

IFR NEWS Nisan 5784



Celebrating Passover Amidst Difficult Circumstances excerpts from Moment Magazine - by Francine Schwartz

Plagues - Pogroms to Wars On the first night of Passover, we ask this question: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" This year, that question takes on significant new meaning. It is not about the rituals of Passover, but rather about the unique situation in which we find ourselves as we celebrate the holiday. The tradition of gathering together for the Passover meal has gone by the wayside; we are forced to separate ourselves to fight a deadly virus.

Indeed, this Passover comes amidst difficult circumstances. But it is not, by far, the first time Jews have celebrated Passover in trying times.

From the very first Passover, celebrated thousands of years ago as Jews left Egypt, we have observed the holiday and its traditions despite external threats that put lives at risk.

Moment has compiled examples of how Passover has been celebrated through the centuries under harrowing conditions. During the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the Holocaust, oppressors tried to snuff out any observance of Passover, but courageous Jews managed to find ways to hold Seders.

Even during a period similar to the one we find ourselves in now, the Black Death that swept through Europe in the 14th century, Passover observances managed to survive.

The First Passover—Exodus Chapter 12: *The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn*

"At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his officials and all the Egyptians; and there was a loud cry in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead. Then he summoned Moses and Aaron in the night, and said, 'Rise up, go away from my people, both you and the Israelites! Go, worship the Lord, as you said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you said, and be gone. And bring a blessing on me too!'

The Egyptians urged the people to hasten their departure from the land, for they said, 'We shall all be dead.' So the people took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls wrapped up in their cloaks on their shoulders. The Israelites had done as Moses told them; they had asked the Egyptians for jewelry of silver and gold, and for clothing, and the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And so they plundered the Egyptians.

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IFR Mission Statement

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

The IFR provides support for members in their professional endeavors and offers continuing education.

The IFR encourages professional relationships with rabbis and other rabbinic organizations.

The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed crowd also went up with them, and livestock in great numbers, both flocks and herds. They baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt; it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

The time that the Israelites had lived in Egypt was four hundred thirty years. At the end of four hundred thirty years, on that very day, all the companies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. That was for the Lord a night of vigil, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. That same night is a vigil to be kept for the Lord by all the Israelites throughout their generations.”



The Crusades–11th & 12th Centuries “*Bloody Matsot? Passover, Blood Libels and Kidush Ha-Shem*” By Ushi Derman : Most historians agree that the blood libels spread in medieval Europe were a dramatic phase in the evolution of Antisemitism. It was always the same story: Just before Passover a Christian child was found dead, usually by the local river or stream.

The local jurists would soon conclude that the Jews slaughtered the child for their ritual needs, especially baking Passover Matsot from his blood.

Jews had two choices: convert or die. Thousands were burnt at the stakes. The Jewish extreme response was martyrdom, either by surrendering and getting killed by the crusaders, or by committing suicide.

Source: The Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot, Tel Aviv. - The Jews of York - Cliffords Tower



The Black Death–Mid 14th Century: One of the most important customs of Passover which celebrates the Israelites’ exodus from slavery in ancient Egypt is the removal of grain, leavened bread, and even stray crumbs from the home.

The replacement of bread with matza, or unleavened bread, commemorates the haste with which the Israelites fled so hurriedly that dough prepared for their journey had no time to rise.

Martin Blaser, an infectious-diseases physician at Vanderbilt University, has a different idea about how the tradition arose. He thinks that the removal each spring of bread and grain from Israelite homes may have protected them from a rat-borne scourge: Yersinia pestis, the bacterial cause of the (bubonic) plague infamous in medieval Europe as the black death.



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Passover, says Blaser, most likely originated from a fusion of two ancient Middle Eastern spring festivals: the ceremony of the sacrificial, or paschal, lamb still practiced among desert nomads, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which celebrated the barley harvest. As nomads took up agriculture, says Blaser, they would have become more vulnerable to plague.

Stored grain attracts rats, which harbor fleas that transmit *Y. pestis* bacteria. But clearing grain from the home in the spring, a peak period for plague, forces rodents to search elsewhere for food.

If the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread while in Egypt, they might have been protected when plague struck. And it's possible that it did strike and that they survived; the Bible describes ten plagues that preceded the Israelites' flight, the last of which killed Egyptian firstborns and cattle. Plague, says Blaser, is one of the few human diseases that attacks domesticated animals with a high degree of mortality.

There's no concrete evidence that Jews were spared when plague decimated Europe in the fourteenth century. In fact, they were accused of causing it and many were massacred. There are, however, reports that Jewish deaths were half those of Christians when plague struck Venice in the spring of 1631. If Blaser's theory is correct, it could explain why the annual removal of grain became enshrined in Jewish law. "If you had certain beliefs that you thought were very good for your community and wanted them to be around in perpetuity," he says, "then you would try to mix them very deeply into the belief system."

The Pogrom in Prague (Easter Sunday 1389)

It was no coincidence that most anti-Jewish pogroms began on Passover and Easter Sunday - there were frequent outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence in late medieval cities. For that reason, among others, surviving records are often frustratingly brief and formulaic.

Yet, in the case of the pogrom that devastated Prague's Jewish community on Easter 1389, we have an extraordinary source that has yet to receive a close reading.

This account, supplementing numerous chronicle entries and a Hebrew poem of lament, is the *Passio Iudeorum Pragensium*, or **Passion of the Jews of Prague**—a polished literary text that parodies the gospel of Christ's Passion to celebrate the atrocity.

The *Passio* as a scriptural and liturgical parody, for it has a great deal to teach us about the inner workings of medieval anti-Judaism.

By "parody" is not a humorous work, but a virtuosic pastiche of authoritative texts, such as the Gospels and the Easter liturgy, that would have been known by heart to much of the intended audience.

We may like to think of religious parodies as "daring" or "audacious," seeing in them a progressive ideological force that challenges corrupt institutions, ridicules absurd beliefs, and pokes holes in the pious and the pompous.

But The Passion of the Jews of Prague shows that this was by no means always the case.



On Holy Saturday of 1389, a pogrom began in Prague that led to the burning of the Jewish quarter, the killing of many Jews, and the suicide of many Jews trapped in the main synagogue; the number of dead was estimated at 400–500 men, women and children.

The American Civil War 1861-1865

For American Jewry during the Civil War, the Passover story was especially powerful. For American Jewry during the Civil War, the Passover story was especially powerful. Northern soldiers saw clear parallels between the Union freeing the South's slaves and Moses leading ancient Hebrews out of Egypt. However, creating a seder during a war requires flexibility and creativity.

In 1862, the Jewish Messenger published an account by J. A. Joel of the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Regiment of a seder celebrated by Union soldiers in Fayette, West Virginia. Joel and 20 other Jewish soldiers were granted leave to observe Passover.

A soldier home on leave in Cincinnati shipped matzot and hagaddot to his colleagues. Joel wrote: "We . . . sen[t] parties to forage in the country [for Passover food] while a party stayed to build a log hut for the services. . . We obtained two kegs of cider, a lamb, several chickens and some eggs. Horseradish or parsley we could not obtain, but in lieu we found a weed whose bitterness, I apprehend, exceeded anything our forefathers 'enjoyed.'...

"We had the lamb, but did not know what part was to represent it at the table; but Yankee ingenuity prevailed, and it was decided to cook the whole and put it on the table, then we could dine off it, and be sure we got the right part.

The necessities for the choroutzes we could not obtain, so we got a brick which, rather hard to digest, reminded us, by looking at it, for what purpose it was intended."

Yankee ingenuity indeed! Historian Bertram Korn observes, "It must have been quite a sight: these twenty men gathered together in a crude and hastily-built log hut, their weapons at their side, prepared as in Egypt-land for all manner of danger, singing the words of praise and faith in the ancient language of Israel." The seder proceeded smoothly until the eating of the bitter herbs. Joel recounted: "We all had a large portion of the herb ready to eat at the moment I said the blessing; each [ate] his por-

tion, when horrors! What a scene ensued...The herb was very bitter and very fiery like Cayenne pepper, and excited our thirst to such a degree that we forgot the law authorizing us to drink only four cups, and...we drank up all the cider.

Those that drank more freely became excited and one thought he was Moses, another Aaron, and one had the audacity to call himself a Pharaoh. The consequence was a skirmish, with nobody hurt, only Moses, Aaron and Pharaoh had to be carried to the camp, and there left in the arms of Morpheus. More problematic was the situation of Union soldiers who, unable to form their own seders, were forced to "fraternize" with local Jews. Myer Levy of Philadelphia, for example, was in a Virginia town one Passover late in the war when he saw a young boy sitting on his front steps eating a piece of Matzah.

