



TBI Tablet online

Chanukah Edition

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FALL BACK FRIDAYS

ALL FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES WILL
BEGIN AT **6:15PM** STARTING
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19

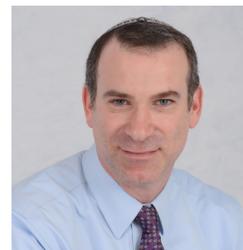


Morgan Gentry on
becoming a
Bat Mitzvah
December 11

TBI Tablet generously
sponsored by the
Gentry family

Shalom friends,

When Thanksgiving falls on Chanukah, it is known as Thanksgivingkah. Although this year is not Thanksgivingkah, it comes very close. Chanukah starts the Sunday night after Thanksgiving (November 28th).



One of the main themes of Chanukah is hope. The famous miracle of the oil, which lasted for eight days instead of one, points to having hope, even when a positive outcome seems unlikely. Chanukah's other miracle – the miracle of the military victory of the Maccabees – inspires a similar message. This feeling of hope, this belief in hope, is also expressed through the ritual of lighting the chanukiah (the Chanukah menorah). Chanukah always falls at the darkest time of the year. The days get shorter, and the dark of night comes earlier and earlier. And that is exactly the time when we light our chanukkiot, which light up our homes, and remind us to light up the world around us. The first night, with just two candles (candle number one and the shamash) seems quite feeble compared to the other nights, but even one candle has a lot of power. As Rabbi Menachem Schneerson teaches, "Remember that in a hall of perfect darkness, totally dark, if you light one small candle, its light will be seen from afar; its precious light will be seen by everyone."

Here are a few more reflections on the meaning and the power of light.

- 1) In addition to lighting Chanukah candles, we light Shabbat candles and yantiv candles. In the Temple, our ancestors lit the seven-branched Menorah, and today, that tradition lives on with the Ner Tamid, the Eternal Light, which is placed above the ark in the sanctuary. Rabbi Harold Kushner asks: "Why has light been such a favorite symbol of God?" He answers, "Perhaps because light itself cannot be seen. We become aware of its presence when it enables us to see other things. Similarly, we cannot see God, but we become aware of God's presence."

...continued next page

Community Chanukah Celebration

Sunday, December 5th 3-5PM

JCC parking lot (full description on back page)





Important Dates In December:

Wednesday, December 1st - 2:30-8:30pm
TBI Chanukah Blood Drive

Friday, December 3rd - 5:30pm
Pre-Shabbat Chanukah song session with
Cantor Vadim Yucht
Live in the sanctuary or you can join on Zoom!

Saturday, December 4th - 5:30pm
Havdalah and Chanukah candle lighting
via Zoom.

Sunday, December 5th 3-5 pm
Sid Jacobson JCC.

Community Wide Candle Lighting and
Chanukah Celebration

THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST IN FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM, RACISM AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE WITH NANCY TRAEGER



CO-SPONSORED BY THE TBI SOCIAL ACTION AND
LIBRARY COMMITTEES

WEDNESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 8, 2021
7:30PM ON ZOOM

IN TIMES OF CRISIS, ARTISTS BECOME ACTIVISTS AND ART BECOMES A VEHICLE FOR PROMOTING CHANGE. ART AND THE ARTIST TAKE ON THE STRUGGLE FOR TOLERANCE AND EQUALITY FOR ALL PEOPLE. THIS PRESENTATION UNDERSCORES ART'S RELEVANCE IN ADDRESSING TODAY'S CHALLENGING ISSUES. SOME ARTISTS INCLUDED IN THIS PRESENTATION ARE: BEN SHAHN, RICHARD AVEDON, ANDY WARHOL, JACOB LAWRENCE, AMY SHERALD AND MARC CHAGALL.

NANCY TRAEGER IS A DOCENT CO-ORDINATOR, EDUCATOR AND PRESENTER FOR THE OUTREACH PROGRAMS AT THE NASSAU COUNTY MUSEUM OF THE ARTS.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN INTERESTING AND INFORMATIVE DISCUSSION. FREE OF CHARGE. ZOOM INFORMATION TO FOLLOW.

2) In the Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat service, we recite Psalm 97, which contains this verse: "Or Zarua la'Tzaddik . . ." which means, "Light is stored for the righteous...." When we act righteously and do good deeds, some sort of light is stored away for us as a reward. While that is a pleasant thought, these words have another, more worldly, meaning. "When we do righteous deeds, we plant seeds of light in the world." That is a beautiful image of light – through our good deeds, we bring light to others and plant more seeds of light, which continue to lift people's spirits and illuminate the world.

3) Light can represent the aspirations of the Jewish people. "In Genesis, God takes Abram outside and says, 'Look toward heaven, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' And God adds, 'So shall your offspring be' (Genesis 15:5). On the surface, the meaning of God's promise is clear: the children of Abram will be so numerous as to be beyond counting. But the Hasidic master R. Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger (1847-1905), known as the Sefas Emes, offers a very different and arresting interpretation of God's promise. God's promise, he says, is not quantitative but qualitative: to be a Jew is, like a star, to bring light to places of vast darkness. Thus, even—and perhaps especially—when Israel descends into the darkness of Egypt, its mission is clear—to light up the darkness of the most deprived and immoral parts of the world (Shemot, 1878)," (Rabbi Shai Held, "Lighting up the Darkness: Chanukah as a Spiritual Practice").

