



# HAKOL

הקול .... 'The Voice'

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Kadourie Mekor Haim (Source of Life) Synagogue, Porto, Portugal, photo by **Karen Kerschen**

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE – KABBALAT SHABBATONS, TORAH STUDY, CELEBRATIONS

**Friday, March 22, No Kabbalat Shabbaton this evening.**

**Saturday, March 23, Purim.** Torah Study, **noon to 1:30 pm** with Rabbi Judith HaLevy, live & on Zoom.  
 Bagels and lox at 11:30am at TJC. *After Torah Study, ...*

1:45-3:15 pm **Hamantashen baking at TJC** with Carole Levy. (see p. 8 for full details)

7:00 pm **Purim Party!** Megillah reading, Purim play, hamantashen, costumes live at TJC.

**Friday, April 12,** 6:30 pm, Kabbalat Shabbat, live at TJC and on Zoom.

**Saturday, April 13,** Torah Study, 9:45 am, bagels and lox; 10 am, at TJC in person and on Zoom.  
 Rabbi Judith will be conducting a Baby Naming ceremony that day.

**Friday, April 19,** B'nai Shalom Havurah Kabbalat Shabbat, 6:30 pm, Zoom.

Rabbi Chavah Carp officiating for B'nai Shalom Havurah events.

**Tuesday, April 23, Taos Community Passover Seder,** at St. James Episcopal Church. Details TBA.

**Friday, April 26,** 6:30 pm, Kabbalat Shabbat, live at TJC and on Zoom.

**Saturday, April 27,** Torah Study, 9:45 am, bagels and lox; 10 am, at TJC in person and on Zoom.

**Friday, May 10,** 6:30 pm, Kabbalat Shabbat, live at TJC and on Zoom.

**Saturday, May 11,** Torah Study, 9:45 am, bagels and lox; 10 am, at TJC in person and on Zoom.

**Friday, May 18,** B'nai Shalom Havurah Kabbalat Shabbat, 6:30 pm, on Zoom.

**Friday, May 24,** 6:30 pm, Kabbalat Shabbat, live at TJC and on Zoom.

**Saturday, May 25,** Torah Study, 9:45 am, bagels and lox; 10 am, at TJC in person and on Zoom.

**Friday, June 14,** 6:30 pm, Kabbalat Shabbat, live at TJC and on Zoom.

**Saturday, June 15,** Torah Study, 9:45 am, bagels and lox; 10 am, at TJC in person and on Zoom.

**Friday, June 21,** B'nai Shalom Havurah Kabbalat Shabbat, 6:30 pm, on Zoom.



**The Taos Jewish Center** (TJC) is dedicated to fostering positive Jewish identity, by providing programs and services that enrich the lives of the people it serves in northern New Mexico. The **TJC** is open to all who wish to explore and participate in these experiences that reflect and incorporate Jewish ethics, culture and observances.

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**HaKol**, *The Voice*, is a community newsletter published quarterly by the Taos Jewish Center.

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## **EDITOR'S POV**

This is an uncomfortable HaKol to read. You'll find perspectives that articulate the pain of our Jewish community — the anguish felt after more than six months since October 7th, when Hamas launched its war on the Jewish people, taking over 200 hostages, attacking Gaza's neighboring kibbutzim and igniting a wave of anti-Semitism we haven't seen since the WWII Holocaust itself.

Then there's the effort to personify all the victims of this hatred — the Palestinians as well as the Israelis caught in this morass of bloodshed and the dilemma created by the founding of Israel at the cost of displacing Palestinians.

The opinions expressed in HaKol *do not* represent an official perspective of the Taos Jewish Center. Rather; it provides its membership with a safe place to air their views across the spectrum, whether or not you agree with all of its contents.

We shudder as a community, feeling helpless to make a difference, particularly in light of increased anti-Semitism, to advocate for a solution that will bring peace. Listening to each other's voices -- we don't have to agree, but we can be civil -- could foster a means for addressing tough differences.

The TJC has recently joined a newly formed organization of regional Jewish congregations — the Jewish Community Relations Council of NM (<https://www.jrcnm.org/>), one of several across the nation to speak as a collective voice to advocate for Jewish interests, culture and security, to amplify the principle that ***Israel has a right to exist.***

We encourage you to support organizations in Israel (you'll find some of them on pages 6 and 7 ) who are providing material support to those most affected by this war and who are working for peace.

You'll find other engaging articles, poetry, photography, art and delicious recipes in this issue. We as individuals lead our own lives. In February, I was privileged to spend three weeks in Portugal, whose Jewish history and experience of anti-Semitism is unique. You'll find my story and photos here too.

*Besorot Tovot, good tidings (in worrisome times)*

***Karen Kerschen***

*kkerschen@gmail.com*

## A LETTER FROM OUR INTERIM PRESIDENT

WELCOME,

TJC members and friends, to the spring issue of Hakol, chock full of news, opinions, events, and the beautiful creativity of our community, expressed in poetry, prose, photography, drawings and painting.

These continue to be hard times for our people and the world, and it helps our hearts to share with our community. More and more people have been attending our Friday evening Shabbat services and Saturday morning Torah studies (which usually include bagels and lox when we meet in person!). We find that we need time together to process the painful events in the Middle East, and reactions world-wide.

Thank you, Rabbi Judith, for hosting another “Conflicted About the Conflict” Zoom session.

Coming soon are good reasons to celebrate with community. We will have a fun Purim celebration on Saturday, March 23 rd at 7:00 pm, where we can let loose again with costumes, reading the Megillah, a Purim play, delicious Hamantaschen (prepared that afternoon by TJC members!) and other foods. Please join us!

Then, on April 23 rd , the second night of Passover, let us gather for a community in-person seder, with our Haggadah, song, and a delicious meal catered by Cid’s Food Market.

We hope you will attend these uplifting events.

And always, let us pray for peace and healing in our world.

**Shalom,**

***Lucy Melamed***

**E-Blasts** are the email notices you receive from the TJC. Submissions for the e-blasts should be sent to Neal Friedman, at [friedendo@gmail.com](mailto:friedendo@gmail.com), with *E-Blast* on the Subject line. **Deadline** for a given week is the Wednesday before the following week’s mailing, which goes out on the Monday before the Shabbat.

***895 Jewish temples received bomb threats last year.  
Hate loses when we stand together***

**Foundation to Combat Anti-Semitism**

Instagram: / standuptojewishhate

TikTok: / standuptojewishhate

Twitter: / standup2jewhate

Facebook: / standuptojewishhate

Website: <https://www.fcas.org>

## RABBI'S COUNSEL : TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

*March 8, 2024.* Truth or Consequences:

The name of an off-the-beaten-path spa town in Nowhere New Mexico. Today, I sink my body into the healing waters with the hope that the warm currents can soothe away the knots that have bound my mind and body over these past months.

*October 2, 2023.* Truth or Consequences:

The title of the sermon that I gave on Yom Kippur, Day evoking a gasp of surprise when I mentioned the "A" word in reference to tensions on the West Bank. Who knew?

*October 7, 2023.* Truth or Consequences:

The TRUTH of Hamas terror shatters Israel's sense of security. The consequences endanger the very existence of the Jewish state, and alter the reality of Jews worldwide. Yes, even in Taos New Mexico, off the beaten path but never far away.

*March 4, 2024.*

Each morning, I open my eyes, say *modab ani*, take my coffee into the quiet time, and gingerly open the news to the Truth and Consequences of the day.

The Times of Israel tells me that Netanyahu will allow access for Muslims on the Temple Mount during Ramadan with weekly review. I do not want to imagine the consequences of a Muslim violence at this holiest of holy sites, while the New York Times reports that the UN acknowledges as 'convincing' information that Hamas rapes and tortures hostages, but will not issue a full condemnation.

Israel recalls its UN ambassador. The Washington post leads its Opinion Page with an article entitled "How October 7 is forcing Jews to reckon with Israel" by Harvard Law Professor Noah Feldman.

"Jews everywhere, whether sympathetic to Israel or critical or some combination, have found that they have no choice but to deal with Israel's impact and significance on their lives and feelings-whether they want to or not. This experience calls for a new account of what Israel means for being a Jew today."

And I haven't even had breakfast.

The Truth of October 7 has forced Israel to address consequences that were best glossed over in these years of power and prosperity for the Jewish state.

Can Israel exist as a Jewish AND Democratic state?

Can an ultra-Orthodox population that now numbers over one million and growing exponentially still be granted exclusion from military service?

Can Israel continue to occupy and settle the West Bank without concessions to a Palestinian state?

Did Israel grow too complacent in underestimating the threats of Hamas and Hezbollah?

And most importantly, can Israel continue to provide security for all its citizens after the massacre of October 7th?

The thousands of starving men, women and children in Gaza overwhelming aid trucks amid gunfire share a split screen with the families of hostages screaming, crying and begging for their loved one's release. Actions and inactions have consequences.

The Truth of October 7 has forced world Jewry to acknowledge that anti-semitism is alive and well, even in the far reaches of New Mexico. The resolution of the Town of Taos calling for an immediate ceasefire last December caught us by surprise. Here? Posters calling Jews murderers? We were stunned by how quickly the world reduced the horrendous massacre of October 7 to a footnote as the calls for Palestinian liberation resounded on the world stage. The uncomfortable truth of age-old anti-semitism has shaken us all.

One consequence is that members of the Taos Jewish Community have eloquently expressed their views. Bruce Grossman has twice written for the Taos News opinion page, and Cindy Grossman has been tireless in her support for action. Carmi Plaut has expressed his horror through art, and Debora Seidman is leading poetry workshops for peace. This HaKol issue is filled with outcries expressed through art and poetry.

It is often said that Purim is the first account of anti-semitism in a diaspora world. As Haman said to Ahasuerus :

"There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of

your kingdom; and their laws are different from those of every other people; therefore it is not for the King's profit to tolerate them." (Chap 3)

We know the story. Mordecai comes to Esther and says:

Think not yourself that in the Kings palace you shall escape, more than all the Jews. For if you remain silent at this time, then shall relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but you and your father's house shall be destroyed." (Chap 4)

Esther stands up. The Jews are saved.

But we rarely read the ending chapters of the Megillah.

"Thus the Jews struck all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and

destruction, and did what they would to those who hated them. And in Shushan the capital the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men...But the other Jews who were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together and slew of their foe seventy five thousand." (Chap 9)

Not true, the sages tell us. Just a revenge fantasy of a people without power.

And today???

The truth, and the consequences, of this seminal moment in time are unfolding before us.

***Rabbi Judith HaLevy***



*Screen capture from "Still Conflicted about the Conflict, 3/6/24, attended by thirty people.*

# HELP WAR VICTIMS

Please join me! It is very important for you to show up and say *Hineni. Here I am.*

During this harrowing time, many members of our communities want to help, including by making donations to organizations on the ground providing emergency services to those most in need.

Here is a list of worthy Israeli and Palestinian organizations working in Israel.

## **Magen David Adom**

Magen David Adom is Israel's Red Cross. It has activated all 1,400 of its ambulances and is treating the wounded, often while under rocket attack and gunfire themselves.

Donate at this link: <https://afmda.org/>

## **World Union for Progressive Judaism Emergency Appeal**

The WUPJ's emergency appeal focuses on providing funds for immediate needs, informal educational programs and childcare, elderly assistance, mental health counseling, and more. Reconstructing Judaism belongs to the WUPJ.

Donate at this link: <https://wupj.org/>

## **New Israel Fund**

NIF's network of NGOs in Israel have an emergency response plan they've activated, and they are asking for donations at this time to implement it. The plan focuses on:

*Basic care for the most vulnerable groups:* While the country reels from this attack, we must make sure that no communities are left behind. Families in the kibbutzim near the Gaza Border are still not reunited and may not have the access to care that they need. A number of Bedouin citizens from unrecognized villages in the South have been killed and many more injured. With very little infrastructure – including very few bomb shelters—and decades of neglect by consecutive governments, this community needs urgent support to ensure that basic care is available for those injured, left homeless and for those needing arrangements for the dead. These are examples of just two vulnerable groups that need our help right now.

*Preventing inter-communal violence in mixed cities:* Through focused efforts with municipalities, the media and local grassroots leaders, we have to work to prevent the spread of violence into mixed Arab and Jewish cities.

*Mental health and trauma counseling:* People, especially the families of the hostages and those who have lost family members in the massacre of October 7 are shocked and reeling. We know that when that shock begins to fade, there will be a massive need for trauma counseling and mental health support for many, including civil society leaders, who will need to show up for their communities and lead long-term efforts, even as they deal with their own trauma.

