



# Shalom04|18

The Journal of the Reading Jewish Community published by the *Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks*

**Your Federation Supports:**

- Jewish Education
- Food Pantry
- Friendship Circle
- Chevra
- Community Shabbat
- Reading Jewish Film Series
- PJ Library
- Jewish Family Service
- Jewish Cultural Center
- Lakin Holocaust Library
- & Resource Center
- Israel & Overseas
- Camp Scholarships
- Israel Trips
- Jewish Community
- High School
- Emergency Support
- Lakin Preschool
- Richard J. Yashek Lecture
- Transportation
- Maimonides Society
- Your Jewish Legacy
- 92ND ST Y Programs
- Joint Distribution Committee
- Meir Panim
- Annual Campaign
- Jewish Agency for Israel
- Yemin Orde
- School Education Programs
- Interfaith Unity Council
- Israel Advocacy
- Youth Events
- Great Decisions Series
- Jewish Community
- Relations Council
- Community Holiday Programs
- Women's Philanthropy
- Jewish Federations
- of North America
- Counseling Services
- Leo Camp Lecture
- Shabbat B'Yachad

## Celebrate Israel 70 with community events in April

**By Amanda J. Hornberger**

This month marks 70 years since the creation of the state of Israel. Join us on Sunday, April 22, for a fun day celebrating Israel! From 1-4 p.m. at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom (555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing) join us as we celebrate Israel's 70th birthday!

Kids (and adults) are invited to grab a passport and travel throughout Israel at special stations sponsored by PJ Library. Each station will represent a different Israeli city or attraction. Look out for fun games and activities while you learn more about Israel.

At 2 p.m. Pella, an a cappella group, will lead us in singing and dancing. It promises to be fun for the whole community!

And of course there be Israeli food and other treats. The entire day is FREE and we hope everyone can join us for a fun celebration of Israel!

For questions or more information please contact Amanda at amandah@jreading.org or 610-921-0624.



MONDAY, APRIL 9, 7 P.M.  
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom -  
"From Coexistence to Shared Society"  
featuring Mohammad Darawshe, Director of the Center for  
Equality and Shared Society, Givat Haviva

MONDAY, APRIL 16, 2 P.M.  
Highlands - 92nd St. Y DVD program  
"Israel 100 Years After the Balfour Declaration"

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18 AT 7 P.M.  
JCC - Community Yom Hazikaron and  
Yom Ha'atzmaut Commemoration

SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 1-4 P.M.  
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom -  
Community Israel 70 Celebration  
Featuring music and dancing by Pella,  
PJ Library kids stations, photo exhibit and Israeli food

MONDAY, APRIL 30, 2 P.M.  
JCC - Movie Monday -  
"Israel Inside: How a Small Nation Makes a Big Difference"

Summer Movie Mondays featuring Israeli films - 2 pm JCC  
JUNE 11 "The Band's Visit"  
JULY 9 "In Search of Israeli Cuisine"  
AUGUST 13 "The Women's Balcony"

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22  
"The Band's Visit" on Broadway  
Bus trip to NYC

## Purim party time



Flappers fill the dance floor at the second annual Purim Masquerade at Stokesay Castle March 10. A great time was had by all who attended. We hope you'll join us at next year's party on March 16, 2019. See Page 14 for more photos.



# You make Passover celebrations possible

By Richard Nassau  
Development Director

I recall complaining to my rabbi during college that Passover was early that year. His reply of course was, “No, it is the 15th of Nisan just like every year.” I remember thinking I just need a little more time. I have a paper to finish and I need to prepare for a midterm exam. I was part of the upcoming community Seder sponsored by my college, and Mom expected me home to help with the family Seder. Preparing for Passover is involved. Looking back, I am thankful that most of the effort to prepare for family and community Seders did not fall to me. (This changed dramatically when we began hosting our own family Seders.) I was fortunate growing up to have a community and a family that took care of preparations for the Passover Seder.

Thankfully, you still do this. You and other members of our Reading/Berks community make Passover celebrations possible, locally and around the globe. You, through a portion of your Community Campaign gift to the Jewish Federation of Reading, are supporting creative and engaging holiday programs, including community Seders.

A sampling of a few activities you and Jewish Federations, along with partners Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) and Joint Distribution Committee (JDC,) are providing



to enrich people's lives at Passover.

**Passover in the Former Soviet Union**

Passover this year will again be special for JDC recipients in the Former Soviet Union. In the Kharkov region there will be Seders for the homebound elderly, the disabled, members of the Women's Club, along with families involved with the Children's Program and Teenage Club.

In Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, matza (#lotsamatza) will be distributed and JDC will provide community members with wide-ranging Passover activities and programs that ensure we reach out and engage members of the community at every level. Programs include a traditional Seder, a children's drawing contest, a culinary competition, a Haggadah art exhibition, theatrical performances by members of the community, a pre-Passover shabbaton for youth, story time for young families about Passover traditions, a “Find the Afikoman” quest, a Haggadah quiz, and a Passover cooking event for the entire community.

**Passover in Europe**

Warsaw's JCC will be hosting a number of Passover-related activities including a treasure hunt around the city. Local Jewish children will scour the city collecting pieces of the stories of the 10 plagues and the exodus from Egypt. Teens from the youth group Hultay will assist with the children's program and then hold their very own Seder — for some, this will be their only opportunity to experience a Passover Seder.

The JCC in Bucharest, Romania, is organizing an educational Seder to teach Romanian Jews to host guests from the community at their own Seder. Last year, for the first time, the Pesach Open Home Educational Seder was broadcast live online.

**Passover in Israel**

You also ensure new immigrants to Israel can celebrate Passover. JAFI has organized workshops for children allowing them to learn about Passover in fun and engaging ways. At absorption centers throughout the country, Hebrew language learning centers and in student dormitories, JAFI is sponsoring model Seders and holding a variety of activities, including hands-on matza baking.

**Passover in Berks County**

Locally, you continue to bring together 40 seniors and their families, plus volunteers, for our Jewish Family Service Seder at Manor at Market Square. You are providing rides for people who may feel isolated but still wish to be part of a community Seder. You are also making sure that anyone who cannot afford Passover groceries receives them.

You are enriching lives at Passover through your support of Federation's Community Campaign. The memories you are creating for people at Seders locally and around the world will linger. I (we) are indeed fortunate to celebrate Passover together as a community and with family.

Even when the 15th of Nisan is early. I wish you a memorable Passover with family, friends, and community.

## A look at some of the creative and engaging Passover programming you and Jewish Federations are supporting around the world.

### In Berks County



### Around the world



# Development

- Annual Campaign
- Women's Philanthropy
- Maimonides Society
- Your Jewish Legacy
- Chai Circle
- L'Chaim Society
- Book of Life
- Letter of Intent



2018 totals  
as of March 19

Jewish Community  
Campaign  
\$163,242

\*Includes transfers from Donor  
Advised Funds



From the President's Desk

# Healing the world through the mitzvah of Tzedakah

By William D. Franklin  
President

Our Jewish Federation is driven by three fundamental Jewish values: Kehillah — building community, Tzedakah, and Talmud Torah- Jewish learning. Last month I wrote about Kehillah. Next month I will write about Talmud Torah and this month's topic is Tzedakah, our mechanism for Tikkun Olam.

Tzedakah is different than charity. It comes from the Hebrew word Tzedek which means righteousness and justice. To do Tzedakah is to do the right thing and, as Jews, it is our obligation. Helping those in need is doing the



right thing. We respond to those in need through Jewish Family Services' many programs. Case Management deals with the various non-financial needs of individuals and families, helping them find proper living conditions, employment and giving information and referrals. Jewish Family Services also provides financial assistance, bereavement services and taxi coupons. In addition, we make hospital visits and run a community food pantry. Recently contributions made it possible for one of our seniors to have major oral surgery. And, after months of financial support and counseling, a Russian immigrant got authorization from Homeland Security and landed a job. These are just two of the many individuals our

community has helped. In Israel, we support Meir Panim, which provides 390,000 hot meals per year in free restaurants across Israel and 168,000 meals-on-wheels delivered to homebound, disabled and elderly. We also support Yemin Orde, which, among other things, provides a home, school and haven to 440 at-risk and immigrant youth from around the world. In March, several members of our Reading Jewish community attended the annual AIPAC convention in Washington. Over 18,000 people, among whom were 4,000 high school and college students, came to learn about and show support for Israel. We were Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, young adults and seniors, African-Americans and

Hispanics, Christian, Jews and Muslims who disagree on almost everything, but agree on one issue- the value of and need to work for the safety and survival of Israel. Similarly, while I know that our Jewish community can also disagree and argue about almost everything going on in our world today, we all support the Jewish value of Tzedakah. Our community, local and international, is a better place since you act to help others. Thank you. As we get close to Passover, it is a good thing to remember that Tzedakah is a key theme. At the very beginning of the Seder, we issue an invitation to all those who are hungry to come and eat. May you all have a joyous and meaningful Passover. Hag Pesach Sameach.

## U.S. anti-Semitic incidents surge 57 percent in 2017

The number of reported anti-Semitic incidents in the United States surged 57 percent in 2017, according to an annual report by the Anti-Defamation League. The organization's Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents found 1,986 such incidents in 2017, compared with 1,267 in 2016. That increase was the largest in a single year since the ADL began tracking in 1979.

