

THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

January 14-27, 2022
Volume LI, Number 1

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Federation to host virtual tour of Auschwitz on Jan. 23

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will host a live virtual tour of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp on Sunday, January 23, at 9:30 am. The program is offered in partnership with the Center for Holocaust Education of the East Valley Jewish Community Center, AZ. The tour of the death camp will include historical footage, aerial photographs, drone videos and testimonies of survivors. There is no cost for the tour due to a generous grant from the Victor and Esther Rozen Foundation. The tour is being sponsored by the Sisterhoods of Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord and Temple Israel. Only 45 spots will be available. To register for the event, visit www.jfgeb.org/. Due to the limited number of spots, those interested are asked to sign up only if they



can definitely attend the tour. "We hope the community will take advantage of this meaningful experience," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "This January marks the 76th anniversary of the liberation of the camp. Many of us will never have the opportunity to travel to Europe to visit in person and this tour is the next best way to understand the atrocities of that time. We are very grateful to our sponsors for supporting this Zoom tour."

Barbara Zelter took the tour earlier this year and called it a "memorable experience." She noted, "I had never visited Auschwitz in person, but taking this virtual tour brought to life all that I have read and seen in the media, newspapers and books. Thanks to Federation for offering this Zoom event to see part of our history that must

never be forgotten. I encourage everyone to be part of the virtual tour."

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp was the largest of the German Nazi camps and extermination centers, consisting of more than 40 individual camps. More than one million men, women and children died there.

Located in Poland, the killing center was open between 1940-45. Estimates on the numbers of those killed are 960,000 Jews; 74,000 non-Jewish Poles; 21,000 Roma;

15,000 Soviet prisoners of war; and 10,000-15,000 other nationalities. (Figures are from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.)



Part of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. (Photo courtesy of the Center for Holocaust Education)

Federation to hold ADL webinar on Jan. 27

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold "The Rise in Antisemitism: Communitywide Webinar with the ADL," with Scott Richman, the director of the Anti-Defamation League's regional office covering New York and New Jersey, on Thursday, January 27, at 7 pm, on Zoom. There is no cost to attend. Rachel Coker, director of research advancement at Binghamton University, will moderate the discussion. To register for the event, visit www.jfgeb.org/. To submit questions before the event, e-mail Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation, at director@jfgeb.org.



The ADL describes its mission as "stop[ping] the defamation of the Jewish people, and... secur[ing] justice and fair treatment to all." Richman's work includes handling incident response, anti-bias education, legislative initiatives, educational programs, fund-raising and leadership development – all designed to fight antisemitism and combat hate in all its forms. He speaks about these issues on his weekly national podcast called "From the Frontlines," which can be found at <https://soundcloud.com/scott-richman-2>. He has been called an experienced advocate dedicated to developing commu-

nity partnerships and initiatives that speak to the ADL's mission.

Before coming to the ADL, Richman worked for the American Jewish Committee as regional director for Westchester (NY) and Fairfield (CT) counties. Previous to that, he served for 10 years at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee aiding the rebirth of Jewish life in the former Soviet Union, and three years as the founding director of Dor Chadash, a non-profit startup that engaged young professionals in the New York area.



Scott Richman (Photo courtesy of the Anti-Defamation League)

Coker, a former newspaper journalist, joined Binghamton University's staff in 2005. As director of research advancement, she edits an e-newsletter and a magazine dedicated to scholarly work on campus, and writes media releases on topics ranging from physics findings to faculty novels. She's also the speechwriter for the vice president for research and tweets about research, writing and more at @rmcoker. Her news writing and publications have See "ADL" on page 5

Evening of Jewish storytelling, poetry and music to be held virtually on Jan. 29

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca will host the annual "Evening of Jewish Storytelling, Poetry and Music" on Saturday, January 29, at 7:30 pm. The event will be held virtually. Register in advance by Friday, January 28, at <https://tinyurl.com/4askcxxx> and click on the invitation to access the registration link. For more information,

contact the temple at 273-5775 or visit www.tbeithaca.org.

"The evening will be a celebration of life, community and the arts," said organizers of the event. "This is our 23rd year of offering original stories, traditional tales, jokes, folk and contemporary poetry, and dynamic live music from around the world. This event

has become extremely popular over the years, drawing participants together for an intimate and cozy evening; a real reminder of times past."

Organizers added, "Although we are not able to be physically together this year, we will create an opportunity to enjoy the warmth of our community and

richness of our heritage. With a virtual presentation, people who live in other locales can easily attend. There will be a mix of original poetry, personal stories and a solo trombone presentation by Ryan Zawel. Presenters represent a cross-section of our community. The event is family-friendly."

Film Fest to hold virtual showing of "Neighbours" in February

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of the drama "Neighbours," a film by writer/director Mano Khalil. The film won the San Francisco Film Critics Jury Prize as best film at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival 2021. A discussion of "Neighbours" will be moderated by Dr. Dina Danon, associate professor of Judaic studies and Middle East and North



Africa studies at Binghamton University. People will be able to register on the Federation website, www.jfgeb.org, and a link to the film will be sent out on Sunday night, February 6. The film will be streamed free for up to 50 computers and will be available for viewing for four days prior to the event. On Thursday, February 10, at 7 pm, Danon will facilitate the online video discussion of the film.



Shed Khalil in a scene from "Neighbours." (Photo courtesy of Menemsha Films)

The film takes place in a small village on the Syrian-Turkish border in the early '80s and tells the story of Sero, a 6-year-old Kurdish boy, during his first year in Arab school. A new teacher in his school preaches anti-Zionism, which confuses Sero because of his connection to his longtime neighbors, a Jewish family. Critics have noted that "with a fine sense of humor and satire, the film tells of a childhood, which, between dictatorship and dark drama, also has its light moments." See "Film" on page 3

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Columnist Bill Simons takes a look at "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" ahead of its fourth season premiere. Page 2

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**Television
Review**

“The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”: Midge unleashed

BILL SIMONS

It is 1954, the apex of the Jewish-American century. Yarmulkes sit atop the men’s heads at the post-wedding reception. A 22-year-old bride, Midge Maisel, formerly Miriam Weissman, seizes the microphone. Radiant, beautiful, deliriously happy – and fueled by three glasses of champagne – Midge thanks her indulgent parents for their generosity and proclaims new husband, Joel, her perfect love. Just getting warmed up, Midge, attired in wedding gown and veil, launches into standup comedy shtick. Diminutive in height, but bombastic in personality, the new Mrs. Maisel ends her routine by joking that there is shrimp in the egg roll. Although the shellfish line was faux humor, the rabbi and other guests, goaded to shock and indignation at the specter of a *treif* ambush, rise and exit in disgust.

Flash forward to 1958: 26-year-old Midge, four years into marriage, appears to have a perfect life: loving husband, two adorable children, supportive parents and in-laws, and a huge and elegant Upper West Side apartment with a closet full of fashionable dresses. Then, everything implodes.

Husband Joel, bored in marriage and the well-paying sinecure job at a landsman’s plastics business, seeks adventure trying his hand at standup comedy and conducting an affair with his secretary, Penny Pann, a pretty and vacuous Methodist version of Midge. When Joel announces he plans to seek a divorce, shock and anger overwhelm Midge. Trained to be an adornment as wife and mother, with a Bryn Mawr degree more a totem of status than educational

attainment, Midge lacks employable skills or the capacity for single life. Crisis, however, forces Midge to recognize that she wants something more than a wedding ring, and she summons forth formidable and unexpected courage.

During the heyday of the grand Jewish department stores, Midge, herself a devotee of dazzling technicolor lipstick, finds glamor, audience and excitement working in the cosmetics department at B. Altman. Then, improbably, Midge, sans sensors, finds her chatty, eccentric, confessional style of conversation well suited to standup comedy at the Gaslight Café in Greenwich Village, a venue where her hubby Joel had bombed. The rise of the amazing Mrs. Maisel has resonance in the early history of pioneer Jewish comedienne Joan Rivers and Totie Fields.

