

# THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

April 22-May 5, 2022  
Volume LI, Number 8

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

## Federation to hold security seminar on May 12

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, in conjunction with the Broome County Council of Churches, will hold a security seminar for faith-based organizations on Thursday, May 12, from 6:30-8:30 pm at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. Representatives from public safety agencies will discuss ways the faith-based community can protect its houses of worship and keep its members safe while sustaining an open and welcoming environment. Reservations are required and can be made through the Federation website, [www.jfgeb.org](http://www.jfgeb.org).

The training will include:

- ◆ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Intelligence and Analysis with an intelligence brief about threats to the faith-based community.

◆ Broome County Sheriff's Office on the active shooter response, "Run, Hide, Fight."

◆ Broome County Office of Emergency Services with a "Stop The Bleed" presentation.

◆ New York State Police Counter Terrorism Investigation Unit on Recognizing and reporting suspicious activity.

◆ New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Service on the Non-Profit Security Grant Program process.

◆ U.S. Department of Homeland Security



Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency on how to get started with security and emergency preparedness, and how to get help.

◆ A question-and-answer period. "Unfortunately, as we've seen over the past few years, acts of violence against houses of worship are a real problem," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "We have to be prepared for the possibility that one of our local houses of worship might be targeted. We need to learn ways to both prevent that from happening and how to minimize the effects if it does."

According to ABC News, the FBI and

Department of Homeland Security issued a warning in January that "faith-based communities have been and will 'likely' be the target of violence 'by both domestic violent extremists and those inspired by foreign terrorists.'" The warning was issued after the hostage situation at a Colleyville, TX, synagogue.

"I pray that we never have to face what occurred in Texas or at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh," Hubal added. "But increasing our security and knowing how to handle these situations is the best way forward. I have attended a virtual security training and I feel more confident in my ability to react appropriately should, God forbid, an act of violence occur."

## CJS Spring 2022 Lecture Series on "Mixed Messages: Jews and Transgression in American Media" in May

The College of Jewish Studies will hold its Spring 2022 Lecture Series on "Mixed Messages: Jews and Transgression in American Media" on Mondays, May 2 and 9, at 7:30 pm, on Zoom. The programs will explore how post-World War II American film and television have depicted Jews in relation to such topics as intermarriage and race relations. The series is free and open to the general public. Voluntary contributions to offset the costs of programs are encouraged. Those wishing to attend should pre-register on the CJS Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/bing.cjs.5/](http://www.facebook.com/bing.cjs.5/)), or the Binghamton University Judaic Studies Department Events page ([www.binghamton.edu/judaic-studies/events/index.html](http://www.binghamton.edu/judaic-studies/events/index.html)).

A Zoom link will be sent to each registrant a day before the talk.

On May 2, novelist and literary scholar Todd Hasak-Lowy will speak on the topic "They Darker than Us: Satire and Ethnicity in Blazing Saddles." He will look at Mel Brooks' 1974 film, "Blazing Saddles," which has been celebrated as "a madcap, outrageous send-up of the Western." But might there be a method



Todd Hasak-Lowy (Photo courtesy of Todd Hasak-Lowy)



Tony Michels (Photo courtesy of Tony Michels)

to the movie's madness? The talk will explore the film's subversive, even transgressive, humor as a very particular way to make sense of Jewishness, ethnicity and difference in America.

On May 9, historian Tony Michels will speak about "Jews and Inter-Marriage on Screen." Since the early years of Hollywood, the theme of intermarriage has appeared repeatedly in films

and television shows. Romances between Jews and Gentiles have served as a source of comedy and drama, an expression of anxiety, but also a celebration of American national ideals. What do the affairs of Jews and Gentiles tell us about American society? This lecture will explore depictions of intermarriage and related themes of assimilation, upward mobility, and gender relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

Hasak-Lowy was an associate professor of Hebrew language and literature at the University of Florida. While in Florida, he published three books: an academic monograph, a short story collection and a novel. Since moving to Chicago, he has

## Federation plans virtual Yom Hashoah event on April 26

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a virtual Yom Hashoah event on Tuesday, April 26, at 7 pm. The virtual event will include a live Zoom session with Holocaust survivor Aliza Erber, who will also offer a Q&A session. In addition, the event will feature readings by local rabbis. It will be available on Zoom and on screen in the Temple Concord sanctuary. For a link to the event, register at [www.jfgeb.org](http://www.jfgeb.org). To learn more information about how to attend at Temple Concord, contact the synagogue at [TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com](mailto:TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com) or 723-7355.

"I was born in Holland in a small town

where my mother was sent to from Den Haag to get far away from the German invasion," Erber writes in her resume. "That was April of 1943. Of course, that town was soon overrun by the Gestapo and, although there were many Righteous Gentiles [R.G.] who helped the Jews, there were also many who denounced us. My mother had to give me away. There was a R.G. doctor who created an underground bunker in the woods and together with a couple of nurses cared for 10 Jewish babies. I am told that when the Germans patrolled the woods, our mouths were taped shut."

Life was difficult for those in hiding.



"Our diet consisted of mashed down roots and boiled grass," Erber added. "Eventually this bunker was discovered, the nurses shot dead, the children clubbed to death by rifle butts. I am not sure how it was that I survived."

Her father and grandfather were part of the Resistance movement and the Dutch underground. "My father was then caught and sent to Terezin," she said. "He was sent to a total of six concentration camps to finally succumb at Auschwitz. He died of slave labor, starvation and typhus."

Erber noted that she and her mother were reunited after the war. "In many ways, I

am not only a 'Hidden Child,' but also a child of Holocaust survivors," she added. "I am now 74 years old and find that it has become my responsibility as one of the last survivors to share my story and that of my family."

"I am pleased that we will be able to once again hold a Holocaust commemoration," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "This is our third year holding a virtual event, but I feel it's important for the community to gather to recognize the significance of Yom Hashoah. This event is special because we'll be hearing a Holocaust survivor speak."

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## Chabad to offer JLI class on personal ethics

Rivkah Slonim will offer the class "Beyond Right: The Values that Shape Judaism's Civil Code," a new six-session course by the Rohr Jewish Learning, which will focus on personal ethics in the light of Jewish Civil Law. The class will be held on six Mondays beginning May 16, at 7 pm. The cost of the course is \$79 per person or \$140 for a couple. It will be offered in-person, as well as over Zoom. Sign-in information will be provided upon enrollment.

"Can you help yourself to someone

else's possessions if you are sure they won't mind?" said organizers. "Must you forgive and accept a repentant antisemitic tormentor? If your neighbor blocks your sunlight with a two-story fence, do you have legal recourse? Do you have a legal obligation to report someone's plans to commit a violent crime? These are just some of the questions among the many – large and small – that are addressed in 'Beyond Right: The Values that Shape Judaism's Civil Code,' a new six-session course by the

acclaimed Rohr Jewish Learning Institute, focused on personal ethics in the light of Jewish Civil Law."

"Many people are surprised to discover the attention Jewish law devotes to disputes between neighbors, ethical dilemmas involving the workplace, and maintaining a peaceful and moral society," commented Slonim. "They assume Jewish law mostly addresses religious practice."

The course will explore six foundational Jewish values that underlie the practical

application of Jewish civil legislation, translating abstract principles into detailed guidance on common real-life scenarios.