Only once since 1979 has the Anti-Defamation League recorded more incidents: 2,066 in 1994. Since then, the numbers had mostly declined. There were small increases in 2014 and 2015. Then, in 2016, the count began to shoot up. "It had been trending in the right direction for a long time," Jonathan A. Greenblatt, chief executive of the ADL, said in an interview. "And then something changed."

That "something" is hard to identify definitively, but Greenblatt pointed to three likely factors: the increasingly divisive state of American politics, the emboldening of extremists, and the effects of social media. Some of the increase may also be attributable to better reporting of incidents.

The invigoration of the far right, including white supremacists and neo-Nazis, has been on display at events like a rally in Charlottesville, Va., in August that turned deadly when a man drove a car into a crowd of counter protesters. A separate Anti-Defamation League report released in February found a more than 250 percent increase in white supremacist activity on college campuses in the current academic year. The count does not include white supremacist incidents unless they had a specific anti-Semitic element.

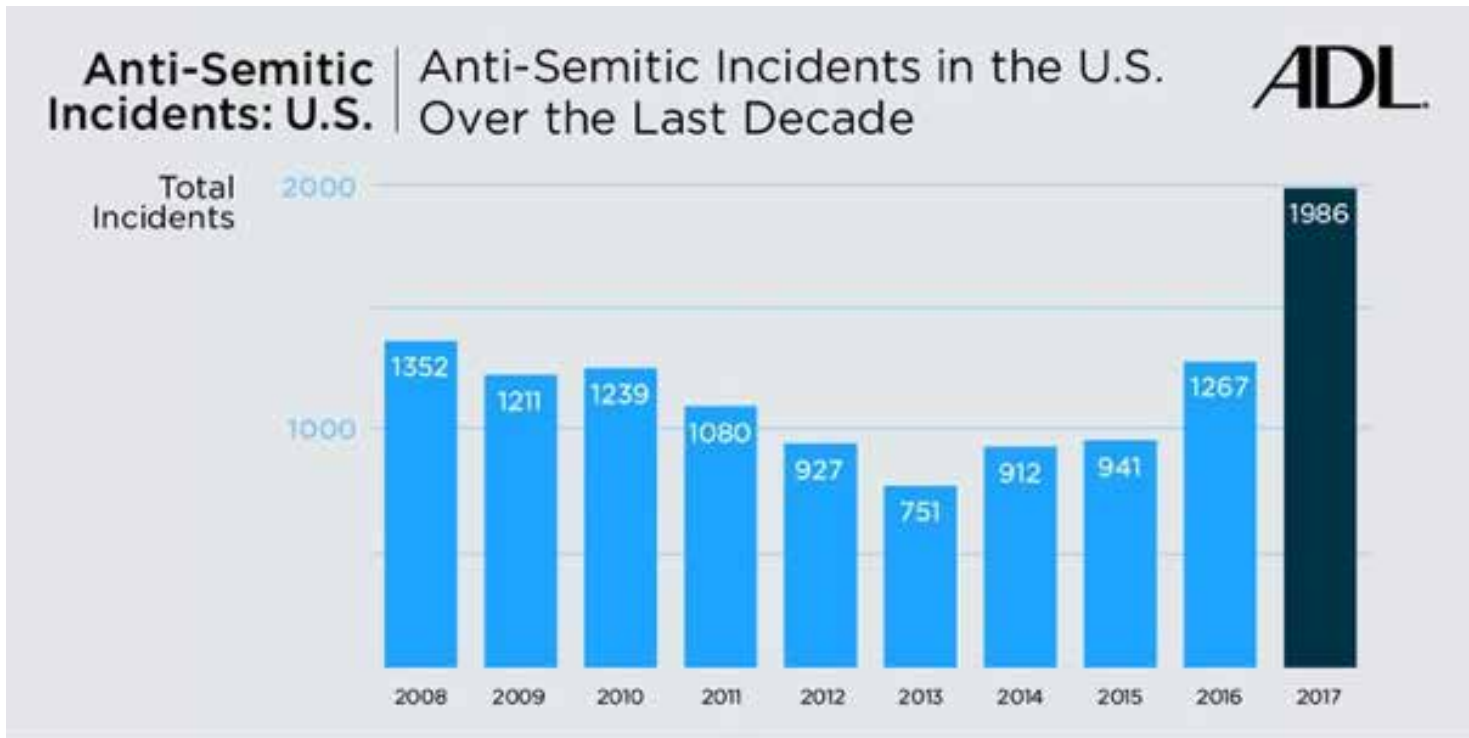
"The diminishment of civility in

society creates an environment in which intolerance really can flourish," Greenblatt said. And the platforms of social media, he added, have "allowed the kind of poison of prejudice to grow at a velocity and to expand in ways that really are unprecedented." The count by the ADL, an international organization that fights anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice, includes three categories: harassment (1,015 incidents in 2017, up 41 percent from 2016), vandalism (952 incidents, up 86 percent) and assault (19 incidents, down 47 percent). The decrease in assaults was "the one piece of good news in this report," Greenblatt said.

For the first time in at least a decade, incidents were reported in all 50 states. And, unusually, K-12 schools

had more reports than any other location. Incidents at those schools nearly doubled, to 457 from 235; those on college campuses increased 89 percent, to 204 from 108. Many of the incidents involved swastikas etched on school property or drawn on Jewish students' belongings. The increase in expressions of anti-Semitism among students is "astounding" in its size, Greenblatt said, but also not entirely surprising. "Kids repeat what they

hear," he said. "And so in an environment in which prejudice isn't called out by public figures, figures of authority, we shouldn't be surprised when we see young people repeat these same kind of tropes." The count is based on reports from victims, law enforcement and the news media. In each case, the group confirms the information independently and assesses its credibility. Reports deemed not credible are not included in the tally.



### It's Simcha Supplement time

If you had or are having a bar/bat mitzvah or graduation (high school or higher) in your family this Jewish year, share the good news with the community. Please submit a few sentences about the person and their accomplishment, along with a photo.

Text and photos can be sent to [Marknem@aol.com](mailto:Marknem@aol.com) or to the Federation office.

**DEADLINE IS APRIL 30.**

**WE CANNOT GUARANTEE PUBLICATION OF ITEMS SUBMITTED AFTER DEADLINE**

## Shalom

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*The opinions expressed in Shalom are of the writers and not the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks*



Jewish Federation®  
OF READING/BERKS



# Engage your community: Join the JCC today!

By Amanda J. Hornberger

The Jewish Cultural Center (JCC) is at the heart of our community and helps provide the programs, tools, learning opportunities and social experiences that keep this community engaged and energetic. The JCC offers you the opportunity to meet new people, nurture treasured friendships and explore how and where Judaism fits into your life. We have fun and educational programs for all ages where you can learn, laugh and debate with your fellow Jews.

Engage through entertainment and classes. The JCC hosts the Great Decisions series on foreign policy topics annually, as well as our popular Tech Tuesday classes. 92nd St. Y programs, held at the Highlands, are another favorite. Weekly programs held at the JCC include our Friendship Circle for seniors on Thursdays, duplicate bridge on Wednesdays and Mahjong on Mondays. In addition, the monthly Movie Mondays are a great way to spend an afternoon with friends enjoying a movie and free popcorn!

Engage through education. This past year your JCC has scheduled speakers such as Jeffrey Rosen, our Leo Camp Memorial

Speaker and Dr. Michael Berenbaum, our Yashek Memorial Speaker. In addition, the JCC had leading journalists J.J. Goldberg and Jonathan Tobin in Reading, as well as Middle East expert Dr. Tamara Wittes. The JCC hosts our Jewish Community High School for students in grades 8-12 each Sunday. The Israel Book Club and the popular Reading Jewish Film Series are also sponsored by the JCC.

Engaging youth. Children through age 11 are active in our PJ Library and PJ Our Way programs. Each month over 100 children ages 1-11 receive a free Jewish themed book, thanks to the JCC. Youth are also invited to fun activities such as snow tubing and GaGa ball.

Engaging families. Your JCC sponsors a home-based Shabbat dinner program to encourage families with young children to celebrate Shabbat. Family friendly activities such as PJ Library programs, Chanukah on Ice and the Purim Carnival are all supported by the JCC.

Engaging community. The JCC helps mark Jewish holidays with gatherings for the entire community. These include our annual Community Shabbat, Kristallnacht

remembrance, Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron, Yom Ha'atzmaut events and our annual meeting and picnic.

The Jewish Cultural Center, its activities and programs, are supported by two primary sources of revenue: Federation annual campaign dollars and membership fees.

This April we invite you to join or renew your JCC membership. Membership information was mailed in late March, and anyone who joins the JCC for 2018-2019 by Tuesday, April 24, will have their name entered to win one of the following prizes:

- Two tickets to the Reading Symphony Orchestra 2018-2019 season-opening concert on Sept. 22.
- Four movies passes to Fox Theatres.
- Six tickets to your choice of a Reading Fightin' Phils baseball game.

No matter how you connect, we know you consider the JCC your home — a place where you can enjoy a cup of coffee, play bridge, read PJ Library books, hear lectures and discuss films and books with a group of your peers.

