



Congregation Beth El

A seasonal, egalitarian synagogue affiliated with the Conservative Movement

Founded in 1947

32 Gorton Avenue • Old Colony Beach • Old Lyme, CT • 06371

website: www.synagogueoldlyme.org

Cheshvan/Kislev 5784

November/December 2023

President

Lisa Semel
917-913-9722
lisasemel@gmail.com

VP Membership

Brian Cutler
beachshulmembership@gmail.com

Treasurer

Rick Hyne
richard.hyne@gmail.com

Recording Secretary

Andrea Fenton
fentonland2@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary/ Newsletter/Ritual Chair

Sharon Waxenbaum
shanaaviv@gmail.com

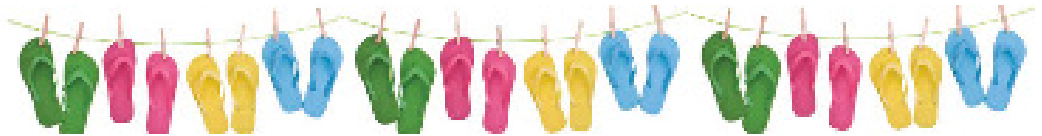
Board of Directors

Mindy Jason - Tree of Life
Shari Most
Peter Patten - Tzedakah boxes
Edyse Katz - Oneg Shabbat
Ruth Spitz - Youth Services
BJ Diefenbacher - IPP

Past Presidents

Alex Rappaport*
Joseph Bernstein*
Jacob Gottlieb*
Allen Rosenberg*
Maurice Wallet*
Arthur Guttenplan*
Solomon Tilles*
Al Snyder*
Ephraim Libbin*
Ruth Kanter*
Evelyn Filkoff*
Arthur Cohen*
Harvey Wallet*
Sandy Steinberg
Milton Rulnick*
Peter Patten
BJ Diefenbacher

*z"l May their memory be for a blessing



Shalom Congregation Beth El members and friends,

On October 7th, the people of Israel suffered a devastating and deadly surprise attack by Hamas terrorists from Gaza. Jewish organizations in the United States immediately began to raise funds to support Israel. The Executive Committee of CBE's Board of Trustees decided that our congregation would make donations to the following organizations: American Jewish Committee (<https://global.ajc.org/secure/>), the Jewish National Fund (<https://www.jnf.org/ways-to-help/support-israel>) and the American Friends of Magen David Adom (<https://afmda.org/>).

The recent pause in the war has allowed some hostages to return to Israel, but much more needs to be done. So please, at this holiday time of year, find a way to make a difference. Maybe one less *Chanukah* gift and one more donation. Long after this war is over, Israel will need our support to repair lives, homes and communities.

I want to share a special video that Sharon brought to my attention. It was created by an amazing organization called Koolulam (<https://www.koolulam.com>). Founded by three Israelis to counter the negative rhetoric online, Koolulam's mission is to use "music to inspire harmony in humanity."

To do this, they bring together hundreds of people from all walks of life, young and old, alone or with family, Jewish, Muslim and Christian, and teach them a song that they will sing together. The concert is recorded and a video is posted online. "We teach everyone to listen – to themselves and one another – and then create something powerful together."

Koolulam's current project is *Bring Them Home Now* (<https://youtube/6y2laYXcBdU>) It's goal is to raise awareness, internationally, of the hostages taken by Hamas. People from more than 100 countries participated in this special production – family members of those taken hostage participated as well. Take a look, you won't be disappointed.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish you all a Happy, Healthy *Chanukah* and a very Happy 2024!

Am Yisrael Chai!

Lisa



Chag Chanukah Sameach & a Happy and Healthy 2024!





Thank you for your generous donations!

Ruth & Andy Spitz - In celebration of the naming of our grandchildren, Ariel Noa Khorshidi, Yehudit Chaya, and Nico Thomas Fucella, Yitzhak Wolfe, held at Congregation Beth El on July 30th.

Irene & Craig Smith - In memory of Gerri Valfor.

Marian & Rick Hyne - In memory of Gerri Valfor.

Pam & Lenny Grossman - In memory of Gerri Valfor.

Mindy & Jeremy Jason - In celebration of the birth of Carley Jordyn Ehrlich, daughter of Suzy & Josh Ehrlich and granddaughter of Stan Ehrlich.

Rabbi Rena & Shalom Kieval - In memory of our son, Jonathan, at the time of his *yahrzeit* and in honor of the CBE community.

Jeanette & Harold Guthart - In honor of Jude Eli Levine. Congratulations to Sarah Semel & Sam Levine and the Semel family. May Jude have a happy and healthy life.

Congregation Beth El - In support of Israel through the American Jewish Committee, the American Friends of Magen David Adom and the Jewish National Fund.

Ruth Spitz and Sharon Waxenbaum - In memory of our father, Donald Wiener, at the time of his *yahrzeit*.