4) Lastly, light can represent the joy which comes from having a Jewish state, and the aspiration that Israel serve as a moral example to the other nations of the world. Several years ago, I had a meaningful experience, which brought this idea to life. One morning, after having traveled all night, I awoke in Jerusalem, opened the shades on my hotel window, and was blinded by the light. Not only was the intense Middle East sun shining down, but it was also reflecting off the white Jerusalem stone. Although it was the middle of February, having a perfectly blue sky and a sunny day is not an unusual occurrence in Jerusalem for that time of year. However, the contrast could not have been starker from my previous location. Just twelve hours earlier, I had been in the gray, drab weather of Budapest, Hungary. I had gone from rain to sun, cold to warmth, Diaspora to Homeland, dark history to bright future. At that moment, one of the blessings in our morning prayer service came to my mind: Or chadash al Tzion ta-ir, v'nizkeh kulanu m'heirah l'oro. "Cause a new light to shine on Zion (Jerusalem), and may we all soon merit to enjoy its light."

May the lights of Chanukah remind of us God's lovingkindness, the power of good deeds, the aspirations of our People, and the blessings of the State of Israel. May this Festival of Lights bring us joy, give us courage, and inspire us bring light to others. And let us say: Amen.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Michael Mishkin

rabbimishkin@tbiport.org

By: Rabbi Sharyn Perlman



Torah for the Heart

Shalom, Friends.

This week, we will celebrate our Jewish as well as our American heritages as once again Thanksgiving and Chanukah fall during the same weekend. This kind of calendar fluke feels a little like a tug on Church/State Separation. And yet, it also feels like a beautiful melding of core values that animate our identities as both Jews and Americans – the ability to live freely, and to practice our freedom of religion without fear.

And for that, we are grateful to this wonderful country, a country that beckoned my four grandparents to leave their lives behind and cross an ocean bound for the Goldenh Medineh – America.

Just as my grandparents were forced to give up everything in

order to live freely as Jews, so did our ancestors in ancient Israel. In the Chanukah story, a small band of Jews fought mightily against the Syrian army and King Antiochus, who tried to abolish Judaism by imposing harsh restrictions against keeping Shabbat, the Festivals, and Brit Milah.

As we light the first Chanukah candle on Sunday evening, I wanted to share a beautiful Chanukah teaching I learned from Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory, former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain. There are two opinions in the Talmud about how to light the Chanukah candles to commemorate the tiny cruse of oil that lasted eight nights. One opinion, that of Beit Hillel, says we should light one candle on the first night, and add a candle every night, until the eighth night, when we light eight candles. The second opinion, that of Beit Shammai, says we should start with eight candles, and subtract one candle every night, until we have only one candle to light on the eighth night. There is a long discussion in the Talmud about the merits of each method, but ultimately the Rabbis decided that we should light according to the first opinion, which is what we do today.

Rabbi Sacks taught that these two approaches to lighting the Chanukah candles represent the difference between power and influence. With power, the more we share it, the less power we have. However, with influence, the more we share it, the more influence we have.

Starting with eight candles on the first night and subtracting one every night, is like giving away our power; on the last night, we have very little left – only one candle. However, lighting one candle the first night, and adding a candle each night until we have eight beautiful flickering candles on the last night of Chanukah, represents the influence that the Jewish people can have on the world. Hopefully, that influence will help us dispel some of the darkness in the world by sharing our light and love with everyone we encounter.

May you and your loved ones enjoy the beauty of a Happy Thanksgiving and help spread the light and joy of a Happy Chanukah.

With blessings of gratitude and light,

Rabbi Perlman
rabbiperlman@tbiport.org



Gratitude Prayers written by TBI High, Kitah Vav (6th) and Kitah Zyan (7th) grade students:

These beautiful and thoughtful “Prayers of Gratitude for Thanksgiving” were written as a cooperative class effort by TBI Hebrew High and Religious school learners, guided by Rabbi Sharyn Perlman, the week before Thanksgiving. We’re so proud of the values shared by our TBI High students!

Continue to next page to read ...

A prayer of thanks

A Prayer of Gratitude for Thanksgiving

Hi God.

Thank You for everything You have given us.

Thank You for family.

Thank You for giving us life.

We are grateful for being able to have what we need.

Thank You for the ability to learn new things every day.

Thank You for all the opportunities You give us.

We are grateful for a safe place to live.

Thank You for entertainment and sports.

Thank You for the ability to make friends and have friends and BFFs.

For all this and more, we thank YOU!

TBI High

TBI 7th Grade-Nov. 21, 2021

Prayer of Gratitude for Thanksgiving

Blessed are You, God.

We are grateful for family and friends.

Thank you for food and water.

Thank you for safe shelter.

Thank you for our education.

Thank you for the feeling of home.

We are grateful for the gift of life.

Thank you for keeping us clothed.

Thank you for filling our homes with love

Thank you for making me, me.

We are grateful for always having enough.

Thank you for giving us different interests.

Thank you for the love of a pet.

Thank you, God, for the creation of the world and all that is in it!

Ameyn!!

TBI 6th Grade-Nov. 21, 2021

Prayer of Gratitude for Thanksgiving

Dear God,

Thank you for making us alive.

Thank you for food and water.

We are grateful for the ability to get what we need

Thank you for the safe roof above our heads and for keeping us dry and warm.

Thank you for making us a family.

We thank you for our technology to reach out to those we care about.

Thank you for camp.

Thank you for the challenges that help us learn and grow.

Thank you for the ability to be grateful.

For all this and more, we thank You!

לב שלם

Lev Shalem

HELP US ELEVATE
OUR SHABBAT SERVICES!



We all love the Mahzor Lev Shalem
(High Holiday prayer book).

Soon we will have the new Siddur Lev Shalem (prayer book)
for our Friday Night and Shabbat morning services.

Please help make this happen by sponsoring one or more
Siddur Lev Shalem books.

