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Editorials..... 4A  
Op-Ed ..... 5A  
Calendar ..... 6A  
Synagogue Directory ..... 11A  
News Briefs ..... 13A

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# HANUKKAH



# A weekend of hostage releases from Gaza



The first 13 hostages released on Nov. 24.

**By Gabe Friedman, Ron Kampeas and Ben Sales**

*This is a developing story.*  
**Friday — First 13 Israeli and 10 foreign hostages released**

(JTA) — Hamas released 13 Israeli hostages into Egypt on Friday, Nov. 24, a sign that the four-day ceasefire brokered between Israel and the terror group that runs Gaza was holding.

Ten Thai nationals and one Filipino national were also released in a surprise additional deal that Egyptian officials said they had brokered. Thirty-nine Palestinian prisoners were released from Israel as part of the agreement, and multiple tankers of humanitarian aid entered the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli government released the names of those

released: Yaffa Adar, 85; Chana Peri, 79; Margalit Mozes, 77; Ruth Mundar, 78, Keren Mundar, 54, and Ohad Mundar, 9; Chana Katzir, 76; Adina Moshe, 72; Danielle Aloni, 45, and Emilia Aloni, 5; Doron Katz-Asher, 34, and her children Rav Asher, 4, and Aviv Asher, 2.

They went into Israel after being driven to Egypt by the International Committee of the Red Cross via the Rafah border crossing. They immediately underwent medical and psychological evaluations at Hatzertim Air Base, Israel's health ministry has said. CNN reported that at least two were sent directly to hospitals.

According to reports, at least some of the hostages were not aware that they had family members killed on Oct. 7.

The temporary truce

agreed upon earlier last week looked like it could have hit a snag, as the Israeli Defense Forces shelled parts of Gaza into the early hours of Friday morning and shot at Gazans attempting to return to the northern part of the coastal enclave. But Israeli military and Hamas forces held off from fighting at the agreed upon time on Friday morning, as did the Hezbollah terror group on Israel's border with Lebanon.

On Tuesday, Nov. 21, Israel and Hamas agreed to a temporary ceasefire that involved, over the course of four days, the release of around 50 of the over 200 Israelis who have been held in Gaza since Oct. 7. Afterward, Hamas can extend the truce by releasing an additional 10 hostages a day. Along the way, Israel will release three Palestinian prisoners



The third group of hostages were released on Nov. 26.

for every released hostage.

It is as of now unclear what happens after the first four days of the truce. As the hostages were en route to Israel, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said "Hamas will pursue its effort to halt the Israeli assault on Gaza" and "complete the prisoner exchange."

President Joe Biden called a press conference to address the hostage release, noting that he was very involved in conversations with Israeli, Qatari and Egyptian officials in the lead-up to Friday. He also called on the Israeli military to work to avoid further Palestinian casualties in Gaza and emphasized his continued push for a two-state solution.

"My expectation and hope is that as we move forward, the rest of the Arab world and the region is also putting pressure on all sides to slow this down, to bring this to an end as quickly as we can," Biden said.

**Saturday — Another 13 hostages released**

Hamas released another 13 Israeli hostages on Saturday after delays that resulted from Israel and Hamas accusing each other of bad faith and that put a temporary ceasefire at risk.

The total number of Israeli hostages released since Friday is now 26, more than half of the 50 women, children and elderly captives Hamas pledged to free. Hamas released the hostages in exchange for a ceasefire that began on Friday and is slated to last at least four days. As part of the deal, Israel has also pledged to release a total of 150 Palestinian women and minors held in Israeli prison on security offenses.

The 13 hostages, identified by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, included some whose families have advocated in international media for their release. Many are from Kibbutz Be'eri, one of the communities hardest hit by Hamas' massacre. They are: Hila Rotem Shoshani, 12, and her friend, Emily Hand, 9, who were abducted from Kibbutz Be'eri.

Hand is a dual Irish-Israeli citizen whose father, Tom, has written about her plight and called for her release on TV. Her mother died of breast cancer when she was a baby. Hila's mother, Raya, remains in captivity; Shira Weiss, 53, and her daughter, Noga, 18, abducted from Be'eri. Ilan Weiss, Noga's father and Shira's husband, remains missing; Alma Or, 13, and her brother, Noam Or, 17,

also abducted from Be'eri,

where their mother, Yonat, was killed during the raid. Their father, Dror, remains in captivity; Maya Regev Jirbi, 21, who was injured in a Hamas raid on an outdoor party in which hundreds of young people were killed. Regev's medical status was classified as "complicated" and Israeli TV reported that she would likely be transferred to a hospital by helicopter. Regev's 19-year-old brother remains in captivity. She is the first abductee from the outdoor party to be released; Sharon Avigdor, 53, and her daughter, Noam, 12, who were visiting friends at Kibbutz Be'eri to celebrate the Simchat Torah holiday when the attack occurred; Adi Shoham, 38, and her children, Neve, 8, and Yael, 3, who were visiting family in Kibbutz Be'eri. Adi's mother, Shoshan Haran, 67, a resident of the kibbutz, was also released. Adi and her daughters are dual German-Israeli citizens. Tal Shoham, their father and husband, remains in captivity.

Survivors of the attack on Be'eri crowded around TVs at a Dead Sea hotel where the Israeli government has housed them since Oct. 7, cheering when they recognized friends on the live feed from Egypt.

Upon the delivery of the hostages, Be'eri officials also accused Hamas of bad faith, noting that it had promised to keep families united and noting that Hila Rotem Shoshani's mother remains captive.

The Red Cross picked up the hostages around 11 p.m. local time on Saturday and crossed the border into Egypt just before a midnight deadline that would have triggered the end of the ceasefire. Israeli media and the families of the hostages identified some of those released as they watched video of them get out of ambulances in Egypt. They were transferred to Israeli territory within 30 minutes.

In addition to the freed Israeli captives, Hamas has now released a total of 15 foreign hostages, including four on Saturday, under a separate agreement brokered by the Thai government via Iran.

**Sunday — 17 additional hostages released by Hamas to Red Cross**

Hamas has released 17 more hostages — 14 Israelis, including one U.S. citizen, and three foreign nationals — to the Red Cross as part of its agreement with Israel

to pause the fighting in the Gaza Strip.

In total, the terror group has now released 40 Israeli hostages, nearly all of them women and children, to Israel as part of an agreement that includes a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of some 150 Palestinians in Israeli prison on security offenses. According to the deal, Hamas will release 50 Israeli hostages in exchange for a four-day pause in the fighting, but that truce could extend: Israel will continue the ceasefire for one additional day for every 10 hostages Hamas releases.

Hamas has released a total of 18 foreign hostages, nearly all of them Thai, under a separate agreement reached by the Thai government via Iran.

Sunday's release came after a dispute between Hamas and Israel the previous day nearly scuttled the agreement. Hamas held off on releasing hostages on Saturday, accusing Israel of hindering the delivery of aid to Gaza, which Israel denied. The release took place close to a midnight deadline, following intervention by President Joe Biden and leaders of Qatar and Egypt.

Sunday's release, for the first time, included a younger Israeli man. According to the Israeli publication Ynet, the Israeli hostages released Sunday include:

Abigail Mor Idan, 4, an American-Israeli citizen; Hagar Brodutch and her children Ofri, 10, Yuval 8, and Uriyah, 4; Sisters Dafna and Ela Elyakim, 15 and 8; Chen Almog-Goldstein, 48, and her children Agam, 17, Gal, 11, and Tal, 9. Their husband and father, Nadav, was killed in the massacre, as was another child; Aviva Siegel, 62, who immigrated to Israel from South Africa. Her American husband, Keith, is still being held hostage; Alma Avraham, 84; and Roni Krivoi, 25.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to continue the fighting after the ceasefire ends, with the aim of deposing Hamas in Gaza. He visited Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip on Sunday.

Israel has vowed to resume the war after the ceasefire, with the goal of eliminating Hamas. The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry says 12,000 people have been killed in the fighting, a number that includes combatants and civilians and doesn't specify casualties from mis-fired Palestinian rockets.

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# Hugs, slinkies and trauma care: How the Israeli health system will treat the released hostages

By Deborah Danan

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Israeli health, military and government officials have been preparing for what a release of hostages from Gaza would look like since Oct. 7. But on Friday, as the first round of hostages were released at the start of a ceasefire brokered with Hamas, some admitted just how difficult that preparation has been.

“We had to write these guidelines without any theoretical or practical knowledge in the world of a situation where children are being held captive by a terrorist organization,” said Sarit Sarfatti, a government official who works with child protection social workers at a briefing for journalists.

Many of the hostages have experienced severe trauma, including witnessing the murder of family members. They were shuttled Friday evening from Gaza into Egypt, and from there were expected to be moved to several designated hospitals throughout Israel.

There, they will be received by teams that include pediatricians, gynecologists, forensic medicine experts and legal medicine specialists, focusing on the specific needs of women and children. No adult men were expected to be released on Friday.

In parallel, the Israel's welfare ministry has selected 60 social workers with expertise in child trauma and at least one social worker will also be designated to each family.

Sarfatti described a three-phase care plan for the hostages. Initially, the focus is on their return to Israel. The second phase involves acute care, at least a month-long, tailored to each individual's specific medical and psychological needs. The final stage, which could extend over a year or “much, much longer,” she said, focuses on long-term care, factoring in personal circumstances, such as the murder of family members.

“We do have a lot of therapeutic models that deal with trauma intervention,” she said. “We have a lot of faith and hope for their healing.”

Dr. Hagai Levine, who is also involved in the process, said the situation will differ from hostage to hostage.

“For one it's a hug from his mother, for another it might be urgent heart repair.”

The Israel Defense Forces showed reporters a range of items that will be distributed to the returned hostages, from neon-colored slinkies to noise-canceling headphones. Levine explained that simple items like a pair of shoes or glasses could make a significant difference in improving the condition of the hostages.

“They were dehumanized, treated as mere objects by Hamas,” he said, noting that many of them were barefoot when they were abducted.

Levine also said he had met with hostages who had previously been released, including Yocheved Lifshitz. She “complained about the

light,” he said, adding that it could “take a long time to get used to again,” and comparing the experience to being a newborn.

Overall, Lifshitz has demonstrated “an impressive resilience and ability to recover,” he said, but was quick to add that he “would not make a medical judgment” about her current welfare, especially given that her husband is still being held in Gaza.

Forensic examinations to determine if the hostages — especially the younger ones, who may not be able to communicate their experiences — went through torture, sexual violence or other forms of abuse may yield inconclusive results, Levine said, as too much

time has elapsed since the events would have occurred. “We may never know,” he admitted.

According to Sarfatti, after a month of close care in the hostage facilities at the hospitals, medical professionals will evaluate whether they can be released back into the community. The social workers assigned to their case will continue guiding the rehabilitation process, which will include therapeutic, medical and educational needs.

“Some of them don't know that their community has been almost entirely annihilated, and we will have to break the news to them very soon,” she said. “This is something that cannot be delayed.”

## Elon Musk says he'll donate X ad revenue to hospitals in Israel and Gaza

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) — Elon Musk announced Tuesday that his social network X would be “donating all revenue from advertising & subscriptions associated with the war in Gaza to hospitals in Israel” and to a humanitarian organization operating in Gaza.

The promise comes as he faces sharp criticism that his site is helping to spread Hamas propaganda and as advertisers stage an exodus over his recent endorsement of an antisemitic post.

It was unclear how Musk was identifying or defining

revenue “associated with the war in Gaza.” He named the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, which has distributed medical supplies to Gazans amid Israel's bombardment of the region and helped evacuate hospitals targeted by Israel, as specific beneficiaries.

But in replies to his own tweet, he seemed unsure how he could route money to the group without inadvertently funneling it into Hamas, writing at one point, “Better ideas are welcome.”

“Ok, what is a better way to help kids in Gaza? Maybe just direct purchase of pediatric medical supplies?”

he mused in response to a right-wing Orthodox Jewish X user, Libs of TikTok creator Chaya Raichik, who shared a video claiming that “the Red Crescent is used by Hamas for their terrorist activities.” (The Red Cross' president met with Hamas senior leader Ismail Haniyeh in Qatar on Monday; on Tuesday, Israel announced that the group would be able to meet with Israeli hostages in Gaza as part of a truce deal.)

Musk's gesture came a day after he filed a lawsuit against the liberal media watchdog Media Matters For America, which last week published examples of ads from major

brands that it said X had placed next to antisemitic and white nationalist content.

Musk's lawsuit claims that Media Matters manufactured fake data for the story, while Media Matters called the suit “frivolous.” Texas Republican Attorney General Ken Paxton also announced Monday he was opening an investigation into Media Matters over “potential fraudulent activity” (Musk resides in the state, although X's headquarters are in San Francisco).

Last week, Musk endorsed a tweet that shared a variant of the antisemitic “Great Replacement” theory, writing in

response, “You have said the actual truth.” He also vowed to suspend any accounts that tweeted pro-Palestinian phrases including “decolonization” and “from the river to the sea,” calling them incitements to genocide.

Major brands including IBM, Disney, and Comcast distanced themselves from X over Musk's “actual truth” tweet. But Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the antisemitism watchdog Anti-Defamation League, publicly praised him for “fighting hate.”

Greenblatt later told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the ADL would continue

advertising on X and that he had been encouraged by a private meeting he held with Musk in which the mogul pledged stronger action against pro-Palestinian speech on the site.

X's CEO, advertising industry veteran Linda Yaccarino, was reportedly at her daughter's wedding while the latest conflict erupted. Her allies from the industry are urging her to leave X, Axios reported on Tuesday. Musk “doesn't share our values,” one industry leader said. “He has proven to the advertising community that he is not someone you can do business with.”

## ‘No Hamas-linked prisoners to be part of hostage deal’

(JNS) — Israel is making sure that none of the Palestinian prisoners it may release as part of a potential exchange with Hamas are connected to the terrorist group, The Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday.

The newspaper reported that an internationally-brokered agreement for a temporary pause in fighting in Gaza and prisoner exchange

is close to being realized. Hamas holds some 240 Israeli hostages in Gaza, who were captured during the terror group's Oct. 7 invasion of the northwestern Negev.

According to Egyptian officials, the proposal under discussion would include the release of a number of women and children kidnapped on Oct. 7 in exchange for the same number of Palestinian

women and children held in Israeli prisons. The officials said that Israel and Hamas disagree on the length of a ceasefire that would be part of the deal.

Egyptian officials said that Israel is “meticulously” verifying the names on the list of Palestinian prisoners who could be released to ensure that none of them are connected to Hamas.

The Egyptians told the WSJ that one scenario would see a five-day pause in fighting and Hamas releasing 50 hostages on the first day, followed by 10 hostages each day. Hamas would guarantee that mothers are not separated from their children. The officials said that some of the exchanges would take place

at the Rafah Crossing with Egypt.

The Washington Post on Saturday reported on a similar framework of a potential deal.

According to the Egyptian officials, one of the main complications is the inability of Hamas to account for the whereabouts of the hostages it and other terror groups in

Gaza are holding.

Meanwhile, members of Israel's War Cabinet, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and minister-without-portfolio Benny Gantz are scheduled to meet with the families of some of the hostages on Monday evening.

## US warns Israel on next phase of war

(JNS) — The White House says it won't support Israel's plan to expand its operations into the south of the Gaza Strip unless it shows it will protect the Palestinian civilians there.