Pam & Lenny Grossman - In memory of Larry Mandell.

Pam & Lenny Grossman - In memory of Hyla Sklar.

Natalie Mandell - In honor of the birth of Gila Tikva Levine, granddaughter of Deborah & Ira Feigenbaum

Lisa Semel & Jonathan Guthart - In honor of the birth of Gila Tikva Levine, granddaughter of Deborah & Ira Feigenbaum.

Phil Rischall - In honor of the birth of Gila Tikva Levine, granddaughter of Deborah & Ira Feigenbaum.

Sharon & Preston Waxenbaum - In memory of Annette Gavens.

Ruth & Andy Spitz - In memory of Annette Gavens.

Marian & Rick Hyne - In memory of Annette Gavens.



The Congregation and Board of Trustees offer their deepest condolences to the following:

Lee, Andrew and Michelle Gavens and Family - On the loss of their beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, Annette Rosker Gavens, on November 20, 2023.

Zichronam livrocha,

May the memory of the righteous be for a blessing.

Milestones & Mazal Tovs

Deborah & Ira Feigenbaum celebrated the birth of their granddaughter, Gila Tikva, on November 7, 2023. She is welcomed by her parents, Jason & Tamar Feigenbaum Levine, and siblings Orli and Ayal.



www.synagogueoldlyme.org

CBE has a website!

Browse through our photo gallery!

Look through past newsletters for holiday recipes, music and books!



Shabbat and Chanukah Candle Lighting Times

Chanukah 1 st	Thursday	Dec	7	4:03 pm
Chanukah 2 nd	Friday	Dec	8	light before Shabbat candles
Shabbat				4:02 pm
Chanukah 3 rd	Saturday	Dec	9	sunset
Chanukah 4 th	Sunday	Dec	10	sunset
Chanukah 5 th	Monday	Dec	11	sunset
Chanukah 6 th	Tuesday	Dec	12	sunset
Chanukah 7 th	Wednesday	Dec	13	sunset
Chanukah 8 th	Thursday	Dec	14	sunset
Shabbat	Friday	Dec	15	4:03 pm
Shabbat	Friday	Dec	22	4:05 pm
Shabbat	Friday	Dec	29	4:10 pm

The 1st candle in the *chanukiah*, the *Chanukah menorah*, is lit at sunset, when the first stars appear. If possible, it should be placed in front of a window (or use a second, electric *chanukiah* there) in order to observe the custom of *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing the miracle!

On the 2nd night, Friday, December 8th, *Chanukah* candles are lit before *Shabbat* candles. Once *Shabbat* candles have been lit, kindling *Chanukah* candles (creating fire) is considered work not permitted on the Sabbath.



Candy Fund

Hershey Bars provide a sweet conclusion to Friday Evening Youth Services. It's a joy to see the faces of our youngest attendees as they leave the synagogue, treat in hand. Please help us continue this long-standing tradition. Contact Ruth Spitz at rspz123@yahoo.com to sponsor!

Todah rabah to our summer sponsors:

Lisa Semel & Jonathan Guthart - In honor of our grandnephew Jude Eli Semel-Levine.

Mindy & Jeremy Jason - In honor of Jackson and Braydon Bobrow.



Albert Von Tilzer, who was Jewish, composed the music for *Take Me Out to the Ballgame*, which is second only to the National Anthem as the most played song in the United States.



Congregation Beth El's

Tree of Life

If you are looking for a meaningful way to remember a loved one, or to commemorate someone's happy event, mark the occasion by adding a leaf or stone to our CBE Tree of Life! Please speak with **Mindy Jason** at 860-559-7557 or email her at mindysjason@gmail.com to arrange the wording and to place your order.

Thank you to the following people who have donated leaves to our Tree of Life:

Jamie Siso and Cassidy Richardson - In memory of Dad/Poppa, Bill Diefenbacher, we miss you lots, love Jamie and Cassidy.

BJ Diefenbacher - In memory of Bill Diefenbacher, I will love you forever, BJ.

Lisa Semel & Jonathan Guthart - In memory of Dorie & Randy Bobrow.

The TRUE Miracle of Chanukah

#1. The Maccabees were willing to light the Temple *menorah* with that one container of oil, even though they thought it would not burn more than one day.

#2. There were probably people who said:

- "Why light a flame that is going to burn out?"
- "Wait until we have enough oil."
- "Wait until conditions are better."

#3. Sometimes it's hard to start something when you can't be sure you'll succeed. You might think:

- "Why bother?"
- "I'll never be able to finish."
- "I'll never figure it out."

#4. YET...the Maccabees cleaned the Temple, removed the idols, took the opportunity they had and lit the *menorah* anyway!

#5. *Chanukah* is the story of the fight for religious freedom.