For questions or more information please contact Amanda at [amandah@jfreading.org](mailto:amandah@jfreading.org) or 610-921-0624.

## French drama on tap for April entry in film series

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Based on the true story of survival of eleven children during World War II, the foreign language drama “Fanny’s Journey” is the next selection in the 2018 Reading Jewish Film Series.

The 2016 film from France and Belgium tells the story of 13-year-old Fanny and her younger sisters who were sent from their home in France to an Italian foster home for Jewish children. When the Nazis invade Italy, the girls’ journey continues to Switzerland when they are suddenly left alone. Follow their remarkable journey in this film.

This drama will be shown on Wednesday, April 4, at 7 p.m. at FOX EAST, 4350 Perkiomen Avenue, Reading (next to Boscov’s East).

The 2018 Reading Jewish Film Series is co-sponsored by the Rubin Educational Fund of the Jewish Federation of Reading and Fox Theatres.

Admission is \$5 per film. All films will be shown on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. at FOX EAST.

Tickets can be purchased at the theater beginning at 6:30 p.m. the day of the screening, and series tickets can be bought at the JCC. Cash and checks are accepted.

The complete list of remaining dates and films for the 2018 Reading Jewish Film Series can be found below:

- April 4** — “Fanny’s Journey”  
**May 16** — “The Venice Ghetto, 500 Years of Life”\*

*\*Special event following screening*



## We Remember: Holocaust Memorial Day 2018

By Amanda J. Hornberger

In honor of Holocaust Memorial Day, Yom Hashoah, Jewish Federation of Reading will hold a commemorative candle lighting by our local Holocaust survivors and survivor family members at The Highlands (200 Cambridge Ave.,

Wyomissing) on Wednesday, April 11 at 7 p.m.

Students from Gov. Mifflin High School's senior Holocaust class will join us to share their projects on local Holocaust survivors. The event will also highlight pre-war Jewish culture in Europe through a short video clip

and readings.

The event is free and open to the community. I hope you will join us at The Highlands at 7 pm on April 11 as we remember the Holocaust and honor those who survived. A light dessert reception will follow the event.

SAVE THE DATE

5-6-70 ISRAEL!

On 5/6, celebrate Israel’s 70th birthday all day long at 5-6-70 Israel!

Family-friendly festivities will fill the afternoon: games, sports, musical performances and food galore! In the evening, singer-songwriter David Broza will treat us to a special Israel70 birthday performance.

SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2018

Afternoon festivities: 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Event Center at Valley Forge Casino Resort

David Broza performance: 7:00 p.m.  
Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El, Wynnewood

For more information on this very special day, visit [jewishphilly.org/5-6-70](http://jewishphilly.org/5-6-70)







# Help for job seekers from the state

By Sari Incledon, M. Ed.

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry was founded in 1913 to inspect the conditions of factories around the state. Since then it has grown to be a large department, with more than 5,000 employees administering and monitoring regulations that touch the daily lives of Pennsylvanians in many ways. Labor and Industry oversees unemployment benefits and worker's compensation benefits. Labor and Industry also enforces many laws and safety standards in the workplace and promotes economic development.

I would like to highlight a few of the important ways our state government assists in providing career through the Department of Labor and Industry, providing career development and opportunities for residents of Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational



Rehabilitation, or OVR, provides vocational rehabilitation services to help people with disabilities prepare for, obtain or maintain employment. Disabilities include but are not limited to: diabetes, heart, muscular, neurological, respiratory, skeletal and joint diseases, alcoholism, epilepsy, drug addiction, mental illness, visual, hearing and speech impairments, developmental disabilities, mental retardation and learning disabilities.

A vocational rehabilitation counselor will determine eligibility for services after gaining an understanding of an individual's abilities, limitations, interests and aptitude. Important factors are: the disability causes an impediment to employment and the individual will benefit from services, and the individual needs service to prepare, engage in or retain employment.

Rehabilitation services are provided in an individualized manner. Eligible people may receive services that include:

Diagnosis – evaluating medical, psychological, occupational and educational abilities and limitations.

Counseling and Guidance – helping

individuals select goals and making plans to attain them.

Restoration – providing medical, psychological and allied services to minimize the effect of the impairment on a person's ability to work.

Training – developing job skills through vocational and technical schools, universities or on-the-job training.

Hiram G. Andrew's Center – a residential program in Johnstown, PA that offers comprehensive rehabilitation services.

Placement – developing job seeking skills and locating employment opportunities.

Post-Employment Services – aiding in job adjustment

The Rehabilitation Plan – the client and counselor together develop an individualized plan for employment that states what services will be provided and what is expected of both the client and the agency.

Referrals to OVR can be made by agencies, schools, hospitals, families or interested individuals. To apply for services call the Reading OVR office (3602 Kutztown Road) at 610-621-5800.

## Fun and learning at Friendship Circle



Peggy Gerner and Tom Montgomery lead the entertaining "Maggie Sings" musical program.



Keith Brintzenhoff, right, leads an afternoon of Pennsylvania Dutch music and folklore.



Dr. Michelle Mart, right, a history professor at Penn State Berks, visits the group to deliver a lecture on Woodrow Wilson in honor of President's Day.

Jewish Family Service

- Food Pantry
- Friendship Circle
- Counseling Services
- Transportation
- Financial Assistance
- Hospital and
- Home Visitations
- Living with Loss
- Information and
- Referral
- Case Management
- Holiday Programs



# Teens, seniors discuss new symbols of Passover

**By Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner**  
*Reading Jewish Community High School*  
Our Better Together Seniors and Teens discussed the new symbols that so many have made part of the contemporary Passover Seder. They are objects and “foods” which represent supplementary causes for freedom and liberation in our world today, at home and for humanity worldwide.

Our Better Together discussion partnerships attempted not only to complete their “answer” list but to create new meanings for the current symbols, and new symbols that were missing from the original list.

Secondly and related to the Exodus was a handout about a film recently made available, “Wendy’s Shabbat,” which some discussed over a snack. The short film describes a group of elderly Jews in Palm Desert, Calif., who gather at a fast food restaurant every Friday night for Shabbat dinner.

Why would they do so? The film announcement described it as follows: “Viewers learn about the genesis of the tradition (“We’re not fancy people, so we figured, let’s go down to Wendy’s”, says Sharon Goodman, 79, the group’s founder); to the kindness of the Wendy’s employees, who set up and reserve the tables ... We watch the group sitting around the tables, saying the blessings over the candles, the wine, and the challah. We see them order and eat their food, we watch them chat and laugh. Then we see them drive off, smiling, in their golf carts in the cool desert night.”

The film release concludes with a statement that the members of Better Together could take with them for their Passover Seder for discussion: “Living by yourself, and having a group like going to Wendy’s — it gives you a feeling of belonging,” says one woman.

Rabbi Dov’s question to the group was whether they and their Seder guests and friends agree that this kind of Shabbat experience was the best, for whom and how the community could address the issues of “an inclusive Jewish community.”

**What are we discussing recently?**  
A course in Comparative Religions of Western Civilization: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam has dealt with fundamental beliefs and teachings of these three faiths and how they developed from and with Judaism. We considered “sin” and attempted to determine what was “a sin” and how it could be defined for the individual within a religious tradition. Quickly, we realized as a group that what might pass as a general statement or definition quickly would need interpretation — as seen before — for each of the subgroups. As one of the students noted, when she asked a fellow student at school, “are



you a Christian?” the answer was. “no, I am a Catholic.” How do Catholics and Protestants differ in their own self-definition, and indeed among the Protestants, what distinguishes each of the sub-groups from one another — Baptist from Methodist from Lutheran from Anglican etc. Then, do they accept members of the Mormon church as Christians, broadly speaking.

We considered whether there are consequences to sins while living in this world, and how does each faith and sub-groups offer a hierarchy of “sins” with a hierarchy of consequences — rewards and punishments after death. Our questions remained as speculation as we realized that each faith group might well have its own interpretation of “major and minor sins” even when based upon similar or the same sources, e.g., Biblical/Koran texts.

Recently we reviewed how one converts

to Judaism, Christianity and Islam — once again “struggling” with the nuances of interpretation that differ from the overall faith and their respective subgroups.

This discussion led quickly to a different question: How does one convert “out” of the faith into which one is born or first identifies — and can you convert to another faith? Why then if you confirm to the new group that you no longer believe as you once did, can you not make such a decision again to leave to yet another religious identity.

Noting that Judaism, in particular, claims that once a Jew always a Jew, how do we as Jews accept that those in other faiths can convert to Judaism. We weren’t all completely comfortable with the protocol and law surrounding these issues.

Time ran out before conclusions could be reached, which is a weekly occurrence as we consider various religious concepts.

## Jewish Education

- [Camp Scholarships](#)
- [Israel Trips](#)
- [Jewish Community](#)
- [High School](#)
- [Lakin Preschool](#)
- [Better Together](#)



### Preschoolers get ready for Shabbat

*Jennifer Gurwitz meets with the children at Lakin Preschool at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom for their Shabbat observance.*  
*Lakin Preschool, which is supported by the Jewish Federation of Reading, provides early childhood education with a Jewish emphasis.*



## Any way to get life back on track?

By Rabbi Yosef Lipsker  
Chabad Center of Berks County

Is there any way to get back on track? You took a wrong turn. You've made a decision that you now recognize is going to cost you dearly. Can you make up for the lost time and momentum? Is the path of return too tedious and too impossibly difficult?