After a long COVID layoff, Amazon Prime will bring back “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” for season four on February 18, sufficient warning time for newcomers to catch up on past episodes. Critically and popularly acclaimed, the dramedy premiered in 2017. Seasons two and three of the series debuted, respectively, in 2018 and 2019. In addition to the beguiling Rachel Brosnahan as Midge, the talented ensemble cast includes Alex Borstein, Michael Zegen, Marin Hinkle, Tony Shalhoub, Kevin Pollak, Caroline Aaron, Zachary Levi and Jane Lynch. With the exception of Lynch, the preceding performers all play Jewish characters. Borstein, Zegen, Pollak and Aaron are Jewish; the other actors are not.

Showrunner Amy Sherman-Palladino, frequently taking

the roles of producer, director and screenwriter, has invested “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” with an entertaining mixture of serious theater and brash humor in its exploration of American society, gender roles and Judaism circa 1960. As the daughter of Jewish-American standup comic Don Sherman, Sherman-Palladino, who previously earned kudos for her creation of the “Gilmore Girls,” knows Midge Maisel’s world.

Midge’s world is New York City, or more specifically those sections of Manhattan where the demographic and ambience are overwhelmingly Jewish. Although theology is not an interest of Midge’s, she intermittently attends synagogue services. Her parents appear to observe *kashrut* in the home. Midge and her mother, Rose, are positively euphoric when the rabbi agrees to come to their apartment to break the Yom Kippur fast. She loves to eat and prepare Jewish foods, particularly brisket. Everyone in Midge’s family is Jewish, even sister-in-law Astrid, a convert who elicits laughter with her earnest attempts to be more devout than those born into the tribe. Aside from a college dalliance with a good-looking WASP, Midge’s romantic relationships, both pre- and post-Joel, are with Jewish men.

The Borsht Belt, the resort hotels of the Jewish Alps, provide cool, hilltop refuge from the sweltering summers of Midge’s New York City. Even as a divorced mother in her mid-20s, Midge, with girlish enthusiasm, joins her parents for several weeks in their annual Catskill colonization of **See “Midge” on page 7**

Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

It has happened to all of us. You end a conversation and hours, or even days later, you keep thinking of all the things you wish you had said. This was the case for me recently. I was speaking with a woman in California on a work-related issue, when she asked why we refer to our Federation as “Greater Binghamton.” Without a second thought, I explained that we cover a large area, including several towns and counties. She responded sarcastically, “Oh, that’s what’s so great about Binghamton.” I knew she was disparaging our town, but since I was caught off guard, I simply ended the conversation. That is when I started to stew over what I wish I had said and to reflect on what *is* so great about Binghamton.

If I had been on my game, I would have mentioned that the median house price in Binghamton is around \$140,000, making this a truly affordable place to live. I wish I had explained that we enjoy four beautiful seasons and that nature lovers relish in beautiful rolling hills and countryside, all within a five-to-10-minute drive. We have a plethora of town, county and state parks where you can play, swim, boat, hike and fish. Binghamton University is a world-class institution and its students create a vibrant atmosphere around town. Pre-pandemic, BU was a source of plenty of cultural activity. We have low crime rates, little traffic, accessible healthcare, plenty of clean water and no earthquakes with which to contend.

If you are looking to get your fill of a big city, just hop in the car and you will be in New York or Philadelphia in three hours. I wish I had told her that we are a small, but caring, Jewish community where everyone knows one another and is willing to help you in your time of need. The list goes on.

Despite the challenges we have seen over the years, I contend that Binghamton is a “great” place to live. If you feel the same way, I would love to hear from you. Let me know what you love about living here. Send me an e-mail at director@jfgb.org or call me at 607-724-2332. In the meantime, stay safe everyone. Wishing you all good health and much happiness in 2022.

In My Own Words

Something personal

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

While there are many political and social issues facing us in 2022, it’s a personal one that I can’t stop thinking about. To put this in perspective: the last few weeks of December were extremely difficult in my chaplaincy work with far too many deaths for reasons not related to COVID. I think it was coping with the pain others were feeling that led to my reaction to another event, one that left me crying on New Year’s Eve because even though it occurred a week before, the sorrow still overwhelmed me.

A friend of my brother passed away. They’d been friends since grade school and my brother saw him almost every time he visited this area. His friend was 68 years old, had diabetes and was anti-vaccine. He died of COVID on Christmas Day. I write Christmas Day rather than December 25 because he and his family are Christian, and his children and grandchildren will have to live knowing he died unnecessarily on a day that should have been a celebration.

I have no idea why he was anti-vaccine. He was my brother’s friend, so I can’t say that I knew him well. But

his death really hit me hard: not just the futility of dying when something as easy as a shot could have prevented it, but the reality it brings about how intelligent people can deny reality. If I’m honest, it’s also because he was someone I knew personally, not a self-aggrandizing politician, celebrity or newscaster, but an ordinary person whose loss mostly matters to family and friends.

When one of those famous folks who preached against vaccines dies, I have sometimes thought “couldn’t happen to a nicer person,” even as I feel ashamed of my reaction. But I feel that way because of other people who may have died because they believed that politician or celebrity and refused to get vaccinated. Think of the many people who are grieving who wouldn’t have had to. There is so much loss and sorrow in the world that we can do nothing about, so why not try to prevent loss when it is possible?

Pikuach nefesh, the idea that one can do almost anything to save a life, is one of the fundamental principles of Judaism. Perhaps that’s why this bothers me so much,

as does the fact that certain Jewish groups have very low vaccination rates. In the Talmud, we are told that while we should believe God will help us, we should *not* depend on God’s intervention. Medical advances are welcomed in Judaism. A big ethical debate in contemporary times is about the use of artificial means to keep people alive: the more Orthodox Jewish opinion is that these machines should generally be used. So, if machines are OK to keep someone alive, is not a shot that prevents an illness in the first place just as important, and far easier to manage?

But even these thoughts relate back to my personal problem: there has just been too much death this past year. I would love to end this column on an upbeat note, but I fear there may be too much death in this new year, as well. So, please, let those you love know how much you love them. And if they haven’t been vaccinated, please tell them how much you will miss them if they become sick with COVID and die. As the Talmud says, “Whoever saves a single life is considered by scripture to have saved the whole world.”



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THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton
BINGHAMTON, NY

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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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DEADLINE

Regular weekly deadline is noon, Wednesday, for the following week’s newspaper.

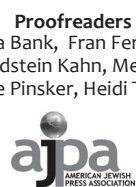
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“The Reporter” (USPS 096-280) is published bi-weekly for \$40 per year by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Road, Vestal, NY 13850-3734. Periodicals Postage Paid at Vestal, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **The Reporter**, 500 Clubhouse Road, Vestal, NY 13850-3734 or reach us by e-mail at TRREPORTER@AOL.COM.

www.thereporter.org

JLI to offer "Meditation from Sinai"

Registration for Meditation from Sinai, the new Rohr Jewish Learning Institute winter course, is now open. The six-session course explores the nature of Jewish meditation and the benefits it can bring to one's daily life. The class will be held for five consecutive Mondays, starting January 31; it will be offered at 7 pm and again at 8:45 pm.

The course is scheduled to be offered over Zoom; a decision will be made closer to the class date if the 7 pm class might be in person and on Zoom. Sign-in information will be provided upon enrollment. Interested students should contact Chabad at 797-0015 or rshea@

Chabadofbinghamton.com, or visit www.myJLI.com for registration and for other course-related information. The course fee, which includes the text book, is \$79 per person and \$140 per couple.

"Course participants can expect to explore what Jewish meditation is, the pivotal role it plays in Jewish tradition and the fundamental ideas it is based on," said organizers of the class. "The course will teach crucial life tools that can help people respond effectively to negative thoughts and emotions, recognize the value of each new moment, and find purpose and spirituality even in life's most mundane tasks."