\$54 per book dedication

[Read More Here](#)



Morgan Shayna Gentry

Saturday, December 11th 2021

7th of Tevet 5782

Parshat Vayigash

Morgan came into this world 1.5 weeks early on March 16th 2009, 17 months behind her older sister Hannah. Her Hebrew name Elyana means “G-d has answered,” and He certainly answered our prayers when she arrived.

From Day One at the hospital, she was quick to learn and figure things out on her own. Morgan is an extremely motivated and hard working individual, mature beyond her years. She takes her school work very seriously, and it isn't unusual to find her up early on a weekend doing homework, long before the rest of the family even opens their eyes.

Morgan is also an accomplished athlete. She spent two years on a competitive gymnastics team, where she enjoyed perfecting her floor routine and demonstrating her poise on the balance beam. This year, she tried her hand at field hockey on the Weber team and was a fierce defender. She is incredibly agile and strong, and truly enjoys exercising.

Morgan loves to spend time with family and friends. She enjoys visiting with her many cousins from Nashville and California, and was lucky enough to grow up with cousins right here in Port Washington. She loves to spend time with friends walking around Port Washington, playing video games, and watching movies. She has also spent five summers at sleepaway camp where she has made long-lasting friendships. She brings tremendous joy to everyone who knows her, especially her grandparents who live in Great Neck and Florida. Her laugh is infectious, and everyone loves to be around her.

Unfortunately, Morgan has also had obstacles to overcome. She has learned that life isn't always easy. When she was entering fifth grade, she was diagnosed with Celiac Disease. This has had a huge impact on her life as she has had to comply with very strict dietary rules. In doing so, she has impressed not only her doctors, but also her friends and family. She has learned to advocate for herself and ensure that the food she eats is safe. This is not an easy feat for many adults, let alone a child.

It is no wonder that for her Mitzvah project she has decided to work with Anya to organize TBI's blood drive. She knows the importance of one's health and is excited to partner with Anya to organize this important event that will provide a life support to so many. In doing so, Morgan is learning what goes into organizing a large community service event and is excited about the many contacts and lives she will touch in this process.

We want to formally thank everyone who has helped to make this day possible:

Anya--In just over two years, you have made such a tremendous impact on our community and, more specifically, on our family. Thank you for always taking the time out to check in on our kids and for truly caring and going the extra mile.

Thank you to Rabbi Perlman for working with Morgan on her Dvar Torah. She is genuinely enjoying the experience, and your patience and knowledge have made a huge impact.

To Josh Blumenfeld--You have seamlessly made the transition from gymnastics carpool driver to Bat Mitzvah teacher! Morgan has enjoyed this special time with you, and I can attest that this is a true “calling” for you.

Thank you to Rabbi Mike for all of your help building up to this exciting time and over the years.

Give a little life

Because a little matters a lot

BLOOD DRIVE

WEDNESDAY • DECEMBER • 1 • 2021 | 2:30PM – 8:30PM

Temple Beth Israel
Temple Drive, Port Washington
Appointments strongly encouraged
Walk-ins allowed if scheduling & social distancing guidelines permit.

To make an appointment contact Anya anyam@tbiport.org or 434-409-2639
[click here](#) or scan QR code and type **20057**
Please have your donor ID # available if you have one

Appointments are preferred however walk-ins will be welcomed if space permits. Please remember to eat, drink, and bring your donor ID card or ID with name and photo. Masks are required for all donors regardless of vaccination status. For full list of COVID-19 safety protocols, please visit nybc.org/coronavirus.

Home for the Holidays
SWEEPSTAKES Donate in **DECEMBER** to win a staycation! **\$2,700** VALUE

New York Blood Center
800.933.BLOOD • nybc.org #nybloodcenter

Jewish Book Month

Check Out Volumes of Page-Turning Chapters To Read, Share and Shelve in a Celebration of Library Media Judaic Bibliotheca.

By: Mark A. Schneider,
TBI Past President & TBI Tablet Editor-at-Large.

So how are you celebrating Jewish Book Month?

I know, I'm booked! But you can page me, chapter-by-chapter, since I've been enjoying the narrative dialogue celebrating this holiday cover-to-cover.

But let's start at very beginning.

Turns out, like the annual date changes for Jewish holidays in general, Jewish Book Month has traditionally started in November with the exact ending date coinciding with first date of Chanukah. Let me explain.

In the beginning, 1925 to be exact—Fanny Goldstein, a librarian with the Boston Public Library created an exhibit of Jewish books because she wanted to encourage giving books as gifts during Chanukah. Chicago Rabbi S. Felix Mendelssohn took a page out of Ms. Goldstein's concept and called for the observance of Jewish Book Week which in 1943 was extended to become Jewish Book Month.

Ok, so now maybe it's time to think about Jewish Book Year? After all, there's certainly no shortage of ways to celebrate—including (thank you Bob Epstein) enjoying Temple Beth Israel's own library of books and author programs.

So here are some ways I'd suggest making this year's Jewish Book calendar time stand out. I enjoyed touring Nassau and Suffolk with author Brad Kolodny's book "Seeking Sanctuary-125 Years of Synagogues on Long Island." From the history of the Island's Jewish community to the synagogues that built that history, this is a wonderful opportunity with a town-by-town guide to the congregations all around us. I enjoyed the synagogue stories that Kolodny researched, such as noting that at the Reform Central Synagogue-Beth Emeth in Rockville Centre, comedian Amy Schumer "attended Hebrew school and had her bat mitzvah here in 1994." A history of the Conserva-

tive Roosevelt Jewish Center includes the news that radio personality Howard Stern "had his bar mitzvah here in 1967," adding the update that "soon after, the congregation merged with B'nai Israel in Freeport, where Howard's parents Ben and Ray continued as members for many years." Port Washington of course has an extensive amount of coverage in this book. There was a nice picture of TBI's sanctuary along with only two sentences on our synagogue history, It made me think that there's a book waiting to be written just about our TBI. Maybe in time for a future Jewish Book Month?

