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THE BULLETIN

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Rabbi: Claudio Jodorkovsky Co-Presidents: Robert Engelbert and Michael Scharfstein

The Saskatchewan Jewish Arts Festival • A Festival of Connection

by Malvina Rapko

When Joel and I started planning the Saskatchewan Jewish Festival, we wanted to create something that would share Jewish culture, religion and traditions with the broader community—an opportunity for learning, curiosity, and engagement. This year we had many interesting discussions about faith and art, a heartfelt book club conversation, a tasty cooking class, a joyful service, a dynamic art exhibition, a colorful workshop, and the world premier of a homegrown theatrical production. A little bit of this…a little bit of that…

Through the festival and its pop-up events, we've seen firsthand how meaningful it is to celebrate Judaism openly, to answer questions, and to build bridges between communities. It's been a reminder of how important it is to be visible—not just for others to learn about Jewish life, but for Jews in Saskatchewan to find each other.

A huge thank you to B'nai Brith Lodge 739 and SK Arts for helping make this possible. Their support has turned an idea into something real. We also want to thank our committee members, Carol Wylie, Kelsey Pavier and Jenna Berenbaum, the featured artists and performers, the volunteers, the staff and board at CAI, and our community partners. We look forward to the next Saskatchewan Jewish Arts Festival.

Let us entertain you in style at the 33rd Annual

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LISA LOEB

Many recognize Lisa from her platinum-selling Number 1 hit "Stay (I Missed You)" featured in the film Reality Bites. Since then, she has enjoyed a thriving career in music, film, television, voice-over work, and children's recordings. In addition to raising two children in Los Angeles, Lisa is an entrepreneur, overseeing multiple ventures, including the design and business operations of Lisa Loeb Eyewear. Her creative output spans music for adults, as well as books and albums for kids and families. Her latest song collections include "A Simple Trick To Happiness" and "That's What It's All About".

Join us at this year's Silver Spoon Dinner and be part of the fun. The Silver Spoon Dinner has been and will continue to be **Saskatoon's Premiere Ladies' Night Out** – an evening of luxury and laughs. You will be pampered, wined and dined and entertained in elegant style while supporting **Congregation Agudas Israel** Jewish Community, **Saskatoon Interval House** and **Ronald McDonald House**.

You will meet the 2025 Sterling Award Winner and have the opportunity to win numerous amazing prizes and bid on fabulous Silent Auction items.

Tickets will be available at www.silverspoondinner.com and www.eventbrite.ca at noon on January 21st
Price per ticket - **$250** (plus service charges)

Follow Silver Spoon Dinner on

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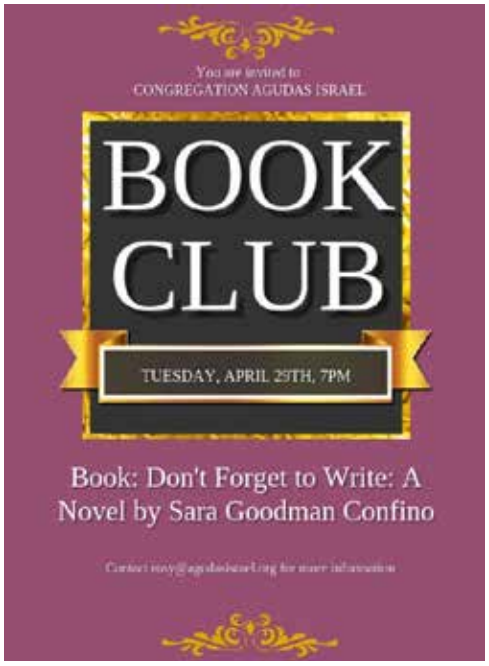

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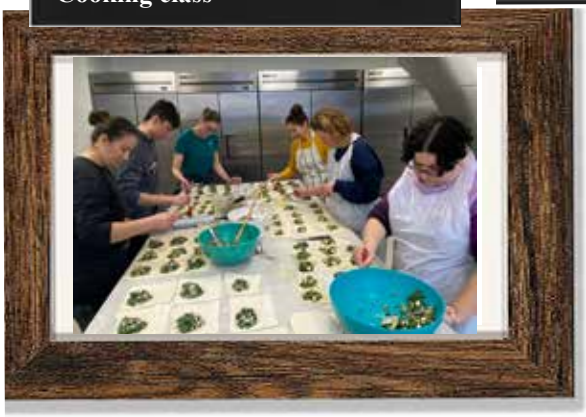
DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT BULLETIN IS MAY 15, 2025

Synagogue Sightings

Cooking class

BBYO Sledding



BBYO Poker Night

Editorial

by Lisa Shiffman, Editor-in-Chief

This Bulletin was quite exciting for me. Last year, while searching AppleMusic for a specific song, I accidentally stumbled upon a different song by the same name which I immediately fell in love with. I equate the singer to a Jewish version of Ed Sheeran, and anyone who knows me, knows how crazy I am for Ed Sheeran's music. I thought I would reach out to the singer to offer my praises as a new fan and I was surprised to get a wonderful response back. This singer is named Eytan, who is based in the US. He has won awards for his music and his voice, oh that voice, will draw you in. He dropped a Chanukah song in December and asked some of his fans if they would like to contribute videos of themselves doing various Chanukah things, such as lighting candles and dancing which he combined into his completed video. My family was asked so we appear in his video a number of times (Light it Up – check it out on YouTube). For this edition of The Bulletin I asked him if he would be comfortable with being interviewed and he said he would love to! I hope you enjoy it and get a chance to check out his music.

I wanted to mention the Jewish Arts Festival that took place in February. Thank you to the team who made it come together consisting of Joel, Malvina, Carol and Kelsey. It was a lot of fun. Our community and the greater Saskatoon community enjoyed and appreciated it. The variety of events offered something for everyone.

This month's artist profile is on Raz Akta, a Yemenite Jew, who uses traditional Yemenite methods to create beautiful jewelry. His techniques are unique as he uses traditional tools to create his masterpieces. I asked Raz for a recipe that his people enjoy, to include in this bulletin so I hope you try to make the kubaneh bread.

There's a lot happening in our little community so be sure to watch the rabbi's weekly newsletters to keep on top of things. Be sure to register for the Pesach seder and other upcoming events. Chag pesach sameach!

FROM OUR CONGREGATIONAL FAMILY

The Mission Statement of Congregation Agudas Israel

Congregation Agudas Israel is a spiritual, religious, educational and social home committed to deepening the quality of Jewish life in Saskatoon and district. We are an evolving link in the historical traditions of the Jewish people. We are a progressive, democratic and sensitive congregation responding to the widest spectrum of Jewish thought and practice.

Written at the 2002 Kallah by the members of Congregation Agudas Israel

Mazel Tov to

Thomas Siqueira for winning the gold medal and to Alon Winkler and Charlie Rapko for winning the silver in an exciting Lakeview Tournament soccer match reffed by Joseph Siqueira.

Jan Gitlin, Sherwood & Elaine Sharfe, Heather Fenyes, Lauren Scharfstein and Pam Bielak who were all awarded The King Charles III Coronation Medal.

Jan Gitlin receiving her medal

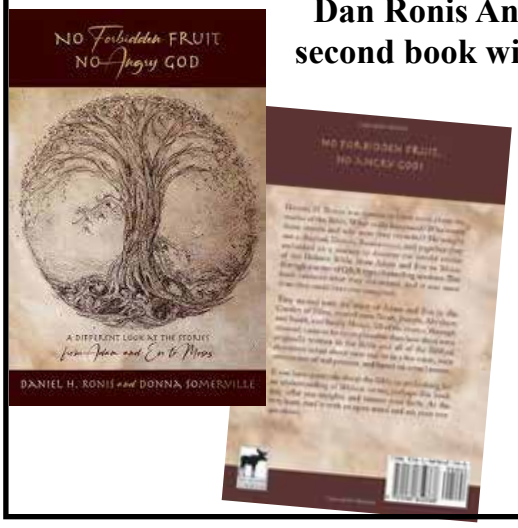
Acknowledging an Act of Kindness

Zara Gurstein would like to recognize "a gentleman where she lives" who brought her a menorah that is battery operated and lights up a new candle every night. He is not of her faith. She thanked him from herself and her Jewish community. Her neighbours in the building came around to wish her happy Chanukah, and wanted to learn about the menorah in peace and harmony. Zara is very proud that she was able to enlighten the people around her what the menorah means to her.

Holocaust Remembrance Day

by Ron Gitlin

Congregation Agudas Israel held a special shabbat service February 1st, commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Members of the Congregation participated in the service, including Holocaust survivor, **Kayla Hock**, and members of our Hebrew School. The Hebrew School children honored Kayla by making a special presentation to her.



Dan Ronis Announces the publication of his second book with co-author Donna Somerville

Available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle format

For those interested Dan has a limited number of copies for sale for $20 with proceeds again going to Sisterhood To order a copy of Dan's book please email: dan.ronis55@live.com

There will be a book signing in the next month or two.

If you wish to only receive the digital version of The Bulletin, please email Myla and ask to be removed from The Bulletin paper-copy mailing list. Myla can be emailed at administrator@agudasisrael.org. The Bulletin can always be accessed through the CAI website.

