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# the Hebrew Watchman

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## Breaking Bread, Building Bridges: Memphis Students Gather for Black–Jewish Unity Dinner



Nearly 90 Black and Jewish college students, administrators and Jewish community leaders joined together at Rhodes College in Memphis for a Unity Dinner.

By Shoshana Cener

At the end of February, something powerful happened around dinner tables. Nearly 90 Black and Jewish college students, administrators and Jewish community leaders joined together at Rhodes College in Memphis for a Unity Dinner. The event was designed to promote conversation, build relationships and strengthen the connection between the groups with a shared history of partnership during the Civil Rights Movement.

The brainchild of Dr. John H. Eaves, founder and director of Black and Jewish Leaders of Tomorrow, the Unity Dinner concept began with a “gather grant” from the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. “As a Black and Jewish American who lives in Atlanta,” said Dr. Eaves, “I saw a need for Blacks and Jews to come together three years ago. Based on my background as a college instructor, I wanted to focus on bridge-building efforts on college campuses, and I envisioned a forum for

courageous conversations between Jews and non-Jews over a meal.”

Now a national collaboration known as the “Tikkun Olam Initiative” between the United Negro College Fund, Blue Square Alliance and Hillel International, the dinners aim to connect students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) with Hillel students through exploring shared values and confronting prejudice. The Memphis event comes on the heels of dinners in Atlanta, Baltimore, Houston, New Orleans, Philadelphia and Washington, DC.

Memphis Jewish Federation and Hillels of Memphis immediately seized the opportunity to host a Memphis dinner. “When we first learned about the initiative, we were so excited because we knew the Unity Dinner needed to be in Memphis,” said Sara First, Federation’s community relations manager.

Dr. Eaves agreed, “Among the cities in which we have held Unity Dinners,

Memphis is unique. It’s the place that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968. It’s an ideal place to rekindle the dream that King had for a beloved community. It was also the end of a golden era of Black and Jewish allyship demonstrated during the Civil Rights era that must be restored.”

Memphis Mayor Paul Young and Rhodes College President Jennifer Collins opened the Memphis meal with remarks recognizing the students for attending an event designed to challenge their thinking and foster change and partnership in Memphis and the Mid-South.

“The Unity Dinner was an amazing experience where so many different individuals, from different places and backgrounds, were able to come together and bond over our shared humanity,” noted Annabelle Turner, Rhodes Hillel student president. “The night was filled with joy, reflection and learning.”

Black and Jewish participants from

LeMoyné-Owen College, Rust College, Rhodes College and the University of Memphis engaged in facilitated table conversations with discussion cards designed to guide dialogue. Prompts included questions such as “Why are you here?” “What is freedom?” and “What do you wish people outside your identity group understood about your community?”

“Students said they really valued the chance to have honest conversations with peers from different backgrounds. Many shared that they felt seen, heard and inspired by the perspectives of others, and that it challenged them to think differently about their own communities,” said Phoenix Goldberg, director of Hillels of Memphis. “The success of the event came from the openness and courage of students who were willing to ask difficult questions and listen deeply. The thoughtful facilitation and welcoming environment made it easy for meaningful dialogue to happen.”

In addition to the efforts of the national partners, many local partners collaborated to bring this event to life including Federation’s Community Relations Council, Hillels of Memphis professional and student leaders, and faculty and staff from all the participating campuses.

“Organizing the event required substantial coordination among the local host committee across multiple campuses and community partners,” explained Rebecca Tuvel, a host committee member, associate professor and chair of the Department of Philosophy at Rhodes.

(See Unity Page 2)

## Iranian Missile Shrapnel Damages Haifa Refinery



The Haifa oil refinery. Credit: Avishai Teicher/PikiWiki Israel.