"Not many people think of meditation as a Jewish thing," said Rivkah Slonim, course instructor, "when in reality, Judaism has a rich and authentic tradition of meditation practices that – when implemented – can truly transform one's life for the better."

"Meditation from Sinai" is a revolutionary, empowering offering that unveils Jewish meditation and mindful awareness as the bedrock for a meaningful life," asserted Slonim. "This course synthesizes extensive research from both the spiritual community and psychological research, forging a practical path to fully realizing life's potentials."

TC to hold Music in the Kilmer Mansion "From Bach to Bernstein" on Jan. 23

Temple Concord will hold a Music in the Kilmer Mansion program "From Bach to Bernstein" on Sunday, January 23, at 3 pm. The program will feature Tom and Jean Goodhearts. They will perform with their son, Mathew, a tenor; Pej Reitz on piano and Zachary Sweet on cello. The program will include classical, contemporary and Broadway music. People may attend in person with masks and spacing at 9 Riverside Dr. Binghamton, or virtually. Tickets at the door are \$15 per adult and \$5 for students. For remote access information, visit www.kilmermansion.org. Donations from virtual attendees would be appreciated and can be made at <https://tinyurl.com/mt6hdn7k>.

Tom and Jean are on the faculty of Binghamton University. Matthew is in his final year at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music; he has studied in Canada and Italy.

"In 2018, the Goodhearts performed at Temple Concord in a magnificent concert, after which we made them promise to return," said organizers of the event. "They had us moving in our seats and rocked the room."

"Pej and Zachary are also well known to us from many previous performances and never fail to amaze us with the beautiful music that comes from their instruments," organizers added. "The music is sure to have us sitting on

the edge of our seats, feet moving and souls soaring. As always, the venue with its lustrous hardwoods, marvelous acoustics and endearing intimacy adds the finishing touch."

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Muriel Carmen on the death of her husband,

Jack L. Carmen

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Sue Krause on the death of her sister,

Donna Onofrey

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Marsha Grass on the death of her mother,

Belle Rosengarden

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

BeaKae "Bunny" Woodruff

Esserman to do annual TC Sisterhood book talk on Jan. 30

Rabbi Rachel Esserman will discuss three books at the annual Temple Concord Sisterhood book talk on Sunday, January 30, at 11 am, at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, and on Zoom. The event is open to the public. Those interested in attending are asked to make a reservation, whether coming in person or joining via Zoom, by contacting Phyllis Kellenberger at pweinste@stny.rr.com or 727-8305 by Wednesday, January 26. There is no charge for the program. The Zoom link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3897224889?pwd=c1haTFczd0pTT1pRbjFCdTFEelRhdz09>, meeting ID 389 722 4889 and passcode 230720; or by phone at 1-646-558-8656, meeting ID 389 722 4889 and passcode 230720. This information will also be e-mailed the week of the program.



Rabbi Rachel Esserman

"I am again looking forward to one of my favorite events of the year," Esserman said. "I've made sure to include a nonfiction work this year again by request. Each work is very different and I look forward to reading them. I've had 'The Slaughterman's Daughter' on my shelf for most of the year and was debating reading it, but decided I would save it for this review. I was a big fan of Aaron Hamburger's works and was delighted to learn he finally had a new novel out. As for 'Come and Hear,' I thought it sounded like a great way to introduce people to the Talmud."

"The Slaughterman's Daughter," winner of the 2021 Wingate Literary Prize, has been described as "a family drama into far-reaching comedy of errors that will pit the Czar's army against the Russian secret police and threaten the very foundations of the Russian Empire. It is a rollicking and unforgettable work of fiction."

"Nirvana is Here" is the winner of a Bronze Medal, Foreword Reviews 2019 Indie Award for Best LGBTQ+ Fiction. The book was called "a wonder of a book" by novelist Lauren Grodstein ("Our Short History"): "As a See "Book" on page 4

During her talk, Esserman will review "The Slaughterman's Daughter" by Yaniv Iczkovits, "Nirvana is Here" by Aaron Hamburger and "Come and Hear: What I Saw in My Seven-and-a-Half-Year Journey through the Talmud" by Adam Kirsch.

Bar/Bat photos needed

Can we have your mug? Kids mugging for the camera and formal photos, that is. For *The Reporter's* annual Bar/Bat Mitzvah issue (coming January 28), we need photos of all teens who became bar/bat mitzvah during the calendar year of 2021. We are looking for one of the teen by him/her/themselves, as well as a photo of the celebration with family and friends.

Please e-mail these photos with identification, including name, date and place of the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony, by Tuesday, January 18. Photos can be e-mailed, in TIF or JPG format, to TReporter@aol.com; please note in the subject line that a bar/bat photo for *The Reporter* is attached and include the necessary information in the message.

Film Continued from page 1

Susan Hubal, chairwoman of the Film Fest Committee, said, "'Neighbours' is a gritty film combining a raw environment and cruelty with warmth, love and pathos. It is based on the filmmaker's own history when he was a small, precocious child and rings sad, but true." The Jewish Film Review called the film "funny and emotionally uplifting. 'Neighbours' is an important humanistic work and a stunning achievement."

Danon's research at Binghamton University "focuses on the eastern Sephardi Diaspora during modern times and draws heavily on previously unexplored Ladino language archival material. [She] is particularly interested in social history and how its tools help revise prevailing scholarship not only on the Sephardi world, but on Jewish modernity as a whole." Her book, "The Jews of Ottoman Izmir: A Modern History," was published in 2020.

DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
January 28-February 10	January 19
February 11-24	February 2
February 25-March 10	February 16
March 11-24	March 2

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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BINGHAMTON PHILHARMONIC

Celebrating the legacy of Fritz and Marianne Wallenberg

Wallenberg Festival

Three Orchestras in one concert!
Saturday, January 29, 2021 at 7:30pm
Broome County Forum Theatre

Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra | Binghamton Youth Symphony | Binghamton Community Orchestra

Pre-Concert Chat at 6:30pm. Recital Hall: Reflections on Growing Up as Children of Fritz and Marianne Wallenberg with James Wallenberg and Katherine (Wallenberg) Rabinowitz

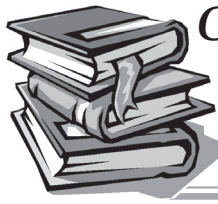
Tickets Start at \$18
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Wallenberg Festival Fundraiser
Wednesday, January 26, 2021
7:00-8:30pm
Kilmer Mansion at Temple Concord
9 Riverside Drive, Binghamton

Listen to the historic music of the Binghamton Symphony and Choral Society in an elegant setting. Reception to follow.

Tickets start at \$10

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Off the Shelf

Communities' unwritten rules

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Every community has unwritten rules which people live by, even if they can't necessarily articulate exactly what they are. However, it's always clear when a line has been crossed and punishment or ostracism is required. Children learn these rules without specific lessons: they are part of the air they breathe. But they are not the same for every community as can be seen by two recent novels, "An Observant Wife" by Naomi Ragen (St. Martin's Press) and "The Family" by Naomi Krupitsky (G. P. Putnam's Sons). However, for each, breaking the rules can have lasting repercussions.

"An Observant Wife" is a sequel to Ragen's "An Unorthodox Match," which looked at Leah, a *ba'al teshuvah* (a secular person who becomes Orthodox), and her attempts to become part of the religious community of Brooklyn. It also explored her growing connection to Yaakov, a widowed man with five children, one of whom greatly opposed their relationship. (To read *The Reporter's* review of "An Unorthodox Match," visit www.thereporter.org/past-articles/feature-book-review/feature-book-review-stream/book-review-stream/off-the-shelf-novels-about-the-orthodox-world-by-rabbi-rachel-esserman.) The new novel opens at Leah and Yaakov's wedding, a wedding many in the Orthodox community do not approve of (although

not openly), even though Yaakov's daughter, Shaindel, now welcomes the woman who has made her life easier.