Divrei Harav – Rabbi Claudio's Message

A New Yahrzeit Board for our Synagogue

by Rabbi Claudio Jodorkovsky

When I am teaching Tefilah (Jewish prayer) to our Hebrew School students every week, one of the most frequent questions I am asked is about our Yahrzeit boards. Why do we have those names there? Who are these people? Why do some of them have their lights turned on? Some feel very proud when they find their own last names on the plaques.

Talking about death with children is always a challenge, but I try to explain to them, in their language, that for Judaism, memory is one of the most important values. The sacredness of memory lies not just in remembering our dear ones but honouring them through our own actions, mitzvot, tzedakah, kindness and learning.

The sacredness of memory lies not just in remembering our dear ones but honouring them through our own actions, mitzvot, tzedakah, kindness and learning.

For generations, one of the most fundamental ways to perpetuate the memory of those who have passed away, has been through a plaque in the Yahrzeit boards in our synagogues.

A Yahrzeit board is a living tribute, a monument where the past and present of our families and our congregation connect towards the future. Each plaque engraved with the name of our loved ones, rekindled annually on the Shabbat of their Yahrzeits, is an invitation for the generations to honour their lives, values and example. The light represents the eternal presence of their souls, and what they brought into our lives.

Decades have passed since our Congregation incorporated its last memorial board. Thanks to the generosity of

continued on page 16

From the President

Michael Sharfstein, Co-President, CAI

As you likely know by now, given the official notice that has been sent out to the community, our President for the last 5 plus years, Kevin Sharfe, has decided to step aside (not step away) from the Presidency. The Board of Trustees reluctantly accepted Kevin's resignation as President at our Board meeting on November 19, 2024.

At the same Board meeting, the Board of Trustees voted to approve Robert Englebert and me as the Co-Presidents until the next AGM for the community. It should not be lost on anyone that it takes two of us to try to fill Kevin's enormous shoes. I wanted to share my immense gratitude for everything that Kevin has done for our community for the past 5 years, but I am having trouble finding the right words. Fortunately, Grant Scharfstein shared some comments at our last AGM that at least come close to expressing my thanks to Kevin, and I want to share some of those comments here (with Grant's approval and whether Kevin wants me to or not):

It should not be lost on anyone that it takes two of us to try to fill Kevin's enormous shoes. I wanted to share my immense gratitude for everything that Kevin has done for our community for the past 5 years, but I am having trouble finding the right words.

I can't let this opportunity go by without saying a few words about Kevin.

I don't think any of us, including myself, have any idea of the sacrifices Kevin has, and continues to make on behalf of this Congregation. His commitment has gone well beyond what should be expected of him, as President of this Congregation.

Kevin has been the President, the leader and the spokesperson for this Congregation, and the Jewish Community in general, during what arguably has been the most stressful, volatile, uncertain times in this Congregation's history.

Kevin has shepherded us through a world-

continued on page 16

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Leah Rosenberg is a San Francisco-based Artist

Leah Rosenberg is a San Francisco-based artist whose practice spans painting, installation, sculpture, printmaking, video, and food. Rooted in her belief in the fundamental generosity of art and the creative act, Rosenberg promotes a democratic approach to the perception of color through focusing on the role of color in our lives, especially its emotional and psychological impacts. She received an Irvine Fellowship through the Lucas Artists Residency Program at Montalvo Arts Center and Kala Fellowship at Kala Art Institute. During her 2019 residency at San Francisco Recology, she worked with paint salvaged from the Household Hazardous Waste Facility. Rosenberg has held residencies at Vermont Studio Center, Project 387, Facebook, Google, Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, McColl Center for Art + Innovation, University of Saskatchewan, and Villa Lena in Italy. Everywhere A Color, a permanent installation at the San Francisco International Airport, and her book The Color Collector's Handbook published in 2018 by Chronicle Books, invite people from everywhere to connect through color. With her passion for color, Rosenberg was appointed Creative Director for Color Factory in San Francisco (2017) and NYC (2018), orchestrating installations and collaborations with internationally-recognized artists and designers.

Her work is part of SFMOMA's permanent collection where she also worked as the lead pastry chef at their rooftop café. Combining her talents, she created a spectrum of desserts based on the museum's collection (2009-2013). In 2019, she was invited to talk about the language of color for TEDxSan Francisco. Her works have been exhibited nationally and internationally including at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Art Moves in Poland, San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, the Golden Pavilion in Hamburg, and Sarasota Museum of Art.

Rosenberg recently completed Color In Twelve Parts, a series of twelve monochromatic films that pulled colors from domestic life and her own collected footage, one color at a time. This series of experimental works builds on Rosenberg's decade-long observational work of color collecting. They were screened in entirety at SFCinematheque, with divergent live soundtrack performances by two local musicians.

The way Leah Rosenberg sees it, colors

have the capacity to improve moods, conjure memories, tell stories, bring calm and joy, and inspire growth. All of which come together in her ever-expanding list of public works: Ohana Montage Health in Monterey (2023), Mercy Housing (2021) and Ghirardelli Square (2020) in San Francisco, and Elco Yards in Redwood City (2025).

Rosenberg earned a BFA from Emily Carr Institute in Vancouver, BC and an MFA from California College of the Arts in San Francisco.

Editor's Note: Leah is the daughter of Alan Rosenberg and Leslie-Ann Crone.

THE BULLETIN

Editor-in-Chief .. .. ..

B'nai Brith Report

by David Katzman, President

We are all starving for good news during these past 16 months. The painfully slow release of the Hamas hostages is a positive development, but we are in such a precarious period. Trying to predict what will happen seems impossible to me but I do know that Jews need to be supporting other Jews. That is the central purpose of your local B'nai Brith's existence.

I want to thank long time BB member Ron Gitlin for being an instrumental participant in bringing the Holocaust Remembrance Project from Calgary to the Western Development Museum, April 1 to August 30. BB Saskatoon provided a $10 000 grant. Funds will be used to bus students from schools in Saskatoon and surrounding areas to the exhibition. This educational experience is so very needed:

A panel survey commissioned by the Association of Canadian Studies and conducted by the polling firm Leger last spring found 18 per cent of ***Canadians*** *between 18 and 24 years old agreed with the statement "I think the Holocaust was exaggerated."* CTV News, Jan.26/2025

"... young adults ages 18-29 who are the most recent reflection of local education systems; when surveyed, they indicated that they had not heard or weren't sure if they had heard of the Holocaust (Shoah): France (46%), Romania (15%), Austria (14%) and Germany (12%)." Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

Susan and I attended the first performance of 18 Jews Eating Chinese Food at Persephone Theatre on Feb. 5. The playwright, our own Jenna Berenbaum, was rewarded with a standing ovation, and I was one of those standing. The representation of Jews was not always flattering but the love for each other was always there. There were many serious themes woven into the dialogue of these larger-than-life characters, such as the significance of being kosher, what makes someone Jewish, the oppression of women and the pressure to be a mother. B'nai Brith was warmly thanked for providing free tickets to all those who needed them. This was a powerful reminder to Saskatoon's citizens that we are here.

At our March 23, 10 a.m. meeting at CAI we will be asked to:

- provide significant funds to the Saskatchewan Child Advocacy Network?
- provide more funds to CAI annually because one of our members will provide financial support to campers whose families meet the financial means criteria used by Calgary/Edmonton?
- consider being even more active promote the Jewish profile in our city
- consider hosting an event to better equip our community to respond to questions about the conflict in Israel
- provide funds to assist young members of our community to attend the Maccabiah games?

Since my last report, BB provided $10,000 to assist the B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO) to attend conventions and meetings in Alberta. We have also received thank you notes from 30 Birds, YWCA, Saskatoon Community Foundation, Right to Skate, Kisik Youth Education, and Teddy Bears Anonymous. More than half of the funds raised go to Jewish groups and projects with CAI.

In the past two years, attendance at our meetings has doubled. Please contact me if you would like to join us. Men and women who are past Hillel (university age) are warmly invited.

March 23 10 a.m. CAI Breakfast graciously provided by BBYO!

CAI Monthly Fundraisers

Agudas Israel will be launching fundraisers throughout the year. We are looking for our membership to help support getting funds for specific projects. February we are launching a fundraiser for a movie projector for our synagogue. We have been enjoying movie nights with the Rabbi with popcorn and chats but we need a new projector. Please scan the QR codes that you see around the synagogue and be generous in your donations. Thanking you in advance.
The Ways and Means Committee.

Future Wish List

Resurface the Parking Lots

Small Display Table

Small Appliances for Kitchen

Basement Windows

Biography of the Month: Eliezer Ben-Yehuda

by Stan Schroeder

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda was born Eliezer Yitzhak Perelman January 7,1858 in Luzhky, Lithuania, to Feyga and Yehuda Lieb Perelman, a Chabad Chasid who died when Eliezer was only five years old. He attended Yeshivah in Polotsk, and was introduced there to the changing ideas in Judaism, Haskalah -- enlightenment, and secular Hebrew literature.

He was expelled from his uncle's home and found shelter in Glubokoye, a small town in the Vilna district, in the home of Samuel Naphtali Herz Jonas, also a Chabad Chasid, who was quite learned, writing and reading Russian, French and Hebrew. Jonas persuaded him to prepare for secondary school matriculation, and his eldest daughter Deborah taught him Russian and French. He entered the Dvinsk Gymnasium, from which he graduated in 1877.