Another recommended book you'll devour is Laura Silver's "Knish—in Search of the Jewish Soul Food." No doubt we all agree with the author's reference to a Joan Rivers quotation: "Who doesn't love a knish?" This book takes you on a delicious journey of knishes served up from Brighton Beach, to the Lower East Side to one of my childhood memories (Knish Nosh on Queens Boulevard). From the world history of the knish to the art of knish making to stories of the pillowy Catskills kind served at Izzy's Knishes in Loch Sheldrake to competitive knish-eating



contests, everything you always wanted to know about the knish is dished up in this tasty book.

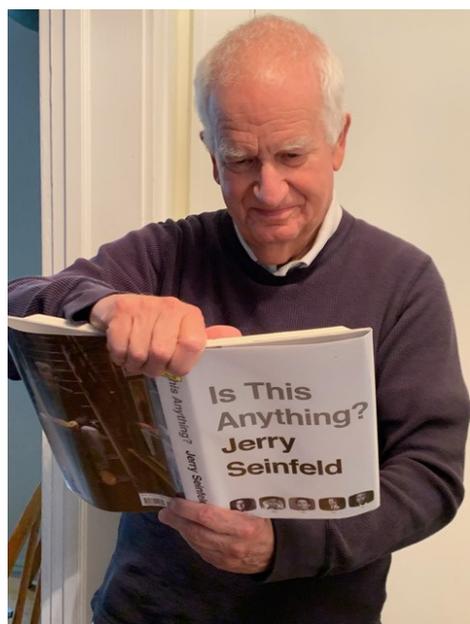
I first discovered author and illustrator Martin Lemelman at a vertical program where he introduced the audience to his book "Two Cents Plain—My Brooklyn Boyhood." There were many similarities to his growing up in Brooklyn childhood and my born-in-the-Bronx-raised-in-

Queens childhood. So much so that I enjoyed reading his biographic book as he told stories (and illustrated them) of visits to movie theaters, Jewish delis, and especially the family candy store, where he enjoyed reading the Sunday newspaper comics, going through all the local newspapers, drinking egg creams



and of his Jewish upbringing including attending a Yeshiva. This graphic memoir of growing up is filled with childhood nostalgia that'll have you reminiscing about your pre-Internet, age of change. If you remember Ratner's on Delancy or Rapoport's on the Lower East Side, have I got a book to serve up to you. It's simply called "The Dairy Restaurant" with text and drawings by Ben Katchor. With a focus on the growth of dairy restaurants in America and the world, and with personal recollections of dining in many of the restaurants before they disappeared, Katchor's book takes you on a menu-filled dietary excursion. By the way, there are lots of old menu prices that have been illustrated in this book that'll make you hungry for the

How 'bout a good joke? Or better than that—how 'bout a whole book of great comedy from one of America's greatest comedians? "Is This Anything?," by Brooklyn-born, Massapequa-raised Jerry Seinfeld is basically his stand-up act and more. Jerry explains the title by saying "Is this anything?" is what every comedian says to every other comedian about any new bit. What you get in over 400 pages are Seinfeld's routines from the 1970s through today. Every subject seems ripe for the comedic picking. Routines about all-you-can eat buffets, chocolate-covered raisins, parakeets, camera phones, pharmacists—as one reads through



the pages, one can imagine hearing the impressionistic autobiographical Jewish voice of Jerry Seinfeld delivering these classic comedic gems.

Obviously Jewish Book Month can be filled with any number of wonderful volumes. Including these five smart books to enjoy in the weeks leading up to lighting the candles and saying Happy Chanukah to you and your family.

Questions or comments? Page me, with an email either at: copymark@gmail.com or markaschn@optonline.net. Read on!

By: Cantor Vadim Yucht

"Light the Menorah"



All of our festivals have certain common features. One of the ingredients that we find in every festival, with the exception of Chanukah, is the obligation to eat a festive meal. Although we typically eat latkes and sufganiyot (doughnuts) for Chanukah, this is a custom, not an obligation. This is not one of the mitzvot of Chanukah.

The only specific mitzvah of Chanukah is to light the menorah. One of the qualities of the holiday, which the Talmud emphasizes, is the requirement to publicize and make known the miracle of Chanukah. The lights of Chanukah—the symbol of the miracle—should be lit in a window where they can be seen by passersby (unless it is not safe to do so), and thus become a public statement of the Jewish faith.

One of the legendary fighters for keeping Judaism alive in Communist Russia, in the darkest years of Stalin's repression, was Rabbi Asher Sossunkin, who spent many years in Soviet labor camps for his counter-revolutionary activities.

In one of these camps, as Chanukah approached, Reb Asher saved half of his two-weeks' ration of margarine, which he used for oil, and, with a friend's help, produced a "real" menorah made of an empty food cans.

The first night, the "menorah" lighting went off without any problems, as it did on the second, third, and the fourth nights of the festival. On the fifth night, however, just as Reb Asher lit five flames on his menorah, an officer from the camp's high command suddenly entered the barracks. The prisoners all froze in their places in fear. The officer walked to the back doorway, where Reb Asher bent over five still-burning flames of his makeshift candelabra. For a very long minute, the officer gazed at the menorah. Then he turned to Reb Asher. "Five?" he asked. "Five," replied Reb Asher.

The officer turned and exited without saying a word.

Chanukah, the festival of lights, is a time for dedication and rededication.

