

THE REPORTER

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CJS spring lecture to highlight “Jews and Ukraine: History and the Current Conflict”

The College of Jewish Studies spring 2023 lecture series will highlight the topic “Jews and Ukraine: History and the Current Conflict.” The last lecture in the series will be a Zoom presentation on Thursday, May 11, at 7 pm, by Lord Maurice Glasman, member of the British House of Lords, who has recently returned from a visit to the war-torn country. Registration for the lecture is available through the CJS Facebook page, the homepage of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and the Judaic Studies homepage. You can also contact Jon Karp to register via e-mail at jkarp@binghamton.edu. This program is free and on Zoom.

Glasman’s Zoom talk is titled “There are No Jews Left in Ukraine.” “Based on his recent speech to the British House of Lords and his April trip to Odessa, Maurice Glasman provides a sad and hauntingly disturbing picture of a community where in 1941 there were more than two million Jews but that is now characterized by closed synagogues and poignant traces of a once-remarkable Jewish civilization,” said organizers of the event. “Although entirely supportive



Lord Maurice Glasman
(Photo by Antonio Olmos,
The Observer)

of Ukraine’s struggle against Russia’s invasion, Glasman discusses some of the war’s unfortunate side-effects for the country’s Jewish legacy, including the rehabilitation of Ukrainian nationalist figures who had victimized Jews in Ukraine’s past.”

Glasman is an English political theorist and Labour Party life peer in the House of Lords. He is the author of “Unnecessary Suffering: Managing Market Utopia” (1996) and “Blue Labour: The Politics of the Common

Good” (2022). His articles and essays have appeared in the *New Statesman*, *The Nation* and *Tablet*, among other venues.

The College of Jewish Studies provides opportunities for adult Jewish education for the Broome County community by offering fall and spring programs. Drawing on local resources and inviting scholars and experts from a range of universities and cultural and religious institutions, CJS sponsors a wide array of programs dealing with Jewish history, culture, religion and politics.

The College of Jewish Studies, founded in 1986, is an informal coalition between the Judaic Studies Department of Binghamton See “CJS” on page 7

TBE Oneonta to host Jewish music concert on May 7

“From the Shtetl to Broadway,” Jewish music from the old world to the new, will be presented at Temple Beth El of Oneonta, 83 Chestnut St., Oneonta, on Sunday, May 7, at 4 pm. The family-friendly, community event is free and open to the public. From the Eastern European klezmer folk tradition to swing standards and Broadway favorites, the concert will explore the arc of immigrant music to that of established composers such as George Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein, and conclude with a Yiddish sing-along. For more information, call

222-5687.

Robin Seletsky, a second-generation klezmer clarinetist who has appeared in venues around the country as well as internationally, will open the program with *freylekhs* and *nigunim*. The award-winning Siesel/Torgan Duo



Andy Puritz (Photo
courtesy of Andy
Puritz)



Robin Seletsky
(Photo by Sandy
Shertzer)

will contribute several original songs from their project, “Now We Can Sing,” which was inspired by the emigration of Jewish composers from Nazi Germany to America. Vocalists Colby Thomas and Stan Fox will perform swing standards

accompanied by a jazz trio, and Andy Puritz will offer his version of Fagin’s showstopper, “Reviewing the Situation,” from “Oliver.” Other performers include Michael Bauer and Linda Klosset.

The event is made possible with public funds from the Statewide Community Re-grants Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York Legislature, and administered by The Earlville Opera House.

Congregation Tikkun v’Or to present “Listen to Your Mother” on May 13

Congregation Tikkun v’Or will host a hybrid program, “Listen to Your Mother,” on Saturday, May 13. The doors will open at 7 pm, with the show starting at 8 pm. Requested donations are \$20 in advance and \$30 at the door. The program will be in person at the synagogue at 550 North Triphammer Rd., Ithaca, and on Zoom. Light refreshments will be available for

purchase for those attending in person. The fund-raiser will benefit Congregation Tikkun v’Or and the Finger Lakes Climate Fund. To register for the event, visit <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeF6ycnq6Wyxr3CIheffORIm7GxJQbViX-Wa3j3EpQVB2OkHrw/viewform>. For additional information, contact the synagogue at presidents_22@tikkunvor.org.

Performers will include Michelle Courtney Berry, Yvonne Fisher, Marina Gershon, Natasha Keller, Alina Kim Lauren Korfine, Rachel Lampert, Kenneth McLaurin, Bridget Meeds, Sue Perlugut, Ian Shapiro and Pamela Tan.

“We have some truly amazing community storytellers and are looking forward to an entertaining and enjoyable performance of ‘Listen to Your Mother,’ with funny, poignant

and emotional stories with the theme of motherhood,” said organizers of the event. “Half of the proceeds from our ticket sales will go toward The Finger Lakes Climate Fund.”

The Finger Lakes Climate Fund promotes clean energy projects in the Finger Lakes area while seeking to strengthen the regional economy and assisting local families in need.

BD Luncheon Speaker series to feature Dr. Benjamin Kaplan on June 10

Beth David will hold the last of its Luncheon Speaker Series of the season on Saturday, June 10, with Dr. Benjamin Kaplan speaking on “From the *Parasha* to Participation: Finding Community in Binghamton.” He will link that Saturday’s Torah reading to his experiences living in Binghamton during the completion of his medical training. The luncheon will take place after Shabbat morning services, which begin at 9:30 am, and is open to the community. There is no charge for the luncheon.

The Torah portion, BeHa’alotcha (Numbers 8:1-12:16), recounts the time after the Jews have left Egypt and are wandering in the desert toward their promised land.

They begin to complain to such a degree that Moses asks God why the burden of leadership has been placed on him. “This Torah portion,” says Kaplan, “is one that I find particularly meaningful and applicable to feelings of displacement and isolation that we as Jews and human beings may be experiencing in today’s world. I plan to delve further into this *parasha*, and its focus on literally taking action. How? By doing something my family and I discovered during our three years in Binghamton. We replaced longing for the familiar, for ‘the



Dr. Benjamin Kaplan
(Photo by Greg Lewis)

way things used to be,’ with becoming involved in our different flavor of Jewish communal life here at Beth David. I have always been inspired by the teachings of two rabbis of blessed memory: Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik and Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks. I plan to incorporate their insights into how change and difference have the potential of providing faith-affirming spiritual possibilities that come about by virtue of our having been displaced from the comfort of familiar surroundings and practices.”

Kaplan grew up in New Jersey and at-

tended the Rabbi Pesach Raymon Yeshiva. He spent a year studying in Israel, attended Yeshiva University and obtained his bachelor of science degree summa cum laude from Touro College, with a major in human biology. “A bad ankle injury,” he said, “sparked my interest in the field I chose to pursue and, in 2020, I graduated from The New York College of Podiatric Medicine. After graduation, my family and I came to Binghamton for my post-graduate work at Our Lady of Lourdes Memorial Hospital. In June, I am scheduled to complete my residency in surgical podiatry.”