Donate at this link: <https://www.nif.org>

## **Sulha Peace Project**

Sulha was established during the Second Intifada with the goal of creating eye-to-eye, heart-to-heart encounters between Palestinians and Israelis. Over the last twenty years, they have continued in-person dialogue throughout the most difficult situations. Today, after October 7, they are still meeting weekly to share their grief, and envision a better future. *"There are no winners in war. Only peace will bring security."* [Sulhapeaceproject.com](http://Sulhapeaceproject.com)

## **Dror Israel Emergency Response**

"Our educators in Sderot, Ashkelon, Beer Sheva, Rehovot, Tel Aviv, Rishon Letzion and other affected communities are assessing all the critical needs and addressing them. Educators are in touch with students, program participants, neighborhood leaders and groups, making sure they are safe and accounted for."

*Emergency initiatives include:*

*Supporting evacuees:* Day care and programs for traumatized children and youth are desperately needed for families who have been evacuated from Gaza border communities under attack to Dead Sea Hotels, our boarding school in Mitzpe Ramon, and more.

*Youth counselors in bomb shelters:* In underprivileged communities where people don't have safe rooms in their homes, experienced youth educators are running therapeutic and educational programs for

children and families in Rehovot and Ashkelon, with more locations opening as soon as deemed safe.

*Day care for children of hospital workers and other essential staff:* Dror Israel Emergency Response is currently fielding requests from hospitals throughout Israel to set up day care centers for children of doctors, nurses, and staff so they can treat the injured while schools are closed.

*Support for children and families sheltering in place:* “We are providing in-person and online programming, distributing activity kits and other educational materials in Sderot, Ashkelon, Rehovot, and more.” <https://www.drorisrael.org/donate>

### IsraAID

Founded in 2001 as a coalition of organizations working in disaster relief and international development, IsraAID has grown into an independent NGO and the largest humanitarian aid organization in Israel. After years of responding to disasters worldwide, they are now bringing that expertise home to help the more than 250,000 Israelis displaced by the current crisis. [israaid.org/donate/](https://israaid.org/donate/)

### Combatants for Peace

Combatants for Peace is an Israeli-Palestinian NGO committed to non-violent action against the “Israeli occupation” and all forms of violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories. [Cfpeace.org](https://cfpeace.org)

### Parents Circle

Founded by Israeli and Palestinian parents who have lost children to the conflict, and have come together to comfort each other and to work together for peace. [Parentscirclefriends.org](https://parentscirclefriends.org)

### Thank Israeli Soldiers

Help to provide thousands of emergency kits featuring daily critical essentials that our soldiers and reservists need during times of war. Donate at this link: <https://thankisraelisoldiers.org/>

### Sheba Medical Center

Israel’s largest medical facility, Sheba Medical Center, is on the front lines of the country’s response to this war.

Caring for over 200 Israelis critically wounded in the attacks, tripling ICU beds and performing countless life-saving surgeries, treating dozens of soldiers,

including many in intensive care.

Organizing a pop-up blood bank enabling thousands of Israelis to donate blood to victims.

Moving Pediatric and Cardiac ICU into a hardened underground parking garage.

Creating a trauma center for the 2200 survivors of the music festival.

As Israel’s largest hospital, the responsibility Sheba bears is immense. There is an urgent need for blood donation equipment, ventilators, ICU monitors and more.

Donate at this link: <https://give.afsmc.org/give/525518/#!/donation/checkout>

### United Hatazalah

1700 on-the-ground volunteers providing care for the injured (some have lost their lives. Need supplies!)

Donate at this link: <https://israelrescue.org/donate/>

### STAND WITH US

Fighting Anti-Semitism worldwide!! Spending more than they have. Reaching over 2 million people.

Donate at this link: <https://www.standwithus.com/israel-emergency-fund>





## PURIM SATURDAY, MARCH 23 PURIM !

(No Friday evening service this week)

12-1:30 pm, ***Torah Study with Rabbi Judith. Live and on Zoom***

(Note special time! Come early for bagels and lox!\*)

\*Please donate in the upside-down Yarmulke on the serving table to support these treats.

1:30-3:00 pm, ***Hamentaschen Baking at the TJC!***

Under the guidance of our “Queen Baker,” Carole Levy, we will roll, fill, pinch in three corners and bake hamantaschen together. Much more fun than store bought! Bring kids and grandkids for this fun event.

We’ll provide the ingredients, please offer a small donation to cover costs.

*Then, that evening,*

7:00 pm, ☆***Purim Celebration at the TJC***☆

The Megillah read in English and Hebrew, hamantaschen, Purim play, costume contest and even a good *L’Chaim!*

***Come dressed to celebrate!***



### Erev Shabbat

3/15, 6:52 pm  
 3/22, 6:58 pm  
 3/29, 7:04 pm  
 4/5, 7:10 pm  
 4/12, 7:16 pm  
 4/19, 7:22 pm  
 4/26, 7:29 pm  
 5/3, 7:35 pm  
 5/10, 7:41 pm  
 5/17, 7:46 pm  
 5/24, 7:52 pm

### Torah Parashat

Pekudei  
 Vayikra Zachor  
 Tzav Parah  
 Shemini Hachodesh  
 Tazria  
 Matzora  
 Passover  
 Acharei  
 Kedoshim  
 Emor  
 Behar

### Havdalah

3/16, 7:49 pm  
 3/23, 7:56 pm  
 3/30, 8:02 pm  
 4/6, 8:08 pm  
 4/13, 8:15 pm  
 4/20, 8:22 pm  
 4/27, 8:28 pm  
 5/4, 8:35 pm  
 5/11, 8:42 pm  
 5/18, 8:49 pm  
 5/25, 8:55 pm





## TJC KABBALAT SHABBATS AND TORAH STUDY

Typically the second and fourth Fridays of each month, Rabbi Judith HaLevy conducts a Kabbalat Shabbat both in person and on Zoom. We have reinstated pot luck dinners, starting an hour before the service. We light Shabbat candles, make Kiddush, honor the Shabbat bride, sing blessings for those in need of healing and we remember the deceased with the Mourners' Kaddish.

The Rabbi leads prayers and discussion pertinent to the time, season and Torah.

It's always a stimulating and grounding evening that ushers in the Shabbat and provides a spiritual separation from the workday world.

TJC Kabbalat Shabbats are announced in the TJC eBlasts. To add your name, you can email the TJC at [tjc@newmex.com](mailto:tjc@newmex.com) and include in the subject line, 'Add me to the TJC eBlast list.'

Check out Rabbi Judith's videos of the Torah *parashat* on the TJC website at [taosjewishcenter.org/rabbi-s-corner-new](http://taosjewishcenter.org/rabbi-s-corner-new)

Saturday mornings following the Kabbalat Shabbats, Rabbi Judith conducts Torah Study. It's hybrid (live and on Zoom), however participants at the TJC can enjoy bagels and lox (9:45 am). Torah study is 10 am to 11:30 am.

## B'NAI SHALOM HAVURAH SHABBATS

B'nai Shalom Havurah meets for Kabbalat Shabbat on the third Friday of the month, on Zoom, conducted by Rabbi Chavah Carp, who teaches a D'Var Torah on that date. We send out an invitation early that week and ask you to RSVP to Annette or Bette to receive the Zoom link.

The annual meeting (on Zoom) will be April 10th. Contact Annette for the link.

The dates for this quarter are April 19th, May 17th, June 21st, 6:30 pm, probably on Zoom.

We hope you can join us. If you know someone who would like to be added to the B'nai Shalom email list, please send their address to Annette at [rubin.annette@gmail.com](mailto:rubin.annette@gmail.com).



Mosaic of David, found in an ancient synagogue in Gaza.



Photo by *Carole Levy*

## ON SEEING A RAINBOW

***Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, zocher habrit v'ne'eman biv'reetoh v'kayam b'ma'amarav.***

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who remembers the covenant, and is faithful to His covenant, and keeps His promise.

## ROSH CHODESH

Rosh Chodesh is sacred to women, who are freed from work on that day, as a reward for refusing to give up their jewelry to be melted down for the creation of the golden calf.

April 9                      1 Nisan

May 9                        1 Iyyar

June 7                        1 Sivan

*A prayer for Rosh Chodesh:*

***Rosh Chodesh (name of month) haba aleynu v'al kol yisrael l'tovah.***

May Rosh Chodesh (*name of month*) come to us and all Israel for goodness.

May you give us long life,  
**A LIFE OF PEACE,  
A LIFE OF GOODNESS,  
A LIFE OF BLESSING.**

## PASSINGS

### *Yahrtzeit Records*



To add or correct a Yahrtzeit record, here's what's needed:

Complete name of loved one.

Hebrew name (including parents), if known

Complete memorial date, day/month/year

Relationship to the loved one (parent, sibling, etc.)

Please send the information directly to

Bruce Grossman, at [grossman@taosnet.com](mailto:grossman@taosnet.com).

### *Eretz Shalom Cemetery*

Owned and dedicated in 1993 by Havurah B'nai Shalom, Eretz Shalom has affordable plots available on a pre-need or as-needed basis. It is located on Llano Mesa, south of town. Your family would appreciate having your arrangements already made.

Contact cemetery administrators Steve Natelson (575/758-1094), Bruce Grossman (575/741-0888) or Jeff Tetenbaum (575/776-3837 or 817-456-2421).

***Todah Rabah*** to our Cemetery Water Bearers

Roberta Lerman

Jay Levine

Sam Goldstein

Jeff Tetenbaum

Neal Friedman

Gordon Hirsch

Special thanks to Cid Backer for donating water containers.



## MITZVOT

### ***B'nai Shalom Mitzvah Fund***

B'nai Shalom maintains a small fund that gives a little help to folks in the Taos community with financial needs. If you want to contribute to this effort, you can send a tax deductible donation to *B'nai Shalom Havurah*, 810 Dillon Lane, Taos, NM 87571 and Bette will send you a receipt for your tax records. Know that you are contributing to *tikkun olam* and your money will be used wisely. Make a tax-deductible donation to help someone local who is in need.

For questions or information, contact Bette Myerson (575-779-1709 or [bette@taosnet.com](mailto:bette@taosnet.com)).

### ***Chaverim of TJC***

The Chaverim (*Hebrew for Friends or Volunteers*) can provide assistance and support to members of our congregation, such as rides to appointments, picking up groceries, prescriptions, or borrowing library books.

Send your request to [tjc@newmex.com](mailto:tjc@newmex.com), with *Chaverim* in the subject line or call the TJC at 575-758-8615.

### ***Meals for the Men's Homeless Shelter***

Distribution of meals every 3rd Thursday. Please be part of this important community mitzvah. Participate when you can. Contact Roberta at [rlerman57@gmail.com](mailto:rlerman57@gmail.com).

### ***Taos Elders and Neighbors Together (TENT)***

A membership, non-denominational community organization to provide transportation, caregiver relief and minor home repairs to help elders maintain independence at home. Further info: [TaosElders.org](http://TaosElders.org)  
Note: TENT's fee structure has recently changed, making it more affordable.  
For further information, visit [TaosElders.org](http://TaosElders.org) or call 575-224-6335.



### ***Ukrainian Window Replacement Project***

Please help to restore broken windows in Ukraine damaged by the shelling of structures during the war. For 15 dollars a window (using local materials) Ukrainians can stay warm during the upcoming winter months. To donate and to learn more, visit: <https://ukrainianchildren.org/window-project/> Scroll down to the “donate now” button, after choosing an amount, from the drop down arrow please select “Window Project.”

## TAOS ORGANIZATIONS THAT FEED OUR HUNGRY NEIGHBORS

*Now, more than ever!*

**The Shared Table**, c/o El Pueblito United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 1302, El Prado, NM 87529  
[www.elpueblitoumc.org](http://www.elpueblitoumc.org)

**The Taos Coalition to End Homelessness**, P.O. Box 1516, Taos, NM 87571  
[www.taosmensshelter.org](http://www.taosmensshelter.org)

**St James Episcopal Church Food Pantry**, 208 Camino de Santiago, Taos, NM 87571  
[www.stjamestaos.com](http://www.stjamestaos.com)

**Taos Immigrant Allies**, c/o B'nai Shalom Havurah, 810 Dillon Lane, Taos, NM 87571 Put “TIA” or “Sin Fronteras” or “Immigrant Program” on the memo line of your check. [www.taosimmigrantallies.org](http://www.taosimmigrantallies.org)

**HEART of Taos**, P.O. Box 613, Taos, NM 87571 [www.taosheart.org](http://www.taosheart.org)

**Help for Afghan Refugees in New Mexico** c/o B'nai Shalom Havurah, 810 Dillon Lane, Taos, NM 87571 Put “**Afghans**” on the Memo line of your check.

**Neem Karoli Baba Ashram and Hanuman Temple**  
416 Geronimo Lane, Taos, NM 87571 [www.nkbashram.org](http://www.nkbashram.org)

## TJC BOOK GROUP

TJC Book Group meets every month on the **third Monday** at **noon**, via Zoom or Hybrid. Join us, even if you haven't read the book or are shy about sharing your thoughts.

