

והגדת לבנך *And You Shall Teach Your Children*



When Every Parent Becomes a Teacher

by Rabbi Kalman Topp



The whole enterprise of the Seder is the Torah's clever way of getting every Jew, at least one night a year, to learn *Torah* with the younger generation. On Pesach night, every parent becomes a teacher. The parent's central responsibility as teacher is to transmit the Jewish narrative and tradition to the next generation. But what is the core substance of that tradition?

"If we hang tough with the courage of our convictions, we will merit to emerge from the bitterness of the maror and sing a shirah chadashah."

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Pesach is All About the Children And so is our Kestenbaum Family Youth Department!

by Rabbi Eli Broner, Youth Director



At the beginning of the Haggada we have the Simanim that tell us the program for the Seder night. There are traditional sentences that are taught to the children that accompany each of the Simanim. The first Siman is Kadesh. Simply put, it means that we open the Seder by saying Kiddush. The sentence that accompanies this Siman is "Kadesh: when the father comes home he makes Kiddush right away so that the children do not fall asleep." This statement tells us what the whole Seder and really Pesach are all about the children. If you look through the Haggada, you will see that it is replete with readings, customs, and actions designed specifically to engage the child. Our sages knew and understood that if we want the redemption to last, it is only through educating and engaging the next generation.

At Beth Jacob as a whole, and specifically the Kestenbaum Family Youth department, the future is of utmost importance. That is why we do everything to ensure that all our programming focuses on the child who is our future. Our programs are designed to be both fun and educational.

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When Every Parent Becomes a Teacher

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רבן גמליאל היה אומר כל מי שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו. ואלו הן. פסח. מצה. ומרור.

That tradition is encapsulated by Rabban Gamliel who would say, as we quote in the *Haggada*: *Anyone who does not say three things on Pesach, has not fulfilled his obligation and these are the three: Pesach, Matzah and Maror.*

פסח... על שום מה. על שום שפסח הקדוש ברוך הוא על בתי אבותינו במצרים

The *Pesach* offering recalls that G-d *pasach*-passed over the homes of our ancestors when He struck the Egyptian firstborn. Thus, the element of the *Pesach* offering symbolizes our *emunah*, our faith in the providence of *Hashem* and our belief that he rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked.

מצה... על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ

Matzah recalls the dough of our ancestors which did not have the chance to rise before the Jews rushed out of Egypt. Therefore, *Matzah* symbolizes the requirement of *hishtadlut*, of human initiative in quickly and courageously seizing the possibility of redemption.

מרור... על שום שמררו המצריים את חיי אבותינו במצרים

Maror recalls the bitterness. Even when we are steadfast in our *emunah* in the involvement of *Hashem*, as reflected in the *Pesach*, combined with our energetic *hishtadlut*, as represented by the *Matzah*, we may not achieve immediate success. There will be *Maror*. Life is filled with struggle. Redemption does not come easily. But if we hang tough with the courage of our convictions, we will merit to emerge from the bitterness of the *Maror* and sing a *shirah chadashah*, a new song celebrating our triumphs, both personally and nationally.

If we internalize these three core elements of *Pesach*, *Matzah* and *Maror* and transmit those principles to the younger generation on the Seder night, we will then be prepared to renew our acceptance of Torah, received seven weeks later on *Shavuot*, and live a meaningful and majestic life of *mitzvot*.

Jordana and I wish you and your dear family a *chag kasher v'sameach*,
Rabbi Topp

Photos from our Tiferet Award Banquet



Torat Imecha Bat Mitzvah Program Adds Meaning to Significant Milestone

Planning a Bat Mitzvah is an experience that requires much attention to detail - there's so much to think about, including securing a venue and caterer, devising a guest list, choosing entertainment, decor, wardrobe, the list goes on and on. It's often easy to get lost in the party planning and lose sight of what the celebration is really about.

Beth Jacob's Torat Imecha Bat Mitzvah Seminar gives mothers and daughters a chance to learn the deeper meaning behind the Bat Mitzvah experience with a series of ten Sunday morning classes that include textual learning, discussion, and creative activities like dance, drama, art and music.

The seminar, led by Rebbetzin Jordana Topp, has been running for 6 years, and focuses on learning about transformative women throughout Jewish history - their achievements and character traits - inspiring girls to apply the lessons they have learned to their modern day lives. Many girls also incorporate what they've learned into their bat mitzvah speeches.

Michele Poltorak went through the program with her daughter Hannah. "It was a great experience for both of us as we together traced the history of the most influential and learned women in Jewish history," she says. "It is an experience we both will treasure."

Dr. Gilat Englanoff relates that participating in the Torat Imecha seminar with her daughter Jacqueline greatly enhanced the simcha they felt at Jacqueline's bat mitzvah. "The program gave us the time to step away from the party planning and learn the meaning of what we're doing it all for."

Jacqueline, a student at Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy, had done some learning about women throughout Jewish history, but was able to add to her knowledge and view the matriarchs in a new light through this hands-on, multisensory program. "I really liked how we learned about women that were not just from the Torah but also inspirational women from all time periods," Jacqueline remarks.

Melanie Rosenkranz, who participated in the program with her daughter Evy, emphasizes the practical impact the classes had on their lives. "We were able to take the lessons we learned into the week, and we tried to emulate certain things from these characters. We learned



from them how to be a positive Jewish woman and role model."

This sense of internalization had been Rebbetzin Topp's goal for her students when she started the program six years ago. "I wanted the girls to feel connected to the great Jewish women of our heritage and to incorporate their character traits into their own personalities as they become bat mitzvah," relates Rebbetzin Topp.



Part of Rebbetzin Topp's success in imparting these lessons is through originality and fun. "I really liked how Mrs. Topp did interactive projects, and how she would dress up in different costumes and use props to help us learn," Jacqueline relates.

"Mrs. Topp is so creative," says Gilat. "Every week we had a different activity, including singing, skits, plays, and excerpts from movies that she related to the mitzvot we were learning about. There was a lot of audio-visual, games, and

creativity, which made it really enjoyable and brought the theme to life."

Another upshot of the program is that mothers end up benefitting alongside their daughters. "The moms

enjoy being in a learning environment and doing something they haven't done in a very long time," Rebbetzin Topp remarks.

The class has also provided a venue where mothers and daughters can branch out beyond their usual social circles. "It's nice to see girls from different schools and backgrounds across the community come together. We had girls from every segment of the community, including yeshivot, day schools, and public schools," says Rebbetzin Topp. "We've had girls who have formed friendships and two moms who studied together and continued to learn together on the phone after one of them moved back to Israel."

Bottom line - The Torat Imecha Bat Mitzvah Program is an experience that helps bat mitzvah girls and their mother form lasting connections - to each other, to new friends, and to the chain of women throughout Jewish history. Says Gilat, "My daughter and I loved it and we have recommended it to all of our friends." **BJ**

"The program gave us the time to step away from the party planning and learn the meaning of what we're doing it all for."

Pesach is All About the Children And so is our Kestenbaum Family Youth Department!