#6. *Chanukah* shows us that the Jewish people have always had the strength to:

- live without guarantees of success
- seize the opportunities available at the moment

#7. The modern State of Israel is considered a miracle. There were those who said:

- "Wait until your army is stronger."
- "Wait until conditions are better."

But a group of people looked to the example of the Maccabees and had the courage to "light the flame."

#8. SO...when you look at the little flames dancing on your *chanukiah* this holiday, take a moment to consider how the Maccabees must have felt when they poured that single container of oil into their *menorah* and kindled the flame.



A **menorah**, which has only 7 candleholders, was the lamp used in the Temple in Jerusalem. It is now used as an emblem of the State of Israel. A

chanukiah, however, has 9 candlesticks, one for each night of *Chanukah* and an extra *shamash*, servant candle, used to light the others.





Hillel vs Shammai

Or why we add another candle each night...

The basic *mitzvah* of *Chanukah* is to celebrate "the miracle that happened" by lighting the *chanukiah* for eight days. However, there is a dispute in the Talmud (a record of rabbinic debates) between Rabbi Shammai and Rabbi Hillel as to whether to increase the number of candles each day from one to eight, or to start with eight and remove a candle each day for eight days. Although today we follow the *halakha* (Jewish religious laws) according to Hillel, who argues that we add a candle each day, it is worthwhile to look at the dispute between *Beit Shammai*, *School of Shammai*, and *Beit Hillel*, *School of Hillel*, for insights into this holiday.

The story of *Chanukah* demonstrates the victory of light over darkness. Things that are evil we call darkness. Darkness is the absence of light. It is possible to combat evil in the world by fighting whatever is wrong. It is possible to create such a tremendous light so that the darkness just fades away. The question lies in what strategy is most successful, to burn away and destroy evil, or to create a greater light so that the darkness just vanishes?

A flame has two very distinct properties. It can burn and it can illuminate. In combating evil in the world, do we destroy it, do we burn it or do we illuminate the teachings of Torah, creating a greater light in the world to dissipate the darkness? This is the nature of the dispute between

Shammai and Hillel. Both methods are valid, but what is to be learned from what happened during *Chanukah*?

Shammai and Hillel both agree the purpose of kindling the *chanukiah* candles is to rekindle in ourselves the light of the triumph over darkness. They also agree that the number of candles should be different each night to signify that each day of the miracle is unique. But its uniqueness can be expressed either by adding or subtracting a candle each day. Shammai teaches that when we fight evil in the world, we are steadily wiping out its influence on us. Thus, he believes we should light the *chanukiah* in the same way, by starting with eight and reducing the number of candles each night. In this way, the burning quality of the flame symbolizes the diminishing effect that the negative forces of the world (or of the pagan Greeks of that time) have on us.

Hillel sees the battle against evil in the world, not as a confrontation, but rather as an important reason to raise ourselves spiritually and live according to Torah principles. Hillel believed the more successful method of wiping out darkness is by increasing the illumination, the teachings of Torah, not by burning away evil, but rather by increasing our light as a "Torah Nation." For this reason we increase the number of candles each night to remind ourselves of our responsibility, as Jews, to steadily increase the light of Torah knowledge and understanding in the world, banishing the darkness of evil by becoming "a light unto the Nations." Thanks to ou.org website

Chanukah Candle Lighting Traditions

During *Chanukah* we read from the Torah and recite *Hallel* during synagogue services. But the most widely observed tradition takes place in our homes, where for eight nights we light the *Chanukah* candles then recite the blessings.

1. The *chanukiah* (9-branched *Chanukah* menorah) should be lit after sunset, when the first stars appear.
2. If possible, the *chanukiah* should be displayed in a window facing the street (or use a second electric *chanukiah* there) in order to observe the custom of *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing the miracle. *Chanukah* celebrates the fight for religious freedom. It is not enough to illuminate your home with light and warmth, but it is also necessary to illuminate your neighborhood and community. We want to let everyone know that it's *Chanukah* and that we are proud to be Jewish.
3. The *Chanukah* lights are for us to enjoy and are not to be used for anything else, not even to light another candle. That's why we use the *shamash*, the servant candle, to light the others.
4. There are many styles of *chanukiot*. As long as the *shamash* holder is taller than all the other candles, yours is a *kosher* (fit, proper) *chanukiah*.

5. Each night a new candle is added on the **right** side. The first night, place one candle on the far right as you face the *chanukiah*. The second night place two candles on the right, etc.

The newest candle is lit **first**, so the lighting goes from **left to right**; adding candles goes from **right to left**.

Because the *menorah* (the 7-branched holder) in the Temple in Jerusalem was lit with oil, some families use a special oil *chanukiah*. While any type of oil can be used, olive oil is a favorite.

6. Every family has their own lighting customs. In some families, each member lights their own *chanukiah*. In other families, parents and children take turns lighting the candles.

