



Sylvester Tevet 24 5779 Secular New Years Eve *Israeli Style*

"Sylvester" - In 46 BCE the Roman emperor Julius Caesar made adjustments to the Roman calendar, including beginning the new year on January 1 rather than in March. (He egocentrically decreed that the calendar should henceforth be called the "Julian" calendar.)

In practical terms, all cultures celebrated the new year according to their particular calendar and the Romans were no different. When the Roman Empire became the Holy Roman Empire under Constantine, at his mother Helena's behest, the Christian world carried on the custom of celebrating the Roman new year.

In many European countries this day was named after Saint Sylvester. There have been three popes named Sylvester (who later became Saints), but the one after whom the day is named is Sylvester I (314-335). Christianity grew under his rule and it is believed that he died on December 31.

In addition, during his rule it was believed that he had been swallowed by the Leviathan sea monster and that the monster would return in the year 1000 to destroy and kill. When it did not, people were relieved and they celebrated.

As you see, there is nothing remotely Jewish about "Sylvester Day." So why is it celebrated in Israel? Israeli society flows according to the Jewish calendar. Schools and businesses are closed on Shabbat, and the whole country shuts down on Jewish holidays like Yom Kippur.

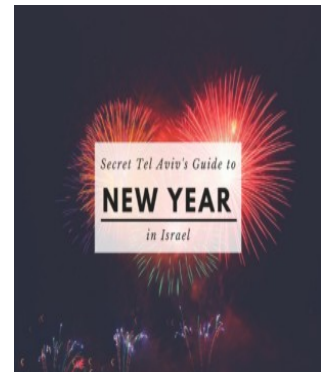
For that reason the secular/Christian new year has little significance. Yet when some ultra-secularists discovered that most of the world holds a "New Years party," they didn't want to feel left out.

Yet they couldn't call it "New Years" because that title was already taken by Rosh Hashana. So the name "Sylvester" was adopted in its stead.

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IFR Member of Blessed Memory**RABBI MARK WILLIAM KURRY Z"L**

1940-2018

The IFR lost a member and friend May 2, 2018. Rabbi "Bill" he was a graduate of the Rabbinical Seminary International and a member of the IFR for 10 years.

Rabbi Kurry, was a former college English professor has enjoyed years of leadership positions and deep roots in the Jewish community. Rabbi Bill has completed the 7½ year cycle of Daf Yomi Talmud study.

He was a member and guest leader at his local Orthodox, Conservative and Reform congregations. Rabbi Kurry was committed to the concept of a life of personal spiritual development and service to God and humanity.

He believed that we are all God's children. His enthusiasm and joy of Judaism was coupled with profound respect of all faiths and traditions.

Rabbi Kurry received Rabbinic ordination from Rabbi Joseph H. Gelberman z"l and The Rabbinical Seminary in New York City.

The Kurry family writes --

Rabbi Bill, as he was affectionately known, is survived by his wife, JoAnn Brousell Kurry, his children, Jonathan Kurry (Yahima), Jodi Kurry Cohen, Drew Kurry (Meredith), Matthew Kurry (Aimee) and Steven Brousell, and his nine grandchildren, Max, Emma, Mitchell, Jeffrey, Jessica, Cassidy, Jacob, Andrew, James and Lilly.

Bill was born on July 26, 1940 in Newark, New Jersey to Oscar and Gwen Kurry. He graduated from the University of Georgia in 1962 and held a Master's of Arts and Literature from Kean University.

Bill was a principal at Rogers Clothes and later Kurry's Clothes, and was later ordained as a rabbi after graduating from The Rabbinical Seminary in New York. All those whose lives he touched will remember him as a kind, gentle soul, generous with his affection, time and money.

He was so proud of his loving wife, children and many grandchildren, encouraging their hopes and dreams, supportive beyond measure.

Rabbi Bill was deeply spiritual, dedicated to Judaism and his community.

He had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, not only for his own edification, but also as a teacher and enthusiastic guide to those around him.

May Rabbi "Bill" Kurry's memory be for us a blessing.



A LOCAL RABBI'S MESSAGE TO THE WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL BOYS WHO GAVE THE NAZI SALUTE



MADISON, Wis. ([JTA](#)) *Reprinted from JTA article* I'd like to share some thoughts with you about why an image of almost 60 boys taking part in a Nazi salute has been so disturbing. I have no wish to condemn or denounce the boys, and I assume that many of them did not understand the meaning of the Nazi salute, nor did they intend to harm anyone.

The first point I'd like to make is that while seeing the image of a Nazi salute has a particular effect on Jews, this isn't just about Jews. This is about white supremacy.

White supremacy is an ugly ideology that affects us all. We are at a crossroads in this country – either we will become a country that honors and welcomes everyone in all their diversity, as we try to learn from each other and appreciate our differences, or we will become a country that even more staunchly privileges white, Christian people over everyone else; a country that even more firmly institutionalizes racism and in doing so disparages Jews, along with African-Americans, Latinos, Muslims, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We are at a crossroads, and we must decide whether we are going to resist white supremacy or we are going to look the other way. It's not just that the image caused great hurt in the community – it's that the image is a manifestation of growing anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia and

Islamophobia in this country. Context matters. Hate crimes are increasing and hate groups are growing exponentially. Just a few weeks ago we witnessed the killing of 11 Jews in a synagogue in Pittsburgh. Three years ago we witnessed the killing of nine African-Americans in a church in Charleston. Six years ago we witnessed the killing of six Sikh worshippers in a Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

These were the high-profile shootings, but far too many acts of intimidation and violence are being perpetrated against immigrants, Muslims, transgender people and so many others. This should concern all of us. There cannot be healing until we acknowledge and confront the political climate in which we live.

