




# CHAYENU

OUR LIVES 

Temple Beth-El  
Rabbi Michael Fessler

118 S. Grand Avenue  
Poughkeepsie NY 12603

President: Russell Rothman  
<https://www.TBENY.org>

## RABBI MICHAEL'S COLUMN



At the time I write this, it's difficult to focus on anything other than the war in Gaza. Knowing that whatever insight I might offer is likely to be outpaced by events before you read this, however, I'd like to focus on a different topic, albeit one related to the Land of Israel: the holiday of Tu Bishvat, the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat, the birthday of the trees (which begins on the evening of Wednesday night, January 24<sup>th</sup> this year).

One of my earliest childhood Jewish memories is of Tu Bishvat. Tromping into my Sunday school classroom on a brisk, sub-zero Minnesota January morning, I stuffed my snowy mittens in my coat pocket. Too late, I remembered: the Tu Bishvat money I'd brought in that day to buy trees in Israel was at the bottom of the same pocket. Digging out an envelope encrusted with rapidly-melting snow, I handed it to my teacher, who opened it to rescue the soggy cash inside. "Good thing the weather's not like this in Israel," he chuckled.

"Your tree wouldn't stand a chance."

While Tu Bishvat was re-invented in the 20th century as an Israeli Arbor Day, its beginnings were much more humble. According to the Talmud, by the 15th of Shevat, trees in the Land of Israel are beginning to awaken from dormancy and begin their new year of growth. This date thus became the beginning of the new "fiscal year" for tithing of fruit and nuts

While the holiday fell into obscurity for centuries after the destruction of the Temple, it was reborn and transformed in the middle ages. Isaac Luria created a Tu Bishvat seder with four cups of wine and various types of fruit, each with a particular Kabbalistic symbolism. Eating fruit with the proper intention and words of prayer was an act of *tikkun* — repair — that brought new blessings into the world.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, that message of *tikkun* has broadened in scope. As the Jewish people returned to our homeland, Tu Bishvat became a day of rebuilding the land through tree-planting. And more recently, Tu Bishvat has also become an important time for another sort of *tikkun*: study and action regarding the relationship between humanity and the environment.

There are those who see in the Bible's creation story a theology of human mastery of creation: that the earth and its contents were given to humanity to do as we please, and that nothing we do can harm nature or diminish its abundance. However, a more careful reading of the story of the Garden of Eden points us toward responsibility: Adam was given the garden "*le-ovdah u-leshomrah*", that is, "to work it and to guard it"; or, perhaps, "to till and to tend it" (Genesis 2:15). A powerful midrash spells out our moral obligation to creation and to the future:

When God created Adam, God led him around all of the trees in the Garden of Eden. God told him, 'See how beautiful and praiseworthy are all of my works. Everything I have created has been created for your sake. Think of this and do not spoil or destroy My world; for if you spoil it, there will be no one to set it right after you.' (Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13.)

In a similar vein, Rabbi Yonatan Neril of Jerusalem's Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development writes, "Jewish tradition teaches us that we only merit the opportunity to rule the earth if we behave righteously and act as stewards of creation. This includes the spiritual discipline to use our resources wisely, and subdue with a sense of moral responsibility. In our times, we have demonstrated our ability to subdue the earth. A central question facing humanity concerns whether we will exhibit the strength to rein in our desires."

Tu Bishvat, the New Year of the Trees, gives us an opportunity to consider what we want to plant with our actions, as individuals and as a society — and what blessings or curses will grow from those decisions, both in our lifetimes and long beyond. May we choose the path of tilling, tending, and blessing.

## President's Column: by Russell Rothman

Hello all,

Over a dozen years ago, as I began my term as president at another synagogue in NJ, I remember thinking about all the issues that I had to look forward to dealing with, such as repairing a large section of roof and decaying parking lot, finding a new tenant to replace the long-term special school that moved (and which subsidized our low dues for years and helped balance our budget for nearly two decades). It turned out that these would be the least challenging issues I had to manage.

One Shabbat morning, while I was on the bima with the rabbi, the caretaker ran down the aisle and whispered in my ear to follow him outside. We slowly went out and he directed me to the bushes in front of the temple offices where he showed me several soda bottles smelling of gasoline with a rag stuffed in at the narrow top. I told him to call the police who responded immediately and I met with them outside the building. They brought in the FBI and County Police and they recovered enough evidence to catch the perpetrators who had previously targeted at least a half dozen other synagogues. The whole incident did scare a number of congregants from coming to the building, even after the bombers were captured, convicted and sent to prison.

I mention this as I start to see the end of my term as your president here, in Dutchess County. As I look back, the problems I faced a dozen or so years ago are not so different as I faced in Paramus: security, finances, shrinking membership, lack of participation, an aging building. Time passes but not much seems to change, no matter where you are.

While we have been blessed with a loyal cadre of volunteers, we have a dire need for a fresh set of hands and minds. Each of us must understand that we are neither too young or old, too inexperienced, unskilled, or too busy to stand aside and hope others will do the work. Our synagogue is run by a team of ordinary people who at some point, offered to step in and help, whether its in the kitchen, during services, planning events, working at events, or making sure the heat and A/C are working, the roof isn't leaking, making sure the cemetery is taken care of, and are finances are managed well. None of them are paid. The newsletter you are reading is edited and produced by volunteers for your benefit. Right now, we are in a dire need for a new group of people to step up and help. I will be leaving office in a few months with no apparent successor. One of our three vice presidents will be stepping down at the end of June after a long stretch of appreciated volunteer service. Our irreplaceable long time treasurer who seems to have been in office since the Nixon administration is also retiring with no apparent replacement, although we are planning to divide the responsibilities into two separate jobs. The Building, Religious, Nominating and other committees are also looking for fresh faces.