Kaplan and his wife Bat-Chen have See “Kaplan” on page 7

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

TI honoring Brown
Temple Israel will honor retiring Rabbi Geoffrey Brown and rededicate its Torah scrolls.
.....Page 3

Vigil for Buffalo
Children of Abraham will hold a vigil for the victims of last year’s shooting in Buffalo on May 13.
.....Page 3

News in brief...
Israelis may soon have visa exemptions to visit the U.S.; Rabbi Harold Kushner dies; and more.
..... Pages 7-8

Special Sections
Book Reviews..... 4
Dine Out..... 5
Business Profiles..... 7
Classifieds 8

Opinion

Israel, American Jewry and democracy imperiled

By Bill Simons

"After 1967 the Americans looked at Israel with new eyes," remembered BBC Middle East Editor Jeremy Bowne. "It fell in love with the young *sabras* who had beaten three Arab armies."

Its stunning victory over Egypt, Syria and Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War inflated Israeli pride, as it did that of American Jews. Admiration for Israel was nearly universal in America, encompassing Jews and Gentiles, conservatives and liberals, Blacks and whites. Even the deadly Israel air raid in the Mediterranean against the *U.S. Liberty* off the Gaza Strip did not still American support. The U.S. officially accepted Israel's formal apology, claim of mistaken identity and reparations. The popular image of Israel's victory was that good had prevailed over bad: "Never Again" had triumphed over "Drive Them into the Sea."

In an America divided by the Vietnam War, race riots and the implosion of Lyndon Johnson's presidency, Israel's decisive win in the Six-Day War provided compensatory validation of democracy. A popular, faux photo of a Chasid emerging from a phone booth to reveal Hebrew Superman regalia underneath his religious garb announced appreciation of Jewish prowess. Israel Defense Minister General Moshe Dayan, a pirate's black patch jauntily won over an eye socket permanently damaged in combat, radiated a contagious confidence that epitomized the prevailing mood. From the vantage point of 2023, the euphoria following the Six-Day War seems like a millennium ago.

Even as assimilation, intermarriage and secularization eroded religious observance, Jewish American identity remained strong, rooted in the generational proximity to the immigrant experience, Holocaust remembrance and identification with Israel. American Jews, overwhelmingly liberal and Democratic, saw a reflection of their own values in Israel. Modern Israel's 1948 Declaration of Independence, declaring commitment to "freedom, justice and peace," resonated with American Jewry. Although

many American Jews balked at the policies of Israel Prime Ministers Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon, those appeared aberrations. American Jews took pride in an Israel that was both strong and moral, the one democracy in the Mideast. They were confident that Palestinians and Jews would eventually live amidst a just peace.

On the cusp of the 75th anniversary of the modern state of Israel's founding, the Irish Jewish politician and intellectual Alan Shatter reflects, "[A] state under siege in 1948 with a Jewish population of 650,000, it has morphed into a nation of over nine million... it is at the cutting edge of development and innovation across a myriad of technological, pharmaceutical, engineering, medical, scientific, military, agricultural, and other fields." This ought to be a time of unalloyed celebration for Israel and for American Jews, but it is not. For the youngest Jewish Americans, memories of immigrant forebearers and of the Holocaust are less visceral, and their perception of Israel has grown more critical, particularly in recent weeks. Suddenly, more seasoned American Jews also fear that Israel democracy is imperiled, a dread now widespread in Israel itself.

Israel politics, like that of the U.S., is polarized. Neither Donald Trump nor Benjamin Netanyahu created the divisive fissures in their respective nations, but both have exploited and deepened them in pursuit of power and to prevent prosecution for alleged crimes. Since 2019, Israel has conducted five national elections, none producing a mandate. His five terms – the first in 1996 – spread over 15 years, make Netanyahu, now 73, the longest serving prime minister in Israel history. Given the criminal charges he faces – bribery, fraud and breach of trust – his November 2022 comeback election as prime minister is remarkable.

In the past, Netanyahu, albeit a conservative and security hawk, governed from the center, attuned to national sentiment and the need for coalition partners in the Knesset, Israel's national legislature. However, centrist parties will no longer form coalitions with Netanyahu's Likud party if

he is its head. Thus, to cobble together a fragile majority in the Knesset to form his current government, Netanyahu turned to *haredi* Orthodox and right-wing extremist factions. These aggrieved groups joined Netanyahu at a steep price.

Accommodating his new partners, Netanyahu appointed zealots, formerly on the fringes of Israel politics, to the cabinet, notably National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, leader of the Jewish Power party, and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, from the Religious Zionist faction. In his youth, Ben Gvir was barred from the military for advocating abrogation of Israeli-Arab citizenship. Bezalel Smotrich sought the destruction of the Palestinian village of Huwara. Smotrich and Ben Gvir aim to transform the inclusive, tolerant, democratic state of Israel into a fundamentalist autocracy. With their support, Netanyahu proposed enervating the powerful liberal Supreme Court by ensuring the incumbent government a majority on the court and empowering the Knesset to overrule its decisions. This would pave the way for the Netanyahu government to enact the reactionary measures of his zealot partners. In addition, these measures would preclude the conviction and possible imprisonment of Netanyahu for his alleged crimes.

Netanyahu had not anticipated that his proposals would trigger massive protests, the largest in Israeli history. For weeks, hundreds of thousands of oppositionists – including unionists, military reservists, students and former government officials – rallied, blocking highways and airport runways. A general strike brought economic chaos.

In the U.S., Israel's strongest ally, the Biden administration, by rhetoric and protocol, and Jewish Americans, by staging large protests, made clear that the dismantling of Israeli democracy is unacceptable. U.S. economic and military aid is essential to Israel, as is the fund-raising and advocacy of American Jews.

Confronted by unprecedented domestic and international opposition, concerns about national security, and **See "Israel" on page 8**

In My Own Words

Drops of wine and Russia

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

For me, the most moving moment of the Passover seder is when we remove drops of wine – the wine that symbolizes joy and gladness – from our cups while reciting the plagues that occurred before the Israelites were released from slavery. We are reminded that, even in moments of celebration, we remember those who suffered for our freedom, for the sins of their leader. This has become even clearer to me as the years pass: it was

pharaoh who refused to let the Israelites leave, yet it was every Egyptian who suffered. They were not to blame that pharaoh enslaved the Israelites. In fact, the average Egyptian may have been little more than a slave – slaves also subjected to pharaoh's will.

This lesson of suffering is once again relevant this year, and not just for the Jewish people. I've been horrified by the war of aggression Vladimir Putin has waged against

Ukraine. The disruption and loss of life is heart-breaking. Not everyone in Russia supports the war, and Russians have protested and signed petitions against the aggression. As one would expect in a country that is a dictatorship (its free elections are a farce), these protesters have been punished.