According to Korn, when Levy "asked the boy for a piece, the child fled indoors, shouting at the top of his lungs, 'Mother, there's a damn Yankee Jew outside!' "The boy's mother invited Levy to seder that night. One wonders how the Virginian family and the Yankee soldier each interpreted the Haggadah portions describing the evils of bondage.

It is easy to forget how difficult it can be for Jewish soldiers to serve their country while maintaining the traditions that beautify Judaism.

Nevertheless, for Jewish Union soldiers fighting between 1861 and 1865 to free others from slavery, the Passover parallels must have made each seder particularly sweet and meaningful.



The Holocaust—1941-1945*“Passover In Hell” By Yakov Brachfeld**Transcription from a YouTube video from aish.com*

Moshe and Mendel Brachfeld, my grandfather and great uncle, were living in the Krakow Ghetto. Krakow was officially declared *Judenrein*—clean of Jews.

In March, 1943, five weeks before Passover, the Germans liquidated the ghetto. The two brothers decided to go into hiding. They ran from attic to attic, trying desperately to stay alive. With Passover approaching, the brothers wanted to eat matzah on the first night of Yom Tov. But they knew that getting caught would mean getting shot.

Nevertheless, they found some flour, a metal board and some flammable paint. They set the paint on fire, koshered the metal, and made a makeshift kosher-for-Passover oven. They baked a few small matzahs for the Seder. They were in their hidden attic on 23 Jozefonsky Street. That night they celebrated the exodus from Egypt by sitting with a little bit of matzah and little bit of borscht in place of wine.

My grandfather, then 21 years old, said to his brother: “The Seder celebrates freedom. Isn’t this worse than the lives the Jews had in Egypt? What kind of freedom are we celebrating tonight?”

His brother answered: “Passover celebrates the birth of a nation, when we went from being Egyptian slaves to becoming a nation that God could call his own. This spiritual freedom is something that no one can ever take away from us.

No matter how much they beat, torture and kill our physical bodies, our souls will always remain free to serve God.”

“How We Baked Matzah in a Nazi Ghetto” Adapted from Yaakov Friedman’s memoirs, Tiferet Yaakov (Hebrew), written by his son-in-law, Rabbi Sholom Horowitz.

Three men, all prisoners, could think of nothing but the imminent festival of Passover. As thousands of Jews—including their own relatives—were being sent to their deaths on a daily basis, Yaakov Friedman, Moshe Goldstein, and Rabbi Yekusiel Halberstam (the Klausenburger Rebbe) had the bravery and presence of mind to secure matzah for Passover 1945.

Here is Moshe Goldstein’s account of the amazing turn of events that afforded them the ability to observe the Festival of Freedom amidst abysmal suffering and death: In the days preceding Passover, the war was nearing its end. The relentless droning of American aircraft filled the German skies, followed by the whistling hail of bombs that pounded the Mühldorf railway complex into rubble.

Spared of destruction were the nearby forced labor camps where we toiled under the harshest conditions. We prisoners celebrated this mighty display of Allied destruction, but the anxiety of our German overseers ran high. The railway was vital to the war efforts, and orders were issued to immediately repair the damage. The Germans decided to send a group of 12 Jewish slaves to begin the cleanup.

I knew the work would be excruciating but I hoped that perhaps I would find some food amidst the rubble. I volunteered to go. We arrived at a scene of utter devastation. Freight cars lay on their sides, smoke rising from gaping holes. Stretches of railing were ripped off the ground and tossed aside in twisted heaps. Nearly every building suffered extensive damage. It was clear some of the cars were un-repairable.

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I managed to disappear between the rows of trains that were still upright. It took a while, but I eventually found a boxcar from Hungary loaded with wheat in burlap sacks. Wheat! And so close to Pesach! G-d had granted us a good start, but how could I possibly smuggle the wheat into the camp?

I knew I did not have much time and I needed to think of a way to bring in as much wheat as possible without the guards knowing. Lugging the sacks through the main gates didn't even occur to me; the wheat would be confiscated and I would be shot without a second thought.

I rummaged around some more, and discovered two pairs of pants. I put them on and cinched the bottoms around my ankles with some rope. I was then able to pour a small quantity of wheat into the space between the two pairs of pants. Once my legs were filled with as much wheat as I dared carry, I began the long walk back to the camp.

The bombings left the Germans rattled and fearful, and for the initial days following the air raid, the inspection of prisoners at camp gates was enforced almost half-heartedly. I was thus able to smuggle in a fairly large amount of wheat. We had wheat, but now what?

Reb Sender Dierenfeld, a fellow inmate and a Belzer Chassid, offered to hide the wheat, and amazingly, he managed to keep it away from prying German eyes. Later, an old mill was procured from somewhere. We ground the wheat in the dead of night, and using a clean piece of cloth, sifted the flour from grit. Next we needed fuel for a fire. During one stint in the field, I asked everyone to find a stick and carry it back to the camp. The branches were conspicuous and caught the attention of a German guard.

He motioned me over. "Why is everyone with a stick?" "What difference does it make? People want to walk around with a stick," I answered. We had flour and we had fuel. We were ready to bake matzah.

One night just before Passover, we set about baking matzah. Near the barracks door stood a prisoner, standing guard with fearful eyes. We lit a fire under a metal can which functioned as our oven, and the Matzah baking—under Nazi noses—began. The Rebbe, Reb Yaakov, and I mixed the flour and kneaded the dough. We worked quickly, not only because of the strict 18-minute limit, but also because of the ever-present danger of being caught. We ended up with 20 small matzahs.

On Pesach eve, after returning from work, our small group sat down for the Seder. On wooden slats around us lay sleeping bodies, exhausted from the relentless work. For those celebrating, the hardships of the Holocaust and daily camp life melted away as we experienced the Biblical redemption from Egypt. Unable to sit for long, we each ate an olive-sized piece of matzah, the taste of tears mingling with the matzah crumbs in our mouths. We could not sit leisurely and recite the Haggadah, but in those moments we each prayed—more fervently than ever before or ever since—the words that still ring in my ears: "Next year in Jerusalem."



Pesach in the Warsaw Ghetto

Pesach in Mandatory Palestine/ Israel 1948 A look at dramatic and historic seders held in Israel in 1948, facing challenges of war and a shortage of food

By DAVID GEFFEN MARCH 31, 2023

Preparations for the soldiers' Seders in Jerusalem in 1948 were under the jurisdiction of chief chaplain Shlomo Goren.

In various locales in the city such as Ramat Rachel and Camp Schneller, the Seders were so packed that the participants had to stand. To ensure that the essentials were covered, Goren prepared an abridged version of the Haggadah.

In Goren's book *With Might and Strength*, he writes, "The city had been under siege for months. Supplies short, rations at starvation levels. No wine, no matzah (this will be explained), no eggs, nothing to make. A token Seder. No way for supplies to reach Jerusalem."

Though no description how it reached Jerusalem was proffered, Goren discovered 90 kilos of matzah in the city. The military governor of Jerusalem decided the matzah was for the citizens.

Goren was aghast; he argued with the governor because soldiers would be forced to eat chametz. "This is the first Jewish army in Jerusalem in 2,000 years – and they should eat chametz?"

Shlomo Goren

Goren was an individual who could not be deterred. Late one night in the week before Passover, he arranged for a truck and soldiers to accompany him, since he knew where the warehouse for provisions was in Jerusalem. He and the soldiers broke in, as there were no guards. They discovered the matzah, although it is not clear how many kilograms they put in the truck.

The next morning, he spoke to the commander of the Jerusalem forces. "We have the matzah. I am requisitioning the amount I now possess. These Jerusalem soldiers will have a kosher Seder."

The chief chaplain's speech to the soldiers is found in his book. "I am sure you all know that it won't be possible for you all to stand at a Seder table and celebrate Pesach the way you are used to doing in your homes." Goren stressed how this Seder would be celebrated. "At least you will be able to mark this one night and observe the mitzvot, to eat some matzah, have some lettuce and drink a cup of wine – let's have a Seder." They also received a minimal amount of food to eat.

When the largest Seder got underway in Jerusalem, Goren announced that a special Elijah would be arriving, so the cup was filled for the special guest. To everyone's surprise, David Ben-Gurion, a symbolic Elijah, arrived, having been flown from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in a Piper Cub [a two-seat monoplane]. The soldiers were overwhelmed – the leader of their country, soon to be the nation of the Jewish people, had not forgotten them. In a little-known photo found at the Central Zionist Archives, the joy on their faces was clear for all to see as they surrounded Ben-Gurion, smiling away.

Chief chaplain Goren recalled a portion of Ben-Gurion's talk. "Tonight, this is the first time in the 2,000 years of exile that the Jewish people are celebrating the festival of freedom and redemption as a free people back in its own land."