The second thought I want to share is that Jews feel a particular sense of horror at seeing a Nazi salute. Our people were the primary targets of the Nazi genocide. A little over a week ago we marked the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht, called the "Night of Broken Glass." It was on this night that the Nazis destroyed 267 synagogues and over 7,000 Jewish-owned stores and rounded up 36,000 Jewish men. This marked the beginning of the Holocaust, the Nazi genocide of the Jewish people. The Nazis killed 6 million Jews, including 1.5 million Jewish children. Two-thirds of the 9 million Jews who had been living in Europe were dead.

Anti-Semitism is a complex phenomenon, but we cannot understand the reaction to the Nazi salute without trying to learn how anti-Semitism has affected Jews throughout history.

For Jews, the Holocaust isn't just distant history. Most Jews have stories about family they lost. I know that I lost several relatives. But because of the chaos and devastation, I never learned their names. I know nothing about who they were or the lives they led – my parents have left me only with blank spaces on a family tree, a vague knowledge that there were so many loved ones who couldn't get out of Germany.

A LOCAL RABBI'S MESSAGE TO THE WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL BOYS WHO GAVE THE NAZI SALUTE

The third idea I want to emphasize is that the Holocaust didn't come out of nowhere. The Nazis drew on centuries of Christian anti-Semitism. They were able to accuse Jews of being the source of all problems facing the German people because Jews had become an easy scapegoat.

Jews had been persecuted by Christians for 2,000 years. In early Christianity, the Church wielded accusations that the Jews killed Christ. In the Middle Ages, Christians destroyed Jewish communities through widespread massacres in the Crusades. For centuries, different European rulers expelled Jews from their countries.

You can imagine how easy it was to target the Jews after so many centuries of persecution. So when Hitler accused the Jews of polluting Aryan blood, people listened. Times were tough and people needed someone to blame. While Jews had been living securely and were fully integrated into the societies in which they lived, the rise of Hitler led, very quickly, to their displacement and widespread persecution.

So where do we go from here, given that the photo has angered and hurt so many people, and there is a strong desire to heal the Baraboo community? I know that you will be discussing this at future gatherings, but I'd like to offer a Jewish response.

In Judaism, when one person hurts another person – regardless of whether the act was intentional – that person is required to do what is called “teshuvah.” It is a process of real reconciliation.

The idea is that healing is not possible until the people who have caused the harm acknowledge what they have done, take responsibility for their actions, apologize and make amends, and then commit to not doing that action again.

This concept of teshuvah carries with it the recognition that we all make mistakes. We all do things we wish we hadn't done.

A necessary component of teshuvah is learning. In this situation the learning needs to include the history of the Holocaust, but I would also argue that we should examine the experiences of other historically oppressed peoples because the Nazi salute is a sign of white supremacy. So let's also learn about Native Americans who were massacred, or driven off their lands here in Wisconsin, right here in Sauk County, and the history of African-Americans who were forced into slavery so others could profit. We must help our young people develop critical thinking skills, broaden their perspectives and become engaged in their world.

We are at a crossroads.

We can decide that it is our responsibility to learn each other's histories. We can decide that it is our responsibility to get to know people who are different from ourselves. We can decide that it is our responsibility to grapple with the political context in which we live. We can decide that it is our responsibility to become active participants in our schools and in our communities.

Or we can look the other way, try to put this behind us without doing the hard work it would take to grow from this experience. But I believe that would be a mistake.

Before I conclude, I want to speak to the young people here. You have your whole lives ahead of you. Wherever you found yourself in this incident – maybe you were in the photo with your arm up or your arm down, or you watched from the sidelines, or you spoke out about the photo, or you remained quiet, or you reached out to a friend or classmate – wherever you were, whatever you have done, you now have a choice.

A LOCAL RABBI'S MESSAGE TO THE WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL BOYS WHO GAVE THE NAZI SALUTE

You can decide to be involved in solving the problems of our world. You can decide to join with others and speak up when you see injustice. You can resist white supremacy.

This incident will not define you if you learn from it and move forward with a commitment to creating a community where all people are valued and respected.

My generation is handing you a broken world in need of so much repair, full of so much hatred. For this I am so sorry. But you have a unique opportunity. You have the power to create real social change. You can make this world more compassionate and more equitable.

May all of you here tonight wrestle with these difficult issues together, may you stand up for justice for all people, and may you be a model of honesty, courage, and integrity for the rest of the nation.

(Laurie Zimmerman is rabbi of Congregation Shaarei Shamayim in Madison.)

Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman was ordained in 2003 by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and became Shaarei Shamayim's second rabbi. In 2015 she published a curriculum for children and teenagers entitled "Reframing Israel: Teaching Kids to Think Critically About the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." She is currently active with Wisconsin's immigrant rights organization, Voces de la Frontera.