But it is not only the protesters who suffer. Think about the Russian soldiers: they are forced to fight a war of aggression or be punished, possibly with death. There have been reports of soldiers deserting or allowing themselves to be captured, although there are no statistics showing how many. New light has been recently shined on the reason some agreed to fight. According to interviews by *The New York Times* with captured Russian soldiers, at least five percent of those in the army are HIV-positive former prisoners who are fighting because they were promised life-saving anti-viral medications only if they joined the army. As one soldier described it, he was given the choice between a slow death by disease or a quick death by fighting.

The words of these soldiers just confirm the injustice the war has unleashed on both sides. I'm not forgetting the horrors the Ukrainian people are suffering, but there should be space in our hearts for all who suffer. Would I have considered what's occurring in the same light had I not been preparing for Passover and thinking about the drops of wine that fall from our cups like drops of tears? I'm not sure I would have.

At Passover, we were supposed to feel as if we, too, were released from slavery. Perhaps we should also look closely at those – in the past and in contemporary times – who suffer because of the actions of their leaders. The beauty of our centuries' old rituals and traditions is that they can inspire us to view the world with different and clearer eyes.

Letters

The Bible and leprosy

To the Editor:

The current weekly *parasha* column, "Spiritual impurity" [in the April 21 issue], about the "leprous curse" contains a grave medical error that should be corrected.

If the "leprous curse" indeed refers to the disease of leprosy, then it is not extinct as the column states. Leprosy, now called Hansen's Disease, is caused by two *Mycobacterium* species. Leprosy is treatable with a multi-drug therapy. Worldwide, there are approximately 200,000 new cases of leprosy annually today.

Affliction with leprosy has never resulted from spiritual impurity. Punishing infected individuals by severe social exile, as described in the column, is inhumane and heartbreaking. I hope *The Reporter* will choose to correct the factual errors in this column, and thus better educate its readers.

Sincerely,
Amy Parker

Editor's reply

Thank you for your letter. Scholars believe the biblical *tzaraat* is not the same thing as Hansen's Disease, but rather an unknown skin disease. However, most English translations use that term because it's the common one used since the Bible was first translated into English.

Since the nature of the disease is not known, it's unsure whether the biblical text considers it catching (necessitating people being isolated from the community for a period of time) or whether the text sees it as a punishment from God. The biblical idea of purity is very different from cleanliness or contemporary ideas of purity. The writer of the *parasha* notes this, along with how harsh a punishment it is and states that this separation should never be taken lightly.

One's acceptance of this is a matter of faith and textual interpretation. *The Reporter's parasha* column includes a wide variety of these interpretations from all branches of Judaism.

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The views expressed in editorials and opinion pieces are those of each author and not necessarily the views of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton.

LETTERS

The Reporter welcomes letters on subjects of interest to the Jewish community. All letters must be signed and include a phone number; names may be withheld upon request.

ADS

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www.thereporter.org

TI to honor Rabbi Geoffrey Brown's retirement

Temple Israel will honor and recognize Rabbi Geoffrey Brown for his service to Temple Israel and the community on the occasion of his retirement as the synagogue's spiritual leader on Sunday, June 11, at 12:30 pm. Two programs – a rededication of the Torah scrolls and a program honoring Brown – are scheduled to be followed by a dairy buffet brunch. The cost to attend the event and the luncheon is \$30 per person. Reservations are required as seating is limited. Call Tammy Kunsman at the temple office at 723-7461 for additional information and to reserve a space to

participate in the *sofer* event in the morning, the program and luncheon in the afternoon or both functions.

In December 2013, the Temple Israel building was destroyed due to a major snow storm. The building was completely rebuilt and reopened in 2016. Brown served the congregation during the rebuilding period as a rabbinic intern and, in July 2017, assumed the post of full-time pulpit rabbi. "Rabbi Brown has contributed much as a leader, mentor and teacher during his tenure," said organizers of the event.

Organizers added, "Rabbi Brown has paid particular attention to the condition of our Torah scrolls and has organized the restoration of the synagogue's *Torot* to kosher condition by his own mentor and scribe, Neil Yerman. In homage to Rabbi Brown's initiative, *Sofer* Yerman will be present at Temple Israel on Sunday morning, June 11. All are invited to participate in the rededication of the scrolls. You can fulfill the mitzvah of putting quill to parchment under the expert guidance of the scribe by making a donation to Temple Israel and participating in this important fund-raiser. Appointment times are from 9:30-11:50 am."

Children of Abraham to hold vigil for Buffalo on May 13

The Children of Abraham of the Southern Tier will hold a vigil in remembrance of the shooting that occurred at Tops Market in Buffalo last year. The event will take place on Saturday, May 13, at 1 pm, in the first pavilion of Schnurbusch Park, 1171 Conklin Rd., Conklin. The vigil will offer a sharing of prayers for Buffalo, as well as the local community.

"We will be gathering in prayer for Buffalo and Conklin one year after the deadly shooting at the Tops Market in Buffalo," said Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell, chairwoman of the Children of Abraham of the Southern Tier Planning Group. "We are coming together to join in prayer for an end to hateful violence and for hope and solidarity. Three members

of Temple Concord and I went to Buffalo last November with other faith leaders at the invitation of several church leaders of those who were affected by the shooting. The hope was that now that we were connected by the deadly actions of another, we should look at how make our connection a positive and affirming one for both communities."

Goldman-Wartell added, "This gathering is the next step in our work in this area. We have plans for future steps and continued actions to promote learning and love in our community and hope to invite a group from Buffalo to our community sometime in the fall. Join us for this event where we'll share plans for the future."

TC Sisterhood Shabbat service set

Temple Concord Sisterhood will hold its annual Sisterhood Shabbat service on Friday, May 19, at 7:30 pm. The installation of the 2023-24 Sisterhood Board of Directors will be held during the service. The service will be led entirely by Sisterhood members. The community is invited to attend the service, which also will be held via zoom. There will be an *oneg* in honor of the installed officers and sisters who participate in the service. Helene Philips and Sima Auerbach are the organizers of this special service.

The newly elected Board of Directors will include Barbara Thomas as meeting coordinator and Sisterhood representative to the temple Board of Directors; Lani Dunthorn, past president; Nancy Dorfman, treasurer; Philips, financial secretary; Marty Eisenstadt, recording secretary; and Sandy Foreman, corresponding secretary. Also to be installed are directors Marsha Luks and Thomas, 2022-24, and Babs Putzel-Bischoff and Philips, 2023-25.

The board also includes Babs Putzel-Bischoff, publicity chairwoman and Rosh Hashanah Kiddush chairwoman, with her committee of Luks, Barbara Dickman and Tracy Putzel-Bischoff. Ani Loew and Lynn Ross are Whale of a Sale co-chairwomen, with Deb Williams as consultant; and Pam Burgman and Williams, rummage sale co-chairwomen. Susan High and Robin Hazen are Judaica Shop co-chairwomen with Carol Herz as consultant; Williams is Artisan Marketplace chairwoman, with Philips on her committee; and Rachel Coker, 2024 Sisterhood Shabbat.