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Over the last few months we have had many exciting programs and events. The year began with our "meet the director" activity in Jacob's Garden where we enjoyed stories, games and Rosh Hashanah crafts. The Yamim Noraim were filled with meaningful programming, from honey cake and cinnamon sugar challah baking, to "Kid Nidrei." Before Sukkot we had a Sukkah decoration party. And during Sukkot, we made our own pizza and played games in our Sukkah that we decorated. The highlight of Simchat Torah was our child-centered Hakafot, where we danced with the Torah, received our very own candy bags, and were entertained by a world class magician.

We had a Chanukah toy drive and got to have a party with sufganiot, a game truck, laser tag, and extreme dodgeball. For Tu B'Shvat, we had an interactive Tu B'Shvat Seder and Shivat Haminim scavenger hunt. On Purim, Bayer Hall was transformed into a Purim jungle carnival, where children played, dressed up, won prizes, and had a great time.

Most recently, we went on a Pre-Pesach field trip to Mulligan Family Fun Center to give parents a chance to prepare for Pesach while the children had fun with their friends and group leaders. We will be celebrating Lag B'Omer in Jacob's Garden with s'mores and meeting Rabbi Akiva! For Shavuot we have all kinds of fun activities planned for our groups, including special holiday baking and build your own Har Sinai ice cream Sunday. The year's activities will conclude with a family picnic, where we will play games and distribute awards.

Our weekly groups are action-packed - from special guest circle times by Morah Chantal to our monthly mitzvah store. All groups, from ages 6 months to 12 years old, enjoy lively davening, Parsha, and stories. The highlight for the children and our Shul is when our groups follow the Torah to the Bima and receive lollipops which show that our children are front and center and that Torah and Judaism are truly a sweet experience. To quote Chief Rabbi Lau on his recent visit: "If a shul has candies, that means there are children, and then we know the future is bright." **BJ**

AIPAC Policy Conference An Impactful Experience for Teens

by Yair Isaacs

I made a promise to myself last year that I wanted to get more involved in Israel advocacy, and soon after, I started attending the Israel advocacy program run by my high school, YULA. I went to many sessions and, in mid-February, I was selected out of a group of kids to attend the AIPAC Policy Conference in Washington DC. Prior to the conference, I was a little skeptical of going, as I had never gone before and thought it was going to be boring and a waste of time.

My school was one out of the two high schools to attend the AIPAC Shabbaton together with six hundred other orthodox Jews. It was one of the most meaningful and inspirational Shabbatons I had ever attended. The Shabbaton was led by Rabbi Steven Weil, who spoke a couple times throughout Shabbat. We heard from numerous speakers such as Ron Prozor, the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, and Roz Rothstein, the CEO and Founder of StandWithUs. The one speech that stood out to me the most was given by Josh Karsh, a regional director for AIPAC, who spoke about our influence on the American political system. The Shabbaton was a great transition into the next three days.

Walking into the general session Sunday morning was mind-boggling; it was amazing to see how one room was able to fit sixteen thousand people, all there to support Israel.

After the general session we had a chance to choose from different breakout sessions. I attended a session that was run by students who advocate for Israel on their college campuses and explained to us how they deal with BDS and other anti-Israel groups on college campuses. Later on in the day we all had a

chance to hear from the heads of Security Councils of both President Barack Obama

and of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In the evening, we had a private session arranged by Beth Jacob, YICC, and YINBH. The son of Hamas, Mosab Hassan Yousef, spoke to us and shared some of his stories. Being with other LA AIPAC activists was inspiring, as I was able to appreciate how many members of our community were willing to stop working for three days to come and support the State of Israel.

While at AIPAC, we had the chance to hear from Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu. The Prime Minister assured us, all 16,000 packed into one room, that the United States and Israel, regardless of the headlines, are still, and will always be, best friends. Later on we heard from Susan Rice. Finally, Tuesday, March 3 was a big day for Israel and Prime Minister Netanyahu. We were able to watch his speech to Congress on the TV with a large group of people back at the convention center. He said perfectly that, "Even if Israel has to stand alone, Israel will stand. But I know that Israel does not stand alone, I know that America stands with Israel, I know that you stand with Israel."

This Policy Conference trip was one of the most impactful trips I have ever taken and I urge anyone that has not attended Policy Conference before to sign up for next year. You will not regret your decision. **BJ**



Photos from our Purim Jungle Carnival!



Dor L'Dor Breakfasts Connect Teens to Parents & Grandparents through Torah

by Rabbi Zach Swigard, BILU Director



Dor L'Dor is a Sunday morning intergenerational series that we ran for teenagers and their parents and grandparents on five different Sundays between the months of December to February. The program began with davening at 9:00 am, which was followed by a bagel and danish breakfast and then concluded with 30 minutes of chavruta-based learning and a mini shiur on the topic of the week. During the series we delved into the following topics:

- 1) Free Will
- 2) Kibud Av V'Em
- 3) Judging favorably
- 4) Ta'amei Hamikra and Trope with Jay Braun and Chazan Arik
- 5) Does G-d care about the Super Bowl?

I am proud to say that we had over 45 teens and grandparents who attended and benefited from our series, and who expressed a lot of appreciation for their experience.

"I loved Dor L'Dor because it allowed me to focus on some quality time with my friends and family."

– Gavriel Hecht, 8th grade

Judaism can be, and should be exciting, emotionally and mentally fulfilling, and engaging for our teens. Programming needs to be appealing and extremely fun, and there must be an overall atmosphere that is positive, accepting, and looking to connect each and every teen to Judaism in their own way. I'm proud to say that our Beth Jacob teen program thrives in all of these areas and is definitely THE place to be for teens.

To get involved or find out more about our program, contact rabbiswigard@bethjacob.org or call 818-800-3646. **BJ**



AIPAC Policy Conference 2015: A Thrilling Experience

by Michele Weiss



Michele Weiss, right.

AIPAC Policy Conference 2015, which took place March 1-3, was an exhilarating and exciting experience for all who attended. This year, AIPAC policy conference boasted 16,000 delegates, its largest delegation to date. The Conference theme was “This is Israel” and over the course of the three days, the Conference delegates had the opportunity to experience Israeli culture, politics and security concerns and to learn more intimately about American support for Israel. In contrast to the divisiveness and partisanship so heavily promoted in the news, the Conference continually emphasized that support for Israel

commentators and specialists, along with Christian ministers, Israeli innovators and even chefs. Each of the sessions enabled the attendees to learn more about Israeli security, Middle East politics, support for Israel, Israeli culture and technology. Notably, at the Sunday night Beth Jacob-Bnai David-YICC-YINBH-YULA-Shalhevet event, we were able to meet with Mosab Hassan Yousef, aka Son of Hamas aka The Green Prince.



Mosab Hassan Yousef addresses the LA delegations.

Mr. Yousef is the son of a Hamas leader. The Shin Bet was able to reach out to him and turn him into an Israeli spy. His story is gripping and inspiring and we were able to meet him and pepper him with questions.

is a bipartisan issue. Both Democratic and Republican members of Congress and the Senate continually emphasized the bipartisan nature of their support for Israel and the “unshakable bond” between Israel and the US. Notably, these concepts were echoed in US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Powers’ and US National Security Advisor Susan Rice’s respective addresses at the Conference’s Plenary sessions.