The doors can remain open without volunteers but only for so long. If Judaism is important to your life, if your children's and grandchildren's Jewish education are important to you, if a buffer from anti-semitism is important to you, if your history and culture is important to you, then I urge you to step up and volunteer. We need you. We need your time, imagination, creativity, and skills. Yeah, we need your money too but your brains, heart, and muscle is equally needed to keep things running. Plus, if you enjoy reading Chayenu, the stalwart editors can use your help as well (they really have been doing this since the Nixon administration!). They would love to pass on some responsibilities to someone who can bring a renewed vitality to our newsletter.

I have been proud to serve our congregation for the past few years and don't expect to disappear. But my one wish is to leave the synagogue in better shape than when I began and leave it in good hands. I hope you will help make TBE a better place by offering to volunteer in some capacity. Please feel free to send me a note or call me if you are willing to pitch in.

### Open Offices:

Recording Secretary

Chairs of Nominating and Personnel committees

Committee support needed in areas including:

Operations (House/building, personnel, cemetery, communications and publicity, security, legal, long-range planning)

Education and Culture (religious school, adult education, ritual, High Holidays, youth, social action, community service, Green Team)

Budget and Finance (dues, endowment, planned giving, investment, scholarships, fundraising, membership)

And in July 2024: Treasurer, vice-president, president, board members



### **Way Outside The Box: Learning That Lasts**

*By Rabbi Miriam Hyman, Education Director &  
Cantor Devorah Gartner, Youth & B'nai Mitzvah Director*

### **A Bright & Sparkling Winter of Fun**

*By Rabbi Miriam Hyman, Education Director &  
Cantor Devorah Gartner, Youth & B'nai Mitzvah Director*

The days may be cold and the nights long, but here at the Kulanu School, the smiles are warm and the energy crackles. There have been so many exciting programs and events. We are always busy and engaged.

Shabbat School returned for all students and families from PreK through Grade 6. We are overjoyed to have the chance to celebrate Shabbat together with study, prayer, song and communal meals from January to March.

On **Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday Weekend**, we were joined by the incomparable voices of the **Souls United Choir**. Singing together with the students and members of our adult *Shalom Singers*, we certainly made a joyful noise.

For the final Shabbat of January, (which was also Shabbat Shirah – the Sabbath of Song) we were privileged to host **Ellen Allard, Artist in Residence**. Ellen, a gifted performer and composer, rocked the house with both her WOW Worship Shabbat Service and her Saturday evening concert. The highlight of her visit was the world premiere of her new **L'dor Vador**, written to honor and celebrate the life-long educational and musical contributions of Lilli Zimet (z"l). Delicious baked goods, many of them from Lilli's favorite recipes, were happily consumed after the concert at the coffee house which followed.

The Kulanu Ivrit Program meets on Tuesdays. All the classes from grades 3-7 are making excellent progress in Hebrew, through classroom instruction, interactive games and homework practice. All Hebrew students also receive one-on-one tutoring each week. This virtual program continues to be a great success. Parents, teachers and students all agree that the individualized attention helps students to hone their Hebrew and prayer skills.

Purim (with a Beauty & The Beast theme) will be here before we blink. As much as we enjoy winter in our beautiful Hudson Valley, we look forward to "A Tale as Old as Time..." in the spring of 2024.



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## **Mission Statement of Temple Beth-El**

We are a vibrant and egalitarian Conservative Jewish congregation serving the Jewish and Intermarried families of Dutchess County and the Mid-Hudson Valley for more than 90 years. Whether you are seeking religious services, educational opportunities, cultural, social, or recreational activities, you will find it at Temple Beth-El. We are a spiritual home for a diverse, inclusive congregation that cares deeply about imparting the love of Judaism to this and future generations.

Share our Journey.

## CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

February	23	5:21 PM
March	1	5:29 PM
March	8	5:37 PM
March	15	6:45 PM
March	22	6:52 PM
March	29	7:00 PM
April	5	7:07 PM
April	12	7:15 PM
April	19	7:22 PM
April	26	7:29 PM
May	3	7:36 PM
May	10	7:43 PM
May	17	7:50 PM
May	24	7:57 PM
May	31	8:02 PM
June	7	8:07 PM
June	14	8:10 PM
June	21	8:12 PM
June	28	8:13 PM

### We Share Our Friends Grief

Jack Rosenblum, father of Judy Lee

Joan Dale, longtime Temple Beth-El member

David Artman, brother-in-law of Jackie Kahn

Patricia Waill, mother of Linda Perfecto

Larry Rosenberg, brother of Blanche Bergman

Steve Kirshon, longtime Temple Beth-El member

Frank Ritter, longtime Temple Beth-El member

### Volunteers Needed

Temple Beth-El members are encouraged to become involved using their talents, interests and available time. If you would like to start a group or teach a course, let us know.

We appreciate our volunteers in any capacity.