To be added to our email list and if you'd like to attend our discussions, contact Diane Friedman, [dianecda5@gmail.com](mailto:dianecda5@gmail.com) or Annette Rubin, [rubin.annette@gmail.com](mailto:rubin.annette@gmail.com)

Here are our upcoming selection for the new year:

March 18th: *One Hundred Saturdays: Stella Levi and the Search for a Lost World*, by Michael Frank

April 15th: *Songdogs*, by Colum McCann

May 20th: *Black Cake*, by Charmaine Wilkerson

June 17th: *Tom Lake*, by Ann Patchet

July 15th: *Surely You're Joking Mr. Feynman*, by Richard Feynman

August 19th: We'll be choosing books for the coming year.

## NEW HOURS FOR THE TJC ROGER LERMAN LIBRARY

The library is open to users on the days when Kabbalat Shabbatons are held at the TJC, which is typically second and fourth Fridays of the month, before and after services.

The library is available on Saturdays before and after Torah Study.

Other times by appointment; contact William Westbury, [wmarthurwestbury@gmail.com](mailto:wmarthurwestbury@gmail.com).

## LIKE TO TALK ABOUT FILM ?

A TJC film group has begun to meet monthly, live at the TJC, to discuss current art films, particularly those that come to the TCA.

Beth Levine, [Beth@BethLevine.com](mailto:Beth@BethLevine.com) is the group's new point person.

All are welcome, including munchies and ideas for the next film.

**Want to get involved "behind the scenes" at TJC?**

**We can use your skills!**

**Contact any of our board members**

**Leading Expert on Antisemitism**



**Gunther Jikeli**  
**Antisemitism Today:**

**Why the lack of Empathy for Jews  
after the Genocidal Violence on Oct. 7?**

**CLICK TO VIEW FILM**

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**Institute for Study of  
Contemporary Antisemitism  
Indiana University**

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- Raoul Wallenberg Prize in Human Rights & Holocaust Studies
- Author of *The Return of Religious Antisemitism*
- Leads the Indiana University lab on Social Media and Hate
- Borns Jewish Studies Program

## NATURE ISRAEL, A TALK BY RABBI PAUL CITRIN



### Watch for announcement in an upcoming eBlast, likely in May.

Former TJC Rabbi, Paul Citrin, was scheduled to speak in March, but the talk with postponed due to weather.

Rabbi Paul Citrin is a member of the national board of **Nature Israel** (formerly *The American Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel*). It is a fabulous organization that is in its 70th year of existence.

Nature Israel works to protect plant and animal species, and water resources through field work, by building hiking trails and and by lobbying. It operates ten field schools in Israel and has been very successful in its work over the decades.

*We live in times where politics in Israel are difficult. The Gaza war is painful. Nature Israel provides an immediate way for Jews and others to stand with Israel in a non-political way out of love for the land. It is that love that which has sustained the relationship between the Jewish people and Eretz Yisrael for over three millennia.*

*In this spirit I would love to come to the TJC to share the work and success of Nature Israel.*

**Rabbi Paul**

The talk will be for about 45 minutes to one hour, followed by a brief question and answer session.

Rabbi Paul will be bringing copies of his most recent book: ***Isaac Unbound: A Life of Reconciliation*** for purchase and signing.

Snacks will be provided.



## WAYFARER'S PRAYER

May it be Your will, *Hashem*, our God and God of our ancestors that You lead us toward peace, emplace our footsteps toward peace, guide us toward peace and make us reach our desired destination for life, gladness and peace.

May You rescue us from the hand of every foe, ambush, bandits and evil animals along the way, and from all manner of punishments that assemble to come to earth. May You send blessing in our every handiwork, and grant us grace, kindness and mercy in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us.

May You hear the sound of our supplication, because You are God Who hears prayer and supplication. Blessed are You, *Hashem*, Who hears prayers.

*Said when setting out on a journey*



## SERVICES, RESOURCES TO SHARE

Are you an individual with a skill you'd like to make known to the TJC community? Write a brief classified and send it to [kkerschen@gmail.com](mailto:kkerschen@gmail.com) for a listing.

### **Hebrew Lessons**

Planning a trip to Israel?

In need of Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation?

Wanting to improve your Hebrew literacy?

Call TJC member and experienced Hebrew tutor and native speaker, Judah Botzer at (575)-751-0779 email [--jbotzer@outlook.com](mailto:--jbotzer@outlook.com)

### **Memoir / Ghostwriting / Editing, with Karen Kerschen**

If you've considered writing your memoir or have a manuscript that would benefit from editorial refining, I can be of service. Years of experience working collaboratively and independently, in biography, life study (Progoff method) and scientific work. [kkerschen@gmail.com](mailto:kkerschen@gmail.com), (505) 583-2180.

### **Writing Prayers For Our Earth with Debora Seidman**

Join together to create a sacred circle where we will write prayers to help heal all life on earth. Each gathering is held as a Ceremony for healing. Each gathering is an opportunity for you to write a prayer in your own words.

Giving voice to the deepest prayers of your heart is healing, empowering and rejuvenating. You'll be uplifted out of your own fear and despair and reminded of what is possible for humanity in these transformational times.

TJC member Debora Seidman is an award winning playwright and poet who has been teaching writing as a spiritual, healing practice since 1996. She first offered Writing Prayers For The Earth in 2010 in response to a call from Lakota Elders for us to pray for Mother Earth after a major oil spill. She revived them in the summer of 2023, the hottest summer on record.

Upcoming Writing Prayers for Our Earth Circles are Sunday, March 17th and Sunday, May 19th, 1-3 pm Mountain Time, on Zoom. For more information and to register, contact [Debora@DeboraSeidman.com](mailto:Debora@DeboraSeidman.com)



### **Cooking with Chef Carole**

TJC member Carole Levy is an artist, celebrated NYC chef, culinary educator and the founder of The Veggie Vanguard, a company promoting whole-food plant-based services and resources. (Since Carole now lives in Taos, her superb Challah is available on Fridays at Cid's.) Her recipes appear in Health Science, a quarterly of the National Health Association.

Carole has a social media presence on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/), where her monthly demonstrations may be found. Upcoming demos are, Sundays, April 7th, May 5th, June 2nd and July 7th, all at 3pm (Mountain Time).

Carole can be reached at [carlevy@icloud.com](mailto:carlevy@icloud.com) or (646) 250-2882.

## PLEASE SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS SPONSORS

If you have a business, profession, trade or service, consider sponsoring the TJC & HaKol with an advertisement. Ads appear here and in each weekly eBlast.

Business-card size, \$375; larger size, \$650 / annually.

Contact us at [tjc@newmex.com](mailto:tjc@newmex.com). Call us at (575)-758-8615.

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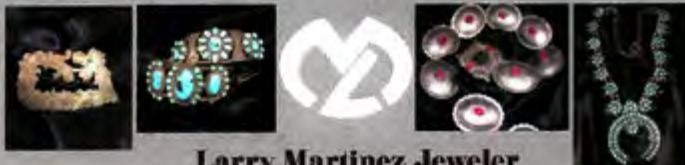


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## **UPDATED CDC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW PEOPLE CAN PROTECT THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES FROM RESPIRATORY VIRUSES, INCLUDING COVID-19.**

Each year, respiratory viruses are responsible for millions of illnesses and thousands of hospitalizations and deaths in the United States. In addition to the virus that causes COVID-19, there are many other virulent respiratory viruses, including influenza (flu) and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The good news is there are actions you can take to help protect yourself and others from health risks caused by respiratory viruses. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has updated the national recommendations for how people can protect themselves and their communities from respiratory virus infection, including COVID-19. The new guidance brings a unified approach to addressing risks to individuals and communities from the range of common respiratory viral illnesses. The new recommendations are prompted by the fact that the U.S. is seeing far fewer hospitalizations and deaths associated with COVID-19, primarily for fully vaccinated people.

Recommendations for individuals attending Taos Jewish Center (TJC) events and maintaining personal optimal Health:

- 1) People who are up to date with their immunization have a lower risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19, RSV and influenza. When people get sick with a respiratory virus, the updated guidance recommends that they stay home and away from others. For people with COVID-19 and influenza, treatment is available and can lessen symptoms and lower the risk of severe illness. The recommendations suggest returning to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall, and if a fever was present, it has been gone without use of a fever-reducing medication. Maintain your immunization status as per CDC and the National Institutes of Health recommendations. States and countries that have already adjusted recommended isolation times have not seen increased hospitalizations or deaths related to COVID-19 or influenza in fully vaccinated people.
- 2) Practice good hygiene by covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing. Wash or sanitize your hands often and clean frequently touched surfaces.
- 3) Take steps for cleaner air, such as bringing in more fresh outside air, purifying indoor air or gathering outdoors.
- 4) If you get sick with a respiratory virus, the updated guidance recommends that you stay home and away from others. For people with COVID-19 and influenza, treatment is available and can lessen symptoms and lower the risk of severe illness and death.
- 5) The recommendations suggest returning to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall, and if a fever was present, it is gone without use of a fever-reducing medication.
- 6) Once you start to resume normal activities, it is important to take additional prevention strategies for the next 5 days to curb disease spread, such as taking more steps to maintain cleaner air, enhance hygiene practices, wear a well-fitting mask, keep a good distance from others, and/or get tested for respiratory viruses.
- 7) Be cautious about suggestions from internet sites or ‘friends’ that may be transmitting misinformation and/or disinformation. Independent verification is important in being able to understand what information is appropriate and reliable to follow. Be skeptical about unsubstantiated cures or quick fixes, especially if they seem too good to be true. Validate the background of any “expert” making health claims who do not have appropriate credentials or are making claims that seem counter to other validated information.

***Neal Friedman MD***

**Taos Jewish Center Board of Directors**

**3/17/24**

# TJC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PLEDGE ☆ 5784 (2023-2024)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Renewing*     *New Membership*        *Individual*     *Family*

Last name \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Last name \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Child's Last name</i>	<i>First name</i>	<i>Birth date</i>	<i>Child's age and grade in Sept.</i>

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Physical address \_\_\_\_\_

Land line \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Yahrtzeits** Please provide the name of the deceased, his/her relationship to the member (e.g., mother of ...), and the month and year of Yahrzeit. (Attach an additional page if necessary).

Name/Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Level**

Sustaining -- \$ 1854 and above \_\_\_\_\_    Family -- \$375 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Platinum -- \$ 1440 \_\_\_\_\_    Individual -- \$ 200 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contributing -- \$ 720 \_\_\_\_\_    Student -- \$ 90 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_ *(Please call us at (575) 758-8615 to discuss what you can afford.)*

**Ongoing Community support -- always appreciated!**

Rabbi Fund \_\_\_\_\_ Torah Fund \_\_\_\_\_ High Holy Days Pledge \_\_\_\_\_

*I pledge to pay in Full* \_\_\_\_\_    *Monthly* \_\_\_\_\_    *Quarterly* \_\_\_\_\_  
*By Check* \_\_\_\_\_    *By PayPal* (taosjewishcenter.org) \_\_\_\_\_  
*If by Credit Card* \_\_\_\_\_, *phone number* \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: A 3% service charge will be added to all Credit Card payments.**

*To pay by credit card, call 575 / 758 - 8615 and leave a message.*

*Someone from TJC will call you back to make the transaction.*

*Mail form and check to Taos Jewish Center, 1335 Gusdorf Road, Suite R, Taos NM 87571.*

Senior members can pay their members using the **Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)** from your retirement funds. Instruct your fiscal intermediary to disburse your membership contribution to the TJC funds or pledges directly to the TJC before your RMD is taken for the year. This reduces the taxable portion of the RMD, providing both you and TJC a mitzvah!

THE TAOS JEWISH CENTER is a faith-based non-profit 501c3 organization.

***All donations are tax deductible & greatly appreciated.***

The Taos Jewish Center is located at 1335 Gusdorf Road, Suite R, Taos, NM 87571.

Visit our website at taosjewishcenter.org. Email us at tjc@newmex.com. Call us at (575)-758-8615.



## Taos Jewish Center

1335 Gusdorf Road, Suite R

Taos, NM 87571

(575) 758-8615

Email: [tjc@newmex.com](mailto:tjc@newmex.com)

Website: [taosjewishcenter.org](http://taosjewishcenter.org)

## Support The Taos Jewish Center (TJC)

Membership at any level includes participation at all High Holy Days services, as well as community gatherings and events throughout the year.

**No family or individual is turned away for lack of funds.**

## Build the Taos Jewish Center Legacy

Your charitable contributions sustain our growing Jewish community and provide a home for Jews in Taos for generations to come. Consider contributing through planned-giving vehicles.

**Bequests** — Include the TJC in your will or living trust.

**Life Insurance** — Name the TJC as a beneficiary.

**Gifts of stock or securities** — Donate and get a significant tax deduction.



**Another option** for senior members taking a **Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)** from your retirement funds is to instruct your fiscal intermediary to disburse your membership contribution to the TJC funds or pledges directly to the TJC before your RMD is taken for the year. This reduces the taxable portion of the RMD, providing both you and TJC with a mitzvah!