During the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78) and the struggle of the Balkan nations for liberation, young Eliezer developed the idea of the revival of the Jewish people on its ancestral soil. He later wrote, "As night visions pale in the face of the light of day, so were my dreams of dedicating my life to the cause of freedom in the Russian nation replaced with a single ideal, manifest in two Hebrew words, 'Yisrael b'artzo' -- Israel in its own land!"

Eliezer began to actively 'preach' that the Jewish people, like all other peoples, had a historic land and a historic language. What was needed was to actuate a national movement that would restore Israel to its land and to its language. He determined to settle in Eretz Israel, and in 1878 went to Paris to study medicine so that he might have a profession to sustain himself. He discussed his plan for a Jewish national movement with some Hebrew writers he met there; they, however, were not interested.

While studying in Paris Ben-Yehuda contracted tuberculosis in the winter of 1878 and his doctors did not forecast a long and happy life for him. He resolved to discontinue his medical studies and make his home in the more favorable climate of Eretz Israel, where he hoped he could continue his advocacy for a national reawakening. He enrolled in the teachers' seminary of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, to qualify for a teaching post in their agricultural school, Mikveh Israel. His health deteriorated and he spent some time in the Rothschild Hospital in Paris. There he met the Jerusalem scholar A. M. Lunz who spoke Hebrew to him in the Sephardi pronunciation, and told him that the members of the various Jewish communities in Jerusalem were able to converse with one another only in Sephardi Hebrew. He, alone among all the prophets of Jewish national renaissance, saw the whole picture of the need for a people wedded to a land, speaking its own language.

In 1881, he left for Jerusalem. He traveled by way of Vienna, where he was joined by his childhood sweetheart, Deborah Jonas. He had written to her of his illness and his dim chance of a long and full life. He bade her forget him -- but she surprised him with a Ruth-like pledge, "wherever you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge..." They married in Cairo, on their way to make a home in the once and future land of Israel.

Ben-Yehuda worked as a teacher, teaching geography and mathematics in Hebrew to his students. In 1884 he started publishing a biweekly newspaper that contained a column featuring new Hebrew words he had coined. This was the beginning of writing the first extensive Hebrew dictionary.

In 1891 Deborah died of the disease Eliezar had contracted in Paris. Before her death she wrote to her 19-year-old sister Paula to come to Palestine and marry Eliezer. Paula wrote to Eliezer, pretending an interest in Hebrew, came to Palestine with her parents, and married Eliezer. He changed her name to Hemda and they established the first entirely Hebrew-speaking Zionist household. They had six children, four survived.

In 1894 he was charged with sedition by the Turkish authorities and spent a year in prison. A bribe was paid to secure his release. Despite continued opposition from the Orthodox Jews who maintained Hebrew should not be a secular language and the Turks who feared its political implications, Ben-Yehuda, Hemda, and their supporters established Hebrew as the language of the yeshuv (the Zionist community.)

The first volume of his seven-volume dictionary was published in 1908, the last in 1958, seven years after Hemda's death. Eliezer died of tuberculosis in 1922, His funeral was attended by 30,000 people

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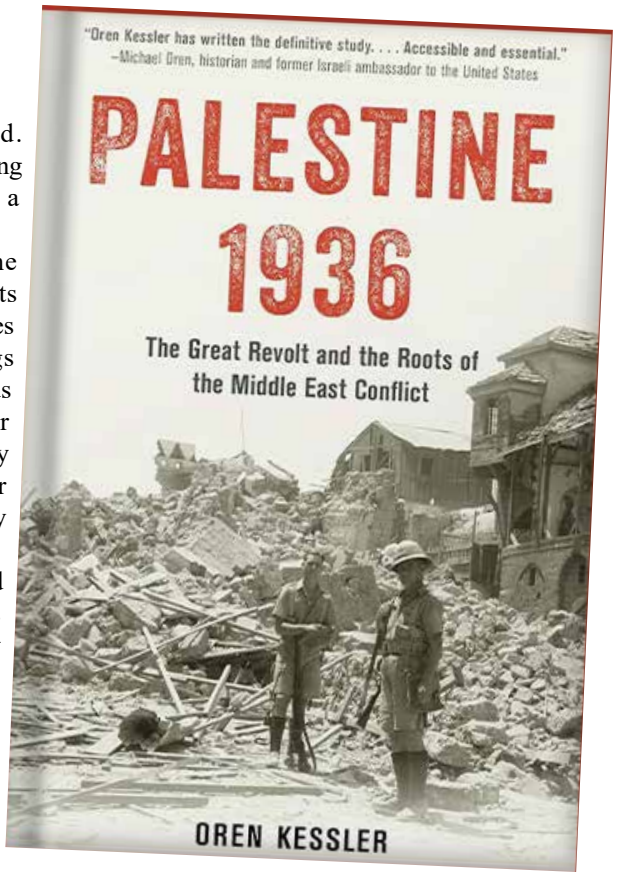
Palestine 1936 Book Review

by Dan Ronis



I found that this book gave me new insights as well as information and details that added to my understanding of the underlying issues surrounding the partition plan. From a Jewish perspective I found it extremely sad that there were positive discussions with Arab leaders prior to the establishment of Israel that could have resulted in an agreement for some form of Jewish state or an enclave within a greater Arab Palestine entity. The book describes the hardening of the Arab position against any and all forms of a Jewish entity in the region and identifies Haj Amin al-Husseni as the chief culprit.

Excerpts from the book attest to that fact:

At a British commission of inquiry after the 1929 riots, "as evidence of Zionist designs on Islamic holy places, he (Amin) had brought with him a copy of the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion" and denied knowing that it was a forgery (p30).

"Arab leaders implored him (Amin) to rethink" the 1936 boycott unless all Jewish immigration ceased. "Emir Abdullah of Transjordan complained that the mufti was shunting aside those who sought a genuine solution"(p78).

"His (Amin) years of effort to make Palestine the centre of Arab and Muslim attention were beginning to yield fruit, and within the country his leadership was effectively uncontested. Police investigators noted that he had created a climate in which an Arab appearing before Peel (commission) risked ostracism if not murder" (p78).

"Ormsby wrote Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden that the cleric was the "chief villain of peace"(78)... Wauchope (British commissioner) lamented that until recently many prominent Arabs had been moderate; but now, led by the Mufti, extremism was the rule".(p85)

"Ben Gurion expected that most influential Arabs would accept partition, however grudgingly. Some did, like Yusuf Hanna, Musa Alami, and the leaders of Syria's main nationalist movement, the National Block". Emir Abdullah of Transjordan...informed the British of his approval. Jerusalem ex-mayor Rageb Nashashibi told the high commissioner he too backed partition. The mayors of Jaffa, Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarem, and Haifi – all Nashashibi allies – followed his line. Yet within weeks, these ertwhile supporters reversed course (pp100-101).

It was an abrupt turnaround. Nashashibi fell in line amid mounting death threats and the murder of a string of associates." (p100 - 101)

So, this is not to discount the competing nationalist movements for a homeland, the errors both sides made, and the strife and killings that had taken place in the previous decade or more. Still, it seems clear that one man put a hard stop to any agreement among the Arabs for allowing a Jewish homeland of any size or shape to be created.

Aside from the troubles caused by Amin, there were deeper issues involved of fears of a majority losing status and power to a minority as highlighted in the following excerpts:

"Musa Kazim Husseini, new mayor of Jerusalem wrote on the anniversary of the Balfour declaration "We Arabs, Muslim and Christian, always sympathized profoundly with the persecuted Jews and their misfortunes in other countries, but there is a wide difference between this sympathy and the acceptance of such a nation...ruling over us" (P13).

After the 1921 riots a commission of inquiry was formed. "Arab fury, it concluded came from fears of Jewish demographic, economic, and political domination" (p19).

Jamal Husseini, the Mufti's cousin, vowed "to starve with honor rather than settle for half a loaf" (p85).

Questioned as to the fate of the 400,000 Jews already in Palestine, Amin was evasive, venturing only "We must leave all this to the future". Pressed as to whether the country could assimilate them, his reply was brief. "No" (84-85).

"Want to understand the roots of the Middle East conflict? Read this book." — Haaretz

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A Brief Look at Spinoza's Concepts of God

Baruch (de) Spinoza (1632 – 1677)

by Dan Ronis

Spinoza is a name known to many Jewish people, being especially noted as one of the few Jews having been excommunicated from his religious community. However, his philosophical and religious views on God and Nature do not seem to be as well-known within the Jewish community as they are within academic segments of the outside community. The following is a brief discussion of Spinoza's construct of God taken from on-line and text sources. Interestingly, the public library had a few books about Spinoza and the USASK main library had several shelves devoted entirely to Spinoza.

"Baruch Spinoza is best known for identifying God with Nature. He does not see God as the transcendent creator of the world. Rather, he views him as the same as Nature itself. If the Axial Age philosophers and the religious thinkers who build on their work emphasize e divine is separate from earth, Spinoza brings the divine back to earth".

In contrast, "... Judaism is committed to belief in one God, it is also committed to the belief that God is separate from everything else....It is not the belief that God is equal to the world, but the belief that God stands over and against the world... In a monotheistic religion, God is one in a stronger sense – utterly alone and unique".