We have much to celebrate. Not just the miracle of oil that burned for eight days, but the miracle of the existence of the Jewish people and the Jewish State.

I wish all of you a happy Chanukah.

B'Shalom,
Cantor Vadim



By: Anya Morgulis

Meet the new Morot on the block.

Religious school is bustling with a few new additions. Meet these new teachers, and see what everyone is smiling about!



Adrienne has been teaching Religious School for 20(!) years to learners of all ages. She loves exploring Jewish culture and creating projects with students that explore learning in collaborative and unique ways. She loves to travel, go to museums with her family, and can speak Italian. When she's not traveling, you can find her doing art projects or exploring the outdoors in playgrounds and dirt piles with her two children, ages four and six.

"Hi I'm Julia Goldberg! I teach kitah gimmel every Sunday here at TBI. I'm from Boston, MA, Dallas, TX, and Birmingham, AL, although I currently go to school at Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. I study Bible and Linguistics. I am passionate about Judaism, especially making it fun and meaningful. I have an orange tabby cat named Matzah. I love learning languages and playing guitar. I love chocolate and sushi (but obviously not together). I am on the Columbia debate team and I love public speaking. I'm so excited to be teaching this year!"



"Hi everyone, my name is Morah Mindy, and I am the shorashim teacher. I'm so excited to be a part of the TBI family! I love to help children find their spark for Judaism. I'm the proud mom of 3 children and a whole group of rescue animals. I love doing art and going to museums."



“Hi, I'm Morah Tami, and I teach kitah aleph! I just want to say how happy I am to be joining the TBI family. I really love helping children to find their voice and teaching them to be proud of their heritage. I have two rescue dogs and an ever-growing comic book collection.”

“Hi TBI Community! I'm Natanya, the 4th-grade teacher at TBI Religious School. I'm from Massachusetts and I'm currently studying Talmud, Philosophy, and Psychology at the joint program between the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia. This year, our 4th-grade class is going to be focusing on important figures throughout Jewish history culminating in a museum where each student will have the opportunity to present a figure of their choice! What I enjoy about this curriculum and teaching (aside from sharing my love of Judaism with my students!) is seeing the students find interest and curiosity in various topics and figures. Looking forward to a fantastic year!”



Hi! My name is Sofie Ramirez and I have the pleasure of being able to teach Kitah Zayin this year. I am a senior at Hofstra University with a major in Criminology and Minors in Philosophy of Law and Latin American & Caribbean Studies. When I am not at TBI I am most likely rock climbing, doing yoga, or curled up with a good book and a cup of tea (and I am always open to recommendations!). While this is my first year at TBI, this past summer I served as a Madricha for a leadership training program of BBYO (an amazing Jewish youth organization that I highly recommend!). It was an amazing opportunity that sparked my passion for communal and cultural education for today's Jewish youth. My goal this year is to get my learners to think more about their "Jewish Futures", especially at this crucial age! Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not an end goal, rather it is a door that opens them up to the rest of their Jewish lives! I look forward to encouraging my learners to take their place as curious and passionate Jewish young adults and becoming a part of the TBI community this year!

Chanukah, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Giving Presents*

Directly from Me to You

By: Brett Parker



Chanukah, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Giving Presents*

It's easy to be uneasy with Chanukah. I used to wear my unease with Chanukah on my sleeve. But it was never Chanukah itself I had a problem with; it was the way it was celebrated in the post-war, assimilated Jewnited States of Living Among the Nations. We all know the story of how, due to its temporal proximity to a major Christian holiday that has come to include a frenzy of consumerism, poor little Khanike has swelled to outsize proportions among Jews and non-Jews alike, but for all the "wrong" reasons. And maybe that irks you. It used to irk me. I used to hate how a celebration of winning the struggle against the forces of assimilation became a kind of celebration of assimilation itself. You have one day of presents? Well, we have eight craazy nights. Oy, the hypocrisy. Oy, the loss of identity. Oy to the (American Jewish) world, as Chanukah came to be seen by so many (both Jews and non-Jews) as kindasorta the "Jewish Christmas."

But wait. Cultural development is not a linear progression. The meanings of holidays change through the ages, sometimes change back again, etc., and that is not necessarily a bad thing. Consider, for example, Sukkot (my absolute favorite holiday, if I had to rank 'em). What started out as a harvest festival--complete with some booth-

dwelling to allow the harvesters to eat, sleep, etc. with some respite from the midday sun without having to leave the fields--morphed into a celebration of freedom, commemorating our escape from bondage in Egypt and our dwelling in, er, tents in the desert? Tents. Not booths/huts. There were no sukkot in the desert, yet the grafted symbolism remains a huge part of the holiday of Sukkot's present make-up.

Chanukah, too, has a variety of meanings to a variety of people, and these meanings are not fixed. We know, for example, that Chanukah commemorates a miracle, but what, precisely, is the miracle of Chanukah? Is it that a plucky band of guerilla fighters somehow defeated the strongest army in the world (complete with war elephants), or is it that one day's worth of oil somehow burned for eight days? There is a Talmudic answer to that question, but no spoilers here. It is safe to say, however, that both of those unlikely outcomes are celebrated at Chanukah, and I imagine that if you polled people about the "meaning" of the holiday, you'd find that a lot of folks would give you some version of both the miraculous military victory and the miraculous oil that just wouldn't quit.