"The JLI course 'Beyond Right' explores fundamental topics that are of vital importance for any just society in light of the profound teachings of the Jewish legal tradition," said Professor David Flatto of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Faculty of Law. "It highlights the central values and commitments that are at stake in addressing

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## Opinion

## Meir Kahane and the Jewish Defense League, part I

By Bill Simons

It was 1973, a time, like our own, of resurgent antisemitism. The residents at 704 Hauser Street in the Astoria section of Queens, New York City, found a swastika spraypainted on their front door. An accompanying note read: "This is just the beginning. We'll be back." Fear pervaded the household.

Paul Benjamin, a charismatic leader of the Hebrew Defense Association, showed up offering protection. The Bunkers explained that they were not Jewish, apparently their home was mistaken for that of their neighbor, David Bloom, a vocal school board member. Benjamin retorted that, as in Nazi Germany, once paranoid extremists target you, irrational hate trumps facts, and his hosts were in danger. Prepared for a long stakeout, Benjamin pulled the curtains. When he resolved that "if they use force, we use force," the Bunkers' liberal son-in-law termed Benjamin a vigilante and warned that counterviolence would only escalate a dangerous cycle. Derisively, Benjamin dismissed dialogue and law as futile.

The Bunkers' crisis apparently diffused when Benjamin received word that the antisemitic terrorists had now circled the Bloom residence. As Benjamin departed, he offered an ambiguous "shalom." Seconds later, hearing an ominous explosion, the family opened the front door. His face frozen in shock, the father muttered, "Wholly jeez, that's Paul... they blew him up in his car."

The preceding was fictive in specifics, but perhaps not in capturing the prevailing zeitgeist. The events were depicted in the Saturday, February 24, 1973, 8 pm episode of the groundbreaking CBS situation comedy "All in the Family." Clearly, the Hebrew Defense Association was a pseudonymous calling out of the Jewish Defense League by the program's Jewish producer Norman Lear. "All in the Family" frequently took on controversial and serious issues, laced with wit. Even in this episode, there was humor in the growing camaraderie between the working-class, head of the household, Archie Bunker, whose bigotry reflected a mean-minded ignorance leavened by occasional displays of sensitivity, and the dynamic Paul who calls Archie "Boobie." The dramatic car-bombing fadeout, however, was, by intent, stunning and disturbing.

Events both transformative and challenging punctuated 1973, with added dimensions for Israeli and American Jewry. Ambiguity clouded the formal ending of the Vietnam War; the Watergate cancer continued to metastasize on the Nixon presidency; stagflation appeared intractable; and the Roe v. Wade decision further polarized the abortion debate. Although Israel won a stunning victory in the high-stakes Yom Kippur War, an OPEC oil boycott followed, bringing an energy crisis and sentiments reflected in a proliferation of bumper stickers of the "America Needs Oil, Not Jews" genre. Amidst this canvas, Rabbi Meir Kahane's militant and controversial Jewish Defense League grew in notoriety. In 1973, it was cited in 98 articles in *The New York Times*.

At this time, I was teaching social studies at the Kingswood-Oxford School in West Hartford, CT. Alex Schwartz was a student in one of my 10<sup>th</sup>-grade Western Civilization classes. He was bright, idealistic, polite, confident and Jewish. At 15, Alex was already 6'5", 210 pounds, and excelled in the javelin throw. His parents, however, had a concern about which they spoke to me. During a summer 1973 immersive work experience in Israel, he had met Kahane and, drawn to the rabbi's courage, charisma and Jewish solidarity, Alex joined the JDL.

Carrying a lacrosse stick, Alex provided security for elderly Jews in the high-crime Albany Avenue area of Hartford and participated in a Jewish Defense League counter rally in Washington, DC. I shared my feelings with Alex about the provocative and sometimes dangerous activities of the JDL. Listening intently and responding in measured tones, Alex indicated that, with caution and responsibility, he would continue his endeavors. A half-century later Alex, now an attorney, and I continued the dialogue on March 16. Although still strongly committed to the fight against antisemitism, Alex had, long ago, broken with the JDL when Kahane's racism surfaced.

In the late 1970s, I again brushed up against the Kahane forcefield. On the evening of Wednesday, April 25, 1979, Kahane spoke for over two hours on the SUNY Oneonta campus in the Instructional Resources Center, Lecture Hall 1. Attendance numbered close to 100, a mix of students, faculty and community.

Security stood at the ready. I served as the advisor to the Jewish student group for a year in the late 1970s during a colleague's sabbatical and then for a long stretch as co-advisor two decades later. I arrived just before the start of Kahane's program.

Kahane's reputation preceded him, and the atmosphere in the room on that late April night was intense and focused. Rabbi Kahane praised militant American Jews who agitated on behalf of their persecuted Soviet co-religionists and castigated comfortable, silent, assimilated, intermarried, suburban Jews for their oversensitivity to Gentile opinion. The JDL, claimed Kahane, was formed to protect the poor and elderly Jews of Brooklyn and the Bronx who had not fled to comfortable Long Island sanctuaries. As for Israel evolving into a multiethnic nation, Kahane called for the expulsion of Arabs from Israel lest their birthrate destroy the defining character of the Jewish state. Reception to the lecture was polarized. A true believer, immune to nuance, doubt or fear, Kahane exuded a preternatural confidence and dynamism. As Philip Steinbach, a reporter for the student newspaper, observed, "Kahane was able to evoke a multitude of emotions... individuals reacted by applauding, growing uncomfortably silent... and by angrily stating their disapproval."

During the volatile question-and-answer session following formal remarks, an Oneonta student castigated Kahane for advocating violence and intolerance in violation of the Torah. Kahane evoked the obligation of self-defense and Jewish survival. A visiting Jewish student from SUNY Albany sought counsel as to what he and allies should do about an upcoming lecture by a Palestine Liberation Organization leader. Kahane told the student to disrupt the PLO representative by shouting him down. When the student asked about employing violence, Kahane shrugged, "And who am I to tell you not to use violence?"

Part II of this series will engage Kahane's question.

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

## In My Own Words

## Collective illusions and society

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I recently read an interesting book on the sociology of social theory called "Collective Illusions: Conformity, Complicity and the Science of Why We Make Bad Decisions" by Todd Rose. I found the book fascinating, especially when it exposed my biases and my inability to see through some societal illusions. Rose's work is an attempt to help readers understand these "collective illusions" that prevent clear thinking, which are based mostly on faulty ideas or the lack of accurate information in order to make well-informed decisions. This column is too short to go into all his ideas – his book is excellent so I recommend reading it – but when thinking about it, I ended up questioning whether collective illusions could sometimes actually benefit our society.

Rose calls all collective illusions wrong and, at first, I agreed. We were both thinking about conspiracy theories that make no sense if one were to think rationally about them. The problems of social media are clearly in his mind, especially the way distorted and incorrect information manages to spread far faster than reasoned thought. He notes that people are sometimes afraid to call out wrong ideas because they are afraid they are the only ones to think that way. I can understand that: I sometimes shy away from challenging people on Facebook because I don't want to start a fight or get called names. (That did happen once when I mentioned that I have a friend who voted for former President Trump in the first election: people were

making unfair and wrong assumptions about her based on that vote and I have since been more cautious.)

