



Hakol

THE VOICE OF THE
PELHAM JEWISH CENTER
March 2019
5779 Adar I/ Adar II



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Upcoming PJC Activities & Events

March

17 -- *Pack It Up for Purim* Ends

17 -- Purim Celebration/1:30pm

20 -- *Megillah* Reading/7:00pm

23 -- Open Book/ 10:30am

23 -- Women's Group/ 1pm

April

5 -- First Fridays at Five Forty-Five/ 5:45pm

6 -- Midnight Run/ 9pm

9 -- Soup Kitchen/ 4:30pm

11 -- Board Meeting/ 7pm

14 -- Matzah Baking/4pm

19 -- Frey Pesach

Rabbi Salzberg's Message



The beginning of March marked Rosh Chodesh Adar Bet, the beginning of the month of Adar II on the Jewish calendar. This is the way that leap years are structured in our calendar; rather than adding a single day, we add an entire month. Rather than happening every four years, this leap year happens seven times every nineteen years, in years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19 (we are in year 3 right now). Simple, right?

When we observe a leap year, we add a second month of Adar, which can be confusing when it comes to celebrating Purim. There is a longstanding disagreement as to which Adar is the real one and which the additional one. It has become accepted practice to celebrate Purim in the second month of Adar, although there is *Purim Katan* - "Little Purim" - in the first month of Adar.

This is necessary, because the standard Jewish year is based on the lunar calendar



This is necessary, because the standard Jewish year is based on the lunar calendar, which is approximately 10 days shorter than a solar calendar. It is because our leap years are more significant - adding an entire month rather than a single day - that we get the sense that holidays are "early" or "late" in a given year, compared to the secular calendar. This may seem overly complicated, but if it weren't for the insertion of leap years, our calendar would get more and more out of synch with the timing of the seasons, and we would quickly find ourselves celebrating Passover in

the middle of winter!

All of this is the result of us, as Jews, trying to find the balance of living in two worlds. Our oldest traditions are clearly based on a lunar system, celebrating the new moon was a much bigger deal in the time of the Bible than it is today - likely even more important than Shabbat. Our religious sensibilities were grounded in the earthy world of the agricultural cycle. Spring and fall holidays (Passover and Sukkot) were celebrations of their respective harvests and needed to fall in the appropriate season.

Working to find this balance resulted in our current calendar, which has served us well for thousands of years, and will continue to serve us for millennia to come.*

Thank you,

Rabbi Alex Salzberg

* It is worth noting that one aspect of the calendar, the insertion of prayers for rain in the fall, will eventually fall out of synch with the rest of our calendar. However, it is many thousands of years before it will be a noticeable difference. Why worry about that now?

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- 19 -- Fast of the First Born/7-8:30am
- 20 -- Passover Services/9:30am
- 21 -- Passover Services/9:30am
- 24 -- Passover Lunch/12pm
- 26 -- Passover Services/9:30am
- 27 -- Passover Services/9:30am
- 27 -- Yizkor Service/11:30am
- 27 -- Women's Group/1pm

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Education Director's Message



Talmud Bavli Megillah 7a:

"Rabbi Samuel ben Judah said: Esther sent to the wise men saying, commemorate me for future generations. They replied, you will incite the ill will of the nations against us.

She sent back a reply: I am already recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia"

Talmud Bavli Yoma 29a:

"Rav Asi taught: Why was Esther compared to the dawn? To teach you: Just as the dawn is the end of the entire night - so Esther is the end of all miracles."

In the two Talmudic quotes above, the Rabbis ponder Esther's role in Jewish tradition. Queen Esther is the main character in the story of Purim, which this year will be celebrated on Wednesday, March 20. Coincidentally, here in the US, the month of March is also considered Women's History Month, because of the International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8. Jewish Holidays and US National holidays don't overlap so frequently. Therefore, this is quite a good reason to examine in depth the holiday of Purim, which we read from the scroll named Megillat Esther.