7. On *Shabbat* (**Friday, December 8th** this year), *Chanukah* candles are lit before *Shabbat* candles. (Once *Shabbat* candles have been lit, kindling *Chanukah* candles, creating fire, would be considered work.)

8. Candles should burn for at least half an hour. No regular work - no clearing the table or doing homework - should take place while they are burning. Relax, sing songs, eat latkes, play *dreidel* games!





5 Oils to Try This Chanukah

Choose wisely for the tastiest, healthiest and most cost-efficient end product.

Shannon Sarha, The Nosher 11.22

The best part of *Chanukah*? All the delicious fried foods we eat, commemorating the fact that the oil in the Temple lasted eight nights instead of just one. If you are gearing up for some latke, donut, churro or bumuelo frying, here are some of the best oils to handle the job.

Canola or Vegetable Oil

My go-to oil for frying latkes, or anything that takes a bit of time to fry (like schnitzel or *sufganiyot*), is canola or vegetable oil because of its high smoke point and neutral flavor. When you are frying you tend to use a larger quantity of oil, and it's definitely the most cost-effective choice. You can reuse canola oil for frying, just use a fine mesh sieve to strain out any pieces of food in the oil, store in a container at room temperature, and use 1-2 additional times, depending on how much cooking debris is left in the oil.

Safflower Oil

Made from sunflower seeds, safflower oil has a high smoke point and neutral flavor, but is pricier than canola or vegetable oil. However, it may be the healthier option for frying, since some research has indicated that there are numerous health benefits to cooking with it, including fighting inflammation and boosting heart health.

Avocado Oil

Like safflower oil, avocado oil has a high smoke point, though it has a much stronger – sometimes sweet – flavor, which may add an unwanted taste, especially when it comes to latkes. It also can be pricey, and since you need a large quantity of oil for *Chanukah*-frying projects, that can add up quickly.

Peanut Oil

Peanut oil has a high smoke point, which is why it's commonly used for deep frying. It can add a rich, nutty or buttery flavor, which you may or may not enjoy. While it's a cheaper option than safflower oil and avocado oil, due to the prevalence of nut allergies, I tend to stay away from using this, just in case.

Schmaltz

OK, I wouldn't recommended frying your latkes exclusively in *schmaltz* for two reasons: it's pretty fatty and you will need a large quantity of it. However, if you are into going old-school, my recommendation is to add canola oil to the *schmaltz*, to balance the flavor.

Congregation Beth El Note Cards



CBE stationery is now available! Blank inside, these 4.25 x 5.5 inch cards are great for handwritten thank yous or for dropping a quick note!

4 cards for \$18
10 cards for \$36

Please contact Carol Bojarski at cbojo9@hotmail.com.

Congregation Beth El has Cards for Every Occasion!

You can acknowledge a loss or happy occasion such as a graduation, anniversary, birthday or wedding with a card from CBE! If you make a contribution to the synagogue, **Carol Bojarski** will send one for you! Call her at 860-508-3635 or email her at cbojo9@hotmail.com.



We also have cards with a picture of the synagogue on the front and plenty of room for your message inside! Purchase a packet of cards and you will have one on hand!

Dedicate a Siddur Book Plate

New grandchild?
Special birthday or anniversary?
Graduation?
Loss of a loved one?



Remember this occasion by dedicating a bookplate in our prayer book, *Sim Shalom*.

Please contact Carol Bojarski at cbojo9@hotmail.com.
Book plate donation - \$18.



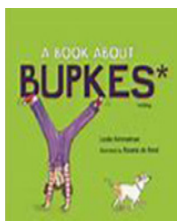
CBE newsletters are published in June/July/Aug/Sept/Dec/March. Please send your good news, simchas, birthdays and anniversaries to shanaaviv@gmail.com.

Donations to CBE by check should be made out to Congregation Beth El and mailed to
Rick Hyne, 19 Danielle Drive, Wayne, NJ 07470

Our **Venmo** account is: **Congregation-Bethel** (hyphen between Congregation and Beth and no space between Beth and el)



Holiday Tales for Children of All Ages



A Book About *Bupkes*

by Leslie Kimmelman/Illus. Roxana de Rond

This is a book about nothing, or *bupkes* in Yiddish. Young Zoe engages in acts of kindness for her friends and family and leaves a trail of *bupkes* in her wake such as:

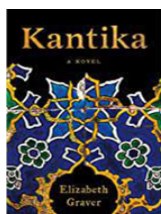
an empty garden means an elderly neighbor has a basket full of freshly picked vegetables, an empty bowl is all that is left after Zoe makes chicken soup for her sick mom and a park bench is empty because Zoe invited a brand-new friend, who had been sitting on the bench, to play hopscotch. "The thing is, *bupkes* may mean nothing, but it can feel like everything," the book concludes.