Rabbi Laurie is an ex-officio member of the board of the Jewish Federation of Madison and Jewish Social Services of Madison. She served on the Board of Directors for the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, the professional organization of Reconstructionist rabbis, from 2008-2012 and was the Faith Co-Chair for the Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice of South Central Wisconsin

from 2006-2008. In 2006-2007 she completed the PEER Executive Leadership Program through STAR (Synagogues: Transformation And Renewal).

While in rabbinical school, she served as a student rabbi in a variety of Reconstructionist and Conservative congregations, interned for Rabbis for Human Rights in Jerusalem and Philadelphia, and worked as an interfaith chaplain in a hospital trauma unit and as a Jewish chaplain at a geriatric center.

Rabbi Laurie is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and was a member of Shaarei Shamayim during her years at UW-Madison. While a student she created the congregation's children's education program and taught its first kindergarten class. Shaarei Shamayim was her first introduction to Reconstructionism and played an important role in her decision to become a Reconstructionist rabbi.

She and her partner, Rabbi Renee Bauer, have two children.



North South East West - IFR Members Share Rabbinic Joys and Challenges**NORTH****Rabbi Monte Sugarman**

Saratoga Springs, NY

Ordained RSI 1999

(20 years in the rabbinate)

Works at Ohr Chadash –

Synagogue Without Walls

“B’nei Mitzvah ceremonies are my thing. I teach over the internet and travel with my Torah. I’ll do whatever I can to bring kids to a love of Judaism.”

For Rabbi Monte Sugarman Jewish joy comes in many forms. With B’nei Mitzvah ceremonies as his specialty, Rabbi Sugarman and his traveling Torah find no obstacle too great to keep him from serving unaffiliated Jews both in the US and internationally as well.

“I’ve served families in Wyoming, Texas and Columbia ... the country!,” says Rabbi Sugarman who not only offers basic Hebrew lessons but works hard to

share Torah stories, anecdotes and examples of Jewish ethics that will foster a connection to Judaism for teens who may not have had a formal Jewish experience.

Well known in upstate New York, Rabbi Sugarman serves elderly Jews in nursing homes and helps when needed at the several synagogues in the area, including Synagogue Beth Joseph, a European style synagogue organized in Tupper Lake, NY in 1905 and frequented by Albert Einstein.

In addition working with student rabbis through the Jewish Spiritual Leaders Institute (JSLI) and teaching and conducting Shabbaton services, allow Rabbi Sugarman to actively support the need for modern, pluralistic rabbis who can embrace Jewish diversity and serve Jews from a variety of backgrounds.

Incorporating music as an essential element of the worship service, Rabbi Sugarman enjoys congregational work that includes playing guitar and singing.

When asked about challenges facing rabbis in 2019, Rabbi Sugarman points to the need to fill the Jewish education gap by creating synagogue services, lessons and holiday experiences that are relevant for parents and their children. “Jews need to be with Jews,” he says.

Rabbi Sugarman feels that today there is a great need to foster a love for Israel and to that end he actively promotes Birth-right Israel as an important option for developing Jewish identity.

North South East West - IFR Members Share Rabbinic Joys and Challenges**SOUTH****Rabbi David Sirull**

Augusta Georgia

Ordained RSI 2002 (16 years in the rabbinate)

Works at Adas Yeshrun Synagogue

“Augusta is home to the Augusta National Golf Tournament. As a rabbi “golf nut” I’m privileged to be where my sport gives me a unique opportunity for public service.”

Rabbi David Sirull describes himself as a “golf nut from Miami,” and indeed his love of the sport and his dedication to his Jewish community compliment the 16 years he has spent serving Adas Yeshrun synagogue.

When asked about the joys he’s experienced in 2018, Rabbi Sirull cites his participation on local Boards, ranging from the local Jewish Federation and Jewish Museum, APAC and the local hospital. Indeed at the latest hospital fundraiser, Rabbi Sirull enjoyed

meeting guest speaker, Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice with whom he discussed Jewish issues related to the Augusta community.

Rabbi Sirull says, “Through my outreach I am able to bring to the forefront issues that are important to our Jewish community.” At the synagogue where he also serves as cantor, Rabbi Sirull puts his vast collection of traditional Jewish music to good use. He is a worldwide resource for many rabbis, cantors and Jewish performers and thoroughly enjoys sharing and singing with his congregation – a community that dates back 130 years.

And speaking of joy, Rabbi Sirull’s YouTube video, “Because It’s Rosh HaShanah,” went viral, bringing the joy of the season to nearly a quarter of a million viewers!

(Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cyY3Z3Pm-U>)

When asked about challenges that rabbis may face in 2019, Rabbi Sirull feels that the great division in America among modern and traditional Jews has become problematic.

“There is discord regarding support for Israel,” says Rabbi Sirull and emphasizes that the rift between traditionalism and modernity also includes differences of opinion regarding observance, belief and practice.

He feels that the technology boom has and will continue to create challenges for rabbis as they deal with social media pros and cons. Finally, in light of the Pittsburgh tragedy, Rabbi Sirull shares the concerns of his colleagues regarding synagogue security and sees this as an emerging issue in 2019.