Scholars have tried to find parallels between the events told in the Megillah and the history of the Persian Empire; nothing conclusive was found, so we assume that the book of Esther is probably a work of historical fiction. On the other hand, Jewish scholars have compared the narrative in the book of Esther to the context of Yom Kippur - some say - "Yom HaKippurim: KePurim" (Yom Kippur as Purim). For example, Rav Joseph Soloveitchik, writes: "Perhaps the feature common to both Purim and Yom Kippur is that aspect of Purim which is a call for Divine compassion and intercession, a mood of petition arising out of great distress." (...) "Purim, therefore", the Rav explains, "epitomizes the instability, uncertainty, and vulnerability which characterize human life generally but particularly govern the destiny of the Jews. It alerts the Jew to the sudden turns of fortune, lurking dangers, the fickleness of life, even as the goral [destiny] itself seems to operate through blind chance." While we cannot be certain if the story of Esther really happened in Persia, during the kingdom of King Xerxes, about 70 years after the destruction of the first temple, around year 422 BCE, we can certainly learn from the narrative about our days.

For example, one may ask: where was G-d during the times that the Jews were in danger in Persia? Why isn't G-d's name mentioned in the Megillah? To which some rabbis reply: the story of Purim didn't happen in Israel. It happened after the destruction of the first Temple, when the Jews were exiled to Babylon. We learn about this from Esther 2:5-6:

(5) In the fortress Shushan lived a Jew by the name of Mordecai, son of Jair son of Shimei son of Kish, a Benjaminite. (6) [Kish] had been exiled from Jerusalem in the group that was carried into exile along with King Jeconiah of Judah, which had been driven into exile by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Our sages explain that when the Jewish people went to exile, G-d



was in exile. He was exiled from His people. Therefore, the narrative and the sequence of events in the

too was in exile. He was exiled from his people. Therefore, the narrative and the sequence of events in the Megillah seem to be driven by human initiative, with Divine inspiration. For example, when Esther fasted for three days, to pray for the King to extend his scepter to her so she could beg for her endangered people - isn't this as we do on Yom Kippur, when we fast and ask G-d to be inscribed in the Book of Life? Esther fasted so the King would hear her plight. Similarly, on Yom Kippur, we also address G-d as our King, we chant: *Avinu Malkeinu honeyynu v'aaneynu*- our Father, our King - we fast and ask the King to please hear our cry and have mercy on us.



The Fast of Esther as a tradition was established on the basis of a statement in the Talmud ([Megillah 2a](#)) that the 13th of Adar is "a time of gathering for everyone." The commentary in the "Kav HaYashar", from 1705, explains that everyone gathers for the Fast of Esther and village dwellers come to the city to recite prayers of repentance and supplication. This is because on that day the Jews gathered to defend themselves and were in need of mercy. Therefore, this day was established for the reciting of prayers of repentance and supplication. In the book of Proverbs, we read that "in a multitude of people is the glory of the king" ([Mishlei 14:28](#)). Through these prayers they arouse abundant mercy on the part of the Heavenly host. Additionally, the Talmud tells us that women are obligated to read the Megillah because they were part of the Purim miracle. (Talmud Erkin 2b).

As a Jewish educator and a woman, to be able to have so many women characters to help model leadership, faith, courage and initiative, gives me hope in the future generations. We are currently witnessing how the anti-semitic sentiment which has been swept under the carpet for a while is coming back to the public eye, stronger than before. We are getting used to seeing evidence of anti-semitic attacks all over the world almost daily, and it is in this context that the story of Purim becomes actual and more meaningful than ever. And it is in this context that we must bring our families to listen to the Megillah reading, and talk about what does it mean to be the right person in the right time and have the power to change the fate of many. Debbie Friedman, the American Jewish lyricist who passed away a few years ago, wrote: "Not by might and not by power, but by spirit alone, shall all men live in peace. The children sing, the children dream, and their tears may fall, but we'll hear them call, and another song will rise". Such is the legacy of Esther, and of other women in Jewish tradition, who have taken leadership and changed the destiny of our people.