The Conference also focused on the related issues of Prime Minister Netanyahu’s address to Congress, scheduled on the last day of the Conference, and the current negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran regarding Iran’s nuclear program. There was much discussion about who would and wouldn’t be attending the Prime Minister’s Congressional address. Most dignitaries who addressed us agreed that a bad deal with Iran is worse than no deal. The differences of opinion revolved around what constitutes a bad deal. Ms. Rice discussed the US view on negotiating with Iran regarding Iran’s nuclear program. She advocated putting Iran’s nuclear ambitions on hold for ten years, taking other measures to contain Iran’s nuclear program and requiring intrusive and regular site visits. Prime Minister Netanyahu advocated completely dismantling Iran’s nuclear program. We had the opportunity to hear Prime Minister Netanyahu address the Conference on Monday morning, prior to his Congressional address.

Another fascinating, if troubling, element of the Conference was seeing the divide between the legislative and executive branches of government on the Iran nuclear negotiations issue. There was a chasm between the views of the members of Congress and Senate who addressed us and the views of the US Administration. It was an exciting, up close and personal experience of the American political process at work.

At the breakout sessions during the Conference, we had the opportunity to hear from Congressional members, Middle East



Delegations from LA shuls pose for group photo.

Her staff welcomed me and other AIPAC members to watch the speech in her office while she attended the speech in the Capitol. It was stirring to watch Mr. Netanyahu’s speech in Hon. Wilson’s office on Capitol Hill and to speak with her staff, who were supportive of the speech. I had the opportunity to meet with staff of my Congresswoman Karen Bass. Hon. Bass was not at the speech and was not in Washington, DC. She had other business regarding the municipal election in Los Angeles that she attended to that day. I also had the opportunity to meet with Congressman Adam Schiff, whose district is in the Glendale-Pasadena area. Hon. Schiff eagerly wanted to speak with us about his perspective, as a Democratic Congressman, on Mr. Netanyahu’s speech.

The Conference had other events too numerous to mention. For example, each night, there were many receptions by different organizations including StandWithUs, the Israel Project and the Israeli American Council (IAC). We had opportunities to meet the pro-Israel community from around the country and from different cultural groups. The synagogue initiative brought thousands of AIPAC delegates from synagogues around the country.

Overall, AIPAC PC was a thrilling experience, giving participants a more intimate view of the issues involved in US and other countries’ support for Israel and in Israeli culture and technological innovation. **BJ**

Songs and Music Help Us Retell the Pesach Story

by Chazan Arik Wollheim



Any meaningful Seder presents challenges as well. The main goal is an educational one, והגדת לבנך transmitting our history as a nation and its inception via the exodus from Egypt. The challenges however, are great: how can we retell the specifics of an event that took place so many years ago in a way that is both interesting and meaningful? How can we keep our children engaged (and awake)

during this long evening? How can we relate the ancient text of the Haggada to kids whose language and interests are so different?

The answer has to do with the role of songs and music.

When we think of the Haggada we think of songs, after all, we've been singing it for centuries, right? And let's not forget the traditional debates about which tunes to choose. How many songs are being repeated just so everyone is happy, singing their favorite tunes? Seems like Seder night wouldn't be "Kosher" if we didn't get to sing the melodies we're used to.

Whether we are chanting real poems like *Echad Mi Yodea* and *Chad Gadya* or sections of Midrash or Mishnah like *Mah Nishtanah* or *V'hi Sheamda*, Seder night is a night of song. Why do we think of these sections, together with *Avadim Hayinu* and *Ha Lachma Anya*, as songs? Probably because of their importance, and the fact that the tune in which they are sung differs from the rest of the text of the Haggada.

So what are the songs of the Haggada? Well, depends who you're asking or to be more specific, if you're holding an Ashkenazi or Sephardi Haggada.

The most ancient poem is probably *Ata Ga'alta*, written in the 7-8th century, which is based on the Aleph Bet and tells the story of slavery in Egypt and the redemption. Today, only the Iraqi and Yemenite traditions still sing it. Another famous song is *Dayenu*, which already appears in the Haggada of Rav Sa'adya Ga'on in the 9-10th century. At the end of the Ashkenazi Haggada, in *Nirtzah*, we find seven poems: *Chasal Siddur Pesach*, *Az Rov Nissim*, *Ometz Gevurotecha*, *Ki Lo Naeh*, *Adir Hu*, *Echad Mi Yodea* and *Chad Gadya*. The first five were added after the 12th century even though they were written much earlier, and the last two, *Echad Mi Yodea* and *Chad Gadya*, were added only after the 15th century.

The origin of *Echad Mi Yodea* and *Chad Gadya* is probably a non-Jewish folk song and we assume they were added to create

interest among the children. We all know how fun the singing can be (especially after 4 cups of wine) and it was an incentive to keep the children (and sometimes adults too) awake and engaged. In the last 200 years or so these songs also made their way into the Sephardi Haggada, and in many cases are sung not in Aramaic, but in the spoken language of the community. The last addition to the Haggada is the poem *Emunim Archu Shevach*, appearing in most Sephardic Haggadot after the 16th century.

The three poems: *Ata Ga'alta*, *Emunim Archu Shevach* and *Dayenu*, unlike the seven at the end of the Haggada (after Hallel and Birkat Hamazon are done), appear and are sung in the middle of the Haggada.

Out of all the songs, *Chasal Siddur Pesach*, which is usually followed by a "spontaneous" singing of "*L'Shanah Haba'ah B'Yerushalayim*" has a special role as it marks the "end" of the formal Seder and "gives permission" to "loosen up" and sing the "fun" songs.

The poem *Az Rov Nissim* was written in Israel as a part of the Piyutim for Shabbat Hagadol. It somehow found its way to Ashkenaz (Germany) where it was recited on the Seder night and later found its way into the Haggada. It is interesting to note that for a very long time this poem was known as the

only one written by Yannai, who lived in Israel in the 6th century. Only after documents from the G'niza in Cairo were documented in the early years of the 20th century, the scope of Yannai's work was discovered to be one of the most productive of all time. Following the discoveries, we now know that *Vayehi Bachatzi Halayla* together

with *Az Rov Nissim* is a part of a large series of poems where Yannai describes the fall of Pharaoh and greatness of God and other miracles that took place "bachatzi halayla," in the middle of the night, like the victory of Abraham over

the kings, Jacob fighting with the angel, Sisrah being defeated and more. The last event mentioned is the miracle of Purim when sleep eluded King Achashverosh.

No wonder the poem was chosen to be recited "in the middle of the night."

So whether you sing a lot or not so much during the Seder, I hope the singing will help you create a meaningful, educational and fun experience for everyone at your table. **BJ**

Wishing you a melodious *Chag Kasher V'Same'ach*,
Chazan Arik



"We all know how fun the singing can be. It was an incentive to keep the children (and sometimes adults too) awake and engaged."