The incoming Intersisterhood Committee includes Luks, Cookie Schaeffer, Jodi Sampey and Roz Antoun. Jesse Parker will be charge of the cradle roll, with

Amanda Donahue in charge of High Holiday childcare if needed. Phyllis Kellenberger, Deb Daniels and Antoun will work on adult education, programming and donor; Sylvia Diamond and Eisenstadt are in charge of Friday night *onegs*.

The new board also includes Hecht, Scholar-in-Residence *oneg*; Dunthorn and Herz, membership and retention co-chairwomen; Foreman and Eisenstadt, hospitality; Coker, Women's Seder; Foreman, Babs Putzel-Bischoff, Robin Haas and Antoun, nominating committee; and Hecht, Sisterhood funds and Uniongrams.

Philips noted there are several vacancies on the board and Sisterhood members who may be interested should inquire with the present nominating chairwoman, Babs Putzel-Bischoff, by calling the Temple Concord office at 723-2355.

Philips added, "Please come and support Temple Concord Sisterhood May 19."

OF NOTE

Karp

Jonathan Karp, associate professor of Judaic studies and history at Binghamton University, co-edited the recently published "Classic Essays on Jews in Early Modern Europe" (Routledge Press) with Francesca Trivellato (Institute for Advanced Studies). The book features 17 long out-of-print, but seminal, essays, of which seven have been translated to English for this volume. Among the translations, including those done by the editors, two are by Binghamton University colleagues, I.S. Révah's 1959 "The Marranos," translated from the French by Dora Polachek of the Romance Languages Department; and Simon Dubnow's 1904 "Poland's Council of the Four Lands and its Relations with Local Jewish Community Governments," translated from the Hebrew by Gina Glasman of the Judaic Studies Department. Karp and Trivellato wrote the introduction to the volume.

Contact Kathy to advertise at 724-2360, ext. 244, or advertising@thereportergroup.org

Beth David holding raffle

The Beth David Synagogue Annual Dinner is holding its annual raffle. The cost of a ticket is \$25 or \$100 for a sheet of five. Raffle tickets can be purchased up to and including the date of the May 7 Beth David dinner; the drawing will take place at the dinner, but one does not have to be present to be eligible to win the raffle. To purchase a ticket, contact the synagogue at 722-1793 or bethdavid@stny.rr.com.

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Anne Bussard on the death of her husband,

Jesse Bussard

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of

Melvin Rozen

DEADLINES

The following are deadlines for all articles and photos for upcoming REPORTER issues.

ISSUE	DEADLINE
May 19-June 1.....	May 10
June 2-15.....	May 22 (early)
June 16-29.....	June 7
June 30-July 13.....	June 21

All deadlines for the year can be found at www.thereportergroup.org/contact-us/faqs under "Q: What Are the Deadlines for the Paper?"

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Off the Shelf

A superhero, a movie star, refugees and more

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

The real life cast of characters list that opens "The American Way: A True Story of Nazi Escape, Superman, and Marilyn Monroe" by Helene Stapinski and Bonnie Siegler (Simon and Schuster) is three pages long and divided into three parts: the Schulback family and friends; Harry Donenfeld, his family and business connections; and Marilyn Monroe, her husbands and others connected to her career. "The American Way" shows how these very different people intersected in sometimes unimportant and, at other times, profound ways.

For Jewish readers, two characters will be of greatest interest: Jules Schulback, who escaped from Berlin with his wife before World War II, and Donenfeld, a former gang member turned printer who's stayed friends

with the mobsters of his youth. Schulback worked in the fur business, both designing furs and selling them first in Berlin and later for his own business in New York City. He was a family man and an upstanding citizen. Donenfeld cheated on his wife and swindled his business partners: he's perhaps best known as the man who helped finagle the creators of Superman – Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster – out of the profits deriving from the Man of Steel. Yet, Donenfeld is the more interesting character because of his many contradictions: when Jewish family and friends came to him, he found them jobs and helped their children. He quietly supported Jewish causes and charities. And, without Donenfeld, Schulback might never have escaped from Europe.

"The American Way" tells of how Schulback and other Jews, including filmmaker Billy Wilder, escaped from Europe. Unfortunately, many members of their extended families were unable to leave in time. These stories are told in juxtaposition with the trials of Siegel and Shuster, who never truly recovered after losing the rights to Superman, and the life of Monroe, whose success as an actress was matched by the difficulties of her personal life. Joe DiMaggio, the baseball player who was also a big fan of the Superman comics, left much to be desired as Monroe's husband.

If it seems difficult to understand all the connections "The American Way" makes, that's because some of them are very slender. For example, Schulback and Monroe

never actually met. Their only connection is the film Schulback shot of Monroe when she was in New York City in 1954 filming "The Seven Year Itch." That story became a family legend and the book ends with members of the family finding the footage, something that may strike readers as an anticlimax since in the grand scheme of the story it has little importance other than to tie together some loose ends.

"The American Way" is well written and easy to read. Those interested in tales of Hollywood, the comic book industry or escapes from Nazi Europe should enjoy this book. While the connections don't always seem relevant, the individual stories are fascinating and this review only covers a portion of them.



Off the Shelf

Three works of fiction

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Sometimes the books in a multi-book fiction review have a common denominator. Other times, they feature works that don't easily fit into other reviews. This is one of those times. The only thing these books have in common is some Jewish content. They include short stories by a former Soviet Jew, a novel about lies of omission and a philosophical mystery focusing on a Midwestern Jewish/Muslim cult.

"Knockout Beauty and Other Afflictions"

After finishing a collection of short stories, I sometimes contemplate whether there are underlying themes that tie the works together. At first, that didn't seem true of Marina Rubin's "Knockout Beauty and Other Afflictions" (Crowsnest Books). Then it occurred to me that most of her characters did have one thing in common: they felt as if there was something missing from their lives. That made for a connection based less on plot than on emotion.

That's clear in the most Jewish themed story, "You Can Live with This Nose," a powerful four-page tale. The narrator and her friend Marigold are attending services at an LGBTQ synagogue to which Mari-

gold belongs. The narrator announces that her mother has given her \$10,000 to get a nose job, something of which Marigold disapproves because she thinks her friend is beautiful just as she is. The story plays off the discovery of what people can and can't live with once they understand the realities of their lives.

Many of the stories offer interesting plot twists. For example, "Jaula" tells of a writer whose work only gets serious consideration once it's rumored she slept with a major writer. However, the reality of the situation is unusual and clever. The two page "Jupiter" offers a clever and funny twist at its end, even though that twist was something readers should have expected. "Man in a Fedora," one of the longer works at more than 30 pages, portrays the danger of self-delusion. The discovery that someone she knows has died sends the main character on a search to learn more about her elusive friend. The main character in "Valentino" is obsessed with shopping, although the clothing she buys doesn't make her happy.

The stories in "Knockout Beauty and Other Afflictions" are well done and offer interesting insights into the characters' lives. This is Rubin's second excellent collection, making her a writer to watch.