### Torah Fund



Add your name with a donation that commemorates a lifetime.

*A book of the Torah-- \$ 1800 - \$ 7200*

*A Favorite Parasha-- \$ 180 - \$ 1800*

### Rabbi Fund

Your generous donation supports the TJC's programming, including Zoom Shabbatons with Rabbi Judith HaLevy.

We have started to have in-person Shabbats and Torah Study, along with a hybrid Zoom option.

In-person events adhere to TJC's Covid policy (see p.15)

Sponsor — \$ 600.

Co-Sponsor — \$ 300.

Assoc. Sponsor — \$ 150-180.





These hebrew letters here are the word *achshav*, which translates as *Now, immediately, at once*. A cry for the immediate release of the hostages. I drew the word achshav as protest art — disordered, upside down, backward, detached and transparent. A sense of imbalance in the letters overlay images of the hostages. Their faces are ghost-like, deprived, suffering in captivity. The taking of hostages is a violation of international law, a war crime. Horrific to imagine how they are treated and whether they will survive. They are not forgotten. There is no rest until they are released by the terrorists and come home safely. When is NOW?

*Carmi Plaut*

## KOLOT / VOICES

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The Summer issue of *HaKol* will be posted in early June (-June 3), in time for Shavuot (June 11th). I invite you to send me your creative output to share — your writings and art, for *Kolot*, these *Creative/Expressive Pages*.

Optimistic deadline: May 21st

Firm deadline: May 28th

**(Earlier submissions always welcome!)**

Send submissions to

***Karen Kerschen, Editor***

[kkerschen@gmail.com](mailto:kkerschen@gmail.com)

## CEASE FIRE NOW, AND ...

*I wrote this article because I felt the need to express a reasonable perspective to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Of course that is impossible since there is no "reasonable" point of view when it comes to this subject, there is only fierce, emotional shouting from all sides.*

*I believe that most of the time Israel's right to exist along with its historical connection to the land is glossed over by the press. Right now there is immense global support for the Palestinian people. There is no question that atrocities have been and continue to be committed by the Israeli government toward the people in Gaza and the West bank. There is no question that unspeakable barbarisms were committed against innocent Israelis on October 7 and that acts of terrorism have been perpetrated against Jews living in the region even before the founding of the state of Israel.*

*Nonetheless, I believe as Jews we have a moral and spiritual responsibility to relentlessly search for peace, truth and understanding. We have a 5,000 year history that has produced the underpinnings of all western civilization. Our legacy is not only Torah, Proverbs, and Psalms, it is a commitment to pursuing a path that honors and protects social justice for all.*

*October 7, changed my life. As I said in my first article in the Taos News on December 21, 2023, I had never experienced Antisemitism in Taos until now. The global enmity toward Israel and Jews is more intense than any time in this century. It is a time to stand together. My commitment and love for our Taos Jewish community has never been stronger. I am proud and gratified that we have maintained our solidarity, support and love for each other during these troubled times. Unfortunately, it appears that a true resolution to the conflict is not within sight in the foreseeable future. We must stay close with each other. We must speak from our hearts. We must make our voices heard.*

**Bruce Grossman**

My wife and I were looking forward to the Matisyahu concert on Valentine's day at Meow Wolf in Santa Fe. Neither of us had seen the American Jewish reggae performer before and because of all the turmoil in Israel and Gaza we were both excited to hear him. His song, "One Day," has become an anthem for so many Jews caught in this unbearable and existential conundrum—The Israel-Gaza War. When we arrived at the door, we were told that the concert was cancelled due to "safety concerns and staff shortages." We quickly found out that Pro-Palestinian groups had worked to stir up fears and were responsible for closing the show.

Matisyahu stated on X:

*"They do this because they are either anti-Semitic or have confused their empathy for the Palestinian people with hatred for someone like me who holds empathy for both Israelis and Palestinians. It is truly a sad day when dialogue with those you disagree with is abandoned for hate mongering and silencing artistic expression."*

The cancellation angered and saddened us. The hate and the vitriol felt personal. The degree of misunderstanding, simplification and narrow-mindedness grows by the day as does the death and destruction. Hatred runs rampant around the globe. The level of revulsion that both sides have for each other has poisoned the well of reason.

Even the American Jewish population is split and conflicted.

The problem(s) started more than 2,000 years ago. After living in the land of Israel for more than a thousand years, the Jewish nation was destroyed by the Roman Empire in 70 AD and most of the Jews fled to other parts of North Africa and Europe. A remnant of that population remained and has lived in Israel since then.

Meanwhile, Jews lived on the fringes of other cultures and depending on the tolerance of the regimes, either flourished or were brutally persecuted over the next two millennia. Intense periods of persecution happened during the Spanish Inquisition and in Russia during 19th and early 20th century. Hatred of Jews and bizarre conspiracy theories about Jews continue today. Anti-Semitic ideology culminated with the Holocaust in Germany when more than six million Jews were murdered.

Following the Holocaust, it became clear to many Jewish leaders that only Jews would protect and safeguard other Jews. Zionism, a movement dedicated to resettling the land of Israel as a Jewish homeland, started in the early 19th century. European Jews began returning to Israel to join the small extant population in what was then called Palestine.

After World War I, Palestine came under the control of England. Previously it had been governed by the Ottoman Empire (Turkey). The political and historical events between 1919 and 1948 when Israel became a nation have been interpreted by thousands of writers and historians. The narrative ranges from a story of a people (Jews) finally returning to their historical birthplace, to the Nakba, the catastrophe, the loss of the Palestinian homeland. Suffice it to say that both Peoples have justification for their cause. The reality at hand is that millions of Jews and Palestinians live side by side and there is a brutal war taking place.

Moral leadership is lacking on both sides of this conflict.

The Netanyahu government is the most intolerant, right-wing administration in Israeli history. For twenty years this administration has shown no serious interest in creating a two-state solution.

Hamas, the elected leadership in Gaza is a savage terrorist organization whose charter openly

advocates the death and destruction of Israel and its people. The October 7th murders were a preview of what they say they want to do again. Hamas is fundamentalist Islamic group that subjugates women and is intolerant toward LGBTQ people. They knew exactly what would happen to innocent people in Gaza after their brutal attack on October 7.

I grieve the loss of innocent lives along with millions around the world. There has been too much killing. 30,000 is too many. 1200 is too many. One death is too many. There needs to be a “Cease Fire Now.” And there needs to be a release of the hostages now.

There needs to be a guarantee of Israel’s right to exist now. There needs to be a path to a two-state solution now. And there needs to be a recognition of equal rights for both peoples now.

Is Hamas ready to accept these proposals? Is Israel? Let’s hope so.

***Bruce Grossman***



Anti-Semitism rages.  
The disbelief and tears. The reoccurrence  
of the mob of so familiar through Jewish  
history. The despair of otherness.

***Carmi Plaut***



## “SO, WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A DIASPORA JEWISH LEADER IN THESE TIMES?”

Discussion topic during IJS Hevraya 2024, on the first evening of Rabbi Retreat

I am like bubble gum, stretched beyond all my limits  
Pulled, twisted, chomped on and chewed,  
I am the color of dinner's neon pink dairy-free dessert  
A vibrant reminder that all is illusion as we hopscotch across the frozen  
abyss  
Melting into chaos.

I am colored Barbie Pink  
Here to tell you that if you think it's impossible to be a woman,  
Try being a Woman Rabbi.  
I am stretched beyond the limits of any yoga pose,  
One foot glued to my Malibu community  
Where matrons moan over the slights and snubs of a rising anti-Semitism  
that refuses to be funded into submission  
While the other leg seeks traction on the icy slopes of Taos.  
Ceasefire! Genocide! Murderers of Children!  
My congregation explodes, bombarded by words,  
Ripped apart by slogans and phrases empty of meaning.  
Where do we stand? How do we fall?  
What does it mean to be a Taos Jew?

My elastic legs are immobile, frozen by commitment,  
But my arms stretch even further to my home across the sea.  
“If I forget thee O Jerusalem”? My tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth.  
I am struck dumb as the horrors unfold.  
The angel ash of children burned in their beds?  
There is no speech and there are no words.  
Even an aleph is silent.

((in the words of another J. Halevi)  
“My heart is in the East, and I am in the West”  
My own heart lies shattered on the desert floor, assailed by silent screams  
In this dance field of Holy Apples  
Young, juicy, apples cling to trees in silence,  
Only to be discovered raped and burned  
My muteness is dumbstruck.

The solid ground of my life has vanished.  
CNN,ABC,CBS – letters without meaning offer meaningless husks of words  
Hamas, kibbutz, hostage, genocide ,  
Ceasefire, River and the Sea.  
Words empty of meaning spill from the screen,  
Tumbling into a distorted chaos called The Present  
We are all caught up in the World Wide Web.  
The web is stretched to breaking point, more holes than wholeness.  
Israel clings to the web's shards, hovering over the abyss,  
As America, Russia, China, Iran pull the strings.

Soon they too snap and break, ripped apart by corruption and greed.  
We are all dangling by a splintering thread.

And at the center of the web sits Spider Woman.

She has had enough.

She opens her gigantic mouth, inhales

And sucks the web's remnants into her yawning maw.

Spider Woman shrieks and falls backwards, falling,

Falling into the black hole of *tehom* (1)

Falling into the dark void of *Bilimah* (2)

Falling into the *Ain*

Sof. (3)

The end.

But wait. Endless time that is no time passes. Nothing exudes a something,  
Something that looks suspiciously like bubble gum.

And then, THE WORD

.....**V'YAH OR...**

### **LET THERE BE LIGHT**

The gum glows, the form forms, an atom, a leaf , the sea

Spider Woman centers herself and begins to spin once more,

Weaving a fragile hope for a better new world.

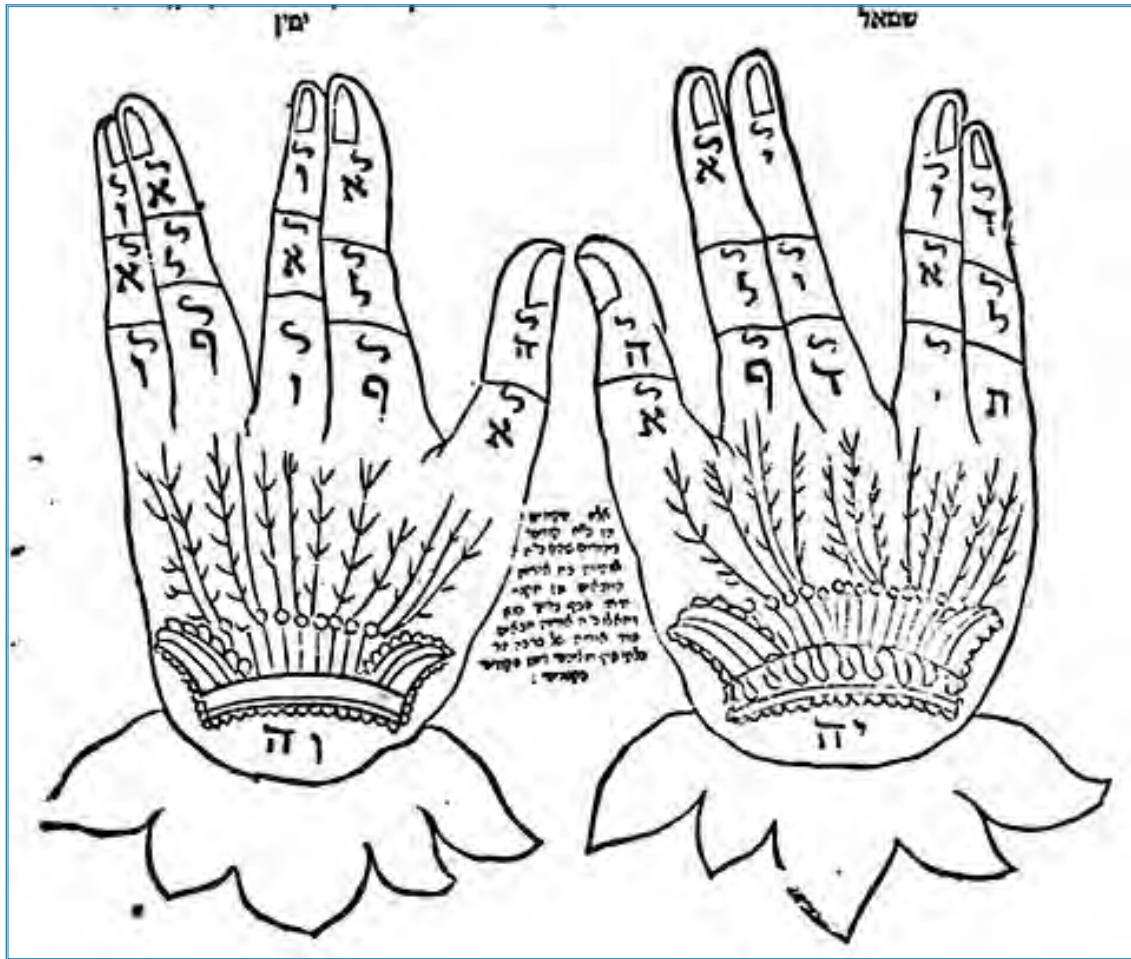
1. *Tehom*. The chaos before formation of the first atoms

2. *Bilimah*. Emptiness, nothing

3 *Ain Sof*. The primal force of creation, literally without end

***Rabbi Judith HaLevy***





*La bendición de los sacerdotes judíos tal como se descifra en un texto del siglo XVII llamado Sefer Shefa' tal — Rabbi Shabtai Sheftel ben Akiva Horowitz (1565-1619).*

The blessing of the Jewish priests as deciphered in a 17th century text called *Sefer Shefa' tal* - Rabbi Shabtai Sheftel ben Akiva Horowitz (1565-1619).