Judaism has an empowering and uplifting message, learned from the fascinating holiday of Pesach Sheni, "the Second Passover."

In the first year after the Exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people were instructed to bring the Paschal sacrifice on the 14th of Nissan and eat it that evening. There were individuals, however, who had become ritually impure and could not bring the offering. They approached Moses, asking for some recourse.

In response, G-d established the 14th of Iyar as a Second Passover. Anyone who did not bring a Passover offering was given the opportunity by bringing an offering on Pesach Sheni.

There are three points that are fascinating about this holiday:

1 Unlike other holidays, which were unilaterally commanded by G-d, this holiday was inspired in response to the outcry of individuals.

2 Unlike Passover, which is seven days in length, this holiday accomplishes its purpose in only one day.

3 The holiday falls a month after Passover.

The lesson of Pesach Sheni is that it's never too late.

No one is ever too lost or too forgone to make amends in their lives. When we stray or mess up, if we recognize how far gone we are and we are shaken to our core, we can rebound. But what's fascinating is that this rebounding is not the regular step-by-step conventional formula. In a single instant —

or in this case, in a single day — rather than the seven-day process of Passover, we can redefine our past and mold our future.

But for this to be real, it needs to come from deep within. It's all about the inner cry — the resolve that we have to make change a reality in our lives.

And that is why Pesach Sheni needed to happen through our own motivation, by us crying out to G-d that we shouldn't be left out. This is also why it is celebrated in the month of Iyar, whose theme is individual endeavor, as exemplified through the counting of the Omer and our work on self-refinement.

We all mess up. We weren't created as perfect individuals who can always make balanced judgements. But the good news is that we don't need to. Even when we make the worst possible error, there is no cause for despair. Quite the contrary, there is cause for acknowledgement, resolve and then action.

Let's get back on track. It's never too late!

### Purim Spiel filled with comedy and music at RCOS



*This year's Purim Spiel at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom featured the music of the Beatles, with lyrics rewritten by Mike Pardo to tell the Purim story in hilarious fashion. Above, Ellen Azrael as Ahasverus and Stephanie Rotenberg as Queen Vashti. Left, Rabbi Brian Michelson and friends are dressed perfectly for the occasion.*

## Lots for sale at Kesher Zion Cemetery

The Board of Directors of the Kesher Zion Cemetery Association ("the Association") is pleased to announce to the Jewish community that effective immediately, the Association is offering for sale Certificates Granting the Right of Burial ("the Certificates") in the Association's cemetery to any and all members of the Jewish faith. The official cost of a certificate to a member in good standing of Kesher Zion Synagogue, exclusively determined by the Kesher Zion Synagogue Board of Directors, is \$1,500, which includes the right to burial and the required charges for perpetual care, plus an additional charge of \$250 for Chevra Kadisha. The official cost of a certificate to a non-member of Kesher Zion Synagogue is triple the cost applicable for a member of good standing of Kesher Zion Synagogue, respectively \$4,500 and \$750. These costs are current as of March 31, 2018, and shall remain in effect until such time the Association's Board of Directors may take further action modifying these costs.

Please contact the synagogue's office for further clarification if needed.

#### April Nissan-Iyar



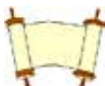
##### Shabbat Candle Lightings

April 6  
7:16 p.m.

April 13  
7:23 p.m.

April 20  
7:30 p.m.

April 27  
7:37 p.m.



##### Torah Portions

April 7/Nissan 22  
Chol HaMo'ed Pseach (Exodus 33:12-34:26)

April 14/Nissan 29  
Sh'mini (Leviticus 9:1-11:47)

April 21/6 Iyar  
Tazria/Metzora (Leviticus 12:1-15:33)

April 28/Iyar 13  
Acharei Mot/Kedoshim (Leviticus 16:1-20:27)

### LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND SERVICE TIMES

**REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM (610) 375-6034**  
Friday, April 6: Joint Shabbat service with Kesher Zion, 6 p.m.  
Friday, April 13: Musical Shabbat, 7 p.m.  
Saturday, April 14: Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.  
Fridays, April 20 and 27, 7:45 p.m.

Saturday, April 21: Aspen Weizer Bat Mitzvah, 10 a.m.  
Saturday, April 28: Ruby Nemeroff Bat Mitzvah, 10 a.m.

**CHABAD CENTER OF BERKS COUNTY (610) 921-0881**  
Saturday mornings: 9:30 a.m.; Friday evenings: 6:30 p.m.

**KESHER ZION SYNAGOGUE (610) 374-1763**  
Friday, April 6: Shabbat service, 6 p.m., followed by dinner (reservation required for meal)

Weekly services Saturdays: 9:30 a.m.; Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.  
at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

**CONGREGATION SHOMREI HABRITH**



# Local student to take part in Israel studies seminar

Jacob Sileski, a son of John and Irene Sileski, has been accepted to the Young Leader Seminar on Israel Studies at Brandeis University.

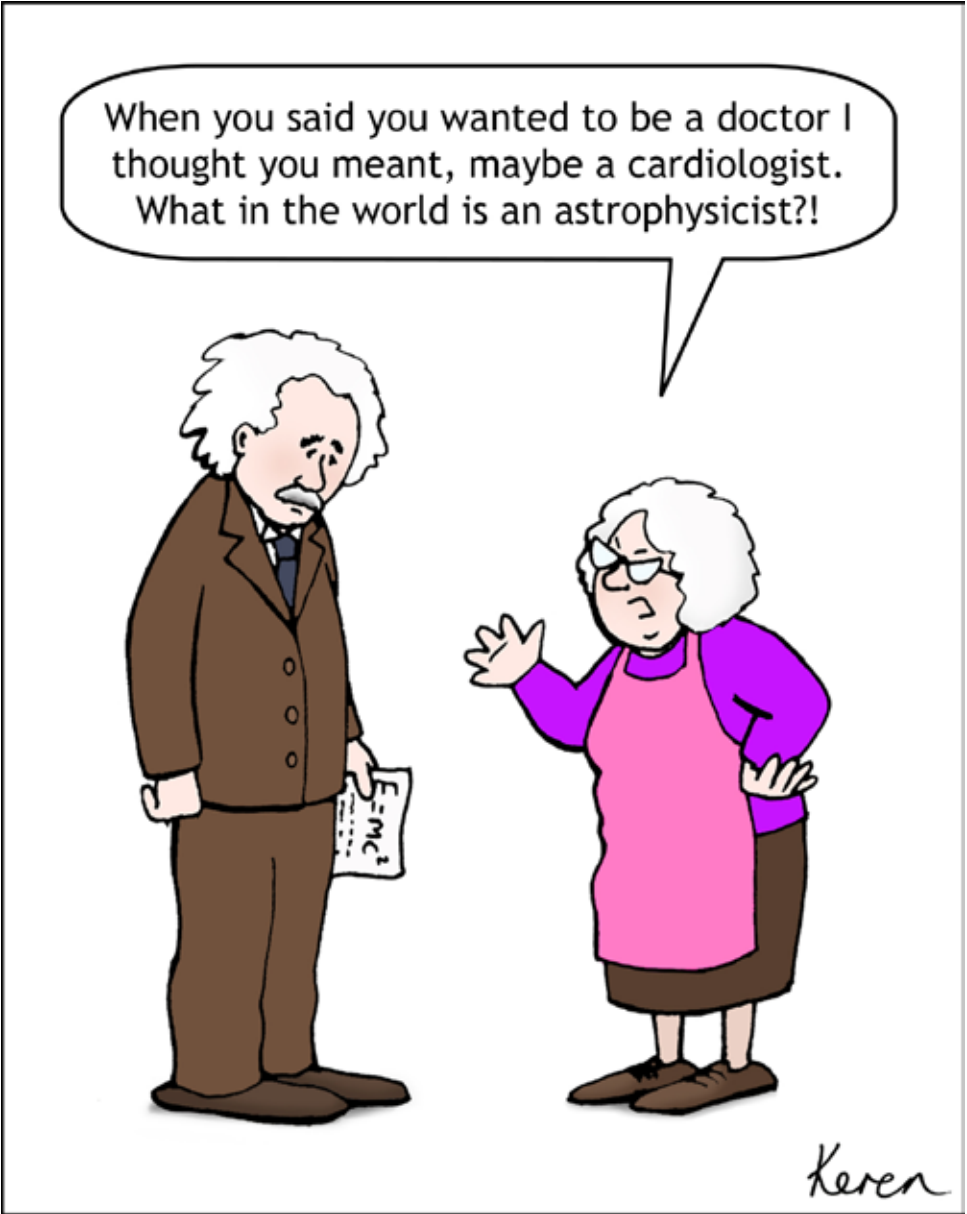


He is a ninth-grader at Conrad Weiser High School. The program is intended to focus on Israeli history, politics, culture and society. In addition to his interest in Jewish studies, Jacob is a World War II buff who often takes part in re-enactments.