North South East West - IFR Members Share Rabbinic Joys and Challenges



EAST

Rabbi Jill Hausman

New York, NY

Ordained RSI 2004 (14 years in the rabbinate)

Works at Congregation Esrath Israel (The Actors' Temple)

"I'm a trainer, a teacher, an officiant and a care-giver... I wear a lot of hats!"

Whether it's teaching converts, preparing students to become Bar or Bat Mitzvah, conducting a healing service or officiating at a Jewish-Muslim wedding ceremony, Rabbi Jill Hausman embraces each event with dedication and abounding joy.

As a sought-after officiant for Jewish and Jewish Interfaith weddings, it is a joy for Rabbi Hausman to work with diverse cultures and incorporate these themes within the wedding ceremony. Rabbi Hausman recalls, "When I first approached the Sufi

(Muslim) Imam, he felt we should conduct back-to-back separate ceremonies. After we got to know each other, he agreed to an integrated ceremony. The couple was thrilled and so was I."

Rabbi Hausman goes on to say that following her husband's cardiac episode ten years ago she now serves as his care-giver – an event that has brought her to a greater understanding of the spiritual healing process. "I've learned so much about meditation," she says, "and how to be open to what the human mind is capable of." As rabbi of Manhattan's Actors' Temple, a synagogue that traces its name to the era when Sophie Tucker and her friends worshipped there in the 1920's and 30's, Rabbi Hausman notes that the Temple began because in those days actors were not welcome in "polite society." Today Rabbi Hausman incorporates meditation and healing into her interactive and participatory services as a way of bringing joy and sharing to the Shabbat experience.

"Rabbis face great challenges in the coming years," says Rabbi Hausman who serves on the Bet Din and the Board of Directors of the Rabbinical Seminary International, and who emphasizes that the relationship between a rabbi and her/his synagogue board always is and will continue to be a delicate one.

In addition, The Actors' Temple has accepted the challenges that those with mental illness bring to the synagogue community by working with Fountain House, a program that helps integrate a person with mental illness into the faith community.

It is a challenge to create what Rabbi Hausman calls the "welcoming climate" in our synagogues. She says that it is not enough for our synagogues to say that they are accepting - congregants must *feel* accepted as well.

North South East West - IFR Members Share Rabbinic Joys and Challenges



EAST

Rabbi Dr. Renae Lee Toben

Bensalem, PA

Ordained Alef Program (10 years in the rabbinate)

Works as Hospice Chaplain and Freelance Rabbi

“I enjoy connecting with people as a ‘regular’ person. I reach out and meet them where they are.”

For Rabbi Dr. Renae Lee Toben serving Jews as an independent rabbi is a privilege that includes officiating at life cycle events such as baby namings to Bar and Bat Mitzvah preparations to end of life funeral and mourning rituals. Each of these and more hold a special place in Rabbi Toben’s heart as she gives her all to Jewish individuals and families who today are making independent choices regarding Jewish ritual and practice.

“Independent Jews” is a phrase that characterizes many of those she serves as she sees

synagogue membership fees that are out of reach for many families, many of whom are not finding spirituality in what she terms large “corporate” synagogues.

For these reasons Rabbi Toben offers High Holy Day services and even a cruise ship Pesach Seder to secularized Jews who might not connect with their Judaism in any other way.

“I see it in their eyes,” says Rabbi Toben. “Many secularized Jews want to be part of their traditions. It gives me joy to serve them.”

As 2019 dawns, Rabbi Toben feels that we rabbis must find new ways to help secularized and disenfranchised Jew explore and embrace their roots.

As the population ages, Rabbi Toben hopes to continue to use her MSW background to help seniors access health and social services and create community where elderly Jews can thrive.

“If we need to set up a rotation to meet in each other’s homes on Shabbat, if we need to meet in small chavurot, we must do it,” says Rabbi Toben. “Finding new ways to bring Jews together is very important.”



Editor's Note: It has been an honor and great pleasure for me to speak individually with these six IFR members and to learn more about their great dedication and commitment to enhancing Jewish life. My thanks to each IFR rabbi who took the time to share joys and challenges with me. I learned so much from each rabbi and through them I strengthened my own connection to Jewish life. Thank you, Rabbi Barbara Aiello, Italy

North South East West - IFR Members Share Rabbinic Joys and Challenges**WEST****Rabbi Dr. J. Adele Plotkin**

Chino Valley, AZ

Ordained RSI 2013 (5 years in the rabbinate)

Works at Beit Torah Jewish Congregation

“We don’t have an “edifice” complex!

***The “building” I’m interested in is
building respect for Jews!”***

For years Rabbi Adele Plotkin has had the rabbinate in her heart. Beginning in 1995 with her service to the Chevrah Kadisha and continuing through her work with nursing home and hospitalized patients, Rabbi Plotkin realized her dream to become a rabbi. Now as spiritual leader of Beit Torah Congregation, Rabbi Plotkin has added those she terms “disenfranchised Jews” to the community she serves.