However, when thinking about all the antisemitism and racism that is currently being expressed, I had a different thought. In the past 10 years, the amount of antisemitism and racism seems to have increased at an enormous speed. Barely a day goes by when Jews aren't accused of controlling the world or performing horrible actions. Racism now seems acceptable to many people who act as if Blacks are trying to overthrow law and order, and destroy whites and American culture. Liberals have been accused of being part of international pedophile rings that traffic in young children. Congressional representatives spout these same statements and get more publicity than they could ever afford to pay for. Even when they are trashed on social media by those who despise those statements, they are rewarded by even more followers, those who believe someone is finally brave enough to tell what they think is the truth hidden by the liberal media.

Rose and I see this as a bad thing, but is it possible that, in the past, collective illusions were what kept people from expressing those thoughts? Antisemitism and racism didn't magically appear. People felt this way, but they didn't feel free to express those thoughts. What changed? They were given permission to publicly admit their biases by people in powerful political positions, who either said something similar or who refused to condemn their comments. Before

that, they may have been afraid of repercussions if they said something racist or antisemitic – being ostracized or losing their jobs – while now they are applauded and cheered on by social media and politicians/celebrities who feel the same. Their fears were based on the collective illusion that others didn't support those ideas; now, they realize others feel the same.

So, are collective illusions always a bad thing? They may not be when they keep society civil. They may not be if they prevent people from expressing hateful and dangerous thoughts. But even better would be to find a way for everyone to understand the truth, or, at least, accept that most people want the same things they do: to not live in poverty, to not live in fear and to find meaning in their life. It would also help if each side of the political and cultural spectrum would give the other the benefit of the doubt, rather than immediately seeing them as enemies to be defeated. Yet, I doubt this is going to happen in our current climate. Too many people on both sides of the issues are talking only to themselves, rather than working for the common good. Writing that phrase – the common good – makes me feel like a broken record. It's one I've used over and over, and will continue to use until people finally understand it. Neither side can create a just and thriving society without the other. Please, we need to work together before our democracy disappears and our society lies in shambles.



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

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

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

Executive Editor Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Layout Editor Diana Sochor

Advertising Kathy Brown

Bookkeeper Kathy Brown

Production Associate Julie Weber



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

www.thereporter.org

# Hillel Journal and Journal brunch

Hillel Academy of Broome County will hold its annual Journal Brunch on Sunday, May 22, from 11 am-3 pm. The event will be held outdoors at Temple Israel. Diane Stento from Danielle House will be honored with the Theodore Sommer Community Service Award and Brian Savitch will receive the A.M. Pierson Award. The deadline for journal ads is Sunday, May 1.

There are three ways to submit an ad to the journal: anyone who has received an e-mail with attachments about the journal and brunch can fill out the information on the PDF and scan the Venmo QR Code to pay for the ad. A second option is to print out the PDF, fill it out and mail,

or drop off, the ad along with a donation. Those who don't have the e-mail can mail back the invitation that is coming in regular mail with their ad and donation. For answers to questions or to receive more information, call 304-4544 and leave a message with a name and phone number.

"It is with great honor that Hillel Academy proudly recognizes with respect and admiration the dedication that Brian Savitch and Diane Stento have in the Greater Binghamton community," said journal organizers. "Their efforts have enriched the lives of our county and our students will forever enrich the world. Thank you Brian Savitch and Diane Stento for everything that you do for

the people in Broome County.

"Brian, you are a pioneer of Hillel Academy's Annual Journal. You have put your heart and soul into our school for many, many years and we are forever grateful to you," organizers added.

Organizers continued, "Diane, what began as a one-time community service project at the Danielle House evolved into a beautiful friendship between our students and your organization. Thank you so much for allowing the children of Hillel Academy to learn the importance of community service, and thank you for allowing our school to honor you this year."

## Intersisterhood May 25 program to feature Rogers and Sperberstein

The 2022 Intersisterhood program will be "Rogers and Sperberstein: Better Than Never!" The event will be held on Wednesday, May 25, at 7 pm, at Beth David Synagogue. It will feature Robert Rogers and David Sperber performing their parodied versions of Broadway tunes with lyrics they created, all with a Jewish twist. Refreshments will be served. The admission price of \$5 will be collected at the event, and attendees will have an opportunity to be entered into a drawing for door prizes.

Attendees should RSVP by Wednesday, May 18, to their respective synagogues: Beth David at 722-1793 or bethdavid@stny.rr.com; Temple Israel at 723-7461 or titammy@stny.twcbc.com; and Temple Concord at 723-7355 or templeconcordaa@gmail.com.

"Ready to laugh and be entertained? The time has come!" said the organizers of this year's Intersisterhood event. "The event will bring together Sisterhood members from Beth David, Temple Israel and Temple Concord, and is being coordinated by Intersisterhood Committee members Dora Polachek, Barbara Zelter and Ani Loew."

Rogers is the director of the Robert Rogers Puppet Company, now in its 42<sup>nd</sup> year, and has performed locally, nationally and internationally. He and his family moved to Broome County in 2002. David Sperber, after training in New York City in ophthalmology and retinal surgery, moved to the Binghamton area in 1996 and established his practice, Retina Associates.

Rogers and Sperber originally met when they were high school students in New Rochelle, NY, and reconnected in Binghamton. "It wasn't until years later," Rogers noted, "that we realized our hometown connection. By chance, we both had joined Temple Concord. One Friday night, I heard David's name as he was called up to the Torah, and that's how we became good friends thereafter." Rogers recalls bantering back and forth with Sperber about theatrical trivia. "I worked in the performing arts," Rogers added, "and if David hadn't become a physician, I think he would have loved to be in the theater."

Their test as a musical comedy team came when they performed together at a Saturday night Temple Concord congregational dinner. "We were a hit," Sperber quipped, "and our personae evolved into what we currently are: Rogers and Sperberstein, the unsung and unknown Jewish musical theater duo."

At another Temple Concord dinner event, Sperber rewrote the lyrics to "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" from "Kiss me Kate" as "Brush Up Your Torah." "At which point," Sperber added, "Robert realized that I could write much better than I could sing. We continued writing new Yiddische lyrics to classical show tunes, and have performed our act numerous times - twice, to be exact."

"With their penchant for adding a Jewish twist to classic Broadway songs," organizers said, "this Intersisterhood event is just what the doctor ordered. Both Robert and David look forward to entertaining us at what will surely be an event to remember!"

## JLI . . . . .Continued from page 1

these issues. I commend JLI for developing this rich and illuminating course."

To register, e-mail to rshea@Jewishbu.com, call the Chabad Center at 797-0015 or visit www.myJLI.com for registration and for other course-related information.

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Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton



Rogers and Sperberstein, AKA David Sperber and Robert Rogers

## Book Club meeting update

The Morning Book Club will meet in the Temple Concord library and on Zoom on Wednesday, May 4, at 10:30 am. The book to be discussed will be "A Place at the Table" by Saadia Faruqi and Laura Shovan, a middle grade children's novel about two families of first generation immigrants in America brought together via cooking and good food. Following the book discussion, the club will choose the books members will read during the next reading season. Members of the club who attend in person are invited to go out to lunch after the meeting ends.

The last meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> "chai" reading season will be held on Wednesday, June 1. The book to be discussed is "Exile Music: A Novel" by Jennifer Steil. The author will join the discussion on Zoom and read from her book. (An interview with Steil will appear in a future issue of *The Reporter*. *The Reporter's* review of the book can be found at <https://www.thereportergroup.org/streams/executive-editor/executive-editor-stream/off-the-shelf-two-sides-of-world-war-ii-part-1-by-rabbi-rachel-esser-man?entry=366308>.)