"I Meant to Tell You"

Few are ever completely truthful when dealing with family and friends: we often tell small lies – even if only to say we like a haircut – in order keep our relationship on an even keel. However, lies – whether of omission or commission – can also undermine relationships. That's true for several people in "I Meant to Tell You" by Fran Hawthorne (Stephen J. Austin University Press). The question then becomes whether these relationships can weather the truth after it's revealed.

The first lie of omission occurs when Miranda neglects to tell her fiancé, Russ, that she was once arrested for kidnapping. Since she was helping an Israeli friend, Ronit, and her daughter escape an abusive husband, the charges were pleaded down and not supposed to appear on her records. Miranda felt unable to tell Russ about what happened because it seems as if that event occurred in a different lifetime. She was more worried about her mother and late father's history: they were active in the anti-war movement in the 1960s and were sure to have FBI files. But Russ is working as a lawyer for the federal government and being screened by the FBI so her crimes come to light.

Russ does not react well to the revelation and the two take a step back before deciding on their future. Miranda moves from their apartment to the house where her mother, Judith, and her stepfather, Bill, live. However, once there, she learns Bill has left her mother for a younger woman. Judith can't bear to tell Miranda's two half-siblings about the betrayal. Then, when Judith learns the truth of Miranda's situation, she feels the need to confess to

her own lies: to tell Miranda the true story of Miranda's father.

The novel moves back and forward in time, telling of Miranda's life in the early 21st century, Ronit's story in the late 1980s to the mid-1990s and Judith's tale from 1968-70. The novel concludes with Miranda forced to live with the full knowledge of the faults and frailties of her friends, family and herself. The shuffling of time and personal perspectives made "I Meant to Tell You" feel disjointed at times and its many twists and turns did not always feel realistic. However, they still managed to be surprising and moving, leaving readers caring more about the characters than they might expect.

"The 12th Commandment"

Many people look to religion for answers when faced with tragedy. That's true for Zeke Lager, a magazine writer and editor, who returns to Ohio for the funeral of a college friend who died by suicide. Some mutual friends have remained in the area, allowing him to reconnect with people he hasn't seen in years. However, the real reason he extends his visit after the funeral is due to a murder connected to a religious sect known as the Donme – something that could be a great basis for a magazine article. In "The 12th Commandment" by Daniel Torday (St. Martin's Group), Zeke must not only learn if the correct man was convicted of the crime, but whether the Donme can offer him the spiritual meaning he's been seeking since the death of his friend.

Nathan the prophet, the leader of the Donme, has been accused of murdering his son for breaking the 12th commandment: telling outsiders secrets about the religion. The need for secrecy is found in the group's history: it's an offshoot of Sabbatai Sevi's 17th century messianic movement. When told to convert to Islam or die, Sevi converted. However, while some of his followers became outwardly Muslim, they still practiced Jewish rituals privately. The Donme offer similar practices with one major addition: they harvest a product that helps them reach a mystical state.

What seemed a simple murder case becomes more complex when Zeke is threatened by local teenagers, whom some Donme feel are the true murderers, and those who fear an article in a national magazine will stir up trouble by bringing unwanted attention to the town. Zeke also must sort out his own feelings about the Donme, something that not only complicates the article he is hoping to write, but his relationship with his college friends.

"The 12th Commandment" is suspenseful and contains an excellent and surprising plot twist, while still providing an ending that feels true to life. Readers, though, do have to tolerate long passages that Zeke narrates while under the influence of hallucinogens, which is never my favorite thing to read. However, as a novel of suspense and an interpretation of a religious community, "The 12th Commandment" qualifies as a success.

Looking for this issue's "Jewish Resources"? Visit www.thereporter.org/streams/miscellaneous-features/miscellaneous-features/tag/80309? to find out what's happening online."



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Federation held Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration



Approximately 70 people attended the Yom Ha'atzmaut program celebrating Israel's 75th anniversary that was held by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton on April 23.



Israeli dancing was enjoyed by those attending the event.



L-r: Moira Shirvan and Lynn Green stood by the "anniversary cakes" celebrating Israel's 75th anniversary.



L-r: Suzanne Holwitt, president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, with Merri Pell-Preus and Tony Preus.



L-r: Ilya Stein, Jodi Sampey and Rose Shea, director of Jewish Family Service, enjoyed the celebration.



Gerry and Susan Hubal and their son, Mark (center), enjoyed the celebration.



Sylvia Diamond enjoyed the celebration.



At right, l-r: Eileen Miller and Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu performed during the event.



Annual Campaign 2023

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- 2) Pledges and payments (checks should be payable to "Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton") can be mailed to the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.
- 3) Fill out the form in this ad and mail it to the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

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Tea and Talk

Chabad of Binghamton, with co-sponsorship from the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, holds Tea and Talk programs, a monthly hour-long gathering for local Jewish seniors who are looking for "a meaningful conversation," from 11 am-noon, in Chabad's atrium lounge.

Upcoming dates are:

- ◆ May 18
- ◆ June 1
- ◆ June 15

To RSVP and for more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/Tea or call 797-0015.



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Weekly Parasha

Emor, Leviticus 21:1-24:23

Emor – “Speak!” – is this week’s *parasha*, Torah portion number 31 of a total 54 *parashot* in our sacred Torah. Emor covers much ground in the Torah’s third book, Leviticus, Vayikra, also known as “*Torat Kohanim*” (the Torah of the Priests) due to its robust descriptions of *Kohanim* and their God commanded actions.

Emor wastes no time laying out specific priestly laws. Then it shifts to list out our festival-filled calendar beginning with our weekly rest-fest, Shabbat, and our three annual pilgrimage/agricultural holidays: Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. The third section reminds us to light the menorah in the Temple and to weekly bring showbread and place it on an assigned *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) table. Although Vay-

ikra is not known for its narrative style, Emor’s conclusion shares a story about a blaspheming man, as well as laws regarding injuring and/or murdering others and penalties for destroying another’s property. If you guessed that this *parasha* ranks first place in total number of verses in the Torah, you would win this week’s trivia prize.

I am fascinated by Emor’s treatment of the law that determines the youngest age of a sacrificed animal, followed by the mitzvah (commandment) prohibiting slaughtering a mother and its offspring on the same day. I pose the question: “Does this mitzvah demonstrate the Torah’s ethical stance on animal welfare, or does it consider less morality and more function to our practice of sacrifice practice?”

Maimonides (Rambam 1138-1204 C.E.), in his epic treatise “The Guide for the Perplexed,” (II:48) posits that “this commandment is necessary because the natural food of man consists of vegetables and of flesh of animals... It is also prohibited to kill an animal with its young on the same day (Lev. 22:28), in order that people should be restrained and prevented from killing the two together in such a manner that the young is slain in the sight of the mother, for the pain of the animals under such circumstances is great.”