In a Tuesday press call, U.S. National Security Council Spokesman John Kirby said the United States won't support Israel “moving forward with operations in the south absent a clearly articulated plan for how they're going to protect the lives of the hundreds of thousands of people” there.

“There's an obligation for them to factor that into their planning,” Kirby said.

The NSC spokesman noted

that the population in the south of the terror-run enclave has swelled as Israel ordered the northern population to flee southwards. It's “even more incumbent” on Israel to “protect those civilians who moved at their urging,” said Kirby.

Israel ordered approximately 1 million Palestinians living in Gaza City to move south on Oct. 13. “This evacuation is for your own safety,” the Israeli military said in a warning sent to civilians as it ramped up its efforts to eradicate Hamas terrorists in the northern part of the Strip.

“We were glad to see that they set up safe corridors in the north for people to get out

of the fighting there in north Gaza,” said Kirby.

The evacuation was slowed by Hamas targeting civilians to keep them in harm's way, calculating that Israel would be held responsible for civilian deaths.

On Nov. 13, a month after calling for the civilian evacuation, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Hamas has lost control of the Gaza Strip.

It is estimated that the IDF's next operational step will be to head south in Gaza, following a temporary ceasefire to free some of the 240 hostages captured by Hamas on Oct. 7 during its invasion of southern Israel.

## Rabbi Israel Barzak dies after assault in Ormond Beach

By Christine DeSouza

Rabbi Israel Barzak, a mohel who performed britot for many families in Central Florida, died on Nov. 26, 2023, from injuries sustained after an assault in Ormond Beach. He was 84.

According to a family friend, Rabbi Barzak was hit by someone at his gated community's entrance as he was picking up delivered groceries. He was taken to the hospital where he died.

Heritage contacted the Ormond Beach Police Department and learned there is an ongoing investigation into the assault and at this time they cannot release information.

Rabbi Barzak's wife, Rhonda, is in Sylvania, Ohio with family. The funeral was held there on Nov. 30.

Family and friends are welcome to leave their con-

dolences at <https://www.echovita.com/us/obituaries/fl/ormond-beach/israel-j-barzak-17255166> and share them with the family.

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# Social media has come unhinged

By Lior Zaltzman

*This essay originally appeared in Kveller.* (JTA) — It was a slow trickle, each long press of the finger and ensuing quick tap was days and sometimes weeks apart (it's hard to comprehend that a whole month has passed since Oct. 7), but I am here to tell you that I — a former social media manager — have removed each and every social media app from my phone.

In fact, as I was writing this very essay, I realized I still had Threads downloaded, opened it for a minute, saw a Thread that said "Zionism is antisemitism," and promptly deleted that, too.

I have zero desire to restore a single one of them.

What happened to me has probably happened to you, too. I saw a Tweet, a TikTok, an Instagram Story that filled me with such fury and indignation that I spent hours — sometimes days — formulating and reformulating an epic, fact-based, emotionally charged, imagined response. Imagined, of course, because I knew I'd never post it. I've seen so many celebrities and random acquaintances do such utterly embarrassing and harmful and reputation-destroying things in the last weeks to even dare to try.

And to be clear: I would try if I thought I could change someone's mind and force them

to see my humanity, but beyond the small, intimate, personal conversations that I can have off the apps, I feel like these enraged indignant responses only seem to silo people further.

I've worked in social media since 2014 — in the Jewish realm of social media, specifically. That means I've seen a lot of awfulness, gas chamber memes, overt antisemitism and Islamophobia. I've personally been told many

conspiracy theorist, or if they're just being cruel for cruelty's sake.

People are so stuck in their "side" and binary that they're willing to share anything — without fact-checking, without making sure they're not getting in bed with people whose worldview is dangerous, without asking themselves for a small second, wait, is this Islamophobic? Antisemitic? Completely detached from reality? Without wondering if they sound like a

I've also been scared for the life of every innocent person lost and about to be lost. Around 1,200 Israelis killed, 300 kidnapped, over 10,000 Palestinian lives believed to have been taken, all unfathomable numbers. And I've been scared about the cycle of rage and violence and siloed indignation that removes the humanity of a whole swath of people. Because I do believe that that's part of what got us here. And I keep seeing it evinced, over and over again, on social media.

I am — unlike many "experts" newly minted by numbers of followers or magnitude of chutzpah — not an expert of Middle Eastern politics, despite being Israeli and working in Jewish media for almost a decade. I know a lot, but I am not a politician or historian. And yet, to the extent I believe that there is a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I believe that it has to be one that takes into account the inherent humanity of all those involved. I believe that it will be human and imperfect.

I'm awed by the people who are still managing to use social media for good right now, the little spots of light — people who parse through history and reality with wisdom and empathy, well-educated veteran observers of Israel and Palestine, academics, journalists, fierce activists, who, through immense pain, still manage to retain their humanity.

Yet for me, I've realized being on social media is doing more harm than good. It's keeping me further away from solutions and useful action, and closer to rage and fear. So for now, I can't stay there.

*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.*

***'I've been scared about the cycle of rage and violence and siloed indignation that removes the humanity of a whole swath of people.'***

times to go back where I came from (which, yes, is Israel, and that feels grimly funny now). Yet I've also believed in its power to heal, to make people feel seen, to energize activism, to educate.

I still believe that — kind of. But I've also never seen it this awful, this polarizing, this ... honestly, unhinged. An unscientific poll of people I know seems to indicate the same thing: Social media is the worst it's ever been, maybe because the Israel/Palestine conversa-

tion has always been so impossibly polarizing.

And the amount of words wasted on misinformation and meanness doesn't even compare to the number of words some people insist on putting into other people's mouths (or keyboards, rather) when their statement doesn't 100 percent pass whatever standards they've arbitrarily decided it must. Beyond Israel and Palestine, we've been tearing ourselves apart inside our Jewish community, and that also breaks my heart.

I understand the deep grief and rage behind most posts. I've been enraged and grieving myself. I've been scared too: Of the growing antisemitism. Of the people who tell me that I and my family, because we were born in Israel, can't be innocent civilians, that we all deserve the horrors of Oct. 7 to befall on us.

## Blinken's diabolical plan

By Mark Levin

(JNS) — It is crystal clear now that U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is exploiting the war against Israel to destroy the existing State of Israel by using pressure, threats, blackmail, leaks, the media, diplomatic backstabbing, the Arab states, the E.U. and the U.N. Read this paragraph from Blinken memo:

*As I said in private and in public, we believe Palestinian people's voices and aspirations must be at the center of post-crisis governance in Gaza. We believe in Palestinian-led governance of Gaza, with Gaza unified with the West Bank. Gaza's reconstruction must be supported with a sustained mechanism. We also underscored America's firm opposition to actions that would undermine efforts to build lasting peace and security. No forcible displacement of Palestinian civilians from Gaza—not now, not after the fighting stops. No reoccupation of Gaza after the conflict. No attempt to blockade or besiege Gaza. No reduction in the territory of Gaza. No use of Gaza as a platform for terrorism or other violent attacks, and no tolerating the use of the West Bank to carry out such attacks. No more violence from extremist settlers in the West Bank. These steps are not ends in themselves. They must lead to Israelis and Palestinians living side by side.*

This also explains the current pressure campaign by leftists in Israel to try and topple the Netanyahu-led conservative government and replace it with radical leftwing parties that will deliver Israel to the effective control of the U.S. State Department where Blinken, a mere appointed U.S. cabinet secretary in our government, will determine Israel's fate.

With the Blinken plan, Israel will not survive, certainly not for long. This has been the plan since Barack Obama was president and Blinken was deputy secretary of state. John McCain was 100 percent right when he went to the Senate floor to excoriate Blinken and refused to vote for his confirmation as deputy secretary of state.

Blinken, the Biden whisperer, is behind

pouring \$100 billion into the rearming of Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis. Blinken set the Middle East on fire immediately upon taking office at the State Department nearly three years ago, lifting or refusing to enforce virtually every sanction on Iran. Blinken destroyed the popular uprising in Iran, in which the Iranians sought to remove their murderous regime, by backing the Iranian regime over its people. Blinken chose Robert Malley, a Marxist supporter of Iran, as the U.S. envoy to Iran to negotiate another nuclear deal. Malley installed a high-level Iranian spy ring in D.C. and undermined our nation (and Israel) at every turn.

The Obama-Biden-Blinken "realignment" is now underway, and the consequences are dire and grave for Israel and the United States—indeed for the entire Middle East and the world. It is a hideous and diabolical plan, being instituted right now without any transparency, involvement of Congress or the American people. It is the brainchild of a small cabal of rogue, radical leftwing foreign policy arsonists who could easily trigger World War III.

The question is, how long will this go on before Blinken is stopped? Where are the House Republican committee chairmen? Where are the Senate Republicans? Where are conservative think tanks? Where is the conservative media?

I understand that the Democratic Party media and the Democratic Party in general are worse than useless. In fact, they are colluders and propagandists for this plan, from Thomas Friedman at The New York Times to Jamie Raskin in the House. But if there is not an organized pushback immediately, a relentless and public demand for accountability and transparency, and the targeting of Blinken for impeachment (successful or not), evil will prevail.

Never forget all the disasters the Biden whisperer has unleashed in a mere three years of running American foreign policy, and the death, inhumanity and impoverishment he has imposed on one region and society after another.

## Allowing Hamas to dictate the news

By Maya Carlin

(JNS) — In the latest controversy surrounding media coverage of the Israel-Hamas war, the BBC was forced to apologize for reporting grossly false information. One of its presenters declared that IDF soldiers "were targeting people including medical teams and Arab speakers" at Shifa Hospital in Gaza, which would be a war crime. The presenter repeated this statement twice, citing a Reuters news report.

As the BBC later admitted, this was an outright lie. It quickly emerged that the Reuters report in question had quoted an IDF statement that specially trained forces were accompanied by "medical teams and Arabic-speaking soldiers who are on the ground to ensure that medical supplies reach those in need." Following a wave of criticism, the BBC apologized.

But as with many media "errors" that have been made following Hamas's Oct. 7 massacre, the BBC's apology was too little too late. Since Oct. 7, mainstream outlets inexplicably considered pillars of professional journalism have been forced to issue similar apologies. Nonetheless, riots, violence and antisemitic threats sparked by these false reports only increased.

Perhaps the best example of this is was the Oct. 20 Al-Ahli hospital incident, in which numerous media outlets lied about Israel's supposed involvement in an explosion at the Gaza hospital in question. Following the explosion, Hamas terrorists immediately blamed the IDF. Within minutes, the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry began to release rapidly increasing casualty numbers supposedly caused by the "attack." The ministry ultimately claimed that at least 500 Palestinians were killed.

Western media outlets ran with these claims, apparently forgetting that they originated with a designated terrorist organization. The New York Times published the false claims on its front page with an image depicting a large crater, suggesting that this was the aftermath of the attack. However, in a small disclaimer, the publication admitted that the picture was actually of the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, not the hospital grounds.

The IDF quickly released evidence disproving Hamas's claims and the media reports that parroted them. Both audio and visual footage proved that the hospital was actually

struck by a misfired Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket. Additional photos and videos showed that the building was not destroyed as Hamas had claimed. In images published by the open-source intelligence tracker OSINT Defender, the courtyard and parking lot of the hospital appeared to have been hit by a rocket, resulting in a "roughly 1x1 meter, 30cm deep" crater.

American intelligence officials later clarified that the estimated number of deaths from this incident were 100-300, not the 500-plus claimed by Hamas and PIJ. The White House publicly supported Israel's version of events.

The New York Times and other outlets revised their reports, though the Times continued to imply some kind of Israeli guilt.

But all of this came only after violent riots incited by the media's lies swept the Middle East. In Tunisia, protestors burned Israeli and American flags and set fire to the El Hamma synagogue. In Jordan, rioters torched property near the heavily fortified Israeli embassy. Iranian-backed groups in Iraq rioted near the fortified Green Zone, home to the U.S. embassy and other foreign diplomatic sites. Antisemitic messages flooded social media and took center stage at demonstrations that occurred across the U.S.

The media had done its work and their backtracking was irrelevant. The damage was already done.

The aforementioned BBC presenter's false claims coincided with other issues concerning the outlet's reporting on the Israel-Hamas war. Following Hamas's Oct. 7 attack, the BBC repeatedly referred to Hamas by various euphemisms such as "freedom fighters" or "gunmen." The outlet's refusal to label Hamas a terrorist organization was widely condemned by Jewish groups, with good reason. After all, why would an ostensibly objective media outlet not consider the indiscriminate torture, rape, slaughter and kidnapping of Israeli civilians acts of terrorism? The BBC finally bowed to criticism and now correctly refers to Hamas as a "proscribed terrorist organization by the U.K. government and others."

Elite media institutions' policy of allowing a terror group like Hamas to dictate news coverage is appalling. These outlets need to take a long look in the mirror. Considering the high stakes surrounding this war, including the exponential rise in antisemitic activity around the world, journalists must be all the more careful not to perpetuate lies told by terrorist groups and their supporters.

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# I survived a pogrom in Iraq 82 years ago — I know where Hamas' extremism will lead today

By Joseph Samuels

(JTA) — When I saw the photos and videos posted by Hamas murdering entire Israeli families, raping women and killing young people at a music festival on Oct. 7 — I was horrified and shocked. These images ignited the flames of a dormant trauma I suffered 82 years ago in Baghdad, Iraq, when I was just 10 years old.

On June 1 and 2, 1941, two months after a pro-Nazi coup that plagued Baghdad, mobs — aided by the police and soldiers — broke into Jewish homes, raping women and girls and murdering Jews mercilessly in a rampage that came to be known as the “Farhud” — an Arabic term for pogrom. Jews could not fight back, and there was nowhere to run and no country to seek refuge. This horrendous massacre occurred during the festival of Shavuot, a holiday celebrating the giving of the Ten Commandments.

My older brother, Eliyahu, unknowingly rode his bicycle to visit our cousins in the Old Jewish Quarter on the first day of the Farhud. The doors of my two uncles' homes were broken in and the interiors looted. Cycling back home through the main thoroughfare, Al Rashid Street, he witnessed a group of men stop a minibus, drag out the Jew-

ish passengers, then rob and slaughter them. It still sends chills down my spine thinking of what he saw.

Thank God, my family was spared. The mob, who could be heard just blocks away, didn't manage to reach us before the British forces entered Baghdad on the afternoon of June 2. After the events, none of the perpetrators was accused or convicted.

I also heard stories of courageous Muslim men who stood in front of Jewish homes with knives, daggers and guns, risking their lives and preventing the mob from breaking into homes. Some took Jews into their own homes to protect them and took the injured to doctors. Some Muslim leaders condemned these brutal acts as heresy to Islam.

I was conflicted and confused. My father, a textile importer, always praised his Muslim customers as honorable, and my older brothers had very close Muslim friends. When I asked my father about this dissonance, he told me, “Son, you must judge people by their individual actions, and not as a group.” That was a lesson I carried throughout my life.

When I saw the pro-Hamas demonstrations that erupted after the Oct. 7 massacre, it brought memories of the events after the United Na-

tions approved the partition of Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish, on Nov. 29, 1947. The Jews of Iraq and other Arab countries prayed that the Palestinian leaders would agree to start a new country, the 23rd Arab country, and live alongside the newly created Israel. The Arab League, however, unanimously rejected the

looted and set ablaze homes, synagogues, schools and an orphanage in December 1947. An estimated 75 Jews were killed, and hundreds were injured.