For more information or the Zoom link, e-mail Merri Pell-Preus at merrypell.preus@gmail.com.

## Virtual . . . . .Continued from page 1

Hubal noted the importance of allowing Holocaust survivors to share their stories before it is too late. "The survivors of the Holocaust are aging and there are fewer opportunities to speak with them directly," she said. "I look forward to hearing Aliza speak about her experience. We need to cherish these opportunities and honor the survivors while we still can."

Jewish Family Service wishes to thank all of our generous sponsors for supporting the *We Remember You Program* with gifts for Purim and Passover, including:

- Hillel Academy Students
- Beth David Synagogue Members
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- Jewish Community Members

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Jewish Family Service

*The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of*  
**Marvin Frank**

---

*The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to David Klotzkin on the death of his mother,*  
**Judy Klotzkin**

---

*The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Aaron Peter Mitchell and Susan Mitchell on the death of their mother,*  
**Alice Mitchell**

---

*The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Jessica Roth Brown and Rene Roth on the death of their mother,*  
**Marcia Roth**

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
May 6-19 .....	April 27
May 20-June 2.....	May 11
June 3-16 .....	May 25
June 17-30 .....	June 8

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## Off the Shelf

# Romance, fantasy or a combination of the two: Part two

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

I wrote in part one of this review that I was looking for light reading after having read some very serious fiction. Once again, I found two books in this review had more serious themes than I expected, although there was a great deal of humor in the romance novel. While one of the fantasy novels offered a romantic element, the novel aimed at tweens focused on parent/child interactions and friendship. But, as I said in the first review, the fun is in the surprises and these works contained several. Even better, one ranks as one of the most affecting novels I've read this year.

### "Aviva vs. the Dybbuk"

Although "Aviva vs. the Dybbuk" by Mari Lowe (Levine Querido) is aimed at tween readers, it packed a powerful punch for this adult. Life has not been easy for Aviva and her mother since Aviva's father died. The two live in an apartment over the *mikvah* where they moved after they could no longer afford their house. Aviva's mother was a teacher before her husband's death, but quit her job and now can barely function. It's clear that her position at the *mikvah* was offered out of pity since most of the community uses the newer, fancier one.

Aviva also has difficulty coping. Her best friend, Kayla, has deserted her, she finds it hard to concentrate at school and there's a dybbuk (the ghost of someone who passed away) living in the *mikvah* who periodically causes havoc. Aviva feels responsible for her mother and tries to make her life easier, but doesn't know how to cure her mother's sadness. Things get more complicated when the principal of their school forces Aviva and Kayla to work together on a project for the school's upcoming mother/daughter event. Then after an antisemitic incident, someone attacks the synagogue. Aviva believes it was the dybbuk who caused the damage,

but how can she get anyone to believe her when she's the only one who sees him?

The ending of "Aviva vs. the Dybbuk" surprised me and left my eyes filled with tears of joy and sorrow. Lowe is an author to watch and I look forward to reading her future work.

### "Sadie on a Plate"

The humor is clear from the start in Amanda Elliot's "Sadie on a Plate" (A Jove Book). The novel opens with the sentence, "My life has this irritating habit of throwing its biggest changes at me while I'm completely in the nude." That includes her invitation to appear on her favorite TV show "Chef Supreme."

That invitation is much needed because Sadie was dumped by her boyfriend and fired from her job on the same day. Even worse, the boyfriend and the boss were the same person: the owner of the restaurant where she worked, who also promised she would never again work as a chef in Seattle. Sadie almost forgets about being dumped during her plane trip to New York to take part in "Chef Supreme" because she's seated next to the very sexy Luke. Their chemistry is hot, but she can't tell him about her appearance on "Chef Supreme," so, after a wonderful lunch together in New York, she promises to let him know when she can be in contact again. But things take an unexpected turn when it turns out... Oh, sorry, can't reveal that, although I guessed the plot twist. However, that didn't take away from the fun of reading about Sadie's time on the program, which she hopes will help her attain her dream: opening her own restaurant where she can cook a modern, hip version of traditional Jewish food.

While "Sadie on a Plate" confirmed that I *never* want to appear on any contest show, this one was great fun to read about,

especially the diabolical challenges the contestants faced. I'm not sure I want to taste all the food they made (some of it sounded rather strange), but there were some that sounded interesting. (Sorry, no recipes were included.) The combination of humor (with some serious touches), the romantic challenges and the cooking competitions will appeal to readers who love romance.

### "A Far Wilder Magic"

My initial challenge with Allison Saft's "A Far Wilder Magic" (Wednesday Books) was of my own making: it took me a bit to realize that its Jewish content was not going to be specifically spelled out. But it finally becomes clear from the discussions of Margaret Welty's Yu'adir heritage that that term represents Judaism, particularly when noting the discrimination and hatred directed toward the Yu'adir. Margaret's homeland also discriminates against immigrants, which readers learn about when they are introduced to the second main character, Weston Winters, who fights against stereotypes of a religion that seems to represent Catholicism. The novel takes place in an alternate version of our world, but at first, the time period is unclear. There are cars and phones, but no cell phones or

television. At 150 pages into the novel, a date is finally mentioned, which sets the events in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The two characters meet when Weston appears at the manor house belonging to Margaret's mother, Evelyn. Weston wants to become a licensed alchemist and hopes to apprentice with Evelyn. Unfortunately for him, Evelyn has once again deserted Margaret to search for answers to alchemist mysteries. Although she can barely tolerate his company, Margaret agrees to let Weston remain until her mother returns. When the legendary *hala*—a non-earthly creature that destroys crops and kills humans—is found in the area, Margaret decides to take part in the Halfmoon Hunt that offers hunters a chance to kill the creature. But, because of the *hala*'s mysterious nature, she needs an alchemist to help her and the only one available is Weston.

The plot lines in "A Far Wilder Magic" are more complex than this short review suggests, but the familial and societal relationships discussed add the depth to the novel. The action became exciting once the hunt began, although I debated exactly how I wanted it to end. Lovers of fantasy will want to add this to their list of potential reads.



## Off the Shelf

# God in body and metaphor

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

What is the true nature of God? That's a question that has been explored and debated over the centuries. There seems to be no satisfactory answer for everyone, even among believers, atheists and agnostics. Two recent books discuss this issue in very different ways: Francesca Stavropoulou's fascinating "God: An Anatomy" (Alfred A. Knopf) offers a close look at God as the deity was originally portrayed in the Bible, while Rabbi Toba Spitzer's excellent "God is Here: Reimagining the Divine" (St. Martin's Essentials) presents intriguing metaphors for those seeking an increased connection to divinity in their lives.