Then he emphasized, "The Seder concludes with the hopeful words 'Next year in Jerusalem.' You men are in Jerusalem fighting to liberate it and fulfill that destiny. Do not yield but hold on to Jerusalem tenaciously." Ben-Gurion spoke a bit longer than expected, with tears in his eyes, until it was time to return to his headquarters in Tel Aviv.

Why is this night different from all other nights? In uniform



Pesach 1920 Jewish Polish Soldiers



Pesach 1945 Jewish American soldiers of the 42nd infantry in Dahn, Germany prior to German surrender.



Pesach 1940 Jewish French Foreign Legion Soldiers Tunisia



Pesach 1948 Soldiers with Ben Gurion first Jewish army in Jerusalem in 2000 years



Pesach 1945 Jewish Allied soldiers Pesach Seder in Como, Italy



Pesach 1951 Jewish soldiers Korean War

Why is this night different from all other nights?

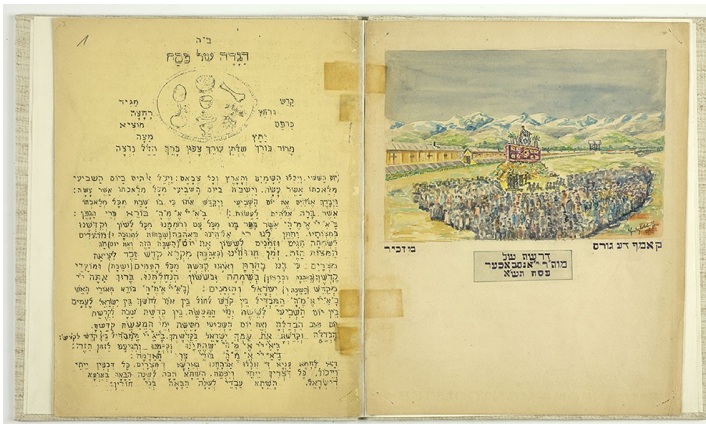


Pesach Seder April 1942 at Beaune la Rolande detention camp in France, David Pastel, who was deported to Auschwitz on 28 June 1942 appears in this photograph. He was murdered on 22 January 1945 during a death march from Auschwitz.

Pesach celebrated in spite of dangerous conditions



Pesach 1941 Lodz, Poland, Matzah distribution in the ghetto. Among the participants: Etka Litman-Mordkovitz, Marila Friend, Kova Novomiest, Yaakov Levkovitz, Aryeh Levkovitz, Misha Yalon, Senk Mordkovitz, Aryeh Altman, Rutka Altman, Heltzia Noiberg



Pesach 1941 Haggadah used at the Seder in 1941 by inmates at the Gurs camp



Pesach 1943 - baking matzah in hiding Lodz, Poland



Pesach April 1940 Seder, Vilna, Poland - eight months after the German/Russian invasion of Poland.



Pesach 1941 - Seder in a hospital, Sosnowiec, Poland,

WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER NIGHTS? BY RABBI MAJOR REUBEN LIVINGSTONE C.F. WWI

War does not stop for religious festivals or rituals to take place yet religious festivals and practices continue to be observed throughout periods of conflict.

Pesach, or Passover as it is more commonly known in the non-Jewish world, is an important Jewish festival of remembrance, reflection and coming together. During the First World War, world Jewry observed Pesach four times – in 1915, 1916, 1917 and 1918.

On the Home Fronts, families gathered together to celebrate Seder nights without loved ones who were serving in the forces or who would now never return. Pesach, the celebration of freedom from slavery and the exodus from Egypt, must have caused them mixed emotions – Jews caught up in conflict once again with serious concern for their future.

For those serving in the forces, celebrating Pesach meant trying to come together with a new family created from fellow Jewish servicemen and women living far from home. While the military chaplaincy of Christian Reverends had existed long before the First World War, as the number of Jewish volunteers rose, so did the need to minister to their religious needs.

Rabbis were recruited to become an integral part of the Military Chaplaincy and served alongside their Christian counterparts throughout the war. From just one Jewish Chaplain in 1909, the number grew to over 20 by the end of the war.

As a result, it became possible for acting servicemen and women to observe Pesach with fellow Jews, under the guidance of a Rabbi, wherever Jewish troops were serving. In this collection, we have brought together pictures, letters, information which give us an insight into the thoughts of those Jews.

The collection includes references to the Jews of Britain, the Empire and Commonwealth and Jews serving with the German and Austro-Hungarian forces.

For Jews, whether serving a century ago, across the years or in the armed services today, the Pesach story is one that resonates and brings unity. A reminder of a fundamental right worth fighting for, freedom.

THE MEN KILLED DURING PESACH 1914-1918

Using the records contained in the British Jewry Book of Honour, we know that 12 Jewish officers and 80 men of other ranks were killed during the four Pesach periods of the First World War.

The number is likely to be slightly higher if we assume that not all Jewish men are recorded in the book. In addition to those killed, many more will have been wounded. Their names can be found by searching through the wounded lists in the Jewish Chronicle archive.

Fatalities include Jewish men from across the UK and the British Empire – Australia, South Africa and Canada. They are buried or remembered on war memorials across the Western Front and the Middle East.

Interestingly, in Pesach 1915, more Jewish officers than other ranks were killed indicating that a number of Jewish men were already in the professional British Army prior to the war.

One of the officers who died was Major Ernest Alex Myer, listed as killed in action (KIA), 03/04/1915. He was a 40 year old Londoner in the London Regiment (City of London Rifles), and is buried in Guards CWGC Cemetery, Windy Corner, Cuinchy, France.

In 1916, Isador Steinberg, from Perth in Western Australia, was serving in the Australian Infantry. He was reported killed on 20/4/16, aged just 20. He is buried in Rue-du-Bacureot (13 London) CWGC Cemetery, Laventie, France. 1917 was the worst year for Jewish servicemen during Pesach as the Festival occurred over the same period as heavy fighting in the Northern France area of the Western Front.

On 10/4/17, two Jewish men, one a private in the army and the other a Mercantine Marine were killed but are without headstones.

Mendel Emanuel Levene, the Mercantine Marine, was killed at sea aged 19 and is remembered on the Salta Memorial Ste. Marie Cemetery, Le Harve, France. Private Sydney Bloom of the Middlesex Regiment was killed on the same day with no known grave and is remembered on the Thiepval memorial, The Somme, France.

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10/4/17 was a bleak day as Emmanuel Schwartz, serving with the Army Cyclist Corps, was also killed and is remembered on the Arras Memorial.

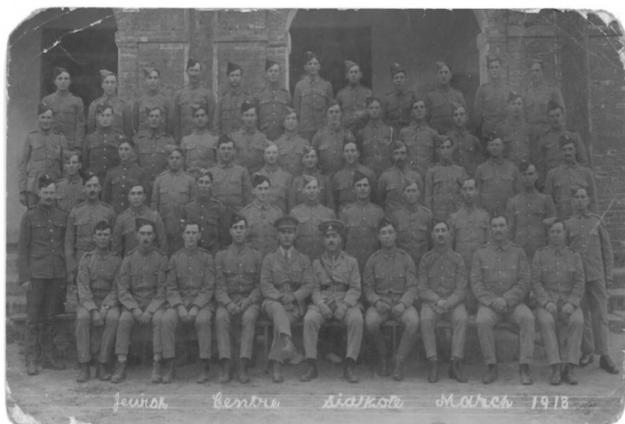
In 1918, the final Pesach of the war, Private Jack Dion MM was killed on 27/03/1918. He was aged 27 and serving with the Northampton Regiment, although he was a Londoner. As the MM indicates he had received the Military Medal for his bravery in earlier battles. He is remembered on the Pozieres Memorial in France.

JEWS IN THE BRITISH FORCES IN THE EMPIRE.

British Jews were stationed and fought across the Globe during the First World War, alongside Jews from the British Empire who also served in the Armed Forces, particularly from Australia and Canada. One of the most famous and celebrated Australian Generals of the First World War, General Sir John Monash, (1865 – 1931) was Jewish.

British Indian forces took part in many of the key battles of the conflict and there are a number of examples of British Jewish officers in their ranks such as VC winner Alexander Frank De Pass.

As professional regiments were redeployed from India to one of the Fronts, other new British regiments were sent out to the subcontinent to carry out their generally peaceful duties. It is why in this collection of images and Haggadot from the war period there is a Haggadah from Fort William in Calcutta, India.



Pesach 1918 Jewish soldiers collected for Passover at Sialkot, N.E. Punjab, Adrian Andrusier Collection



Pesach 1918 British units Jerusalem. British Jewry Book of Honour.



Pesach Seder 1919 London, UK



Seder service, Australian Y.M.C.A. British Jewry Book of Honour.