Luckily, as we celebrate Women's History Month and Black Women's History Month, we too have many women from our own tradition to celebrate. And not only those from the Bible or from later times in Jewish History. Let's celebrate our mothers, sisters, daughters, our friends, colleagues, partners and leaders. Each one of the women in our lives, in the present and the past, who have been a source of inspiration and admiration to us and those around them. Women who have pushed the limits of the impossible and showed us the way to stand tall and proud in our faith and our beliefs.

Wishing each and everyone of you *Chag Purim Sameach* - Happy Purim, and Happy Women's History Month!

Ana Turkienicz
Education Director

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A Message from Michael Dvorkin, PJC President



It took Michelle and me a few years of living in Pelham before we joined (or honestly even set foot in) the PJC, but once we did, we knew it was for us. We liked pretty much everything about the PJC, from the people and the services to the house and the egg salad. But I'll admit that I wasn't always crazy about the name - The Pelham Jewish Center. It didn't sound synagogue-y enough for me, and brought to mind a JCC image, like there would be kids' swimming lessons and a badminton team. I wanted the name to have some Hebrew in there or maybe the word "congregation," something more synagogue-esque.

But I didn't know what I was talking about; The Pelham Jewish Center is exactly the right name. Because the PJC isn't only a place to come and hear a drasha or say Kaddish or celebrate a simcha. It is all of those things, but its fundamentally more; the PJC really is the center of Jewish life in Pelham. It's a Jewish community that includes, as it must, a synagogue. We know that Judaism is not only a set of beliefs, but a set of personal obligations. And because of our small size, the PJC is a community that demands that its members each contribute - fulfill our own obligation - in order to sustain it.

So it's not a coincidence that the days back when I didn't like the name were also the days when I was a more passive member, and that I only came to really appreciate the PJC when Michelle started to nudge me to pitch in, too. This, I think, was the vision of the PJC founders who we honored at this year's Gala and who we honor every time we sponsor a Kiddush, or attend a shiva minion, or any of the other things we do individually to maintain their vision.

to maintain their vision.

This month there's a lot going on: our Spring Gala, the *Megillah* reading, our Purim celebration, adult education classes, Mishloach Manot, Kaskeset performance, PJ Library, Pack it Up for Purim -- not to mention the bread and butter Shabbat services, our First Fridays dinner and the *Hakol* issue you're reading right now. None of which would be happening without the work of our members. Now, if I'm laying any guilt down on anyone here, that's OK because lucky for you there's plenty more opportunities for you to fulfill our founders' vision (and your own obligations). The Nominating Committee is up and running and we've got Board positions to fill for the next term. We need volunteers for and contributions to the Tag Sale (May 19th), the Midnight Run (April 6th) and more. Step on up!

Best,

Michael Dvorkin

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News from the PJC Board

Did you know that members of the Pelham Jewish Center are invited to attend the monthly Board meetings? Board meeting dates appear on the PJC website calendar.

PJC Secretary and Director Mark Levine discusses his role ...

My wife Linda, and our three now grown children Noah, Alina and Kaylee have been members of the Pelham Jewish Center now for over 20 years. All three kids had b'nai mitzvahs at the PJC and each one was beautiful. We hear over and over how people enjoy the PJC because of its intimacy and I would have to say that it is the intimacy and *hamishness* that has kept us here all of those years.

We have been active in a number of ways. Linda had run the blood drive for a number of years and still runs the High Holiday food appeal. We have collectively participated in the breakfast run, the midnight run, the tag sale and numerous other events. For the past few years I have enjoyed chanting one or more Hafatorahs. For the past almost three years I have been the Secretary. Perhaps the thing I like best is that if the other officers are not present, I get to give the announcements, where sometimes I try to get clever or funny and sometimes people laugh (either with me or at me). I still have the same goal I had when I started out: to get applause after I read the announcements. I guess I have to accept that it may never happen, but it is nice to get a chuckle. But please don't feel any pressure to put your hands together for me. It would embarrass me anyway.