Out and About: A Tale of Giving

by Liza Wiemer/Illus. Margeaux Lucas

Daniel wakes up early one morning, looks out the window and sees his dad going somewhere, his arms loaded with boxes. But when he asks his mom and siblings about where dad went, they give a mysterious answer: "He went out and about." At school, Daniel's imagination runs wild. What could be in those boxes? Daniel pictures a baseball mitt, a birthday cake, even a pizza. Eventually, Daniel figures out the contents of the mysterious boxes and joins his dad on a mission of *zedakah*, helping those in need.



Kantika

by Elizabeth Graver

"The very first Jewish book was a multi-generational family saga. While the Bible went on to achieve some commercial and critical success, the genre doesn't always get much love." *Kantika*, is described by its publisher as a "dazzling Sephardic multigenerational story." It's about a wealthy Turkish Jewish family whose fortunes are reversed by the First World War and whose members are dispersed to Barcelona, Cuba and, finally, New York. While it has all the drama one might expect from such journeys, it remains both lyrical, literary and likely to stand the test of time. The book arrives at a time of renewed interest in Sephardic culture, and part of its appeal is that it tells a fresh story to the many American-Jewish readers used to a steady diet of the Ashkenazi experience.

Thanks to Andrew Silow-Carroll JTA 08.23



A Wild, Wild Hanukkah

by Jo Gershan and Bob Strauss
illus. Jo Gershan

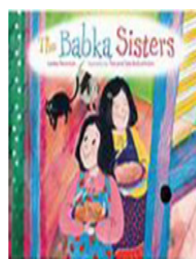
Who wouldn't want a polar bear at their *Hanukkah* party? Or two "crying crocodiles" who peel onions by the pound to make latkes? Each night of *Hanukkah*, more and more animals arrive, eating jelly doughnuts, flipping latkes and lighting candles. On the final night, "eight pompous, punk-rock penguins" show up to spin their *dreidels* on the floor and finish off the celebrations. Gershan's wise-looking animals and the authors' witty rhymes will delight children and parents alike.



Beni's Tiny Tales

by Liza Wiemer/Illus. Margeaux Lucas

Beni, the Jewish bear, is back in this delightfully illustrated installment of the series by Zalben, who first began writing about him and his family over 30 years ago. Now, Beni is all grown up and is teaching his own children about holiday traditions. *Beni's Tiny Tales* includes ten stories, each centered around a Jewish holiday, as well as recipes (for *Chanukah*, there are dreidel and menorah cookies and doughnut holes, songs and craft ideas.) Zalben's watercolor and pencil drawings of the bear family are cozy and detailed, with each character's personality shining through.



The Babka Sisters

by Leslea Newman
Illus. Tika and Tata Bobokhidze

Prolific children's writer, Leslea Newman, is out with a new book about two sisters, Esther and Hester, who live next door to each other. When Sylvester moves into the neighborhood, they compete for the title of Best Babka Baker, and Sylvester agrees to be their taste-tester. After much mixing, stirring, kneading and baking, the sisters arrive at Sylvester's house for a *Shabbat* meal. What will his verdict be? With silly rhymes sure to leave kids in giggles, and with whimsical illustrations by sisters Tika and Tata Bobokhidze, this title makes for sweet reading.





Cabbage Schnitzel

NOTE: *Cabbage schnitzel tastes little of cabbage and instead transforms into something savory, caramelized, meaty, and satisfying.*

Cabbage schnitzel has always been popular in Eastern European and Russian Jewish cooking. Meat, in that part of the world, used to be scarce, and cooks came up with creative solutions for making vegetables taste richer. Cabbage was often one of the only fresh vegetables available during the long winter months and it became a meat stand-in used for its texture, volume and versatility.

Ingredients

- 1 ½ lbs cabbage, about 16 cups shredded
- 1/2 small yellow onion, grated or chopped
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 1/3 cup plain bread crumbs/matzah meal
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- salt and pepper, to taste
- oil, as needed for cooking
- fresh dill and/or lemon wedges for garnish

Directions

1. Thinly shred cabbage using a mandoline, a food processor with the shredding disc attachment, or even with a sharp knife.
2. Fill a large pot with water and bring to a boil. Salt the water generously.

3. Add the shredded cabbage to the boiling water. Cook until the cabbage is tender, about 3-4 minutes. Drain in a colander, then allow the cabbage to continue to drain and cool for at least 10 minutes.

4. While the cabbage cools/drains, prepare the remaining ingredients. Grate the onion or chop it very fine. Beat the eggs and reserve.

5. Once cooled, squeeze any excess liquid from the cabbage and add just the cabbage to a large bowl. Add the onion, beaten eggs, bread crumbs, flour, and salt and pepper. Stir until the cabbage is evenly and well-coated in the breadcrumb and egg mixture.