## A discussion on ‘Body and Soul’



Dr. R. Todd Rober speaks about the music behind “Body and Soul” at the Reading Jewish Film Series screening on March 13 at Fox East.



# New nanomedicine could prevent progression of pancreatic cancer

Israel21c.org

A study published in the scientific journal Nature Communications distinguishes the reason for extended pancreatic cancer survival: an inverse correlation between a known oncogene, a gene that promotes the development of cancer, and the expression of an oncosuppressor microRNA.

The study may serve as a basis for the development of a medicine that can treat pancreatic and other cancers. Though 75 percent of pancreatic cancer patients die within 12 months of diagnosis, about 7 percent survive more than five years. “We thought that if we could understand how some people live several years with this most aggressive disease, we might be able to develop a new therapeutic

strategy,” said lead researcher Ronit Satchi-Fainaro of Tel Aviv University’s Sackler Faculty of Medicine.

Satchi-Fainaro and her research team examined pancreatic cancer cells in mouse models and discovered an inverse correlation between the signatures of miR-34a, a tumor suppressant, and PLK1, a known oncogene. The scientists then devised a novel nanoparticle that selectively delivers genetic material to a tumor and prevents side effects in surrounding healthy tissues.

“The nanoparticle is like a taxi carrying two important passengers,” Satchi-Fainaro explained. “Many oncology protocols are cocktails, but the drugs usually do not reach the tumor

at the same time. But our ‘taxi’ kept the ‘passengers’ — and the rest of the body — safe the whole way, targeting only the tumor tissue.”

To validate their findings, the scientists injected the novel nanoparticles into pancreatic tumor-bearing mice and observed that by balancing these two targets — bringing them to a normal level by increasing their expression

or blocking the gene responsible for their expression — they significantly prolonged the survival of the mice. Theoretically, the same effect could be achieved in humans.

The study was supported by the European Research Council, Tel Aviv University’s Cancer Biology Research Center and the Israel Science Foundation.

## SAVE THE DATE

**Tuesday, May 15, 7 p.m. at JCC**  
**Information Meeting on Summer Series**  
**“3 Evenings with the Rabbi”**

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# Yemin Orde ‘the best thing that happened’ in her life

Yemin Orde graduate Nofar Getanech Desta is certain that “living and learning at Yemin Orde was the best thing that happened in my life”.

Nofar’s traumatic and dangerous journey from a small village in Ethiopia to the modern urban environment of Israel started with, literally, one small step. She was only four years old when her parents woke her in the middle of the night and announced that the family was walking to Ethiopia’s capital city, Addis Ababa, where they would wait for governmental permission to move to Israel — the Holy Land of their dreams.

“I remember we left our home and everything behind and walked for three months until my mother, who was pregnant with twins, fell ill and could not continue. My parents decided to send me and my siblings on to Gondar, the next closest city, by ourselves, and wait for them,” Nofar said. “My oldest brother, who was 10 years old at the time, was put in charge of the five of us. We all had to take care of each other. It was very scary.”

Nofar’s parents joined them in Gondar four months later, along with the newborn twins. Six months later, tragedy struck when one of the twins died from illness. In Gondar, Nofar’s family continued to wait for

permission to make Aliyah. Four years later, their prayers were answered and the family was flown to Israel to begin new lives as Israeli citizens. The family then settled in Haifa.

Nofar found the complexities of her new and modern homeland of Israel where everything – language, school, friends, and her parents – seemed so difficult and out of her control.

“My parents didn’t have jobs and everything was so hard in the beginning. We had to learn a new language and adjust to a new culture and a new way of thinking. I started working at a very young age to support my family,” Nofar said.

At age 14, Nofar arrived at Yemin Orde Youth Village, which provided her with a loving home and a chance to strengthen her confidence and academic skills. “I knew from the start that I had made the right decision to come to Yemin Orde. It wasn’t just another boarding school for me — it was home,” she said.



At Yemin Orde, Nofar was able to refocus her energy from daily struggle to achieving success as a role model among her peers and an excellent student. She was active in many extra-curricular activities and programs at the Village that allowed her leadership qualities to shine. Additionally, she represented the Village as a counselor at a summer camp for special needs children in the United States.

Thanks to Yemin Orde Youth Village’s caring and supportive community, Nofar learned to embrace hope and lean into her dreams of a bright and productive future in Israel.

In 2014, after serving three years as a combat soldier in the Israel Defense Forces, Nofar received an academic scholarship for college through Yemin Orde’s Graduate Program. She attended college at Ono Academic College in Tel Aviv and studied law. Today, she serves as an attorney in the Haifa District Attorney’s office and works to safeguard justice and safety in Israel.

Nofar lives in Netanya with her husband, Yosi. Her parents and four sisters and four brothers all live in Israel.

Yemin Orde is supported by local dollars through the Jewish Federation of Reading’s Israel Now campaign.

## Poverty is colorblind: Meet Liya

Poverty is ageless and colorblind. Just ask Liya Abera, age 10. The child of Ethiopian immigrants who were rescued by the Israeli government shortly after Operation Solomon in the 1990s, Liya is often home alone and hungry. Her parents, Aaron and Nyala, are trying their hardest. But like many Ethiopian immigrants, their absorption into Israel was largely unsuccessful.

“When my mum goes to the bank, she still doesn’t know how to deal with it in Hebrew,” says Liya. She explains that she is embarrassed by this – but also saddened. “I just want to be Israeli.”

Ethiopian Jews have been in Israel for more than three decades, yet the vast majority continue to live in Israel’s social periphery. Major socioeconomic gaps exist between Ethiopian immigrants and their descendants, and non-Ethiopian Israelis.

For example, according to a report published in 2012 by the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute in Jerusalem, some 65 percent of the children of Ethiopian immigrants are defined as poor. In contrast, only 15 percent of children of immigrants from the former Soviet Union and 23 percent of children in the veteran population are considered poor. Furthermore, the report showed that only 55 percent of Ethiopian immigrants are employed, compared to 72.5 percent of the overall Jewish population.

Aaron Abera is a janitor. Nyala is a nanny. “We love Israel,” says Nyala. “We just struggle.”

Last year Liya became restless and irritable and was struggling in school. Meir Panim’s After-School Youth Club offered Liya academic assistance — and hope for

her future. “The first to suffer the effects of the economic hardships confronting so many families in Israel are children,” explains Danielle Rubin, Project Director at American Friends of Meir Panim. “The lack of nourishing food and endless hours spent alone while parents work late paint a dismal picture. Kids go to school with empty stomachs and are unable to concentrate.”

Meir Panim’s After-School Youth Clubs help these at-risk children obtain their academic goals, giving them an opportunity to break out of the cycle of poverty. Today, Liya still struggles. But she also smiles. “Thanks to Meir Panim, I have a new outlook on life,” she says.

Meir Panim is supported by local dollars through the Jewish Federation of Reading’s Israel Now campaign.

## The 3 big breakthroughs coming to digital health in 2018

### Israel21c.com

Israel is pioneering digital health developments for the world. Which ones will hit their stride in the coming months?

Medication personalization, personalized disease management and reducing chronic pain will be the three biggest breakthroughs in digital health this year, predicts Dr. Yossi Bahagon, a family physician, global digital health consultant and managing partner of OurCrowd Qure, Israel’s first exclusively focused digital health fund.

Digital health is a booming business, projected to be worth \$230 billion by 2020. Over the course of 2017, investments skyrocketed in hardware and software solutions and services — including telemedicine, wearable technology, mobile applications and remote monitoring sensors — to help healthcare professionals and patients prevent and manage illnesses and health risks, as well as promote well-being.

“Digital health is not about technologies; it’s about creating a different human experience and quality of care while utilizing advanced technology. Patient-centric platforms using big-data tools to improve quality of care, efficiency and transparency are at the essence of all the systems being developed,” says Bahagon, one of the people responsible for Israel’s fully

digitized healthcare system, a rarity in the world.

Israel is prominent in the global digital health landscape, with more than 450 active startups and companies in a variety of digital health-related fields and more than 700 local and global participants. In the face of rising costs, an aging population, fragmented care and wasted resources, digital technologies are reinventing the way we consume and receive healthcare by expanding access, improving quality and managing costs.

Bahagon explains his three picks for digital health breakthroughs in the near future, noting that there are Israeli startups involved in all of these areas.

1. Medication personalization: “Medicine is one-size-fits-all today, even though each patient has completely different DNA and habits. This is going to change dramatically in the next few years. When one patient comes into my clinic he will get a certain treatment and a different patient with the same or similar disorder will get a different treatment. This personalization will be based on analyzing patients’ genetic, clinical and physiological data.”

2. Personalized disease management: “There are already platforms for this today, but they are not yet seamlessly personalized to the patient. This will happen soon.”

3. Pain reduction using digital

health tools: “In the United States, there is a big buzz about the overuse of opioids. We see companies targeting the area of chronic pain reduction using advanced digital tools such as augmented reality.”