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – Shrapnel from an Iranian missile intercepted by the IDF struck Israel’s largest oil refinery in Haifa Bay

last Thursday, causing damage to the facility and triggering power outages in the surrounding area, the Israel Fire and Rescue Services confirmed. Smoke was

seen billowing from the Bazan Group oil refineries following the attack. A Fire and Rescue Services spokesperson said no casualties were reported at the refinery, though the structure sustained some damage. Shrapnel from the missile also hit a high-tension electricity line, causing localized outages. The Israel Electric Corp. said power was quickly restored to most residential areas. Energy and Infrastructure Minister Eli Cohen said that the damage to the electricity network in northern Israel was limited. “IEC teams are already working in the field and have restored electricity to most of the disconnected areas,” he said. The Bazan facility was damaged during the 12-day war last June, when three of its employees were killed. In a separate incident last Thursday, Magen David Adom reported four people wounded in the northern city of Kiryat Shmona following additional rocket fire. According

**Four people were wounded in a separate missile attack on Kiryat Shmona.**

to MDA, a man aged about 60 was in serious condition with an abdominal injury, a 68-year-old woman was in moderate condition with a head injury, and two people in their 20s were listed in light condition suffering from blast injuries. A Thai worker in central Israel and four Palestinian women in southern Judea were killed by Iranian missile attacks overnight last Wednesday. At least 21 people, all civilians, have been killed in Israel as a result of hundreds of Iranian ballistic missile attacks since the start of the war with the Islamic Republic on Feb. 28. [HW](#)

Unity...  
(Continued From Page 1)



Participants from LeMoyne-Owen College, Rust College, Rhodes College and the University of Memphis engaged in facilitated table conversations with discussion cards designed to guide dialogue.



The Unity Dinners are about more than just discussion. They're about relationships and continued dialogue that extend beyond a single evening.

"Students left the evening motivated to continue building connections and exploring these conversations on their campuses and in their communities," said Goldberg. "The event planted seeds for ongoing collaboration and mutual understanding."

"Students from different colleges were even heard organizing a meet-up for Shabbat dinner," added Tuvel, "suggesting the event sparked real connections that will likely continue."

Students left the dinner with name tags featuring a QR code that allows participants to apply for mini-grant funding to host their own events in the future. Organizers are also looking into

Hillel students visiting HBCUs to further support those connections.

"The Tikkun Olam Initiative created a setting where students felt comfortable speaking openly about their various experiences and perspectives," added Jessica Cowan, associate director of the Turley Center for Community Engagement at Rhodes, "and overall engagement was excellent."

"Students walk away from the Unity Dinners creating friendships, raising awareness about each other's cultures and laying the foundation for allyship between the two groups in fighting against hate on college campuses," noted Dr. Eaves.

If the Memphis dinner is any indication, the work of building understanding, one conversation and meal at a time, has already begun. **HW**

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## Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. March 27, 2026 / 9 Nissan, 5786 .....6:59 p.m.  
Havdalah, Sat. March 28, 2026 / 10 Nissan, 5786 ..... 7:56 p.m.  
**Weekly Torah Portion: Tzav**

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# Shir Tzion in Memphis: Songs, Stories, and a Living Connection

By Yosef Shlomo Kfir, Torah Mitzion Kollel

On a quiet Monday evening here in Memphis, I watched people walk in from different corners of our community – families, students, retirees – and step into the home of the Grunwald family, where chairs were set up and a pot of soup was already warming the room. They took their seats with a bowl in hand and curiosity in their eyes, ready for another “Shir Tzion” night: simple food, a shared space and a song that opens a window into the story of Am Yisrael.

At our first gathering, around the Greenwald’s living room, we centered the evening on “Sar Moshe Montefiore.” As the melody filled the house, we spoke about Sir Moses Montefiore’s visits to Eretz Yisrael in the 1800s, his support for building neighborhoods beyond the walls of Yerushalayim, and how his work helped strengthen Jewish life during Ottoman times. People leaned in as images of the famous windmill and early neighborhoods appeared on the screen, connecting the song to real places and acts of chesed.

The following Monday, we met again in the same welcoming space and turned to “Shomer HaChomot.” Between sips of hot soup and shared cookies, we explored Jerusalem’s reunification in 1967, the emotional moment when soldiers reached the Kotel, and the meaning behind a modern operation that carries the same name. Participants spoke about what it means to live in a time

when pesukim about return and protection feel close and relevant.

What gives these evenings their unique energy is the structure we’ve built over these Monday night gatherings: a short presentation with historical context, listening to original recordings and lesser-known versions, and then singing together as a group. The moment when voices slowly grow stronger and more confident is something you can’t plan – it just happens.