Researched and submitted by Kohenet Ilana Joy Streit to [OpenSiddur.org](https://opensiddur.org/?p=53388) <<https://opensiddur.org/?p=53388>>, a volunteer-driven, non-profit, non-denominational, non-prescriptive, gratis & libre Open Access archive of contemplative praxes, liturgical readings, and Jewish prayer literature (historic and contemporary, familiar and obscure) composed in every era, region, and language Jews have ever prayed. Our goal is to provide a platform for sharing open-source resources, tools, and content for individuals and communities crafting their own prayerbook (siddur). Through this we hope to empower personal autonomy, preserve customs, and foster creativity in religious culture.

This was distributed as part of an Israel Palestine Empathy kit, with empathy guidelines for Israelis and Jews, Palestinians and Muslims.

Submitted to HaKol by **Rabbi Chavah Carp**

## GRAPHICS BY CARMİ PLAUT

*Carmi's new website is <https://artbycarmi.com>*

The graphics here are from his Broken Arts series, found on the website with many more graphics.

This illustration reflects Herzl as a metaphor for Zionism under fire, under attack. Theodor Herzl was the founding father of modern day Zionism, a political movement for the establishment of a national homeland in the ancestral land of Israel, a home and refuge for Jews everywhere.

Herzl's stoic glare is that of self-determination with an inner and outer strength. A faded smoke-covered Star of David is in the sky above. The people gathering burning is a disturbing image, but an ever present part of our world and psyche. A narrative on anti-Israel, anti-Semitic hate speech and violence. We often hear words like 'Racists', 'Colonists', 'Nazis'...all becoming a common pejorative anti-Jew, anti-Zionist language.

A portrait of Herzl as a survivor with hope, in the face of darkness.



Destroyer, butcher of Gaza...hiding amongst hungry children. Hands and faces of civilians desperately holding, reaching out their empty bowls. I intertwined the Hebrew words, *גִּבּוֹרֵי יְשׁוּעָה*, The Human Shields. The use of human shields is forbidden by the Geneva Convention and is considered a war crime as well as a violation of humanitarian law.

I pictured Sinwar\*, hiding in and emerging from the empty bowls, his hand stained with blood. Placing the children alongside as hungry shields with little regard for the people of Gaza. A tragic daily commentary.

\* Yahya Sinwar is accused of masterminding the deadliest terror attack in Israeli history, on Oct. 7, 2023, when 1200 Israelis were killed. Sinwar has led Hamas, the Sunni Islamist political and military organization that rules the Gaza Strip, since 2017. In 1989 an Israeli court sentenced Sinwar to four life sentences for his role in killing suspected Palestinian informers and plotting to murder two Israeli soldiers.

Sinwar spent the following 22 years in prison and was one of more than 1,000 Palestinian detainees who were released in 2011 in exchange for one Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, who had been held hostage by Hamas for five years.

At the time of his imprisonment, Sinwar headed Hamas' infamous internal security arm, Al-Majd and according to Israeli and Palestinian sources his job was to investigate members of Hamas who were working with the Israelis. Sinwar boasted during his interrogations about killing suspected Palestinian informants with "a razor blade and a machete."

Sinwar is believed to be bunkered in the warren of tunnels beneath Khan Younis, the city in southern Gaza where he was born in 1962 into a family that had been forced out of the Palestinian town of Majdal, now Ashkelon, in the wake of Israel's 1948 war for independence.

*Sources: ABC News and Washington Post.*



The displaced children and families of both sides. Trauma, survivor, uncertainty, fear and remembrance. I split this illustration to accent the psychological tearing inside and out.

***“The diamonds are in our hands....”*** The IDF special forces were recorded saying during the uncover raid hostage raid and rescue. Referred to as precious like diamonds. Louis Mar and Fernando Marman, from Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak, were held captive for 129 days. Amazing heroism and compassion of the soldiers. The forces sheltered them with their bodies during gunfire, a soldier gave his boots to Har who was extracted barefoot and dramatically ushered them to a makeshift helipad toward home, and to the hospital. How beautiful to hear the recorded video enflight.. hearing a soldier comfort the liberated men with the words “we love you”. The illustration shows the hostages hugging their partners just after reunion, during a surrealistic moment of disbelief and joy. “My heart is now whole”.

Inside the raised up Torah is a story of joy, of compassion, of liberation, of an ongoing struggle and of love. The two diamonds sit on top of each gem covered Torah scroll, as electrifying light shines throughout. A backdrop of the diamond faceted sky, mixed in with the darkness of smoke and destruction of surrounding city. The power of light in darkness. The soldier stands within hope, gratitude, triumphant.

*“Pukach Nefesh,”* saving a soul, saving a life, saving the entire world.” A Talmudic teaching and Jewish principle.



***Carmi Plaut***

## IN THE ARMS OF ANGELS: A HEALING PRAYER FOR THOSE RAPED BY HAMAS

You are now in the arms of angels.  
Soldiers who touched  
the most sacred part of your body  
did nothing to your soul.

The holy breath of angels remained  
with you who were tortured and left naked  
by Hamas the seventh of October.  
Angels bless all who have been raped.

Fourteen year old girls splayed open  
before they were killed;  
Every woman whose body has been  
plundered  
when rape has been a weapon of war.

Let us build a mikvah  
wide enough for all,  
for we are one body.

The only hands that will touch you now  
will be the hands of angels.

Angels will guard you with their wings.  
No soldier  
No terrorist  
will ever claim a woman's beauty as his own.  
Women's beauty belongs to Shechinah.

Let every child be safe.  
Archangel Michael, protect them.  
Archangel Raphael, heal them.  
Let beauty be honored as a treasure so rare  
it will only be touched by someone  
who has bathed in the waters of prayer.  
Let us be made holy again  
by remembering each other's names.

We were all born from the breath of G-d,  
created from the dust of stars.  
Whatever we do together until the end of time  
began as a holy act of creation.

Let us never again forget  
that we were not born for war.  
We were born from love and for love.

We were born to be a blessing  
to each other  
to this earth.

☆

*Mikvah*: in Judaism a pool of natural water in which  
one bathes for the restoration of ritual purity.

*Shechinah*: Hebrew name for the feminine indwelling  
presence of the Divine.

***Debora Seidman***

Taos, New Mexico

December, 2023-January 2024



***Carmi Plaut***

## **AT THE CEASEFIRE MARCH**

**Dressed in black they show their beliefs.  
Nothing will deter them  
They are masters unto themselves  
Whole and untrammelled by  
The smallness of their knowledge,  
The greatness of world events.**

**Then Monday arrives  
The college gates open  
They are you and me with  
All their fallacies falling by the wayside,  
Innocent Tik Tok faces  
Between friends.**

(c) ***Sarah Newfeld-Green***

January 21, 2024

(after joining the Ceasefire March (pro-Palestine) in  
San Luis Obispo, Sat. January 20, 2024



***Bobbi Shapiro***

## GAZA DIARY: ALIA IS ALIVE— FOR NOW!

With 2% charge left on her cell, Alia texted me on October 10th, 2023 to thank me for caring and to say goodbye. She lives in Gaza City and did not know if she would survive the threatened Israeli onslaught. “Three days ago, no thoughts of war crossed my mind, but life has its own plans,” she wrote on a WhatsApp text.

I met Alia through We are Not Numbers (WANN) an international writing project that pairs young writers with mentors who help polish their stories for publication in English.

When Hamas violently breached the wall separating Gaza from Israel and the rest of the world, most of the writers were attending university. Alia was one class away from completing her undergraduate degree in literature and translation. For an isolated enclave, Gaza had incredibly high levels of literacy, but after months of bombing, academic institutions and schools have been reduced to rubble. At least 94 professors have been killed, including the president of Islamic University, Alia’s school.

We have been writing, texting and talking for one year. At first we were strangers, connected through a fragile electronic umbilical chord while navigating the syntax and vocabulary of English. Now Alia now signs her texts— “love, your spirit daughter.”

After evacuating their home in Gaza City, Alia’s family of nine, took refuge in a small village near Rafah. The current situation is dire— insufficient food, water, warm clothing, lack of doctors, hospitals and medicine. I worry when I don’t hear from her. Communication is handicapped by the lack of electricity. Charging cell phones at specified solar stations is a dangerous undertaking.

During times of silence, I write to her, so when the power came back, she’ll know I have not forgotten her. I tell her about the marches, rallies, protests, phone calls, sit-ins and die-ins happening from the Statue of Liberty to Grand Central Station, to the Seattle Space Needle, to in front of the White House. People are demanding an immediate cease fire and humanitarian aid.

On October 20, I lit Sabbath candles and prayed for Alia’s safety. The devastation inflicted by the Israeli army was unimaginable: ice cream trucks used as makeshift morgues; premature babies removed from incubators that no longer provided

warmth, doctors operating without anesthesia or lights, bodies littering streets of concrete rubble that had just been churches, hospitals, mosques, schools and apartment buildings.

On November 12th, I finally got a text. Alia had been cut off from the world for 20 days, but kept a diary. She’s the only writer I’ve heard from since October 7th. She reminded me of myself at twenty— questioning everything. But my self-exploration happened in the streets of Paris. Alia’s coming-of-age is happening in a traditional Muslim society ruled by a political party she was too young to have ever voted for. She turned 23 in January and wants to become a writer and a journalist. She dreams of travel, but lives under an Israeli military occupation in “the world’s largest open-air prison.” She has no passport, and is a citizen of no country.

Diary Excerpts:

Oct. 17, “Like most people, we evacuated our home in Gaza City. We’re staying with my uncle in the south where it’s safer— we hope.

I’m living my grandma’s life—waking to the sounds of a rooster, not having internet, or even a T.V. But my grandma had it better—she had water. Somedays there isn’t enough water to cook with, wash dishes, or ourselves. Doing laundry is a luxury. We’re also running out of fuel, and food. Sleeping with 66 people in a tiny house is another new experience. I feel like Gazans are just numbers.

Nov. 29. My friend Yousif has died. He was only 20. He was a psychologist, guitarist, writer and poet. There was a lot of ink left in him. Maybe he’s somewhere I don’t know. Is Paradise a myth?

More news. My friend Esraa got out of the rubble—with her family. They survived. But did they? Another friend, Rama lost her parents and brothers. I hope she found a safe place, but I don’t know of a safe place in Gaza.

I just found out Mohammed Hamo lost his soul. He was one of those people you knew from



the first moment you would become friends. An Israeli airstrike killed him, his father and brothers. I didn't cry when I found out but just before I slept, I felt like throwing up. He was one of the purest souls I ever met.

I didn't cry when Israel bombed my university at the beginning of the war. It felt silly to cry over a building when people are losing families. When I think, I get panic attacks. My father says, "Count your blessings." He says look at what you have, but about this war he said, "There is no future here."

Borders are closed. At the beginning of the war, it cost \$1,000 to get out. Now it's up to \$5,000. My mother is trying to get us into Jordan where she lives but we don't know if Jordan will accept us. She knows we can be killed at any moment. She tells me to read the Quran, but paper cannot fix anything. The remedy is practical. The prophet says we have to work for things to happen.

It gets colder every day. Food has become expensive. We have no fuel so we cook with wood. Tap water is not always available, so we borrowed a tank from our neighbor and filled it from a well. We buy drinking water. Some of it is clean, some is contaminated. We no longer have snacks but we have oranges!

We are down to 40 people living in this small house. We wake up, search for food, eat, then go back to sleep, just like animals. I sometimes think dying would be better. I wanted to write that I wish I was born somewhere else but being Palestinian is intertwined with me. Palestine gave me life."

Alia went silent—again. Internet and phone signals were cut for the fourth time since October 7. When Israel started bombing southern Gaza where Alia and her family had taken refuge, I worried for their safety. But on the first night of Chanukah, a miracle happened—Alia texted she was alive, and wondered why she hadn't heard from me. I dared not tell her I had lost hope!