Spinoza's argument for a God not separate from creation is "that there is only one substance conveyed in various forms. One is that if God is infinite, then there can be nothing outside of God. He can have no limits or boundaries. This means there cannot be a world external to Him. The world must be contained as part of the infinite substance that is God".

He offers a version of the following argument.

1. No two substances can share the same attribute or essence.
2. God is a substance that has (or is comprised of) infinite attributes.
3. To exist separately from God, any other substance would have to possess attributes or an essence that is different from one of the infinite attributes or essences of God, which is impossible.
4. Therefore, no substance can exist separately from God.

I will interject here and say that I find such arguments of logic often difficult to follow and not to my liking as well. They seem to be based on a different way of thinking than people are used to as well as dependent on arcane definitions of terms.

"While Spinoza is often viewed as a Pantheist, one must keep in mind that his view that Nature is God does not awaken in him a thirst for prayer or rituals or of religious experience as typically understood. He thinks our goal should be to rationally understand the world and our place in it. This means rejecting the traditional views of religion and embracing rational reflection upon Nature. He does though refer to this as "the intellectual love of God".

"Spinoza's God has some affinity with JAHWE, the Jewish God, but he is not the God of religion. God is not prior to creation or nature. God is both creator and created. The need to prove God's existence goes against the essence of Spinoza's God. A God that is imminent in nature does not require any logical proof of existence".

Spinoza's view, in the final analysis, has many similarities with the ancient Stoics and Epicureans. He thinks our ethical goal should be to control our attachment to passions and to cultivate virtue. This entails that we strive for knowledge. Ultimately all knowledge is of God or Nature.

Part of this process, as we have emphasized, first requires overcoming false beliefs. Spinoza's criticism of the anthropomorphic views of God is meant to aid in this. He thinks such anthropocentric views are mere superstitions and give rise to childish passions and fears. Like the Epicureans, Spinoza sees such false metaphysical assumptions as leading to much human suffering. A major focus of his Ethics then echoes the traditional Epicurean view that once we disabuse ourselves of false superstitious beliefs, we can better free ourselves from irrational passions.

"All things in nature, which are a part of God, are also necessary. As Spinoza states, That eternal and infinite being we call God, or Nature, acts from the same necessity from which he exists" (Part IV, Preface). The laws of nature are also mechanical. This God is not thought to act for purposes, not in sync with Aristotelian telos (purpose), but in accord with mechanical necessary laws".

I chose not to summarize the various statements above concerning Spinoza's concept of God but leave it to the reader to draw from it their own synthesis of his definition. I simply attempted to provide an insight into Spinoza's thoughts and writings using his concept of God as an example.

In my opinion, trying to apply logic, rationality, reasoning to that which is beyond those attributes simply does not work. Trying to explain God using rational arguement is like trying to understand Science using Religious beliefs or vice versa, explaining Religion using scientific methodology. It does not work – they are wholly different ways of looking at the Universe. More importantly, I don't think that most peoples lives would be lived any differently if they believed that God is like that which Spinoza defined or is as the God of Jewish scripture.

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This page is sponsored by Jeffrey and Sherril Stein.

A Look Back

Introduction by Leslie-Ann Crone
and article by Leah Rosenberg

Last week, while sorting files, I came across a Bulletin article that Leah (our daughter) had written 30 years ago in early 1995 following her 1994 March of Living trip at the age of fifteen. The timing of finding this article seemed so serendipitous as the world and our congregation was preparing to honour the survivors at the 80th anniversary of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day service. Reading this, after all these years, brought feelings of gratitude for the teaching and commitment to our children over the years from the CAI Hebrew School, the Board of Trustees, and Bnai Brith, and which continues today. Our children DO remember as adults, the importance of history and the benefits of growing up in a small Prairie city with a very committed Jewish Community. (I unfortunately couldn't find the complete Bulletin from 1995, but think it was in the Winter/Spring edition 1995).

Last April, I was involved in a true once in-a-lifetime experience that changed me forever. I had developed new ideas, different priorities and changed views. Along with almost 6,000 other Jewish youth from around the world, I participated in the March of the Living 1994. It was an intense two week trip to Poland and Israel while we studied the contrasts between the anguish of our past and the hope for our future.

Our trip, the 1994 March of the Living, began full of excitement and anticipation. Everyone wondered what Poland was really like, not like a book, but the places and stories of history that we could actually touch and experience. We arrived in Warsaw and it was even worse than I imagined. Yes, it was dark and gloomy, cold and run-down. Buildings screamed in misery they were so old, and only to be mocked by the acres of beautiful grass surrounding them. The people lining the streets were just like the buildings: cold, grey, never smiling. They watched and stared at us with a vengeance. Hate was thick in the air.

Our first stop was the Warsaw Jewish community cemetery. This visit was somehow relieving. This was the easiest place to be in Poland. Everyone buried here died of natural causes, none were lcilled or tortured. The only thing that made me somewhat uneasy was the fact that there was no one left to tend to it or take care of the area. Our next stop was the Warsaw Ghetto. We went through a museum filled witfi remnants of tragedies that took place there. Yellow star badges, pictures of terrorized children and an ark covering that were somehow kept intact. In the same room were pieces of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Pictures of leaders and helpers of the rebellion. Right outside of the museum we found graffiti written in German which read: 11 Alles Zu Gas" with a Jewish star drawn above it. Translated it read: "They should all be gassed." The Warsaw Ghetto was a walled in square mile in which 150,000 Jews were forced to live. They lived in small apartments with 8-15 other families. Can you imagine? Almost the entire population of Saskatoon alone living in one square mile. Each person was allotted a mere 180 calories a day. That is less than one piece of bread. In addition to this, they had to walk down the street amongst the stench of dead bodies randomly scattered.

Along the Memorial at Majdanek streets of the ghetto are large stone markers dedicated to those who risked their lives to help save others. Not a common occurrence. Two major buildings which served as SS headquarters during the war now serve as a public high school and a hospital. The apartments that the Jews lived in are now rented and occupied by Polish families. Right outside the ghetto is a memorial at Umshlagplatz, the place where Jews were gathered and then transported from the ghetto to the death camps. The memorial reads, "Along this path of suffering and death over 300,000 Jews were driven in from 1942-1943 from the Warsaw Ghetto the gas chambers of the Nazi Extermination camps. The walls of the memorial are engraved with the names of families who had passed through.

The next day we visited Plashov, a forced labour camp. There was nothing left here but a huge monument commemorating certain SS officers who perished. A short ways away was a stone placed there in memory all those who were worked to death. To my surprise, this piece of land was beautiful. There were

Memorial at Majdanek

houses up on the hill looking down onto these rolling hills. The only thing was, these rolling hills made up a labour camp 50 years ago. These peoples' backyards were where so many innocent people perished.

That afternoon we were on our way to Auschwitz. We arrived and walked through the entrance, past the young Poles selling hot dogs. The grounds resembled a college campus. Nice, big, brick buildings surrounded by well kept grass. We were taken through these buildings. Some were SS offices, others places used for experimentations on prisoners. Then, we entered others, thinking they would be the same. They were worse. This was the proof of the deaths. Room after room filled with tallisim, glasses, hair and artificial limbs. All had been stripped from the Jews entering here. The next building was used for gassing experiments to make sure the stuff really worked. In between buildings is a wall where one was instructed to walk towards. As they approached it they were shot in the back. This was all apart of. one day's work at Auschwitz. They killed hundreds in hours then went home to their wives and children. Humanity was no longer a way of life, hatred became the norm.

At Birkenau, which is an expansion of Auschwitz, we were taken through one of the women's barracks. The platforms where they had to sleep were no more than six feet wide and three feet high. There are three platforms in each section and there are four very long

continued on page 11

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rows of these lining the bunker. Approximately 13 women had to sleep on each of these platforms with no straw, blankets or pillows. Definitely not a "living" environment. While we were being told of these stories, an elderly woman walked in with a man about her age. She stood in the doorway watching us listen. She then slowly made her way in, stood in front of a platform and began to tremble. She explained to us that that platform was the exact one she slept on with 12 other girls 50 years ago. You could see her pain from the memories that particular platform brought back.

Finally the day of the "March" came, which was appropriately placed on Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day). 6,000 Jewish teens from 42 countries joined together. We all wore our blue jackets and marched in silent rows of six. We marched through the Arbeit Macht Frie gate and along the railroad tracks leading to Birkenau. The streets were blocked off and lined with Polish police and Polish citizens who yelled "Heil Hitler" and spat at us. Was I scared? Not at all. Seeing and hearing them made me feel so proud to be Jewish. Here we were, in this place where their ultimate goal was to eliminate the entire Jewish population, and we were able to march through 50 years later, alive and Jewish. We, the future of the Jewish people, were there to show that they couldn't kill us all. And we were there, just as our ancestors had been, yet instead of marching to their death, we were marching to life. It was by far the best experience.