Avraham Fried Concert

Photo credits Joe Shalmoni © 2015



AIPAC Policy Conference



Purim!



Modern Minds on Jewish Matters



Sisterhood Chanukah Luncheon



Blood Drive



The Power of Questions

by Rabbi Arye Sufrin



In *Sefer Shemot*, the verse clearly teaches us the importance of speaking to our kids about the story of *Pesach*, as it says, “*V’Higadeta L’vincha – Speak to your children*” (Ex.13:8). However, a few verses later we are given insight on how to properly tell the *Pesach* story. As the Torah continues:

And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ then

tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’” (Ex. 12: 26-27)

Furthermore, it says that:

In the days to come, when your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ say to him, ‘With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (Ex. 13: 14)

Specifically on *Pesach*, not only should we discuss the story with our children, but the Torah teaches us to relive the experience through asking questions.

The *Gemara in Pesachim 109a* teaches the importance of asking and prompting children to ask questions at the Seder. The example cited is of Rabbi Akiva, who would hand out to the children parched grain and walnuts on *Erev Pesach*, precisely so they should not fall asleep and be able to ask questions. It continues by mentioning the tradition of Rabbi Eliezer who would snatch the matzot on the night of *Pesach* on the account of the children so they should not fall asleep. How would snatching the matzot help prevent children from falling asleep? The famous 11th century commentator, *Rabbi Shmuel Ben Meir*, better known as the *Rashbam*, suggests that food induces drowsiness, so Rabbi Eliezer snatched the *matzah* to prevent children from getting tired. This way, they were able to ask questions throughout the Seder.

The *Rambam* codifies this concept into *Halacha* in the 7th chapter of *Hilchot Pesach U’Matzah* by saying that a parent must mix things up a bit in order to prompt questions by the children so they can say “What is the difference between this night and every other night - *Mah Nishtanah Halaylah HaZeh MiKol Haleilot?*”

There is no doubt questions engender active engagement and participation by everyone no matter what age each participant is. But why the focus on asking questions? Why not spend the evening fulfilling the mitzvah of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* by simply telling over the story and reading the Haggada?

Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger, Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University, explains that the *Gemara in Bava Metzia* on 33b teaches that a person who learns one chapter, one *Halacha*, or even one letter from someone else must treat that person with the same respect one would treat their teacher or *Rebbe*. It is amazing to realize that one simple teaching of a letter completely transforms their existing relationship into one that is now considered to be a *Rebbe-talmid* (Rabbi/student) relationship. As the relationship in learning continues, the ultimate goal is to have the student learn and strive to be a *Talmid Chacham* (wise student). What does it mean to be wise? Our Rabbis explain by dividing the letters from the word *Chochmah* (wisdom), it spells *Koach* (*Chaf, Chet*) and *Mah* (*Mem,*

Hey) which literally means the “power of what,” which teaches us that true wisdom is based on the power of asking questions, not just on content knowledge attained by listening.

By always referring to a wise person as a *Talmid* (student), we want to create in our children *anivut* (humility). Humility should not be confused with low self esteem, but rather the feeling of “I want to know more.” Our brightest scholars and great *Talmidei Chachamim* always want to learn more. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks writes about Nobel Prize winner in Physics, Isadore Rabi, who was once asked as a child why he became a scientist. His response was simple yet insightful, “my mother made me a scientist without ever knowing it. Every other child would come back from school and be asked, ‘What did you learn today?’ But my mother used to ask: ‘Izzy, did you ask a good question today?’ That made the difference. Asking good questions made me a scientist.”

Perhaps now we can understand the importance of asking questions at the Seder. The *mitzvah of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* needs to be more than just a summarized story reminding us of the great miracles and the *yad chazakah* (strong hand) used by G-d to take us out of Egypt. *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* needs to be an engaging, captivating, and inspirational experience filled with learning that emulates the way a *Rebbe* and *Talmid* (rabbi and student) would engage in learning. The phenomenon of asking questions is something that is part of our DNA as a Jewish nation.

The *Rambam* emphasizes the importance of asking questions on Seder night by teaching that if a child is not present at the Seder, then the wife should ask the questions. If the wife is not present, then let the guests and friends ask questions, and if you are alone, then verbalize and ask the questions to yourself. I can understand based on the answer above the importance of engaging in questions with one’s spouse or guests, but why ask yourself questions?

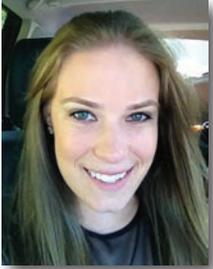
Perhaps one lesson is to teach us not to underestimate the value and importance of the process of asking questions, even if it is to ourselves. Because the process of asking questions without known answers is very much an effective way to grow and learn. In fact, many famous educators explain the ideal way for students to learn effectively is simply by questions alone. Dr. Al Siebert and Mary Karr in *The Adult Student’s Guide to Survival & Success*, supports this by saying the most effective learning technique of all is to study through asking and answering questions.

Additionally, many of the *Baalei Mussar* explain that asking questions is a true sign of *cheirut* (freedom) which is the main theme of the holiday. It is easy to understand this as we see how people in Iran and other foreign countries are restricted from speaking their mind and afraid for their lives to ask important questions about fairness and equality. The process of asking questions does not just symbolize the invigorating and inspirational *Talmud Torah* experience explained above, but it also serves as an important reminder to appreciate the freedom we have, which is part of the goal of the Seder experience.

But we must always realize that the ultimate freedom has yet to come, and we must strive to work hard every single day one mitzvah at a time so we can merit the ultimate redemption and freedom *Bimheirah V’yameinu*. **BJ**

In Search of a Central Hub for Young Jewish Singles in LA? Look No Further.

by Sarah Markoff



If you asked me five years ago whether I would move back to LA as a twenty-something year old, I would've said absolutely not. Living in the Upper West Side in New York City was THE place to be as a young Jewish adult. Every time I came home to LA for a school break, there was no place for me to meet new people. No central hub for young Jewish singles in LA.

That all changed two years ago. I was home for my last winter break in college and my mom told me about the Young Professionals minyan at Beth Jacob. Having gone to a different shul my whole life, I was a bit skeptical, but I decided to check out the scene (and the davening) nonetheless. After only one Shabbat morning service, I was blown away. Being an LA native, I recognized a few people from the neighborhood, but the majority of the congregation consisted of new people I had never seen before. Everyone was beyond friendly to me at Kiddush and many people simply introduced themselves without knowing who I was. I knew this group of vibrant, kind, and generous human beings would someday be my community.

After finishing nursing school in New York, I moved back to LA two months ago and was immediately welcomed with open arms. The minyan has almost tripled in size since my first experience, but the sense of closeness amongst all the members still remains vividly apparent.

I knew this group of vibrant, kind, and generous human beings would someday be my community.