Although Leah and Yaakov love each other, problems arise. Leah is not welcomed by the women of the community and feels lonely. She also has difficulty following some aspects of the community's strict practice, which leave her feeling further from, rather than closer to, God. Yaakov has left the yeshiva for secular work in order to repay the loans that accrued after his first wife died. He misses his studies and the interaction with people, rather than numbers. It does surprise him, though, to learn that there are kind people outside his previously narrow world.

To complicate matters, Shaindel is doing her own exploration. The loss of her mother has made her question her faith and leads to behavior that could threaten the family's standing in the community. Her interest in a local boy – one who left his studies, but whose father is a rabbi – creates additional problems. But it's what happens when Shaindel sees a therapist that brings matters to a head, and shows Leah and Yaakov how their community has strayed from the religious laws that should form the core of their lives.

As Leah learns to her chagrin, "There is the law, and then there is the law people live." Make one mistake and the gossips condemn a person, something almost impossible

to stop because people think it's in the best interest of the community. Yet, they ignore the laws against *lashon harah* (evil speech) because gossip is how the community controls its members. Unfortunately, they also find it nearly impossible to believe that someone born to their community could secretly cause great harm. The worst part of what happens to Leah and Yaakov is based on real life, which will be clear to those who have followed the news over the past decade.

Ragen portrays this religious community showing all its warts and problems. Yet, she clearly loves the religious life as seen in her portrayal of Leah and Yaakov. The author advocates for those who seek to obey the law without all the unnecessary trappings placed on it by unwritten rules that destroy the spirit of observance. The desire to live by that spirit is what gives Yaakov, Leah and readers hope.

It feels odd to compare the community found in "An Observant Wife" with the one in "The Family," but both have unwritten rules that outsiders find difficult to understand. But, while Leah and Yaakov face much unpleasantness when they step across a line, the results are far worse for those breaking the Family's rules. Once a member of the Family, you are always a member of the Family. Follow the rules and the Family will protect you for life. Attempts to break the rules or leave the Family result in death. That's because the members of the Family are related not only by blood, but by ethnicity; in this case, Italian Catholic.

The novel takes place from the late 1920s-40s, with Sofia and Antonia growing up in the shadow of the Family. Sofia's father Joey runs a protection racket in Brooklyn and Antonia's father Carlo was once his best friend. It quickly becomes clear that Joey is part of a loose-knit Italian mafia that labels itself as protecting others, even as it becomes clear the harm they do.

Why did the PR people market this book as Jewish to Jewish newspapers? About 100 pages into the novel, readers are introduced to Saul Grossman. Saul is a German Jewish immigrant who feels lost in the U.S. The Nazis made life miserable enough that his mother encouraged him to travel to America for safety. Yet, he pines for his mother, who remains in Germany, and longs for a place that feels like home. When Joey decides Saul would be good for business, even though he is Jewish, Saul is happy to be wanted. It takes him a while to understand exactly what will be expected of him and, by that time, it's too late to do anything but accept his fate. His interactions with Sofia – and Sofia's desire for her own life – help move the plot, as does what Antonia discovers about being connected to the Family.

What makes "The Family" interesting is the ethical dilemmas that occur just before and during World War II. In addition to its regular protection activities, the Family helps immigrants fleeing Europe by giving them fake papers so they can stay in the U.S. Even though they have to pay for the privilege (and sometimes pay dearly), the Family helps them escape destruction and death. Yet, once the war is over, the Family must look for new income sources and that creates ethical problems for readers who may (and should) find it difficult to sympathize with what Joey, Sofia and Saul do. However, readers will also find themselves quickly turning pages toward the novel's end in order to discover what happens.

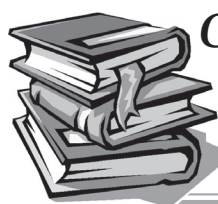
Book Continued from page 3

Jewish Gen-Xer, the novel reminded me exactly of who I once was – and all that I still want to be... a brilliant accomplishment."

"Come and Hear: What I Saw in My Seven-and-a-Half-Year Journey Through the Talmud" has been described as "a kind of travel writing – a report on what [the author] saw during his seven-and-a-half-year journey through the Talmud. For readers who want to travel the same path, there is no better guide."

Esserman is the executive editor and book reviewer for The Reporter Group. Her editorials and reviews have won awards from the American Jewish Press Association and the Syracuse Press Club. This year, she won four awards for her book reviews: first place and honorable mention in the American Jewish Press Club's Simon Rockower Awards Book Review category, and first and second place in the Syracuse Press Club's Critique category. She also serves at the Jewish chaplain for Broome Developmental Disabilities Service Office. Her work has been published in "The Women's Torah Commentary" and "The Women's Haftarah Commentary," both by Jewish Lights Publishing. She also has had a book of poetry, "I Stand By The River," published by Keshet Press of Temple Concord. A Reconstructionist rabbi who says her first love is teaching, she sees her position at *The Reporter* as an opportunity to educate the public about Judaism.

Esserman also is a freelance rabbi who does lifecycle events, hospital visits, chaplaincy; and has been rabbi-on-call when needed by local Reform and Conservative synagogues. Her education includes a B.A. in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania, and rabbinic ordination and an M.A. in Hebrew letters from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Wyncote, PA.



Off the Shelf

Moral quandaries

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

When looking for answers to contemporary ethical questions, people debate whether the wisdom of the past is still relevant. Can answers to questions about social media be found in the Torah? What can the Talmud teach us about end-of-life issues based on technological advances the ancient rabbis could never have imagined? Do medieval codes offer insights into parent/child relationships when the world has changed so radically? Rabbi Neal Scheindlin, author of "The Jewish Family Ethics Textbook" (The Jewish Publication Society), certainly thinks so. In his well-written and interesting work, he shows how Jewish texts offer a variety of different opinions on these subjects, ones that give readers much food for thought.

The book, which was originally aimed at teenagers, also works well for adults, whether in classroom settings or study groups. It looks at a variety of areas: parent/child relationships, questions of honesty, activity on social media, sexual ethics and medical issues about reproductive technologies, abortion and end of life issues. Each section offers a general introduction, case studies and a series of Jewish texts (from ancient to contemporary times) that discuss the issue. These sections conclude with a series of questions to explore before Scheindlin offers his own comments on the texts.

What makes Jewish ethics challenging is that there is usually no simple answer to a question. Debates on ethical issues began in rabbinic times and have continued through the centuries. This leaves contemporary rabbis and readers

to ponder the correct approach. Some of those differences between opinions are not based on *halachic* (legalistic) differences, but philosophical approaches to life. One example is the discussion about whether cloning should be allowed. One rabbi forbids cloning because he believes God did not intend humans to reproduce in that manner. Another rabbi believes that the process (which requires the clone to be placed in a woman's womb) is natural enough for cloning to be acceptable. Scheindlin notes that their opinions "are not different analysis of [*halachic*] literature, but irreconcilable standpoints concerning human beings' role in relation to God's creation. Ethicists differ irreparably on where to draw the line between the appropriate use of human scientific ingenuity, which tradition encourages, and playing God, which it forbids. Human cloning unavoidably confronts us with this problem. Deciding about its ethics requires deciding how far we are willing to go toward making new creations in God's world."

A fascinating discussion occurs around a problem of medical ethics: should medical treatment stop for someone who is dying? A Jewish concept known as *goses* offers one solution: when a person is actively dying, nothing should prevent that death. Yet, that concept came into being before the increase in medical technology. In ancient times, *goses* meant a person would die within three days. But what does that mean to those who have inoperable/incurable cancer who don't want treatment because it would not prolong their life, only increase their suffering? (This is not a case of euthanasia, although that also comes under discussion.) Scheindlin notes the tension between doing something to hasten a person's death (which most Jewish texts forbid) and not doing anything to impede dying. He also discusses the difference between when "a respirator can still be curative, for example, in helping a patient recover from surgery, but [when] in the last stage of terminal illness, the machine does not perform any therapeutic function." The author also discusses different ways that death has been defined, which also influences when treatment might be stopped.