We Iraqi Jews faced a dilemma. If the Arab armies won and eliminated the new Jewish state, there would be a second Holocaust. But if they lost, would the Iraqi leaders

jobs, and accusations, arrests, tortures and imprisonments culminated in the public execution of a prominent Jewish merchant, Shafiq Addas, on Sept. 23, 1948. This brought fear to every Jewish heart.

I was accepted at three universities in America, but Iraq refused to grant me an exit visa. In December 1949, I got to Iran with the help of two Muslim smugglers. And two months after that, I arrived in Israel. I became a homeless, penniless refugee. I stood in line with a tin plate to get a free meal and slept in a tent anchored in the sand. However, I felt liberated for the first time in my life. The sense of freedom overshadowed the feeling of victimhood.

The continuous harassment, persecution, torture and execution in Iraq and other Arab countries forced 850,000 Jews to flee from their homelands. Jews lived in Iraq over 1,000 years before Islam conquered the region, and for 1,300 years after. Presently, there are only about 6,000 Jews remaining in Arab lands. They left their homes, businesses, synagogues, properties, everything. Like myself, they became refugees. But we all moved on. We had to learn a second language and were grateful to become equal citizens of the countries that accepted us.

This is not to say that the

situation of the Mizrahi Jews who were made refugees after the creation of Israel and that of the Palestinians in Gaza are completely analogous. But it suggests that experiences of oppression and exile do not have to lead inevitably to the horrific events that played out on Oct. 7.

Hamas's first order of business — like ISIS, Assad's Syria and other totalitarian regimes — is to eliminate the opposition. Hamas mercilessly crushed the Fatah movement who were giving them a fight for the 2006 election. Today, they continue to discriminate against minorities, women and homosexuals.

As a Jew who survived the Farhud and who grew up with, and has, many faithful Muslim friends — and who knows the hardship of being a refugee — I cried for the massacre of Jews by Hamas. I also cried for the innocent Palestinians that were killed by Hamas for refusing to follow orders and join their movement. I pray that the Palestinian people will find the courage to stand up to Hamas and make it a priority to establish a democratic and prosperous Palestinian state.

*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.*

**‘Hamas’s first order of business — like ISIS, Assad’s Syria and other totalitarian regimes — is to eliminate the opposition.’**

partition and declared a war to eliminate the Jewish state.

Frequent demonstrations took place in the streets of Baghdad, with screams of “death to Zionists” and calls to free Palestine. We feared another Farhud. We got lucky — there were only a few skirmishes — but the Jews of Aleppo, Syria, were raided by mobs, encouraged by the Syrian government, that

turn against us, their Jewish citizens that had inhabited the area for over 25 centuries?

On May 15, 1948, five Arab armies, including Iraq, attacked Israel. Against enormous odds, Israel survived. The shame of failure caused Arab countries to, indeed, turn against their Jewish citizens. In Iraq, Zionism was declared a capital offense. Jews were fired from government

## What is a ‘proportionate response’?

By Dr. Eric R. Mandel

(JNS) — In the Western mind, proportionality in war is simply a numbers game. The side that inflicts more casualties is acting disproportionately, is in the wrong and may even be committing crimes against humanity. This has no basis in international law, but it is useful as a rhetorical weapon.

Israel's enemies make prodigious use of this numbers game, which is no surprise. After all, when Israel is fighting a terrorist entity that uses civilians as human shields in order to increase body counts, which are then used to manipulate journalists and international leaders, it is fighting an uphill public relations battle.

The “proportionality” argument also involves clear double standards. For example, during the U.S. campaign against ISIS in places like Mosul, where the terror group hid among one million civilians, it took nine months and 11,000 dead civilians to defeat ISIS. Yet there were few accusations of disproportionality in the media or from the international community. They knew ISIS had to be defeated and that civilians would die in the process.

Moreover, if this is all about numbers, then the implication is that Israel should indiscriminately kill 1,400 innocent Palestinian civilians and take an additional 240 hostage. It is unlikely that this is what those who preach about “proportionality” are advocating.

According to Alan Johnson in *Fathom* journal, the “goal pursued by military action must be proportionate to the ongoing threat faced. Israel's goal to remove Hamas is proportionate because Hamas now poses an existential threat to Israel.”

He is correct because proportionality has nothing to do with the injury you receive but the goals you hope to accomplish.

So, what is “proportionate” in Israel's war against Hamas?

According to an accurate, non-politicized reading of international law:

When terrorists use human shields and place their entire military infrastructure in civilian structures—a war crime in and of itself—those buildings lose their immunity to attack. The deaths of civilians are legally the fault of the terrorists who use them as human shields, so long as reasonable care is taken to minimize civilian casualties.

According to just war theory, you cannot target non-combatants if there is no legitimate military target. However, it is legal to attack a target if it advances your military goal, even if civilians are present.

According to the U.S. Department of Defense, a military must provide water and food to a civilian population, not fuel or electricity.

My analysis is not based solely on legal theories. I have covered previous Gaza wars, interviewed Israeli military ethicists and wit-

nessed the scene in Sderot in the aftermath of the Oct. 7 massacre.

As a result, I know that this is not the first time Hamas has used hospitals as military bases. In 2014, I was with an elite Israeli unit that was fired upon by Hamas terrorists from an UNRWA hospital. They could not fire back because it was marked with a large “H” on the map, and they knew that returning fire could be considered a war crime.

So, they called a military lawyer on the phone. He told them to risk soldiers and get an audio feed from inside the hospital, wait for a drone to film the encounter, and finally, contact the Defense Minister to give the final OK. The IDF found terrorists in the hospital and tunnels beneath but lost three soldiers' lives because it followed international law.

When former President Barack Obama or U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres tell Israelis not to let their rage overcome their responsibility to avoid civilian casualties, it is nothing but hypocrisy. Obama had no compunction about targeting ISIS terrorists embedded within civilian populations in Syria and Iraq. Guterres leads an organization that enables terror groups like Hamas by condemning Israel more than all other nations combined.

During the 2012 Gaza war, I watched as Israel responded to indiscriminate Hamas attacks against Israeli civilian communities. I saw from a

radar command center on the Gaza border how hard Israel tried to avoid the Palestinian civilians being used as human shields at rocket launch sites. I remember leaving the command center and hoping my nation's army was as ethical as what I witnessed.

The death of any innocent civilian is a cause for sadness. But moral equivalence between the planned, willful massacre, rape and abduction of Israeli civilians and the deaths and injuries of Palestinian civilians purposely placed in harm's way in order to manipulate the international media is a perversion of just war theory and international law. If Israel cannot attack a Hamas military target because it has civilians nearby, Israel

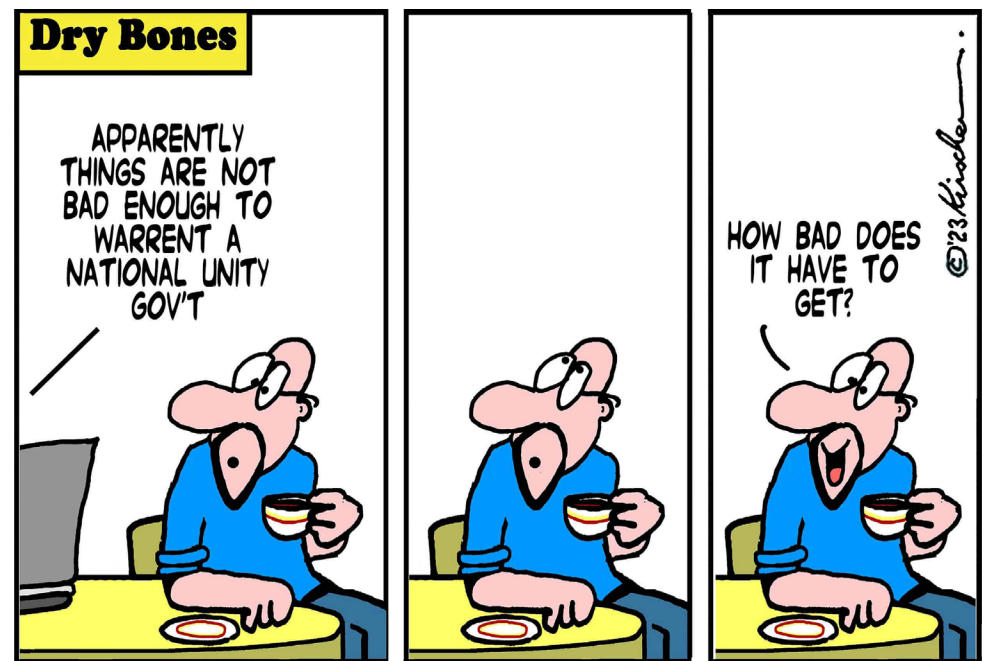
cannot shoot one bullet in its own defense. That is not proportionality, it is a demand for national suicide. Nothing could be less ethical.

Far more German than American or British civilians died during World War II. The RAF estimated that more than half of Cologne, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg and Nuremberg, to name just a few German cities, were destroyed by Allied bombing. We call the American generation that defeated the Nazis the Greatest Generation because, despite that destruction, the Nazis had to be defeated.

Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and their patron Iran are the 21st century Nazis. As the Hamas Charter says, “Israel will ex-

ist until Islam will obliterate it” and “the Day of Judgment will not come until Muslims fight Jews and kill them.” Or, as Iran's Supreme Leader has said, Zionists (i.e., Jews) must be “uprooted and destroyed,” they are “illegitimate” and a “bastard regime,” they “cannot be called humans,” so “raze Tel Aviv and Haifa to the ground.” What more must they do and say before the West believes them?

Let Israel eradicate radical Islam from Gaza for the benefit of the world, including the Palestinians. Sadly, like German civilians during the Second World War, the Palestinians will pay a high price for Hamas's heinous tactics and ideology. Unfortunately, there is no other choice.





# What's Happening

## A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY CALENDAR

LIGHT SHABBAT CANDLES AT

DEC. 1  
5:10 p.m.  
DEC. 8  
5:10 p.m.

For inclusion in the What's Happening Calendar, copy must be sent on separate sheet and clearly marked for Calendar. Submit copy via: e-mail (news@orlandoheritage.com); mail (P.O. Box 300742, Fern Park, FL 32730-0742); fax (407-831-0507); or drop it by the office (207 O'Brien Rd., Ste. 101, Fern Park) Deadline is Wednesday noon, 10 days prior to publication.

### MORNING MINYANS

Chabad of South Orlando — Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. and 10 minutes before sunset; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday, 8:15 a.m., 407-354-3660.  
 Congregation Ahavas Yisrael — Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday, 9 a.m., 407-644-2500.  
 Congregation Chabad Lubavitch of Greater Daytona — Monday, 8 a.m.; Thursday, 8 a.m., 904-672-9300.  
 Congregation Ohev Shalom — Sunday, 9 a.m., 407-298-4650.  
 GOBOR Community Minyan at Jewish Academy of Orlando — Monday - Friday, 7:45 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.  
 Temple Israel — Sunday, 9 a.m., 407-647-3055.  
 For events happening at the Roth Family JCC, please visit the website, orlandojcc.org.  
 For events at the Holocaust Memorial Resource & Education Center, please visit holocaustedu.org.

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1

Ahavas Yisrael — Kabbalat, 30 minutes before sundown.  
 Holocaust Center — New exhibit: After the End of the World: Displaced Persons and Displaced Persons Camps, on display through Jan. 31, 2024.

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2

Torah Portion — Parashat Vayishlach: Genesis 32:4-36:43.

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

Shalom Orlando — Community of Lights, 11:30 a.m. -2:30 p.m.  
 COS Senior Bingo — 2 p.m. Play 10 games. Cost \$5 for a set of cards and \$3 for each additional set. All money collected at the door will be distributed as prize money. Complimentary nosh with hot/cold beverages. For information, contact Andy Rosen and Jerry Leibman, andy@pineloch.com or 407-921-0129.

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 4

Jewish Pavilion — JP Connections luncheon honoring volunteer of the year, 11 a.m. at Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs, 350 Northlake Blvd., Altamonte Springs. Cost: \$35 per person. Info: 407-678-9363.

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5

ZOA — Local ZOA chapter hosts Susan Tuchman who will discuss "The campus war against Israel & Jews, 7:30 p.m. at Congregation Ohev Shalom. No cost.

COS Men's Club — Virtual bridge, 7 p.m. All welcome, no cost. Register at www.bridgebase.com. For info: Jim Tinkoff, jtinkoff@cfl.rr.com or Andy Rosen, andy@pineloch.com.  
 Chabad of South Orlando — Sixth class on Kabbalah, "The Essence of Everything," 6:30-8 p.m. Information: 407-354-3660.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7**  
**First Chanukah candle at sunset**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8**  
**First Day of Chanukah**  
**Second candle**

Ahavas Yisrael — Kabbalat, 30 minutes before sundown.

# David Horowitz center cuts ties with Candace Owens

(JNS)—The David Horowitz Freedom Center, which invited the "then little-known Candace Owens" to a conference six years ago where she said "everything started for me," has bid adieu to the conservative commentator.

The center "went on promoting Candace, honored her with an Annie Taylor Award for Courage in 2018, and hosted her at multiple events," it said in a statement, published in Frontpage magazine, which Horowitz edits. "That's why we are so disappointed in what she has become."

"The atrocities of Oct. 7, the appearance of ignorant mobs in the U.S. chanting 'Hitler was right' and supporting the Hamas terrorists, and Candace's moral equivalence about these neo-Nazis have changed the stakes," per the center. "We have decided to issue the present

statement because of her recent promotion of Hamas's genocidal lies."

It detailed some of Owens's statements, including comparing Israel to the "segregated South," implying Israel committed "genocide" and saying antisemitism on campus would increase with the removal of the group Students for Justice in Palestine.

On Nov. 15, Owens wrote on X that Ben Shapiro, the Jewish co-founder of The Daily Wire and its editor emeritus, was "emotionally unhinged." She responded to a post by Shapiro that said, "Candace, if you feel that taking money from The Daily Wire somehow comes between you and God, by all means quit." Owens hosts a show on The Daily Wire.

In recent remarks that apparently leaked on social media, Shapiro confirmed that Owens "still works for my

company, and I think she's been absolutely disgraceful. I think that her faux sophistication on these particular issues has been ridiculous."

Owens joined Daily Wire three years ago following stints at Prager University and the conservative youth group Turning Point USA.

On Nov. 6, Owens wrote in support of Queen Rania of Jordan, who is of Palestinian descent, and who cast doubt on Hamas's atrocities and accused the world of a "double standard" on Palestinian deaths in Gaza.

"I agree with Queen Rania's assertion that antisemitism is being weaponized in order to silence critics and bully people into compliance," Owens wrote.

In the past, Owens has also faced criticism for defending Ye (Kanye West), who has frequently been accused of antisemitism.

## Quote of the Week

"Is not Hanukkah a symbol of Israel, and its light a symbol of his immortality."  
 — Leo Jung

"My week is not complete without it!"

"I can't live without it!"

"How in the world am I supposed to know what's going on?"

These are some of the comments we receive from readers when they miss an issue of *Heritage Florida Jewish News*.