New innovative Israeli products include:

- DarioHealth’s personalized, pocket-sized glucose meter coupled with a real-time mobile app to manage diabetes;
- EIMindA’s mapping tool for visualizing neural activity to optimize management of brain disorders and injuries;
- HIL Medical’s radically cheaper and smaller proton-beam laser-based cancer therapy system;
- Intendu’s adaptive motion-interaction brain rehabilitation platform for at-home therapy;
- KolGene’s system for connecting clinicians with genetic labs worldwide;
- Memic’s internal laparoscopic surgical robotic system;
- RealView Imaging’s medical holography visualization system for medical images;
- TytoCare’s suite of products for simple tele-health examinations and consultations.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said this will be one of Israel’s major growth engines in the next few years, Bahagon reported.



# Is favoring Israel an American national security interest

By Eric R. Mandel  
TheHill.com

Should the United States distance itself from Israel to become a neutral negotiator? According to a *Wall Street Journal* article, the Trump administration's recent "moves have been seen as favoring Israel by Europeans, the Palestinians and their supporters."

Lost in the discussion is whether America's national security interests would be best served as a neutral intermediary, or, as Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley recently said, "There's nothing wrong with showing favoritism towards an ally."

Is Israel a strategically vital ally? The Washington Institute's Robert Blackwill and Walter Slocombe once wrote, "There is no other Middle East country whose definition of national interests is so closely aligned with that of the United States." Today those interests include reigning in Iranian expansionism and its quest for weapons of mass destruction, while combating both radical Sunni and Shiite Islamist terrorism.

The State Department, over the years, has been reluctant to "take sides" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, arguing that this would have negative effects for America's other interests in the region. However, it seems this has not advanced American interests or brought peace. It has magnified Palestinian intransigence, while draining American taxpayer dollars, propping up a corrupt Palestinian Authority without demanding anything substantial of it.

Beyond shared democratic Western values, does Israel advance American interests? In the 21st century, intelligence and cyber-defense are paramount for security. For the United States, there is no better source of reliable information in the Middle East than Israel. The Israelis live in this bad neighborhood and understand the realities better than those on the outside. It was Israel that discovered the North Korean-built Syrian nuclear reactor and destroyed it. Can you imagine the threat to American security if there were loose nukes in today's Syria? Who would control them — ISIS, Bashar al-Assad, Hezbollah, or Iran? These days, do we want our military in the region to be dependent on Turkey's President Erdogan?

Today the United States has a reliable naval port in Haifa, joint military exercises preparing its soldiers, American troops manning the X-band anti-missile system in Israel to protect Europe, Israeli security technology for U.S. homeland security, and Israel's advances in drone technology to benefit our military.

It should be clear to all that the Palestinian leadership is incapable of making the hard but essential choices for real peace, a demilitarized state, ending the claim of a "right of return" of descendants of Palestinians refugees to Israel, accepting a Jewish State, and signing a final end-of-conflict agreement. The Palestinians disengaged from meaningful negotiations years ago. President Abbas used the opportunity of Trump's Jerusalem announcement to end America's primary role in mediating the conflict, moving it to the more friendly confines of an internationalized mediation. Abbas knows the Europeans are his best ally and advocate, with the deck stacked against Israel. As retired Israeli Brig. Gen. Michael Herzog wrote in *World Affairs*, Abbas "was afraid of the U.S. peace plan coming his way, felt he would have to reject it — while Israel may say yes — and didn't want to navigate that situation."

Pro-Palestinian Americans, such as Columbia University professor Rashid Khalidi, have encouraged the Palestinian leadership to distance itself from America; Khalidi called the United States the "eternally dishonest broker" in a recent op-ed. A binational state controlled by Palestinians would be an unreliable American strategic partner and would cripple American security in the Levant.

Far too many U.S. secretaries of State have wanted to be the one to be the hero who does something about the Arab-Israeli situation, so they have pressured Israel to make major concessions. American administrations have pressured Israel because it is the one party in the conflict that is susceptible to pressure.

Israel over the years has taken profound risks to accommodate American interests to its own detriment. President George W. Bush's demand for Palestinian elections in 2006, against Israeli advice, directly

led to Hamas' takeover of Gaza. Bush's father demanded that Israel break its own strategic doctrine by not responding to the Iraqi Scud attack during the Gulf War.

If a Western-style peace settlement is beyond possible, what, then, will advance American security interests? The problem is that our interests have moved way beyond the conflict over the past decade, with our primary security problem being Iranian hegemony and its alignment with anti-American allies and proxies.

So, how can America and Israel move forward without a Palestinian partner? The best, but still unlikely, possibility is encouraging the Sunni Arab Gulf states to start dealing with Israel as an equal and legitimate nation in the open, forcing the Palestinians to make more reasonable demands. The idea of treating these

two belligerents evenly is morally obtuse but treating them fairly according to our interests is appropriate.

Yes, American foreign policy interests would be advanced if there is resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but not at the expense of endangering the security interests of its indispensable ally Israel — security interests that are vital to combating Iranian, Turkish and Russian expansionism. You need only to look at Turkey, the eastern flank of NATO, to know how important Israel has become to American long-term security interests in the region.

Favoring Israel is an American national security interest. It lets our other allies know that America sticks with its longtime friends and warns our adversaries not to underestimate American loyalty.

## Obituaries

**William Black**, 89, of Douglassville. Bill was a World War II Army veteran and was a member of Mercy and Truth Synagogue in Pottstown. He received his bachelor's degree in accounting from Temple University and worked at several companies in New Jersey and Pennsylvania in their accounting offices, he was also an auditor for Amity Township for many years. Bill is survived by his wife, Laura, daughters Leslie and Robin and his son Neal. Other survivors include his seven grandchildren and his sister Alice Weinstein.

---  
**Sidney Spillerman**, of Wyomissing. Sidney worked as a pharmacist until his retirement. He is survived by his wife, Cheryl, and his

children: sons, David and his wife, Ruth, of Sinking Spring; Jason and his wife, Dorothy; and Chad and his wife, Ilyssa. Other survivors include his six grandchildren and his brother Sol and sister Shirley.

---  
**Peter Schiffman**, 84, of Reading. Peter was the manager of Truck Purchasing for the Hertz/Penske Corporation in Green Hills, he has a vast knowledge of trucks and truck specifications. He had a keen interest in weather and meteorology. Peter is survived by his son Jeffrey and his wife Lynne, his daughter Jill and her partner James Scutt, his son-in-law Richard McGlamory and four grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. Other survivors include his sister Paula Schletter and her husband Marty and several nieces and nephews.

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# All Around the Town

Mazel Tov to grandparents Jim and Jackye Barrer and parents Sam and Katie Barrer on the birth of Anna Grace. Anna was born Dec. 29.

Until next time: Shalom!

Friday, April 13th  
7:00 pm

## MUSICAL SHABBAT

and Wine & Cheese Oneg

Please join us as we celebrate Shabbat featuring Jacob Kraus.

Jacob is an up and coming singer-songwriter & guitarist from Boston. Currently based out of Astoria, NY, Jacob is in his third year as the Assistant Director of Youth Engagement at Temple Sinai of Roslyn, where he also serves as the Music Director. He has been song leading for over a decade at synagogues, day schools, and summer camps. He travels the country singing with communities and using Jewish music as a tool to educate & engage the next generation of Jews. Service to be followed by a special oneg featuring a variety of wines & cheeses and delicious, catered deserts.

Members & non-members welcome.

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# AIPAC conference an exciting, informative experience

By Rabbi Matt Abelson

In March I attended the AIPAC Policy Conference (<http://www.policyconference.org/>) in Washington. I represented Reading alongside several other members of the Reading Jewish community.

We met with U.S. Rep. Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania's 6th District and Sens. Pat Toomey and Bob Casey. We asked them to support the Israel Anti-Boycott Act, the U.S.-Israel Security Assistance Authorization Act of 2018, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Economic Exclusion Act.

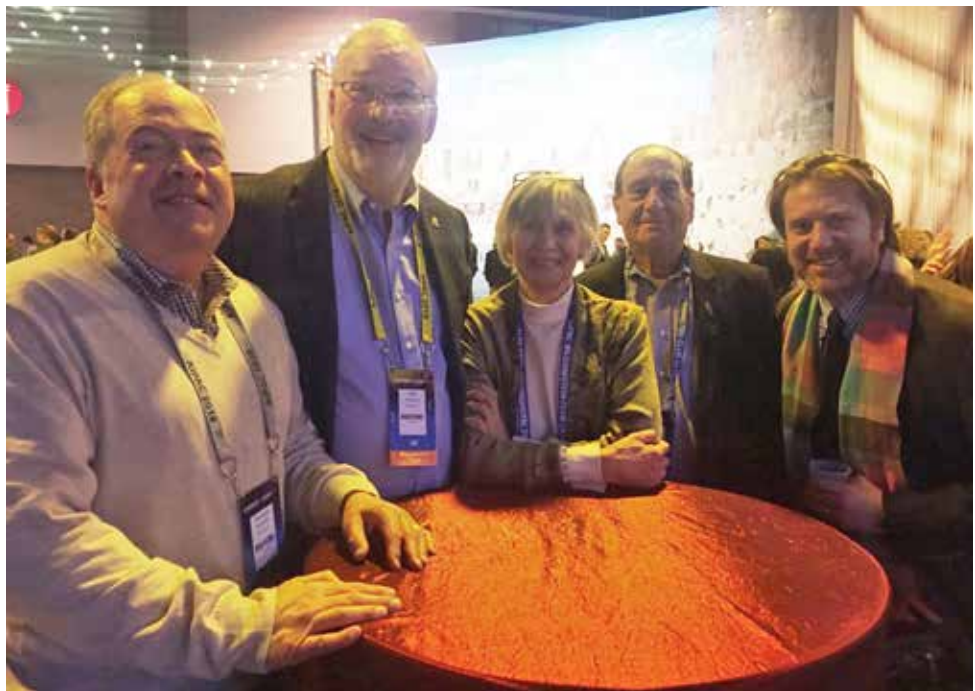
The experience was awesome, and this year's conference's awesomeness was consistent with its awesomeness during previous years. Vice President Mike Pence, Sen. Chuck Schumer, Sen. Robert Menendez, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley, and U.S. Rep. Grace Meng addressed the conference. You can view their speeches and many other featured presentations at <http://www.policyconference.org/>.