In the coming weeks, we’ll continue meeting at the Greenwald home to explore “El Eretz Tzvi,” sharing the story of the Entebbe rescue in 1976, including the long flight and the leadership that made it possible. After that, we’ll sing “Shuru Habitu U’Re’u,” and learn about the early agricultural settlements, the draining of swamps, and how that same spirit continues in Israel today.

Each week adds something new – the printed lyric sheets, the mix of Hebrew and English, and the conversations that continue even after the singing ends. More than once, someone has paused at the door and said, “I didn’t expect to feel this connected.”

If you haven’t joined us yet, there’s still a place waiting for you at the table – and a song you didn’t know you were missing.

For more details call Rabbi Ilai Grunwald head of Torah Mitzion Kollel in Memphis 901.216.3690 [ilaigr@gmail.com](mailto:ilaigr@gmail.com) **HW**

# The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is Monday–Friday at 11:30 a.m. Programs and monthly Luncheon are at noon.

**Monday, March 30**  
**SPECIAL EVENT – FREE FILM SCREENING**

There will be a special showing of the film “Tatami,” recently featured in the Morris and Mollye Fogelman International Jewish Film Festival. This screening is a special Senior Adult Club event and will take place following the daily lunch.

Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m., and the film will begin at noon in the Belz Theatre at the Orgel Family Performing Arts Center. There is no charge for this special presentation; however, reservations are required due to limited seating.

Tatami is the first feature co-directed by Iranian and Israeli filmmakers, Academy Award winner Guy Nattiv and Cannes Best Actress Zar Amir Ebrahimi and is the winner of four Ophir Awards. Based on true events, the film follows Iranian judoka Leila and her coach, Maryam, as they travel to the World Judo Championships, intent on bringing home Iran’s first gold medal. Midway through the competition, they receive an ultimatum from the Islamic Republic ordering Leila to fake an injury and lose. With her freedom and her family’s safety at stake, Leila faces an impossible



choice: comply with the regime or defy orders and fight on for the gold. The trailer is available on the MJCC website.

**Wednesday, April 1**  
**No lunch or Program. in observance of Erev Pesach**

There will also be no lunch service during Chol HaMoed Pesach. Lunch service will resume on Friday, April 10. The MJCC will be closed Thursday-Friday, April 2-3, and Wednesday-Thursday, April 8-9.

**Monday, April 13**  
**Ask the Rabbi with Rabbi Yosef Braha**

Rabbi Braha always makes this one of our most enjoyable and engaging programs. Many of us have questions about Judaism that we never get the chance to ask – this is your opportunity. Whether your questions are deep or simple, about holidays, kashrut or daily practices, come join us for a meaningful discussion. Enjoy a delicious kosher lunch while learning and participating. Please make your reservation by 1 p.m. the day before.

We invite you to join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch prepared by the kitchens at the Memphis Jewish Home. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required by 1 p.m. the day before. To make a reservation, please call Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or email [stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org](mailto:stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org). Office hours are Monday through Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. You may also call the front desk at 901-761-0810. **HW**

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# Words of Torah ~ Tzav: Fins and Scales: Aspiration and Armor

By Rabbi Dr. Gavriel Brown, Head of School, Margolin Hebrew Academy, Cooper Yeshiva of the South

When I was a teenager, I went to Seattle’s Pike Place Fish Market, which is less a fish market and more a full contact sport with seafood. A guy yells “Salmon fillet!” and then heaves a glistening fish across the room like he is auditioning for the Mariners. Someone catches it. People clap. It happens again. And again. It is theater. It is chaos. It smells like the ocean and adrenaline. And then, at one point, they threw a fish directly into the audience.

People ducked. A few screamed. And then came the realization: It’s a fake plush salmon. I happened to be right where they threw it when we visited, and I flinched. Of course I flinched. Which, it turns out, is not such a bad way to walk into a conversation about kosher fish.

The Torah gives us the rule in Va-yikra. You want to eat fish, great. Just make sure it has fins and scales. "את זה תאכלו... כל אשר לו סנפיר וקשקשת... אתם תאכלו."