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## "Big Banks" by Yoni Glatt Difficulty Level: Easy koshercrosswords@gmail.com

### Across

1. Radar screen image
5. Skyline sight
10. Includes in an email, for short
13. Uris' 18 of literature
14. Mary-Kate, Ashley or Elizabeth
15. "But of course!"
16. Yitzchak dug these in North Dakota?
18. CD-\_\_\_\_\_
19. H.S. senior's exam, once
20. Seizes, as a throne
22. '50s White House monogram
25. Concerning kidneys
27. "Live With Kelly and Ryan" co-host
28. TV host Piers teams up with "Dr. Strangelove" director?
31. Big name in arcade games
32. Follower of uno, due
33. "The Princess Bride" author gets financial advice from a renown economist?
40. You row with one
41. Jewish "Godfather" actor
43. "Driving Miss Daisy" star's pursuit of a justice of the peace?
49. Neshama
50. You might yell "yee-haw!" at one
51. Sydney's state, for short
52. Bombay, today
54. Motorcycle daredevil's prop
56. Zurich peak
57. Jerusalem going solo?
62. Marvel's Stan
63. ...up ("Uncle!")
64. "My mistake"
65. Dangerous letters when dropped
66. Dissuade by threat, maybe
67. Former times

3. Sick
4. Chaverim
5. Ease up
6. Great \_\_\_\_ (grassland region)
7. The Holy Land; abbr.
8. Reliable customers
9. Whom Seth begat
10. Fisher of "Star Wars"
11. Turbulent, as waves
12. "The Metamorphosis" protagonist Gregor
17. Bibi's wife
21. Modern link
22. Insta communications
23. Wicked advisor of King Saul
24. Thus
26. Memo-heading abbr.
29. Gadot who unabashedly supports Israel
30. Teachers org.
34. Scooby of note
35. A chatunah results in one

36. Film showcasing the villainy of Iran
37. Actress Pounder of the "Avatar" films
38. Cole of fashion
39. Chutzpah
42. Like the moon each month
43. Units of energy
44. Psyched
45. Org. Alex Bregman and Max Fried play for
46. Main slot on an old PC
47. Less messy
48. Medically induced condition, maybe
49. Wee
53. Liquid that burns
55. Ruse
58. Joseph spent some time in one
59. Perfect-game line score
60. Shapiro's radio station
61. Nachal Oz to Netivot dir.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
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52				53			54			55		
56				57		58				59	60	61
62				63						64		
65				66						67		

### Down

1. Upscale German car
2. It's not the truth

See answers on page 14A.



# The Maccabees: The Jewish freedom fighters



Detail from “The Story of Hanukkah” by Ori Sherman.

The Maccabees were a band of Jewish freedom fighters who freed Judea from the Syrian-Greek occupiers during the Second Temple period. The word Maccabee is an acronym for the Hebrew words that mean “Who is like You among all powers, Gd.” Led by Judah the Maccabee and his four brothers, they trounced the Greek interlopers and restored the Holy Temple in Jerusalem to the service of Gd. Their victory is celebrated during the holiday of Chanukah.

### The Background

More than 2,000 years ago there was a period of time when the Land of Israel was part of the Syrian-Greek Empire, ruled by the dynasty of the Seleucids. In 174 BCE (3586), Antiochus IV ruled the region. He was called Epiphanes, meaning “the gods’ beloved,” but people called him Epimanes (“madman”), a title more suited to the character of this harsh and cruel king.

Wanting to unify his kingdom through common religion and culture, Antiochus tried to root out the individualism of the Jews by suppressing the practice of all Jewish law. He also meddled in the affairs of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, installing idol-worshipping High Priests who paid him handsome tributes.

At that time, Antiochus was also engaged in a successful war against Egypt. But messengers from Rome arrived and commanded him to stop the war, and he had to yield. Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, a rumor spread that a serious accident had befallen Antiochus. Thinking that he was dead, the people rebelled against Menelaus, the corrupt High Priest, who then fled together with his friends.

Antiochus returned from Egypt enraged by Roman interference with his ambitions. When he heard what had taken place in Jerusalem, he ordered his army to fall upon the Jews. Thousands of Jews were killed. Antiochus then enacted a series of harsh decrees: Jewish worship was forbidden, and the scrolls of the Law were confiscated and burned. Sabbath rest, circumcision and the dietary laws were prohibited under penalty of death. Many brave Jews refused, preferring death.

### Mattityahu: The First Maccabee

One day, the henchmen of Antiochus arrived in the village of Modiin where Mattityahu, a respected and el-

derly priest, lived. The Syrian officer built an altar in the marketplace of the village and demanded that Mattityahu offer sacrifices to the Greek gods. Mattityahu replied, “I, my sons and my brothers are determined to remain loyal to the covenant that our Gd made with our ancestors!”

Thereupon, a Hellenized Jew approached the altar to offer a sacrifice. Mattityahu grabbed his sword and killed him, and his sons and friends fell upon the Syrian officers and men. They killed many of them and chased the rest away. They then destroyed the altar.

Mattityahu knew that Antiochus would be enraged when he heard what had happened, and would certainly send troops to punish him and his followers. And so, Mattityahu and his sons and friends fled to the hills of Judea.

### Judah the Maccabee Strikes Back

All loyal and courageous Jews joined them. They formed legions, and from time to time they left their hiding places to fall upon enemy detachments and outposts, and to destroy the pagan altars that were built by order of Antiochus.

Before his death, Mattityahu called his sons together and urged them to continue to fight in defense of Gd’s Torah. He asked them to follow the counsel of their brother Shimon the Wise, and their leader in warfare was to be their brother Judah the Strong, or Judah the Maccabee.

The Maccabees won battle after battle, including one in which they fended off an army of more than 40,000 men.

Then the Maccabees returned to Jerusalem to liberate it. They entered the Temple and cleared it of the idols placed there by the Syrian vandals. Judah and his followers built a new altar, which he dedicated on the twenty-fifth of the month of Kislev, in the year 139 BCE (3622).

Since the golden Menorah had been stolen by the Syrians, the Maccabees now made one of cheaper metal. When they wanted to light it, they found only a small cruse of pure olive oil bearing the seal of the High Priest Yochanan. It was sufficient to create light for only one day. By a miracle of Gd, it continued to burn for eight days, until new oil was available. That miracle proved that Gd had again taken His people under His protection.

In memory of this, our sages appointed these eight days as a holiday of annual thanksgiving and lighting candles.

### The Maccabees Rule Judea

The Maccabees and their descendants took the throne of Judea for themselves. This was a problem because they were priests, descendants of Aaron. Their job was to serve in the Holy Temple and guide the people in spiritual matters. It was the place of the descendants of King David, from the tribe of Judah, who were supposed to sit on the royal throne. Indeed, it did not take long until the monarchy of Judea was dragged down into a series

of unending power grabs and bloody intrigue, with king after king trying to imitate the very same Greeks their ancestors had ousted from the land.

Yet, for all their shortcom-

ings, the Maccabees leave us with an empowering message that resonates in all times and all places: Never cower in the face of tyranny. Do your part, trust in Gd, and success is sure to come.

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## Eight thoughts for this Chanukah

By Marilyn Shapiro

On Thursday, Dec. 7, Jews around the world will begin celebrating Chanukah. Each night, we will light the candles placed in our Chanukiah to remember yet another time in our history when Jews faced the possibility of annihilation.

In 167 B.C.E. Judah Maccabeus and his brothers led a revolt against Antiochus, the Seleucid king who had tried to eradicate their religion. This Jewish festival commemorates the recovery of Jerusalem and the subsequent rededication of the Second Temple.

Now, 2190 years later, Jews are facing another enemy whose goal is to wipe Jews off the face of the earth. Israel is at war against Hamas. On Oct. 7, 2023, thousands of members of the Gaza-based terrorist group poured over Israel's borders killing over 1400 innocent men, women,

and children, injuring 4000 more, and kidnapping over 200 people. Israel immediately and rightfully responded by declaring war and later sending troops into Gaza. As a Jew and a human being, I am sad, afraid, angry and grieving for all the lives lost during this conflict. As I light candles over the holiday's eight days, I will have the following eight thoughts.

One: Israel's right to defend itself. I stand with Israel. Absolutely. I am saddened by the pain and suffering on both sides. But Israel did not start this war. And the Israeli Defense Force, like the Maccabees, must fight with every ounce of their strength to root out the evil that is Hamas.

Two: Antisemitism's rise — Never Again is now. The rise of antisemitism around the world is terrifying, and it is hitting too close to home. Who would have thought that a former president would be hosting vowed antisemites in his Florida estate? Who would have ever thought that neo-Nazis would be marching outside the gates of Disney? Who would have thought that our small synagogue would have to hire a security guard so that we can attend services without fear of being mowed down like the members of Pittsburgh's Tree of Life.

On Oct. 16, 2023, a group of individuals met with Congressman Darrin Soto. Initially scheduled to address concerns about the rise of antisemitism in Florida, the meeting took on greater urgency after the Oct. 7 massacre. Rep. Soto opened the meeting by pledging his support for Israel and the Jewish community. "I have your back," he told us. After a brief introduction where he listed legislation he supported, he turned the meeting over to his constituents. The group discussed a wide range of subjects: the need for security at synagogues and other Jewish venues; the tidal wave of misinformation, the bullying of Jewish students at local campuses, and the importance of government officials, businesses, and colleges to speak out clearly against antisemitism in any form. As the war continues, I will continue to be in touch with my representatives on

the state and national level to encourage their support of Israel.

Three: Jewish Pride. Despite my fears, I am still proud to be a Jew. For many years, I have worn a butterfly charm on a necklace, which represents to me the souls of the six million who died in the Holocaust. Soon after the war began, I dug out my Jewish star and added it to my necklace. I know around the world Jews are shedding yarmulkas, but I have decided to display my connection to Judaism with pride and resolve.

Four: Community. During this terrible time, attending services at Congregation Beth Shalom in Kissimmee, Florida, has become even more important to me. Judaism stresses again and again the need for community, coming together in person to pray, to sing, to talk. At times, I feel that it is Jews against the world, and I love being in a room where I am not alone in my fears, my grief, and my support. I find comfort in so many of the prayers, a number of which I am reading with different eyes since Oct. 7.

Five: Writing. I am grateful I have another way to build connections as a Jew. I will use my writing to bear witness to moments of Jewish sacrifice, survival, and strength. In 2017, I had the honor of interviewing Harry Lowenstein, a Holocaust survivor who founded our synagogue. After its publication, I realized the importance of writing down as many stories as I could of individuals who had been witnesses to antisemitism from their flight from their Eastern European shtetls to their often miraculous survival during the Holocaust to the accounts of Jews and non-Jews who have worked against hatred in all forms. My writing—and life—has found a purpose: To make sure these stories are not forgotten.

Six: Donations. Of course, Israel needs more than hopes and prayers and words. The country is in desperate need of funds to counteract the effects of this war on its economy and its citizens. I made a donation to Hadassah Hospital in the first days of the war. Since that time, I have learned of other Israeli agencies that would benefit from financial support. Those include Magen David Adom — Israel's

national emergency medical response organization, and Leket Israel, the country's largest food bank. More suggestions can be found on this website:

<https://www.jpost.com/special-content/donate-to-israel-now-top-21-charities-making-a-difference-in-israel-in-2023-771512>

Seven: Emotional Support. I appreciate the support of my non-Jewish friends and will carry their kindness forward. In the days immediately following the massacre, I was overwhelmed by the outpouring of expressions of sadness, shock, and anger, and sorrow for me, Israel, and Jews around the world. "My heart is broken in two," wrote Ginny Campbell, my fellow writer, with her usual eloquence. "We all share one God. I can only believe His heart is broken too. Know my prayers are with you and all our brothers and sisters who are grieving tonight. Love can and must win out in the end."

Eight: Joy and Hope: Following the lead of Israelis who have suffered such great loss, I will find joy and hope for the future. On Oct. 20, Yonaton Perez and Galya Landau were married, despite the fact that the groom had suffered a leg wound during the Oct. 7 Hamas attack and his brother had been declared missing. "We are part of a people that sanctifies life," Rabbi Doron Perez, Yonaton's father, was quoted in a Times of Israel article. "[The future] will be a new dawn and a much better time for the Jewish people."

"I am a Jew because at every time when despair cries out, the Jew hopes," reads a prayer from the Reform prayerbook Mishkan T'Filah. As I write this, the Israel-Hamas War is in Day 44. Only time will tell what will happen in the future. Over eight evenings, our family will light our colorful Chanukah candles in a darkened room. In their beautiful glow, we will recite the traditional prayers. This year, however, we will add the Mi Sheberach, a prayer for physical and emotional healing for all human beings facing illness and pain. Then we will sing the words of Oseh Shalom, "May the one who creates peace on high bring peace to us and to all Israel." And we say: Amen. Peace, salaam, shalom.

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CARDINAL MONUMENTS

### Insights from The Orlando Senior Help Desk

## Life Advice for Recharging

Take technology breaks: Constantly being connected can leave you frazzled and stressed out.

Enjoy the outdoors: Exposure yourself to nature and breathe fresh air. Even ten minutes may reduce stress, anxiety and fatigue.

Get active: Release those endorphins with movement, stretches, walks and laughter.

Make Time For You: Take a minimum of 10-15 minutes each day to do something just for you.

Connect with people you love on a regular basis.

Get plenty of sleep: Rest will keep you more focused, less anxious and will boost your immune system.

Be Grateful: Think about those people and things in your life that bring you joy.

Consider journaling: Keeping a journal may help you process your thoughts and feelings and bring you relief. Journaling allows you the opportunity to revisit issues at another time.

Dance, Wiggle and Giggle.

While most seniors face major adjustments when transitioning to an elder-care community, Jewish seniors face additional challenges. Not only do they lose their homes, and many of their friends, but they also lose ties to their cultural heritage. This is where the Jewish

*Pavilion, a 501c3 non-profit, steps in. The Pavilion serves as a resource that provides room visits, festive holiday celebrations, and more to 450 Jewish residents in fifty facilities for seniors. The Jewish Pavilion promotes inclusion, and thousands of seniors of all faiths are welcomed into our programs. www.Jewish-Pavilion.org.*

*The Orlando Senior Help Desk (407-678-9363) helps thousands of callers navigate their way through the daunting senior maze, alleviating caregiver stress while giving advice on all types of elder issues. www.OrlandoSeniorHelpDesk.org.*



# Japanese-Style Latkes for Chanukah



By Sonya Sanford

This recipe was first published on *The Nosh*.

The Japanese word “okonomiyaki” is derived from two words: okonomi (how you like it) and yaki (grill). Okonomiyaki is a customizable Japanese savory vegetable pancake. Like a latke, it gets cooked in oil in a fritter formation. Unlike a latke, it’s usually made into a large plate-sized pancake comprising mainly cabbage.

Food historians have linked the rise in popularity of okonomiyaki in Japan to World War II, when rice was more scarce and this recipe offered a filling meal or snack with a wheat-based starch. Throughout Japan there are regional differences and countless variations of okonomiyaki, but the most common form of the dish involves a batter made of flour, a variety of mountain yam, eggs, shredded cabbage, green onion, dashi and often the addition of pork belly. It gets topped with its own tangy sweet sauce, Japanese mayonnaise and bonito flakes (katsuobushi).

I first fell in love with okonomiyaki on a trip to Japan. You can find it there in restaurants that specialize in the dish, but it’s also something that is prepared in home kitchens. The cabbage gets slightly crisp, tender and sweet when seared in oil on a flattop or skillet, and then it gets generously slathered with an umami-rich sauce, along with a welcome drizzle of creamy mayo. The richness, sweetness and tanginess of these components all work perfectly together.