In 1967, I survived the Six-Day War under the protection of a Palestinian family living in East Jerusalem. Growing up in a Jewish family in NYC, I was an unlikely witness to the conquering of historic Palestine and the onset of military

occupation. When armed Israeli soldiers searched our house for weapons, my Palestinian friends begged me to tell the soldiers— I am American. I am Jewish. And these are my friends. Poignant graffiti on the Separation Wall running between Israel and the occupied West Bank reads: Friends cannot be Separated. I believe that.

I am currently hoping to secure a student visa for Alia to attend the University of New Mexico. It would be a miracle and a gift for both of us if that could happen. Alia's beloved professor, role model, and second father was killed on December 7, 2023. Dr. Refaat Alareer was renown intellectual and poet who presciently penned this poem days before his death.

If I must die,  
you must live  
to tell my story  
to sell my things,  
to buy a piece of cloth  
and some strings,  
(make it white with a long tail)  
so that a child, somewhere in Gazal  
while looking heaven in the eye  
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze—  
and bid no one farewell  
not even to his flesh  
not even to himself—  
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up  
labove  
and thinks for a moment an angel is there  
bringing back love  
If I must die  
let it bring hope  
let it be a tale.

The way forward is clear. The foundations of mutual existence are clearly laid out in international humanitarian law. I have a dream. Israel/Palestine becomes a place where all people living between the river and the sea feel safe in their home, school, and place of worship— no exceptions. A secure Israel demands Palestinian freedom.

<http://www.wearenotnumbers.org>

***Iris Keltz in New Mexico and  
Alia Kassab in Gaza***



A Peace Fantasy. A dream of a mixed breed, a coexisting world.  
I blended a Orthodox Jewish attire with a traditional Arab garb.  
A dream to grasp.

***Carmi Plaut***



*Joyful*  
*Katherine Soskin*

## DELICIOUS RECIPES FROM CHEF CAROLE LEVY

### Sunflower Pâté

#### For the pâté:

- 1 cup raw sunflower seeds, soaked and drained
- 8-10 cornichons (or dill gherkins)
- 1 small shallot, chopped
- 2 tsp capers
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 T fresh lemon juice + zest from the lemon
- 1 - 5.3 oz plain unsweetened plant yogurt

#### For the lettuce cups:

- 1 small head of butter lettuce or Belgian endive, washed and leaves separated
- 1 small cucumber, sliced into thin rounds
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded, thinly sliced
- 2-3 T of chopped fresh herbs, such as dill, chives, tarragon, flat-leaf parsley
- ½ cup of cherry tomatoes, cut in half (I like using multicolored)
- 1 small red onion, sliced thinly
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges



#### Instructions:

1. **Making the pâté:** Cover the seeds with water and soak for 4-6 hours, or, preferably, overnight. Strain the seeds, rinse well under running water.
2. Combine all the pâté ingredients in a food processor and process to a fine texture.
3. Taste, add zest to bring up flavor, and if needed add some lemon juice.
4. **Assembling:** Arrange the lettuce cups/endive on a plate with the round side down so each leaf forms a cup.
5. Place sliced red peppers and a dollop of the pâté inside each leaf.
6. Top with cherry tomatoes, cucumber, red onion. Scatter the chopped herbs and serve with lemon wedges. Store in an airtight container for 3-5 days.

#### Chef's note:

- ◆ Pâté is a delicious spread on toast, with lettuce, tomatoes, sliced avocado.
- ◆ You can also make pâté with a combination of pumpkin and sunflower seeds.

## Potato Fennel and Garlic Soup

### Ingredients:

2 leeks, white and light green parts only  
8 garlic cloves, peeled and cut in half  
1 cup celery, sliced  
2 lbs fennel bulb, trimmed, washed and diced  
1½ lbs Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and diced  
1 bay leaf  
4 large sprigs fresh thyme  
8 cups vegetable broth (no added salt)  
¼ tsp black pepper, freshly ground  
Any plant-based milk (optional)



### Instructions:

1. Halve the leeks lengthwise and rinse away any grit. Thinly slice the leeks crosswise.
2. In a large soup pot over medium-high heat, sauté the leeks in water or broth, and cook until leeks are soft and golden brown, stirring frequently. Stir in the garlic for the last few minutes of cooking.
3. Add the celery, fennel, potatoes, bay leaf, and sprigs of fresh thyme.
4. Stir the vegetables, and then add the vegetable broth.
5. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce immediately to medium-low heat.
6. Simmer soup until the potatoes are very tender and are falling apart after about 30-45 minutes. Taste.
7. Remove the bay leaf and sprigs of thyme. (It is okay if the thyme falls off and remains in the soup.)
8. Blend the soup until smooth with an immersion blender, or work in small batches and ladle into a blender.
9. Return the soup to the pot, and add chopped fennel fronds and fresh black pepper.

### Chef's notes:

- ◆ Save the fennel fronds as these will be chopped and added to the soup. They can also be served as garnish.
- ◆ Add a small amount of plant-based milk for a creamy, smoother texture.

## Mushroom Carnitas

### Ingredients:

- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 jalapeño, thinly sliced
- 12 oz mushrooms (white or cremini), sliced
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 2 tsp lime juice
- 1 T soy sauce, tamari for gluten-free option, or coconut aminos for soy-free option

### For carnitas spices:

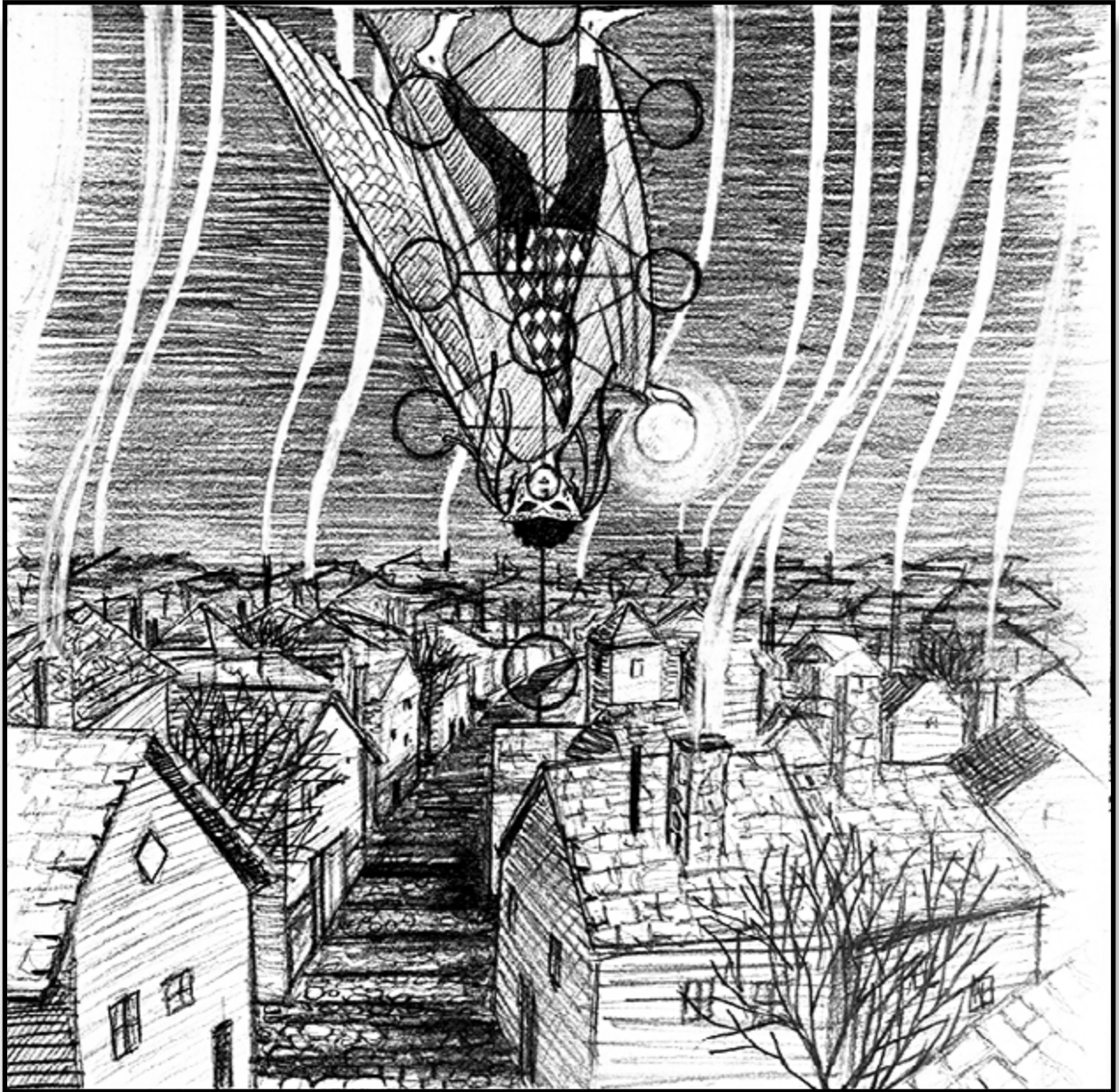
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp oregano
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp or more chipotle pepper
- 1-2 tsp chili powder



### Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and line a baking dish with parchment paper.
2. Put sliced onions and mushrooms in a mixing bowl.  
Add orange juice, lime and soy sauce. Mix thoroughly.  
Let sit and marinate for 10-15 minutes, or cover and chill for an hour.
3. Mix spice mixture and sprinkle over mushrooms. Toss well to coat.
4. Drop the mushroom mixture onto the lined baking dish.  
Spread to make an even layer.
5. Bake for 30 minutes.  
Halfway, toss and make sure mushroom edges are not burning!  
(If you think mushrooms are cooking too fast, lower the heat to 350°F.  
Cooking time depends on the thickness of sliced mushrooms.)
6. Serve in tacos or wraps or in a bowl with avocado/guacamole, salsa and beans.





Walking upside down  
***Sam Goldstein***

## FOUR POEMS BY JOAN LOGGHE

### *Miscellaneous Pesach Unleavened Memories*

At the country club in Florida, my mother showing off my kids. The whole Seder on a two sided piece of paper. I can do that and I did.

Or the time we gathered on Canyon Rd at Judy Chicago's house, she thought we had to rewrite the Hagaddah but I never got the memo.

My widowed mother came and rented a white car we drove to Judy's house, I could name the guests They tarred the road, thus spattering the rental with tar.  
Hope was a baby.

The year my friend's uncle came, a retired pediatrician and a moyal. I knew my brother, of blessed memory would appreciate that, oh, our resilient people. Attacks again in all directions this very day. Maybe it's time to write a new Hagaddah

Mike on the kibbutz before year we met. The volunteers cleaned up all the leftover wine x left by the kibbutzniks, it became their problem.

Or all the years with Scott and Julie, hearing Lauren's story of Elijah who came to fix the washing machine for 7 dollars and change, when she had exactly seven dollars on hand, oh chariot of fire let children and parents speak sweetly, quench the urge for war and territory, drink wine and sing off key, but sing. Next year in Kiev, At the house with a dozen close friends, Miriam was here, it fell on Good Friday, like this year the highway thick with pilgrims and she wrote about them.

Two or three years at Four Winds restaurant owned by Jack Blum's son. We brought the food and the wine, they supplied the plates and the room we washed our hands and dried each finger gently. the forsythia bloomed. one year Benjamin and Rabia played the violin and sang in Aramaic

or Taos at a church, just a nice second day in a Taos casual sort of way. My dear Chavah is the rabbi spoke of the cousins, Israelis and Palestinians cousins, she says holding in her own hand, a Seder for peace.

Women's seder at Beth Shalom, a table of women after Miriam's timbrels and story, I make friends Jewish and interdenominational women

desperate times, 2020, we Zoom. I thought I'd never see my kids again. They were in the bath in Pittsburgh when I called. I had a Seder plate, candles, parsley and flowers,

Hope had matzoh, thus born the bathtub seder. Some were offended, others said the sea parted. May this plague recede

The young Jews grow old, child by child grow tall, learns the story and reads the Four Questions.

Clashes still occur in Israel. How many years do we say "next year in..." some warring place? singing Dayenu all day, beyond Dayenu and into Halleluyah





## ***Visitation***

God is invading my privacy,  
talks to me in the movies,  
grabs my attention away from the screen. .  
Tells me He's just catching up with me  
Special Special Special.

I asked if my mezuzah was clean enough  
He sings the sweetest schmaltzy  
song in Yiddish. A language I don't know  
but my grandmother, a woman  
I never met, knows, as do the ghosts.

Oy is the Aum of the shtetl  
I was not allowed to say Oy  
out of the house or I'd be seen.  
I love like a convert and God  
won't take my money but shows up

sunrise and Kodosh Kodosh Kodosh.  
God pays well, freelance, a creative,  
gig culture. He owes me  
Gelt or Pay Pal, or cash or crypto  
currency from the Crypto Jews.

If the angels walk in from the Badlands  
these hoodoo hoodlums in my distant vision  
I say, Hey God.  
Two angels walked in  
from the Badlands, how can it be?  
Is it you, intrusive elusive God?