6. Heat a large skillet filled with a ¼" of neutral cooking oil (like avocado or canola). Once the oil is hot, form the cabbage mixture into schnitzel-shaped patties in the pan, about ½" thick. Cook the patties in batches, so as not to crowd the pan and cause the cabbage to steam instead of brown.

7. Cover the pan with a lid and brown for 3-4 minutes. Lift the lid, carefully flip over the patties (a fish spatula works well for this), cover again, and brown for an additional 2-3 minutes or until the schnitzels are golden brown and crisp on each side.

8. Once cooked, transfer to a paper towel-lined plate or rack to drain some of the excess oil.

You can serve this unexpectedly rich entrée with a squeeze of lemon and fresh dill for added brightness. Cabbage schnitzel can also be topped with a dollop of sour cream or some hot sauce for heat.

Sonia Sanford The Noshers 01.19



Apple Fritters with Vanilla Sugar (serves 6-8)

In ancient Rome, frying food in olive oil became a Jewish tradition because the oil was plentiful, inexpensive and pareve.

For the Vanilla Sugar

- 2 vanilla beans
- 1½ c granulated sugar

For the Fritters

- large baking apples, peeled
- 3 Tbl granulated sugar
- 1½ c all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1½ c milk or non-dairy milk
- vegetable oil (such as sunflower or grapeseed) for frying

Directions

1. Split the vanilla beans and scrape out the seeds. Put the sugar and vanilla seeds in a food processor and pulse until fully combined. Transfer the sugar to a glass jar, add the empty bean pods, cover tightly and set

aside. (The sugar can be used right away but the flavor will develop over time. It can be stored, tightly covered, for up to one year.)

2. Using an apple corer (or melon baller), carefully remove the apple cores and discard. Slice apples into ½-inch-thick rings and set aside.

3. Whisk together the flour, sugar, salt and baking soda in a large bowl. Add the milk and whisk until smooth.

4. Heat ½ inch of oil in a large frying pan over medium heat until shimmering. Line a large plate with paper towels and set nearby.

5. When the oil is hot, working in batches of 4-5, dip the apple rings into the batter, let the excess drip off and carefully slip them into the oil. Fry, turning once, until golden brown on both sides, 2-3 minutes per side. Transfer to the paper towel-lined plate to drain.

6. Sprinkle the fritters generously with vanilla sugar while still hot and serve immediately.

Leah Koenig, Hadassah Magazine Nov/Dec 2023

American Jews are giving mightily to Israel.

Is there enough left to go around?

by Andrew Silow-Carroll JTA 11.23 (edited for space)

As they have during previous crises in Israel, American Jews are pouring dollars into Israel to support people displaced by the war, to bolster nonprofits whose employees are headed to the front and, in a newish twist, to defend both Israel in the court of public opinion and Jews abroad who are seeing an uptick in antisemitism.

Jewish nonprofits celebrate this outpouring, but are quietly anxious. As priorities shift to the defense of and support for Israel, what will happen to the bottom line of the schools, social services agencies, cultural centers and other Jewish institutions in the United States that don't have an obvious Israel portfolio? An adjacent question is one of discretion, even tact: With many nonprofits dependent on the end-of-the-year gifts that allow donors to claim tax benefits, should they go ahead with their own fundraising appeals and perhaps attach their "asks" to the current crisis?

"What irks me particularly is an emergency campaign now when they're not related to the crisis," said Andres Spokoyny, the president and CEO of the Jewish Funders Network, speaking generally. "If you're a school that is not affected by the crisis, just tell the truth that despite the crisis, you need to continue operating, and that having a strong community means that institutions and organizations like yours need to be strong and healthy."

Spokoyny, whose organization's "How You Can Help Israel" page lists "trusted agencies and nonprofits," has been recommending to the private foundations and philanthropists under his organization's umbrella that they give "above and beyond," supporting their traditional grantees, as well as the emergency campaigns for Israel. Spokoyny also knows that the pot of funds allocated for Jewish giving is not bottomless. He is hoping the current crisis serves as a "wake-up call to the many Jewish donors that give token gifts to the Jewish community and huge gifts to their alma mater or to the hospital, to give more to Jewish and Israeli causes."

Barry Finestone, president and CEO of the Jim Joseph Foundation, calls on Jewish donors to divert more of their secular giving to Jewish causes. "Yes, we absolutely need to support Israel and Israelis. We need to contribute mightily to the multitude of needs Israel has," he writes. "But unless philanthropy steps up in the U.S. as well, there is a genuine chance that much of the organizational structure we have spent generations building will be stretched to its limits." "They run the risk of being forgotten," he said of the Jewish organizations that don't directly serve Israel. "And please God, when this is over, and we know there's going to be a long tail both literally and psychologically, we're going to turn back to our camps, and to our synagogues, and to our JCCs, and we've got to make sure that they're there, or else the fabric of Jewish life that we've built over the years has the potential to crumble."