Just like last year and the year before,

AIPAC worked dilligently to foster a bipartisan culture. As you can see from the above list of names, Democrats and Republicans addressed the conference.

I attended several "breakout sessions" in which I listened to policy experts discuss issues relevant to the U.S.-Israel relationship. Probably the most interesting was the session titled "From Russia with Love? Moscow's Geopolitics in the Middle East, Europe, and Around the World." The panel included experts from the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. The information I acquired there was equivalent to reading a month's worth of newspaper articles on the subject.

Two main points emerged from the conference: 1) The president of the United States and Congress are as firmly behind Israel as they have ever been, and 2) Given the chaos and carnage in the failing state of Syria, Iran is in a greater position to threaten Israel and the entire Middle East than ever.



Reading representatives at this year's AIPAC conference included, from left, Don Abramson, Vic Hammel, Andi and Bill Franklin, and Rabbi Matt Abelson.

While we yearn to live in a time during which Israel lives in peace and security with its neighbors, that time is not yet.

Because of the strength of the America-Israel relationship, however, we may trust that such a day will be.

## U.S.first responders turn to an Israeli app to save lives

Israel21c.com

When Hurricane Irma hit the Florida Keys in September, the new First Response app from Israeli-American company Edgybees helped first-responders identify distress calls in flooded areas. When wildfires hit Northern California a month later, the app steered firefighters away from danger.

This augmented-reality app — designed only months before as an AR racing game for drone enthusiasts — is now used by more than a dozen fire and police departments in the United States, as well as the United Hatzalah emergency response network in Israel.

The app orients rescuers in confusing environments and helps them track rapidly evolving circumstances. Patent-

pending algorithms collect real-time data from fast-moving cameras mounted on drones, cars or body-worn accessories, enabling three-dimensional elements such as street maps, power lines, infrastructure and distress signals to be layered over live video.

It all started in 2016, when Israeli dad Adam Scott Kaplan — a former executive of successful technology companies — caught the drone bug from his friend Menashe Haskin, who managed the Israeli development office of Amazon Prime Air and holds some 35 U.S. patents in aerospace, video and vision processing, data processing and communication.

"I bought myself a DJI drone and began filming my daughter sea surfing. I quickly

got bored, and — crazy entrepreneur that I am — I started flying between trees and rocks to compete with myself. But when a drone hits a tree, the tree wins. Menashe and I discussed it and decided to develop a game. DJI loved the concept and released it last May."

Drone Prix AR was a smash hit. Edgybees, the company formed behind the game, was soon approached about adapting the technology for real environments. Many police departments are using drones, but they lacked a technology for real-time mapping over video, and this is exactly what Edgybees could provide.

Just when the company started testing the app with several police and fire departments, hurricane season hit

Florida. "We were asked if our software could help, so we had to work 24/7 to get it up and running," says Kaplan.

Drone operators used the app to orient rescuers during Hurricane Irma. Edgybees plans to expand to commercial sectors that use high-speed imaging, such as real estate, urban planning, smart cities, construction, automotive, broadcast media and security.

"What started as technology powering a racing game is now saving lives around the world," says Kaplan. "The overwhelming response by commercial and industrial drone users looking to leverage AR, and partner with us in the fields of fire, public safety, and search-and-rescue has been amazing, and we can't wait to expand the next set of drone applications into new markets."

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There's lots of ways to eat matza, just like there's lots of ways to be involved in Federation.

What's your favorite?

#lotsamatza



# Looking sharp at JCC's second Purim Masquerade



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# Jewish Cuisine Word Search

Find the names of the tasty treats unique to Jewish cuisine.

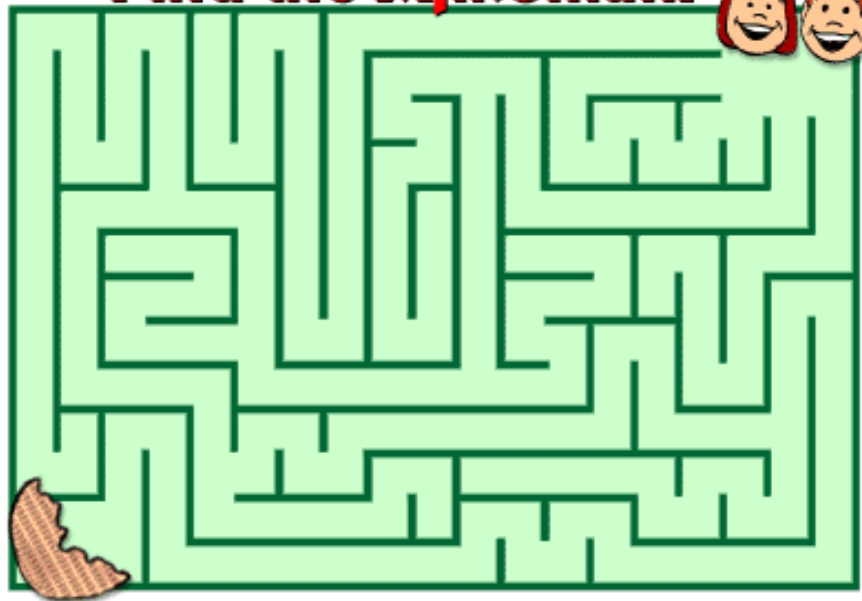
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C C S T G H B H C A L P E R K  
G M E L I H A H K U G E L G W  
B A O R E Z Y L L G K Z E H W  
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V B O I J M N K C B A K J S F  
M A T Z O B A L L S K D T K D

- BAGELS
- BAYTZA
- BLINTZ
- CHALLAH
- CHAROSET
- GEFILTEFISH
- KARPAS
- KASHRUT
- KOSHER
- KREPLACH
- KUGEL
- LATKES
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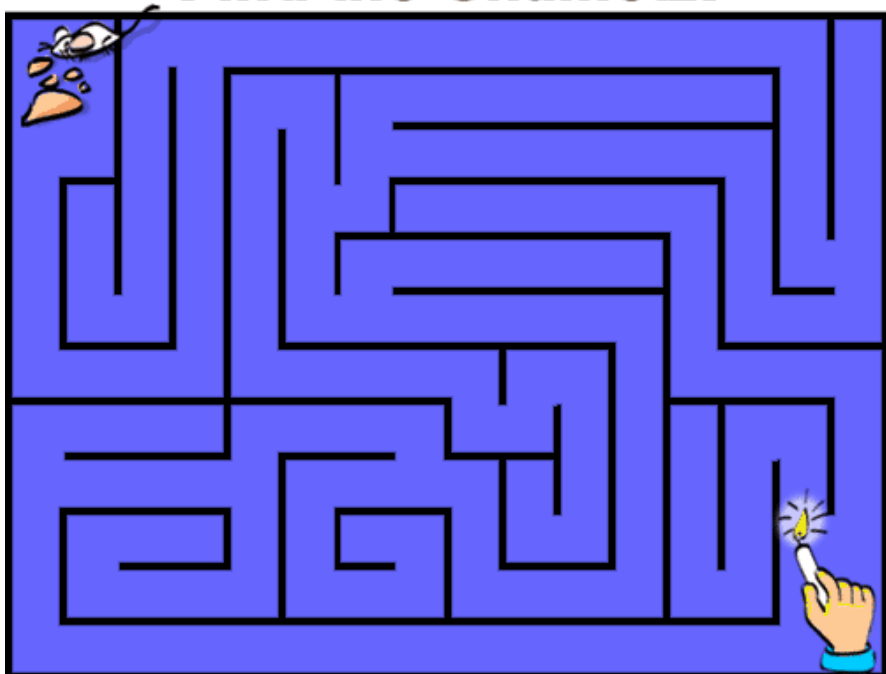


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## Gaza needs to look in the mirror before things can improve

By Jonathan S. Tobin

If the people of Gaza are suffering, blame the leaders and the terror groups they support for spending on weapons and tunnels, not on infrastructure and building an economy.

Gaza is broke. The conflict between the Gaza Strip's Hamas overlords and the Fatah party that runs the West Bank has resulted in a cash crunch that has left many of the compact area's 2 million people without money. Along with Gaza's inadequate infrastructure, the resulting poverty from this crisis contributes to a general picture of despair for many Palestinians.