So that's pretty cool, and certainly enough upon which to build a celebration. And, if you want to get fancy, you can add in all sorts of stuff about internecine battles and the struggle over what kind of Jewish expression would prevail, or maybe sprinkle in something about the seemingly universal appeal of a Festival of Lights occurring right around the Winter Solstice and the longest, darkest days of the year (in the Northern Hemisphere) . . . and on and on and on. There is no shortage of "meanings" that can be attributed to, or glommed onto, Chanukah. But for years—for centuries—even when so much of the diaspora was scattered among the Christian lands, Chanukah was certainly not seen as analogous to

the great big Christian elephant in the wintery room. Of course it wasn't. It was about—on one level, anyway—the preservation of Jewish identity, culture, and practice in the face of increasingly compelling (in both senses of the word) moves toward assimilation.

But then, with the great migrations of Yidn to the Goldene Medina, where Christians were not quite so scary as they'd been in the Alte Heym (well, at least when they weren't wearing white hoods, etc.), something fascinating happened. As Yankel & Gittel had kids called Sydney & Ethel (not to mention grandkids called Philip & Barbara and great-grandkids called--gasp!--Brett & Jennifer), who went to public schools and City College and quite literally rubbed elbows with all manner of non-Jewish Amerikaners, the Cohens started wanting to keep up with the Joneses. So gift-giving became a part of

Chanukah in the U.S. Not just a bit of gelt, but a full-on barrage of presents, to rival what was found under the neighbors' trees. And it is this recent historical development that, for me, made Chanukah hard to love. I'll let Ari Lesser explain, as he does so well:

"Chanukah just ain't what it used to be

'Coz some Jews got jealous of the Christmas tree

Spent all their money on a shopping spree

Trying to be like the people they see on TV

Don't let yourself forget history

Knowledge is key to set your mind free

Just open a book, look back and see

What a really meant to be a Maccabee"

Here's the whole thing: [Ari Lesser - Chanukah Hip Hop](#)

Agreed, Ari. Agreed 100%.

But then I had kids.

...continued next page

It's easy to rail against rampant consumerism and an emphasis on presents when you don't have small people at home—small people whose happiness means more to you than anything—wanting, wanting, wanting. So I caved. I gave in. I made sure there was a (little) present for each night. I felt the same pull that must have had a grip on the ancestors of those of us who are Ashkenazim when they arrived on these shores, passed through Ellis Island and the Lower East Side, and started to develop a very different kind of relationship with “the other.” And that is precisely the insight that allowed me to stop worrying and to start to love a different kind of Chanukah.

Did my use of “the other” just now cause you to flinch a little? If it did, isn't that a good thing? Reading nearly any historical account of Jewish/non-Jewish relations down through the ages is to be overwhelmed by how palpable that sense of otherness and othering was. We were a people apart, and often not in a good way. Jewish depictions of non-Jews were frequently terrifying, and with good reason, as cautionary tales. But the very fact that American Jews have been able to live in such close and usually-safe proximity to our non-Jewish neighbors allowed something remarkable to happen. Some of the non-Jewish stuff looked kinda good. So we appropriated some of it. You can like that or not. You can see the inundation of Kosher sushi as a good thing or a bad thing. You can rail with fist in the air against Chanukah taking on some of the worst elements of Christmas. But what you can't deny is that only relative safety allowed for this kind of cross-pollination to happen in the first place. Relative Jewish safety, that is. And Jewish safety is perhaps one of the most important meanings of Chanukah. And not just Jewish safety in the story of the Maccabees, but also in how we celebrate today. We aren't even permitted to light a chanukiah in a window or by a gate if violent anti-semitism makes it dangerous to do so. Jewish safety trumps all other considerations at Chanukah time, as it does throughout the calendar. And nothing says “safety” like developing relations with our neighbors that non-others both us and them,

that allows for the emergence of a larger “we,” even while

we adhere to our individual traditions and cultures. If this kind of safe proximity leads to a bit of appropriation, is that really the end of the world? I don't love that Chanukah in the U.S. has become partially-subsumed into the winter gift-giving frenzy, but I do like reflecting on the fact that the only reason that development was possible is that we have (mostly) made peace with our non-Jewish neighbors.

Yes, antisemitism is real. Yes, anti-semitism is on the rise. Yes, we have to remain ever-vigilant. But compared to eras past? Real progress has been made. Yes, cultural and religious appropriation is real, too, and we have to remain ever-vigilant on that front, as well, if we want to preserve our traditions and our heritage for future generations. But, if we are honest, cultural and religious appropriation are rampant in even what are seen as the most “Jewish” of traditions and expressions, not to mention those of other groups. Perhaps this particular bit of appropriation is relatively harmless--especially if kept in check to a certain extent--and serves the valuable purpose of sparking kids' interest. Like the Four Questions at Pesach. Like giving a three-year-old something sweet with every Hebrew letter learned. Like a nice kiddush at shul that helps put the Jews in the pews. Seen in that light (as it were), maybe a few Chanukah presents aren't so horrible. These days, I give them to my kids with (mostly) undiluted joy.

But don't get me started on the travesty that is the “Chanukah bush.” That, for me, is a bridge too far. Chappy Chanukah, y'all!

- Brett Parker

Synagogue Director

brettparker@tbiport.org

*I know that I'm showing my age with the title's reference, but if you haven't experienced the brilliance of Dr. Strangelove, it would make for a great movie night during Chanukah, or whenever.



Sisterhood

Despite the questionable forecast, it turned out to be a lovely evening at Beth Ain's beautiful cedar covered outdoor space where we gathered to discuss Noa Tishby's richly historical, enlightening and entertaining novel, *Israel: The most misunderstood country on earth*. Warmed by heat lamps, hot cocoa and lively conversation, Linda Galler facilitated a cozy circle of intellectual discourse and debate. A good time was had by all, even honorary sister of the night - Murph!