The two authors approach the topic from opposite points of view: Stavropoulou, a chaired professor of Hebrew Bible and ancient religion at the University of Exeter, is an atheist seeking to tell "the story of the real God of the Bible, in all his corporeal, uncensored, scandalous forms... The God revealed in this book is the deity as his ancient worshippers saw him: a supersized, muscle-bound, good-looking god, with supra-human powers, earthly passions, and a penchant for the fantastic and the monstrous." Spitzer, who is a pulpit rabbi and teacher whose courses include new ways to think about God, sees that physicality as a metaphor, rather than an actual description of God: "Yet something new and radical for its time and place was the Bible's insistence that we resist the urge to represent God in any physical way. Whatever God was, It could not be contained in any object represented in nature or made by human hands (a major departure from the Mesopotamian and Canaanite cultures that surrounded and influenced the ancient Israelites). While physical imagery could be used in stories about God, when it came to worshipping God, there were to be no statues, no pictures, nothing that a person could point to and say, 'There is my God!'" Although she acknowledges many people still think "whether [they] explicitly believe it or not, God is a Big Person Who knows everything and can do anything God wants," her work shares metaphors that help people replace what is, for many, an unhelpful image.

In more than 400 pages, Stavropoulou systematically explores the biblical text, focusing on its plain meaning and comparing it to other religions of the time to show how the Israelite God was originally like the gods of other religions—meaning that God had a body (including a sexual organ), and walked, talked and ate like

humans. She also shows how the ancient rabbis discussed God's having a physical presence. Only later, during the medieval period, when writers like Maimonides objected to an embodied God, did Judaism dismiss that idea.

To put her ideas into perspective, Stavropoulou discusses how the Bible developed, focusing on the different ways God is portrayed. For example, she sees the varying names used for God as showing that the text combined aspects of different divine beings into one God. She notes that several of those gods were married and offers examples from the Bible that suggest the Israelite God may once have had a wife. She also notes while it's not possible to determine exactly how Yahweh became the main Israelite god, supplanting El and Elshaddai, by the times the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah were established, he was the head God of a pantheon of divine beings.

In order to discuss the details of God's physicality, sections focus on specific aspects of God's body, including "Feet and Legs," "Genitals," "Torso," "Arms and Hands" and "Head." While it's not possible to explore even a portion of this material, examples include:

◆ God walking in the Garden of Eden looking for Adam. Stavropoulou suggests that God walked through the garden seeking companionship and calls out to Adam out of frustration when God can't find him.

◆ The idea that the destruction of the Temple meant that God could no longer eat with his worshippers. Before that, part of the sacrifices were for the worshipper and/or the priest, while the burnt part of the offering was God's food. Stavropoulou sees this shared consumption between humans and God. She also believes that "the holiness of the deity's priests was not only maintained by an adherence to ritual distinctions between the sacred and profane, but by the regular consumption of the god's food and drink."

◆ The ark originally serving as a footstool on which God's actual feet were expected to rest. The author offers examples of footstools found in many non-Israelite temples during that era to show different religions all expected God to be physically present in their place of worship.

◆ The existence of the Sabbath day because God was physically tired after creation and needed bodily rest. Her translation of Exodus 31:17 (part of the 10 Commandments) See "Body" on page 7

## Annual Campaign 2022

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## Film Fest held discussion on April 10



Above and below: The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest held a virtual showing of the film "Here We Are." Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, and Dr. Jennifer Gillis, professor of psychology at Binghamton University, moderated an online discussion that took place on April 10. Thirty-two computers registered to view the film and there were 16 computers online during the discussion. Shown are participants of the discussion.



## TC Sisterhood elected Board of Directors

The Temple Concord Sisterhood elected its officers and Board of Directors for 2022-23 on April 6. Barbara Thomas will be meeting coordinator and Sisterhood representative to the temple board. Lani Dunthorn is past president, with Nancy Dorfman as treasurer, Janet Hayman as financial secretary and corresponding secretary, and Marty Eisenstadt as recording secretary.

Directors are Marsha Luks and Thomas (2022-24), and Babs Putzel-Bischoff and Helene Philips (2021-23). Philips is the Women of Reform Judaism liaison. Putzel-Bischoff is nominating committee chairwoman, publicity chairwoman and Rosh Hashanah Kiddush chairwoman. Members of the Rosh Hashanah Kiddush Committee are Tracy Putzel-Bischoff, Barbara Dickman, Luks and Gayle Klein.

Ani Loew and Deb Williams are Whale of a Sale co-chairwomen with Pam Burgman and Hayman. Judaica Shop co-chairwomen are Carol Herz and Robin Hazen. Williams is the Artisan Marketplace chairwoman, and Marilyn Strosberg and Philips are on the Artisan Marketplace Committee. The position of Artisan Marketplace bake sale chairwoman needs to be filled.

Sisterhood Shabbat will be organized by Philips, Sima Auerbach and Cathy Eckert, with InterSisterhood by Luks and Cookie Schaeffer; Cradle Roll by Jesse Parker; and High Holiday child care by Amanda Donahue. Adult education and programming, including Donor co-chairwomen, are Deb Daniels, Phyllis Kellenberger and Roz Antoun. See "Board" on page 7

## TC Religious School celebrated Passover



The Temple Concord Religious School celebrated Passover with songs, crafts and a model seder on April 9.

# Spring Home Improvement

### Did you know?

(NAPSA) - Fire experts agree you have as little as two minutes to escape a burning home before it's too late. The Red Cross encourages you to practice your home fire escape plan twice a year. Visit [redcross.org/homefires](http://redcross.org/homefires) for a free plan.



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## Weekly Parasha

Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17

# Redemption in three dimensions

RABBI AARON SLONIM, DIRECTOR, THE ROHR CHABAD CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDENT LIFE AT BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

The seders (and thus the first two days of the holiday) tend to get most of the air time when it comes to *Pesach*, but the holiday is eight days long with the first two and the last two days manifesting a more concentrated form of sanctity.

The seders are famously a re-enactment of the Exodus from Egypt. This first dimension is about leave taking from a place of constriction and confinement. We might call this “freedom from.”

The seventh day of the holiday, *Shevii Shel Pesach*, marks the splitting of the Sea of Reeds. This stage of the

Exodus is about the Jews loosening the shackles of servitude on their mind-set and inner consciences. They have left Egypt, but has Egypt been purged from their system? Can they find the inner strength to follow God into the sea instead of submitting to the Egyptians at their heels? And they do! This can be termed “freedom to.”

The final day of Pesach, *Acharon Shel Pesach*, offers a whole new level for redemption. This can be referred to as the freedom to transcend. The *haftorah* for this day is the famous prophecy of Isaiah about the end of the days, the final redemption. This last frontier bids us to move con-

ceptually beyond the here and now, and transport ourselves to the Messianic Era, a time of complete manifestation of God when all will know Him and serve Him. The Baal Shem Tov instituted the custom of celebrating this day with “*Moshiach’s seduah*,” a feast which includes matzah, four cups of wine, words of Torah about redemption and soulful melodies.

May we very quickly experience the joy of the ultimate redemption and drink of the aged wine that our tradition teaches has been put away from that great feast. *L’chayim!*

## Congregational Notes

### Temple Israel

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

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

On Saturday, April 23, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17 and the haftarah is Isaiah 10:32-12:16. At 8:45 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Wednesday, April 27, there will be Torah study from 4-5 pm on Zoom.

On Saturday, April 30, at 9:30 am, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Leviticus 16:1-18:30 and the haftarah is I Samuel 20:18-42. At 9 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

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

The temple office will be closed on Friday, April 22, for the seventh day of Passover.

The bar mitzvah of Ezra Gindi will be held on Saturday, April 30, at 9:30 am.

There will be an Executive Board meeting on Tuesday, May 3, at 7 pm.