Of course, the notion that everyone in Gaza is starving is an exaggeration. Gaza's thriving malls continue to operate, as does its water park, restaurants and hotels, inconvenient facts that are missing from most of the coverage of the current crisis. But even if we concede that the talk of a humanitarian crisis in Gaza is probably exaggerated if for no other reason than we've been hearing variations on this theme for 25 years, there's no question that most of the people there are poor and have little hope of improving their plight.

This means, as it almost always does, that Israel will be blamed for this awful situation. Since the world considers that Israel is still "occupying" Gaza, and is therefore responsible for the coastal territory's problems, it is only natural that the worse things get there, the more opprobrium will be directed at the Jewish state in international forums and the press.

This is wrong, but not just because Israel hasn't occupied Gaza since 2005. In 2005, then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon withdrew every Israeli soldier, settler and settlement in an effort to create a de facto separation between Jews and Arabs. The international community cheered when philanthropists purchased the greenhouses built by Jews in order to give them to the Palestinians. The intent was to allow Gaza to

become an incubator of development and peace. But within hours of the withdrawal, the greenhouses were demolished by angry Palestinian mobs determined to erase every trace of the Jewish presence.

This goes a long way toward explaining why poverty is endemic in Gaza. It's true that Israel has blockaded the territory since Hamas seized control of it in a bloody 2007 coup, though it has continued to allow food and medical supplies in and to pay for its electricity. Egypt has also severely restricted entry to Gaza. Both countries were rightly determined to isolate the Islamist terrorist state.

That crunch was exacerbated when the P.A. began to squeeze Hamas by cutting off its financial contributions to Gaza in order to force the Islamists to cede power. There have been two sets of public employees in Gaza—one paid by Hamas and the other paid by the P.A. The current money crunch means tens of thousands of people in both groups are now out of cash.

But Gaza's problems go deeper than the question of who pays for Hamas and Fatah patronage jobs, or which of its governing factions is paying the bills for its bureaucracy. If Gaza is poor, it's because the welfare of the Palestinian people or even the building up of a state that would protect them and their interests has never been the primary goal of either Hamas or Fatah.

The United Nations pays for schools and other services via its UNRWA refugee agency, which exists to keep Palestinian refugees in place in order to perpetuate the conflict with Israel. Just as importantly, foreign donors have poured billions into both the West Bank and Gaza in the past two decades. Yet little of that money has been spent on providing a better life for the people of Gaza.

The reason is that almost all of the resources that have poured into Gaza for infrastructure have paid for Hamas's military efforts. Vast sums have been spent on creating

enormous underground bunkers for Hamas leaders and fighters, and to store their missiles and other weapons. Each time Hamas launches terrorist wars against Israel, these structures are rebuilt and enlarged. We were often told during those conflicts that it is unfair that the people of Gaza have no air raid shelters. But in Gaza, the shelters are for the bombs, not the people.

Just as much has been spent on building an equally vast network of tunnels aimed at the Israeli border. The purpose was to facilitate murder and kidnapping raids into the Jewish state, as we saw during the Israel-Hamas war in 2014. Since then, even more terror tunnels have been built and Israel has been forced to build an underground barrier to prevent the tactic from succeeding.

But if the focus of Palestinian nationalism had been on state-building and enabling their economy and vital services to thrive, the people of Gaza wouldn't be in this fix. Had even part of the money spent on waging a pointless war against Israel been spent on infrastructure, Gaza couldn't be depicted, albeit often

falsely, as the poorest place on Earth.

That's why the people of Gaza and their rulers need to look in the mirror when they talk about their plight. Blaming Israel or Egypt or the indifference of the world for their situation ignores the fact that the cash crunch and grinding poverty of many Gazans was the inevitable result of their own choices. At every point in the last century, the Palestinians have chosen war instead of peace. They prioritized a war whose goal remains Israel's destruction over building a state that could live in peace alongside that of the Jews.

That doesn't mean we shouldn't have some sympathy for them or that efforts to ameliorate their plight shouldn't be undertaken. But those who wish to help must—as the U.S. is belatedly doing—demand that the Palestinians stop spending on terror. Until they do, philanthropic intentions won't do a thing to change the situation.

*Jonathan S. Tobin is editor in chief of JNS—the Jewish News Syndicate. Follow him on Twitter at: @jonathans\_tobin.*

Join us April 14th at 10:00am. This Tot Shabbat will feature Jacob Kraus, Temple Sinai Musical Director & Guitarist.

# Tot Shabbat

Members and non-members are invited. No registration is required. Tot Shabbat services are held Saturday mornings at 10:00 am at Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing unless noted. Please call the Temple office with any questions, 610.375.6034.

A musical, story-filled, interactive hour for children through grade 2. Bring your family & friends to celebrate with Rabbi Michelson & stay for a pint-sized oneg of juice, challah, fruit, & child-friendly treats!

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# To make peace in the Middle East, focus first on water

By Gidon Bromberg, Nada Majdalani, Munqeth Mehyar

For the past 20 years, Israelis and Palestinians alike have approached peace negotiations with the flawed assumption that, in order to reach an agreement, all core issues must be solved simultaneously. As the conflict continues to claim victims on both sides, it's important to point out that when President Trump's Middle East envoy, Jason Greenblatt, was looking for an early success in the new administration's peace efforts, he found it — in water.

For Palestinian communities that suffer water shortages and require Israeli approval to increase pumping of shared natural water resources, an agreement to increase water sales from Israel to the Palestinian Authority by 50 percent annually will dramatically improve lives and livelihoods without creating water shortages on the Israeli side.

This work to mediate peace through Israeli-Palestinian water sharing should be commended and continued. To ensure that the United States does not undercut its own efforts, the Trump administration must reevaluate some of its Middle East policies from a water security perspective. For example, the draft Taylor Force Act, which prohibits American aid to the West Bank and Gaza, does not exempt water programs. How might cuts to UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) funding impact a water crisis in Gaza that is already severe? Any further reduction in Palestinian access to water could destabilize the region.

The United States clearly recognizes

the importance of international water security, having recently released its Global Water Strategy, which coordinates the work of 16 U.S. government agencies and private partners. The Israeli government recognizes water as a security issue as well, and that's a potential game-changer in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For the Palestinian government, the priority is to increase water provision to meet basic needs, supporting economic growth as well as its aspirations for a state with the right to access and develop its own resources.

Israel is proud of its leading role in advancing technologies that can economically produce large quantities of drinking water from the salty Mediterranean. Today 70 percent of Israel's drinking water is produced through desalinization and 85 percent of its wastewater is treated and reused to meet agricultural needs. Once-arid Israel no longer need suffer water shortages. A logical next step, beyond water sales, would be to negotiate a fair allocation of the natural water resources that Israelis and Palestinians share, thus solving one of the core issues plaguing the peace process.

However, both sides have shortsightedly refused to negotiate over natural water reallocation, wanting any water deal to remain part of a negotiation on other final-status issues, like borders and refugees. Israeli politicians insist that a better water deal for the Palestinians must be matched by Palestinian compromises on refugees. Palestinian politicians argue that a fair water agreement would make the Israeli side look

good and say that they cannot afford to allow the need for a water deal to relieve pressure to resolve other issues. Both sides contend that, without also agreeing on borders and settlements, they will not know which natural water resources belong to whom.

These arguments ring hollow and, for both sides, the costs of continuing to hold water hostage are simply too high. Water, like money, is fungible.

As long as all agree that negotiating over water rights involves cross-border waters, borders, settlements, refugees, and security arrangements are not issues that must be determined in advance of a water agreement.

The clock is ticking. Climate change, decreasing natural waters, and increasing pollution are all taking their toll. In the West Bank, some 60 million cubic meters of untreated sewage pollute the Mountain and Coastal Aquifers, streams and the Mediterranean Sea annually. In Gaza, the flood of untreated sewage is so great that groundwater is no longer potable, and most beaches in Gaza and some in neighboring Israel have been forced to close. Twice, Gaza's sewage crisis has necessitated the shutdown of a nearby Israeli desalination plant, threatening the very technology that can ensure the region has enough water.

Lack of access to safe water and inadequate sanitation leads to the spread of preventable diseases, none of which recognize political borders, as untreated wastewater flows into cross-border streams and valleys, and the Jordan River. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has

expressed concern about the risk of an epidemic of cholera, or another infectious disease, in Gaza, and argued for the provision of more quality water in order to avoid public health, environmental and national security threats to Israel.

The logic of leading peace through water diplomacy is further strengthened when one considers the broader instability of the region. Advancing regional water projects such as a master plan for the development of water and sanitation in the Jordan Valley, and an increased water trade that does not sacrifice water rights, present more opportunities to help stabilize the situation. Water scarcity was a causal element of the conflict in Syria and, now, with Syrian refugees flooding into neighboring Jordan, economic opportunities for both the refugees and the local population are paramount if we are to avoid further regional unrest. Water is required.

Clearly, the fair and efficient allocation of the region's fresh water could unlock an important path to greater stability. Conversely, the sustainability of any Middle East peace agreement will be compromised if water resources are not allocated fairly and managed efficiently.

We urge the Trump administration to think outside the box and, in the interests of a more stable Middle East, to prioritize water projects. Israelis and Palestinians need a sustainable path to peace based on mutual respect and recognition. By advancing a policy that impacts every life, every day, we can restore hope in the possibility of peace, one glass at a time.

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