The discussion about social media does show the difficulty of applying ancient texts to contemporary times. One example deals with an inappropriate photo sent on Snapchat (where posts are not permanent) and what occurred after a fellow student took a screenshot of the photo and sent it to the school's principal. Issues of privacy versus breaking the school's code of appropriate behavior are discussed, as is the fact that the photo became known to a far wider group of people after it was reported. Should the person who took the screenshot have talked first to the person who posted the photo before going to the principal? Or did he do the right thing because it was a violation of school policy? But if something was done not on school grounds, does the school have a right to punish an individual? Jewish texts about how one should not be a tale bearer are offered for one point of view, while others note how people are required to act to prevent someone from being harmed.

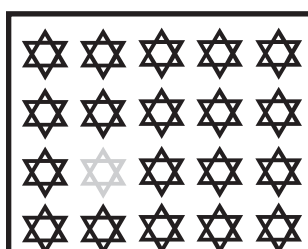
"The Jewish Family Ethics Textbook" is an excellent work for anyone looking for an introductory text in Jewish ethics. The book would work in many types of group settings; Scheindlin encourages those reading it on their own to find a discussion partner so they can better appreciate the different points of view offered. What all readers learn is that there are no easy answers to many ethical questions, which is why it is important to explore these issues before facing them in real life.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Palestinians summon Dutch envoy because of financial-aid cut to NGO

The Palestinian Authority has summoned the Dutch envoy in the Netherlands on Jan. 10 in response to the decision to stop funding a Palestinian NGO after Israel banned it for being a terrorist organization. According to an AP report, the P.A. called the cutoff of funding for the Union of Agricultural Work Committees "unjust and biased." Israel banned it and five other groups in October for their close ties with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The Netherlands, according to the report, noted that an independent audit of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees found no evidence of involvement in terror. However, it did discover what it called a "worrisome" number of board members linked to the PFLP, in addition to the fact that two employees were arrested in connection to a bombing that killed an Israeli in 2019.



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THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

Jewish online resources

By Reporter staff

A variety of Jewish groups are offering educational and recreational online resources. Below is a sampling of those. *The Reporter* will publish additional listings as they become available.

◆ The Biblical Archaeology Society will hold a virtual Scholars Series. The four lectures will be “Jesus’s Resurrection in the New Testament: Who Witnessed What and Why?” on Thursday, March 10, from 8-9 pm; “New Views on the Philistines: What Archaeology Reveals about Goliath and His Peers” on Sunday, June 19, from 3-4 pm; “The Archaeology of Qumran 75 Years after the Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls” on Thursday, September 8, from 8-9 pm; and “Mary Magdalene: Memory and Mystery at Dura Europos” on Thursday, December 8, from 8-9 pm. There is a cost to attend. A video of the lecture will be available to paid registrants for approximately one week after each event. For more information or to register, visit www.biblicalarchaeology.org/travel-study/bas-scholars-series-2022/.

◆ The Jewish National Fund will hold virtual lectures called “Conversations on Zionism: Reclaiming the Narrative.” Upcoming lectures include “Scott Shay with Russell F. Robinson: Exploring Campus Conspiracies” on Tuesday, January 18, at 7:30 pm; and “Digital Media Warriors” on Tuesday, February 1, at 7:30 pm. For more information or to register for individual lectures, visit www.jnf.org/events-landing-pages/conversations-on-zionism.

◆ Maven at the American Jewish University will hold online classes and talks in January and February, including “Measuring and Meaning: A Vision for Jewish Education in America” on Thursday, January 20, from 3-4 pm; “American Shtetl: Satmar Hasidism Blossoms in Upstate New York” on Thursday, January 20, 3-3:45 pm; “The Holocaust in Israeli Theater” on Wednesday, January 26, from 1-2 pm; “Menopause as a Jewish Rite of Passage” on Thursday, January 27, from 3-3:45 pm; “Civil Discourse and Judaism” on Wednesday, February 2, from 3-4 pm; Good is the New Cool: Purpose, Meaning and Tikkun Olam: on Wednesday, February 2, from 1-1:45 pm; and “Book Talk: Naomi Ragen’s ‘An Observant Wife’” on Wednesday, February 16, 1-1:45 pm. Some talks/classes are free, but there is a charge for others. For more information and to register, visit <https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes>.

◆ The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy will hold the virtual talk “Wandering Jews of New Jersey” on Monday, January 31, from 7-8:30 pm. The talk will explore memories of New Jersey towns. For more information or to register, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/wandering-jews-of-new-jersey-a-talk-on-zoom-tickets-234882488847.

◆ RitualWell will hold three free programs: “A Play for the End of the World: Book Talk with Jai Chakrabarti” on Thursday, January 27, from 7-8 pm, about his novel that was inspired by the true story of a play written by an Indian poet and performed in a Warsaw Ghetto orphanage before the residents are deported to Treblinka (www.tickettailor.com/events/ritualwell/623787); “Black Fire / White Fire: See “Resources” on page 8

ADL Continued from page 1

earned recognition from SUNY CUAD and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. She is a past president of the University Research Magazine Association and immediate past president of Temple Concord. She also has served as adjunct instructor of journalism at BU and at SUNY Broome Community College. In addition, she is the chairwoman of *The Reporter* Editorial Committee.

“It’s important to come together to discuss antisemitism and how we can best respond to it, whether we’re encountering it online, at our children’s schools or elsewhere in our community,” Coker said. “Antisemitism casts a shadow over Jewish life in America. The presence of police officers at our synagogues during the High Holy Days is a perfect illustration. We operate against a background of fear even at times when we should be able to engage in prayer and peaceful reflection. I respect the Anti-Defamation League as a source of expertise and data when it comes to antisemitism in the United States, and I look forward to the insights that may be revealed during this webinar.”

Ben Kasper, who is second vice president of the Executive Committee of Temple Israel’s Board of Trustees and a member of *The Reporter* Editorial Committee, noted that “Jewish tradition commands us to ‘welcome the stranger.’ Did our support of refugees contribute to the antisemitic violence at Charlottesville, VA, or the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pennsylvania? Why has there been a spike in antisemitism in the past few years and what can we do to address the threat to our community? The ADL has recorded and studied attacks on our Jewish community, and has developed strategies to address this growing act of violence.”

“I’m so pleased that the Federation is able to bring Scott Richman and the ADL to our community to talk about these important issues,” Hubal said. “Education is part of the Federation’s mission, and the issues Scott will discuss will speak directly to many members of our community. Please join us for what will be a fascinating discussion.”



Business Profiles



Disaster Clean-up

Specialty: Full-service fire and water damage restoration
 Name: Arthur Diamond
 Location: 1612 Watson Blvd.
 Endwell, NY 13760
 Phone: 607-748-0128
 Hours: 24/7, including holidays

Disaster Clean-Up is a full-service fire and water damage restoration company. The company covers all of Broome County and the Southern Tier, and has trained technicians on call 24/7, including holidays, to respond to emergencies. Disaster Clean-Up is proud to offer the most advanced technology and largest capacity for drying and dehumidification in all of the Southern Tier. Services range from mold removal to moisture testing to cleaning of buildings and their contents, and more.

From the smallest fire or water loss in your home to the largest commercial disasters, Disaster-Up can do it all.

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.

Hopler & Eschbach Funeral Home

Specialty: Funeral services, burials and cremation
 Location: 483 Chenango St.
 Binghamton, NY 13901
 Name: Kurt M. Eschbach
 Phone: 607-722-4023
 E-mail: hoplereschbachfh@aol.com
 Website: www.hefuneralhome.com
 Hours: 24-hour service, 365 days a year

When faced with the death of a loved one, Hopler & Eschbach Funeral Home invites you to turn to its caring staff to help guide you through the funeral process. Deeply experienced and knowledgeable in the performance of Jewish burial customs, Kurt Eschbach and his staff are the most qualified professionals in the community to help plan and carry out your funeral or memorial services. They provide services at your synagogue, the funeral home or cemetery, and also provide cremation services and funeral pre-planning.