Next, we ventured on to Majdanek. This was the hardest because this camp was left almost untouched. There is so much death here. We walked through the so-called "disinfection" room. Here, Jews were greeted with a real shower. This would open up their pores to prepare them to be gassed. Adjacent to this room is the gas chamber, its ceiling stained blue from the Cyclon B and carbon dioxide gas. There are little cubby holes were the SS would sit, smoke a cigar, and watch the Jews suffocate. We came to barracks with cages filled with shoes, then another, and another. Three full barracks with an endless number of shoes of all shapes and sizes. I could smell them, that old, leathery, wornout smell. I touched a small shoe, trying to picture the child that once wore it. We walked down a paved path until we reached the crematorium. The first room contains a sterile table where the people were dissected, the purpose being to find any swallowed jewels or hidden diamonds in their corpses. The last room was filled with ovens, at least 20. Right outside the crematorium, grows a beautiful rose garden.

The Nazis were very proud of their accomplishments, killing so many Jews, not to mention other innocent people - gypsies, homosexuals and those with disabilities. As their "Medal of Honor", they built a huge mausoleum. In this mausoleum lay 17 tons of ashes. The ashes of 86,000 Jews. Full bones and chips of bones can be seen. To all those people that say the Holocaust never happened, I'm here to tell you it did. I touched their shoes and saw their ashes.

The last camp we visited was Treblinka. During the war, most of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto were eventually transported to Treblinka, solely a death camp in which the longest a prisoner could ever survive was one week. Treblinka was only operating for 13 months. In those 13 months, it killed 800,000 Jews. I cannot comprehend how anyone could systematically murder millions of innocent people. There is nothing left of Treblinka. However there were 17,000 stones placed there symbolizing 17,000 communities destroyed during the war. The larger the stone, the larger the community. These stones are endless, they go as far as the eye can see. It is incomprehensible how many people, families and communities this war against our people destroyed.

That night we left for Israel. I had never felt so relieved to be leaving a country in all my life. The five hour flight was nothing compared to the agony of every minute spent in Poland.

We arrived at 4:00 a.m. in Jerusalem. Directly from our plane, our contingent went to visit the Kotel (wailing wall). Just as we arrived, the sun was rising. It was so beautiful and there was nowhere I would rather have been at that moment.

Being in Israel gave me a tremendous sense of security and happiness. We spent an afternoon with Arab teens. Many friendships were made with these people we were often told were our enemies.

The next day, we did a three hour hike to Ein Gedi. Our destination was a natural oasis. It was amazing. We then visited the children's memorial at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum. We observed touching sculptures of prisoners and skeletal figures. Each demonstrated a specific pain, meaning, the vision of the sufferings throughout that time. This was Yom Hazikaron. Sirens sounded for two minutes in which everyone stood in silence to remember those who perished in all of Israel's wars.

That night was Erev Yom haAtzma'ut, and we celebrated Israel's independence on the streets of Jerusalem. Everyone was singing and dancing in the streets. We spent the next day at an Air Force base where the program was generated expressly for the "March of the Living" participants. An air show, music, performers and fireworks structured the evenings events. The next day we were going home.

Even now, it is somewhat difficult to be coherent about the whole trip. Poland is still something so entirely out of my realm of reality that it is sometimes easy to dismiss. It seems that if the camps and torture were real, school and society would not be. Poland hurt. There are no other words to explain it. It left me with a lot of questions and no answers. We saw the effects of cruelty and inhumanity beyond all means. Poland isn't something you can whitewash with nice phrases and big words. Nothing I could write could ever possibly have the effect of that trip. And that is why Poland hurt. Because there are no real words for what we saw there and we were left with the thought of Poland and hope that people will understand.

There was an amazing feeling of unity and togetherness in Poland. As we walked down the streets of Warsaw and Cracow wearing our jackets with the Star of David on the back, we felt the stares and walked on. I felt pride and sadness as I walked along those streets. Sad at seeing unfamiliar things only people long dead could recognize. Proud to be walking alive and free in a town where Jews once flourished.

During the whole trip, physical gestures, a hug, an arm around the shoulders became an important way of silent communication. When the pain was too great, a hug became a transfusion of strength and comfort. The bus was our safe place, a barrier from whatever was going on outside, where we could regain strength between one draining experience and the next.

Israel... for me was like coming up for air while swimming. I had just been in one of the deepest, darkest places of humanity drowning. Israel acted as my "oxygen" supply and enabled me to continue. Israel helped in healing certain emotional wounds from the week before, but there is still a scar that will last forever. I will forever live by and keep in mind the Hasidic saying: "Forgetfulness leads to exile while remembrance is the secret of redemption."

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CIJA | Community Column

It Starts at the Seder Table

by Judy Zelikovitz

Vice President, University and Local Partner Services at CIJA, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

This year, the Jewish community will greet Passover with mixed emotions. On a holiday where we celebrate the 3,500-year-old Exodus from Egyptian slavery to freedom, we also mourn the modern-day hostages held captive for so long and the loss of those who will never return to their loved ones.

It can be difficult to explain to our children the enduring importance of Passover – a tale of survival, courage, and resilience.

Passover offers a unique opportunity for families and friends to gather around the Seder table, retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt, eat symbolic foods, and, most challenging of all, attempt to keep the younger children engaged until the meal.

It can be difficult to explain to our children the enduring importance of Passover – a tale of survival, courage, and resilience. The story of the Jewish people facing an impossible obstacle and conquering it, of our people standing up against oppression, proud of our Jewish identity – confronting and overcoming baseless hatred.

In the past year, Jewish students have been made to feel othered, embarrassed, threatened, and, sometimes, compelled to hide their Jewish identity. Since October 7, online Jew-hatred and anti-Israel vitriol have become all too common. While cities, overrun by hate-filled protests, seem almost completely desensitized to the hate, we see our children suffering.

An excerpt from the Passover Haggadah reminds us that "in every generation, one must see oneself as having personally come forth from Egypt…and you will tell your child on that day…" As we sit down at the Seder table this year, we will, once again, tell the next generation the story of the Jewish people's victory against oppression and that pride in our identity is the way to fight oppression.

The younger guests at our Seder table – our children, our grandchildren, our nieces and nephews – are the next generation of leaders. It will be their responsibility to challenge antisemitism head-on, and it's our responsibility to educate them about how to do it.

CIJA remains committed to protecting the quality of Jewish life in Canada. Our team is working with government officials to advocate for the introduction of safe access (bubble) legislation to protect schools and places of worship from the threat of violence or harassment. We are also advocating to enforce existing legislation that combats both online and real-world hate.

We continue to demand accountability from social media platforms, institutions, and organizations. We urge the government to support the provinces' education for judges, crown attorneys, and law enforcement regarding antisemitism and hate crimes. We continue to stand by our policy priorities that include advocating for community safety, for maintaining public order, and fighting antisemitism in schools and on campus.

The community, after a long year and a half, is tired. Some of us are scared. And yet, we remain proud. We know more work must be done to protect ourselves, our children, and our Jewish identity. So, this year, as we retell our ancestors' story to our children, we are reminded that we remember the past to protect our present – and our children's future. It starts at the Seder table. But it doesn't end there.

BBYO

by Sam Glasofer

Hey, everyone! I am Sam Glasofer and I am very proud to be the s'gan (Vice President) of Saskatoons BBYO. We are a youth organization led and organized by Jewish teens such as myself. If you know any jewish teens that would be interested in coming to a few programs over the next couple months please reach out to Millia, our Saskatoon BBYO city supervisor at Mshiffman@bbyo.org. We host free programs such as movie nights, poker nights, and volunteering. But a select few programs require a few dollars to participate such as sledding at Optimist hill, bowling, or any of the Northwest Canada BBYO Conventions (hosted in Calgary and Edmonton and hopefully someday Saskatoon!) Thanks for reading and I hope you all have a good day.

Interview with Eytan

interviewed by Lisa Shiffman in December 2024

Eytan's musical journey began in 2010, following two transformative trips to Israel that led to his debut album, "The Best Thing In My Life." Featuring international superstars, the album produced six #1 hits on global radio. He followed this success with the EP "After The Rain" in 2013, where he contributed lyrics to nearly every track.

Eytan's work has always carried messages of hope and resilience, with singles like "No More" (2014) receiving praise from industry icons like rapper Nelly and Lady Gaga's producer, Vince Herbert.

In recent years, he's expanded his repertoire with covers of songs like "Say Something," "Can't Help Falling in Love," and "Courage," along with his unique adaptation of "Boi Kallah" to "Hallelujah." His original songs, such as "Hold My Hand" and "Ascension," released in early 2024, showcase his passion for creating soul-stirring music.

On October 7th, 2024, Eytan released "No Matter What"—a tribute to resilience and unity, marking one year after the terrorist attack on Israel. This powerful new single highlights his ongoing commitment to music that touches hearts and inspires hope in times of crisis.

Lisa: Do you write your own music? Where do you get your inspiration from?

Eytan: My first album 'The Best Thing In My Life' was pretty much written for me. It was in my beginning stages of getting into the music industry and I didn't really know much. After that album came out I started to write a lot of my own material. A lot of my inspiration came from pain, heart-break, how I was feeling, some songs I just wanted to have fun with!

Lisa: Did you grow up speaking both Hebrew and English? Have you ever lived or travelled in Israel?

Eytan: My parents are originally from Russia then traveled and lived in Israel for a bit where they picked up Hebrew. Growing up they spoke all three languages to us so I do speak Hebrew and understand Russian. I traveled to Israel multiple times. When I was a child, after high school then a couple of times after....most of my first album was recorded in Israel as well.

Lisa: What inspired you to become a singer?