### Penn-York Jewish Community

President-Treasurer-Secretary: Harvey Chernosky, 570-265-3869  
B'nai B'rith: William H. Seigel Lodge  
Purpose: To promote Jewish identity through religious, cultural, educational and social activities in the Southern Tier of New York and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, including Waverly, NY; Sayre, Athens and Towanda, PA, and surrounding communities.

### Temple Beth El of Oneonta

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
Rabbi: Amelia F. Wolf  
Address: 83 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY 13820  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 383, Oneonta, NY 13820  
Phone: 607-432-5522  
E-mail: TBEOneonta@gmail.com  
Regular service times: Contact the temple for days of services and times.  
Religious School/Education: Religious School, for grades kindergarten through bar/bat mitzvah, meets Sunday mornings. For the schedule of services, classes and events, contact the temple.

Friday night services will be held on May 6 and Saturday morning, May 7; and June 3.

### Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated  
Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045  
Phone: 607-756-7181  
President: Carol Levine, 315-696-5744  
Cemetery Committee: 315-696-5744  
Website: templebrithsholomcortland.org  
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/  
Service leaders: Lay leadership  
Shabbat services: Either Friday evening at 7:30 pm or Saturday at 10 am from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot. Holiday services are also held. Check the Facebook page or weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.  
Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis. Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is “*Likrat Shabbat*,” while the Saturday morning siddur is “*Gates of Prayer*.” The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences.

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

### Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

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

### Rohr Chabad Center

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

Chabad will be holding pre-Shabbat virtual programs. For more information, visit [www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership](http://www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership).

### Kol Haverim

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

### Congregation Tikkun v’Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism  
Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY  
Phone: 607-256-1471  
Website: www.tikkunvor.org  
E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org  
Presidents: Nomi Talmi and Shawn Murphy  
Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman, rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org  
Education Director/Administrative Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky  
Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin  
Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikkunvor.org for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule.  
Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly.  
Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.

Friday, April 22, light candles after ..... 7:35 pm  
Saturday, April 23, Shabbat/yom tov ends ..... 8:36 pm  
Friday, April 29, light candles before ..... 7:42 pm  
Saturday, April 30, Shabbat ends ..... 8:44 pm  
Friday, May 6, light candles before ..... 7:50 pm  
Saturday, May 7, Shabbat ends ..... 8:52 pm

### Temple Concord

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

Some services and programs are online only.  
Friday, April 22: at 10:30 am, seventh day of Passover concluding service with Yizkor. To attend in person, all must show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations. Masks are not required, but are recommended. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3ueF8KH>, meeting ID 892 9312 2589 and passcode 462423; or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

Friday, April 22: at 7:30 pm, Shabbat service led by Rabbi Goldman-Wartell. To attend in person, all must show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations. Masks are not required, but are recommended. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330; or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

Saturday, April 23: Shabbat school at 9 am; Torah study at 9:15 am on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3CVxM14>, meeting ID 882 9808 7579 and passcode 676707; Shabbat family service at 10:30 am; and “Havdalah with a Bonus” at 7 pm on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3zd0atv>, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279.

Tuesday, April 26: at 7 pm, Dr. Aliza Erber discussion on the eve of Yom Hashoah. Event will be online or for viewing in the temple sanctuary. (For more information on the program, see article on page 1.)

Friday, April 22: at 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Yom Hashoah Commemoration led by Rabbi Goldman-Wartell. To attend in person, all must show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations. Masks are not required, but are recommended. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330; or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.  
See “Concord” on page 7

### Norwich Jewish Center

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

### Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
Rabbi: Rachel Safman  
Rabbi Emeritus: Scott L. Glass  
Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292  
Phone: 273-5775  
E-mail: rabbi-safman@tbeithaca.org and secretary@tbeithaca.org  
Website: www.tbeithaca.org  
Presidents: David Weiner and Linda Aigen  
Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman  
Director of Education: Rabbi Suzanne Brody  
Services: Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 10 am, unless otherwise announced.  
Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sun. and legal holidays).  
Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday, 3:45-5:45 pm. The Midrashah (eighth grade and high school) classes will meet at times designated by their respective teachers.  
Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.  
For upcoming services and events on Zoom, visit [www.tinyurl.com/HappeningAtTBE](http://www.tinyurl.com/HappeningAtTBE).

## Concord . . . Continued from page 6

Saturday, April 23: Shabbat school at 9 am; Torah study at 9:15 am on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3CVxM14>, meeting ID 882 9808 7579 and passcode 676707; Shabbat family service at 10:30 am; and "Havdalah with a Bonus" at 7 pm on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3zd0atv>, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279.

Sunday, May 1: 10 am-2 pm, Sisterhood Rummage Sale, buy one item, get one free. The rummage sale will be held in Temple Concord's basement. Shoppers are asked to use the Oak Street entrance. Masks are not required, but are recommended.

Wednesday, May 4: at 10:30 am, Morning Book Club: "A Place at the Table" by Saadia Faruqi and Laura Shovan. Anyone new to the book club or who needs the Zoom link should contact Merri Pell-Preus at 222-2875 or [merrypell.preus@gmail.com](mailto:merrypell.preus@gmail.com).

Wednesday, May 4: at 6:30 pm, Sisterhood schmooze; and at 7 pm, Sisterhood board meeting.

## Body . . . Continued from page 4

is not the traditional one – "on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed" – but rather, "on the seventh day he rested and caught his breath."

◆ Poetry in the book of Hosea, which uses euphemisms that she believes clearly refer to God's genitalia. For Stavrakopoulou, Hosea's use of the word "fructify" (meaning to be made fruitful) makes it clear that the Israelite God, the same as other gods of the time, took the land as a wife and gave it his seed so that "the earth will fructify the grain, the wine, and the oil."

"God: An Anatomy" is an impressive work perfect for those interested in the history and development of religion. One doesn't have to agree with all of Stavrakopoulou's interpretations in order to be challenged by her thoughtful, detailed book.

While Stavrakopoulou offers a scholarly work that is not interested in religious practice, Spitzer wants to help people increase their spiritual connection to the Divine. She realizes that many people are searching for something beyond the impersonal and, too often, unbelievable ideas found in our religious cultures. She notes, "We need to reject two myths. First that a superhero God is going to magically appear and save us. And second, that human beings are so good and so powerful we can save ourselves. In between those two misconceptions is a deeper, urgent truth: there is Something operating both within us and around us that, if understood and accessed properly, can help us foster the wisdom, compassion, and resilience to perhaps save ourselves and our planet. We need to know It by Its many names and learn from each of those names what is asked of us."

While she doesn't reject using human metaphors for God – for example, seeing "God as Parent, as Beloved, as Teacher" – she believes there are other useful metaphors that can expand our view of God. For example, she explores the ideas of seeing God as Water, Voice, Place, Fire, Rock, Cloud and the process of Becoming. Spitzer notes that these images are taken from the biblical text, which also refers to God in ways other than human. At the end of each chapter, she offers exercises to help readers incorporate these ideas into a spiritual practice. In addition, Spitzer offers examples from her personal life as to how they have helped her during difficult times.

One wonderful example is her explanation of God as water: "And unlike God as Distant Emperor, God as Water

## CJS . . . Continued from page 1

published three more books and co-written two others, all of them with major commercial houses, with both fiction and non-fiction works currently in the pipeline. His books have been translated into 19 languages. He has also translated Hebrew literature into English, and since arriving at SAIC five of his book-length translations have been published.