VICE PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S PASSOVER ADDRESS TO THE U.S. ARMED FORCES IN EUROPE

Pesach 1945: The traditional Passover greeting, *chag Pesach samech*, must have carried indescribable joy in 1945. The Second World War was nearly over, and victory over Nazi Germany was certain when, on March 26, then-Vice President Truman delivered his Passover address at the Jewish Welfare Board.

His remarks, were broadcast from Washington, D.C. to the "Jewish men and women in the Armed Forces." Among those who were listening were the U.S. Army Soldiers serving with the 42nd Infantry Division in World War II.

They celebrated the Jewish holiday of Passover in Dahn, Germany, just over a month before the German surrender. That day 1,500 Soldiers and civilians celebrated a Passover Seder, the commemoration of the Jewish people's escape from slavery in Egypt, in Dahn, a small German city just west of the Rhine River. According to the *Times Union*, Chaplain (Maj.) Eli Bohnen, a rabbi serving with the division and his assistant Cpl. Eli Heimberg created a division Haggadah – the text recited at the Seder on the first two nights of the Jewish Passover, including a narrative of the Exodus – specifically for the Passover Seder. The division Haggadah is believed to be the first Jewish ritual printing in Germany since the rise of the Nazis to power in 1933. **continue to next page**



U.S. Army Chaplain Max A. Braude's 1945 Seder Service



Pesach 1945 Jewish American soldiers drinking wine for Seder during World War II (Yad Vashem)



Pesach 1945 - Passover Seder held for Jewish Allied soldiers at the Bon Marche store, Belgium.

PESACH 1945 - VICE PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S PASSOVER ADDRESS TO THE U.S. ARMED FORCES IN EUROPE

TO BE RELEASED ON DELIVERY

SPEECH OF THE HONORABLE HARRY S. TRUMAN
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
ANNUAL PASSOVER SERVICE
NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD
BROADCAST TO THE JEWISH MEN AND
WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES
FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.
Columbia Broadcasting System
Broadcast time 5:00 to 5:30 PM E.W.T.
March 26, 1945

Since biblical times, people of the Jewish faith have made great contributions to the moral code of mankind. From the revelation of the Ten Commandments by Moses to the philosophical teachings of modern Jewish scholars, there has been a constant search for a better way of life for the benefit of all. It was the Hebrews who first fought the worship of pagan idols in the western world and who preached eternal faith in one God -- the God in whom we all put our trust.

This evening, as the Passover begins, all God-fearing people can well join with those of Jewish faith to thank the Almighty for the many blessings received. Already millions of people, recently held in bondage in Europe, Asia and Africa, have been liberated by the forces of freedom. Although this tragic world-wide conflict still continues to demand a heavy toll in lives and wealth, gratifying progress has been made toward the all-essential goal -- complete victory!

In view of the evil objectives of our enemies, it is especially fortunate that righteousness will triumph. Today the Angel of Death is again passing over the homes of modern tyrants. If the dignity of every man is preserved, the moral principles, for which the United Nations fight, must survive. Ultimately all people must be led out of bondage.

Having suffered persecution for centuries, the Jewish people steadfastly adhered to their ancient faith -- the faith which gave them courage and fortitude to withstand man's inhumanity to man. Furthermore, the Jews were frequently in the vanguard of the fight to aid other oppressed minorities.

All who insist upon fighting for ideals, be they religious or political, must suffer at some time from the intolerance and bigotry of bitter opponents. Yet nothing of lasting value can be achieved or retained without paying a price in one form or another.

It has well been said that "The price of liberty is constant vigilance". We Americans must indeed be constantly vigilant to preserve the many benefits which can be enjoyed only by a free people, who respect the rights of every individual.

It is sad to realize that the tragic world conflict still raging around the globe was started by a man whose hatred for a race became such an obsession that he refused to treat these people as human beings. Not satisfied with persecution and discrimination, Hitler, according to his own bitter words, finally sought to exterminate the entire Jewish race. To pave the way for his plans for world domination, the German dictator deliberately sought to make a scapegoat of the Jewish people. Little did he reckon with the courage and endurance of a race hardened by centuries of oppression, and strengthened by a firm faith that ultimately another Moses must come to lead them out of their modern bondage and into the Promised Land.

The Gentiles also seek a Promised Land, where intolerance and bigotry do not exist. The entire world dreams of a Promised Land, with peace and security, where all good people can dwell together in harmony as brothers. This cannot be achieved by bitterness and hatreds, but requires rational planning and general education.

It is not accidental that the most ignorant are frequently the most intolerant. It is not a coincidence that the greatest teachers in history were among the most tolerant. General education, however, is a long and endless process. In the meantime, men of good will must work together for the promotion of racial and religious harmony among all people, so that we may ultimately achieve the Promised Land on this earth which our Creator surely expects.

As the Passover begins, and Eastertide approaches, all Americans should give thanks for the many special blessings which we enjoy. All people should reverently pray for a lasting peace for the ultimate benefit of all humanity.



THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE of KABBALAH IN MOTION

By Rabbi Joseph Gelberman, z"l, with Rabbi
Burt Aaron Siegel

סולם של יעקב

"To Climb Jacob's Ladder"

This Kabbalistic practice uses the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Say each

letter aloud, and turn your heart to the spiritual concept associated with each of

these letters. In addition, think of each letter as the rung of a ladder. Imagine that

with each letter you speak, along with each concept that you contemplate, you are ascending the ladder.

א Aleph — emunah — faith

ב Bet — bitachon — trust

ג Gimel — g'meelut chasadim — deeds of loving-kindness

ד Dalet — d'vaykoot — your one-ness with God

ה Hey — ho-dah-ah — thankfulness

ו Vav — viddui — confessing our wrong doings

ז Zayin — zohar — the radiance of God's teaching

ח Chet — chesed — loving-kindness

ט Tet — tahor — pure

י Yud — yirah — awe

כ Kaf — kapara — atonement

ל Lamed — lee-mood — learning

מ Mem — mitzvah — the Divine Commandment

נ Nun — netsach — glory

ס Samech — sefer ha-chaim — the book of life

ע Ayin — anav — humble

פ Pey — peleh — a wonderful sight

צ Tsadee — tsdakah — righteousness

ק Kuf — Kadosh — holy

ר Resh — ruach — Spirit

ש Shin — shalom — peace

ת Tahv — t'chiyat ha-meitim — reincarnation

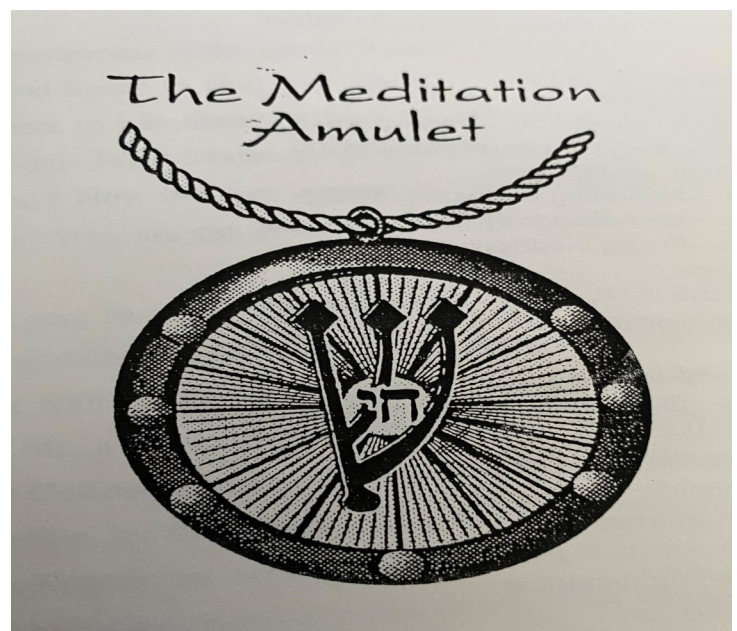
When you have visualized yourself having reached the top rung, the rung of the

letter Tahv, take a moment to deeply meditate upon the spiritual concept

associated with this letter, "*t'chiyat ha-meitim*," the return to life after the

completion of the journey. What does this mean to you? Consider the teaching

about re-incarnation that is found in Kabbalah, as well as in other traditions. You may not achieve all your spiritual aspirations in this lifetime, but there will be more opportunities for the soul to fulfill its highest purpose.



Ravenous Ravens



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



CARROT - POTATO KUGEL (DAIRY)

8 carrots, peeled and sliced
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons onion, chopped fine
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 oz. cheddar cheese, cut into small cubes
1 tablespoon butter or margarine

Cook, carrots, covered in boiling, salted water for 10 minutes. Add potatoes, cook 10 to 15 minutes longer.

Drain vegetables mash. Add egg, onion, salt, pepper. Beat until well blended. Stir in cheese mixture into a 1 and 1/2 quart casserole.