“There are Jews in interfaith and non-traditional families and it is my joy to be there for them,” says Rabbi Plotkin who con-

nects with her congregants with weekly D’vei Torah via e-mail and snail mail and sees no need for a formal synagogue building to get the job done. “We do Shabbat in private homes,” says Rabbi Plotkin who is enthusiastic about how the community has come together for education and support. Hospital and home visits occupy Rabbi Plotkin’s rabbinical day as she garners great satisfaction serving the elderly, the ill and those who face long term recovery or permanent disability – “Those who need me most.”

In fact Rabbi Plotkin recalls an unusual message from a Jewish woman who was presented with a ghoulish artifact reminiscent of World War II. Disturbed by its Holocaust overtones, the woman asked for Rabbi Plotkin’s help. “I took the request seriously,” she says, “And we created an appropriate ceremony. My job is not to qualify the need but to be there for those who need me.”

Rabbi Plotkin feels strongly that 2019 should be a year for restoring respect for Judaism not only around the world but in communities large and small.

“I teach by example and do what’s in front of me,” she says. “My main goal is to be of service.”

Let the Light Grow Chanukah 5779**Adele Jay**

Little candles added one by one
Let the light grow stronger like the sun,
Brighter and brighter for all week long,
Filled with love and almost joyous song.

Yes, we were all saved but at what price?
Our freedom to worship is quite nice...
Yet then we denied that to others,
Leading to Herod and false brothers...

Still at this moment we can rejoice
O’er the principle of freedom’s voice,
If only we can keep in view
That all deserve these freedoms too.

North South East West - IFR Members Share Rabbinic Joys and Challenges**WEST****Rabbi Lewis (Buz) Bogage**

Denver, Colorado

Ordained Hebrew Union College (OH) 1962
(56 years in the rabbinate)

Worked as a Pulpit Rabbi – Currently a

Lecturer, Rabbi, Teacher and Mentor

“Isaiah said it best; it is our duty to hope.”

For Rabbi Buz Bogage it is hope and joy that characterize his lifetime of service to Jews all over the US. Rabbi Bogage’s rabbinic journey began in Mc Alester, Oklahoma more than half a century ago and continued with his leading High Holy Day services in a synagogue in Trinidad, Colorado just last September. “The synagogue in Trinidad was built and has functioned continuously since 1889 with only minor repairs and changes,” says Rabbi Bogage who notes that this historic shul is centrally located at the juncture of four states, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Idaho, and it remains just as it

was 129 years ago. “There were Jews in the Old West 300 years ago,” says Rabbi Bogage who reminds us that the virtues of community, consistency and connection that characterize the synagogue in Trinidad, Colorado apply to Rabbi Bogage’s approach to Judaism and from which he has derived great joy over the years. Whether it’s working alongside Rabbi Jamie Korngold, Colorado’s Adventure Rabbi, lecturing on the Kabbalah at Naropa, the only certified Buddhist University in the US, establishing Jewish camping experiences for the Reform movement or sharing duties with Rabbi Joseph Gelberman (z”l) in the development of the Rabbinical Seminary International, Rabbi Bogage represents the cutting edge in Jewish innovation.

What needs to happen as we rabbis move ahead? Rabbi Bogage believes that outreach and “inreach” to Jews between the ages of 35 and 55 years of age is essential to the health of our religion. He feels that synagogues are not conducive to “bouncing around,” and instead we rabbis might consider focusing on meditative silence and silent prayer. “In this noisy world we have become uncomfortable with silence and introspection.”

Many are uncomfortable with prayer so understanding the history of our prayers and blessings would be an enormous help,” says Rabbi Bogage who also suggests that “Coffee Shop Judaism,” where elders and young people can gather with their rabbi for discussion and sharing would bring more Jews back to Jewish life.

Rabbi Bogage recalls his early days with Rabbi Gelberman when they worked to combine teaching and learning experiences with Jewish ethics and values in order to create grounded individuals.

“If the pollsters are right and anti-semitism is on the rise, we rabbis need this approach today.”

OPINION - IFR Member Rabbi Dr. Adele Plotkin Chino Valley, AZ

I write this to emphasize that no one needs to put up with religious abuse, insensitivity, and disrespect. We do not need to be silent when what is being said to us makes us feel uncomfortable, violated, or dirtied.

It is the time of year when many people tell me that they have been traumatized by having to put up with or otherwise deal with blatant religious greetings - but they do not totally understand why they feel so uncomfortable. Briefly: they have been cursed by another to have a Merry Idolatrous observance/celebration.

It is true that many of the speakers do not realize that they are being insensitive and disrespectful. However that does not excuse their making others feel dirtied. So we who care need to work on educating those around us.

How can we do that? First we need to understand why we feel uncomfortable or dirtied. As explained above in brief, we who do not accept the worship of a man as a deity would consciously or subconsciously feel that we are being proselytized into accepting idolatry. Certainly responding in kind would cross that line. After all, look at the name! Whose mass is it [from the Latin word for Messiah]?

So another aspect of the greeting violates the beliefs of those who do not think there has ever been a Messiah on earth. Indeed the Rambam, Maimonides, a great Jewish teacher and Rabbi, taught that the Messianic age would be one of peace, cooperation, and everyone's needs being adequately met. Since that has never happened, it is clear that no Messiah has ever been around.