## JEWISH CONTRIBUTIONS IN CREATING A BETTER WORLD

- 1) The Roosevelts were Dutch Jews who arrived in NYC in 1682. Claes Rosenvelt before he changed his name to Nicholas Roosevelt, was the first Roosevelt ancestor to set foot in America, and Sarah Delano, FDR's mother, descended from Sephardic Jews.
- 2) Joseph Stalin was originally named Joseph David Djugashvili (translated as: "son of a Jew".) All 3 of the women that he married were Jewish.
- 3) Dwight Eisenhower's father was a Swedish Jew, and listed in West Point's Yearbook of 1915.
- 4) Lillian Friedman, a Jewish woman, married Cruz Rivera. They named their baby Geraldo Miguel Rivera (it doesn't sound Jewish), but according to Jewish Law, anyone born to a Jewish mother is Jewish. Thus, Geraldo Rivera is Jewish.
- 5) Fiorello Laguardia, famous former mayor of New York City, whose mother's name was Jacobson. His father was not Jewish. Laguardia spoke seven languages fluently, including Hebrew and Yiddish.
- 6) Winston Churchill whose mother's name was Jenny Jerome, a Jew.
- 7) Cary Grant, whose mother, Elsie, was Jewish. His father, Elias Leach, was not. Grant's original name was Archibald Alexander Leach; (Robin Leach is his first cousin).
- 8) Peter Sellers' mother, Margaret Marks, was Jewish. His father, Bill Sellers, was not. Peter's real name is Richard Henry Sellers.
- 9) David Bowie's mother is Jewish, his father is not. One of Bowie's albums discusses his Jewish ancestry. His real name: David Stenton Haywood Jones.
- 10) Robert DeNiro's mother is Jewish.
- 11) Shari Belafonte's mother is Jewish. Her father, Harry's grandfather is a Jew.
- 12) Olivia Newton John's grandfather, a Jew, was a Nobel Prize winning physicist.
- 13) Harrison Ford's mother is a Russian Jew, his father is Irish Catholic.
- 14) The first theater to be used solely for the showing of motion pictures was built by a Jew Adolf Zukor.
- 15) The first full-length sound picture, The Jazz Singer was produced by Jews, Samuel L. Goldwyn & Louis B. Mayer (MGM).
- 16) A Jew, Dr. Abraham Waksman, coined the term antibiotics.
- 17) A Polish Jew, Casimir Funk, who pioneered a new field of medical research, gave us a common word -- vitamins.
- 18) The first successful operation for appendicitis was performed by a Jewish surgeon, Dr. Simon Baruch.
- 19) Dr. Abraham Jacobi hailed as America's father of Pediatrics, is a Jew.
- 20) Until a Jewish doctor, Dr. Siccary proved it differently, people believed that tomato was poisonous.

## Learn and Lunch

April 10th, 2024 - A Panorama of Jewish Liturgical Music with Rabbi Jon Haddon

Menu: Pizza, Salad, Gelato Bars

April 24th - Off For Passover

Gluten-free options always available.

## Happy News!

Joan and Lawrence Cohen's grandson, Rafael Katzovicz, became a bar mitzvah recently! Rafael is the son of Stephanie and Roy Katzovicz.

**Mazal tov to the entire family!**

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## Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Did you know that "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" was written, not about the mythical Land of Oz, but the homeland of the Jews - Israel?

The lyrics were written by Yip Harburg, the youngest of four children born to Russian-Jewish immigrants. His real name was Isidore Hochberg, and he grew up in a Yiddish-speaking, Orthodox Jewish home in New York. The song's music was written by Harold Arlen, also a cantor's son. His real name was Hyman Arluck, and his parents were from Lithuania.

Together, Hochberg and Arluck wrote "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," which was voted the 20th century's No. 1 song by the Recording Industry Association of America and the National Endowment for the Arts. In writing it, the two men reached deep into their immigrant Jewish consciousness — framed by the pogroms of the past and the #Holocaust about to happen — and wrote an unforgettable melody set to near prophetic words.

"And the dreams that you dare to dream / Really do come true.

# Happy News!

**MORSE SCHOOL ACHIEVES STATE GOALS  
for first time in 5 years!**

Morse School, the largest and highest need school in the City of Poughkeepsie, has not been meeting NYS goals for the past 5 years.

Many of you know of our programs to assist students and their families with food drives and clothing drives. We also have TBE members who tutor students in language and math.

We learned recently that they are "out of receivership" and **MEET ALL STATE GOALS** for student achievement, attendance and English language learners. The mood at the school is **JUBILANT!**

Yishar koach and thank you to all who have volunteered!

Volunteers are needed now more than ever to help Morse School sustain it's new achievement. To volunteer, contact Muriel Horowitz at [socialaction@tbeny.org](mailto:socialaction@tbeny.org)

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**One of our TBE Volunteers at Morse School is Steven Ru. He will have 2 small paintings in the group show "Art as a Love Language" at Studio 89, located at 89 Vineyard Ave in Highland, NY. The show opens on Valentine's Day from 5 - 7:30pm. It runs from Feb. 14 through March 31, 2024.**

**Yishar Koach Steven!**

*Paula Reckess*

## TEMPLE BETH-EL GENERAL FUND

### **Sharon & Bernardo Steinvurzel**

In honor of Anya Reckess' Bat Mitzvah  
In honor of David Greenberg's engagement  
In memory of Stephen Kirshon

### **Barbara & Bernie Cohen**

In honor of Anya Reckess' Bat Mitzvah  
In honor of Paula & Azzy Reckess' 50th anniversary  
In honor of Lew Sims' Birthday  
In memory of Roz Cooper's sister  
In memory of her mother, Ruth Blumberg  
In memory of Leonard Eisner

### **Rabbis Hyman & Fessler**

In appreciation of Karen Jacobs

### **Blanche & Lou Bergman**

In appreciation & recognition of the professional staff and volunteers  
In appreciation for helping to make our 45th anniversary very special