Eytan: I recall when I was about 5-6, my mother lined my sisters and I up, wrote down the lyrics to Celine Dion & Peabo Bryson's 'Beauty & The Beast' and we started singing it. That could be when the spark was ignited in me. I don't recall singing much throughout my childhood but more-so in my teen years and on.

Lisa: If you could collaborate with any artist - living or dead - who would it be and why?

Eytan: If I could collab with any artist it would be my girl, Celine Dion. I have always admired her humbleness yet powerful talent! It has been a dream of mine for years. I did almost belt out singing to her as she was leaving her NYC hotel back in 2020. I was by her car door, she noticed me but I just couldn't do it.

Lisa: What's one thing about yourself that fans would be surprised to learn?

Eytan: I've never smoked weed and I am a complete homebody – haha!

Lisa: What do you enjoy doing when you are not making music?

Eytan: I love creating. I love learning. If it's not music I could be writing a poem, a children's book, designing jewelry, taking someone's picture (photography), finding someone a home or apartment as I am also a real estate agent.

Lisa: Are there any upcoming projects or releases that you are excited about (keeping in mind that this will be published in March 2025).

Eytan: I've recently released "No Matter What" which was a tribute to the October 7th victims as well as to all the Jewish people feeling the rise in antisemitism, I released my first Chanukkah song in 2024, I have just released my first single for 2025 called "Home" and "Bodies" in February (which isn't very "Kosher"). I'm hoping to do more performances, get to know more of my fans, grow my social accounts and of course release more music!

Lisa: What's been the most memorable moment of your music career so far?

Eytan: When I was studying in Israel a friend of mine let me listen to a CD of Gad Elbaz. I connected so much with his music and voice and would practice to his music for hours and hours. Fast forward years later I got to meet him and show him a song I recorded. He was coming to do his first show in NY where he later invited me to sing with him on stage for my first ever public performance. Shortly after that we ended up in the studio together where he wrote Yeled Katen and Composed the music to "The Truth" where we recorded that as a duet and were on my debut album "The Best Thing In My Life".

Lisa: Your music has great meaning and depth to those of us that listen to it. Do you ever find the process of writing to be quite exhausting?

Eytan: Writing is usually my form of therapy and I think I actually feel relieved once I finish writing. I'm not sure why, but I love being able to express myself and my feelings that way.

You can find Eytan on Tiktok, Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, Amazon Music, Instagram and Facebook or check out his merch page at: https://my-store-11486214.creator-spring.com/ Be sure to check out his song "Am Yisrael Chai" (one of my favorites) as well as the other great tracks mentioned in this arricle.

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Kubaneh (Yemenite Jewish Bread)

Kubaneh is an amazing Jewish Yemeni pull-apart bread consisting of multilayered rolls laminated with butter and nigella seeds. Both the yeast and sourdough versions are delicious and can be enjoyed at any meal and paired with sweet or savory foods. Traditionally, the bread is baked for Sabbath (Saturday) morning and served with boiled eggs, grated fresh tomatoes, and spicy zhoug sauce.

Ingredients

Yeast Version
450g bread flour (scant 3 1/2 cups)
40g sugar (3 Tbsp)
9g instant yeast (1 Tbsp)
8g salt (1 1/2 tsp)
225g water (scant 1 cup)
1 egg and 1 egg white (reserve the yolk for the egg wash)
To pour over the dough after mixing
1 Tbsp of oil
To laminate into the dough after the first rise
57g softened unsalted butter (4 Tbsp)
2 Tbsp of nigella seeds
To brush on the dough before baking
1 egg yolk beaten with 1 Tbsp water

Instructions

Mixing

Pull 57g/half stick of butter from the refrigerator, unwrap it, and place it on a small plate to soften. Fold the wrapper in half and save it to grease your springform pan and countertop. Reminder: The butter doesn't go into the dough during mixing.
Whisk the dry ingredients in a large bowl: flour, sugar, (yeast), and salt.
Add the water, whole egg, egg white. Mix thoroughly until the dough is smooth.
Pour 1 tablespoon of oil on top of the dough, cover, and let the dough rise until it has more than doubled. In a warm summer kitchen, this took 1 hour for the yeast version and 4.5 hours for the sourdough version.
Shaping and Final Proof
Smudge a bit of the softened butter onto your saved butter wrapper and grease a 9-inch springform pan. Use this wrapper to lightly grease your countertop too.
Scrape the dough out of the bowl and de-gas it by pressing your palms into it.
Divide the dough in 12-18 pieces.
Working one piece at a time, spread the dough thin with butter-coated fingertips. Don't worry if you tear the dough a bit.
Layer more butter on the thin dough, then sprinkle it with nigella seeds. (Have a paper towel nearby to occasionally de-seed your buttery fingers as the seeds will shred the next dough ball.)
Fold the dough in thirds, and then roll it from a short side.
Place the roll in your pan, working from the center outward. It's okay if the rolls topple over a bit. You can adjust them later, and a little chaos adds to the appeal.
When all the rolls are done, cover your pan and let the dough rise until it has more than doubled - around 1 hour.

Baking

Preheat your oven to 350F.
Beat the egg yolk with a tablespoon of water and brush the top of the dough.
Sprinkle with nigella seeds and bake for 30 minutes uncovered.
Let the dough cool on a rack for about 20 minutes before you remove the outer ring of the pan. Serve on the base.

Made you Laugh

submitted by Alex Boda Hendren

A British Jew is waiting in line to be knighted by the king. He is to kneel in front of him and recite a sentence in Latin when he taps him on the shoulders with his sword. However, when his turn comes, he panics in the excitement of the moment and forgets the Latin. Then, thinking fast, he recites the first sentence that comes to his mind in a foreign language:

"Ma nishtanah halailah
hazeh mikol Haleilot"

Puzzled, his majesty turns to his advisor and whispers, "why is this knight different from all other knights?

Quarterly QUIZ! Answers

1. Hadassah
2. God
3. Four
4. Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes
5. Four
6. a. Reading the megillahb.
   b. Giving charitable gifts to the poor
   c. Sending gifts of food
   d. Enjoying a festive meal
7. Twice: once in the evening and once during the day.
8. It is said that Esther kept a vegetarian diet so she could avoid unkosher food without raising suspicion.
9. Adar II.
10. Xerxes I

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Thank you for your continued support.

Artist Profile : Raz Akta Jewelry

My name is Raz Akta, and I am a 23 years old Yemenite Jewish silversmith. My pieces draw inspiration from centuries-old methods and filigree designs—an almost lost craft, preserved within my heritage like a treasured secret. But I don't simply copy tradition—I build from it. Tradition is my foundation, not my boundary. Each piece I create is a chance to honor the past while giving it new life through my hands, keeping its spirit alive in a modern world.

Crafting jewelry isn't just about making something beautiful; it's about connection. I see my work as a bridge, linking people to their roots and to one another. Through my art, I aim to close the gaps that often separate us, offering a way for people to celebrate themselves and the cultures that bond us.

Every piece tells a story—not only of my Yemenite heritage but of the broader human experience, a history of creativity, richness, and meaning.

Sharing my culture with the world has become one of the most fulfilling aspects of my craft. As I create my pieces, I invite others to connect with their own traditions. I believe that handmade art has the power to bring us together. This is more than jewelry to me—it's a way to honor my roots while soldering them into a larger, collective story. To view more of Raz's work visit: razakta-jewelry.com

President... continued from page 4

wide pandemic the likes of which we, and the world, have never encountered before. Covid created stresses and pressures on all of us, but for Kevin, there was the added stress of leading this Congregation through times where, in reality, there was concern about whether we would even come out the other end. The future was absolutely unknown and uncertain. Many in this Congregation stepped up to see us not only survive this crisis, but to come out stronger, none more so than Kevin. His dedication, leadership and his unwavering commitment to Congregation Agudas Israel was central in seeing us through. We could not have done so without his strong leadership.

Let's add to this crisis the fact that we undertook a massive renovation of our home, this building. At probably the worst possible time. Yet, with Kevin's leadership, with his commitment, his input into almost every facet of this project, including his significant fund-raising efforts, we did the impossible. We have a state-of-the-art facility, a home we are all proud of and a lasting legacy for the future of this Congregation.

October 7, 2023. A date, to quote Franklin Delano Rosevelt, that will 'live in infamy'. Israel, and the Jewish people, suffered the greatest loss of life in a single day, since the Holocaust.

But even more than this is the incomprehensible, but real, rise in overt anti-sematism that the world has seen since. Its effects reached every Jew, and every Jewish community around the world. We, of course, are not immune.

Kevin has, non-stop, and consistently, been working to keep our Congregation, and the Jewish community safe. These absolutely untold hours spent, talking and meeting with other communities, Jewish organizations in Canada, the University of Saskatchewan, local law enforcement and first responders, go without notice by all of us, because Kevin isn't doing it for recognition or glory. He's doing it because of his absolute, total and unquestionable commitment to this Community and his faith. He is, in no small part, keeping us safe.

I could go on and on about Kevin's commitment to Congregation Agudas Israel, but I won't. But I do want, and I do need, everyone here to recognize the absolute selfless commitment Kevin gives to this community, as our leader. We have asked too much of him. We expect too much from him. We owe him a huge debt of gratitude and appreciation for what he has done.