We are excited to announce our next book - **The Lost Shtetl by Max Gross**. Winner of National Jewish Book award, Jewish Fiction award and so many accolades. So excited to read! Date TBA!!

If you would like to support sisterhood, our mission and events by becoming a member, please email me, Alisa Schindler at alisaschindler@gmail.com.

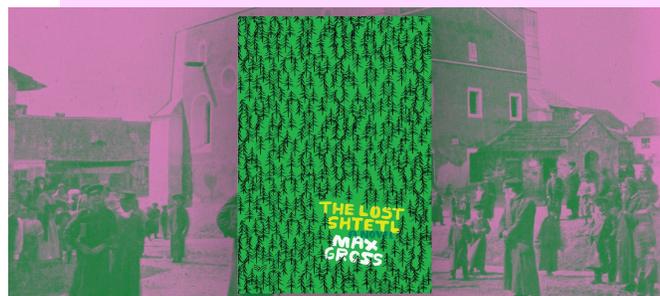
\$54 for membership.

Any amount for support.

Thank you so much.

Alisa Schindler

<http://alisaschindler.com/>



Simchas and Condolences

The BAM Fund (be a mensch):

Joan and Daniel Konas in loving memory of Michael Konas, beloved brother of Daniel.

Joan and Daniel Konas in loving memory of Rudolph Konas, beloved father of Daniel.

Letty and Jerry Roberts in loving memory of Letty's beloved mother Grace Kaplan.

Susan Isaacs and Elkan Abramowitz in loving memory of Morton Isaacs, beloved father of Susan.

Jackie Popper wishes sincere condolences to Alisa Schindler on the loss of her beloved cousin Alana.

Susan Isaacs and Elkan Abramowitz wish sincere condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

Heidi and Michael Jaffe in loving memory of Sam Jaffe beloved grandfather of Michael Jaffe.

Ronnie Peshkin in loving memory of her beloved mother-in-law, Ethel Peshkin

Ronnie Peshkin in loving memory of her beloved father, Henry Kahn.

Eden Kastle and the Kastle family in honor of Nancy Feldman and her dedication to the weekly minyan.

Annette and Dan Kastle wish condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

Annette and Dan Kastle wish condolences to Ellen Doft and Alex Katz on the loss of Ellen's beloved father, Elliot Doft.

Cathy Seldin and Mark Rozeen wish their condolences to Ellen Doft on the loss of her beloved father, Elliot Doft.

Susan Isaacs and Elkan Abramowitz in loving memory of Rose Isaacs, beloved grandmother of Susan.

The Building Fund:

Esther Tobias in honor of TBI and Nancy and Jay Feldman.

Barbara and Len Blum wish sincere condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

Susanne and Seth Diamond in loving memory of Seymour Ornstein, beloved father of Susanne.

Susanne and Seth Diamond in loving memory of Shirley Ornstein, beloved mother of Susanne.

Michael Love and family in loving memory of Deborah Love.

Joan and Daniel Konas wish sincere condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

Barbara and Bert Taffet wish sincere condolences to Ellen Doft and Alex Katz on the loss of Ellen's beloved father, Elliot Doft.

The Cantor's Discretionary Fund:

Beverly Taubel and Mindy and Sean Mintz in loving memory of their beloved Uncle, Rabbi Zalman Taubel.

The Kiddush Lunch Fund:

Letty and Jerry Roberts: "Thanks to Cantor Vadim for adding zest and ruach to our services!"

The Library Fund:

From the TBI Library Committee in honor of Stefanie Epstein's graduation from Syracuse. Congratulations to Bob Epstein and Beth Hisler, proud parents.

Barbara and Bert Taffet wish a speedy and complete recovery to Michael Pollack.

Sandy Marcus wishes her sincerest condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

Susan and Richard Levin wish sincere condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

Susan and Richard Levin wish sincere condolences to Stuart Grauer and family on the loss of his beloved mother, Alice Grauer.

Sherrie and Michael Pollack wish sincere condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

Nancy and Jay Feldman wish continued good health to Michael Pollack.

Nancy and Jay Feldman wish heartfelt condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

Nancy and Jay Feldman wish continued good health to Mike Love.

Nancy and Jay Feldman wish heartfelt good wishes for a complete and speedy recovery to Rae Smaolowitz.

The Mahzor Book Fund:

Claire and Ted Brezel in loving memory of Allan Brezel, beloved brother of Ted Brezel.

Judy and Moton Sloan wish sincere condolences to Eric May on the passing of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

Rae and Marty Smolowitz wish sincere condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

The Mortgage Reduction Fund:

Rochelle and Michael Block in honor of TBI. Very happy birthday to Rochelle!

The Preschool Fund:

Zeke Morris wishes happy birthday to Isla Wasserman.

Zeke Morris wishes happy belated birthday to Ethan Gross.

Zeke Morris wishes happy birthday to Aiden Ciccarone.

Zeke Morris wishes a happy birthday to both Claire and Elle DeSalvo.

Doris and Mark Novick wish sincere condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

Zeke Morris wishes happy birthday to Hazel Rosen.

Zeke Morris wishes happy birthday to Grayson Fleisher.

Simchas and Condolences Continued...

The Rabbi's Discretionary Fund:

In honor of Jay Feldman, Giant fan, opera lover, 'minyonaire', writer and fighter for justice, 'bon vivant', and generous to boot! A Renaissance Man 'for all seasons'! signed, a fellow traveler.

Susan and Gerald Horn in loving memory of Louis Horn, beloved father of Gerald.

Mindy and Sean Mintz in loving memory of Sarah Huppert, beloved role model, grandmother and great grandmother.

Beverly Taubel wishes her sincere condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son Jeffrey May.