## ***SLIPPERY***

Time is so slippery.  
By the time I think about the sour cream  
it expired in August and Now it's October  
slamming on its brakes cause November is here  
and my niece's birthday and the due date  
only two months away then, as it skids  
around the bend at the corner of this year  
and next. And remember that girl in Canada  
who said time gets faster when you age  
she was selling me a Timex  
and I asked her what she knew about time.  
I pooh poohed her statement and said  
get back to me when you're old  
which I now truly am  
and she's probably forty five  
and thinks she is old and time is fast  
but she never was seventy as I am  
and my husband and I joke  
that every ten minutes it's Friday  
but really it's next month already  
and the sour cream sits open on the counter  
ready to cool down the hot green chile stew

## *April in Santa Fe*

This is the city for poets. You'd think, Paris,  
but I say here, just inside the library door  
where magazines wait to be recycled into new  
hands, where in the stacks the poets snuggle up

against one another, paperback by hard  
cover, living by dead, they hum between  
themselves, they speak in a frequency  
heard only by readers.

And on the Plaza the poems wait  
to be written down. They are suspended  
in the air, a hacky sack flying from foot  
to foot, a man looking down from a balcony,

a cash register tallying up the tax on a strand  
of jewelry, liquid silver and jet. And the paintings  
on the walls of the museums,  
or sculpture in gardens  
just words away from saved and savored.

How this city is held afloat by art astounds  
my lovely Wisconsin relatives  
held intact by milk and road repair.  
They are driving off with turquoise stud earrings  
for the grand daughters.

The birds bank and cycle above their rented car  
and I am left here, my pen filled with ink  
to immortalize  
which means don't let this moment die.  
City of poems, City of poets,  
archiving the spring air, tracing the holy  
pollen count which after all makes sacred seed of  
tree.  
The birdsong of Thursday, the vibrations left in the  
wake of artists who gather like iron filings

around this magnet of place. The ticket holders,  
the tourists,  
the local girl who never went to a museum  
before and now, skipping through bird and tulip,  
it's her poem.

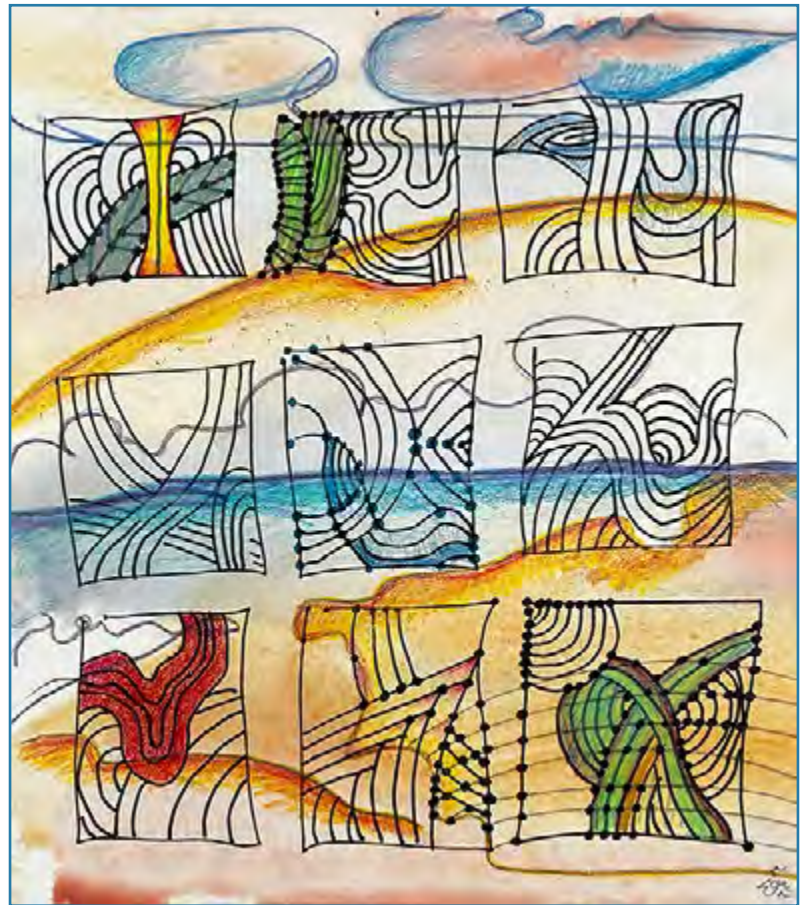
A little no capital letters e.e. cummings of a boy,  
a large fat-lady-singing of a woman  
and this Opera is not over,  
it keeps singing Spring, spring, spring  
and in Sena Plaza  
the waiters can't help but burst Broadway

over the crowns of poppy waiting for their clock  
of scarlet to tick open.  
On the Plaza my friend Sunny  
selling glass earrings and barrettes.  
Have you noticed  
I mean how can you help but notice?  
How many generations of souls  
from Santo Domingo or Santa Clara,  
sat under the portal through years and winters  
for the arrival of April,  
in this holy city where April  
is never cruel, though windy and more than deep.

Saint Francis making us all into  
instruments of His Peace.  
Poets accumulate to jot down the aha of place,  
the jolt of jonquil, white bark of aspen, nuance  
of sunset on the Cathedral.

Any place can be Paris, my old teacher said.  
And in the library, I check out books, the delicate  
arm of the librarian tattooed with apple blossoms.

*Joan Logghe*

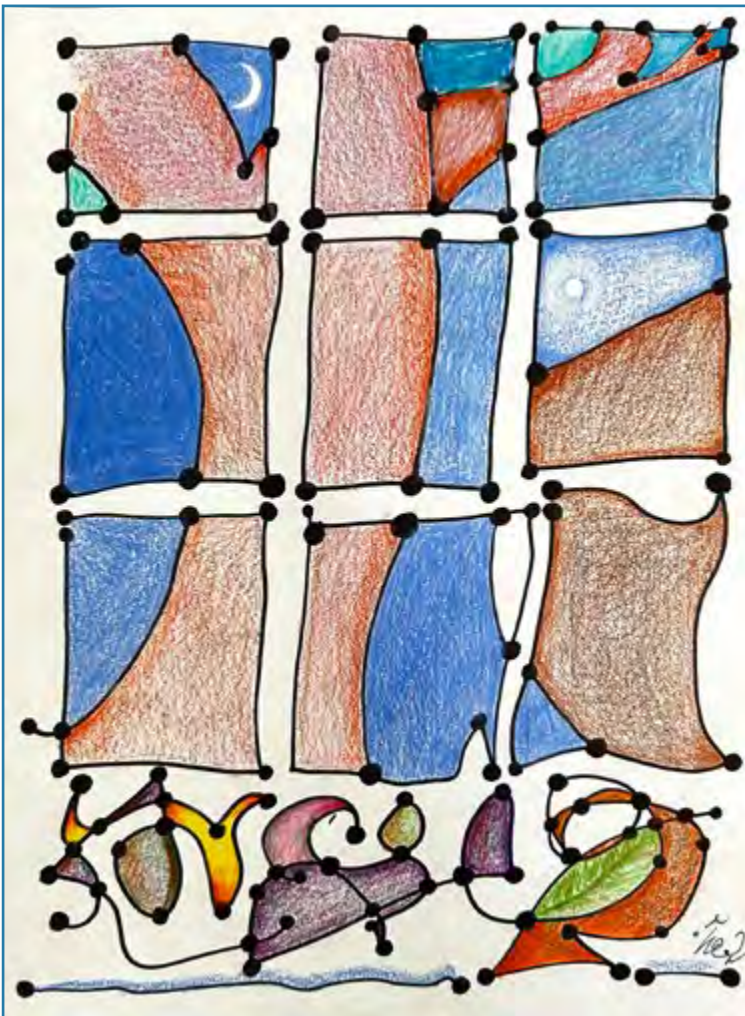


## NEW WORK FROM BOBBI SHAPIRO

*Fruition*, the upper right painting is a “Memorial to the January 6th insurrection, which changed USA and all the world pivoting on a dime. It’s a memorial that insists on the present moment as it says Now.

“Well here’s an interesting thought: I began to call my precious Ram Das mantra of Be Here Now to Be Here Now-ish. Now-ish is more realistic than now, because the moment even the most experienced meditator thinks she’s here now, another speedy moment has gone by and you’re already in the future without knowing it.

*Bobbi Shapiro*



## JEWISH PORTUGAL

Leaving my studio apartment in Porto, Portugal, the first thing I see is a 13th century wall called Muralha Fernandina, part of the defensive battlements of this maritime city.

To my left is the Escalera Guindais, mural-lined 265 steps (Porto is very steep) leading down to the Douro River, which was once a major waterway for transporting wine and olive oil from the Douro Valley to the Gaia, across the river where famed port wine has been produced since the 17th century.

Nowadays, you cross the river on a bridge built by Gustav Eiffel (one of six bridges that cross the Douro) by train or on foot — a favorite activity of tourists and locals alike.

I love to travel. I prepare by studying the country's language, as well as its history and how all that shapes its people, their ideas and values. Those who travel with me tend to find me exhausting, but I'm unsatisfied to passively take in my surroundings. Traveling alone, I look to engage with people — it makes for a fine trip.

I didn't expect to be drawn into the history of anti-Semitism in Portugal. Blame it on our TJC library, where I borrowed a novel by American-Portuguese novelist and scholar, Richard Zimler, called *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon*. (Thank you, Bruce Grossman, for donating the book!) Zimler weaves a multi-generational story of life during the Inquisition in some gory, grim detail. Zimler has lectured on this grotesque time, pointing out that the gold and jewels that bedeck Portugal's magnificent church interiors derived from Jewish expulsion and confiscation of wealth.

Jews have been in Portugal for a long time. Legends place Jews on the Iberian peninsula during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in the 6th century BCE, during the reign of King Solomon in 900s BCE, even in Phoenician maritime trade. We were present during the Roman Era, then persecuted by the Visigoths, as well as other European Christian kingdoms that controlled the region. The Moors' invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century CE began what has been seen as the region's Gold Age of Jewish Culture. The advanced characteristics of Jewish culture — high degree of literacy, studies in medicine, cosmology, astrology, for example — set us apart from the population at large, and attracted the interest of royalty, while fueling resentment from the Catholic power structure.





By the 12th century, when Portugal became an independent kingdom, Jews were pivotal in maritime trade, particularly in warehousing, providing local supplies and pharmaceuticals, and other commodities from distant shores, such as luxury goods. Portugal's naval preeminence was funded in large part by Jewish taxation, while its maritime trade growing from the Mediterranean to northern Europe.

Jews became the intellectual and economic elite of the country, involved in all aspects of exproation, employed as cartographers, financiers, physicians, astronomers, tax collectors. They were given preferential treatment by the kings.

Resentment by Christians toward Jews grew, especially after the influx of Jews from Spain, whose crackdown against non-Catholics began earlier than in Portugal.

*We see the Jews on horses and mules, richly adorned with robes, thin hoods and silk tunics. They carry golden swords, wear high-quality bonnets and garnishes so that it is impossible to recognize them.*

Medieval records show Jews accused of affrontery to Christians, who enslaved them, forced them to convert, confiscated their properties and took their children from them, to be raised as Catholics. With the rise of Christian imperialism, religious tolerance always linked to economic interests.

*Jews are as necessary in a country as bakers.* This aphorism contributed to the increase of the Jewish population in Portugal. The 14th century saw Jews gaining in prestige in Portugal. There were more than 150 Jewish communities throughout the nation; every major town, village and port had a Judiaria (Jewish quarter) with its own synagogues, with the the role of the rabbi as the highest civil and religious authority of the Jewish commune, an autonomous government regional structure. Within that structure, the synagogue was headquarters for the commune's government, religious, cultural and educational life. Jews enjoyed an independence suggesting a state with the State.

Yet inconsistencies abounded. The Jewish minority was considered property of the king, who by turns (depending on who ruled) favored or abused their skills and wealth by 'grace and mercy, and not by right'.

The arrival of the Black Death (bubonic plague) in 1390 gave the Church opportunity to vent anti-Semitic anger: Jews were accused of making a pact with the devil, polluting the waters and their doctors killing the sick. Anti-Jewish riots ensued, Jewish tolerance lessened from royalty. The mendicant orders of Dominicans and Franciscans pressured Pope Gregory IX to establish the court of the Inquisition and the crime of Judaizing

(against those who had been forcibly converted but continued to secretly follow the law of Moses), following the Church's imperative of religious uniformity. It took decades for the Inquisition's impact to be thoroughly felt, but its establishment instilled anti-Semitism in the country in a way that surfaces even in modern times.

Richard Zimler tells of an abortive book interview for television he was scheduled to do at a Lisbon church that was the site of an *auto-da-fé*, in which 2000 'New Christians' were burnt in the city's main square, while Dominican priests led a mob through the streets shouting, "Death to the Jews!" and "Death to the heretics!" When his novel was published in 1996, one American reviewer noted the book forced an entire nation to re-evaluate its history with regard to Jewish presence in the country.