Rabbi Sufrin. How can I possibly describe Rabbi Sufrin? On my first Shabbat back in town Rabbi Sufrin approached me with such kindness and openness, urging me to become involved in the YP community. It didn't take much convincing as I already asked him if I could deliver a dvar Torah one Shabbat morning. Rabbi Sufrin and his wife Tamar are two of the most kind hearted and welcoming people I have had the pleasure of meeting. They make everyone feel as if they have known them for years, and if they don't know you, they will gladly invite you into their home to get to know you better. Everything they do is for the good of the community and the minyan. They are always trying to get members involved in planning new events and coming up with great ideas on how to further enhance the experience of not only attending the YP minyan, but really becoming a community in which everyone has a part to play.

Moving your life from one city to another (even if it is my hometown), can be a scary and stressful experience. But having been back only two months, I know that the Young Professionals minyan at Beth Jacob will always serve as a wonderful community and support system not only for me, but for each and every one of its amazing members. **BJ**



Chief Rabbi David Lau Emphasizes Unity Throughout Historic Visit



Photo credit Joe Shalmoni © 2015

January 9-11, 2015, was an historic and memorable weekend at Beth Jacob, as we were privileged to host Israel's Chief Rabbi David Lau and Rabbanit Tziporah.

Throughout his weekend visit, Chief Rabbi Lau emphasized that the Torah and its values belong to ALL Jews. He spent his time throughout his stay in Los Angeles furthering the goal of Jewish unity, as he visited and reached out to diverse communities that included orthodox and non-orthodox groups, Ashkenazim

and Sephardim, young and old. Some of his stops included New Community Jewish High School, the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, the USC Chabad House, and the Israeli American Council.

On Shabbat morning, Chief Rabbi Lau spoke in Shapell Sanctuary about Moshe Rabbeinu's test of leadership, and the challenge of transmitting a tradition that the younger generation can find relevant. He commented on the many children he saw at Beth Jacob, enjoying their Shabbat lollipops and treats. "A *shul* with lots of candy is a *shul* with a future!" he said.

After *Shabbat*, about 200 people attended our Saturday night town hall meeting, at which the Chief Rabbi was interviewed by our own Rabbi Kalman Topp. Rabbi Lau spoke at length about instituting new professional standards for the Rabbinate throughout the State of Israel, including training in *derech erez* in order to better serve Israel's different constituencies in a sensitive, empathic way.

At the town hall meeting, Chief Rabbi Lau was questioned by audience members about the conversion controversy in Israel, as well as army service *vis a vis Chareidim*. As a reserve major in the IDF Intelligence Corps, as well as a Rav and Chareidi Jew, Rabbi Lau stressed his respect for those who dedicate years to full time Torah study, but said that as soon as those years of study are completed, every Jew must give time to serve the State of Israel.

Chief Rabbi Lau's time at Beth Jacob culminated at Sunday's Avraham Fried concert at the Saban Theatre, where the Rav addressed the crowd before a spirited and lively concert with about 1800 people in attendance. Having the opportunity to meet and hear from Chief Rabbi Lau, a man who, through his brilliance, caring and hard work has made a *Kiddush Hashem* in Israel and throughout the world, was a true inspiration.

We thank our generous sponsors, Carrol & Jack Fenigstein, Anne & Mark Goldin, and Fela & David z"l Shapell for making it possible. **BJ**



Photo credit Joe Shalmoni © 2015

Pesach Recipes from Jacob's Platter

For more Pesach and year-round recipes, you may purchase a copy of Jacob's Platter in the shul office.



Ratatouille (*Parve*)

- 1 onion
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 Tbs. oil
- 2 eggplants
- 1 red pepper
- 2 yellow squash
- 2 zucchinis
- 28 oz. diced tomatoes
- 28 oz. tomato sauce
- 1 Tbs. Italian seasoning

Chop and sauté the onion and garlic with oil in a medium stock pot until onions are clear. Meanwhile, chop and cube eggplant and pepper. Slice squash and zucchini. Add vegetables to stock pot. Stir in diced tomatoes and sauce. Sprinkle seasoning over vegetables and stir once. Simmer over low heat for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Do not over stir as vegetables will get mushy. Serve hot or cold. Serves 12.

Note: If you want to serve the vegetables cold and as a dairy dish, you can cook as described above and blend slightly and serve with a dollop of sour cream.

Michele Poltorak



Chicken Tagine (*Meat*)

- 3 Tbs. olive oil
- 6 pieces boneless, skinless chicken thighs or half breasts
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- 1/4 tsp. cumin
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 Tbs. matzah meal
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 carrots, thinly sliced or chopped
- 1/2 lb. zucchini, thinly sliced or chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 or 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 15 oz. can diced tomatoes

In a pot, heat oil to medium heat and sauté chicken until browned (about 3 minutes per side). Remove chicken from pot. Mix the spices and matzah meal together in a bowl, reduce heat to low and add this mixture and the garlic to the pot. Stir for 30 seconds. Stir in the broth, then add the vegetables, cinnamon sticks and tomatoes. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Return the chicken to the pot and simmer, covering pot, until all is tender (about 20 minutes). Salt to taste. Serves 6.

Deborah Oles



Spinach Feta Squares (*Dairy*)

- 4 lbs. frozen chopped spinach
- 6 eggs
- 1 lb. feta cheese, crumbled
- 3 Tbs. olive oil
- Ground black pepper to taste

Thaw spinach and working in small batches, squeeze out as much water as possible. Pre-heat oven to 350°. Beat eggs and stir in all ingredients. Place in oiled rectangular baking dish. Bake for 1-2 hours until brown on edges and center is firm. Cool and then cut into squares. Serves 10-12.

Estee Feinstein

The 21 West 86th Street Passover Experience Comes to Beth Jacob

by Laurence Richards

Would you like to experience a heightened sense of joy this Passover? Interested in trying something new?

How about setting your Passover table for over 30 new guests without knowing all their names - let alone their exact number - until the actual beginning of the Seder Night?

When I was asked to write an article about Passover for this publication, I was unsure where to begin. And then I thought of my experiences living in New York City many years ago. And I thought perhaps that I had an interesting story to tell.

It all started in 2004. At the time, I was living in Manhattan's Upper West Side, one of the many thousands of Jews who had moved there for the opportunity to work, enjoy the city, and potentially meet a spouse. At the time, I was relatively happy and comfortable. Yet, as the Passover holiday approached, I remember a feeling of trepidation that overcame me.

For many years prior, I had found my Seder experiences to be more of a task rather than a pleasure. I had found that I did not connect with the ritual or spirituality of the evening. I had found myself alienated from the holiday - burdened by its demands, anxious that I could not enjoy our faith's most special evening, the Seder.

Perhaps it was the formal environment of the Seder. Perhaps it was the mechanical way in which the Seder had been presented by my hosts. Perhaps it was me.

Whatever the case, I felt uninspired. I thought there had to be more.

And so I thought to myself: Why must I always be a guest in someone else's home for the Seder? Can't I myself create a Seder that is both enjoyable and meaningful? Can't I simply host my own Seder... right now?

The questions were particularly interesting for me, considering that I had never conducted a Seder, nor did I consider myself as being especially knowledgeable concerning the Seder's format and its customs.