Fins and scales. That is the list. Except here is the wrinkle. The Mishnah points out that if a fish has scales, it already has fins. Built in. Package deal. No need to double dip. So the Gemara asks the obvious question. Why say both? Why not just say scales and call it a day.

Answer: “גדלה ופארה של תורה” Because it adds beauty to the Torah. Which is a very Torah way of saying, we are not just listing ingredients here. *We are making a point.*

Fins are about movement. They are propulsion and direction. It represents the ability to go somewhere on purpose. Scales are about protection. They are the armor; the part that lets a fish survive the trip it is taking.

You need both. And if that sounds like a biology lesson, it is not. It is a life lesson wearing a fish costume.

We love fins. We are a fins culture. Move faster. Do more. Take on another thing. Add a class. Add a sport. Add a side hustle. Keep swimming. Preferably upstream, heroically, with a soundtrack.

But fins without scales is just high-speed vulnerability. It is motion with no protection. It is a kid who is doing everything and perhaps, inside, is falling apart.

I saw something like this years later

in Alaska during the salmon run. These fish are not casually floating along. They are grinding upstream through freezing water, getting knocked around, they turn green and look like they have seen things. And yet they keep going. It is inspiring. It is also exhausting just to watch. And the takeaway is simple. If you are going to swim like that, you had better be built for it. You need the push forward, and you need the protection that lets you survive the push.

Which brings this right into school life, where we spend a lot of time talking about achievement. Grades. College. Output. Momentum. *Fins, fins, fins.*

All important. None, sufficient. Because the real question is whether we are also giving students scales. *Do they have boundaries that protect their time and attention? Do they have a sense of identity that is not entirely tied to performance? Do they have the ability to say no, to pause, to reset, without feeling like they are losing the race.*

And to be fair, the opposite problem exists too. Some students have excellent scales. Very safe. Very protected. Also not going anywhere. They are so busy avoiding risk that they never develop the strength to move forward.

The Torah does not let you choose your favorite. You do not get to be a fins only fish or a scales only fish. If you want to be kosher, you need both. That is the gedulah. That is the fe’erah that we saw before. The elegance is in the combination.

A kosher life is not about moving the fastest or staying the safest. It is about learning how to do both at the same time. To grow without breaking. To strive without losing yourself. The Zohar has its own language for this, *ohr makif* and *ohr penimi*, the outer push and the inner stability. Same idea, fewer fish.

So here is the image to keep. A fish moving against the current. Not drifting and certainly not stuck. Actually going somewhere. But also intact. It has fins and scales. It makes it upriver.

Which is really what we want for our children and grandchildren and for ourselves. Not just motion. Not just protection. Both, working together, so that the life we are building is not only impressive in the moment, but durable over time. **HW**

# Wendy & Avron Fogelman Religious School Now Hiring Teachers for 2026-2027!



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# The ISJL's 2026 Southern & Jewish Conference "B'Yachad: All Together Now"

Jackson, MS – The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) invites everyone with a connection to Jewish life in the South to attend its annual conference, Southern & Jewish, taking place June 21–23, 2026, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Charlotte, with its vibrant and growing Jewish community, provides an exciting setting for this year’s gathering. The ISJL looks forward to partnering with local community leaders to host an engaging and meaningful conference experience.

Southern & Jewish brings people from across the South and beyond to connect, learn, network and share insights on sustaining Jewish life where they live. Beginning at noon on Sunday and concluding at noon on Tuesday, the conference features nationally recognized presenters and performers, including keynote speaker Rabba Rori Picker Neiss and Jewish educator and musician Eliana Light, the 2025 Covenant Foundation Family Education Fellow, along with engaging hands-on learning opportunities and ample time for conversation and relationship-building. As one attendee shared last year, “It was such a warm and welcoming experience – I kept forgetting it was my first time.”

This year’s theme, B’Yachad: All Together Now, emphasizes the importance of coming together across communities, generations and identities. Like the ISJL itself, the conference is trans-denominational and welcoming to all. Affinity group meetups offer opportunities to connect with others who share similar interests or life experiences, including interfaith families, Jews-by-choice, artists, LGBTQ+ Jews, grandparents, parents of young children, and more.