A few months after I got back from Japan, I ended up eating at Brooklyn’s Japanese Jewish restaurant, Shalom Japan. I didn’t hesitate to order their Jewish-influenced spin on okonomiyaki. They’re known to top it with pastrami or corned lamb tongue and sauerkraut. It became clear there that okonomiyaki, with its base of humble cabbage and onion, is a perfect fit on a Jewish table. The fried pancake part of it all called out “Hanukkah.”

I am a fan of all pancakes and fritters, and I set out to modify the classic Japanese version for a recipe that didn’t require access to a specialty food store, and that could be made with kosher ingredients. Full disclosure: My version lacks authenticity. If you’re going for the real deal, you’ll need a batter made with an okonomiyaki flour mix, or nagaimo yam; this special kind of yam is added in powdered form to the flour mix, or gets grated fresh into the batter. The toppings should include bonito flakes, and the batter should be made with dashi. These ingredients can be found at most Japanese markets. Instead of nagaimo yam, my version uses a batter of flour and potato starch, and instead of dashi I use water.

I’ve also included a recipe for homemade traditional okonomiyaki sauce that can be made simply with easy-to-find

ingredients, but you can also buy a pre-made bottled sauce. You can make these pancakes large-sized and cut into wedges like the Japanese do, or slightly smaller à la a large latke. I wouldn’t go too small with this, as the vegetables tend to hold together better en masse. This recipe doesn’t need to be too exact, and it works as a blank canvas for additional vegetables like kale, mushrooms and/or daikon.

In the spirit of Chanukah, these okonomiyaki get cooked in oil, but they’re not heavily fried. The oil used to fry the okonomiyaki gives a loving nod to the miracle of the oil glowing in the Temple for eight days instead of one, but the heap of vegetables and addictive sauce make this a nutritious and satisfying addition to any Hanukkah meal.

- Ingredients**  
 For the pancakes:  
 3/4 cup all-purpose flour or gluten-free all-purpose mix  
 1/4 cup potato starch or cornstarch  
 1 tsp baking powder  
 1 tsp kosher salt  
 2 large eggs  
 1/2-3/4 cup water  
 1/2 shredded green cabbage, about 4 1/2 packed cups  
 3 green onions, sliced thin, plus more for garnish if desired  
 1 carrot, peeled and shredded  
 4-5 inches daikon, peeled and shredded (optional)  
 oil, as needed (sunflower, canola or peanut)  
 sesame seeds, for topping (optional)  
 mayonnaise, for topping (optional)

- For the okonomiyaki sauce:  
 1/2 cup ketchup  
 1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce  
 2 Tbsp soy sauce  
 2 Tbsp honey or agave syrup, or to taste

**Instructions**  
 Start by making the batter. Whisk together the flour, starch, baking powder and salt in a large bowl.

In a separate bowl, beat the eggs. Add the eggs and 1/2 cup of water to the flour mixture. Whisk until smooth. You want a fairly thin, crepe batter-like consistency. If you find it too thick, add another 1/4 cup of water. Try not to over-mix; you do not want to overdevelop the gluten. Allow the batter to rest in the fridge for 30 minutes to an hour.

While the batter is resting, prepare the vegetables. Remove the thick core from the cabbage half, then cut the halved cabbage in two. Thinly slice or shred the cabbage. Thinly slice the green onions. Grate the carrot and daikon if using.

Make the okonomiyaki sauce: Combine the ketchup, Worcestershire, soy sauce and honey/agave in a bowl. Taste and adjust to your liking. The sauce should be tangy, savory and a little sweet.

Combine the batter with the vegetable mixture.  
 Heat a cast-iron skillet or a nonstick skillet with about 3 Tbsp oil over high heat. Once the oil is glistening and hot, lower the heat to medium low and add some of the cabbage mixture to the pan, gently nudging it into a circle shape. I like to make each pancake with about 2 cups of the mixture. For me, that makes an ideal-sized pancake that isn’t too hard to flip, and one that will hold together. Cover the skillet with a lid for 3-4 minutes. Carefully flip over the pancake, and cover it with a lid for an additional 3-4 minutes, or until browned on both sides and cooked through. Make sure not to cook on too high of a heat or the pancake might burn on the outside while remaining raw in the center.



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**Sudoku (see page 14A for solution)**

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# Sfenj: Moroccan Chanukah Donuts Recipe

By Carine Goren

The following story and recipe come from the book *Traditional Jewish Baking* by Carine Goren, and was first published on *The Nosh*.

I was never able to pronounce the name of this pastry correctly. Sfenj actually means “sponge,” and these are indeed spongy, springy and full of air bubbles. I learned this recipe from my friend and pastry chef Ruta, and here it is, with a few minor adjustments. In my family, sfenj are consumed in three different ways: mom likes them plain; most of the family (including yours truly) prefer them sugar-coated; and my own private chef heats up some honey in the microwave oven and dips them between bites.

Allow for at least two sfenj per person; I am yet to meet anybody who can stop at one.

Ingredients

7 cups all-purpose flour  
2 Tbsp active dry yeast

1/2 cup sugar, plus more for rolling

1/2 tsp salt

3 1/3 cups lukewarm water, divided

1 1/2 qt vegetable oil, for deep-frying

Directions

In the largest bowl you have, mix the flour and yeast. Add the sugar and salt and mix with the flour. Pour in about half the water and begin kneading with your hands—fingers spread open, using lifting motions from the bottom of the bowl to the surface of the dough. Gradually add (all!) the remaining water, and knead for another minute, and no more! This dough must not be over-kneaded. It is very loose, and that's okay.

Cover in plastic wrap and set aside to rise, until doubled in bulk. With very wet (dripping with water) hands, work the dough to let out the air (it will return to its original volume). Cover, and let rise again until doubled in bulk. This second rising will be a lot shorter, so you may begin heating up your oil. In a wide pot, heat the oil to 325°F on a deep-frying thermometer.

Dip your hands in a bowl of cold oil or water. Pinch a ball of dough (tangerine size) and pull it up. With your other hand, pinch under it to cut it off the rest of the dough. Holding the ball of dough with both hands, insert your finger in its center to create a hole, and stretch until the hole is about 1 inch (3.8cm) in diameter. Carefully place the bagel shape into the hot oil. Repeat with the rest of the dough (not forgetting to dip your hands in cold oil or water occasionally).



Deep-fry until sfenj are golden, 2–3 minutes on each side. Put the fried sfenj on a paper towel to soak up the excess oil. Dip each sfenj in a bowl of sugar to coat, and serve immediately.

*\*Grandma Knows Best: Sfenj must be prepared and fried when they are meant to be served. Don't prepare this dough ahead of time, and don't put it in the refrigerator. When cold, it is hard to work with, and it goes sour very quickly (within 4 hours).*

## A Jewish convert's guide to enjoying the winter holiday jumble

By Leah Grisham

This essay was first published on *Kveller*

Jewish kids and Christmas: For some parents, this combination can seem like a proverbial minefield of challenges presented to us each winter. The secular world, it seems, becomes infinitely less so as Christmas decorations, commercials and episodes of beloved kids shows proliferate.

For interfaith families like mine, which celebrate both Chanukah and Christmas, this time can be especially fraught. My own 3-year-old Jewish daughter, for instance, is obsessed with the Grinch, loves Santa Claus, and has been singing “Jingle Bells” since July. No matter how much I try to hype up Chanukah, she still asks me if it's Christmas every time she sees snow (which happens early in our part of the country). Whether it's the constant Christmas messaging or her own hazy memories of past Christmas celebrations, it seems like Chanukah plays second fiddle to the other December holiday.

My holiday anxiety was especially strong last year, which was my first winter holiday season as an official Jew after converting earlier in the year. I'd breezed through Passover

and the High Holidays content in my Jewishness, but after Thanksgiving I felt a huge amount of pressure to make Chanukah more fun, festive and memorable for my daughter — and, if I'm being honest — for myself, someone who spent decades of her pre-conversion life loving Christmas.

I'm not alone in these feelings. According to posts made in a Facebook group called Jewish Converts (Converts to Judaism), an online support group of sorts for Jewish converts that is over 2,500 members strong, this time of year sees lots of people asking for advice and venting their uncertainties toward navigating the winter holidays. Is it OK to still have a tree in my interfaith home? Is it OK to attend extended-family Christmas gatherings? What do I tell my kid when all their friends are talking about gifts from Santa? How can I get my mother-in-law to stop trying to proselytize my kids? What if I still love Christmas music? These questions are not totally unique to converts, but for those of us who grew up celebrating Christmas (no matter how un-religious our families' traditions were), it can be hard — and very confusing — when it comes to the winter holidays, which can cause feelings of resentment and competition.

In my mind, the competition I was imagining between Christmas and Chanukah became greater than the holidays themselves. Looking back, I can see now that my need to make Chanukah “better” than Christmas became conflated with my very Jewishness: Bigger and better Chanukah celebrations came to represent (in my mind) being Jewish



“enough.” Accordingly, I spent December going crazy buying Chanukah gifts, planning what had to be the perfect Chanukah party and decorating every inch of our home in blue and white decorations. I don't know what the world record for most Stars of David in one house is, but my home in December 2021 would be in the running. I was also filled with angst over the Christmas hoopla that my daughter would experience when we travelled to see our extended families over the holiday. I wanted her to feel joy and excitement over Jewish celebrations, but that felt impossible in a sea of red, green and Santa Claus.

After so much fretting, things came to an anticlimactic end with the introduction of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, which kept my small family at home alone. Weeks of feeling resentful toward extended family Christmas parties faded into disappointment that these gatherings — which would have been our first extended-family celebrations since 2018 — didn't happen at all. In fact, as my daughter and husband enjoyed Christmas afternoon naps, I had quite a pity

party for myself as I guzzled champagne and chocolates on the couch, watching “The Holiday” by myself (Jack Black and Eli Wallach make it Jewish enough for me!).

My unexpected sense of disappointment over cancelled Christmas plans made it clear: After so many quarantined holidays and life events celebrated over Zoom, the mental capacity I spent being angry at Christmas would be better spent embracing the opportunity to gather with family and friends, no matter what the occasion.

Navigating the Christmas season as a convert to Judaism is not easy — and it would be a lie to say that I've totally let go of the fact that, to my 3-year-old, Christmas is more exciting than Chanukah — but this year I am going to do my best to stop fretting over details.

Our world has seen so much grief and upheaval over the last few years; maybe it is OK to let our guards down a little bit and embrace joy wherever it can be found. I'll pack our menorah and Chanukah pajamas and bring them to Grandma's house for Christmas and do my best to just let my daughter enjoy the fun of this year's holiday jumble.

## A holiday concert with Jack Hartmann

Jack Hartmann, a popular children's entertainer, will be performing live in concert at the Rosen Event Center. Hartmann has a Kids Music Channel on YouTube. His music is research-based and teacher-approved to focus on helping children learn things like the alphabet, the days of the week and how to count to 100 through the medium of music.

The concert takes place on Tuesday, December 19. Doors open at 5 p.m. and the concert starts at 6 p.m. Tickets are available at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com).



## Israel's soldiers vow 'never again'

**By Fiamma Nirenstein**

(JNS) — The seaside Zikim base in southern Israel borders one of the kibbutzim destroyed by Hamas during the Oct. 7 massacre. Tanks, armored vehicles and excavation equipment that unearths terror tunnels roar past, heading for the Gaza Strip. Intense looking boys in uniform go to and fro in apparent chaos. But it is not chaos, it is Israel's ongoing series of military operations against Hamas.

The paratroopers we meet are finally having a drink. Yesterday, they managed to eat and take a shower after nine days in the Strip, during which they managed to sleep only a few hours on the ground and eat peanuts. What they found in Gaza is now making headlines around the world: Tunnels full of weapons, kindergartens full of missiles, the conquest of the Hamas "parliament," endless battles with terrorists embedded deep in the civilian population.

Israel is on the march, advancing slowly but steadily into the heart of Hamas-tan. Now, it is closing in on Hamas's main headquarters, including beneath hospitals and other civilian sites. Israel tries to protect civilians, but it is clear that the IDF will not allow Hamas's hideous tactics to work this time. This is war to the finish, and Israel intends to finish it.

The IDF has captured Hamas's most important bases in northern Gaza following intense battles. It has opened humanitarian corridors to the south for civilians seeking to escape the war zone. It had to do so after Hamas terrorists began killing civilians trying

to flee, hoping to use them as human shields instead. Over 45 Israeli soldiers have been killed so far, in addition to the 1,400 murdered and some 240 kidnapped on Oct. 7.

Shon, a 24-year-old soldier, says, "I didn't have time to call my family. I know I should. We are reserves, but perfectly trained." When war broke out "I was in Tel Aviv, working in start-ups. But I rushed away as soon as our commander called. We immediately started fighting in the invaded kibbutzim. It's unspeakable what [Hamas] did to children and families." "How do I feel?" he asks. "That we will never let it happen again."

Irwin, just returned from India, says, "In Gaza, I hope there are normal people. We are here to free them too. We know that we can die, but the purpose is bigger than us. There is no choice. We will not suffer another attack like the one on Oct. 7."

These soldiers fight out of love their homeland—mole-dent in Hebrew—for their homes and families; values that are difficult even to pronounce in Europe.

The soldiers' main target is the crown jewel of Hamas's terror infrastructure—the tunnels. They have found them littered with the detritus of terror, as well as possessions likely belonging to the hostages, such as baby bottles and diapers, as well as lists of Hamas "guards."

Now Hamas's "parliament," government buildings, police headquarters, and more are in the hands of the IDF.

Daniel, 21, was wounded in the fighting. At Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv, this pianist,

marksman and nurse recounts, "I found myself naked after the blow that took me in the back and head. Next to me, my best friend was bleeding. Stunned, I heard shouting: 'Nurse! Nurse!' But I was the nurse. He was bleeding, we saved him and now he is next to me here in the hospital."

"I have damage to my ear, my head, I'm burned on my arm and body," he says, "but I'm dying to get back to my unit. I know I'm needed. We are a single body. We share sleeping bags and the last sandwich."

Back at Zikim, Shahar, a 30-year-old paratrooper, recounts, "On the seventh, they sent us directly to the kibbutzim. As soon as we arrived in Be'eri, in Alumim, we were hit in the face by the blood, the dead on the ground, the horrors and a huge number of terrorists. I lost a very dear friend of mine there, whose body was found only after a week."

"Entering Gaza to fight is the most natural thing," he says. "I was injured in the back and head, but I asked to return as soon as possible. My grandparents were Holocaust survivors, my father fought in the Yom Kippur War. Never again is now—and now, it's my turn."

"If we show weakness, Hamas will try to tear us to pieces again," he asserts. "It makes me angry that the world doesn't care about us. We do everything to save the civilian population. Hamas uses it as a human shield. My mother takes people from Gaza to hospitals in Israel. We offer incubators to hospitals that hide terrorist leaders. What else do you expect from us?"

## Israel moves to strip Hamas affiliates' residency status

(JNS) — Israeli Interior Minister Moshe Arbel is working to revoke the Israeli residency status of individuals affiliated with the Hamas terrorist organization.

Specifically, Arbel began the process to revoke the status of Jerusalem residents Maged Juaba and Rashid Rashek for carrying out "actions to promote and support" terrorism against Israel as part of their membership in the terrorist organizations Hamas and Shabab al-Aqsa.

The minister said his action was in accordance with section 11A of the Law on Entry into Israel, which concerns denial of residency due to

breach of trust to the State of Israel.