Nevertheless, I decided to jump in.

At the time I felt - perhaps without any justification, perhaps without any sort of initial plan - that I myself could conduct a Seder that was inspiring, stimulating, and fun for its participants. I felt, somehow, that I could find a wonderful crowd of people who would have an incredible time at my Seder, and that I could infuse meaning into their holiday.

I had found my mission.

But what was my plan?

The seed of my strategy started with a simple idea: fulfilling a market need. In previous years, I was often struck by the fact that as Seder Night approached, many people did not have a place to go, and that when such people sought to uncover a Seder invitation, there was none to be had. No more invitations to family tables on the Upper West Side. No more spots at communal synagogue events. No more room for people at Seder getaway weekends in places such as New Jersey or Upstate New York. Indeed, when there

was less than one week or even two weeks before Seder night, if you didn't have a place, you had to scramble to find one.

What were these people supposed to do?

And then it occurred to me: I would invite them to my apartment for the Seder. I would host a Seder for these people.

But how would I find them? And how would I create the evening?

I began to hatch my plan. I would deliberately wait until the last minute - in fact, I would wait until only five days prior to Seder Night - and then - and only then - would I contact a few rabbis in town and

a famous person ("Special Agent Steve") who had unrivaled access to Jews living in Manhattan due to his many communal involvements. I would contact these people with only days remaining until the Seder, and I would say to them, "Send me whomever you have. Send me anyone who does not have an invitation to Seder Night. Send them to my apartment. I will host them. I will give them a Seder."

I gave the rabbis and Special Agent Steve the address of my apartment. I told them the exact time the guests needed to arrive.

I had few limitations. The invitee simply needed to be in want of a locale for Seder night. I think that was it. I only requested of the rabbis and Special Agent Steve that they would - as best they could - provide me with the names and number of people who would attend.

In reality, I was left with an estimate of the number of guests. And a vague guest list, at best.

For that first Seder Night in 2004, there were 32 guests at my 800 square foot one-bedroom apartment located at 21 West 86th Street, New York, NY, 10024.

There were professionals and students from the Upper West Side, the Upper East Side, Midtown, Downtown, Soho, and Brooklyn. There were people ranging in age from early 20s to late 40s. There were men and women, married and single, divorced and dating.



Sara and Laurence Richards, with children, from left to right, Tova, Lev, and Akiva

Numerous nationalities were represented. There were guests from London. A person from Australia. And a group of four from the country of Ecuador, a group that would populate my Seder consistently in future years to come.

There were also five of my own “confederates,” people who I had specifically chosen to help with the logistics of the evening. And there was a rabbi who had agreed to attend. He hailed from the Manhattan Jewish Experience, a popular local Jewish educational and outreach organization, and he was an expert concerning the rituals of the Seder. He also possessed a dazzling voice and a natural ability to communicate the spirituality and meaning of Seder Night in an incredibly warm and inviting manner.

Rabbi Arnie provided the halachic guidance. I provided the food and the setting. And I led the Seder, with Rabbi Arnie’s help.

An intense buzz abounded. 32 new faces, crammed around my outstretched dining room table, leather sofa, two lounge chairs, and a counter directly adjacent to my small city kitchen.

The energy was electric. People actively engaged in the Seder. Following along in their Haggadas. Listening to Rabbi Arnie. Socializing with one another. Meeting new people. Developing friendships. Enjoying the evening. Not wanting to leave when it was over. Asking questions. Joking around. Having fun.

I had uncovered - at least for me - the secret to the holiday. Invite guests. Not just friends and family, but guests who may be looking for something more.

And the food was excellent, too. Ah, the food.

In fact, I had attended too many Jewish events where the food was not quite so good. And so, for my Seder night, I had determined that the food I would serve would be special. I found what I considered to be the finest kosher takeout place in Manhattan, The Kosher Marketplace, located on Broadway and West 90th. I arrived when their doors opened at 7am on the morning of the Seder Night, and I spent the next hour and a half ordering prepared dishes for my guests. Chicken Roast. Brisket. Other Pesach specialties. And handmade, Shmura Matzah, direct from Israel.

Perhaps most poignantly, I had made it my personal goal that all of my guests would stay for the entire length of the Seder. This was no small objective, considering that there were many participants who had never experienced an entire traditional Seder, not to mention the fact that there was even one person who had never even attended a Seder before that evening. (In fact, in all of my subsequent Seders, there was at least one person who had never experienced a Seder.)

Yet no one left before the Seder’s conclusion.

The expressions of gratitude and warmth I experienced through the evening were incredible. And I had the time of my life.

That first Seder which occurred in 2004 established the blueprint for future Seders. Of course, a few changes were made. The following year, rather than host a Seder for only one night, I decided to host Seders on both nights. In 2006, I decided to host Seders for both nights as well as lunches on both days of the holiday.

Attendance increased. The rabbis became more eager for my help as the holiday approached. And I began to feel a special sense of excitement each year as Pesach came closer.

I began to look forward to Pesach. I began to see its meaning. And I began to experience its joy.

The year 2007 was particularly special. At the time, I was not living in Manhattan, but in Norfolk, Virginia, where my job was temporarily located. So I decided to bring the Seder to Norfolk. Using a similar strategy, I contacted a local Rabbi and the local Jewish Federation, and I was able to attract over 30 people to a home provided to me by a local family. I think I flew in some of the kosher food from The Kosher Marketplace. Somehow, I pulled it off.

Yet, what happened at 21 West 86th Street that same year was perhaps even more interesting. At the time, my good friend Glenn was living in my apartment, and as a precondition of his acquiring a new locale, I required him to host the Seder. On both nights.

Glenn looked at me as if I was crazy. I looked at him as if I was quite serious. Along with our good friend Azi, Glenn hosted the Seder at 21 West 86th Street. And he found his bride as well, sitting across from him at the Seder table. Glenn now has a beautiful

young boy whom he loves immensely.

I hosted the Seders for one more year, but my special ritual ended in 2009, when I returned at the beginning of the year to the city where I was raised, Los Angeles.

No more Seders at my apartment. Back in LA, I decided to focus on other things. Building my business in Los Angeles. Building a new life for myself back here in LA. And building my family.

Over the past several years, I have explained to my wife on many occasions that it would be quite nice to recreate the Seder experience I had developed in Manhattan. She is a wonderful woman, and she agreed to help.

But it was not to be. One year we called a few rabbis asking for guests, but no one needed a place. Another year we invited guests to our home, but they had to leave due to a medical condition. And still another time on Seder Night, I even failed to bring home even one guest from a local synagogue known for its population of singles. On that night, after the service ended, I made an announcement to the congregation asking if anyone needed a place for the Seder. No one replied. I then saw a group of young people standing in the back of the synagogue, seemingly with no place to go. I asked them if they had a place for the Seder. They said no. I asked them if they would come to my home. They said no. I told them that the table had been set, that my wife had cooked extra food for extra guests, that her parents were there, that we were waiting for them. They looked at me as if I was crazy. I told them that I lived in a beautiful home in Beverlywood. They walked away.