Kevin, on behalf of myself and Marsha, personally, on behalf of the Board of Trustees and on behalf of Congregation Agudas Israel THANK YOU. THANK YOU, THANK YOU.

Thank you is not enough, but it is all I have for now. Thank you Kevin, for everything you have done and will do for us, your community.

Divrei Harav.. continued from page 4

the Shiffman family, honouring the memory of their parents and grandparents Bev and Jack Z"L, we will soon be welcoming our new board which will allow our congregation to continue perpetuating this important Mitzvah. Its design will be similar the boards we currently have, preserving the beauty of our Synagogue and its traditional design.

It is only when we honour our past and our ancestors that we can think of a future for our congregation. Lighting a Yahrzeit light in our Synagogue, saying Kaddish that Shabbat, reminds us of who we are, and why our Jewish tradition is so important for us. We have received a thousand-year heritage which our parents and grandparents made sure we could appreciate. When we remember them on their Yahrzeits, we are saying thanks to them for their generosity and the gift of the Jewish tradition.

But a Yahrzeit board also speaks about the power of community. We live in community, share our traditions with our fellow Jews, and when we die, we also do it with community. When you engrave the name of your parents and grandparents in a Yahrzeit board, you are also bonding their lives in perpetuity with those who shared with them the beauty and joy of Jewish community. It is a statement of belonging and shared destiny. By inscribing their names in our walls, we incorporate them in the history of our congregation, as a testament of their love for our Jewish tradition.

We will be installing our new Yahrzeit board in the next few weeks and begin ordering new plaques. I would like to invite you to engage in this important Mitzvah, honoring the memory of your loved ones by requesting a plaque in their names. Our congregation will illuminate it in perpetuity each year on their Yahrzeits, their memories will be uplifted during Kaddish and their legacy cherished for the generations to come.

L'shalom

Rabbi Claudio

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Israel Matters!
Hamas, Israel, and the New York Times

by Edward Kaplan

TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM
Hamden, CT

Israel Matters readers have no doubt noticed that when it comes to the October 7 Hamas massacre of Israelis and the war that ensued, reporting by the New York Times, America's most revered newspaper, seems to have veered from relaying the facts of the conflict to a narrative that evokes sympathy for Palestinians while downplaying Israel's side of the story. The extent to which the "Gray Lady" has pursued such a narrative, however, has never been studied systematically – until now.

Yale professor (and deputy dean of the management school) Edieal Pinker, an expert in quantitative analysis, has produced a blockbuster paper titled "An Analysis of the New York Times Coverage of the War Between Israel and Hamas." His study, publicly available at the Social Science Research Network site SSRN.com, is based upon the text of 1,561 articles that were published in the New York Times between October 7, 2023 and June 7, 2024.

As will be detailed below, what makes his analysis so powerful is his contrast of NY Times reporting with the documented Israeli casualties of the war as reported by the Armed Conflict Location and Event database and the IDF; the number of Palestinian casualties published by Hamas is routinely cited.

Here in Prof. Pinker's own words is what he found:

1. The dominant summary description of the war is that Hamas attacked Israel on October 7th, 2023 killing 1200 Israelis, and Israel's military response has killed X thousand Palestinianswith X increasing over time.
2. Mention of the Israeli hostages is often left out of the above summary.
3. Mentions of Israeli violence is extensive.
4. Mentions of Palestinian violence post-October 7th is rare and at odds with actual events.
5. Mentions of Israeli casualties after October 7th is relatively infrequent and out of sync with actual Israeli casualties.
6. There are many articles whose main topic is some aspect of Palestinian suffering with many personal accounts of such suffering.
7. Very few articles mention any Israeli suffering that is not directly related to the events of October 7th.

It is important to understand that the findings above are the results of a detailed study of NY Times articles about the war. Of the 1,561 articles included in this study, 895 or fully 70% fit the summary description in the first point above! Regarding points #4 and #5, 1,423 of the 1,561 articles did not mention the deaths of Hamas combatants, nor did they mention Israeli casualties post-October. While there was actual, heavy fighting happening on the ground in Gaza, from the perspective of the New York Times, it seems that Israeli soldiers are fighting civilians or shadows, not Hamas. In fact, Israel lost 364 soldiers during the time period covered by the study, with an additional several thousand wounded.

Pinker's study also provides a novel way of understanding how a regular reader of the NewYork Times encounters this narrative by focusing on the frequency with which readers would come across different types of stories. For example, personal stories of Palestinian suffering were reported on two out of every three days on average. With respect to Israeli casualties, there were ten streaks each lasting at least one week where there were no stories mentioning Hamas casualties. The impression left was that Palestinian casualties are all civilian.

Israel was mentioned more than Hamas in 93% of the 1,561 articles in the study, while in total Israel was mentioned more than 27,000 times compared to 8,500 mentions of Hamas. Theimpression left is that Israel has all of the agency behind this conflict, with Palestinian civilians bearing the cost.

In January, the former US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in an interview with the Times, called the lack of news coverage of Hamas"astounding." Blinken stated "You hear virtually nothing from anyone since October 7 about Hamas. Why there hasn't been a unanimous chorus around the world for Hamas to put down its weapons, to give up the hostages, to surrender?" Prof. Pinker's study suggests an answer – the narrative promoted by the New YorkTimes minimizes the role of Hamas while promoting Israel as the agent behind this conflict.

Editor's Note: Ed Kaplan grew up in Saskatoon and is a professor at Yale University.

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Yahrzeits

March 1 **Adar 1**
Sarah Altman
Eileen Cookman
Bill Katz
John Albert Cameron Mar 2 (2)
Gertie Chochinov
Elaine Friedman
Ruth Horlick
Lily Salz
Millie Diamond Mar 3(3)
Ronald Trute

Esther Berenbaum
Hazel Buckwald
Gitman Chertkow
Marcia Sarlin
Rose Selchen
Boy Bressler Mar 6 (6)
Charna Gersher
Wolf Meth
Naomi Rose
Shirley Seitz
Ester Weisman
Frances Melamede Mar 7 (7)
Raisa Mondrus
Rose Wolfe

March 8 **Adar 8**
Annie Altschul
Albert Krolik
Fira Rotenberg
Dana Unknown
Sadie Chertkow Mar 9 (9)
William East
Itta Golumbia Mar 10 (10)
Motas Kleyman
Fred Shnay
Gussie Sklar
Moses Burt Mar 11 (11)
Maurice Mitchell
Sydney Abbey Mar 12 (12)
Ann Raisen
Clara Gertler Mar 14 (14)
Harry Helfgott
Samuel Kaplan
Leah Meth
Harry Sarlin

March 15 **Adar 15**
Jacob Golumbia
Anne Gitlin Mar 16 (16)
Yetty Goodman
A.J. Weiner
Jean Davidner Mar 18 (18)
Lillian Levitt
Lorraine Sklar
Keren-Or Wilczek
John B. Goodman Mar 19 (19)
William Guttmann
Tiby L.E. Mathews
Vera Schlucker
Baby Segal
Rosie Sellinger
Ed Vickar
Esther Freeman Mar 20 (20)
Reva Hock
Anni Leffman
Malka Schmuck'vich
Harry Steiger
Gertrude Chertkow Mar 21 (21)
Libbie Good
Morris Gurstein
Mendel Pepper
Jacob Rabkin

March 22 **Adar 22**
Anatoly Pekurovski
Reuben Brant Mar 23 (23)
Freda Epstein
Harry M. Bondar Mar 24 (24)
Rebecca Segal
Yenta Shafer
Goldie Wolfe
Jennie Bobowsky Mar 25 (25)
Fanny Shore
William Sklar
Max Taylor Mar 26 (26)
Dovid Berkovich Mar 27 (27)
Pearl Goodman
Keile Bodovsky Mar 28 (28)
Richard Buckwold
Rebecca Forgan
Solomon Ginsberg
William Katz

March 29 **Adar 29**
Nathan Gladstone
Eva Kolominsky
Clara Lehrer Mar 30 (Nissan 1)
David Horowitz Mar 31 (2)
Jack Adi Iman Apr 1 (3)
Jacob Michael Goldenberg
Jacob Barsky Apr2 (4)
Dorothy Buckwold
Kariton Kolominsky
Sarah Ponak
Abraham Teitelbaum
Samuel Brown Apr 3 (5)
Marco Levy
David Shafer
Samuel Caplan Apr 4 (6)
Bert Frank
Joe Goldenberg
Kenneth MacDonald
Dora Morgan

April 5 **Nissan 7**
Lazer Gersher
Judah M. Jaffe
Miroslava (Mirka) Pollak Apr 6 (8)
Gerry Rose
Rachel Horowitz Apr 7 (9)
Miriam Shaket
Max Goldberg Apr 8 (10)
Sarah Melamede
James Greenblat Apr 9 (11)
Jolan Zickerman
Keiva Feldman Apr 10 (12)
Fanny Filer
Barbara Gaynor
Sarah Livergant
Frank Bernbaum Apr 11 (13)
Dorey Heller
Wolfe Korbin
Max Reznick

April 12 **Nissan 14**
Edward Baron
Alice Cameron
Alex Fayerman
Joel Green
Simcha Scharfstein
Maynard Gertler Apr 13 (15)
Leopold Neumann
Solomon Neumann
Heshkel Soffer
Sara Berenbom Apr 14 (16)
Tamara Avivi Apr 15(17)
Abraham Bobroff
David Kaplan
David Katz Apr 17 (19)
Bud Wasserman
Kasiel Winocour
Irwin Joseph Kahan Apr 18 (20)