### **Miriam & Frank Rubin**

In honor of Naval Lieutenant Jerome Goldberg

### **Debra & Glenn Ring**

In honor of Eli Gorin's 95th birthday

### **Gail & Samuel Simon**

In honor of Lew Sims celebrating 50 years in business  
In honor of the leadership of the High Holiday services & Choir

### **Bonnie Cantor**

In honor of Sims Podiatry 50th anniversary

### **Grete & Marty Finkelstein**

In honor of Eli Gorin's 95th birthday  
Mazel tov Sandy & Jerry Goldberg on becoming great-grandparents  
In loving memory of my mother, Claire Rothschild  
In memory of my uncle, Martin Lowenberg  
In memory of my grandfather, Max Mezger  
In memory of Rabbi Erwin Zimet  
In memory of our loved ones

### **Ralph Preiss**

In memory of Margot Preiss

### **Adrienne London**

In honor of Stew Brenner's birthday  
In honor of Brion Shapiro's birthday  
In honor of the professional staff for doing a wonderful job during the haggim  
In honor of Lew Sims' Birthday  
In honor of Merri Sedgwick, Suzanne Turrisi, Beth Richardson & Cantor Devorah for a lovely Hanukkah dinner event  
Refuah Shlemah Burt Cohen  
In memory of David Artman  
In memory of Frank Ritter

In memory of Joan Dale

### **Nancy & Sanford Bernstein**

In honor of Sims Podiatry's 50th Anniversary  
In honor of our 62nd wedding anniversary

### **Sheila & Martin Zweifler**

In memory of Frank Ritter

### **Norm Silverman**

In memory of my father, Harry Silverman

### **Elaine Miles**

In memory of Frank Ritter

### **Shele Gehrke Lieberman**

In memory of Gary Lieberman  
In memory of Dr. Nathan & Barbara Lieberman and family

### **Miriam Gold**

In memory of my mother, Rose Mendlovitz

### **Laurie & Joshua Baskin**

In memory of Annette & Sheldon Baskin

### **Susan & Richard Grilli**

In memory of Leon Grilli

### **Sandy & Jerry Goldberg**

Mazel Tov Rafael Katzovicz on your Bar Mitzvah

### **Brenda Goldstein & Rocco Romeo**

In honor of Lew Sims' Birthday

### **Gail Watson**

In memory of Alex Boguslav  
In memory of Lily Zimet

### **Jacob Hentel**

In loving memory of my wonderful wife, Jean

### **Paula & Azzy Reckess**

In loving memory of Paula's mother, Sarah Tuller

### **Rita Minnerly**

In honor of Lew Sims' birthday

### **Nancy and Steven Koch**

In honor of John Weisman  
In honor of Goldy Saferstein

### **Andrea & Kenneth Miron**

In memory of Ann Miron

### **Babi Satzman**

In memory of Ceal & Robert Sommer

### **Barry Tunkel**

In memory of Irene & Raymond Tunkel

## **Mazal tov to:**

Barbara and Bernie Cohen on the birth of their new granddaughter, Melanie Rose Cohen.

Jill and Ira Auerback on their grandson Dylan Major's receiving the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship.

Karen and Martin Hochhauser on son and grandson Samuel Marks' graduation from Binghamton University.

Carol Gray on her granddaughter's graduation from the NYS University at Oneonta.

Rabbi Miriam and Rabbi Fessler on their daughter Ariella's graduation from NYU School of Arts and Sciences and the Tisch School of the Arts.

Cantor Devorah and Robert Gartner on their daughter Bethany's receiving her Master of Science in Criminal Justice.

Merri and John Sedgwick on their son Jason's marriage to Christina Magnussen.

Judy and Alan Fox on their granddaughter Paige Fox's graduation from High School.

Rox Fox, Alan's mother, on her 100th birthday.

Irvin and Linda Miller on their granddaughter Eliza Tabachnik's graduation from High School.

Joan and Leslie Molomot on their daughter Lisa's receiving a Peabody award for her film "Missing in Brooks County"

Lucia and Scott Swartz on their son Aaron's graduation from Skidmore College.

Donna and Philippe Pistinier on their grandsons Ben Pistiner and Henry Ostroff's graduations from High School.

Bob Ulrich on his grandson Wilson's graduation

Marilyn and Michael Schwartz on their granddaughter Emily Bubel's graduation from a 5 year Bachelor/Master program.

Paula and Azzy Reckess on the birth of their granddaughter, Lilah Esther Reckess.

Paula and Azzy Reckess on their granddaughter Anya's bat mitzvah.

Sue and Rich Levine on their 40th wedding anniversary.

Rita and Lew Sims on their grandson Alex's bar mitzvah.

Nina and Russell Rothman on their 44th wedding anniversary.

Emily Perlman on her grandson Aaron's graduation from High School.

Beth and Les Richardson on their grandson Eitan's graduation from High School in Israel.

Stephanie Wasser on the birth of her granddaughter, Adeline "Adi" Gray Cook.

Sue and Rich Levine on their grandson Dom's graduation as valedictorian of his High School.

Rabbi Neal Loevinger on his receiving his Doctor of Ministry degree.

The Harding Club on their 100th anniversary!

Carole and Barry Horowitz on their grandson Zachary's graduation from Tufts [University](#).