Rashid Rashek was involved as a minor in the stabbing of an Israeli citizen in the Old City of Jerusalem, participated in violent activity on the Temple Mount, established a military unit together with other Hamas operatives whose purpose was to carry out attacks on Israelis and kidnap soldiers and promoted disturbances against the security forces.

Maged Juaba worked, among other things, to recruit terror operatives, pay salaries, organize and participate in many public actions expressing support for Hamas, as well

as transferring funds to the families of Hamas terrorists.

After the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel formally annexed the eastern parts of Jerusalem, which were under Jordanian control before the war. Israel also included in the city's borders a number of small villages near the city.

The Arab residents of these areas and their descendants have been legally entitled to Israeli citizenship ever since because they reside within the State of Israel. However, most eastern Jerusalem Arabs declined Israel's offer of citizenship after 1967 and were instead given permanent resident status.

## OBITUARY

**SUSAN M. HAURYLICK**

Ms. Susan M. Hauryluck, 69, Orlando, Florida passed away peacefully Friday, Nov. 10, 2023, at AdventHealth, East Orlando following a brief illness. Ms. Hauryluck was born Sept. 23, 1954, in Bronx, New York to the late Robert and Judy (Bardack) Hauryluck and moved to the

Orlando area in 2000 from New York.

Ms. Hauryluck is survived by her devoted daughters; Shannon (Richard Leonard) Davidson and Meredith Hauryluck both of Orlando, Florida; and her loving sister, Nancy Morris of Orlando, Florida.

Graveside services for Ms. Hauryluck were held at

Evergreen Cemetery (150 South Cypress Way, Casselberry, FL) with Rabbi Arnold Siegel of Jewish Family Services officiating. May she rest in peace and may her memory always be a blessing.

Services entrusted to Beth Shalom Memorial Chapel, 933 Lee Road, Suite 101, Orlando, Florida 407-599-1180.

## Central Florida Synagogues

**Orlando Weekday Morning Minyan (Conservative/Egalitarian)**, services Monday-Friday 7:45 a.m. (9 a.m.—national holidays); 2nd floor Chapel—Jewish Academy of Orlando; 851 N. Maitland Ave., Maitland. For information call 407-298-4650.

**Celebration Jewish Congregation (R)**, services and holiday schedules shown at www.JewishCelebration.org; 407-479-8377.

**Chabad at UCF (O)**, 3144 N. Alafaya Trail, Orlando, FL 32726, 407-949-8838.

**Chabad Lubavitch of North Orlando (O)**, 1701 Markham Woods Road, Longwood, 407-636-5994, www.jewishorlando.com; services: Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. Friday night winter 6 p.m.; Summer 7:00 p.m.; Saturday at 9:30 a.m.; Sunday at 8 a.m.

**Chabad of Altamonte Springs (O)**, 195 S. Westmonte Dr., Suite 1126, Altamonte Springs, 407-720-8111; www.jewishaltamonte.com; Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat at sunset and Shabbat Morning 9:30 a.m.; In person services

**Chabad of Greater Orlando (O)**, 708 Lake Howell Rd., Maitland, 407-644-2500; www.chabadorlando.org; services: Sunday, 9 a.m.; Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.; Shabbat services: Friday, 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Family service, 4th Friday of the month.

**Chabad of South Lake County (O)**, P.O. Box 120605, Clermont, FL 34712, 352-717-4119; www.jewishsl.com; In person services

**Chabad of South Orlando (O)**, 7347 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, 407-354-3660; www.jewishorlando.com; To be added to the CAY chat and get updates on services and events please send a message to Rabbi Dubov at 407-529-8256 (times may vary); In person services

**Chabad of the Space & Treasure Coasts (O)**, 1190 Highway A1A, Satellite Beach and 7350 Lake Andrew Drive, Melbourne, 321-777-2770.

**Chabad Student Center (O)**, 1276 Richmond Rd., Winter Park, FL 32789; winterparkjewishstudent.org, 330-861-8770 - In person services

**Congregation Bet Chaim (R)**, 181 E. Mitchell Hammock, Oviedo, 407-830-7211; www.betchaim.org; Shabbat services: Friday, 8 p.m.

**Congregation Beth Am (C)**, 1470 Myrtle Lake Hills Road, Longwood, 407-862-3505; www.congbetham.org; Shabbat services: Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.

**Congregation Beth Emeth (R)**, 2205 Blue Sapphire Circle, Orlando, 407-222-6393; Shabbat service: monthly, 8 p.m.

**Congregation Beth Israel (Rec)**, Collins Resource Center, Suite 303, 9401 S.R. 200, Ocala, 352-237-8277; bethisraelocala.org; Shabbat service, second Friday of the month, 8 p.m.

**Congregation Beth Shalom (R-C)**, 315 North 13th St., Leesburg, 352-326-3692; www.bethshalomflorida.org; schedule of services on website.

**Congregation Beth Shalom (Progressive Conservative)**, 1308 E. Normandy Blvd., Deltona; 386-804-8283; www.mybethshalom.com; Call for more information.

**Congregation B'nai Torah (C)**, 403 N. Nova Rd., Ormond Beach, 32174, 386-672-1174; www.mybnaitorah.com; Shabbat services: Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.

**Congregation Chabad Lubavitch of Greater Daytona (O)**, 1079 W. Granada Blvd., Ormond Beach, 386-672-9300; Shabbat services Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.

**Congregation of Reform Judaism (R)**, 928 Malone Dr., Orlando, 407-645-0444; www.crjorlando.org; Shabbat services, 7 p.m. 1st, 2nd and 3rd Fridays; 6 p.m., 4th and 5th Fridays; Saturday: 10 a.m.

**Congregation Ohev Shalom (C)**, 613 Concourse Parkway South, Maitland, 407-298-4650; www.ohvshalom.org; Shabbat service, Friday, 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.

**Congregation Shalom Aleichem (R)**, 3501 Oak Pointe Blvd., Kissimmee, 407-935-0064; www.shalomaleichem.com; Shabbat service, 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month, 8 p.m.

**Congregation Shomer Ysrael (C)**, 5382 Hoffner Ave., Orlando, 407-227-1258, call for services and holiday schedules.

**Congregation Sinai (C/R)**, 1200 W. Broad St., Groveland, FL; 352-243-5353; congregation-sinai.org; services: every Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Shabbat Service every Saturday, 10 a.m.

**Orlando Torah Center (O)**, 8591 Banyan Blvd., Orlando; 347-456-6485; Shacharis-Shabbos 9 a.m.; Mon.—Thurs. 6:45 a.m.; Sun. and Legal Holidays 8 a.m.; Mincha/Maariv Please call for times.

**Southwest Orlando Jewish Congregation/Ohalei Rivka (C)**, 11200 S. Apopka-Vineland Rd., Orlando, 407-239-5444; Shabbat service, Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.

**Temple Beth El (R) / Temple Israel (C)**, 579 N. Nova Rd., Ormond Beach, 386-675-6615 / 386-252-3097; Friday Shabbat Service 7 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.

**Temple Beth Shalom (R)**, P.O. Box 031233, Winter Haven, 813-324-2882.

**Temple Beth Shalom (C)**, 40 Wellington Drive, Palm Coast, 386-445-3006; Shabbat service, Friday, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.

**Temple Beth Shalom (C)**, 5995 N. Wickham Rd. Melbourne, 321-254-6333; www.mytbs.org; Shabbat services: Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday: 9:30 a.m. Minyan, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.; Thursday, 10:00 a.m.

**Temple Beth Shalom (R)**, 1109 N.E. 8th Ave., Ocala, 352-629-3587; Shabbat services: Friday, 8 p.m.; Torah study: Saturday, 10:00 a.m.

**Temple B'nai Darom (R)**, 49 Banyan Course, Ocala, 352-624-0380; Friday Services 8 p.m.

**Temple Israel (C)**, 50 S. Moss Rd., Winter Springs, 407-647-3055; www.tiflorida.org; Shabbat services: Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday 9:00 a.m.

**Temple Israel (R)**, 7300 Lake Andrew Drive, Melbourne, 321-631-9494.

**Temple Israel of DeLand (R/C)**, 1001 E. New York Ave., DeLand, 386-736-1646; www.templeisraelofdeland.org; Friday Shabbat service, 7 p.m.; Saturday, 10:00 a.m. Torah study 8:30 a.m.

**Temple Shalom (formerly New Jewish Congregation) (R)**, 13563 Country Road 101, Oxford, 352-748-1800; www.templeshalomcentralfl.org; Shabbat services: Friday, 7 p.m.; first Saturday of the month, 9:30 a.m.

**Temple Shir Shalom (R)** Services held at Temple Israel, 50 S. Moss Rd., Winter Springs, 407-366-3556, www.templeshirshalom.org; Shabbat services: Fridays, 7:30 p.m. on Zoom.

**Traditional Congregation of Mount Dora (T)** Mount Dora, 352-735-4774; www.tcomd.org; Shabbat services: Saturday, 9:30 a.m. sharp.

(R) Reform (C) Conservative (O) Orthodox (Rec) Reconstructionist (T) Mehitsa



# Israel to 'complete the elimination of Hamas' after ceasefire

By Joshua Marks

(JNS) — Israel will resume its war against Hamas following the conclusion of the ceasefire agreement reached with the terrorist group early Wednesday, according to a government statement.

"The government of Israel, the IDF and the security services will continue the war in order to return home all of the hostages, complete the elimination of Hamas and ensure that there will be no new threat to the State of Israel from Gaza," the statement read.

In his remarks at the start of Tuesday's all-night Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the agreement a "difficult decision" but the "right" one.

"All the security forces fully support it. They made it clear in their full professional assessment that the security of our forces will be guaranteed during the days of the ceasefire and that the intelligence effort will be maintained [during] these days," the premier said.

Netanyahu also emphasized that Israel would continue its

mission to topple Hamas in Gaza as soon as the ceasefire expires.

"We are at war, and we will continue the war," he said. "We will continue until we achieve all our goals."

According to details released by the government on Wednesday, the agreement calls for Hamas to release 50 of the estimated 240 hostages it captured on Oct. 7 in exchange for a multi-day ceasefire. Women and children will be freed in groups of approximately 12 per day over four days, during which there will be a pause in fighting. An additional 10 hostages will then be released in return for each additional day of ceasefire, up to a maximum of 10 days.

Senior Hamas terrorist Moussa Abu Marzouk told Al Jazeera that the truce would enter into force at 10 a.m. on Thursday.

The agreement also calls for Israel to release "up to" 150 security prisoners in exchange for the initial 50 hostages, plus more if additional hostages are freed. The government has published a list of 300 Palestinian prisoners and detainees who could

be released as part of the deal, and the public will have the opportunity to appeal the release of specific prisoners over a period of 24 hours.

Out of the 300 prisoners, 287 are males aged 18 and under, most of whom were arrested for rioting, rock-throwing and other offenses in Judea, Samaria and eastern Jerusalem. The other 13 are adult women, most of them convicted of attempted stabbings.

Palestinians in eastern Jerusalem are preparing huge celebrations to welcome home the terrorists expected to be released from Israeli prisons in the coming days.

All 300 Palestinian prisoners will only be released on the condition that 100 Israeli hostages are freed.

"Immediately after the end of the pause in fighting needed to secure the release of the hostages, fighting will resume in the Gaza Strip in order to destroy the military and organizational capabilities of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza and to create the conditions for the return of all the hostages," the statement reads.

Hamas took the hostages

during its murderous assault on southern Israel on Oct. 7, during which thousands of heavily armed terrorists stormed across the Gaza border, murdering 1,200 people and wounding over 5,000 others.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog supported the government's decision, though adding that he understood its opponents.

"The reservations are understandable, painful and difficult, but given the circumstances, I back and support the decision of the prime minister and the government to move forward with the deal to release hostages," Herzog said on Wednesday.

"This is a moral and ethical duty that correctly expresses the Jewish and Israeli value of securing the freedom of those held captive, with the hope that it will be the first step in returning all the hostages home.

"The State of Israel, the IDF and all the security forces will continue to act in every way possible to achieve this goal, alongside the restoration of the absolute security of the citizens of Israel," he continued.

While initially opposed to the deal, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said on Wednesday that his Religious Zionism Party voted for it after being convinced that Israel would continue its mission to destroy Hamas in Gaza.

During the debate, it became clear to Smotrich that "repatriating hostages would advance the goals of the war and that the government, the Cabinet and the entire defense establishment were unreservedly committed to continuing the war until the destruction of Hamas."

Smotrich thanked the IDF for putting pressure on the terrorist group that created the conditions for the hostage deal and vowed the country's political echelon would continue to support its efforts.

"We have no intention of stopping, on the contrary—the political echelon stands behind you, believes in you and is convinced that you will complete the job, destroy the Hamas Nazis in Gaza and restore security and national dignity to the citizens of Israel," he said.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and his Otzma Yehudit Party voted

against the deal, warning that freeing Palestinian terrorists could "bring disaster" and adding that fuel being allowed into the Strip might end up being used by Hamas to power its terror machine.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid said on Wednesday that his Yesh Atid Party supports the deal, tweeting that "the State of Israel has a supreme obligation to continue to work to return all the hostages home, until the last one."

In a letter to Justice Minister Yariv Levin, the organization demanded to see the list of prisoners Israel is considering releasing; the ministry has published the names of the 300 terrorists on its website.

The Almagor group is also demanding to know what restrictions on combat and intelligence-gathering will be part of the agreement.

It also wants to know about "the delivery of fuel and other supplies which may help Hamas conduct terror operations against residents of Israel," and "the general commitments Israel is making to Hamas that have been given directly or through a third party."

## Three-quarters of American Jews fear Israel-Hamas war is making their communities less safe, poll finds

By Ben Sales

(JTA) — Large majorities of American Jews are worried for their safety amid Israel's war with Hamas and believe antisemitism is on the rise, according to a new poll.

And the vast majority of American Jews support military aid for Israel. Most Americans overall also support military aid for Israel, the poll found. The Jewish Federations of North America, which commissioned the poll, had initially included data about whether respondents approved of President Joe Biden's Israel policy, but later said that data was inaccurate.

According to the poll, which was published Thursday, 75

percent of American Jews are either very or somewhat concerned that the war will cause issues in terms of security and safety in their communities. Nearly three in 10 said they knew of "physical acts of violence or acts of hate" against Jews in their communities.

And 72 percent of Jews said antisemitism in their local communities has increased over the past few weeks. Zero percent believe it has decreased. Most Jews also believe antisemitism will continue to increase.

The poll, conducted by Benenson Strategy Group, is the first measure of the sentiments of American Jews since Hamas invaded Israel on Oct. 7, sparking a war in Gaza

in which Israel has vowed to defeat the terror group. In the weeks since the war began, law enforcement agencies and Jewish security groups have documented a spike in antisemitic acts. Earlier this week, a Jewish man near Los Angeles died following a confrontation with a pro-Palestinian protester.

Asked to describe how they feel or the climate in their local community since the war started, 32 percent of Jews responded "tense," 21 percent said "uncomfortable" and 20 percent said "scary." Sixteen percent of Jews said it felt "normal."

A broad spectrum of Jewish groups have come out in support of Israel, pressed the

Biden administration to support its military campaign and staged rallies on behalf of Israel and the hostages held by Hamas. Jewish groups are planning a large rally in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday to drive home those messages and speak out against antisemitism.

At the same time, a small number of Jewish groups have delivered statements and staged a series of large rallies and actions calling for a ceasefire and placing blame for the conflict on Israel, which they have accused of "genocide."