April 19 **Nissan 21**
Allan Barsky
Goldie Filer Apr 21 (23)
Sadie Goldstein
Stuart Goldstein
Liza Portnaya
Enid P. Wine Apr 22 (24)
Rosa Fessler Apr 23 (25)
Tibor Braun Apr 24 (26)
Clara Filer
Molly Grotsky
Judel Teitelbaum Apr 25(27)
Aaron Volansky

April 26 **Nissan 28**
Bertha Roe Baron
Keos Lertzman
Bernice Levitan
Jacob Morgan
Allen Ross
Mordcha Joseph Bernbaum Apr 27 (29
Albert Broudy
Sarah Mazer
Morris Shechtman
Jennie Shore
Isadore Baruch Apr 28 (30)
Aarons William Brant
Herschel Davidner
Leonid Flikshteyn Apr 29 (Iyar 1)
Norbert Meth
Joe Scharfstein
Isador Sugarman
Max Swartz
Mrs. Mani Udin
Nechamah Kaplan May 1 (3)
Ann Strauss Gertler May 2 (4)

May 3 **Iyar 5**
Jack Bermack
Sheila Bobroff
Joseph Germek
Orville Katz
Simon Clein May 4 (6)
Samuel Fayerman
Max Nisenholt
Irwin Ruttle
Rebecca Friedman May 6 (8)
Gertrude Cyprus May 7 (9)
Mirla Avol May 8 (10)
Max Sharzer
Robert Mitchell May 9 (11)
Sam Sternberg

May 10 **Iyar 12**
Tully Conn
Edith Koffman
Aharon Mizrahi
Minnie Rogers
Maurice Handelman May 11 (13)
Viktor Pollak
Karen Jane Fogel May 13 (15)
Sam Sadowsky
Sarah Adelman May 14 (16)
Robert Gitlin
Anton Kamenicky
Hyman Segal
Maya Shnaper
Percy Stollar
Helen Singer May 15 (17)
Clara Columbia May 16 (18)
Lewis Horwitz
Sidney Panar
L. Strayer
Marion Vickar

May 17 **Iyar 19**
Michael Davidner
Joseph Winestock
Minnie Katz Schell May 18 (20)
William Laimon
Anthony Burtnick May 19 (21)
Tillie Scharfstein
Feiga Shendelzon
Lena Sugarman
Sam Davidner May 20 (22)
Goldie Kassen
Benjamin OIiman
Sadie Smith
Solomon Dragushan May 21 (23)
Herman Green
Mildred Barlow May 22 (24)
Cherna Friedman
Leah Gladstone
Sam Hock
David Rabinovitch
Gladys Rose
Edith Roth
Sylvia Sandbrand
Esther Solsberg May 23 (25

May 24 **Iyar 26**
Fred Mendel
Rachel Muscovitch
Ruth Shear
Eliezer Goodman May 25 (27)
Broche Minovitz May 26 (28)
Fanny Rapaport
Ethel Spector
Frank Gertler May 27 (29)
Jack H. Litman
Jack Kaslow May 28 (Sivan 1)
William Kutz
Bernard Sharzer
Abraham Bruser May 30 (3)
Rita Epstein
Jacob Mazer
Arthur Rose

May 31 **Sivan 4**
Abram Hoffer
Ben Tartar
Albert Epstein Jun 1 (5)
Joe Katzman
Anita Lefebvre
Bernard Lehrer
Harry Cohen Jun 2 (6)
William Grobman
Ruth Gonor Jun 4 (8)
Libba Korbin
Rose Litman
Rose Manolson
Paul Swartz
Goldie Brounsteln Jun 5 (9)
Semyon Furman
Lloyd Hock Jun 6 (10)
David Taras

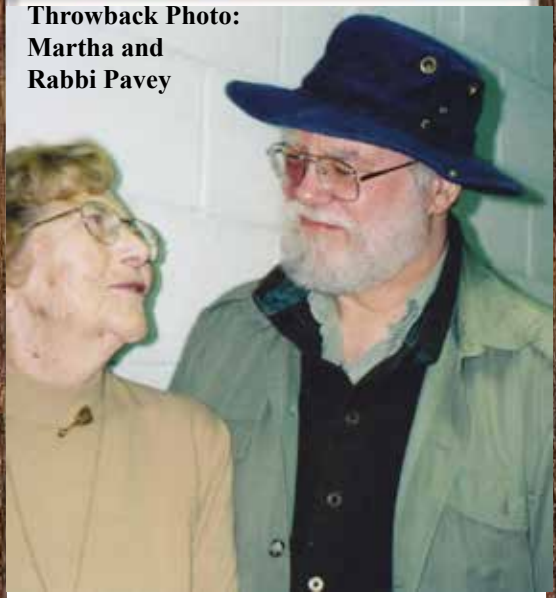
June 7 **Sivan 11**
Ida Dorney
Samuel Golumbia Jun 8 (12)
Florence Russell
Sophie Cornfield Jun 9 (13)
Abraham Prober
Clare Richman
Bessie Golumbia Jun 10 (14)
Rose Levinton
Nettie Steiger
Harry Hillman Jun 11(15)
Samuel Schacter
Seda Margolis Jun 12 (16)
Bathsheba Baron Jun 13 (17)
Marlene Ditlove
Jack Mallin
Amelia Sandbrand

Synagogue Sightings

Hillel & Jewish Employee Network pre-Chanukah Gathering

"Stand With Us" Mizrachi Jew Educational.

Throwback Photo: Martha and Rabbi Pavey



Latke Bee

Hillel Bowling Night

Joint Hillel-BBYO event at USask

March 2025 / Adar/ Nisan 5785

April / Nisan / Iyar

May / Iyar / Sivan

sun	mon	tues	wed	thurs	friday	saturday
						Mar 1 Adar 1 **Terumah** Shabbat Shekalim *Dan Ronis
2 Adar 2	3 Adar 3	4 Adar 4	5 Adar 5	6 Adar 6	7 Adar 7	8 Adar 8 **Tetzaveh** **SHABBAT ZACHOR** * Lisa Shiffman
9 Adar 9	10 Adar 10	11 Adar 11	12 Adar 12	13 Adar 13 **Fast of Esther**	14 Adar 14 **Purim Celebration**	15 Adar 15 **Ki Tisa** **SHUSHAN PURIM** * Nicky Gitlin
16 Adar 16	17 Adar 17	18 Adar 18	19 Adar 19	20 Adar 20 **Movie Night** 7:00 pm	21 Adar 21	22 Adar 22 **Vayakhel** **SHABBAT PARAH** * Marsha Scharfstein
23 Adar 23 **B'nai Brith Meeting** 10:00 am	24 Adar 24	25 Adar 25 **Cooking Club** 6:00 pm	26 Adar 26	27 Adar 27	28 Adar 28	29 Adar 29 **Pekude** *- Shaina Goluboff
30 Nisan 1	31 Nisan 2	Apr 1 Nisan Nisan	2 Nisan 4	3 Nisan 5	4 Nisan 6	5 Nisan 7 **Vayikra** *Grant Scharfstein
6 Nisan 8	7 Nisan 9	8 Nisan 10	9 Nisan 11	10 Nisan 12	11 Nisan 13	12 Nisan 14 **Tzav** SHABBAT HAGADOL *Kevin Sharfe
13 Nisan 15 **Community Passover Seder** 6:00 pm Service 10:00 am	14 Nisan 16 **OFFICE CLOSED**	15 Nisan 17	16 Nisan 18	17 Nisan 19 **Movie Night** 7:00 pm	18 Nisan 20 **OFFICE CLOSED**	19 Nisan 21 **Passover** * Matt Steen
20 Nisan 22 **Yizkoe Passover**	21 Nisan 23	22 Nisan 24	23 Nisan 25	24 Nisan 26	25 Nisan 27	26 Nisan 28Tevet 26 **Shemini** * Gideon Wiseman
27 Nisan 29	28 Nisan 30	29 Iyar 1 **Book Club** **7 pm**	30 Iyar 2	May 1 Iyar 3	2 Iyar 4	3 Iyar 5 **Tazria-Metzora** *Michael Scharfstein
4 Iyar 6	5 Iyar 7	6 Iyar 8	7 Iyar 9	8 Iyar 10	9 Iyar 11	10 Iyar 12 **Achrei Mot-Kedoshim** * Robert Engelbert
11 Iyar 13	12 Iyar 14	13 Iyar 15	14 Iyar 16	15 Iyar 17	16 Iyar 18	17 Iyar 19 **Emor** * Steven Simpson
18 Iyar 20	19 Iyar 21 **OFFICE CLOSED**	20 Iyar 22	21 Iyar 23	22 Iyar 24 **Movie Night** 7:00 pm	23 Iyar 25 **Rosh Chodeesh**	24 Iyar 26 **Behar-Behukatai** * Zoe Litman
25 Iyar 27	26 Iyar 28	27 Iyar 29 **Cooking Club** 6:00 pm	28 Sivan 1	29 Sivan 2	30 Sivan3	31 Sivan 4 **Bamidbar** * Dan Ronis

31 - Dan Ronis

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