## ANNIVERSARIES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>
Julius & Irene Quint	Monday	April 17, 2023
Steven & Ellen Sackstein	Tuesday	April 18, 2023
Christian & Kimberly Fekete	Monday	May 8, 2023
Martin and Linda Katz	Saturday	May 20, 2023
Stuart & Carole Chimkin	Sunday	May 21, 2023
Howard and Wendy Marin	Sunday	May 21, 2023
Samuel and Gail Simon	Sunday	May 21, 2023
Richard and Susan Levine	Monday	May 22, 2023
Elliot & Lori Levine	Wednesday	May 24, 2023
Jason & Debbie Silbergleit	Wednesday	May 24, 2023
Russell & Nina Rothman	Saturday	May 27, 2023
Dr. William Parsons & Simona Cohen Parsons	Sunday	May 28, 2023
Les and Beth Richardson	Thursday	June 1, 2023
Bernard & Lisa King-Smith	Friday	June 2, 2023
Stuart & Wendy Waxman	Friday	June 2, 2023
Azzy and Paula Reckess	Saturday	June 3, 2023
Christopher & Dana Zivica	Saturday	June 3, 2023
Jeffrey & Barrie Hartman	Monday	June 5, 2023
Jack and Karen Fein	Tuesday	June 6, 2023
David and Denise Kurish	Thursday	June 8, 2023
Arthur & Wendy Weiner	Friday	June 9, 2023
Mark & Miriam Aaron	Saturday	June 10, 2023
Jack & Marion Auspitz	Saturday	June 10, 2023
Nathaniel & Jessica Gold	Sunday	June 11, 2023
Lewis and Rita Sims	Sunday	June 11, 2023
Donald and Ruth Klein	Thursday	June 15, 2023
John and Renee Weisman	Thursday	June 15, 2023
Michael & Lisa Arnoff	Saturday	June 17, 2023
Rabbi Michael Fessler & Rabbi Miriam Hyman	Sunday	June 18, 2023
Leslie and Joan Molomot	Sunday	June 18, 2023
Zvi & Ilana Segal	Sunday	June 18, 2023
Les & Jane Kriegler	Monday	June 19, 2023
Jack & Claudia Schachner	Monday	June 19, 2023
Stephen and Susan Helman	Tuesday	June 20, 2023
Mark & Susan Cooper	Wednesday	June 21, 2023
Fred and Davida Hurst	Wednesday	June 21, 2023
Isaac & Rebecca Bruck	Thursday	June 22, 2023
Jeremy & Megan Hershfield	Thursday	June 22, 2023
John and Diane Mayeri	Sunday	June 25, 2023
Michael and Pam Smith	Thursday	June 29, 2023
Marshall and Robin Breite	Friday	June 30, 2023
Donald & Suzanne Turrisi	Friday	June 30, 2023
Martin and Sheila Zweifler	Friday	June 30, 2023



## A Few Chuckles

Five out of four people have trouble with fractions. -

- So now cocaine is legal in Oregon, but straws aren't. That must be frustrating.
- Still trying to get my head around the fact that 'Take Out' can mean food, dating, or murder.
- Dear paranoid people who check behind their shower curtains for murderers. If you do find one, what's your plan?
- The older I get, the more I understand why roosters just scream to start their day.
- Being popular on Facebook is like sitting at the 'cool table' in the cafeteria of a mental hospital.
- You know you're over 50 when you have 'upstairs ibuprofen' and 'downstairs ibuprofen'.
- How did doctors come to the conclusion that exercise prolongs life, when...the rabbit is always jumping but only lives for around two year, and the turtle that doesn't exercise at all, lives over 200 years.

So, rest, chill, eat, drink, and enjoy life!

- If only vegetables smelled as good as bacon.
  - When I lost the fingers on my right hand in a freak accident, I asked the doctor if I would still be able to write with it. He said, "Probably, but I wouldn't count on it."
  - I woke up this morning determined to drink less, eat right, and exercise. But that was four hours ago when I was younger and full of hope.
  - Anyone who says their wedding was the best day of their life has clearly never had two candy bars fall down at once from a vending machine.
  - We live in a time where intelligent people are silenced so that stupid people won't be offended.
  - The biggest joke on mankind is that computers have begun asking humans to prove they aren't a robot.
  - When a kid says "Daddy, I want mommy" that's the kid version of "I'd like to speak to your supervisor".
  - It's weird being the same age as old people.
  - Just once, I want a username and password prompt to say CLOSE ENOUGH.
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## Mazal tov to: Continued

Bob Ulrich on his grandson Wilson's graduation from Northwestern University.

Steven Rushefsky on the beautiful mural he helped the Morse School create.

Vicki Greenberg on her grandson David's engagement to Vitoria Schmitt.

Joy and Bryan Kolber on their son Marcus' graduation from the SUNY Upstate Medical Residency Program.

Rita and Barry Rothfeld on their 50th anniversary.

Len Klein and Les Muldorf on the engagement of their granddaughter Alyssa Klein to Keith Poole.

## How “Hatikvah” (The Hope) Became Israel’s



In 1897, at the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, the delegates joined in a rousing rendition of the song “Hatikvah.” The beloved [Zionist](#) hymn would come to be known among generations of Jews around the world as the Jewish national anthem. Yet it was not until 2004 that the Israeli government officially designated “Hatikvah” as the country’s national anthem. Between these two facts lies the curious tale of one of the most important songs in modern Jewish history.

### From a Poem to a Song

“Hatikvah” began its life as a nine-stanza Hebrew poem entitled “Tikvatenu” (“Our Hope”). Its author was a colorful 19th-century Hebrew poet, **Naftali Hertz Imber** (1856-1909), who hailed from Złoczów, a town in Austro-Hungarian Galicia. Inspired by the Hibbat Zion movement of early Zionism, Imber originally wrote the poem in 1878 while living in Jassy (Yash), Romania. As a young man, Imber wandered Eastern Europe for several years before settling in [Ottoman](#) Palestine in 1882. There he worked as personal secretary and Hebrew tutor to **Sir Laurence Oliphant** (1829-1888), an eccentric British author, politician, world traveler, and Christian Zionist. In the 1880s, Oliphant’s mystical religious beliefs inspired him to launch various philanthropic efforts to encourage Jewish resettlement in the historic Land of Israel. Imber first published “Tikvatenu” in an 1886 collection of his poetry, “Barkai,” (Morning Star), issued in Jerusalem and dedicated to Oliphant.