Bake and 350° oven for 30 minutes. Top mixture with butter or margarine place under broiler for 5 inches from heat for three minutes. Make six servings may also be done in microwave until heated through.



TABBOULEH SALAD

2 cups boiling water
1 cup wheat pilaf
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint or 2 tablespoons dried mint
1 small carrot, shredded
1 cucumber, peeled and diced
1 onion, chopped
1/2 cup chopped Italian parsley
3 tablespoons lemon juice
1/4 cup olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt

Pour boiling water over pilaf. Let stand for 1 hour or until fluffy. Toss with mint, carrot, cucumber, onion and parsley. Beat together lemon juice, oil, and salt, and toss with pilaf mixture. Serve at room temperature. Serves 6



Ravenous Ravens



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

“DAYENU” PASSOVER EGG SOUP (TYPICAL ITALIAN SEDER SOUP)

2 quarts broth, preferably beef
3 matzos, split in half
4 large egg yolks

In a medium pot, bring the broth to a boil. Drop the matzo into the pot and cook until soft, but not mushy, approximately 15 minutes. Right before serving, beat the egg yolks in a small bowl with a whisk for a minute. Add the egg yolks to the broth, stirring them quickly with the whisk so that they mix smoothly with the broth rather than curdling. **Serve immediately.**



FLOURLESS ALMOND CAKE

2 cups, plus 2 tablespoons almond flour
1 large pinch salt
2/3 cup confectioners sugar
1 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs, beaten
1 stick (4oz) unsalted butter or margarine,
melted and cooled
1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Grease and line with parchment an 8” square baking pan.

Combine flour, salt, sugars. Add eggs and melted butter or margarine, and vanilla to dry ingredients. Mix until smooth. Batter will be thick.

Pour into pan and bake 35-45 minutes. Turn out cake onto wire rack and cool. Keep wrapped in plastic wrap.



CALIFORNIA CHAROSET

- 1 large avocado, peeled, pit removed and diced
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 4 seedless dates
- 2 figs or prunes
- 1 whole orange, zest and sections
- 2 tablespoons apple juice
- 2 tablespoons matzo meal

Toss the avocado and lemon juice in a bowl; set aside.

In a processor or blender, place the almonds, raisins, dates and figs. Process until coarsely chopped. Add the orange zest and orange sections and process briefly to combine. Add the avocado and process 1 or 2 seconds more.

Transfer the mixture to a glass bowl and gently fold in the apple juice and matzo meal. Cover with plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator.

**CAPUNET****ITALIAN-JEWISH STUFFED CABBAGE**

- 8 or 9 leaves Savoy cabbage
- 1 lb. ground beef
- Small handful of flat-leafed parsley, chopped finely
- 1 onion, chopped finely
- 2 cups beef or chicken broth
- 1/4 teaspoon each kosher salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons bread or matzah crumbs
- Dash nutmeg

Bring pot of water to a boil; add 1 tbs salt to water and add cabbage leaves. Soften cabbage leaves 2 or 3 minutes. Remove from pan and let cool.

Mix with hands: meat, parsley, onion, bread or matzah crumbs, the 1/4 each tsp salt and pepper.

Roll meat into cabbage leaves by folding in sides. Arrange in sauce pot 1 layer snugly, seam side down. Pour broth over cabbage rolls and cook over very low heat, 1 1/2 hours, adding additional water or broth if necessary.



PASSOVER SPINACH FRITADA

2 - 10 ounce packages of frozen, chopped, spinach
3 eggs
3 ounces (3/4) cups grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
3 tablespoons oil
3 tablespoons matzah meal
8 ounces small curd cottage cheese (optional)

Place spinach in large mixing bowl and let stand until thawed.

DO NOT DRAIN.

Add all ingredients. Pour into a greased 9" square pan. Bake at 350 degrees about 1 hour or until golden brown.

Allow to cool 10 minutes.

**PEAR AND RAISIN CHAROSET**

2 small pears, cored and coarsely chopped
12 dried apricot halves, chopped
1/4 cup raisins
1 1/2 tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons sweet red wine

In medium bowl combine pears, apricots, raisins, honey, lemon juice, and cinnamon.

Mix well, then stir in wine.

Cover and refrigerate at least one hour before serving.



Ravenous Ravens



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



UKRAINIAN CABBAGE WITH CARAWAY SEEDS

1 head shredded cabbage, about 2-3 quarts
1/4 to 1/3 cup butter or margarine
1 teaspoon caraway seeds
1 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1-2 tablespoons vinegar

Remove and discard outer leaves of cabbage; rinse and cut into quarters, discarding core, and coarsely shred. Melt butter or margarine in saucepan; add cabbage and mixture of caraway seeds, salt, and pepper.

Cover saucepan and cook over low heat, stirring frequently, 10 to 15 minutes, or until cabbage is just tender. Stir into the cabbage mixture 1 or 2 tablespoons vinegar; cover saucepan and cook 5 minutes longer.

Serves 6



SETTING THE PESACH SEDER TABLE



IFR NEWS Kislev 5784



חזל טוב



To New IFR Member

Rabbi Daniel Gitel

To IFR Member Rabbi Anna Sugarman, her son David and daughter in law Tal on the birth of their daughter and granddaughter Liv Sugarman born in Israel, on September 19, 2023. Rabbi Anna will travel to Israel to welcome her new granddaughter.

To IFR Member Rabbi David Degani and his wife Cantor Lee, on the tenured appointment of their son, Professor of Anthropology Michael "Mike" Degani to The University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. Professor Degani, his wife and son recently moved to Cambridge, England from the United States.



Moshe Ben Etel

Ari Ben Shoshanna

Michael Ben Etel

Eliyahu Ben Yona v'Gitel

For a man:

בִּי שְׂפָרְךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן דָּוִד
וְשְׁלֹמֹה, הוּא יִכְרֹךְ אֶת (name) בֶּן (mother's name), בְּעֵבֹר
שׁ (name) בֶּן (father's name) יִתֵּן בְּלִי נָדָר לְצִדְקָה בְּעֵבֹר, שֶׁבֶת
הִיא מְלֻעֶזֶק וְרַפּוּאָה קְרוּבָה לְבוֹא, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן:

For a woman:

בִּי שְׂפָרְךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן דָּוִד
וְשְׁלֹמֹה, הוּא יִכְרֹךְ אֶת (name) בֵּת (mother's name), בְּעֵבֹר
שׁ (name) בֶּן (father's name) יִתֵּן בְּלִי נָדָר לְצִדְקָה בְּעֵבֹר, שֶׁבֶת
הִיא מְלֻעֶזֶק וְרַפּוּאָה קְרוּבָה לְבוֹא, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן:



The IFR Lapel Pin was minted in 2020 in solid brass with an antique brass finish and black enamel. The pin is one inch across, and is available for IFR Members \$65.00 USD ships free in the continental USA, shipping rates are applied outside of the USA.

Nisan 27 יום הזיכרון לשואה ולגבורה

Oral history interview with David Levine

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.1
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0001

Date interview: 1991 January 08

Oral history interview with Joan Mermelstein

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.2
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0002

Date interview: 1991 January 08

Oral history interview with Ruth Levine

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.3
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0003

Date interview: 1991 January 08

Oral history interview with Henry Carter

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.4
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0004

Date interview: 1991 February 06

Oral history interview with Israel Seibert

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.5
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0005

Date interview: 1991 February 06

Oral history interview with Mary Kartal

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.6
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0006

Date interview: 1991 February 06

Oral history interview with Soma Rosenberg

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.7
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0007

Date interview: 1991 February 27

Oral history interview with Joseph Polaniecki

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.8
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0008

Date interview: 1991 February 27

Oral history interview with Roma Kaltman

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.9
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0009

Date interview: 1991 February 27

Oral history interview with Lou Weisser

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.10
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0010

Date interview: 1991 April 06

Oral history interview with Jesse Kropveld

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.11
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0011

Date interview: 1991 April 06

Oral history interview with Gerd Buchheim

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.12
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0012

Date interview: 1991 April 06

Oral history interview with Simon Czerkiewicz

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.13
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0013

Date interview: 1991 April 25

Oral history interview with Edith Carter

Oral History | Accession Number: 1993.A.0093.15
| RG Number: RG-50.231.0015 Date interview:
1991 April 25



Pesach 1945 & 1946 - Returning home to Bielsko Poland after liberation
These were the family members who were left - shosh's father is in Polish Corp II Army uniform
by Rabbi Suzanne (shosh) H Carter, D.Div