Southern & Jewish is designed for anyone connected to Jewish life in the South. From teachers and religious school directors to congregation presidents, lay leaders, local historians, youth group advisors, clergy and parents, the conference offers content and connections for a wide range of participants.

Early Bird registration rates are available through April 15. Additional information about sessions and speakers will be announced in the coming weeks. To learn more or register, visit [www.isjl.org/conference](https://www.isjl.org/conference).

The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) supports, connects, and celebrates Jewish life in the South. To learn more about the ISJL and its programs, visit [www.isjl.org](https://www.isjl.org), call 601-362-6357, or follow @TheISJL on social media. **HW**

# ‘Kill A Jew, Go to Heaven’ Graffiti Found on NYC Bike Trail

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – A graffiti message reading “Kill a Jew, go to heaven” was found last weekend on a bike trail in New York City’s Riverside Park. The sprayed sentence was discovered on a large stone along the trail between 97th Street and 105th Street, located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, a major hub of the Jewish community.

The Combat Antisemitism Movement, a global coalition of pro-Jewish groups, tweeted that it was “a direct

public call for violence against Jews.” The nonprofit added, “Last month alone, 28 antisemitic incidents were reported in New York.”

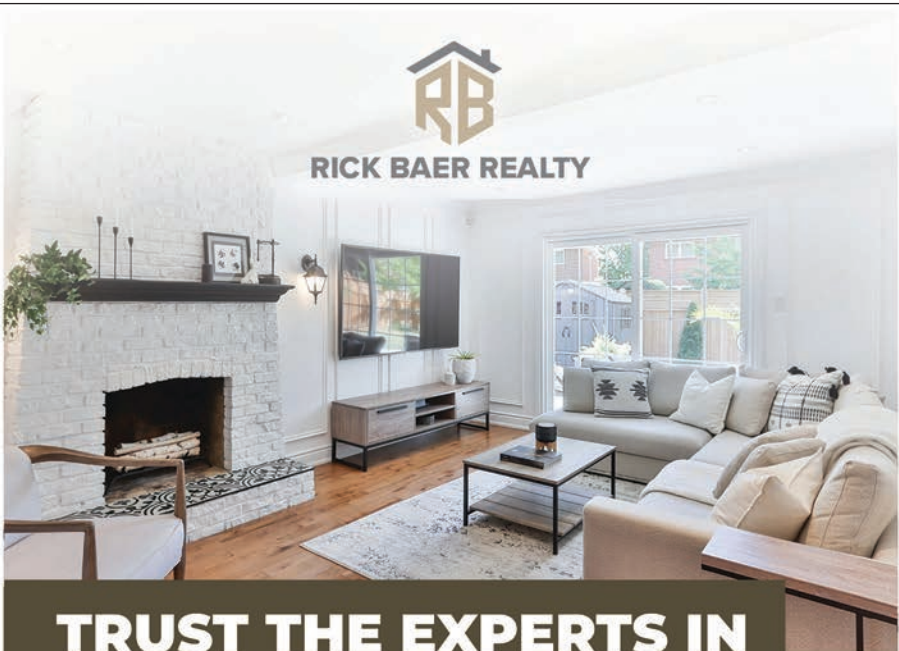
U.S.-based organization StopAntisemitism also responded to the incident, lamenting “this level of open hatred” in a city that was once a “safe haven for Jewish life.” The NYPD and the New York City Parks Department have opened an inquiry into the incident. No suspects were arrested. **HW**

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**A Pesach Message For Your Table**



“Pesach is the oldest and most transformative story of hope ever told. It tells of how an otherwise undistinguished group of slaves found their way to freedom from the greatest and longest-lived empire of their time, indeed of any time. It tells the revolutionary story of how the supreme Power intervened in history to liberate the supremely powerless. It is a story of the defeat of probability by the force of possibility. It defines what it is to be a Jew: a living symbol of hope.”

— Rabbi Jonathan Sacks



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In 2027, Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR) will celebrate 100 years of serving patients. In honor of this accomplishment and all the people who made it possible, we are telling 100 of their stories. Over the next two years, we will publish 100 Stories for 100 Years – a weekly column spotlighting resident, staff, and lay leader stories with the Home from throughout our history. This week, we are sharing words from one of our past staff members, Joel Ashner.