At 9736 Oakmore Road, it seemed, the 21 West 86th Street Seder Experience was not meant to be.

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“I had uncovered – at least for me – the secret to the holiday. Invite guests. Not just friends and family, but guests who may be looking for something more.”

What Are We Going to Do to Make This Night Different from All Other Nights?

by Rabbi Adir Posy



There are two separate and distinct commandments in the Torah when it comes to remembering *Yitziat Mitzrayim* (the Exodus from Egypt). The first is a *Mitzvah* to remember (*Zechira*), which is fulfilled each day with our recitation of the *Shema*. The second is the *Mitzvah* to retell (*Sippur*), which we fulfill once a year during the *Seder* on *Pesach* eve. The formulation of the *Mitzvah* as one of retelling is somewhat surprising - if we look closely at the text of the *Haggada*, while we talk about specific events, we also spend an equal amount of time talking about Rabbis in *Bnei Brak* and different instructive paradigms. Instead of just reading the story out of a *Chumash* as you might expect, we spend half of the time talking about how to tell the story. (For a more expansive discussion of this issue, please see the *Koren Beth Jacob Haggada*).

In dealing with this question, our rabbis offer an insight that is a foundational principle for us as Jews in the modern world. As we approach the *Seder*, the eternal words of the Torah's command for us echo in our ears. "*V'higadeta L'vincha*" -we must share our story and our heritage with the next generations. However, a closer look at the *passuk* offers the key to understanding our attitude on *Pesach* night.

The Torah says *V'higadeta l'vincha bayom hahu l'emor...ba'avur zeh asah Hashem li b'tzeiti mimitzrayim*.

You must tell your children, that it was for this G-d took ME out of Egypt.

The very nature of the *Mitzvah* is to make it contemporary to ME, to focus on how we take the values and ideals of our tradition and history and project them into the way we conduct ourselves today and tomorrow. So we spend our time at the *Seder* reflecting on how to do that. How do we take a legacy of which we are so proud and make sure that it informs our lives?

And what better example than the *Seder*. Yes, the *Seder* has a script, and yes the *Seder* is chock full of rituals. And that is perhaps the perspective of the "*Ben Rasha*" - the wicked son. He scoffs and says - *Ma ha'avodah hazot lachem* - your rituals are obsolete - they are for another time and another place.

But if the *Seder* is done right, it's something completely different.



It's seeing the rituals in the context of a connection to G-d, to history and to family. We do everything we can through the telling of the story and the asking of questions to elicit this excitement & renewal.

Thus, we don't simply have a dry recitation of the facts that occurred so many years ago. We use those facts as a prism to view the totality of Jewish history and look at our own lives through the lens of *b'chol dor vador omdim aleinu l'chaloteinu veHakadosh Baruch Hu matzileinu miyadam* - In every generation our enemies rise against us and it is *Hashem* who saves us.

Perhaps we can rephrase the words of the *Mah Nishtana* as the question is not only how is this night different from all other nights - but "what are we going to do to make this night different." - How are we going to make this night special. If we are successful

in that mission, we can be assured that we will fulfill "*V'higadeta L'vincha*" in the truest sense. **BJ**

"One of the basic tenets of our faith is that a connection to the past is not an impediment to building a better future, rather it is the key to doing so."

The 21 West 86th Street Passover Experience Comes to Beth Jacob

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Until Beth Jacob Congregation, that is, and its Young Professionals Minyan, in particular, decided otherwise.

A few months ago, I said to my wife, "Enough. I can't take it anymore. I need my guests. I need my Seder back." At the time, I had begun speaking with a young man who is involved with the Young Professionals Minyan at Beth Jacob. He and I had become acquainted, and I had told him about my communal experiences in Manhattan. I also had developed a friendship with Rabbi Posy and Rabbi Sufrin.

I attended the Young Professionals Minyan one morning on Shabbat, and I returned home and explained to my wife that I had a plan to recreate my Seder experience. I told her that I would speak to the young man at the Young Professionals Minyan and that he would invite the guests over to our home. He would find the guests for us! And the rabbis would help! She agreed!! And so did they!!

And so, G-d willing, the Seder experience will return this Passover. But things are now a bit different. This year, we are limited to only 15 guests. And we will be hosting the Seder only for one night. My wife explained to me - very clearly, with no ambiguity, in no uncertain terms - that with an eight month-old baby girl, a two year-old baby boy, and a 12 year-old boy, that we would not be hosting more than 15 people. And that there was a one night limit. Well, I guess she's right. And did I mention that she's also expecting again at the end of August?

Oh well. At least I have my Seder back. And for that, I am incredibly grateful. Thank you, Sara. Thank you, Beth Jacob.

And so, if you want to experience a sensation like none other, please consider inviting to your Pesach Seder not only your friends and family, but also people who may be searching for something more. You may experience a sense of joy like never before. **BJ**

Attention high school & college students!

Home for summer break? Make time for Torah at Beth Jacob's

Summer Kollel

Monday-Thursday Evenings,

7:00 to 9:30 pm

June 29-July 30

Attention community members!
Interested in learning Torah?

We'll match you up with one of our Kollel members.

Learn one on one with your friends, engage in lively group discussion, and explore the Torah topic of your choice at Beth Jacob's Summer Kollel!

Our Summer Kollel scholars are young men and women from our community who have set aside their evenings to learn and partner with you.



Learning geared for parents & sons every Monday evening, and for parents & daughters every Wednesday evening.

Rosh Kollel, Rabbi Avner Shapiro. For more information, or to sign up for a *chavruta*, please contact Rabbi Adir Posy at rabbiposy@bethjacob.org

Summer Kollel is generously sponsored by Lee Samson.

Summer Kollel Kickoff BBQ!

Monday, June 29, 6:00 pm in Jacob's Garden

Open to the community, free of charge.

In Memory of David Shapell ז"ל

Beth Jacob Congregation mourns the loss of David Shapell, יוסף דוד בן בנימין ז"ל, builder and pillar of our community and the entire Jewish people. He was a great man - a giant in his generosity and good deeds, strength of character, and dedication to Jewish causes the world over.

David was born in the shtetl of Wolbrom, Poland in 1921, and lost most of his family to the horrors of the Holocaust. With faith, defiance, resilience and courage, David, his brother Nathan, and sister Sala survived. David met Fela, also a survivor, in a displaced persons camp in Germany after the war - they married and subsequently moved to the United States in 1950. Together they rebuilt their lives, first in Detroit, then in Los Angeles-Beverly Hills, raised three beautiful children, Rochelle, Ben and Irv, and created the immensely successful Shapell Industries construction firm.

The Shapells used their resources to show tremendous generosity to the world, fulfilling David's early promise to himself that if he would be blessed with the means, he would make sure to share it with others. His support of Israel and the IDF, Holocaust education, Torah study, and rebuilding Jewish families and institutions has assured that his impact will reverberate for generations to come.