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Surname	Given Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Address pre1939	Address 1945	Came From	Profession	Notes
HIRSZBERG-WASSERBERGER	Sara	27/10/1912	Mielec	Kraków	Mickiewicza 21	Rosja	Gorseciarka	-
WASSERBERGER	Edmund	21/05/1921	Lesna ad Zywiec	Skoczów	Stalina 12	Rosja	Radotechnik	-
WASSERBERGER	Joanna	20/01/1924	Oswiecim	Oswiecim	Mickiewicza 29	KL Auschwitz	Gorseciarka	-



Henryk, Anna, Edmund (Eddie) Walter, Eugenia and others 1945



Herbert, Henryk, Ignatz, Edmund (Eddie) and Walter 1945

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Surname	Given Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Address pre1939	Address 1945	Came From	Profession	Notes
KARTER	Eugenia	15/11/1900	Lesna ad Zywiec	Bielsko	Sulkowskiego 13	KL Lipsk	Gorseciarka	-
KARTER	Henryk	04/12/1908	Dankowice	Bielsko	Sulkowskiego 12	Auschwitz	-	-
KARTER	Walter	31/12/1920	Biala	Biala	Bielsko Sulkowskiego 12	KL Auschwitz	Bez zawodu	-
KARTER (KORNBLUTH)	Rut Irena	18/04/1948	Bielsko	-	Sulkowskiego 12	-	-	-

Henryk, Walter, Eddie, Alina, Anna, and Jack 1945



Jetti Wasserberger השם יקום דמה 1937 and granddaughter "shosh" 2007



Pesach Massacre March 27, 2002 - Netanya Israel

During Pesach on March 27, 2002, the Park Hotel in the Israeli coastal city of Netanya held its traditional annual Passover seder for its 250 guests, in the hotel dining room located at the ground floor of the hotel.

Many hotel guests were elderly Jews and Holocaust survivors, who didn't have family and relatives in Israel.

In the evening of 27 March 2002, a Palestinian suicide bomber disguised as a woman approached the hotel carrying a suitcase which contained powerful explosives. The suicide bomber managed to pass the security guard at the entrance to a hotel, then he walked through the lobby passing the reception desk and entered the hotel's crowded dining room. At 19:30 pm (GMT+2) the suicide bomber detonated the explosive device he was carrying. The force of the explosion instantly killed 28 civilians and injured about 140 people, of whom 20 were

injured severely. Two of the injured later died from their wounds. Some of the victims were Holocaust survivors. Most of the victims were senior citizens (70 and over). The oldest victim was 90 and the youngest was 20 years old.

A number of married couples were killed, as well as a father together with his daughter. One of the victims was a Jewish tourist from Sweden who was visiting Israel for Passover.

The plot for the Passover massacre included the use of cyanide 4 kg of cyanide had been bought and prepared for a chemical attack Tarak Zidan had been recruited to Hamas, and during 1997 he researched the use of chlorine and other nerve agents to be used in terror attacks.^[8]

In 2002, 4 kg of chlorine had been bought and packed for the attack.

For an unknown reason it was not used and passed to Abbas al-Sayyid instead. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack. The bomber was identified as Abdel-Basset Odeh, a 25-year-old from the nearby West Bank city of Tulkarm.

Hamas spokesman Abdel Aziz Rantisi said that "As long as there is occupation, there will be a resistance" and denied that the attack was timed to coincide with the peace initiative of the Saudi Arabian government at the Beirut Summit, an initiative rejected by Hamas.^[40]

A Passover Massacre, a Terror War, and the Lies They Told - Jewish Journal - Shachar Azani

The International Criminal Court (ICC) recently made headlines when it confirmed that Palestine is a State Party to the Rome Statute, extending the ICC's jurisdiction to the territories "*occupied by Israel since 1967, namely Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.*"

Shortly thereafter, the ICC's prosecutor announced she would launch an investigation against Israel regarding Operation Protective Edge, Israel's defensive war against Hamas' Gaza missiles in 2014.

Although Israel's investigative, prosecutorial and judicial systems are held in high regard, the ICC's decision poses a potential — albeit not immediate — risk of prosecution and has implications that extend beyond Israel's political and military leaderships to high- and low-ranking officers and soldiers of the IDF. Due to the unique nature of its conflicts — and that of their terrorist enemies — Israel faces a most complex, if not unparalleled, situation on the battlefield. And here is one glimpse into that world: the story of my cousin, Ofer. I've known Ofer all my life. He's always been a jolly guy, the kind who always smiles, focuses on his work as a criminal lawyer, and takes care of his family. On one balmy Tel Aviv

night a few years back, we sat for dinner together when the conversation took an unexpected turn. When I asked Ofer what he had been up to lately, he suddenly came to a halt, almost hesitant to speak.

"What's up?" I urged him, curious to know what was holding him back. I caught a glimpse of his eyes. It was clear they were hiding something. He finally relented. "I am not sure you know, Shachar," he stated, "but I was a reservist during operation Defensive Shield, at the height of the Second Intifada in 2002. I was one of those who fought in Jenin." I vaguely knew that, of course, but like so many other Israelis, this was a given, an experience so ordinary that it had never occurred to me to ask him about it. Thus, Ofer began his tale.

"It was the eve of Passover, 2002, and we were on the way to celebrate the holiday at my mother-in-law's house, grandma Mazal. I remember the endless traffic, impatient drivers honking in despair and the kids squabbling in the back seat while we tried to reassure them. Just a few more minutes, and we were there. We were moving a few inches forward and then stopped again. Almost an ordinary Passover eve. Just almost. Suddenly, the radio changed its tune. A stern voice on the radio announced there had been a terrible bombing in Netanya. Terrible, the voice echoed, but said no more."

Continued

On Wednesday, March 27, 2002, at around 2 pm that day, a Palestinian suicide bomber and his driver, both members of Hamas, were driving around looking for crowded places. After traveling from Herzliya to bustling Tel-Aviv, they decided to drive to the coastal city of Netanya, where they had worked illegally in the past. They chose the Park Hotel, which was abuzz with innocent men, women, children and the elderly, many of whom had no one to celebrate the holiday with or were incapable of doing so on their own.

They all gathered to celebrate the Passover Seder at the hotel's dining room on the ground floor. Sometime around 8 pm, the suicide bomber entered the hotel and walked straight to the center of the dining room. He then detonated a powerful bomb strapped to his body. The explosion could be heard miles away, due to parts of the ceiling collapsing. Dozens of people died, and hundreds more were injured. Among them, 11 Holocaust survivors all perished in a horrendous massacre that sent shockwaves throughout Israel.

"We began to hear the details. A terrible bombing attack in Netanya turned into a massacre. Bodies were strewn all over the hotel's dining room, and the white clothes meticulously prepared for the celebration were now drenched in blood around what was

left of the Seder table. We were still standing in traffic. We looked around, only to see great sadness in the eyes of others. Everything turned eerily quiet, as the honking stopped and the entourage of vehicles continued to drive in silence to their respective celebrations."

Sadly, this was not a unique occurrence in Israel at the time. Around September 2000, the Palestinian leadership, then headed by Yasser Arafat, launched what was later called the Second Intifada, a series of suicide attacks against Israel targeting buses, malls and coffee shops. Some of these atrocious attacks were executed by women and even children. They resulted in the deaths of over one thousand Israelis, with many more injured. The Park Hotel Massacre is considered to be the bloodiest terror attack in Israel's history, part of the Bloody March that year, during which more than 135 Israelis lost their lives to terrorism.

"It was clear to everyone that something had to change. We must put an end to this suicidal terrorism madness that Tsunamied through Israel at that time and reached its peak that Seder night at the Park Hotel. Instead of a Seder (Hebrew for order), our enemies did their best to wreak havoc and chaos. No more. The die had been cast, and along with it, the uniform came out of the closet."

Continued...

As a result of the Park Hotel massacre and Bloody March, Israel's government decided to draft 20,000 IDF reservists, including my cousin Ofer, and launch operation Defensive Shield, a large-scale IDF counterterrorism operation in the West Bank.

It took place between March 29 and May 10, 2002 and marked the beginning of the end of that period of unfathomable horror.

The Jenin Refugee Camp was the site of Defensive Shield's most notorious battles. The IDF encountered heavy resistance from Palestinian terrorists.

The camp was densely populated, which forced the IDF to make a moral, meaningful and eventually costly choice: engage in door-to-door combat instead of bombarding large swaths of the camp. The reason was to avert a high number of civilian casualties.

The decision was not only that of Israel's high command but also reflected the values of how the IDF soldiers operated on the ground.

The result was devastating. The ferocious exchange of fire resulted in the death of 23 IDF reservists, 13 of whom died in one bloody day.

continue to next page

Little did the IDF soldiers know that an integral part of the Palestinian terrorists' battle plan involved women and children.

They used them not only as human shields — a practice sadly seen often — but also deployed them as combatants on the front lines, as well as logistical and intelligence support.

In that battle, Palestinians weaponized Israel's values and the IDF's ethical code against its soldiers. Ofer is not one to tear up.