Michels is the George L. Mosse Professor of American Jewish History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is the author of "A Fire in their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York" and "Jewish Radicals: A Documentary History," and a forthcoming study of Jews and American Communism.

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

The College of Jewish Studies, founded in 1986, is an informal coalition between the Judaic Studies Department of Binghamton University and several area Jewish sponsoring institutions: the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord and Temple Israel. Programming for CJS would not be possible without the additional financial support of a generous grant from The Community Foundation for South Central New York - David and Virginia Eisenberg Donor Advised Fund, the Jacob and Rose Olum Foundation, the B'nai B'rith Lectureship Fund, the Victor and Esther Rozen Foundation, an endowment fund from the former Temple Beth El of Endicott, a grant from the JoyVel Charitable Fund, and the generous donations of individual sponsors.

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

For more information on the College of Jewish Studies and its programs, go to [www.bingcjs.org](http://www.bingcjs.org) and [www.facebook.com/bingcjs](http://www.facebook.com/bingcjs).

### NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

#### Couple plans to build first Holocaust museum in Boston

Jewish philanthropists Jody Kipnis and Todd Ruderman of Massachusetts bought a 15,000-square-foot building in Boston to create a Holocaust museum. "Look what's going on in Europe again," she said, referring to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February, reported the AP. "And we've seen a rise in hate crimes and swastika graffiti in schools in Massachusetts. We're looking to build a museum that will be an interactive, cautionary experience." They purchased the building on Tremont Street for \$11.5 million. A New England Holocaust Memorial stands in the city; however, this would be the first indoor museum. Kipnis and Ruderman also started the Holocaust Legacy Foundation and the Holocaust Legacy Fellows, a program for Jewish teenagers to visit Germany and Poland to learn about the Holocaust, and then to return and educate others, according to the report. Professor Michael Berenbaum, director of the Sigi Ziering Institute: Exploring the Ethical and Religious Implications of the Holocaust at the American Jewish University, who was the project director for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, is leading the design for the Boston museum.

## Board . . . Continued from page 5

Listed for Friday night *onegs* are Sylvia Diamond, Eisenstadt and Dickman. Scholar-in-Residence *oneg* chairwoman is Jean Hecht. Membership and retention co-chairwomen are Dunthorn and Alycia Harris. Williams is house chairwoman. Hospitality Committee co-chairwomen are Sandy Foreman and Eisenstadt. Rachel Coker is chairwoman of the women's seder.

The Nominating Committee includes Foreman, Antoun, Robin Haas and one position still to be filled. Hecht is in charge of Sisterhood funds.



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# Jewish online resources

## By Reporter staff

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

- ◆ The Leo Baeck Institute – New York | Berlin will hold a hybrid event “Identity Between Worlds: Hungarian-Jewish Cultural Achievement” on Thursday, April 28, from 7-8:30 pm. Kati Marton and András Koerner will discuss the role of national identity in the lives of Hungarian Jews. The program will be streamed on Zoom and on the Institute’s Facebook and YouTube pages. For more information, visit [www.eventbrite.com/e/identity-between-worlds-hungarian-jewish-cultural-achievement-tickets-300770421427](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/identity-between-worlds-hungarian-jewish-cultural-achievement-tickets-300770421427).
- ◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold the virtual program “What Does Your Dream Tell You?": B. Rivkin and Yiddish Occultism in America” on Monday, May 2, at 1 pm. Sam Glauber-Zimra will discuss a little known part of Rivkin’s literary career. For more information or to register, visit <https://yivo.org/Yiddish-Occultism>.
- ◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold the hybrid program “Am Yisrael High: The Story of Jews and Cannabis” on Thursday, May 5, at 7 pm. Eddy Portnoy will moderate a discussion with Ed Rosenthal, Adriana Kertzer, Rabbi/Dr. Yosef Glassman, and Madison Margolin. Registration for Zoom is required and may be made at [www.yivo.org/Cannabis-Opening](http://www.yivo.org/Cannabis-Opening).
- ◆ The Center for Jewish History will hold the virtual program “A ‘Feminist’ Department Store in Imperial Berlin? Kaufhaus N. Israel” on Monday, May 9, at noon. Dr. Sophie Bookhalter will examine the place in Imperial Germany of a Jewish-owned department store and fashion house. For more information or to register, visit <https://programs.cjh.org/tickets/kaufhaus-2022-05-09>.
- ◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold the hybrid concert “Continuing Evolution: Yiddish Folksong Today” on Monday, May 9, at 7 pm. The concert will feature music by Sergei Prokofiev, Maurice Ravel, Joel Engel, Alexander Veprik, Aaron Copland and more. Registration is necessary for Zoom. For more information or to register, visit [www.yivo.org/FolksongFestival1](http://www.yivo.org/FolksongFestival1).
- ◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold the virtual event “Israel’s Moment:

International Support for and Opposition to Establishing the Jewish State, 1945-1949” on Wednesday, May 11, at 1 pm. Jeffrey Herf will discuss his book of the same name. For more information or to register, visit <https://yivo.org/Israels-Moment>.

- ◆ Elmad presents the podcast “Halakha of the Harvest: Identifying the Fruit of the Forbidden Tree” featuring the maggid of Melbourne, Levi Cooper. For more information or to subscribe, visit <https://elmad.pardes.org/2022/03/halakha-of-the-harvest-identifying-the-fruit-of-the-forbidden-tree/>.
- ◆ ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal will hold the virtual class “Torah at the Intersection” on Tuesdays, May 10, 17, 24 and 31, at 7:30-9 pm. The cost to attend is \$72. The class will “explore the weekly reading, or *parasha*, of the Torah, connecting its wisdom to traditional and new Jewish midrash, Nonviolent Communication, Buddhism and other major streams of learning that can deeply inform our lives today.” For more information or to register, visit <https://aleph.org/civicism/event/register/?reset=1&id=445>.
- ◆ The Jewish Museum will hold the virtual program “Virtual Unpacking the Book: Jewish Writers in Conversation with Claire Stanford and Gary Shteyngart, ‘Happiness in the Time of Technology’” on Thursday, May 12, from 7-8 pm. They will discuss “what happiness means in today’s fragmented world, and what technological advancements mean for the future of happiness.” For more information or to register, visit <https://thejewishmuseum.org/calendar/events/2022/05/12/happiness-in-the-time-of-technology-051222>.
- ◆ The Light of Infinite Festival will take place on Tuesday, May 31. The festival is sponsored by the podcast Light of Infinite where Erez Safar offers insights into the weekly Torah portion and Kabbalah. The festival will include live talks and musical performances. For a list of those performing/speaking or to register, visit <https://lightofinfinite.com/fest/>.
- ◆ The UnYeshiva from Judaism Unbound will offer rounds of mini-courses this spring. The April 25-May 15 classes include “Encountering the World: The How and Why of Jewish Practice,” “Ebb and Flow: The Psychedelic History and Future of Judaism” and “Queer and Present Prophecy: A Playful and Provocative Exploration of Isaiah.” The

May 16-June 5 include “Whose Canon Is It, Anyway? An Exploration of Jewish Storytelling,” “Traditionally Unbound: A Crash Course in Karaite Judaism” and “Gender, Identity, and Jewish Mysticism: Finding Your Place, Whoever You Are.” For specific information about each class or to register, visit [www.judaismunbound.com/classes](http://www.judaismunbound.com/classes).