Yehuda Kurtzer, president of the Shalom Hartman Institute, says the outpouring for Israel has been inspiring, but also worries that the shift toward what he calls, in a Facebook post, "defensive, protective and supportive" causes will come at the expense of "foundational" and "constructive" philanthropy. Foundational giving, he said in an interview, is about "keeping the lights on in the synagogues and Jewish institutions that do the core work of Jewish life."

As an example, he points to the flood of giving that is expected in response to the pro-Palestinian and antisemitic activism on college campuses. "Jewish students feel vulnerable on college campuses, so dollars are going to go to "fighting antisemitism on campus," said Kurtzer. "But there's another set of dollars that Hillels need right now. They have record turnout for students coming to Shabbat dinner over the past month. They're looking for foundational dollars so they can support [that] or provide counseling services, whatever students need."

UJA-Federation, for example, is allocating \$600,000 to responding to antisemitism on campus, normally a sizable allocation if only a fraction of the money raised for the emergency campaign.

Mark Charendoff, the president of the Maimonides Fund, said the board of his grantmaking organization is also focusing on fighting antisemitism. And yet he knows that pivoting to new priorities can come at a cost in attention to other needs. "Human beings only have so much bandwidth," he said. "And on both sides of the ocean, our staff are single-mindedly focused on the current crisis, obviously. Which means that we're not focused on new opportunities, new ways of engaging in the elements of our portfolio that are not related to or not affected by the war."

Moving Traditions is a small Jewish organization with an unusual name and a mission that can be hard to describe on one foot. Working through synagogues, Hebrew schools and its own programs and curricula, it helps Jewish kids navigate their teen years in healthy, safe, appropriate and socially conscious ways.

When the Hamas attacks in Israel on October 7th threw the Jewish world into crisis, Moving Traditions created curricula to help teachers and teens talk about the conflict. And its CEO, Shuli Karkowsky, ordered up a "worst-case scenario" plan in case some of her reliable funders decided to hold back on their support and direct more money to Israel. Karkowsky said her organization doesn't intend to do significant fundraising around the emergency in Israel, but that doesn't mean it has nothing to offer to a Jewish world in crisis. "I do think there's an enormous need for work with North American Jewish teens right now who feel confused and lonely," she said. "They're not sure what their political opinions are, or they do and they feel abandoned by their friends, or they do and they disagree really strongly with their parents who are coming back and saying, 'How do I connect with my kid who's saying things I really don't agree with?' So I do think there's a small role for us to play as part of the work we would be doing anyway."

"In Israel since October 7th, the rabbinic principle of *pikuach nefesh*, preserving life, has taken precedence above all, though not everyone agrees on what it means."

On a normal *Shabbat*, Orthodox Israelis turn off radios, silence cell phones and, if they have one, lay down their guns. But nothing is normal in Israel now. Israelis have special dispensation from the country's top rabbis to bear arms. They've been told to leave communication devices on and to make sure someone brought a phone to services.

The decree from Israel's Chief Rabbinate offers a striking window into how war is changing the religious strictures that are part of the cadences of Israeli life. In keeping with centuries of Jewish tradition, a wide range of rabbis are issuing opinions on everything from kosher food to transportation to the laws of how husbands and wives relate to each other.

The opinions are almost all rooted in the core Jewish idea that *pikuach nefesh*, the preservation of life, overrides nearly every other religious law. That principle is what made it not only possible, but obligatory for Jews who are observant of *halacha*, Jewish law, to break the laws of *Shabbat* in order to respond to Hamas's bloody onslaught on October 7th, and to continue to depart from traditional *halacha* in certain circumstances.

The Chief Rabbinate's *Shabbat* decrees about keeping radios and phones on are meant to ensure that Orthodox Jews are able to hear safety alerts and instructions from Israel's Home Front Command, which is responsible for civil defense.

The Chief Rabbinate now also permits departures from the country's regular restrictions on public transportation. Most Israeli cities have never had public transit on *Shabbat* or Jewish holidays due to opposition from Haredi Orthodox lawmakers and voters. Its national carrier, El Al, also does not operate on *Shabbat*. When Hamas attacked, on *Shabbat* and the holiday of *Shmini Atzeret*, public transportation across the country was not functioning. That meant initially, IDF reservists had to make their way to their bases on their own.

Rabbis in Israel also granted permission for El Al to fly on *Shabbat*, marking the first time the airline has operated on *Shabbat* since the 1982 Lebanon War. The airline said in a statement that it had received permission from "relevant *halachic* authorities" to operate flights to carry reservists, rescuers, medics and members of the security forces "whose arrival into the country is vital."