But giving announcements is an unofficial function. My official function is taking minutes at board meetings, sending notices of board meetings, preparing agendas of board meetings, signing certain documents and running the annual meeting of members. The good thing is that if I were a professional secretary, I would get fired for poor typing, but because I don't get paid I can't get fired. The trickiest part is that it is my job to understand the by-laws and do my best to make sure that they are followed. I am a practicing lawyer and it is a little like being a lawyer for the board. Sometimes the board actually listens to me, and I am thankful to our wonderful board members for that.

Thank you,

Mark

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Reflections on "The Fiddler on the Roof"

Being A PJC Player

Taking a role as a cast member in the PJC production of "Fiddler on the Roof" was a lark for me. It was a way to do something different, meet new people and become part of a worthwhile cause. Yes, it was a big responsibility to attend rehearsals for 10 Sundays and a Saturday night, memorize the cast songs (the ones I needed to know were not the songs I already knew), and learning my lines, choreography and cues.

When Sari chose me to play Yente, I thought I'd have some fun. Yente is an outsized, comic character with wit and a Yiddish accent. I decided to ham it up. I remembered that my Yiddish-speaking relatives pronounced their "w's" as a "v's". I also recalled that after saying "God forbid," my grandmother would spit twice. So my Yente took on these Yiddish habits.

Working with Sari is working with a professional. From casting to choreography and understanding the talents and limitations of her players, Sari was right on target. Davi helped with much needed cuing and set changes. And the costumes were such fun to create. The actors were free to imagine their own costumes and bring appropriate props. When I left for the final rehearsal, my husband looked at me and said I could pass for a member of *Kiryat Joel*.

the wonderful cast of congregants made all the difference. I was already friends with some cast members and meeting new members with whom I became friends was a treat. The feeling of camaraderie was strong. We each supported one another when we tripped up and spurred each other on. The afternoon of the show was our best performance. We all rose to the occasion.

Observing the audience - a full house - laughing and crying made all our efforts worthwhile. And to top it off, we raised over \$1,200 for the charities HIAS & ADL.

Songs from Fiddler are still running through my head. I will remember Fiddler as one of the highlights of my time at PJC.

Thank you,

Barbara Saunders-Adams

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איִדן, by Aiden Levy

As printed in The Pelham Post, 2/20/19-3/5/19, by PJC member Aiden Levy about his Bar Mitzvah.

My name is Aiden in English, and in Hebrew it is **איִדן**. But I only want my English name. The name that makes me normal, not the one that makes me stick out like a sore thumb. The one with the grotesque marks etched across the paper on the wrong side like those British cars that drive on the opposite side of the road.

But Aiden you must not complain my Dad says to me each time I protest going to Hebrew School. But Aiden you are Jewish, don't you see that? My Dad asks me almost disgusted. No I don't! I scream back. Why do you force this onto me? Why can't I just be like the other kids? My father just shakes his head slowly.

You will understand someday that you belong to this community... my Dad trails off. But I don't understand. I roll my eyes in naiveté.

I walk into the synagogue shaking in fear about what is to come. It is my *Bar Mitzvah* day, or the day of "partying" for the Jews, as some ignorant people call it. I have been preparing for months, memorizing prayer after prayer despite not even knowing what I'm actually saying. My Rabbi is there waiting for me, his ginger beard a stark contrast to his all black dressing.

Are you ready? he asks.

Yes, I lie. I walk through the congregation room, slowly step onto the *beama*, or "stand," and open up my folder of multi-colored highlighted notes. I stare into the eyes of the congregation in fear. They are all waiting for me to become a "man." But I think they are all waiting for me to fail. For me to begin singing, only to be greeted by a chorus of mockery.