Going back to the question of educating those who do not realize that they are de facto cursing others. A lot depends on the situation one is in. However there are many approaches that can be chosen. One can firmly say 'happy holidays' or 'have a wonderful winter season' if short on

time. One can add 'if you observe, which I do not'.

If comfortable enough of a situation, one can say that being cursed with a merry idolatrous celebration/observance is most definitely not appreciated... and please do not curse me! Two responses that might need to be dealt with are 'it doesn't bother me if you say Happy Chanukah to me' and 'it isn't idolatrous!' or the like. For the former, a difference needs to be drawn between greetings that do not impose upon the beliefs and sensitivities of others and those greetings that do. Also, the Chanukah greeting is part of all the Abrahamic liturgy/traditions whether practiced or not. [My preference is to give no Chanukah greeting unless I know the person would not object.]

For the latter, it needs to be taught that the speaker's sensitivity and respect needs to be directed at the sensitivities of intended listener[s] not selfishly at their own ideas of what their rights [or beliefs] are. No one should have the right to impose their religion on others. That fact extends to many areas of interactions including some in political venues.

It will probably be an ongoing battle without end. However, starting right after the abuse has occurred in asking organizations to do sensitivity training is a good first step. Right before the religious fervor sets in is another good time. Note too, that this is not the only holiday season where these abuses occur. So education efforts basically need to be all year round.

The alternative is putting up with being abused, crossing the line into idolatrous behaviour, and/or mistakenly being viewed as having done such.

Do you care?

-Rabbi Dr. Adele Plotkin

Submitted to the IFR NEWS as an OP-ED

Ravenous Ravens

Chanukah 5779



**Rabbi Frank Tamburello's column featuring
Jewish holiday Eats and Treats**



2. Cover the dish with aluminum foil. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove the aluminum foil and arrange the tomatoes on top. You can leave some on the vine and scatter some loose. Scatter a few thyme sprigs on top. Return to the oven and bake for another 15 minutes. By now the fennel should feel soft when poked with a knife, and the breadcrumb should have a nice golden color. Remove from the oven in allowed to rest for a few minutes. Sprinkle the chopped parsley over and serve hot to warm.



Burnt Eggplant with Yellow Pepper and Red Onion

Fennel, Cherry Tomato and Crumble Gratin

Ingredients:



- 2 1/2 lb fennel bulbs
- 3 Tbs olive oil
- 1 Tbs thyme leaves, plus a few whole sprigs
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 Tbs coarse sea salt
- 1 tsp freshly ground pepper
- Scant 1 cup heavy cream

Process 1 cup bread crumbs with 1/4 cup cold unsalted butter and mix with 3 1/2 ounces grated Parmesan cheese

10 1/2 ounces cherry tomatoes

1 tsp flat-leaf (Italian) parsley, chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 400°. Trim off the fennel stalks, and cut each bulb in half lengthwise. Cut each half into slices 2/3 inch. Place in a large bowl with the olive oil and the thyme leaves, garlic salt and pepper, and toss together.
2. Transfer to an ovenproof dish, and pour the cream over the fennel. Scatter breadcrumb/ cheese mixture evenly on top.



Ingredients:

- 2 medium eggplants
- 2 yellow or green peppers, cord and cut into 2/3 inch dice
- 1 medium red onion coarsely chopped

4 1/2 tsp sunflower or nut oil

6 tsp cider vinegar

1 Tbsp ground cumin

Coarse sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
Place the egg plants directly onto separate Moderate-flames on the stove top and rose for 12 to 15 minutes turning them occasionally with metal tongs, until the flesh is soft and the skin is burnt and flaky or place the egg plants under a hard broiler for about an hour turning them occasionally and continuing to cook even if they burst. Leave it to cool slightly.

2. Take a long cut through each warm egg plant. Using a spoon, scoop out the soft flesh While avoiding most of the burnt skin on the outside. If you don't like the seeds try to remove them as well. Leave the egg plant flesh to drain in a colander for at least an hour or overnight.

3. Coarsely chopped the egg plant flesh. Mix all the remaining ingredients together, then taste and adjust the seasonings. It should be robust and pungent. serve within 24 hours.

Ravenous Ravens

Chanukah 5779

Roasted Sweet Potato with Pecan and Maple



2 sweet potatoes, about two pounds
3 Tbs olive oil
4 Tbs pecans
4 green onions, coarsely chopped
4 Tbsp coarsely chopped flat- leaf parsley
2 Tbs coarsely chopped cilantro
1/4 tsp red pepper flakes
4 Tbs golden raisins
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Dressing:

4 Tbs olive oil
2 Tbs maple syrup
1 Tbs sherry vinegar
1 Tbs lemon juice
2 Tbs orange juice
2 tsp grated fresh ginger
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. Start with the sweet potatoes. Don't peel them. Cut them into three-quarter inch cubes. Spread them out on a baking sheet and drizzled with the olive oil.
2. Sprinkle with some salt and pepper mix well with your hands and then roast in the oven for about 30 minutes until just tender. Turn them over gently halfway through cooking.