By the time Imber left Palestine in 1888, his poem had become a song (soon renamed “Hatikvah,” Hebrew for “The Hope”) thanks to the early Zionist pioneers in the Jewish farming community of Rishon-le-Zion. The melody arrived courtesy of a Romanian Jewish immigrant named **Samuel Cohen**, who adapted it from a Moldavian folk song, “Carul cu Boi” (Cart and Oxen). “Hatikvah” spread rapidly among Jewish pioneers as part of the new culture of secular [Hebrew songs](#) and [folk dances](#) (such as the hora) that existed in the early decades of the Zionist movement.

**Herzl’s Problem With “Hatikvah”** Even as it grew in popularity, however, not all Zionists favored “Hatikvah” for the movement’s anthem. [Theodor Herzl](#) disliked the song, and in 1897 he launched the first of several international competitions, all ultimately unsuccessful, to produce a serious alternative. One of Herzl’s objections to “Hatikvah” was the bohemian figure of Imber himself. Despite his personal charisma, literary talents, and Zionist convictions, Imber was a perpetual ne’er-do-well, described by one contemporary as “a vagabond, a drunkard and a Hebrew poet.” In fact, after leaving Palestine, Imber lived in London and Boston, before dying of alcoholism in abject poverty on New York’s Lower East Side in 1909, despite repeated efforts by Jewish communal leaders to help him. For other early Zionists, it was not the author of “Hatikvah” but the non-Jewish origin of its melody that proved objectionable. Many Zionist cultural figures were unnerved by the song’s strong resemblance to Czech composer Bedřich Smetana’s “Moldau” section of his 1874 symphonic tone poem, “MáVlast.” In fact, in creating his own national musical epic for the Czech nation, Smetana had drawn on the same Moldavian song as a source around the same time that Samuel Cohen did. As a solution, some Jewish composers wrote new melodies for Imber’s words.

Scholars joined the fray as well, with some postulating that the “Hatikvah” melody actually derived from the traditional [Hallel](#) liturgy of Jews. The early 20th-century scholar [Abraham Zvi Idelsohn](#), “father of Jewish musicology,” took a different route, arguing that Hatikvah’s root melody belonged to no one folk song tradition. Instead, he claimed, it constituted a generic “wandering melody,” common across European cultures without a distinct national paternity.

Recent scholarship has elaborated on this idea, isolating a centuries-old melodic pattern common to many Central European songs, the most famous of which is Mozart’s “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Of course, “Hatikvah” is far from unique as a national anthem in sharing its melody with other “foreign” sources. For instance, the tune of “God Save the Queen” served at various times as national anthem of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Russia, the United States, and several German states, along with several other countries, past and present.

In later years, “Hatikvah” continued to be a subject of debate. [Religious Zionists](#) frequently objected to the putatively secular character of its lyrics, which do not mention God. As a result, [Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook](#) composed a parallel poem, “Ha-emunah” (“The Faith”), which speaks of the “steadfast faith in the return to our holy land...where we shall serve our God.” Ironically, [socialist Zionists](#) denounced the poem for its allegedly religious, messianic overtones, owing to the reference to an ancient biblical promise of Jewish return. In the 1930s, they instead proposed [Hayim Nahman Bialik](#)’s “Birkat ha-am” (“The People’s Blessing”), also known as “Tehezakna,” for its line, “Strengthen the hands of our brothers renewing the soil of our land...” Cultural Zionists voiced their objections as well, often criticizing the minor-key melody as gloomy and depressing, and castigating Imber’s Hebrew style as heavy-handed and antiquated.

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In spite of these criticisms and challenges (and in some cases because of them), most Zionists embraced “Hatikvah.” Year after year it was sung at the annual Zionist congresses and other political events around the world. In 1933, at the 18th Zionist Congress, the song was officially adopted as the movement’s anthem together with the now-familiar [blue and white flag](#). In the 1940s, many Jews in Europe defiantly sang the song as a gesture of collective hope and spiritual resistance in the face of the [Nazi Holocaust](#) and [Stalinist terror](#).

Yet after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the government declined to recognize “Hatikvah” as the official state anthem, despite adopting a new flag and coat of arms as national symbols. Still, “Hatikvah” was openly promoted as the de facto national anthem and used at all official state occasions.

The traditional lyrics were also emended to reflect the new historic reality of statehood. Whereas the original last three lines of the text speak of “the ancient hope to return to the land of our fathers, to the city where [\[King\] David](#) dwelt,” the new version replaces the biblical allusion with an emphasis on “the hope of two millennia to be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem.”

Almost from the moment of its creation, “Hatikvah” has served as both a beloved anthem throughout the Jewish world and a subject of political debate. The same pattern continues today. In recent years, a controversy has occasionally surfaced in Israeli politics over allegations that the lyrics are unsuitable for a country with such a sizable non-Jewish minority.

Nevertheless, “Hatikvah” remains an enduring symbol of Jewish nationhood and Israeli identity. And in November 2004, over a century after its composition, “Hatikvah” was officially designated the Israeli national anthem by the [Israeli Knesset](#), bringing its journey full circle.