I begin a few awkward words, alternating between murmuring and stumbling. Sweat beads begin to form on my hairline. I clear my throat, and this time with more determination begin the first of my prayers. The words come out a bit easier, and the looks of the congregation begin to liven. Now I feel more comfortable and confident as my words spill out like honey out of my throat. I ease past the prayers and into my *D'var Torah*, or personal speech by a new "man." I hesitate before beginning, glancing across the densely packed room. I see the faces of many people that somehow all know and care about me, even though I might not necessarily know them. I see the encouraging looks, the proud smiles, and best of all, the acceptance that I was now part of the community. I beam widely before I dive into my thoroughly prepared speech.

Thank you,

Aiden

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It's Worth the Wait...

The *PJC 65th Anniversary Journal* is expanding. For this reason, we have changed the date of publication to coincide with the year end festival of Shavuot. The *Journal* will cover events from the nearly seven decades of PJC history. It will include your personal tributes and photos if provided. The *Journal* should be a keepsake worth the wait. Please keep the tributes coming. As well as advertising from local merchants.

Barbara Saunders-Adams
Fundraising Chair

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Share a Simcha!

simcha!

"Share a Simcha" allows congregants to share their news with our PJC community. Please submit news about family members -- engagements, births, job updates, kid achievements, community acknowledgements and any other milestones to [Jacqui Stein](#). This

will continue to be a regular *Hakol* feature, so keep your news and updates coming!

- Congratulations to the Kagan family on Henry's becoming a bar mitzvah in Israel!

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Tributes & Donations



Make Tributes & Donations [ONLINE!](#)

Donations to the PJC from...

- Jeremy & Jennie Driesen, in honor of Sari Schulman, for directing and producing this year's performance of *Fiddler on the Roof*
- Martin Dvorkin, in honor of Michael Dvorkin
- Virginia Herron-Lanoil, in honor of her granddaughter, June Elora
- Patricia Levison, in memory of Eleanor Dreyfus' brother, Nathaniel Goldberg
- David & Jeanne Radvany, in honor of Leah Leonard
- Barbara Saunders-Adams & Sam Adams, in honor of Sari Schulman & Daviel Schulman, for their tireless and incredible efforts producing this year's performance of *Fiddler on the Roof*
- Judy Shampianer and Michael Bowen, in honor of Jason & Tracie Cohen, for them at this year's Spring Gala Dinner

Donations in Support of the *First Fridays at Five Forty-Five* Program from...

- Michael Frankel & Shayna Klopott, in memory of Audrey Beerman's mother, Natalie Shore

Donations in Honor of This Year's Gala/the PJC's 65th Anniversary from...

- John & Leah Leonard
- Andy & Lisa Neubardt
- David & Jeanne Radvany
- Neco & Ana Turkienicz
- Neil & Beth Yelsey

Donations to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund from...

- Anne Borofsky, in memory of Josh and in honor of and with gratitude to Rabbi Salzberg
- Virginia Herron-Lanoil, in recognition of the support provided to her and her family on the occasion of the Baby Naming service for her granddaughter, June Elora
- Maria Kogan & Eugene Lief, in honor of and with gratitude to Rabbi Salzberg
- Barbara Saunders-Adams & Sam Adams, in memory of Audrey Beerman's mother, Natalie Shore
- Morris Stampfer, in memory of Eleanor Dreyfus' brother, Nathaniel Goldberg

At any time, if you wish to pay by check, please make it payable to "**The Pelham Jewish Center**" and mail it to our bookkeeping firm at: The Pelham Jewish Center, P.O. Box 418, Montvale, NJ 07645.

All donations to the [Rabbi's Discretionary Fund](#), at any time throughout the year, should be made payable to "**The Pelham Jewish Center -- Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**" and mailed directly [to Julia Coss at the PJC office](#).

Thank you!

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The Pelham Jewish Center

451 Esplanade

Pelham Manor, NY 10803

Phone: 914-738-6008 ~ Fax: 914-931-2199

Email: office@thepjc.org ~ Web: www.thepjc.org