Jenin 2002



Continued

That night, his eyes spoke louder than words.

“April 8, 2002, was the eve of Israel’s Holocaust Remembrance Day. By that time, we had already been heavily engaged in fighting at the Jenin Refugee Camp, known to be the suicide bombers’ capital of the West Bank. The IDF chose a risky path. We were fighting door-to-door, passing through walls to minimize casualties, rather than carpet-bombing the camp from the air. All that was done in order to save the lives of the many Palestinians who were in the camp, held hostage and used as human shields by the terrorists.

“The sun set slowly on yet another day of fighting, and we found shelter for the night. Dror Bar, one of the force’s commanders, convened the soldiers after dark. In the heat of battle, Dror found the time and will to hold a Holocaust Remembrance ceremony with a group of sweaty soldiers. Together they lit six candles in memory of the six million of our people who perished at the hands of Nazi evil.

“His words still echo in everyone’s ears. ‘We are fortunate and privileged to be alive at a time when the Jewish people are free. When we have a state of our own, and an army of our own, to fight for our people, for our freedom, for our lives. To be masters of our own fate.’ The words resonated amid the bullets’ whistles. ‘This battle today, in Jenin,’ he said, ‘was part and parcel of

the Zionist ethos and an expression of the resurrection of the Jewish people in our modern State of Israel.’”

On April 9, 2002, IDF soldiers stumbled into a Palestinian ambush in the camp. They entered an open yard, later nicknamed “the bathtub,” where fire was opened on them from all directions. In the heat of that intense and bloody battle, Palestinians kidnapped three IDF’s soldiers’ dead bodies and hid them in a nearby room. The soldiers’ friends, however, refused to leave them behind — even at the peril of their own lives. They fought to retrieve their fallen friends, an action they were later decorated for as an act of heroism. It was the IDF’s deadliest battle day since the First Lebanon War in 1982. Lt.(res.) Dror Bar, aged 28, of Kibbutz Einat, was killed mere hours after that ceremony, along with twelve other brave IDF soldiers.

Senior Palestinian officials rushed to blame Israel, claiming it was nothing short of a “massacre” of hundreds of Palestinians, with some even going arguing 3,000(!) Palestinians died at the hands of Israel.

These were blatant and shameless lies. Recently deceased Palestinian spokesperson and chief negotiator, Saeb Erakat, is well remembered for having rushed to TV studios and pointing the finger at Israel, claiming it was a genocide.

continue to next page

At first, international media reported the Palestinian accusations without scrutiny, while Israel's government fought the blood libel. This false accusation was later thoroughly debunked not only by human rights organizations but even by the United Nations itself, which denied the occurrence of such a massacre in Jenin. And Time Magazine stated conclusively, "Time investigation concludes that there was no wanton massacre in Jenin, no deliberate slaughter of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers. But the 12 days of fighting took a severe toll on the camp."

But the battle was not over. The end of one day of fighting marked the beginning of another struggle. It was a battle of the heart, touching the depths of emotion, a battle for the memory of those fallen soldiers and for the soul of a nation.

Mohammad Bakri is an Arab-Israeli actor and film director. Shortly after operation Defensive Shield ended, he filmed a series of interviews with residents of the Jenin refugee camp. He produced a film based on these testimonies and other materials, titled "*Jenin, Jenin*."

The movie was described as a one-sided production, echoing the Palestinian false narrative of what transpired at the camp. It was edited to blame IDF soldiers for supposedly committing atrocities at the camp, including firing at a hospital, robbing the elderly and even running over an infant.

Ofer paused for a minute. "*After taking heavy fire in the camp and paying a costly price in human lives, we were not about to take this attack on us and our fallen friends lying down. Not by a long shot.*"

"We were not about to take this attack on us and our fallen friends lying down. Not by a long shot."

The movie's lies were too much to bear for the IDF soldiers who took part in the fighting. They fought in a battle for the people of Israel, where they lost many friends. Now, they found themselves on yet another battlefield — a legal and media one — to cleanse, cherish and uphold the memory of their fallen comrades against an orchestrated campaign of lies and incitement. It took many years of work and many failures before it reached a temporary conclusion a few months ago. In January 2021, Israel's Central District Court prohibited the movie's screening. The battle over the movie faced various legal challenges, touching upon libel and defamation of a group of people to free speech. The film was finally banned only after Nissim Meghnagi, an IDF reservist who took part in the operation at the Jenin Refugee Camp, filed a defamation lawsuit of his own against Bakri. Meghnagi was seen in the film and accused of stealing money from an elderly Palestinian man. The court ruled he was "sent to defend his country and found himself accused of a crime he did not commit." **continue to next page**

"The battle in Jenin was the epitome of heroism," Ofer recounted, "and much happened in that battlefield which is yet to be told. Tales of glory and virtue to share with generations to come."

Rabbi Hillel famously said: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?" (Pirkei Avot 1:14).

Ofer and his friends were on the front lines, ready to give their lives for the people and State of Israel.

They marched onto the battlefield, determined not only to defend and protect the innocents but also dead-set on preserving the memory of their slain comrades.

"But if I am only for myself, what am I?" they asked and, in their deeds, answered. What will the ICC answer?

Shahar Azani is a former Israeli diplomat and Senior Vice President at JBS.



Rabbi Frank Tamburello's Seder Plate from Venice

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Chag Pesach Kasher v'Sameach 5784

Questions about Gaza by Rabbi David Degani

Due to the war I have been receiving many questions. Here is one that has been asked several times concerning the water and electricity situation in Gaza.

When Gaza fell into Israeli hands during the War of 1967 after the Egyptians left the area, what was left was a collapsed infrastructure, a completely broken water pipe system, one old and often dysfunctional electrical power plant, an antiquated, barely functioning electrical grid and a dilapidated sewer system.

Due to ongoing bitter rivalry between political groups in Gaza, the ability to elect an effective central authority as a governing body, was impossible. In fact, no effective public utility to speak of existed in Gaza since the beginning of the 20th century.

Unfortunately, other than humanitarian help, no serious international initiative to improve the infrastructure has been offered to remedy the situation.

This was the situation 65 years ago. Nothing much has changed since except that the population is now more than four times as much, from 400,000 Arabs living in Gaza in the

late 60's to 1.8 million presently cramming into the same small area.

After the 1967 war, the State of Israel realized it needed to supply Gaza with water and electricity while trying to rebuild the infrastructure using its own limited resources of water and electricity.

To make things even worse, the Israelis realized that at least half of the water supplied to Gaza could not be handled by the antiquated water pipe system. A few desalination plants were desperately needed as well as a few new power plants to replace the one small dysfunctional electrical power plant along with its dilapidated electrical grid.

Over the years, plans to improve the situation in Gaza were drawn by Israeli engineers with international support.

These plans were impossible to implement since terror organizations were active in Gaza against Israel. Any Israeli initiative to ease Gaza's situation was flatly rejected.

Plans to help the situation were also drawn specifically by the Israeli water and electrical authorities. These plans were scratched as well due to constant terror activities from Gaza.

continue on next page

Continued: The UN organization, UNICEF however, did manage to build a small water desalination plant in Gaza in order to ease the water shortage. However the plant is too small. It is based on old technology and cannot solve the dire water situation in Gaza.

One of the well known plans to help the situation was put forward by former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett and former foreign minister Yair Lapid. It evidently had great European support. It was never implemented due to the refusal of Hamas to even consider it.

There were also Israeli proposals to build a few modern desalination plants as well as patching the water pipe system using Israeli vast know-how and experience in the field. Plans to build a few electrical power plants with foreign donations were also considered.

In 2008 Hamas authorities agreed to allow the building of a desalination plant and electrical power plants to alleviate the severe water and electrical shortage. Building materials earmarked for these projects were sent along with engineering plans for the projects to be built with the help of Israeli engineers and foreign money. However, Hamas had plans of its own. All the building material was used to build one of the most elaborate and sophisticated underground large tunnels. This became what is now known as

Gaza's underground city. The goal was to provide shelter to the dozens of thousands Hamas terrorists as well as a way to kidnap Israelis. Both goals were achieved. Many terror attacks in the area including kidnapping Israeli citizens (and getting back hundreds of terrorist prisoners in Israeli jail in a prisoner exchange) were conducted using these tunnels.

When Israel realized that all building materials were used to build the underground structure instead of helping the population, it was decided to immediately stop the transfer of all construction material to Gaza.