## Hatikvah- National Anthem of Israel

### Lyrics in Transliteration and English

*Kol od baleivav penimah  
Nefesh yehudi homiyah,  
Ulfa’atey mizrah kadimah,  
Ayin letsiyon tsofiyah;*

*Od lo avdah tikvateinu,  
Hatikvah bat shenot al payim,  
Lihyot am hofshi be’artzeinu,  
Eretz tziyon veyerushalayim.*

As long as Jewish spirit  
Yearns deep in the heart,  
With eyes turned East,  
Looking towards Zion.

Our hope is not yet lost,  
The hope of two millennia,  
To be a free people in our land,  
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.



## Solomon Perel, Jew Who Posed as a Hitler Youth to Survive, Dies at 97

His masquerade — a tale recounted in a memoir and in the film “Europa Europa” — saved his life. But “to this day,” he said, “I have a tangle of two souls in one body”

Solomon Perel in an undated photo. “I’m not a Jew,” he lied to his Wehrmacht captors in 1941. “I’m an ethnic German.” Sueddeutsche Zeitung Photo/Alamy  
Solomon Perel, a German Jew who saved himself from death by posing as a member of the Hitler Youth during World War II and later felt gratitude for the Nazi he pretended to be in order to live, died on Feb. 2 at his home in Givatayim, Israel, near Tel Aviv. He was 97.

His great-nephew Amit Brakin confirmed the death.

Mr. Perel, who was also known as Shlomo and Solly, recounted his survival story in a 1990 autobiography. It was adapted into a German movie, “Europa Europa,” released in the United States in 1991, which won the Golden Globe for best foreign-language film.

Like many other Holocaust survival stories, Mr. Perel’s began with Nazi oppression, which led his family to move in 1936 from Peine, Germany, to Lodz, Poland. After the German invasion on Sept. 1, 1939, they were forced into a ghetto that would house as many as 164,000 Jews. He fled later that year with an older brother, Isaac, in the hope of finding relative safety in Soviet-controlled eastern Poland.

In Bialystok, where he parted with Isaac, Solomon was placed by a Jewish assistance organization in a Soviet orphanage in Grodno (now part of Belarus). He stayed for two years, until Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941; he recalled that the Jewish children at the orphanage were roused from their sleep and told to flee the German attack.

Solomon became one of many refugees captured by the German Wehrmacht in an open field near Minsk.

Fearful that his captors would learn he was Jewish and shoot him in a nearby forest, he dug a small pit in the soft ground with the heel of a shoe and buried his identification papers.

After waiting on a long line, Solomon was asked by a German soldier, “Are you a Jew?” Heeding his mother’s last words to him, “You must live,” but not his father’s, “Always remain a Jew,” he lied: “I’m not a Jew. I’m an ethnic German.”

Not only did the Germans believe him; they welcomed him into their unit under the name Josef Perjell, and made him an interpreter. One interrogation in which he participated was of Joseph Stalin’s son Yakov Dzhughashvili.

“I became a split personality — a Nazi by day and a Jew by night,” Mr. Perel told The Week, an Indian magazine, in 2019. He remained there until his commanding officer sent him to the Hitler Youth boarding school in Braunschweig, Germany, during the winter of 1941-42.

If anyone discovered he was Jewish, “they’d deal with me like cannibals,” he said in “Because You Must Live: The Story of Shlomo (Solly) Perel,” a part of the Survivors Testimony Films Series produced by Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust memorial. He was relieved that the school’s showers had separate stalls, which prevented anyone from seeing that he had been circumcised.

But, he said, “nobody suspected me because it was impossible to think that some Jewish boy would sneak into the center of that protected country.”

He became, to the young Nazis surrounding him, a true believer, absorbing the lessons of National Socialism, wearing a uniform with a swastika and a Nazi eagle on his chest and preparing for military service.

“I was a Hitler Youth completely,” he said in the Yad Vashem film. “I began telling myself, ‘Wow, I’m part of a force that’s conquering the world.’”

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But he could not switch off his real self entirely. In 1943, during the Christmas holiday, he received a holiday pass and took a train back to Lodz. For 12 days, wearing the black winter uniform of the Hitler Youth, he searched for his parents in the ghetto.

He rode a streetcar, which Jews could not board, back and forth. He walked the city's streets. He saw men rolling carts piled with Jewish corpses.

But he did not find his mother, his father or his sister, Bertha, none of whom he would ever see again. His brothers, Isaac and David, survived.

Marco Hofschneider portrayed Mr. Perel in the critically acclaimed German movie "Europa Europa." Delphine Forest played his teacher. Orion Classics

Solomon Perel was born in Peine on April 21, 1925. His father, Azriel, owned a shoe store. His mother, Rebecca Perel, was a homemaker.

Solomon was nearly 8 years old when Hitler seized power in Germany in 1933, but his life did not change appreciably until two years later, when antisemitic laws stripped Jews of their rights and citizenship. He was expelled from school.

"It was my most traumatic childhood experience," he said in "Because You Must Live," "that barbaric expulsion from school because somebody considered me different."

The family moved to Lodz after his father was forced by the Nazis to sell his store for nearly nothing. Solomon attended a Polish state school for Jews. It was after the Germans invaded Poland and Jewish families were ordered into the Lodz ghetto that he started on the path that led to his lifesaving masquerade as a Nazi.

Simmy Allen, a spokesman for Yad Vashem, said that Mr. Perel's life as a Jew among the Hitler Youth was more than unusual.