The funeral home and parking areas are newly renovated and spacious. Staff work diligently to provide the highest quality service at a cost that is 10-30% lower than other funeral homes. With their quality service, fair pricing and newly renovated facilities, Kurt and his staff believe you will make Hopler & Eschbach Funeral Home your new family tradition.

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Weekly Parasha

Beshalach, Exodus 13:17-17:16

The legacy of Miriam

RIVKAH SLONIM, DIRECTOR, THE ROHR CHABAD CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDENT LIFE

This week's Torah portion recounts a most dramatic chapter in Jewish history: the splitting of the Red Sea.

Upon leaving Egypt, after having experienced wonders and miracles, the Jews traveled into the desert toward Mount Sinai. They traveled upon the explicit direction of God and were led by the Clouds of Glory. Suddenly, they found themselves confronted by an impossible situation. Before them lay the Red Sea, behind them they could see

and hear the Egyptians gaining speed. Pharaoh, having reconsidered his earlier position, had sent his entire army to recapture the Jews. Immediately, there arose a hue and cry among the Jewish nation.

The *midrash* relates that four distinct opinions were discernible in the general confusion and commotion. There were Jews who favored jumping into the sea rather than be returned to captivity. Others wanted to turn back to Egypt

of their own volition. A third group felt they should stand up to their enemy and wage war. The final camp opined that they should cry out to God for help.

In one sweeping statement of leadership and absolute faith in the Almighty, Moses declared: "Do not be afraid, stand firm and you will see what God will do to rescue you today. You might be seeing the Egyptians now, but you will never See "Miriam" on page 8

Congregational Notes

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, January 15, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Exodus 13:17-17:16 and the haftarah is Judges 4:4-5:31. At 5:45 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

The temple office will be closed on Monday, January 17.

There will be a Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, January 18, at 7 pm, on Zoom.

On Wednesday, January 19, there will be Torah study from 4-5 pm on Zoom only.

On Saturday, January 22, at 9:30 am, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Exodus 18:1-20:22 and the haftarah is Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-6. At 5:45 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Wednesday, January 26, Torah study will be held from 4-5 pm.

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.

Kol Haverim

Affiliation: Society for Humanistic Judaism
 Address: P.O. Box 4972, Ithaca, NY 14852-4972
 Phone: 607-277-3345, E-mail: info@kolhaverim.net
 Website: www.kolhaverim.net
 Chairwoman: Abby Cohn
 Kol Haverim: The Finger Lakes Community for Humanistic Judaism, is an Ithaca-based organization that brings people together to explore and celebrate Jewish identity, history, culture and ethics within a secular, humanistic framework. KH is part of an international movement for Secular Humanistic Judaism and is affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism, a national association with over 30 member communities and congregations around the country. Established in the spring of 1999, it offers celebrations of Jewish holidays, monthly Shabbat pot-lucks, adult education, a twice-monthly Cultural School for children, and a bar and bat mitzvah program. KH welcomes all individuals and families, including those from mixed religious backgrounds, who wish to strengthen the Jewish experience in their lives and provide their children with a Jewish identity and experience.

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.

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.

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

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 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.

Friday night services will be held on January 14; February 4; March 4; April 1; May 6 and Saturday morning, May 7; and June 3.

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 and 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.

Friday, January 14, light candles before 4:38 pm
 Saturday, January 15, Shabbat ends 5:40 pm
 Friday, January 21, light candles before 4:46 pm
 Saturday, January 22, Shabbat ends 5:48 pm
 Friday, January 28, light candles before 4:55 pm
 Saturday, January 29, Shabbat ends 5:57 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, January 14: at 7:30 pm, Shabbat services with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell, celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. weekend and Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the Trees. To attend in person, all must show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations, wear a mask and physical distance. Join via Zoom at https://bit.ly/37UQSpK, meeting ID 829 9450 3102 and passcode 708450, or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

Saturday, January 15: Shabbat school at 9 am, Torah study at 9:15 am, Shabbat family service at 10:30 am; and "Havdalah with a Bonus" at 7 pm on Zoom at https://bit.ly/3zd0atv, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279.

Wednesday, January 19: at 8 pm, a talk with Andrew Feiler, author of "A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America." Register in advance for the meeting at https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwuc-2sqjMtGtassK7ETBkmS3BQanVI2zhm.

Thursday, January 20: at 7 pm, "A History of Women Rabbis" (also on Thursday, February 3, at 7 pm) in the Temple Concord library and on Zoom. Pre-register with the Temple Concord office by calling 723-7355 or e-mail templeconcordaa@gmail.com and specify in-person or via Zoom. Join via Zoom at https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83161633898?pwd=d0VZcmllTTFKNGhI-K3I5cUZaYVYzd09, meeting ID 831 6163 3898 and passcode 243055.

Friday, January 21: Shabbat services at 7:30 pm with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. To attend in person, all must show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations, wear a mask and physical distance. Via Zoom at https://bit.ly/37UQSpK, meeting ID 829 9450 3102 and passcode 708450, or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

Saturday, January 22: Shabbat school at 9 am, Torah study at 9:15 am, Shabbat family service at 10:30 am; and "Havdalah with a Bonus" at 7 pm on Zoom at https://bit.ly/3zd0atv, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279.

See "Concord" on page 7

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
 Rabbi: David Regenspan
 Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
 Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 336-1523
 Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
 Adult Ed.: Saturday morning study is held at 10 am. Call for more information and to confirm.

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
 Presidents: Nomi Talmi and Shawn Murphy
 Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman, rabbishifrah@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.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Polish diplomat fired after calling country's Holocaust speech law "stupid"

A Polish diplomat has reportedly been fired after calling his own government's laws regarding speech centered around the Holocaust "stupid." Jaroslaw Nowak, the plenipotentiary for contacts with the Jewish Diaspora, made the comments in an interview the week of Jan. 7 with the British publication Jewish News. Nowak was discussing the 2018 amendment to the country's Act on the Institute of National Remembrance, which makes it a crime to publicly state that Poland bore any responsibility for the Holocaust. He called it "one of the stupidest amendments that was ever done by any law." The law infuriated many in Israel, who claimed that it was an attempt by Poland to whitewash Holocaust history, coupled with the fact that Poles killed Jews during the German occupation and collaborated with the Nazis, reported the Associated Press. The legislation originally included prison terms of up to three years for those who falsely blamed Poland for German crimes, though the punishment was later removed from the law. Nowak, who was appointed to his position in July, also told Jewish News he believes that "at some point," Poland will "have to do something" about restitution for Jewish victims of the Holocaust. He said, "There are a number of ideas being discussed in Poland right now. Maybe it will be a very symbolic compensation like it was in the Czech Republic or Hungary, maybe it will be something else. Definitely this is something that is critical, let's say, in the perception of Poland abroad. I cannot stress enough how important it is." In August, Poland passed another law, also censured by Israel, stating that people who had properties seized by the country's communist regime during World War II - among them Holocaust survivors and their heirs - can no longer bring forward claims for restitution

Midge. Continued from page 2

the fictive Steiner's Resort, which has a to-be-explored Binghamton connection. To complement dotting staff, platters of kosher food, frenetic activities, a beauty contest that Midge has dominated since adolescence, pool, lake and nightclub quality entertainment, matchmaking is a priority. When Rose's new friend, Mrs. Ettenberg, bemoans that her doctor son is looking for a "weird" girl, Midge's mother knows just the young lady for him.

After overcoming the awkwardness of their initial meetings, shared weirdness and discomfort at their mothers' matchmaking, Dr. Benjamin Ettenberg and Midge become a couple, share physical intimacy and announce their engagement. A brilliant young surgeon, Jewish, affluent, 6'4", blandly handsome, quirkily eccentric, supportive of his fiancée's showbusiness ambitions and smitten with the lady, Benjamin would appear a perfect husband for Midge. Then, surprisingly, and impersonally, Midge ends the engagement by letter.