Rita Shumsky wishes a very happy birthday to Jay Feldman.

Phyllis and Michael Schafrank wish sincere condolences to Eric May on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May.

"Our deepest sympathies to Eric may on the loss of his beloved son, Jeffrey May." Diane and Steve Greenlick.

Eric May thanks the community for all of the tributes made in his son, Jeffrey May's, memory.

The Gindi family gives thanks, and supports the Interfaith clergy Initiative.

Susan Isaacs and Elkan Abramowitz in loving memory of Helen Isaacs, beloved mother of Susan.



Help TBI By Purchasing through Amazon Smile

Every time you make a purchase on Amazon smile .5% of your purchase price is donated to Temple Beth Israel when you select us as your primary charity.

The AmazonSmile Foundation is a 501(c)(3) private foundation created by Amazon to administer the AmazonSmile program. All donation amounts generated by the AmazonSmile program are remitted by a subsidiary of Amazon.com, Inc. to the AmazonSmile Foundation. In turn, the AmazonSmile Foundation donates those amounts to the charitable organizations selected by our customers. Amazon pays all expenses of the AmazonSmile Foundation; they are not deducted from the donation amounts generated by purchases on AmazonSmile.

Sisterhood Contributions



Honor someone's simcha, express sympathy, or wish someone refuah shlema by making a contribution to Sisterhood, and a card will be sent on your behalf. For a minimum contribution of \$10.00, you can choose from the Building Beautification Fund (BBF), Flower Fund (FF), School Equipment Fund (SEF), Torah Repair Fund (TRF), or the Women's League Torah Fund Campaign (WLTF). JNF Tree certificates are available for a minimum contribution of \$18.00. Please e-mail Deborah Brooks at deborahnaomi@aol.com and send your contribution (payable to TBI Sisterhood) to TBI, c/o Deborah Brooks.

Sincere condolences to Joel Kitay on the passing of his beloved father Alvin Kitay
Board and Officers WLTF
Sisterhood WLTF

Sincere condolences to Eric May on the passing of his beloved son Jeffrey May
Board and Officers WLTF
Sisterhood WLTF

Sincere condolences to Stewart Grauer on the passing of his beloved mother Alice Grauer
Board and Officers WLTF
Sisterhood WLTF

Mazal tov to Elizabeth and Joseph Gentry on their daughter Morgan becoming a Bat Mitzvah
Board and Officers WLTF
Sisterhood WLTF

TBI's 2021 JAFCO AND CHAI LIFELINE HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

Light up a Life

by adopting a child in need for the holidays.

JAFCO's (Jewish Adoption and Family Cares Options) mission is to care for abused, neglected and at-risk children - as well as those with developmental disabilities - in the Jewish community and to work in partnership with families and the entire community.

Chai Lifeline is a leading international children's health support network, providing social, emotional, and financial assistance to children with life-threatening and lifelong illnesses and their families.

JAFCO and Chai Lifeline have each created their own links to Amazon. You can choose which gifts you wish to purchase and they will be delivered directly to the agency. Please use the address provided when you are ready to check out (JAFCO's Gift Registry Address and Chai Lifeline's Gift Registry Address links on lower left of flyer).

JAFCO

CHAI LIFELINE

Don't have time to shop yourself just give us an amount to spend and we will shop for you!

(Gifts range from \$25 - \$50)

Any questions or issues, please contact either:

Debbie Mishan jd lcm19@yahoo.com or Gail Seiden
gailbseiden@aol.com

Thank you again for brightening this holiday season!
We are ever grateful for your generosity.





No-No-No...N-O-V-E-M-B-E-R... as I am sure you have been hearing your children sing this song all the time at home! I know I have been singing it during the entire month of November (every year ☺). As one of favorite songs, Thanksgiving is also one of my favorite holidays. I love how it brings us together to reflect and talk about all of the things that we are thankful for in our life. Watching all of your children flourish in our preschool environment makes me feel so thankful! Thankful for all of our amazing teachers, amazing families and amazing students. Collaboratively we make an incredible, supportive, and warm community. A community that I am thankful to be a part of. All of our preschool classes have been practicing their Thanksgiving songs with our music teacher Miss Lisa and their classroom teachers. They are getting ready for our Thanksgiving Show on Zoom. While we were hoping for an in person show, we are still thankful to have our show and share it with our families. In addition to our show, the kids will be baking some delicious breads for the holiday and will be sending them home to share with their families.

Along with Thanksgiving, this year Chanukah follows right after. As you can imagine our classes have been super busy getting ready for two holidays! After our Thanksgiving break, each class will be making latkes for snack. We will all come together right outside of our classrooms and light the

candle for each night as one big family. Before we know it, December break will be here. Registration is well on its way. Sign up by the end of December and you will get the early bird discount. Share with friends too! You can call or email Diana Snaider for a tour— preschool@tbiport.org or 516-767-1708 ext 7. First Friends registration is available as well. You can find all of the enrollment forms at tbiport.org



By: Diana Snaider



UNITED WE LIGHT UP THE NIGHT

COMMUNITY CHANUKAH CELEBRATION

Celebrate the last night of Chanukah at this outdoor celebration with sufganiyot, hot cocoa, latkes, gelt, and candle lighting.

3-4pm: Festival led by Shevet Gefen Israeli Scouts with family activities

4-5pm: Candle lighting and musical performances by local Cantors and Schechter School of Long Island's AriNotes chorus

Help support SJJCC's Community Needs Bank by bringing a canned protein.

**At Sid Jacobson JCC • 300 Forest Drive, East Hills
Sunday, December 5**

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER, VISIT
SJJCC.ORG/LIGHTUPTHENIGHT



SJJCC.ORG

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