"David would say that the people of our generation can't understand the extent of the hardships and extreme brutality of the Shoah," Rabbi Topp relates. In light of these experiences, David took great pride in being part of the US democratic process, and, according to his daughter Rochelle's shloshim eulogy, never missed an opportunity to vote in any election, large or small. He also was a great supporter of the State of Israel and the IDF. It was of immense importance to him that the Jewish people have a state and a means of defending themselves, Rabbi Topp said at a memorial service in Shapell Sanctuary at Beth Jacob, with several hundred people in attendance.

Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, The US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles have all been major beneficiaries of his dedication to keeping the memory of the Holocaust Kedoshim alive. Notably, in 1979, upon visiting the mass graves in Wolbrom, Poland, where much of his family is buried, David took upon himself to have the neglected graves cemented over and a fence erected, personally taking responsibility for the *kavod lameitim* of all of those from his community who had perished.

David was also instrumental in rebuilding Jewish life worldwide through his support of Shapell's Yeshiva and Midreshet Rachel V'Chaya in Jerusalem, Yeshiva University, and Beth Jacob Congregation, among many other institutions.

On a personal level, David was a paradigm of personal nobility, a beacon of justice and humility, whose ethics and integrity informed all of his endeavors. "It was very important to him that his business never received even one citation for violating the law or code of the city," says Rabbi Topp.

David's extreme kindness assured that he simply never said no to a cause or an individual in need – he helped countless people with grants and loans throughout his lifetime, actively seeking out those who could benefit from his services. In fact, Rabbi Topp says, "He wanted to be in the business of chesed and giving loans. If a few months would go by and I didn't refer anyone to him, he would say to me 'rabbi, I'm still in the business.'" Despite his impact, David shied away from the limelight – he and Fela declined to be honored by Beth Jacob on numerous occasions, and more recently demurred when the Jewish Journal wanted to profile them for their generosity.

Although he was decidedly private, members of Beth Jacob Congregation can count themselves among his closest friends. "We feel incredibly grateful to have had David's extraordinary support and constant presence at Beth Jacob for many decades, which enabled us not only to be inspired by his community and national philanthropy,

but to learn from this world-class mensch up close as well," says Rabbi Posy.

The Beth Jacob community also had the privilege to regularly see David and Fela, who were a regal couple, and whose love and dedication for each other is legendary. Longtime friend and fellow Beth Jacob member Paul Venze recounted at the memorial service that David's face would light up with a smile when he would see his wife walk through the shul doors on Shabbat morning, and for her part, Fela's eyes would follow her husband wherever he went – their bond was tangible to all who knew them.

David's memory will always be with us as we uphold his legacy in the Shapell Sanctuary. May his memory be a blessing. May Fela, Rochelle, Ben, Irv and the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.



David ז"ל was laid to rest in the Eretz HaChaim Cemetery, Beit Shemesh, Israel.

Upcoming Scholars in Residence

We are deeply honored to welcome
**Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew
 Congregations of the Commonwealth**
Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis



**In his first visit to the West
 Coast as UK Chief Rabbi
 May 1-2, 2015**

- **Shabbat Morning Drasha**
- **Community Lunch in Bayer Hall**
- **Shabbat Afternoon Talk**

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis was Chief Rabbi of Ireland from 1984 – 1992, Rabbi of the Western Marble Arch

Synagogue in London from 1992 – 1996, and was appointed Senior Rabbi at Finchley United Synagogue in 1996, a position which he held until becoming Chief Rabbi in 2013, taking on the mantle of leadership from Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks. He currently also serves as Associate President of the Conference of European Rabbis.

**Weekend generously co-sponsored by
 Marcie Meier and Myrtle Sitowitz.**

Shavuot Scholar in Residence
Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Rosenblatt
May 23-25, 2015



Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Rosenblatt has been Senior Rabbi of the Riverdale Jewish Center since 1985, and has lectured widely in the United States, United Kingdom, South Africa and Israel.

He holds a BA and MA in Comparative Literature from John Hopkins University, a PhD in Modern British Literature from Columbia University, and Semicha from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University.

Please join us for our All Night Learning Program with an all-star cast of outstanding Torah Scholars, Saturday Night, May 23.

Community Events at Beth Jacob



Yom Hashoah

Wednesday, April 15

6:45 pm Memorial March from SWC to Beth Jacob

7:30 pm Memorial Program in Shapell Sanctuary

Program sponsored by the

David ^{z"l} and Fela Shapell Family Foundation Institute on the Shoah U'Gevurah of Yeshiva University.

Honorary Chair, Ernie Goldberger.

Bnei Akiva presents
**Yom Hazikaron
 Commemoration &
 Yom Ha'atzmaut
 Celebration**

Wednesday Night, April 22



Kestenbaum Family Youth Events



Lag B'Omer Celebration!

Thursday, May 7

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

in Jacob's Garden

Enjoy hot dogs and s'mores
 and a visit from Rabbi Akiva!

Family Picnic in the Park

Sunday, June 7

Summer is here!

We invite parents and children to join us for lunch, games, and an awards ceremony for great groups and kids!



***Connected to the Past –
Committed to the Future***Rabbi Kalman Topp
*Senior Rabbi*Rabbi Adir Posy
*Associate Rabbi*Rabbi Arye Sufrin
*Assistant Rabbi*Arik Wollheim
*Cantor*Allen Ishakis
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*Youth Director*Rabbi Zach Swigard
*Teen Rabbi, BILU Director*Rabbi Simon Dolgin ^{z"l}
Rabbi Emeritus

We wish you a Chag Kasher V'Sameach! Pesach at Beth Jacob Congregation



Erev Pesach, Friday, April 3

*Ta'anit Bechorot**Shacharit with Siyum* 6:00, 6:45, 7:40 amLatest time to eat *chometz* 10:27 amLatest time to burn *chometz* 11:42 am

Candle Lighting 6:58 pm

Mincha/Maariv 7:00 pm*Seder* after 7:54 pm

First Day Yom Tov, Shabbat, April 4

Hashkama 7:10 am, Benny's 8:30 am, Shapell 9:00 am,

Young Professionals 9:30 am

Mincha/Shiur 6:50 pm; Candles & *Seder* after 7:59 pm

Tonight Count Omer 1

Second Day Yom Tov, Sunday, April 5

Hashkama 7:10 am, Benny's 8:30 am, Shapell 9:00 am,

Young Professionals 9:30 am

Mincha/Shiur 7:05 pm; *Havdallah* 8:00 pm

Tonight Count Omer 2

Erev Yom Tov, Thursday, April 9

Candle Lighting 7:02 pm; *Mincha/Shiur* 7:05 pm

Tonight Count Omer 6

7th Day Yom Tov, Friday, April 10

Hashkama 7:10 am, Benny's 8:30 am, Shapell 9:00 amCandle Lighting 7:03 pm; *Mincha/Maariv* 7:05 pm

Tonight Count Omer 7

8th Day Yom Tov, Shabbat, April 11

Hashkama 7:10 am, Benny's 8:30 am, Shapell 9:00 am*Mincha* 6:45 pm; *Seudah* 7:05 pm; *Havdallah* 8:04 pm

Tonight Count Omer 8