"We know of Jews using false papers and presenting themselves as non-Jews, even Aryans, during the Holocaust in different places throughout Europe, even in Berlin," Mr. Allen said in an email. "But to be in the heart of the lion's den, under that level of scrutiny all the time and, in a sense, part of the ideology of the 'enemy,' as Shlomo was, is a very unique and rare position."

Mr. Perel recalled how invested he had become in the Nazi philosophy even as the war turned against Germany.

"I was deeply involved in a world that had been forced upon me, my reasoning powers had finally been completely anesthetized," he wrote in his memoir, published in English and French as "Europa, Europa," "and my mental faculties were so befogged that no ray of reality could penetrate. I continued to feel just like one of them."

Mr. Perel at his home in Israel. He lectured widely about his wartime experiences, condemning racism in any form. Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, via Associated Press

As the war neared its end, Mr. Perel was sent to the Western Front, assigned to a unit guarding bridges. When American soldiers arrested him and his squad and briefly held him in a prisoner-of-war camp, his war was over. He was no longer Josef Perjell. He was once again Shlomo Perel.

Mr. Perel moved to Munich, where he was a translator for the Soviet Army during interrogations of Nazi war criminals. He emigrated to the British mandate of Palestine, fought in the Israeli war of independence and managed a zipper factory.

In 1959, he married Dvora Morezky. She died in 2021. He is survived by a son, Uziel, and three grandchildren. Another son, Ronen, died in 2019.

For many years Mr. Perel put his memories of the Holocaust aside. But in the late 1980s, after a near-fatal heart attack, he began to discuss his past and to write his memoir.

The film adaptation, written and directed by Agnieszka Holland, starred Marco Hofschneider as Mr. Perel. It earned Ms. Holland an Oscar nomination for best adapted screenplay.

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In addition to winning the Golden Globe for best foreign film, the movie was named best foreign film by the New York Film Critics Circle, the Boston Society of Film Critics and the National Board of Review. But the German Export Film Union declined to select it as its entry for an Academy Award for best foreign film — a decision that prompted many of Germany’s leading filmmakers, including [Wolfgang Petersen](#) and Werner Herzog, to sign a letter of protest that was published in Daily Variety.

Mr. Perel attended the film’s premiere in Lodz.

In 1992, he reunited with some of his former Hitler Youth comrades and revealed to them that he was Jewish. Some years earlier, he had gotten together with surviving members of the Wehrmacht unit that had accepted him as a German.

He lectured about his experiences in Israel and around the world.

“He insisted on including, with every lecture or talk he gave, a message for accepting the other,” Mr. Brakin, his great-nephew, said in a text message, “including the one that is different, and a message against racism in any form it might take.”

But Mr. Perel never fully purged himself of the Nazi identity he had adopted.

“To this day, I have a tangle of two souls in one body,” [he told The Washington Post in 1992](#). “By this I mean to say that the road to Josef, the Hitler Youth that I was for four years, was very short and easy. But the way back to the Jew in me, Shlomo, or Solly, was much harder.”

“I love him,” he said, referring to Josef, “because he saved my life.”

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## One of World’s Oldest Synagogues Reopens in Egypt



Egypt has reopened one of the world's oldest synagogues and home to the most significant single trove of Jewish manuscripts.

The Ben Ezra synagogue was inaugurated by Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly on Thursday after a decade of restoration work, according to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA).

Constructed in the 12th century, the synagogue was rebuilt in 1889 and restored previously in 1982. It was named after Abraham ibn Ezra, a Jewish figure who authored various biblical commentaries during the golden age of Spanish Judaism.

The site has been visited by distinguished Jewish figures throughout history, including Moses Maimonides, one of the most influential Jewish philosophers. Maimonides lived close to the synagogue and worshipped there. The site of the synagogue is believed by some to be where the biblical prophet Moses prayed to God.



A copy of the "Torah scrolls" at the newly restored Ben Ezra Synagogue, Egypt's oldest Jewish temple, after decade-long restoration, in old Cairo, Egypt.

The synagogue was also where the single most important selection of Jewish medieval manuscripts was found in the late 19th century, according to the Cambridge University Library, where the documents, known as the Cairo Geniza, are now kept.

The building has basilica-style architecture as it was once a church, according to the ministry.

Its latest restoration — completed by the Drop of Milk Association, an organization that seeks to preserve Egypt's Jewish heritage — required treatment to protect ceilings, stones and provide insulation.

Egypt's MOTA has worked to restore several buildings and take on conservation projects in the last few years, said Louise Bertini, executive director of the American Research Centre in Egypt (ARCE).

Bertini said ARCE works closely with the ministry to protect conservation efforts. It awarded Drops of Milk a grant in 2017 to fund their restoration efforts of the remaining synagogues in Egypt, including Ben Ezra, Bertini said.

Egypt's Jewish population exceeded 80,000 people in 1948, but only about a dozen Jews remain in the country today.



The Ark and "Menorah" at the newly restored Ben Ezra Synagogue, in old Cairo, Egypt.

The restoration efforts are largely to improve tourism, according to Bertini. "There's always an effort to open up new sites or make a current site more accessible," she told CNN.

Egypt has however come under intense criticism for razing large parts of old Cairo to make way for development projects.



The "Bimah," also known in Arabic as al-minbar, is pictured at the newly restored Ben Ezra Synagogue, in old Cairo, Egypt.

The move was met with indignation from historians and activists on social media, who saw it as the destruction of Egypt's heritage and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Historian Khaled Fahmy tweeted that "unique treasures will be utterly destroyed, and we shall all bear the shame of having caused their destruction."

Cemeteries and tombs have already been moved out to make way for bridges and highways.