- ◆ Jewish Women Archives will hold three “Quarantine(ish) Book Talks” in May: Thursday, May 5, at 8 pm, Riva Lehrer, author of “Golem Girl: A Memoir”; Thursday, May 12, at 8 pm, Julie Klam, author of “The Almost Legendary Morris Sisters”; and Thursday, May 19, at 8 pm, Cindy Rizzo, author of “The Papercutter” (The Split, #1). For more information, visit <https://jwa.org/events>.
- ◆ The Institute for Jewish Spirituality will hold the virtual program featuring IJS Executive Director Rabbi Josh Feigelson in conversation with Joy Ladin, Ph.D., and Rabbi Dr. Erin Leib Smokler on Tuesday, May 3, from 8-9 pm. Preregistration is required. To register, visit <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E102272&id=44>.
- ◆ Jewish Book Week announced the first videos of its in-hall events from the 2022 festival are now available. Speakers include Howard Jacobson, Elif Shafak, Steven Isserlis, Claudia Roden, Mike Leigh and Philippe Sands, among others. Videos from this season and past seasons can be found at <https://jewishbookweek.com/videos-and-podcasts/>.
- ◆ The Biblical Archaeology Society will present the virtual lecture “New Views on the Philistines: What Archaeology Reveals about Goliath and His Peers” on Sunday, June 19, from 3-4 pm. The speaker will be Aren M. Maeir, who is a professor of archaeology and the head of the Institute of Archaeology at the Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology at Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel. For more information or to register, visit [www.biblicalarchaeology.org/travel-study/bas-scholars-series-with-aren-maeir/](http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/travel-study/bas-scholars-series-with-aren-maeir/).
- ◆ The Jewish Book Council will hold “Virtual Unpacking the Book: Gary Shteyngart and Claire Stanford: Happiness in the Time of Technology” on Thursday, May 12, from

7-8 pm. Gary Shteyngart and Claire Stanford will discuss “what happiness is in today’s fragmented world, and what the future of happiness will be as technology advances.” For more information or to register, visit [www.jewishbookcouncil.org/events/virtual-unpacking-the-book-gary-shteyngart-and-claire-stanford-happiness-in-the-time-of](http://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/events/virtual-unpacking-the-book-gary-shteyngart-and-claire-stanford-happiness-in-the-time-of).

- ◆ Ritualwell will hold “The Throne of God: Prostration as a Jewish Practice” on Mondays, May 2-23, at 1:30 pm. The class will discuss the “embodied Jewish prayer practice of prostrations.” Classes will be recorded, but live participation is encouraged. The cost to attend the four sessions is \$144. For more information or to register, visit [www.tickettailor.com/events/ritualwell/651860](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/ritualwell/651860).
  - ◆ The latest issue of JewishFiction.Net is available free online and can be accessed by visiting [www.jewishfiction.net/index.php/current-issue/](http://www.jewishfiction.net/index.php/current-issue/).
  - ◆ The Museum of Jewish Heritage will hold the virtual program “Introduction to Sephardic History in Salonica” on Wednesdays, May 4-25, from 6-7:15 pm. There is a \$144 fee for the classes, which may not be taken separately. The course will look at the history of Sephardic Jewry, Ladino culture and the Jewish heartland of southeastern Europe and Anatolia through the story of one family from Salonica (current-day Thessaloniki, Greece). For more information or to register, visit <https://898a.blackbaudhosting.com/898a/page.aspx?pid=196&tab=2&txobjid=71796a9dc3f3-46d7-975e-e94d9fdd518&>.
  - ◆ 18Doors will hold the virtual program “Couples and Conversation” on Tuesdays, May 3, 10, 17 and 24, at 7:30 pm. The workshop is \$54/couple and registration is required. The online workshop is intended for “seriously dating, engaged and newly married Jewish/interfaith couples.” For more information or to register, visit <https://18doors.org/event/national-2022-05-couples-and-conversation/>.
- For additional resources, see previous issues of *The Reporter* on its website, [www.thereportergroup.org/streams/miscellaneous-features/miscellaneous-features/tag/80309?](http://www.thereportergroup.org/streams/miscellaneous-features/miscellaneous-features/tag/80309?)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

### JFNA surpass \$50 million mark for Ukrainian aid

The Jewish Federations of North America announced on April 18 that it has surpassed its fund-raising goal of \$50 million for aid to Ukraine. According to a news release, the funds have been allocated to 35 NGOs operating on the ground in Ukraine and neighboring countries. Some of these groups include the Jewish Agency for Israel, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and World ORT, which the release called its core partner groups. The funds are being used to provide housing, clothing, cash assistance, medical attention, mental-health services, life-saving rescue operations, security and transportation for refugees, including those making *aliyah* to Israel. The funds also went to host thousands of Ukrainian Jewish refugees for Passover seders on April 15, hosted by the Jewish Agency and JDC in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Moldova and Israel, with haggadot in Russian and Hebrew. JDC also organized 15 online seders for Jews in Ukraine who were unable to leave. A volunteer hub has been created to recruit and place hundreds of skilled volunteers over the coming months to provide essential services on the ground through partnering organizations with 30 already having been deployed in Budapest, Warsaw and the Poland-Ukraine border. According to the release, the work of the partner organizations includes 34,000 people served through the JDC; 2,414 people received medical assistance; 12,276 people have been evacuated to other countries; 1,800 treated using telemedicine at Israel’s field hospital; 11 emergency hotlines have been set up; more than 11,500 immigrants have come to Israel from Ukraine and Russia; and 18 facilities are operating at five border crossings.

### New report exposes SJP’s methods of intimidating Jewish students at Cornell

Canary Mission released a new report that documents and exposes Students for Justice in Palestine at Cornell University and its efforts to “create an environment hostile for Jews on campus.” The 25-page report ([https://media90.canarymission.org/application/pdf/Cornell13\\_DONj4m.pdf](https://media90.canarymission.org/application/pdf/Cornell13_DONj4m.pdf)) highlighted the activities of the group and its supporters, including students, graduates and professors, from 2014 to 2022. It provided examples of how SJP Cornell “intimidates supporters of Israel and has even waged a misinformation campaign to dismiss the rise in antisemitism,” according to Canary Mission. It also documented the group’s “hostility and gaslighting,” and its strategy to place their activists on the student government to use their positions to demonize Israel and pass resolutions in support of the BDS movement. The report additionally revealed that SJP Cornell has “a history of aggressive anti-Israel protests and disruptions on campus.” During Israel’s 11-day conflict last May with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, SJP Cornell targeted Jewish supporters of Israel on campus and hosted a series of protests supporting Palestinian terrorism. The student group pushed anti-Israel statements in the Student Assembly and blamed Israel for the conflict. They accused Israel of “apartheid” and “provocations against Palestine – from the occupation of Sheikh Jarrah to the assault on Al-Aqsa mosque and the bombings of the Gaza Strip.” Cornell’s Hillel reported at the time that Jewish students felt increasingly “unsafe” at the school due to a series of antisemitic acts on campus. SJP Cornell hosted an event on March 25 with Palestinian activist Mohammad El-Kurd, who has a history of spreading antisemitism and antisemitic conspiracy theories; demonizing Israel; and expressing support for terrorists and the second Intifada.

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