In some cases the war has prompted more stringent observance of Jewish law. Food prepared and served by the Israeli army must be certified kosher by the military rabbinate. After 2,000 meals that it donated to Israeli soldiers were thrown away, the Tel Aviv hotspot *Ha'achim* asked President Isaac Herzog to help it get kosher certification. After retraining staff and overhauling its

kitchen, the restaurant now produces and distributes meals to soldiers full-time. "I don't eat kosher food, but I respect it," co-owner Yotam Doktor told *Israel Hayom*.

Rabbis in the Diaspora have also issued opinions related to the war. In the United States, Rabbi Herschel Schachter, one of the leading Modern Orthodox rabbis, ruled that worshipers should insert *Avinu Malkeinu* into their *Shabbat* liturgy. The plaintive prayer is typically recited only during the High Holy Days and considered at odds with the joyous tenor of *Shabbat*, when it is generally not recited.

Within Israel, in addition to state rabbis issuing national decisions, respected rabbis with smaller public pulpits have begun considering wartime questions as well. Rabbi Avraham Stav has authored books on Jewish law and is also an army reservist in the 439th artillery battalion, now called up for duty in Israel's south. He has continued to answer questions from the front, including about the kosher status of homemade donated food sent to the army bases.

"Whether homemade food is kosher can be hard to ascertain, since there is no kosher certificate attached to a home kitchen," Stav wrote on Facebook. But he said that according to Jewish law, if a person attests that their food is kosher, even with just a handwritten note, the food should be considered kosher, so long as there is no reason to suspect that the person was saying so out of ignorance or disdain. All the more so, he wrote, "out of sincere concern for observant soldiers."

Yoni Rosensweig, an Orthodox rabbi who leads a synagogue in Beit Shemesh, has built a substantial following due to his wartime legal opinions and his mental health advocacy. Rosensweig, too, ruled that soldiers and others in need should be lenient when assessing the kosher status of homemade, donated food. But a ruling on another topic ignited a backlash.

On the first day of the war, Rosensweig received a question about whether a man heading into battle could hug his wife goodbye if she was at a point in her menstrual cycle when touch would otherwise be prohibited under traditional Jewish law. Rosensweig's answer, posted on Facebook, was clear: Yes, provided that the embrace was for comfort only. "There is no greater emotional need, both for the husband and for the wife, than this hug before embarking on a military operation to defend the people and the land," he wrote.

The backlash was swift. For days, Rosensweig fended off criticism and responded to questions about how he could rule in contravention of mainstream opinions about Jewish law. After several days, he sought to put an end to the fighting with a new post. "The reality is that I'm impressed that most of the public didn't wait for me for this ruling at all. They did what they thought was right. Those who wanted gave a hug, and those who didn't, did not. And that makes sense. Because when you are right there, at that very moment, you do not call the rabbi, but do what you think is right."

Jackie Hajdenberg, JTA 10.23.23



Tree of Life Order Form

Donor Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Order _____ Leaf @ \$118 OR _____ Stone @ \$318

**S
A
M
P
L
E
S**



In honor of
 our children
 Ephraim & Menashe
 with love
 Asenath & Joseph
 Jacobson

In celebration of
 the marriage of
 Rachel & Jake Isaacson

 Rivkah & Isaac
 Abramson

In memory of our
 beloved mother
 Yocheved Moses

 Miriam & Aaron
 Amramson

Line 1 (12 characters): _____

Line 2 (14 characters): _____

Line 3 (18 characters): _____

Line 4 (20 characters): _____

Line 5 (17 characters): _____

Line 6 (9 characters): _____

Do you wish to have your donation acknowledged? Send to the person/family recognized at:

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Please contact **Mindy Jason** for more info and to place an order: mindysjason@gmail.com/860-559-7557.

Please Venmo* or make checks payable to **Congregation Beth El**.

*Our **Venmo** account is: **Congregation-Bethel** (hyphen between Congregation and Beth and no space between Beth and el



Congregation Beth El

A seasonal, egalitarian synagogue affiliated with the Conservative Movement

32 Gorton Avenue ♦ Old Colony Beach ♦ Old Lyme, CT ♦ 06371

Annual Membership Form

Welcome to our synagogue by the sea! We invite you to join our congregation!

Member Contact Information:

Name _____

Primary Address _____

Phone # _____

Beach Address (if applicable) _____

Phone # _____

Email address _____ Facebook _____

Membership Dues:

Although we are a seasonal congregation, our expenses are incurred year round.
We encourage you to be generous with your support.

_____ \$36 (minimum)	_____ \$118	_____ \$540
_____ \$54	_____ \$180	_____ \$720
_____ \$72	_____ \$360	_____ \$ Other

Please make checks payable to **Congregation Beth El**.

Please mail check and completed form to:

Rick Hyne 19 Danielle Drive, Wayne, NJ 07470
or Venmo Congregation-Bethel*

Brian Cutler, Membership VP beachshulmembership@gmail.com

* Our Venmo account is **Congregation-Bethel**
(hyphen between Congregation and Beth, no space between Beth and el)