The poll did not ask about the particulars of Israeli policy or the war. The words "Gaza," "hostages" and "ceasefire" do not appear in its questions. But Eric Fingerhut, the CEO of the Jewish Federations, said the poll results show that those demonstrations do not represent most Jews or Americans.

"We know that large majorities of Americans support Israel in its fight against terror, and it's important not to let a vocal minority warp that view," he said in a statement.

The poll was taken from Oct. 29 to Nov. 1 and reached respondents via text message. It included 3,777 American adults, including 2,199 Jews. The margin of error was approximately 1.5 percent for the overall sample and 2 percent for the Jewish respondents.

The survey found that 85 percent of Jews and 53 percent of Americans overall have been following news about the war closely. An additional 15% of Jews are following the war news somewhat closely.

Regarding U.S. military aid to Israel, 73 percent of Jews said it's very important and 14 percent said it is somewhat important, versus 13 percent who said it's not too, or not at all, important. Among U.S. adults overall, 60 percent say it is important and 40 percent say it is not.

The survey also found that both Jews and Americans overall feel there is significant prejudice in the United States against Jews, Muslims, Arabs and Palestinians. Two-thirds of Jews said there is "a lot" of

discrimination against Jews, and an additional 26 percent said there is some, for a total of 92 percent. Likewise, 78 percent of Americans overall said Jews face a lot or some discrimination.

In addition, approximately 75 percent of Jews said Arabs as well as Muslims face discrimination in America, and 66 percent of Jews said Palestinians face discrimination. Majorities of Americans overall also said those groups face discrimination.

Jewish respondents have felt less secure over the past month, with 42 percent saying they have worried for their personal safety very much or all the time during that period, and an additional 30 percent saying they are somewhat worried. And 74 percent of Jews said there is a lot of antisemitism in the United States today; 86 percent say there's more antisemitism than there was five years ago.

Jews who wear Jewish symbols were twice as likely to say they worried for their personal safety "all the time."

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## Weekly roundup of world briefs

### Israel's coalition to advance bill giving Druze special status

(JNS) — Israel's government coalition announced on Saturday evening that it will advance a Basic Law to give the Druze community special status.

The decision comes as six soldiers from the minority have been killed in action against Hamas terrorists in Gaza during the IDF's "Operation Swords of Iron."

Coalition chairman Ofir Katz and Foreign Minister Eli Cohen announced the legislation, saying that "in the coming days we will advance the draft law on the foundation of the Druze community, which aims to anchor the important position of the Druze community in the State of Israel."

Katz said, "We're setting the wheels in motion for the Druze community Basic Law [to pass] in the imminent future. The aim is to enshrine in law the crucial role of the Druze community in the State of Israel."

The proposal will not amend the 2018 "Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People," which was seen by some as giving the Druze and other minorities second-class citizenship and was opposed by Druze leaders.

Druze are known for their fierce loyalty to Israel and high rates of military service, particularly in combat roles.

"I welcome this important initiative, which will do historical justice to the members of the Druze community in Israel," Construction and Housing Minister Yitzchak Goldknopf said.

"There is a covenant of blood between the State of Israel and the Druze community and we have the responsibility and duty to do everything so that the citizens of Israel who are members of the community are equal in their status and rights," the minister said.

### Mixed-gender battalion fights in Gaza for first time

(JNS) — For the first time, a mixed-gender battalion is fighting inside the Gaza Strip, the Israel Defense Forces said on Sunday.

The soldiers from the 498th "Shahar" Battalion, part of the Home Front Command's Rescue and Training Brigade, joined the ground forces' activity in Gaza, the IDF said.

The female and male fighters of the battalion joined brigade combat teams of the 162nd Division, performing tasks such as scanning buildings and locating weapons in the area of the Shati Camp. The camp is a Hamas stronghold in northern Gaza.

During a raid on a hotel where Hamas terrorists were hiding, soldiers also uncovered an underground floor in a hotel where intelligence material was found.

The Shahar Battalion's engineers also advise other soldiers on the safety of damaged buildings they consider entering.

### Israeli troops hold mezuzah-hanging ceremony in Gaza City

(JNS) — IDF troops held a *mezuzah*-hanging ceremony in Gaza City, *Israel National News* reported on Monday.

Givati Infantry Brigade

Rabbi Daniel Kind led the ceremony, which was attended by soldiers and commanders in the Strip as part of the mission to defeat Hamas after the Oct. 7 massacre.

"I wish the entire brigade to continue in our special work, in the great mission. God willing, we will succeed," Kind was quoted as saying.

In Jewish tradition, a *mezuzah* ("doorpost" in Hebrew) is a piece of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah held in a case that is attached to the right doorframe of the entrance to the home and in all of the rooms of the residence.

Due to uncertainty concerning the Gaza City ceremony under Jewish law (*halachah*), the rabbi recited a verse from Psalms instead of the regular blessing: "Blessed are You, O Lord; train me in Your laws."

Rabbi Yoel Rechel, who was expelled from Gush Katif during the 2005 disengagement from the Gaza Strip, posted a video to Facebook on Nov. 16 of another *mezuzah*-blessing ceremony after IDF troops took over Al-Azhar University in Gaza City, which the rabbi renamed to the Hebrew Elazar.

Israeli soldiers prayed at a sixth-century synagogue in Gaza earlier this month.

Michael Freund, founder and chairman of Shavei Israel, tweeted that "for the first time in decades, Israeli soldiers prayed in the ancient synagogue in Gaza which was built in the 6th century and where a beautiful mosaic floor depicting King David was unearthed years ago. Jews have returned to Gaza!"

### Award announced for information leading to killer of Samantha Woll

(JNS) — Following the arrest and release without charges of an unnamed suspect in the death of synagogue leader Samantha Woll, Detroit law enforcement has put forward a reward for clues.

Those providing information leading to the arrest of her killer will receive \$15,000.

In spite of a lack of suspects, police continue to insist that antisemitism was not a motivating factor, citing a lack of signs typical in a hate crime.

Law enforcement found Woll's body outside her house on Oct. 21, believing she fled after an attack inside the house.

### Michigan home of Rahm Emanuel vandalized with antisemitic graffiti

(JNS) — A home in Gordon Beach, Mich., belonging to Rahm Emanuel—U.S. ambassador to Japan, former White House chief of staff and former mayor of Chicago—was vandalized recently with antisemitic graffiti.

"Our family is very proud of how our friends, neighbors and the community have rallied to our support and in a singular voice in condemning hatred and bigotry," Emanuel told the *Chicago Sun-Times*. He was reportedly in Chicago at the time of the incident.

Photos showed the word "Nazis," with the last letter forming a dollar sign, painted in black on a wooden fence at the property on Lake Michigan. The second letter appeared to be an anarchist symbol.

The Michigan office of the Anti-Defamation League said it is "disgusted" by antisemitic messages defacing both Emanuel's home and Chabad of Kalamazoo in Michigan. It added that it is working with law enforcement and the U.S. attorney for the Western District of Michigan and urges that "both incidents be investigated as potential hate crimes."

"A little bit of light pushes away a lot of darkness," said Rabbi Mordechai Haller of the Kalamazoo Chabad House of the vandalism of the Jewish center and Chanukah decorations there.

"This was an act of darkness," he added. "There's a lot of darkness in the world. The way that we fight is we start with light."

### Water 4 Mercy brings fresh water to Tanzanian village for first time

(JNS) — A nonprofit entity that combines efforts at water access, improved agriculture and community engagement in sub-Saharan Africa has brought its innovations to an 18th community.

Water 4 Mercy has created a supply of fresh water for the Ausia village in Kondo, Tanzania, a remote location that during dry seasons necessitated long walks for its 3,000 or so residents to retrieve uncontaminated water.

"In the process of getting this tainted water, it is common that women, who are traditionally tasked with water retrieval for the home, hurt themselves, are attacked by animals and in many cases raped," said the nonprofit.

The project began in 2023 in collaboration with its partner group, Innovation: Africa. Water 4 Mercy tapped an aquifer to provide fresh water and installed solar panels to operate the pumps.

Nermine Khouzam Rubin, founder and CEO of Water 4 Mercy, noted that "this work would not be possible without the collaboration of our partners at Innovation: Africa, CultivAid and the Don Bosco Technical Institutes, as well as the donations of our patrons."

### Israel recalls South Africa envoy over 'genocide' comment

(JNS) — Israel has recalled its ambassador to South Africa for consultations after the country's ruling African National Congress (ANC) accused the Jewish state of "genocide" in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said that Eliav Belotsercovsky would return to Jerusalem following the "latest statements from South Africa."

ANC spokeswoman Mahlengi Bhengu-Motsiri said last week that, "We cannot sit back and watch the genocidal actions of the Israeli regime."

The move comes two weeks after Pretoria recalled its diplomats from Israel.

"We are ... extremely concerned at the continued killing of children and innocent civilians in the Palestinian territories and we believe the nature of response by Israel has become one of collective punishment," South African Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor said at the time.

"We felt it important that we do signal the concern of South Africa while continu-

ing to call for a comprehensive cessation [of hostilities]," she continued.

Israel has consistently stated that its war is with Hamas, not Gazan civilians, and has demonstrated how Hamas commits war crimes by using human shields. Israel maintains that it acts within international law and does everything possible to avoid civilian casualties.

Pandor spoke by phone with Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh on Oct. 17, less than two weeks after the terror group's assault on southern Israel, during which it massacred 1,200 people, wounded more than 5,000 others and took some 240 hostages back to Gaza.

### Torah scrolls dedicated at Western Wall in honor of hostages, soldiers

(JNS) — A massive Torah scroll dedication ceremony to honor Israeli hostages and soldiers in Gaza was set to take place Tuesday afternoon at the Western Wall Plaza in Jerusalem's Old City.

Two scrolls were being dedicated "to elevate the souls of the fallen, the well-being of soldiers, and return of the hostages."

Families of fallen soldiers and hostages as well as evacuees from the north and south were slated to attend the ceremony. Rabbis and public figures were also expected to participate.

Prayers will focus on the speedy return of some 240 hostages being held by Hamas after they were kidnapped on Oct. 7, when thousands of Palestinian terrorists stormed across the border with the Gaza Strip and murdered 1,200 Israelis.

Other prayers will be for the health and safety of Israeli soldiers in harm's way.

Ceremonies were also taking place for dozens of additional Torah scrolls that will eventually be donated to communities devastated by the war.

The first Torah scroll will be completed on Tuesday at the Western Wall and dedicated the following day to the Kerem Shalom community in the Gaza Envelope.

### Israeli troops hold mezuzah-hanging ceremony in Gaza City

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Givati Infantry Brigade Rabbi Daniel Kind led the ceremony, which was attended by soldiers and commanders in the Strip as part of the mission to defeat Hamas after the Oct. 7 massacre.

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### IAF strikes three armed terror cells at Lebanese border

(JNS) — Israeli aircraft on Tuesday struck three armed terror cells in Lebanese territory close to the border, as well as a number of Hezbollah targets, the army said.

Sirens sounded in northern Israel on Tuesday morning due to a potential hostile aircraft intrusion from Lebanon, with the IDF later giving the all-clear.

Three anti-tank missile launches from Lebanon toward the area of Metula near the Israel-Lebanon border were identified by the IDF on Tuesday morning. No injuries were reported, and the IDF struck the source of the launches.

Later on Tuesday morning, the IDF reported that terrorists fired mortar shells at a military post in northern Israel. No injuries were reported in that attack and the IDF responded with artillery fire.

### Iron Beam laser intercepts Hamas rocket from Gaza

(JNS) — Israel made history in recent days with the first operational use of its "Iron Beam" laser defense system during its war with Hamas, *Channel 14* reported on Monday.

The laser beam successfully intercepted an incoming rocket fired by terrorists in the Gaza Strip at Israeli territory.

The incident is the first use of a laser-based air defense system in a war zone.

More than 10,000 missiles, rockets, mortars and drones have been launched at Israel since the start of "Operation Swords of Iron" in response to Hamas's Oct. 7 massacre.

Israel is accelerating the development of the Iron Beam, with the security establishment aiming to make it fully operational as early as next year, according to a report on Monday in Israeli daily business news site *Calcalist*.

"More than a hundred engineers from Rafael's Research, Development and Engineering division are working on accelerating the development of Iron Beam," the article states.

Iron Beam is the first ever ground-based laser air defense system against rockets, mortars and unmanned aerial vehicles, delivering

speed-of-light engagement of threats at low cost compared to missile interceptors.

Israel's "Iron Sting" laser- and GPS-guided mortar weapon was used for the first time in combat during the Gaza ground operation, the IDF reported on Tuesday.

Soldiers from the Maglan unit used the Iron Sting weapon along with the Spike anti-tank guided missile during activities in the Strip. According to the IDF, the Maglan soldiers destroyed over 70 targets and killed many terrorists.

### USC suspends professor who called for Hamas 'murderers' to be killed

(JNS) — At a Nov. 10 vigil at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, professor John Strauss made clear his condemnation of the terrorist group that rules the Gaza Strip and attacked Israel on Oct. 7.

"Hamas are murderers; that's all they are," he said. "Everyone should be killed, and I hope they all are."

In response, administrators chose to bar Strauss from campus, allowing him to contact students virtually for the rest of the semester.

"Totally barring a professor from campus because of a passing comment like this is a shocking overreaction. Regardless of professor Strauss's intent, he is entitled to his views and the right to share them," said Jonathan Friedman, director of free expression and education programs at PEN America.

He continued, saying "it is no doubt a challenging time for campuses, and we recognize that words may feel especially menacing in this environment. But it is exactly because of rising tensions that universities must resist the urge to place limits on speech or dole out punishments for comments that do not rise to the level of clear threats or incitement."

Friedman added that "what USC has done runs counter to the university's obligation to foster dialogue and debate."

### Israeli soldier saves six lives after falling in Gaza

(JNS) — IDF Staff Sergeant Yehonatan Yitzhak Semo, 21, was wounded in combat in central Gaza on Nov. 10 and evacuated to the Beilinson Hospital in Petach Tikvah, where he later died.

He was a resident of Karmeit Tzur, near Hebron.

His organs have been donated to six patients, Israel's National Transplant Center announced on Sunday.

Semo's lungs were transplanted into 36-year-old Meir Atsaba, also of Kiryat Gat. The father of two had suffered from lung disease which became life-threatening when he contracted coronavirus.

Yaakov Malka, a 46-year-old father of four from Kiryat Gat, received Sam's heart. He suffered from heart failure and at one point had even received an artificial heart.

Semo's liver was donated to a 51-year-old patient while the liver lobe was transplanted into an eight-month-old infant.

The kidneys were transplanted into a 10-year-old child and a 50-year-old patient.



# 100 Jewish youth make aliyah to enlist in IDF

By Noam Dvir

(JNS) — Some 100 young Jewish men and women from around the world have decided to make aliyah and enlist in the Israel Defense Forces as Israel wages war against the Hamas terrorist organization.

In a month, they will put on their uniforms. Meanwhile, they are completing a preparatory course run by the Defense Ministry's Defense and Society Department. The course is taking place at an immigrant absorption center in Karmiel, in the Galilee—an area where strikes by the Lebanese-based Hezbollah terror group are a daily occurrence and the threat of a major confrontation looms.

During the four-week program, the participants will prepare physically and mentally for their service, study Hebrew and get to know Israeli society.