However, according to IDF reports, it has been discovered that Hamas has managed to smuggle huge amounts of construction material through the Egyptian border and through its extensive tunnel system. Hamas even expanded the underground elaborate tunnels system to more than 200 miles. For years Hamas has been successfully smuggling anything they needed for their terror activities through land and sea. It also became apparent that a lot of materials have been smuggled through Israel by hiding them in double strength food bags like rice bags. Israel, having no other choice, started monitoring everything that is shipped to Gaza on a daily basis aboard dozens of large trucks including food and other goods. **continued next page**

Continued: Unlike what Arab propaganda wants everyone to believe, there are absolutely no restrictions on food, medicine, and all other basic needs. Everything is simply being checked for any material that could be used, directly or indirectly, for terror, including weapons and ammunition.

This is the hard lesson learned by Israel that when it comes to Gaza that less than total vigilance leads to terror disasters. Israel is still obligated to supply water and electricity as much as it can to Gaza. This is not a “control” issue but rather the kind of moral and legal obligation issued by the international community and the UN despite the hatred and the will to obliterate the state of Israel.

It is sad that on one hand the world accuses Israel of “controlling” Gaza by controlling the water and electrical flow and by restricting material going to Gaza and on the other hand demands that Israel provides Gaza with water and electric power, food and other materials. It is sad that the world has ignored all the attempts by Israel to help rebuild Gaza infrastructure and instead has faced extreme hostility.

It is a strange anomaly that Gazans want to destroy Israel by completely killing all men (women and girls should be taken for obvious purposes)

despite the fact that Israel provides for the Gazans, as much as it can, water and electricity and despite Israel's attempts over the years to help with plans which cannot be implemented.

No other country in the world ever came out with a serious attempt to help the water and electrical infrastructure situation, not even the UN, with all its vast resources.

Any accusation from any international body over the years of Israel's discriminatory restrictions in regards to helping Gaza is a propaganda fallacy.

Rabbi David Degani



Rabbi David Degani is a long time IFR member/board member. A sabar raised in Tel Aviv, Rabbi Degani is a veteran of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Rabbi Degani and his wife Cantor Lee started their Boca Raton Synagogue, Shirat Shalom in 1998. They have two children and three grandchildren.



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Shabbat Ki Tissa: Ashrei ha adam ha sameach b'chelko: Happy is the person who is content with his lot. This week our Torah portion is Ki Tissa and it tells us how the Jewish people, saved from slavery by God, turned their backs on God when Moses went up the mountain because; they feared Moses would never come back. It's this story, our separation from God, and how to overcome it, about which I speak today.

We are such creatures of habit, aren't we? I know people who, when driving on a vacation, have to stop at the same rest area or the same restaurant each time. Some at UVTO insist they have the same dinner table. Or those who bet the same lottery numbers each week. And we all know about ball players with their rituals. The pine tar; wrapping and unwrapping batting gloves, spitting and digging holes in the batter's box. And there are the gum chewers, water bottle drinkers, smokers and the chronically late!

WHY DO WE DO ALL THIS? Let me simply say, we do things for a myriad of reasons and rationalizations which are only important if we think they are. Sometimes we choose to repeat behaviors because they give us a sense of comfort or balance; they justify a world view or make us feel in control.

In a place in Talmud (Menachot 43b) it says "R. Meir used to say a person is bound to say one hundred blessing daily" Deut. 10:12)"

A hundred blessings a day! Who has time for that? If there are sixty minutes in an hour and we are awake approximately sixteen hours a day that means about six blessings an hour or one every ten minutes! How can that possibly be a realistic goal and still leave time for us to get things done? I mean, spirituality it's nice but someone has to play pickle ball or go to the gym. Do the laundry, read a newspaper, cook a meal. There are cards to play, rummy tiles to be chosen and bridge to be...bridged.

A hundred blessings a day!?! Get serious. Of course we could look at it another way. Maybe we need to first ask ourselves are there a hundred things in a day worth blessing? Are there fifty? Or twenty? Or even five? Is there anything left to give blessings over at all? Or is that just old fashioned thinking?

Here's my confession: I take Rabbi Meir's challenge every day – the hundred blessing challenge. It goes something like this. Imagine a movie:

Fade In: the bedroom. There I lie after a night's sleep. The sun has crept up and suddenly "beep-beep-beep" the sound of the alarm wakens me. My wife pretends to be asleep. I open my eyes.

My first thought of the day: Thank you God, I'm alive! I get to do it again! (one blessing down, 99 to go) As I stretch my legs I thank God that my body seems to still be in one piece. (98 to go) My eyes search around the room, I see color, I see gradations of light. Thank you for my sight, my,

hearing – my senses. (97 left) I get out of bed, take my water glass and tip toe into the bathroom. Very quietly I do those things one does in morning in bathroom and say the blessings which accompany them. I do them quietly so my wife doesn't hear and think I have become a Chassid and get scared. They take a few seconds, I brush my teeth. I taste the toothpaste, I feel the water ... and ugh! I see myself in the mirror. I am thankful that time hasn't done worse to me! (Are you still counting?)

Don't worry I'm not going to take you minute by minute through my day. But seriously I must tell you this process continues from the time I awake until the time I go to sleep. I attempt to remain in what I call an attitude of gratitude all day, or as long as I can manage it. Look, I am not a saint: I fail, I forget sometimes, I get carried away or enmeshed, I get selfish or self involved.

I use or misuse my sense of humor. I say blessings but skip the gratitude which makes the blessings just empty shells; half truths which say that I am grateful while I am not in a state of gratitude. Some days I don't get to twenty five blessings. Other days, I get further.

If we begin our day being thankful for everything, nothing is taken for granted, and if we end our day that way...how bad could a day be? If we take a minute, no, half a minute, before everything we do and just express our gratitude for being able to taste-touch-see-hear-smell how could we experience the world as anything less than a wonder and a nurturing home in which to live? If we take the time to be grateful – maybe even write those things on a list once a day, how then could we experience family and friends – living here- as anything less than just below the angels?

Okay, then I turn on the news. You know what comes next. I hear about war and sadness, hatred, intolerance,

floods and ignorance. And I get sad, like we all do. And I feel helpless and angry. And I get pulled down, like we all do. And then what?

Yes, I know we live in a world of peril. I know we live in a physical world whose stakes are often measured by life and death. Our forbears knew that too. Every year on Yom Kippur we read their names.

They left behind their words and directions. One writing reminds us: “every Jew whether poor or rich, suffering from an illness or in good health, young or old must learn Torah by day and night.” That was every Jew. Not every Orthodox Jew or every Rabbi. Every Jew.

And by studying Torah what will we learn? The story of Moses? Abraham and Isaac? The Red Sea? Those stories are good and worth learning. But it is my belief that unless we learn the very nature of our lives, we have learned nothing.

Unless we hear that we are like grass that in the morning grows and in the evening is cut; unless we hear that we are dust and unto dust we shall return, we are missing the point. There's only so much time.

Every moment is a gift. A precious drop of time and possibility. A moment to be strong and choose life. A moment to see, really see. To see color and shape and texture. Light and Shadow. A moment to taste: sweet and salty, sour, bitter. To hear, to smell. To live. And to wonder. To wonder how it all happened this way. The magnificence of the human senses. The wonder of the universe. And from deep in that moment to look for God. To turn and dare to ask your 21st Century self: **is** there something there? Do I still believe in my faith? Friends, in this very moment, can you feel your heart beat? Can you sense your breathing? Do you realize that deep within your ears are tiny little pieces of toy-like flesh that are vibrating and allowing you to hear and ex-

perience my voice? How does your spine feel? Can you sense that you are alive? Not just taking up space.

Imagine if everyone could take the moment and feel the magic of just being. Where would that lead us?

Could it not lead us to a place where each of us would feel grateful? Connected? Energized? Able to say a hundred blessings a day? Able to bless ourselves? Able to bless the "others?" Even those we don't want to bless? Imagine taking all those habits that we have collected, all those mindless habits and in their places substituting blessings of gratitude. Moments of unspeakable and lovely gratitude. Tens of them, fifties of them, maybe even a hundred of them. That's what our ancestors were trying to leave behind. That was the message. Your life is sacred, it is precious. Every delicious moment is to be savored and to be blessed. And each moment of gratitude is to be expressed to the creator of all, as you understand the creator of all.

I end where I started, with Talmud:
ashrei ha adam ha sameach
bchelko....Blessed is the person who
is content with his lot.

May this Sabbath bring you peace.
And may you find the time to perceive
your aliveness and offer thanks and
be content. The journey of hundred
blessings begins with one moment of
pure unencumbered awareness. May
God bless you and may you bless the
God of your understanding, and in
that way find contentment.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Arthur Rosenberg

Thousand Oaks 2024



*Blessed are You, Adonai our God,
source of all being; You formed the
human body with wisdom, and placed
within it many openings and closings.
It is known before Your throne of
glory that if one of these were to be
opened where it should be closed, or
closed where it should be opened, we
would not be able to stand before You
and offer praise. Blessed are You,
Adonai, healer of all flesh and
worker of miracles*



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