Rabbi Frank Tamburello's column featuring Jewish holiday Eats and Treats

2. On a separate baking sheet, toast pecans for five minutes. Remove from the oven and chopped coarsely.
3. To make the dressing, whisk together all the ingredients in a small bowl with some salt and pepper. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary.
4. When the potatoes are ready transfer them to a large bowl while still hot.

Add the green onions, parsley, cilantro, pepper flakes, pecans, and raisins. Pour the dressing over and toss gently to blaine's, then season to taste serve at once or at room temperature .

Squash Gourmet

Hubbard squash, large enough to provide to cups cubed squash.

1/4 cup sliced green onions, including some green tops



1 cup sour cream
2-3 Tbs cream or milk
Salt and pepper to taste

Heat oven to 350°. Cut the squash and a half remove the seeds and pith. Baked squash cut

side down in shallow pan 45 to 60 minutes, or until fork tender but not soft; baking time depends on size of squash.

Remove squash skin and cut into 1 inch cubes; refrigerate or freeze remaining squash for another use.

Transfer squash cubes to a 1 quart casserole. Sprinkle with sliced onions. Since sour cream with cream or milk or cream mixture over squash;

Toss to distribute evenly. Sprinkle squash with salt and pepper and toss again. Bake 20 to 25 minutes until steaming hot.



Happy Hanukkah

Ravenous Ravens

Chanukah 5779



**Rabbi Frank Tamburello's column featuring
Jewish holiday Eats and Treats**

IFR Shmooze and NEWS

Whole Grain Pilaf



- 2 Tbs butter or vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup chopped green or white onions
- 1/2 lb fresh mushrooms (shiitake recommended)
- 1 cup bulgur wheat or medium barley
- Chicken or beef bouillon (2 cups for wheat or 2 1/2 cups for barley)
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds (optional)

Heat oven to 350°. Stir fry onions and mushrooms in butter or oil until browned. Start in wheat or barley and brown lightly, 1 to 2 minutes. Add water or broth or bouillon and bring to a boil stirring constantly.

Pour into one and a half quart casserole.

Cover and bake until liquid is absorbed and Grainson are tender; wheat pilaf for 20 to 25 minutes, Barley peel off for 45 to 50 minutes.

If using almonds, add to dish 15 minutes before end of baking time.



**IFR Member Rabbi David and wife
Cantor Lee Degani on the birth and
Brit Milah of their first grandson
Avraham Tzvi Ben Ariel.**



New IFR Member Rabbi Jill Hausman



Rifuah Shlema to:

Jake Jacobsen

Rabbi Helen Marie James

We Remember IFR Members

Rabbi Howard Meridy M.D. z"l

Rabbi Marvin Pearlman z"l

Rabbi Bill Kurry z"l



Meditation on Compassion - IFR Member Rabbi Frank Tamburello For Jewish Science

“A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space.

He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.

This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us.

Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.” - Albert Einstein

Lord Byron wrote that the “dew of compassion” is a tear. When we look around us and see what is happening in the world, we see that, more than ever, the world needs dew of compassion.

This metaphor provides the lubrication for rusty wheels of stubbornness, greed, insecurity, intolerance, and self-righteous indignation.

Psalm 133 says: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers and sisters to dwell together in unity!

It is like the dew of Hermon, coming down upon the mountains of Zion.”

As a human family, despite our many differences, we are all connected in unity.

We are all one.

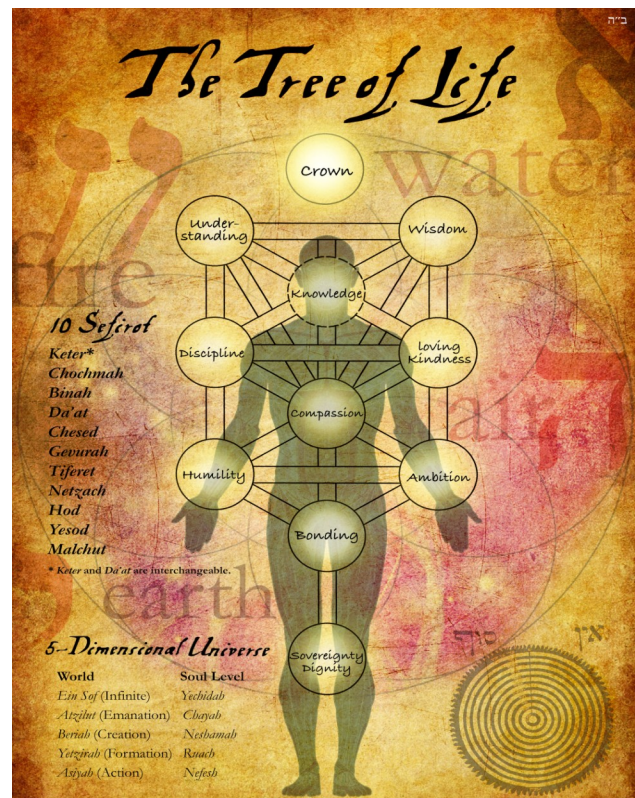
Technology, without doubt, brings this fact home to us on a moment-by-moment basis. If we, like the psalm says, let the sweet dew of compassion wash over our deeds and thoughts, then we will see that it truly the only process that can bring about change for the better.