"About 100 Jewish youngsters from the Diaspora chose to leave their families, friends and work to come to Israel and volunteer for the IDF," Udi Dror, head of recruitment at the Defense and Society Department, said. "They do this at a time of war to take part in the defense of Israel. This is not taken for granted. We sup-

port them upon their arrival in Israel and will continue to do so throughout their entire military service."

**Choosing to stay and serve**  
One such youngster is 18-year-old Esther Brown from Mexico.

Brown knew from a young age that she wanted to move to Israel.

"I always wanted to help Israel, and certainly in the current situation. I arrived in Israel in July, and when the war broke out in October, I had the option to fly back to Mexico and not join the program.

"I thought about it a lot, my parents wanted me to return at first, but I decided to stay despite the difficulty. And now? The pride that they feel is much greater than the worry.

"I want to serve in a combat unit, and if possible—join the K-9 unit or the search and rescue unit. Another option is military service in the foreign relations unit because I feel that I can really help in public diplomacy," she says.

**'I really want to get into Golani'**

Nineteen-year-old Soleil Tibi from Paris will also don his uniform next month.

When asked which unit he most wants to join, he im-

mediately answers "Golani." So far in "Operation Swords of Iron" in Gaza, the Golani Infantry Brigade has lost the most soldiers, but it has also reached the most impressive achievements.

Tibi has three siblings and most of his family members still live in Paris. He developed his passion to join the IDF while studying in Israel.

"Ever since I was little, I knew I would come to Israel, but I didn't think it would happen at the age of 17, and my parents didn't really like the idea either. In France, I met friends who told me about Israel, the school and the army. As a result, I decided to come to Israel to

study at a school in Holon, near Tel Aviv.

"There I met friends who had to enlist in the IDF and older friends who already had—and their stories encouraged me to enlist. Although I am not obligated to enlist, I decided that I wanted to, and to join a combat unit. I really want to get into Golani."

Tibi was on a brief trip to France when the war broke out; he immediately returned to Israel to fulfill his dream.

"My family was very worried and told me that it is dangerous these days in Israel, but they understood that this was my wish and supported me. Moreover, it is also difficult in

Paris at this time as well due to the antisemitism, and this is felt on a daily level."

**Motivated to enlist**

"The war only increased my motivation to enlist in the IDF," said 20-year-old Abraham Matt, originally from New Jersey.

Born and raised in the U.S., Matt moved to Israel about two years ago and studied in a yeshiva. "I want to enlist in the Sayeret Matkal special operations unit [the General Staff Reconnaissance Unit] and intend to reach as high as possible," he said.

When asked what motivated him to enlist, Matt said, "Last year we visited Masada. The tour guide told us the

story of the place, that it was the last place of refuge for the Jews [in the Great Revolt of 66-74] and that they had nowhere to run. At that point, I realized that in order for that to never happen again, I had to volunteer and contribute. Israel is the country of Jews from all over the world—from the U.S., France and Russia. It is our home.

"I heard about the events of Oct. 7 when I was in the US on a visit. This increased my motivation to enlist. I feel that fighting is really a sacred mission, that the people of Israel should be united and defeat Hamas."

*Originally published by Israel Hayom.*

## Biden: Gaza op will end when Hamas can no longer murder Israelis

(JNS) — U.S. President Joe Biden said on Wednesday that Israel's Gaza operation will last until Hamas no longer has the power to commit the types of atrocities witnessed on Oct. 7.

"I think it's going to stop when Hamas no longer maintains the capacity to murder and abuse and just do horrific things to the Israelis. And they still think they—at least as of this morning, they still thought they could," Biden said at a press conference in California following a meeting with China's Xi Jinping.

"When Hamas said they plan on doing the same thing again—what they did on the 7th... they're going to go in—they want to slaughter Israelis. They want to do it again. And they've said it out loud. They're not even kidding about it. They're not backing off. "And so, I just asked the rhetorical question, 'I wonder what we would do

if that were the case?'" the president remarked.

Senior Hamas official Ghazi Hamad told Lebanon's LBC TV on Oct. 24 that the terror group would continue to carry out massacres like the one it carried out in southern Israel on Oct. 7 until the Jewish state is destroyed.

"The Al-Aqsa Flood [Hamas's name for the Oct. 7 mass terror attack] is just the first time, and there will be a second, a third, a fourth... because we have the determination, the resolve and the capabilities to fight," said Hamad.

During the Q&A with reporters Biden said that it was "established" that Hamas uses Al Shifa Hospital and other medical centers in Gaza for its terror warfare against Israel after the White House said on Tuesday that a "variety" U.S. intelligence sources confirmed Israeli claims.

"I think that Israel is also taking risks themselves, about their folks

being killed one-to-one going through these hospital rooms, hospital halls. But one thing has been established is that Hamas does have headquarters, weapons, materiel below this hospital and, I suspect, others," the president said.

The president offered a lengthy response on if he considered the Al Shifa Hospital operation justified:

"Here's the situation: You have a circumstance where the first war crime is being committed by Hamas by having their headquarters, their military hidden under a hospital. And that's a fact. That's what's happened. "Israel did not go in with a large number of troops, did not raid, did not rush everything down. They've gone in and they've gone in with their soldiers carrying weapons or guns. They were told... told, let me be precise, we've discussed the need for them to be incredibly careful.

"You have a circumstance where you know

there is a fair number of Hamas terrorists. Hamas has already said publicly that they plan on attacking Israel again like they did before, to where they were cutting babies' heads off to burn—burning women and children alive. "And so, the idea that they're going to just stop and not do anything is not realistic. This is not the carpet bombing. This is a different thing. They're going through these tunnels; they're going in the hospital. "And if you notice, I... I was mildly preoccupied today, I apologize, I didn't see everything, but what I did see, whether... I haven't had it confirmed yet, I have asked my team to answer the question, but what happened is they're [the IDF] also bringing in incubators. They're bringing in other... other means to help the people in the hospital, and they've given the doctors and, I'm told, the doctors and nurses and personnel an opportunity to get out of harm's way."

Happy Chanukah!  
from  
Andrew L. Reiff, P.A.  
Attorney and Counselor at Law

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## Israel will have 'security responsibility' for Gaza

(JNS) — Israel will have "overall security responsibility" for the Gaza Strip after defeating Hamas, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday.

"I think Israel for an indefinite period will have the overall security responsibility because we've seen what happens when we don't have it. When we don't have that security responsibility, what we have is the eruption of Hamas terror on a scale that we couldn't imagine," Netanyahu told ABC World News Tonight anchor David Muir.

The military is conducting a war against Hamas in Gaza with the goal of eliminating the terror group's capacity to threaten Israel. The war was sparked by Hamas's mass invasion of the western Negev on Oct. 7, during which the terror group murdered 1,400 people, wounded more than

5,000 and took more than 200 back to the Gaza Strip as hostages.

The United States has been pressing for the Palestinian Authority to take a "leading role" in a post-Hamas Gaza Strip, as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated in a visit to Ramallah on Sunday, but Israel does not want another terror group sworn to its destruction at its borders.

Earlier this week, Likud parliamentarian Amit Halevy slammed the U.S. proposal to hand over control of Gaza to the P.A., saying the Biden administration was "slapping Israel in the face" by pressing the position.

"While Blinken vows that he will do everything to prevent a recurrence of the events of Oct. 7, he pushes for giving control of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority, whose members, exactly like Hamas, advocate for

the destruction of Israel and applaud Hamas's murderous Nazi-like massacre of Jews, seeking to emulate them," said Halevy.

Terrorists from P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah party joined in Hamas's murderous assault on southern Israel on Oct. 7. The video of members of the Fatah-affiliated Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade bragging about partaking in the massacre was exposed last week by Palestinian Media Watch.

During the ABC interview on Monday, Netanyahu also reiterated that "there will be no ceasefire in Gaza without the release of our hostages."

"It will hamper the war effort. It will hamper our effort to get our hostages out. The only thing that works on these Hamas criminals is the military pressure we are exerting," he said.

He also pushed back against criticism of mount-

ing civilian casualties in Gaza, stating that the media should not take casualty figures provided by the Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry at face value because they do not include the thousands of terrorists killed fighting Israeli forces.

"I think every civilian loss is a tragedy. We are fighting an enemy that is particularly brutal. They are using their civilians as human shields. While we are asking the Palestinian civilian population to leave the war zone, they are preventing them at gunpoint," he said.

Netanyahu also had a message for Iran and its terror proxy Hezbollah in Lebanon: "I think they've understood that if they enter the war in a significant way the response will be very, very powerful and I hope they don't make that mistake."



# Conservative Judaism's flagship in mourning

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

(JTA) — The Jewish Theological Seminary community is in mourning after three revered scholars long associated with the Conservative movement flagship died within days of each other.

Rabbi Israel Francus, who died Nov. 15 at age 96, and Rabbi Avraham Holtz, who died the same day at age 89, were both professors emeritus at the seminary — Francus as a longtime professor of Talmudic exegesis and Holtz in Hebrew literature.

Samuel Klagsbrun, who died Nov. 11 at age 91, was a psychiatrist and medical director of a private psychiatric hospital who for many years taught pastoral psychiatry to JTS students, and was instrumental in the creation, in 2009, of the seminary's Center for Pastoral Education.

"Together, these three individuals reflect the breadth and depth of a JTS education," Shuly Rubin Schwartz, the chancellor of JTS, said in a statement to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. She noted that the three represented "the importance JTS attaches to educating not only the texts, history, and ideas of our people but also ensuring that future clergy were attuned to the heart, soul, and emotional lives of the Jews they would serve."

Klagsbrun was perhaps the best known of the three outside of the seminary. The founder and executive medical

director of Four Winds Hospitals in Katonah and Saratoga Springs, New York, he sought to reconcile the sometimes competing claims of religion and psychiatry, telling the New York Times in 2002, "Psychiatrists were not paying any attention to religion or the spiritual aspects of life. And religion and religious values and backgrounds and spiritual dimensions are extremely important to people's dynamics."

He was also known for his work on psychological challenges facing cancer patients, his approaches to the ethics of death and dying, and a devotion to improving hospice care.

Born in Antwerp, Belgium, Klagsbrun emigrated with his parents to Manhattan, where he attended the Ramaz school, Yeshiva High School and City College. He received a Seminary College degree from JTS in 1954 before earning a medical degree from Chicago Medical School.

Klagsbrun was a founding member of Or Zarua, a Conservative congregation on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. He and his wife, the writer Francine Klagsbrun, a longtime columnist for the New York Jewish Week and the author of a recent biography of Golda Meir, met at Camp Ramah in the Poconos. She survives him, as does his daughter Sarah and son-in-law Eric Weinstein, and three grandchildren.

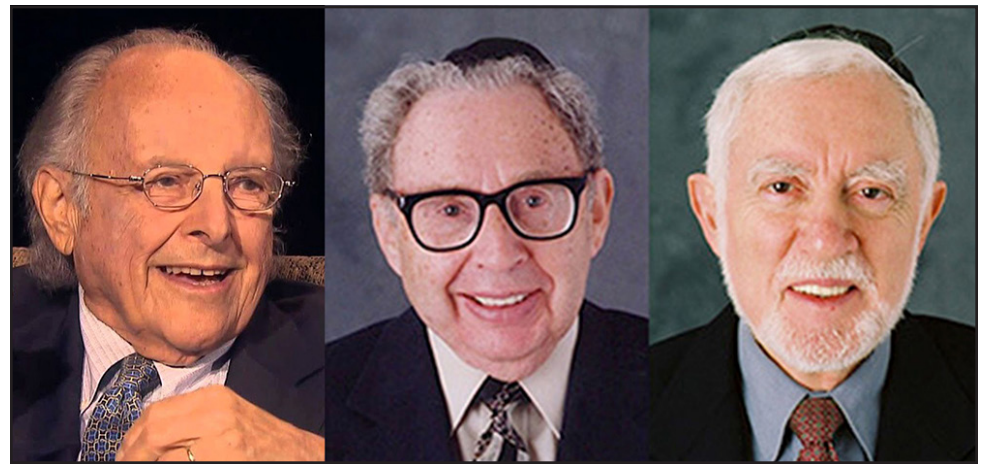
Holtz, the Simon H. Fabian Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Literature at JTS, was an

authority on the Nobel-prize winning Israeli author S.Y. Agnon, producing, in 1995, a fully annotated and illustrated edition of Agnon's masterwork "Hakhnasat Kallah," or "The Bridal Canopy."

In an interview with fellow Agnon scholar Jeffrey Saks in 2016, he explained why he modeled the annotated edition on the "Mikraot Gedolot," a collection of classic rabbinic commentaries of the Bible — a decision that drew the scorn of traditionalists. "You can understand the whole attack by the fact that I came from [the] Jewish Theological Seminary," said Holtz. "Only somebody coming from the Seminary would do such a sinful thing."

Holtz was ordained and received his doctorate at JTS, where he also taught and served as chair of its department of Hebrew Literature and as dean of Academic Development. In a eulogy, Schwartz described Holtz as "part of a cadre of younger, native-born scholars teaching at JTS in the 1960s who in retrospect proved to be harbingers of the explosion of Jewish studies in higher education in the United States."

Schwartz also quoted professor emeritus Judith Hauptman, who remembered him as having a command of Hebrew that was "so excellent and fluent that it could make your jaw drop. It was a privilege to read any text with him — whether it was a classic poem, a midrash, or an Agnon story.



Samuel Klagsbrun, Israel Francus and Avraham Holtz were on the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

For Avraham the literature was his life's blood."

Holtz is survived by Toby Esther Berger, a retired senior lecture in chemistry at Barnard College, four children — Shalom Eliezer Holtz, Razelle Weinstein, Mordecai Yehiel Holtz and Miriam Malka Craime — their spouses and numerous grandchildren.

A native of Poland and survivor of Auschwitz, Israel Francus was the Judge Abraham Lieberman Distinguished Service Professor of Talmudic Exegesis at JTS, where he taught generations of students in the close reading of the rabbinic literature at the heart of a rabbi's education. Among the many tributes shared on social media following his death, Rabbi Josh Gruenberg of Baltimore's Chizuk Amuno Congregation spoke about the "joy" of taking Francus' class.

"In the span of just one class, he could make you laugh to your core with lightning-fast quips, remind you of the great care rabbis have always taken in understanding our tradition, lift you up with a compliment that inspired you to work harder, and make you cry as he shared heartfelt stories and lessons on the occasions of his teachers' *yahrzeits*," said Gruenberg.

Francus received bachelor's and master's degrees from both Columbia University and JTS as one of the first two graduates of JTS's joint program with Columbia. He was also ordained at JTS.

His published works include an analysis of a commentary on a Talmudic tractate by the 16th-century rabbi Elazar Azikri, as well as over 40 articles published in Israeli journals. An article on how to interpret a *sugya* — the

essential literary unit of the Talmud — will be published posthumously in the journal *Sinai*.

"My father was modest about his accomplishments," Francus' son Yitzchak, an attorney living in Pittsburgh, said at his father's funeral, held Nov. 15 at JTS. "Not modest in the sense of self-abnegation, or in the showy sense of conceit internalized, but modest in the perspectival sense. He stood in awe of the Talmud. For him, simply participating in its eternal discourse was an almost unimaginable honor."

Francus is survived by his wife, Tova (Shulzinger) Francus, an immunologist; his sons Yoseff, Yitzchak and Yaacov Francus; 10 grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

Holtz and Francus were both buried in Israel.

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