A hurt and angry Benjamin knows just where to find Midge: at her usual table, surrounded by friendly sycophants, at the Stage Deli, where she admits the letter

was cowardly and callous, but, despite the doctor's comfort with a working wife, Mrs. Maisel is not willing to take on a potential drag to her burgeoning comic career. Akin to Carnegie's in "Broadway Danny Rose," the Jewish deli is the Greek chorus in Midge's world. The Stage Deli, retrofitted to circa 1960, is Midge's place to nosh and schmooze.

We left Midge at the end of season three abandoned on an airport runway, fired for inadvertently outing gay singer Shy Baldwin, the headliner for whom she was to open for on-tour. Tune into season four to watch Midge encounter the 1960s. Midge faces multiple challenges: reigniting her fledgling career, balancing that peripatetic career with the needs of her two young children, navigating romance and encountering the feminist movement. Laughter, struggle and revelation await.

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.

Concord. Continued from page 6

Sunday, January 23: at 10 am, Tenement Museum Virtual Tour sponsored by the WRJ NE District. The cost is \$10 per person. To log into the site, visit https://women-of-reform-judaism-northeast-district.square.site/.

Sunday, January 23: at 3 pm, "Music in the Mansion: From Bach to Bernstein." (For more information, see the article on page 3.)

Wednesday, January 26: at 7 pm, the Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra will present a Wallenberg Festival Fund-raiser in the Kilmer Mansion at Temple Concord. Tickets are \$20, or \$10 for Wallenberg Festival ticket holders. For tickets and

more information, contact the Binghamton Philharmonic box office at 723-3931 or visit www.binghamtonphilharmonic.org.

Friday, January 28: Shabbat services at 7:30 pm will celebrate Reproductive Freedom with guest speaker Aviva Friedman, community educator at Family Planning of South Central New York. To attend in person, all must show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations, wear a mask and physically distance. Via Zoom at https://bit.ly/37UQSpK, meeting ID 829 9450 3102 and passcode 708450, or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

or compensation. Nowak was fired on Jan. 8 by Poland's Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau, the ministry's spokesperson Lukasz Jasina announced on Jan. 10 via Twitter, giving no reason for the move. The Polish official has been involved in establishing dialogue between Poles and Jews since the 1980s, according to the Associated Press.

Study shows spike in COVID-related depression, anxiety among Israeli teens

There was a "significant spike" in mental health diagnoses and consumption of different types of psychiatric medications by Israeli adolescents during the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new study has shown. The data, released on Jan. 11 by Maccabi Healthcare Services and its KI Institute for research, showed an overall increase of 55 percent in the diagnoses of eating disorders, 38 percent of depression and 33 percent of anxiety. It also found a 28 percent increase in the administration of anti-psychotic drugs. The problem was even more acute among adolescent girls, according to the study, which showed a 68 percent increase in the diagnosis of depression, 67 percent of eating disorders, 42 percent of anxiety and 29 percent of general stress. Researchers analyzed 200,000 medical records of teens between the ages of 12 to 17 from before and during the pandemic to reach their conclusions. "The alarming findings once again indicate the need for national preparation, not only against the pandemic but also against its mental effects," said Dr. Gilad Bodenheimer, head of mental-health services for Maccabi. He called on the state to allocate a budget for a national program to respond to the mental state of children and youth. "The program should focus on preventive care," he said, "and integrating the arms of education, welfare, and, of course, health." This is not the first study to identify mental-health challenges in Israel as a result of the virus. A study released in August by scientists from the Weizmann Institute of Science, for example, showed increased mental distress among Israelis, especially among women, young adults and people who became unemployed as a result of the crisis. A report released in April by Professor Michal Grinstein-Weiss of Washington University and the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, together with Professor Rami Benvenisti of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, showed that one in five children - 21 percent and three times more than before the coronavirus crisis - were suffering from symptoms of anxiety.

Israel establishes its first digital bank

The Bank of Israel announced on Jan. 11 the establishment of Israel's first-ever fully digital bank. The BOI governor and supervisor of banks on Jan. 10 gave final regulatory approval to One Zero Digital Bank Ltd., which was established in 2019 but had been operating on a restricted and limited license. According to a BOI statement, the bank, the first to be established in Israel for decades, now has the same status as all other banks in the country, and is subject to the same supervision to ensure its stability and the protection of its depositors' money. "This is further good news for competition and innovation in the banking and financial industry," said BOI Governor Amir Yaron. "We have guided and will continue to guide the bank in its work; we will supervise its integration into the banking system," said Yair Avidan, BOI supervisor of banks, adding, "We will work to assist any other entrepreneur that wants to establish a bank in Israel." One Zero Digital Bank was established by Mobileye founder and CEO Amnon Shashua.

Annual Campaign 2022

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Resources Continued from page 5

Reading and Writing Creative Midrash” on Wednesday, February 2, from noon-1:30 pm (www.tickettailor.com/events/ritualwell/560566); and “Writing from Single Words of Torah” on Tuesday, February 22, from 7-8:30 pm (www.tickettailor.com/events/ritualwell/559435).

◆ RitualWell will hold classes beginning in January and February. There is a cost to attend these classes, which include “Writing the Revelatory Poem,” on Tuesdays from January 25-February 15, from noon-1:30 pm (www.tickettailor.com/events/ritualwell/560459); and “The Masked Writer: Persona Poetry as Modern Midrash” on Wednesdays from February 16-March 2, from noon-1:30 pm (<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/ritualwell/560463>).

◆ UJA – Federation of New York and The Jewish Week will hold the virtual book

talk “American Shtetl: The Making of Kiryas Joel, a Hasidic Village in Upstate New York” on Wednesday, January 19, at 6 pm. Nomi Stolzenberg and David Myers will discuss their book about Kiryas Joel, which was named for Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, the founder of Satmar Hasidism. For more information or to register, visit www.ujafedny.org/event/view/literary-january-american-shtetl.

◆ Geshher will hold a variety of talks about different Jewish areas of the world, including “Vilnius: The Jerusalem of Lithuania and the city of my family” on Tuesday, January 18, from 1:30-3 pm (www.qesher.com/new-vilnius-the-jerusalem-of-lithuania/); “Greek Jewry: At the crossroads of civilizations” on Thursday, January 20, at 1:30 pm (www.qesher.com/greek-jewry/); “Desert Roots: Concert and Presentation by Dror Sinai” on Sunday, January 23, at 1:30 pm (www.qesher.com/desert-roots/); “A Portrait of Jewish Life in Berlin” on Thursday, January 27, at 1:30 pm (www.qesher.com/jewish-life-in-berlin/); “Jewish Africa: A Photographic Journey” on Sunday, January 30, at 1:30 pm (www.qesher.com/jewish-africa/); and “Gleams and shadows of Jewish life in France” on Thursday, February 3, at 1:30 pm (www.qesher.com/jews-in-france/).

◆ UJA-Federation of New York will hold the virtual talk “Jewish Women: Deep Footprints in American History” on Tuesday, January 18, at 10:30 am. Pamela Nadell, author of “America’s Jewish Women: A History from Colonial Times to Today,” will tell “how Jewish women maintained their identity and influenced social activism as they wrote themselves into American history.” For more information or to register, visit www.myjewishlearning.com/the-hub/jewish-women-deep-footprints-in-american-history/.

◆ The Siegal Lifelong Learning Program at Case Western Reserve University will hold the virtual program “Hazamir: Not Just a Choir” on Friday, January 21, from noon-1:30 pm. Vivian Lazar will tell the story of the international Jewish teen choir, HaZamir. The musical youth movement has more than 40 chapters in the United States and Israel. For more information or to register, visit www.myjewishlearning.com/the-hub/hazamir-not-just-a-choir-2/.