Two weeks before filming, the journalist called to cancel the interview. "Why? The Church diocese of Lisbon refused to allow me to enter St. Dominic's and be filmed discussing the Lisbon Massacre of 1506. Yes, 500 years after the anti-Semitic pogrom, Lisbon's Catholic hierarchy was able to censor my appearance on a television program. These officials obviously wished to hide the truth about the Church's involvement in the massacre."



I attempted to sign up for a walking tour of Porto's Jewish Quarter, but was foiled, because it required payment for a minimum of two people. So I went exploring on my own: up from the riverfront and through the narrow streets west of the Porto's

cathedral. Street names have been changed, but some street signs give clues, particularly to the Olival district, inside the old Walls.

Googling revealed that at Rua de São Miguel 9, there was once an old synagogue, referred to by the philosopher Imanuel Aboab, a 16th century Jewish scholar who wrote in one of his books that he'd attended services there as a child.

I found my way to the address, but was disappointed to see that the placard that once graced the outside wall had been removed. I left, disappointed, but on a whim stopped in at a cafe on that street whose name had the word Oriental. There, I asked a man if he knew anything about a synagogue at #9. He nodded and closed his laptop computer.

'Yes, the Catholic Church owns the building now, as it does many on this street and runs it as an old age home. But in 2003, during renovations, a *Hekhal* (an *Aron ha Kodesh*, or Holy Ark), was discovered on the ground floor — a cabinet built into the wall, facing east, where a Torah had been stored. (Archeologists in Portugal, as here, play a significant role in any reconstruction site.) The discovery of that secret synagogue site made the national news and halted work for several years, until the city's Jewish community and the Church came to a compromise.'

Now, the people who work there will grant you entry if you ask to see it (it's in the dining room). And with that he took me there and I shot some photos. One of the stones exposed has scratched into its surface the suggestion of a Tree of Life.





Today, there is one synagogue in Porto, the Kadourie Mekor Haim, largely funded by a Sephardic business man from Hong Kong, in memory of his wife whose Portuguese ancestors had fled the Inquisition. Having communicated with its administration prior to my trip, I was able to attend a Shabbat service in this Sephardic, Orthodox temple. I sat with other women behind wooden slats separating us from the men.

After the service was an elaborate kiddush (a full catered meal), which gave me the opportunity to meet and chat with several people. I met two couples from Israel — one who'd lost their home when the corridor twenty miles south of Lebanon was evacuated recently, the other who lived in Jerusalem. Both couples were attempting to migrate to Portugal. Before leaving, I excused myself to take photos in the sanctuary. I managed to get two before being sternly chastised for doing so on the Sabbath. As I was leaving, the gentleman who escorted me through the locked gate explained that the property's fence was defaced with anti-Semitic slogans weeks earlier, so security is enforced.

The rise of Naziism in Europe paralleled the fundraising and construction of the synagogue in the 1930s. At its center was a Portuguese military man, Artur Barros Basto (1887-1961) through whose efforts the so-called Rescue of the "*Marranos*" from the crypto-Jewish communities took place. During WWII, the Synagogue became a transit point and sanctuary for Jews fleeing the Nazis.



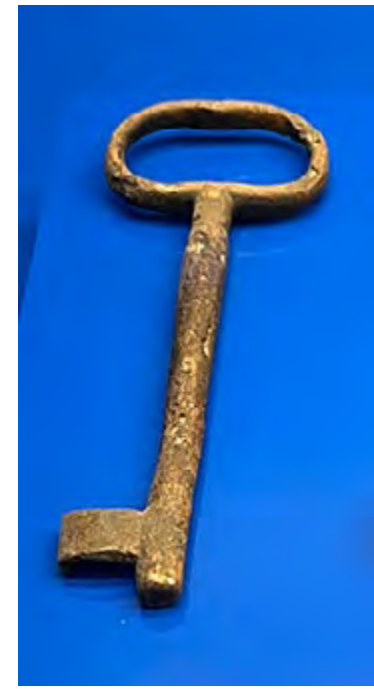
I had read that the village of Belmonte, a rural town in the hilly Beira region (where Jews first migrated at the end of the 13th century) had a vibrant community of crypto Jews whose ancestors managed to evade the Inquisition. I rented a car and, equipped with GPS and a Michelin map, drove out there — a wonderful adventure into a region I never would have seen otherwise. Almond trees were in bloom. On the hilltops I spotted ancient castles and modern wind farms.



Belmonte now has a synagogue and a museum detailing its Jewish story. Because of the remoteness of the village and the secrecy maintained by its Jewish population, some holidays blended with their Catholic ones. For example, Passover with Easter, Shavuot with Pentecost, and Sukkot with the feast of Tabernacles. They recall and celebrate Purim, Yom Kippur and the Sabbath. Jewish education was passed orally from parents to older children who could understand the need for secrecy, the women being the guardians of tradition. Matrilineal lineage has been maintained, often with members marrying their first cousins. Four women in particular are remembered in this village. I stayed overnight in one of the *Casas das Matriarcas*.

Although the Inquisition ended officially in 1831, Jewish ceremonies continued to take place in





absolute secrecy, as if they still lived in the time of the Inquisition. It was known that their Christian neighbors were aware that these practices occurred, but thankfully, they were not exposed.

In the museum, one finds keys from the 17th and 18th century — a tradition that New Christians who fled from the Inquisition left the keys of their dwelling to people they trusted, in the hope that one day they would return. The candle lights of the Lord were kept and lit inside clays pots or large pitchers.

The crypto Jews had no knowledge of Hebrew, although they knew the word *Adonai*. Men were not circumcised and dietary and domestic customs were forgotten, such as concerning cooking utensils and mixing milk and meat. (In another remote village, Jews developed a sausage called *Albeira*, which was made without pork but seasoned and smoked like pork sausage to avoid calling attention to the fact that they didn't eat pork.)

Prayers reveal the hybrid nature of their practice in isolation, having Catholic phrasing and hand gestures like those used in Muslim prayer — palms up.

Said over Shabbat candles:

*Blessed by the Lord, God Almighty, who has sent us and entrusted us with His blessed and holy orders so that we may celebrate and illuminate the Lord's holy night, so that the Lord will lighten our soul and free us from guilt, punishment and sin. Amen. Lord, go to Heaven reach Heaven.*

Every year for the Holy Feast (Easter), the crypto-Jews prepared a Holy Bread made without yeast. A prayer referring to Passover:

*Adonai, on the 14th day of the moon in March, as the day sone, Israel left Egypt, singing in harmony. Songs they sang and Lord they praised; they praised the Lord will all their hearts. They crossed the Red Sea to the Promised Land.*

In 1923, Barros Basto learned of the existence of these secret Jews, who go to church as a cover but have maintained their Jewish identity. He rode by train and horseback to find the village and returned to Porto intent to “rescue” (*resgate*) them as Jews. He contacted the Anglo Jewish Association in London, which sent a scholar to Portugal to





determine whether the international Jewry should help them.

In the meantime, Barros Basto established a Jewish Theological Institute and called for men from Beira and other remote regions to gather and learn Jewish principles, including Talmud, Torah, how to lead services, how to slaughter animals. Instructional booklets were printed. He arranged for them to be circumcised.

His efforts infuriated the priests. An anonymous letter was sent to his military superior accusing him of homosexuality and circumcision (forbidden in the military), leading to a court-martial. He was absolved of the former, expelled from the military for the latter.

Barros Basto died in 1961, but his story as the Portuguese Dreyfus had a life of its own, and in 2011 he was absolved of wrong-doing.

In 2013, Jewish and Catholic communities of Porto signed a friendship and cooperation protocol, agreeing to work together on joint charitable projects.



*Readers might like to know that there's a movie available on YouTube called Sefarad, produced by the Jewish Community in Porto. (Portuguese, with English subtitles). It dramatizes the story of Captain Artur Barros Basto, and is entertaining and informative.*

**Karen Kerschen**



*Tree of Life, by Veronica Baca  
Submitted by Katherine Soskin*

## INTERESTING LINKS AND ARTICLES

Role of Music in fostering a love of Israel

[https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/israeli-folk-music/?utm\\_source=MJL\\_Maropost&utm\\_campaign=MJL\\_Word\\_of\\_the\\_Day&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/israeli-folk-music/?utm_source=MJL_Maropost&utm_campaign=MJL_Word_of_the_Day&utm_medium=email)

Synagogue Music

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/synagogue-music/>

The Battle of Khan Younis

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/briefing/israel-hamas-war.html>

War, children and social media

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/10/12/israel-hamas-video-children-internet/>

Alma Research and Education Center: Israel at War

Comprehensive, ongoing information about the security challenges in the north, against Hezbollah, along the Lebanese border.

<https://israel-alma.org/>

Airstrikes against Yemen

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-uk-airstrikes-pound-yemen-after-weeks-of-red-sea-attacks-by-iran-backed-houthis/>

Arguments about the Genocide Convention

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-hearing-out-south-africa-and-israel-on-genocide-what-a-fair-minded-court-would-do/>

Eitan Chitayat — I'm SO down with the Yellow Star

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwTdj9Fss\\_jY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwTdj9Fss_jY)

Origin of the Mogen David

[https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/star-of-david-hot-topic/?utm\\_source=mjl\\_maropost&utm\\_campaign=MJL&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/star-of-david-hot-topic/?utm_source=mjl_maropost&utm_campaign=MJL&utm_medium=email)

Peter Beagle's Jewishness

<https://jewishreviewofbooks.com/uncategorized/5276/the-best-unicorn/>

Translations of the Bible

<https://jewishreviewofbooks.com/american-jewry/12556/from-king-james-to-koren%ef%bf%bc/>

IDF examines missteps

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-launches-internal-probes-into-missteps-misconceptions-in-lead-up-to-october-7/>

Hopes for a calm Ramadan

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-east-jerusalem-hopes-for-a-calm-ramadan-mix-with-fears-of-al-aqsa-restrictions/>

No fireworks this year

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/minister-scraps-independence-day-fireworks-show-citing-ongoing-war-in-gaza/>

London exhibit to bring the hostages home

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-790763>

Dispelling myths of Ramadan

<https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-790369>

Israel's northern border

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-03-07/ty-article/.premium/lebanon-is-waiting-for-a-ceasefire-in-gaza-to-end-its-dispute-with-israel/000018e-15ed-d8fb-abff-55eff96b0000>

Mallow, wild food foraging in Gaza

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-03-06/ty-article-magazine/.premium/khubeza-the-wild-plant-palestinians-in-gaza-are-foraging-for-amid-soaring-hunger-and-war/0000018e-13b5-d32b-ab8f-bbfd437f0000>

Haaretz Archeology and Science

<https://us18.campaign-archive.com/?e=b1038171eb&u=d3bceadb340d6af4daf1de00d&id=13c8f2e2f3>

UN weighs in on settlements

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-rights-chief-says-settlement-expansion-a-war-crime-prevents-palestinian-state/>

IDF Women

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-790797>

The Nightingale of Iran

[https://www.kveller.com/this-podcast-uncovers-a-famous-iranian-jewish-familys-incredible-story/?utm\\_source=mjl\\_maropost&utm\\_campaign=MJL&utm\\_medium=email&mpweb=1161-69399-329865](https://www.kveller.com/this-podcast-uncovers-a-famous-iranian-jewish-familys-incredible-story/?utm_source=mjl_maropost&utm_campaign=MJL&utm_medium=email&mpweb=1161-69399-329865)

Another concert canceled

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/for-3rd-time-matisyahu-concert-canceled-amid-threat-of-pro-palestinian-protests/>

Haradim responses to military draft (two articles)

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-791086>

<https://us18.campaign-archive.com/?e=b1038171eb&u=d3bceadb340d6af4daf1de00d&id=9313e0f43d>

Palestinian move to suspend Israel membership in UN

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-791091>

IDF plans war with Hezbollah in north

<https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-791067>

Watercolor building portraits

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/culture/article-790823>

Ramadan, Islam's holy month (scroll down on this webpage)

[https://people.com/human-interest/ramadan-everything-to-know/?ck\\_subscriber\\_id=2538454385&utm\\_source=convertkit&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=How%20the%20TSA%E2%80%99s%20new%20self-screenings%20work%20-%2013313132](https://people.com/human-interest/ramadan-everything-to-know/?ck_subscriber_id=2538454385&utm_source=convertkit&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=How%20the%20TSA%E2%80%99s%20new%20self-screenings%20work%20-%2013313132)

Vashti and Esther, a Feminist Perspective.

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/vashti-esther-a-feminist-perspective>

How Coca-Cola became Kosher

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/kosher-coca-cola/>

The Earthquake That Could Shatter Netanyahu's Coalition

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2024/03/orthodox-military-israel-netanyahu/677758/>

**SKY PHOTOS BY CAROLE LEVY**