The great Rambam reasons that “if the Law provides that such grief should not be caused to... birds, how much more careful must we be that we should not cause grief See “World” on page 8

Congregational Notes

Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union
Rabbi: Zev Silber
Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
Phone: 722-1793, Rabbi’s Office: 722-7514, Fax: 722-7121
Office hours: Mon. closed; Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Wed. closed; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm; Fri. 10 am-1 pm
Beth David e-mail address: bethdavid@stny.rr.com
Rabbi’s e-mail: rabbisilber@stny.rr.com
Website: www.bethdavid.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/bethdavidbinghamton

Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative
Rabbi: Geoffrey Brown
Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 723-7461 and 231-3746
Office hours: Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 am-3:30 pm; Fri., 8 am-3 pm
E-mail: titammy@stny.twcbc.com
Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown via Zoom and in-person (masks are required).

On Saturday, May 6, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Leviticus 21:1-24:23 and the haftarah is Ezekiel 44:15-31. At 9:30 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

Temple office hours for Monday-Wednesday, May 8-10, will be 2-4 pm.

On Wednesday, May 10, Torah study will be held from 4-5 pm on Zoom.

On Saturday, May 13, at 9:30 am, Shacharit services will be held via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Leviticus 25:1-27:34 and the haftarah is Jeremiah 16:19-17:14. At 9:30 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Tuesday, May 16, there will be a Board of Trustees meeting at 7 pm on Zoom.

On Wednesday, May 17, there will be a Ritual Committee meeting at 10 am on Zoom and Torah study from 4-5 pm on Zoom.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi: Rachel Safman
Rabbi Emeritus: Scott L. Glass
Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
Phone: 273-5775
E-mail: rabbi-safman@tbeithaca.org, secretary@tbeithaca.org
Website: www.tbeithaca.org

Presidents: David Weiner and Linda Aigen
Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman
Director of Education: Rabbi Suzanne Brody
Services: Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 10 am, unless otherwise announced.
Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sun. and legal holidays).

Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday, 3:45-5:45 pm. The Midrashah (eighth grade and high school) classes will meet at times designated by their respective teachers.
Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.

For upcoming services and events on Zoom, visit www.tinyurl.com/HappeningAtTBE.

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi: Amelia F. Wolf
Address: 83 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY 13820
Mailing address: P.O. Box 383, Oneonta, NY 13820
Phone: 607-432-5522
E-mail: TBEOneonta@gmail.com

Regular service times: Contact the temple for days of services and times.

Religious School/Education: Religious School, for grades kindergarten through bar/bat mitzvah, meets Sunday mornings. For the schedule of services, classes and events, contact the temple.

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

For specific information regarding services (including online services), meetings and classes at any of the area synagogues, contact them by phone or e-mail.

Rohr Chabad Center

Affiliation: Chabad-Lubavitch
Rabbi Aaron and Rivkah Slonim, Directors
E-mail: aslonim@binghamton.edu
rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com
Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 797-0015, Fax: 797-0095
Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com
Rabbi Zalman and Rochel Chein, Education
E-mail: zchein@Jewishbu.com, rchein@Jewishbu.com
Rabbi Levi and Hadasa Slonim, Downtown and Development
Chabad Downtown Center: 60 Henry St., Binghamton
E-mail: lslonim@Jewishbu.com, hslonim@Jewishbu.com
Rabbi Yisroel and Goldie Ohana, Programming
E-mail: yohana@Jewishbu.com, gohana@Jewishbu.com
Regular service times: Daily 7:30 am, Friday evening 6 pm, Shabbat morning 9:30 am, Maariv and Havdalah one hour after candle-lighting time, Sundays 9:30 am.
To join the mailing list, for up-to-date information on adult education offerings or to arrange for a private tutorial, for details concerning the Judaica shop and resource center, or for assistance through the Piaker Free Loan Society or Raff Maasim Tovim Foundation, call Chabad’s office at 797-0015.

Chabad will be holding pre-Shabbat virtual programs. For more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership.

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607-756-7181
President: Carol Levine, 315-696-5744
Cemetery Committee: 315-696-5744
Website: templebrithsholomcortland.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/>
Service leaders: Lay leadership
Shabbat services: Either Friday evening at 7:30 pm or Saturday at 10 am from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot. Holiday services are also held. Check the Facebook page or weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.

Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis. Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is “Likrat Shabbat,” while the Saturday morning siddur is “Gates of Prayer.” The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences.

Services and programs are held by Zoom on the first and second Fridays of the month.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
Rabbi: David Regenspan
Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
Phone: 334-2691
E-mail: fertigj@roadrunner.com
Contact: Guilina Greenberg, 373-5087
Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
Adult Ed.: Shabbat study sessions are held on designated Saturday mornings at 10 am. Call ahead, text or e-mail to confirm dates.



Friday, May 5, light candles before..... 7:48 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, May 6 8:50 pm
Friday, May 12, light candles before..... 7:56 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, May 13 8:57 pm
Friday, May 19, light candles before..... 8:03 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, May 20 9:05 pm

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Rabbi: Barbara Goldman-Wartell
Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
Phone: 723-7355, Fax: 723-0785
Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com
Website: www.templeconcord.com
Regular service times: Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.
Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 4:15 pm and 5:15 pm on Tues. and Thurs. during the school year unless otherwise noted.

Some services and programs are online only.
Friday, May 5: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service by Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. Masks are optional for those attending in person. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Saturday, May 6: At 9 am, Shabbat school; at 9:15 am, Torah study (join via Zoom at <http://bit.ly/3XDnvRE>, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892); and at 10:35 am, Shabbat family service led by students and followed by a potluck lunch.

Sunday, May 7: From 10 am-2 pm, Sisterhood rummage sale – buy one of anything, get one free. From 1-4 pm, a dessert reception in the Kilmer Mansion honoring Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell for her 14 years of leadership at Temple Concord. RSVP via phone at 723-7355 or e-mail TempleConcordAA@gmail.com.

Tuesday, May 9: At 8 pm, general board meeting. The meeting is open to members of Temple Concord. For the meeting link, contact the synagogue at 723-7355 or at templeconcordaa@gmail.com.

Wednesday, May 10: At noon, “Counting the Omer – An Exploration of the Jewish People’s Transformation Studying Our Sacred Texts,” session 5, “The Book of Daniel.” To attend one session or all by signing up for the series, visit at www.tinyurl.com/OmerStudy. The sessions will run on Wednesdays through May 24.

Friday, May 12: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service by Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. Sisterhood will be sponsoring an oneg in honor of Goldman-Wartell. Masks are optional for those attending in person. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

See “Concord” on page 8

Penn-York Jewish Community

President-Treasurer-Secretary: Harvey Chernosky, 570-265-3869

B’nai B’rith: William H. Seigel Lodge
Purpose: To promote Jewish identity through religious, cultural, educational and social activities in the Southern Tier of New York and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, including Waverly, NY; Sayre, Athens and Towanda, PA, and surrounding communities.