This change is inevitable when enough of us provide a concerted effort to express compassion in this critical time of human development.

The morning dew helps the tender petals of a flower to open, and provides moisture in the noonday sun.

Likewise the dew of compassion that we express toward others will create a world of justice, equality, and opportunity.

The dew of compassion allows us to assist whenever the need presents occasions to make difficult situations lighter and better.



Chanukah Like You Never Heard It Before - IFR Member Rabbi David Degani

The historical events surrounding the story of Chanukah are a little different than what we are told as children. The real story of Chanukah involved complicated upheavals both internally within the Jewish population of Judea and externally as part of the ever changing relations with the Syrian Greeks.

The influence of the Hellenists, the Jews who adopted the Greek culture and religion which included some of the Temple priests, was serious enough to severely threaten the continuation of the Jewish monotheistic and moral based religion. This existential threat was so severe that many saw the end of Judaism as imminent.

The Greek ruler Antiochus the Fourth who was entangled in wars in Egypt saw in the Jews a source of constant rebellion and was determined to eliminate Judaism once and for all. He turned Jerusalem into a complete Greek city, turned the Temple into a shrine for Zeus and forbade the Jews from practicing any Jewish laws. The Hellenists, were now in complete control of the entire country. The Jews who remained loyal to their heritage lost all hope for redemption. When Judah Maccabee gathered there with a very limited number of loyal followers, his rebellion against the Greeks seemed impossible to win.

Due to his guerrilla warfare genius, Judah managed to chase the Greeks out of a limited area surrounding the Temple. This took three months to accomplish. As we all know, he cleansed the Temple and rededicated it to G-D. However, by no means was this a complete victory against the Greeks and their vast Jewish Hellenists allies. Therefore the celebration of Chanukah is a

remembrance of the re-dedication of the Temple and not of a decisive victory over the mighty Greek army.

Following the capture of the Temple by Judah many more Jews who began to believe that complete victory was possible with the help of G-D, joined the rebels. Judah gained a substantial number of loyal soldiers and a three year war against the Greek Invaders began.

First order of things was to send soldiers to protect Jews in the east side of the Jordan river as well as the Jews in the Galilee and the Mediterranean shores from local non Jews who with the help of the Hellenists wanted to eliminate Judaism.

In order to put a stop to Judah's successes, the Greeks sent their best general, Lisias, along with a huge army to face Judah's rebels. The major battle that ensued was a decisive win for the enormous Greek army. The Jewish rebels dispersed everywhere and the rebellion was just about over at that point.

A blockade was put on Judah and a few of his loyalists who retreated to the Temple area. Everything seemed to be lost. With the expected death of Judah and the rest of the Maccabees the end of Judaism in Judea seemed to be a sure thing.

This is when the Chanukah miracle really happened. Lisias suddenly faced a bitter political rival Philipus who was advancing toward the Greeks with a huge army in order to declare himself the Greek emperor. Lisias then retreated immediately from Jerusalem, left most of Judea and signed a peace agreement with Judah.

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This peace agreement did not last too long. Another Greek general, Bacchides attacked Judah and his army and in a decisive victory he eliminated most of the rebels and killed Judah himself. This was the end of Judah Maccabee's revolt against the Syrian Greeks. Therefore unlike common belief, Judah Maccabee was unable to successfully rebel against the Greeks.

Jonathan, Judah's younger brother waited two years for the right opportunity to try and rebel again. Jonathan was a brilliant statesman and a great general. He knew how to take advantage of the political bickering among the Syrian Greek generals who all wanted to become emperors. With winsome and brilliant political maneuvers, offering loyalty to specific influential Greek generals, he managed to re-assemble his own Jewish army and to liberate, piece by piece, areas of Judea which were under Hellenist, Greek and other idol worshippers' influence.

Jonathan was eventually murdered at the hands of Hellenists in Jaffa.

Simon, the last of the Maccabee brothers continued the task started by his brother Jonathan of the retaking of Judea from the local Greek and Hellenistic population.

His successes aggravated the new Greek emperor, Antiochus the 7th who sent yet again army to help the Hellenists and to stop Simon from expanding their control over Judea.

Yet again a battle took place between Antiochus' army and Simon. This time the Maccabees won and the Greek army retreated out of Judea.

At this point the Greek Emperor Antiochus the 7th realized that losing so many soldiers for control over a small piece of land called Judea was not worth the effort.

In addition the international power of Greece was diminishing against the rising power of Rome.

Therefore the Maccabees' eventual victory was the result of the Maccabees stand fast effort to free Judea.

With a little luck or perhaps a miracle and with hard fought battles along with brilliant political maneuvers they managed to gain an independence for Judea for the next 80 years, only to end at hands of their deceiving old ally, Rome.

Happy Chanukah 5779- Rabbi David

**IFR Mission Statement**

The IFR is a professional organization of rabbis united by a commitment to Jewish tradition and a desire to facilitate the Jewish spiritual growth and life cycle needs of all.

IFR provides a progressive, pluralistic forum, linking member rabbis in a spirit of friendship and a sense of community.

IFR provides support for members in their professional endeavors and offers continuing education. IFR encourages professional relationships with rabbis and other rabbinic organizations.



Chanukah Puppy Party 5779