◆ The Jewish Genealogical Society of

Illinois will hold the virtual program “How to Interpret Jewish DNA Test Results” on Sunday, January 23, from 1-2 pm. Topics will include ethnicity estimates, tools to understand and locate DNA matches, nuances found at each testing company, and strategies to tackle endogamy. For more information or to register, visit www.myjewishlearning.com/the-hub/how-to-interpret-jewish-dna-test-results/.

◆ The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute will hold several events this winter: Rachel Sharona Lewis on “The Rabbi Who Prayed With Fire” on Wednesday, January 19, from 7-8 pm; Laura Arnold Leibman, Ph.D., on “Once We Were Slaves: The Extraordinary Journey of a Multi-Racial Jewish Family” on Tuesday, February 15, from 7-8 pm; Judy Heumann on “Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist” on Wednesday, March 23, from 7-8 pm; and Tamar Biala on “Dirshuni: Israeli Women Writing Midrash,” date and time in May TBD. For more information or to register, visit www.brandeis.edu/hbi/events/index.html.

◆ Jewish Together will hold “Jewish Disability Advocacy Day” virtual programs on Wednesday-Thursday, February 23-24. For more information or to register, visit www.jewishtogether.org/jdad-2022.

◆ The Brooklyn Public Library will hold the virtual book talk about “The Books of Jacob” by Olga Tokarczuk” with Jennifer Croft and Ruth Franklin on Tuesday, February 1, from 4-5:30 pm. The novel examines the legacy of Jacob Frank, a mid-18th century Jewish mystic. For more information or to register, visit www.bklynlibrary.org/calendar/books-jacob-olga-virtual-20220201.

◆ The Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History will hold a “Musical Tu B’Shevat Seder” on Sunday, January 16, at 8 pm. The event will be available on Zoom, the museum’s Facebook page and the museum’s website. For more information, visit www.nmajh.org/events/

musical-tu-bshevat-seder-21/.

◆ The Jewish Women’s Archives Quarantine(ish) Book Talks Winter 2022 will be held virtually: Helene Wecker, author of “The Hidden Palace: A Novel of the Golem and the Jinni,” on January 27, at 8 pm; Ariella Elovic, author of “Cheeky: A Head to Toe Memoir” on Thursday, February 3, at 8 pm; Haviva Ner-David, author of “Hope Valley,” on Thursday, February 10, at 8 pm; and “Writing Jewish Fiction for Kids” with Emily Barth Isler and Aimee Lucido on Thursday, February 17, at 8 pm. To register for the talks, visit <https://jwa.givecloud.co/product/QBTregistrationform/quarantineish-book-talks-winter-2022>.

◆ “Between the Lines: Author Conversations from The Library of JTS” will feature an online discussion with author Ken Krimstein about his book “When I Grow Up,” a graphic narrative based on newly discovered, never-before-published autobiographies of Eastern European Jewish teens on the brink of World War II on Wednesday, January 26, at 7:30 pm. For more information or to register, visit www.jtsa.edu/event/when-i-grow-up/.

◆ The Jewish Theological Seminary will hold the webinar series “The Power of Emotion: Judaism and the Inner Life” on Mondays from January 24 to April 4, except February 21, from 2-3:30 pm. Topics include “The Importance of Shame in Rabbinic Tradition”; “Trust, Frustration, and Confusion in the Psalms”; “Unlocking the Gates of Heaven: The Transformative Power of Grief”; “Love During the Holocaust”; “The ‘Burning Heart’ from the Book of Jeremiah to the Metropolitan Opera”; “Compassion and Love in Jewish Mystical Sources”; and “Divine Rage.” To register for the series, visit <https://inspired.jtsa.edu/event/the-power-of-emotion-judaism-and-the-inner-life/e383743>.

For additional resources, see previous issues of The Reporter on its website, www.thereporter.org.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

University of Haifa receives \$16 million to tackle marine, ecological developments

The University of Haifa announced on Jan. 10 a 50 million shekel (\$16 million) gift from the Kadas Family Charitable Fund to support the creation of an International Faculty Initiative of Global Climate Change, with an initial emphasis on marine and coastal ecology research. It represents the largest one-time donation in the university’s history. The funds are slated to be used to create a virtual community of scholars, spanning universities and research centers across the globe. The project will begin with an initial focus on waterways in general and on the Mediterranean in particular. “The Eastern Mediterranean Sea hosts more than 17,000 marine species and contributes an estimated 7 percent to the world’s marine biodiversity,” says Professor Dan Tchernov, scientific director of the University’s Mediterranean Sea Research Center of Israel. “Today, this rich ecosystem has come under threat from climate change, pollution, over-fishing and coastal infrastructure projects.” The Mediterranean Basin is considered a microcosm of the environmental and sustainability challenges facing people across the world.

Miriam Continued from page 6

see them again. God will fight for you, and you shall remain silent.” (14:13-14)

Indeed, the Jews soon witnessed an event that remains to this day the embodiment of all that is miraculous: the splitting of the Red Sea. As Moses raised his staff and hit the water, the sea parted, allowing the Jewish nation to walk across on dry land. As the last Jew reached the opposite bank, however, Moses once again extended his hand over the sea, and the Egyptians, who were in hot pursuit, found themselves cast beneath the returning waters. “Of all Pharaoh’s army that had followed the Israelites into the sea, not a single one remained.” (14:28)

Upon witnessing this wonder, “the Israelites saw the great power that God had unleashed against Egypt and the people were in awe of God, they believed in god and his servant Moses.” (14:31)

Spontaneously, the Jewish men, 600,000 strong, burst into a rapturous ode to God. They sang a song of awe and exaltation, of praise and tribute, of gratitude and appreciation. And they expressed their belief in God’s omnipotence and eternity.

This first song is followed closely by another, Miriam’s Song. Miriam the prophetess, sister of Moses and Aaron, led the Jewish women in their own ballad, this one with musical accompaniment.

Each week, the reading of the Torah portion is followed by a reading from the prophetic works, known as the *haftarah*. The *haftarah* is always connected thematically to the Torah portion. This week, the *haftarah* focuses on the song of Deborah the prophetess.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad movement, sees in this choice of *haftarah* great significance. Our *parasha* features songs by both men and women. The prophetic writings, too, include songs by both men and women. What symbolism, then, is expressed in choosing the song of a woman over one by a man, i.e. David? Such a choice cannot be arbitrary.

The explanation, Rabbi Schneur Zalman taught, lies in the difference between the songs. Both the men and women had witnessed the same miracles and perceived

in equal measure the revelation of God. Yet, there was a vast difference in their apprehension and appreciation, and consequently in their respective songs. When the men sang, they sang with happiness, even passion. When the woman sang, it was with rapture and elation. Indeed, they needed to harness the added dimension of music to fully express their joy.

Their happiness was greater for they had suffered so much more under the tyrannical Egyptian reign. But their happiness was also greater because their trust in God was of a fuller measure and now their belief was not only justified, but shared by the entire world around them.

Jewish women suffered the indescribable hardships of slavery alongside their male counterparts. The greatest travail, however, involved birthing and raising children, and here the women’s pain and courage took on spectacular dimension. In the face of excruciatingly difficult circumstances and the bitter decrees of Pharaoh, Jewish women persisted in encouraging their husbands to build the “army of God.” With enormous trust in God, they forged ahead in bearing and nurturing their children despite the perilous conditions. This faith withstood their fear and uncertainty – the sheer agony they endured.

Their song at the sea reflected this depth and breadth; it reflected their particular relationship with the Divine One quite unmatched by their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons. For this reason, the sages saw fit to highlight this *parasha* with the song of a woman.

The legacy of Miriam lives on. Jewish women of every age have, against seemingly insurmountable odds, kept the torch of Yiddishkeit burning brightly. With their passion and implacable belief in the Almighty, they led the nation of Israel in doing what had to be done. They taught their people not to fear anything or anyone, but God himself.

Our sages stated: In the merit of righteous women were the Jews redeemed from Egypt and in their merit will the Jews be redeemed in the future.

May we sing praises to God upon our final redemption speedily in our days. Amen.

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