Congregation Tikkun v’Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY
Phone: 607-256-1471

Website: www.tikkunvor.org
E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org
Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman, rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org
Presidents: Sue Merkel and Laurie Willick, presidents_22@tikkunvor.org

Education Director/Administrative Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky

Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin
Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikkunvor.org for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule.

Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly. Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.

Kaplan. Continued from page 1

known each other since elementary school. While Kaplan worked as a resident, his wife continued the professional studies she had begun at Rutgers University, and completed her advanced nursing degree at Binghamton University. They, along with their 3-year-old daughter, Zoey, and 7-month-old son, Yedidya, are members of Beth David

CJS. Continued from page 1

University and several area Jewish sponsoring institutions: the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord and Temple Israel. Programming for CJS would not be possible without the additional financial support of a generous grant from The Community Foundation for South Central New York – David and Virginia Eisenberg Donor Advised Fund, the Jacob and Rose Olum Foundation, the B'nai B'rith Lectureship Fund, the Victor and Esther Rozen Foundation, an endowment fund from the former Temple Beth El of Endicott, a grant from the JoyVel Charitable Fund and the donations of individual sponsors.

"If you are not one already, please consider becoming an individual sponsor so that the CJS can continue bringing quality programs to the community," organizers said. "For more information on how to become an individual sponsor or to make a donation, please e-mail us at bingcjs@gmail.com. The College of Jewish Studies is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization."

For more information on the College of Jewish Studies and its programs, visit to www.facebook.com/blingcjs or https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19YRT23IRR-h4GtSAmN2dX-eXgPDrHiWL9zEd8cZx6jwI/viewform?edit_requested=true.

Synagogue. "Being in Binghamton and being a part of Beth David have been truly inspirational experiences," Kaplan says. "My involvement in the *shul* has made me realize how important Judaism is for me and my family. I am still moved whenever I recall how warmly we were embraced from the first moment we arrived. In a large community, it's easy to get lost in the crowd. Here, every person counts and becomes a valued part of the congregation. It has made me appreciate how each of us has a role to play and needs to get involved in order to sustain and bolster our collective and individual Judaism. The personal rewards are incredibly powerful. As an example, our daughter Zoey's first introduction to *shul* and Judaism took place here. I am sure that the love and level of comfort she constantly experiences as a 'regular' at Beth David will stay with her forever."

"We look forward to having community members join us," organizers say, "for what promises to be an inspiring talk coupled with a delicious luncheon enjoyed together, as we wish Ben and his family much success in the next chapter of their lives!"

Since the monthly series' continuation depends on the generosity of contributors, Beth David welcomes donations to the Luncheon Fund in order to keep the program going. Donations, as well as sponsorships, can be made in honor of or in memory of someone, or to mark a special occasion. Those wishing an acknowledgment to be sent to the person being honored, or to the family of someone being remembered, can indicate that along with the necessary information. Donations can be sent to Beth David Synagogue, 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, Attention: Luncheon Fund.

NEWS IN BRIEF

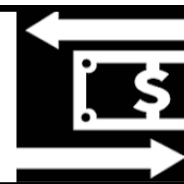
From JNS.org

Rabbi Harold Kushner, 88, dies

Rabbi Harold Kushner, bestselling author and rabbi of 24 years at the Conservative Temple Israel Natick, MA, where he earned the title rabbi laureate, died on April 27. He was 88 years old. "He was a giant for our family, and an incredibly dedicated father and grandfather who can be counted on for everything. We are gratified to know so many people are grieving with us," his daughter, Ariel Kushner Haber, told NPR. In 1977, Kushner's son Aaron died at age 14 from the degenerative disease progeria – sometimes called "Benjamin Button" disease after the F. Scott Fitzgerald short story, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" – that aged his body rapidly and prematurely. Four years later, Kushner wrote the bestselling book "When Bad Things Happen to Good People." In it, he posed the question of whether God was all-powerful, but unkind, insofar as bad things happened to good people. Or, perhaps, God was good, but not all-powerful. "The theological conclusion I came to is that God could have been all-powerful at the beginning, but He chose to designate two areas of life off limits to His power," Kushner told NPR. "He would not arbitrarily interfere with laws of nature; and secondly, God would not take away our freedom to choose between good and evil." To Kushner, God was at the side of, rather than aloof from, mourners in their grief. In 2012, he wrote another volume on the subject: "The Book of Job: When Bad Things Happened to a Good Person," among many other writings. Kushner was born in 1935 in Brooklyn, NY.



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 Website: www.AUDIOCLASSICS.com
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Ernest H. Parsons Funeral Home

Specialty: Funeral
 Location: 71 Main St.
 Binghamton, NY 13905
 Name: Joseph Fritsch
 Phone: 607-724-1336
 Fax: 607-724-1337
 E-mail: parsonsfuneral@yahoo.com
 Website: www.parsonsfuneral.com
 Hours: 24/7/365

The Ernest H. Parsons Funeral Home, located at 71 Main St., Binghamton, has been a landmark since 1928 and is located in the J. Stewart Wells Mansion, built by renowned architect Isaac Perry, who completed construction in 1867.

Ernest H. Parsons owned and operated the funeral home from 1928 until his death in 1976. Charles Mills purchased the funeral home after Ernest's death and continued the tradition until his retirement in 2012. The current owners – J. Fritsch, R. Fynboe, S. Pitkorchemny and K. Vakiener – strive to uphold the original motto of the founder: "Let Us Serve You with Understanding." Parsons Funeral Home offers distinctive service with respectful attentiveness to the ceremonial rites and the utmost consideration of families' desires to accord a last tribute of affection and esteem to their departed loved ones.

Did you know?

(NAPSA) – A University of Phoenix survey found the majority of hiring managers employing military veterans recognize them as having more experience, discipline and an ability to work under pressure and with a team. To learn more, visit www.uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes.

Hopler & Eschbach Funeral Home

Specialty: Funeral services, burials and cremation
 Location: 483 Chenango St.
 Binghamton, NY 13901
 Name: Kurt M. Eschbach
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First person

Two seders and one rabbi

By Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu

This year, I was lucky enough to prepare two Passover seders. The two Passover seders were on behalf of – and at the initiative of – Hillel Academy. The first seder took place before Passover and was dedicated to the students at Hillel. It was an experiential, learning seder, which included explanations about the seder, including why we celebrate and how to celebrate. Each child received a seder plate with all the symbols of Passover. The students prepared readings in Hebrew and English, and sang many songs. There were also many smiles.

The second seder was on the first night of Passover and was a community seder. People came from different parts of the Jewish community and it was a great cele-

bration. The attendance was excellent and the participation huge. I guided the seder with interesting explanations and special singing. To my delight, everyone sang. We also had fun asking questions and enjoyed the meal that chef Victor Torres prepared for us.

I made the many preparations for the two seders, including dividing the food and symbols into plates so everyone got exactly the same thing: maror, horseradish, charoset, egg, karpas, a roasted shankbone, shmurah matzah and four cups of grape juice. At the end, we sang “Who Knows One” and “Chad Gadya.”

Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu is the head of Jewish studies at Hillel Academy of Broome County.



At left: Students at Hillel Academy of Broome County participated in the model seder.



Students read from the haggadah during the seder.



Students enjoyed eating matzah during the seder.

Israel.....Continued from page 2

President Isaac Herzog’s warning of possible civil war, Netanyahu paused the judicial restructuring proposals – at least for now. But elements in the Netanyahu government still covet a reactionary agenda: aggressive West Bank settlement, subjugation of Palestinians, retrenchment of women’s rights, revising the Law of Return to recognize only Orthodox conversions and creation of a militia reporting directly to Ben Gvir. Thus, protests continue.

Resistance to Trumpism is compatible

with American patriotism. Likewise, opposition to Netanyahu is consistent with implacable support for Israel. Carrying the Israeli flag, anti-Netanyahu protesters are peaceful, so far.

Bill Simons is a professor emeritus at SUNY Oneonta where he continues to teach courses in American history. He is also the co-director of The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, and served as a speaker for the New York Council on the Humanities.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Netanyahu not in contempt of court, High Court rules

Israel’s High Court of Justice on May 1 rejected a request to hold Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in contempt for allegedly violating the terms of an agreement stipulating that he not interfere in judicial reform legislation. The Movement for Quality Government in Israel petitioned the court in March, asking it to sanction Netanyahu with prison time or fines for a March 23 televised address in which he said he would no longer stand on the sidelines of the debate on judicial reform under a “gag order” imposed upon him by the attorney general. A 2020 conflict of interest agreement prevents Netanyahu from making senior judicial appointments that could influence the outcome of his ongoing criminal trial. Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara in April said that Netanyahu was not in contempt of court when he allegedly violated the conflict of interest arrangement. Baharav-Miara said that while she believed the prime minister violated the law, the conditions for holding him in contempt of court had not been met. The High Court on May 1 adopted her position in its ruling. The court also clarified that the position of the attorney general is binding unless the court rules otherwise. Netanyahu responded to the petition in April, telling the court through his lawyers that he must be involved in the issue of judicial reform as the matter has convulsed the nation and risen to the level of a national crisis.

Israel’s gov’t to ask court for conscription law extension

Israel’s government is expected to ask the High Court of Justice for a five-month extension of the court-mandated deadline for passing a new conscription law to allow more time to debate changes to how haredi men are drafted. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government will ask for a delay from July 31 until December to hammer out a new version of the bill, according to reports on May 1. While the two haredi parties in the coalition had previously insisted that the conscription bill be enacted into law before the state budget is passed (the deadline for that is May 29), it is now believed that Shas and one out of the two factions in the United Torah Judaism political alliance have given up on this demand. Legislation being drafted would lower the age at which ultra-Orthodox, or haredi, Jewish men need to receive deferments from serving in the military, and significantly increase the pay of combat soldiers. The initiative would also reduce the length of time soldiers in positions deemed less essential need to serve. While Israelis are generally drafted into the military aged 18, most haredi men continue to receive exemptions from service until they reach the current age limit of 26. To do so, they remain in yeshivas until then. By lowering the age limit to 23, the government hopes to encourage haredim to enter the workforce earlier. For decades, ultra-Orthodox Israelis have received near-blanket exemptions from national service, but in 2012 the Supreme Court struck down the law permitting the arrangement. A new law was also overturned by the court in 2017. Since then, defense ministers have received more than a dozen extensions from the court, as the government failed to pass legislation.

Israeli FM pledges U.S. visa waiver for Israelis

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said on the night of April 30 that Israel was making progress in getting visa exemptions for citizens who wish to travel to the United States. “Today, we hosted representatives of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to discuss the progress of the necessary steps,” he said. “We are working so that already in the coming months Israelis will be able to fly to the U.S. without the need for a visa.” In late March, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that the country had completed the legislative requirements for citizens to receive exemption from U.S. visa requirements. The U.S. Visa Waiver Program allows citizens of participating countries to enter the United States by obtaining a tourist visa upon arrival at a U.S. port of entry. This saves them the trouble of first securing a visa from a U.S. embassy or consulate in their home country.

Concord.....Continued from page 6

Saturday, May 13: At 9:15 am, Torah study (join via Zoom at http://bit.ly/3XDnVRE, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892). There is no Torah study or Shabbat family service. At 1 pm, there will be the prayer vigil “Buffalo and Conklin: A Prayer Vigil at Schnurbusch Park, Conklin.” (For more information, see the article on page 3.) At 7 pm, “Havdalah with a Bonus,” join via Zoom at https://bit.ly/3e8mZsy, meeting ID: 83396546578 and

passcode 333740, or via Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Wednesday, May 17: At noon, “Counting the Omer – An Exploration of the Jewish People’s Transformation Studying Our Sacred Texts,” session 6, “The Scroll of Song of Songs” with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. To attend one session or all by signing up for the series, visit at www.tinyurl.com/OmerStudy. The sessions will run on Wednesdays through May 24.

World.....Continued from page 6

to our fellow men.” He clearly states that these mitzvot are for the purpose of asserting compassion in our treatment of living things, including birds.

Nachmanides (Ramban, 1194-1270 C.E.) opposes this view and states, “The sending away of the mother bird... is to eradicate cruelty and pitilessness from man’s heart... not that God had pity on the mother bird... for such pity on animals is overridden when it clashes with human necessities... the real reason is to cultivate in us the quality of mercy, that we may not become cruel, for cruelty envelops the entire personality of man, as is well known from the example of professional animal killers who often become hardened to human suffering.” Ramban believes that because cruelty can consume one’s entire personality, it’s best to practice behavior that teaches mercy to even the lowly bird to further one’s moral capacity to be kind to animals.

Rabbi Yosef Ibn Kaspi (Yosef Kaspi 1280-1345 C.E.) makes a twist on the Ramban’s elucidations, referring to our mother-bird-in-the-nest verse with “our perfect Torah wishes to impart to us exhaustive existential knowledge, to the limits of our capacity. Thus, this precept has two aims: To make us realize the high level of

our being, and at the same time protect us from haughtiness and pride. The universe consists of the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human world... There seems little or no relationship between us and the animal world, not even as much as we have with the vegetable world and the land.” Kaspi’s commentary concludes with the reference to not destroy trees (Deut. 20:19) and to take care of land (laws of shmitah, the sabbatical year). How much more so should we do this with animals, who are also to be regarded with love and compassion.

The composite of these three discussed sages is how I frame the answer to my originally posed question, “Does this mitzvah demonstrate the Torah’s ethical stance on animal welfare, or does it consider less morality and more function to our practice of sacrifice practice?” Our laws have an underlying directive that requires from us certain and specific actions. By practicing these laws, we develop habits that become self-sustaining communal behaviors. It isn’t enough to learn the laws. We must go out into the world; we must interact with it and all of God’s creations with mercy, compassion and love. May we all find reason to spread our collective positive energies with good behavior to not only our fellow humanity, but also to the lowly bird!

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