Joel wins a distinguished service award for her work on the capital campaign to build the Belz Family Foundation Rehab wing.

By Shoshana Center

**MJHR:** Tell us about yourself (hometown, education, family, hobbies, career).

I was born and raised in New Orleans; grew up in Touro Synagogue. I went to Jacobs Camp for 11 summers, which is where I met my husband, Dub. I credit camp for me having a career in the Jewish industry.

I have a degree in marketing from Washington University in St. Louis. After graduation Dub and I were living in Atlanta, and I worked in advertising at Macy’s. After raising our kids, I worked in a small business with my husband. Then, there was an opening at the Jewish Home for a community relations director, which I held for 16 years. After that, we moved back to Atlanta, and I now work for Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta.

My husband and I have three adult children – two sons, a daughter – a granddaughter, and a grandson on the way. I love playing with my granddaughter and doing Pilates.

**MJHR:** How did you become connected to MJHR?

There was a “Friends of the Jewish Home” group when we moved back to Memphis from Atlanta in the mid-90s, and I was invited to join.

When I was looking for work, Judy Royal was on the board and mentioned the open role. I interviewed with Mary Anna Kaplan, Alvin Notowich and Nat Landau, and got the job. I was excited for a career change. My Community

Relations Director role involved marketing, PR and fundraising. I learned a lot in the 16 years I worked at the Home. I loved being with the seniors and got to know so many of them and donors. I wrote articles and added more donors while building the Home’s fundraising program. When I left, we had a capital campaign with a list of 70-plus legacy donors, and the Golf Tournament was huge and supposedly one of the best without a celebrity – we have a great group of volunteers, and I helped build up the tournament with sponsorships, community involvement and vendors.

**MJHR:** Share your favorite MJHR story.

When I first started my role, I was going through some old files and found a Nashville donor who noted he wanted to leave funds to the Home in his will. But his name wasn’t on the current mailing list. I found his phone number and called him; he was 92 at the time. He said, “I’m so glad you called, I was redoing my will and hadn’t heard from the Home, so I thought the Home didn’t need the money.” We talked and stayed in touch, I went to see him in Nash-



Joel with MJHR Resident, Darcus.

ville. Shortly after that, he passed away, leaving us a significant gift through his estate in his will. He was a sweet man. That story warms my heart.

Another great story is when I worked with local artist Zoe Nadel. She had the idea of bringing an art gallery and new art into the Home. Rotating artists would show their works and people could buy them. To participate, the artists also donated a piece of art to hang in the Home. That’s where the art that’s all over the Home is from. Some people bought the art and dedications, which include a plaque in honor of or in memory of someone. The money raised and donated art made the space so nice; they were all original pieces of art. As soon as a new showing came up, residents would come to the auditorium to see the new art. It helped the artists with exposure, and the residents had a destination to see the beautiful art in the gallery and all over the building. I’m really proud of that.

**MJHR:** What do you wish for the future 100 years of the organization?

I hope that the community stays as involved as it is. I think it adds so much from the volunteers who are there for every Jewish holiday and every Shabbat, to the people calling bingo, to the people who are coming in through the friendly visitor program, which is awesome.

I just hope the community stays involved as volunteers, but also in giving because it takes the donors to help the Home get the needed equipment and all the extras that improve residents’ quality of life. I’ve heard people refer to it as the Ritz-Carlton of nursing homes. We’re treating everyone the same, and everybody is getting this beautiful experience, whether they’re there for rehab, a brief stay, or they’re there long term.

**MJHR:** Anything else you’d like to share about the Home?

I’m really proud of the capital campaign. We were getting a lot of referrals for rehab work. That was good because rehab reimbursement was helping us cover costs well, but we needed space – a bigger gym and separate rooms. So, we had the idea to build the addition. I talked with donors about investing. I involved multiple people in the process who I knew would be helpful. I couldn’t raise the money by myself. I needed volunteers to help. Our goal was \$7 million, and we raised \$7.5 million. It was a group effort, but I’m really proud of the fact that we got it done, and we exceeded our goal. Now there’s a beautiful piece of art on the donor wall, which has all the major donors on it, and it’s also another piece of art that beautifies the space. The Belz Family Foundation Rehabilitation Facility opened in 2019.

Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab is a not-for-profit nursing home, Jewish in character and environment, dedicated to providing the highest level of care possible with dignity, compassion, and professionalism. Only through the help of generous donors is the organization able to care for those in need. Find more information at [www.memphisjewishhome.org/giving](http://www.memphisjewishhome.org/giving). **HW**

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# The Risks of Trying to Time The Markets

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors  
Questions for Mike? You can reach him at 901.761.8151 or Michael.Stein@WellsFargoAdvisors.com  
fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael-stein

Timing is everything – whether it’s navigating traffic to get to work on time or getting a table at a popular restaurant. If you miss the window, you might end up stuck in traffic or waiting in line longer than you’d like for dinner. Timing can be tricky for everyday activities, and it’s even more challenging when it comes to the markets. If your timing is off with the markets, research shows it could cost you. It’s a significant risk.

### Making the Right Call

For some investors, timing the market is like calling the right play in football: if you do it right, the risk could be worth the reward. However, if your timing is off, you could end up getting sacked. Missing even a handful of the market’s best days can dramatically cut your investment returns. Conversely, missing several of the worst days in the markets can potentially offer higher returns, but the strategy behind trying to miss the bottom of trading can be challenging.

Historically, missing just 10 of the best days in the markets, a very small amount over a 30-year period, would have dropped your annual average rate

of return from 8% to 5.26%. Missing 30 days and the drop would have been even more steep to near 1.8%. If you missed 40 days, the drop would have been even more to .44%. Change that to a 50 day miss and your annual return would have hit a negative, -.86% annually.<sup>1</sup>

### In The News

Markets fluctuate greatly and interest rates rise and fall, but outside factors like politics and international trade can also affect investment returns monthly, weekly, even daily. Predicting change is really just guessing. Diversification in investments can be a better overall strategy, limiting exposure and risk by building your portfolio to address your short-term and long-term goals. As life changes with marriage or divorce, a new baby, a new job or even retirement, it’s important to review your financial goals.

### The Bottom Line

I believe the best strategy to help manage your risk is to avoid trying to time the markets and remain fully invested throughout a complete market cycle, rather than attempting to time the market by buying and selling to avoid vol-

atility or capture significant gains. It’s also a strong recommendation to consider rebalancing your portfolio, buying asset classes that have fallen below a portfolio’s long-term allocations and selling those that are higher, while staying fully invested. Regular rebalancing can lead to more consistent returns and again manage your risks, something we always want to do. The markets are never a completely smooth ride, but some simple strategies can help reduce losses and help you maintain performance in the long-term.

<sup>1</sup> Source Bloomberg and Wells Fargo Investment Institute data, February 1994 through January 2024 for the S&P 500 Index. Best days are calculated using daily returns. An index is unmanaged and not available for direct investment. A price index is not a total return index and does not include the reinvestment of dividends. Past performance is not guarantee of future results.

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## Belgium Deploys Soldiers to Jewish Sites as Britain Charges 2 Men with Spying on Jews for Iran

By Grace Gilson

(JTA) – Two Iranian men in Britain have been charged with allegedly spying on the Jewish community in London on behalf of Iran.

The arrests come as French police say they thwarted a plot against Jewish targets by supporters of the Islamic State, and as Belgium deploys its army to patrol Jewish sites following a blast at a synagogue there.

British police arrested Nematollah Shahsavani, 40, and Alireza Farasati, 22, and two other men earlier this month on suspicion of conducting surveillance on Jewish community sites, with the likely goal of facilitating attacks against them.

While the two other men were released without charge, London’s Metropolitan Police announced last Wednesday that Shahsavani and Farasati had been charged under the National Security Act with assisting a foreign intelligence service between July 9 and Aug. 15 last year. “The country to which the investigation relates is Iran,” the agency said.

(See [Belgium](#) Page 9)



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Belgium...  
(Continued From Page 8)

The arrests coincide with rising fears about Iran’s operatives overseas amid the U.S.-Israel war on Iran, as its long-standing network has repeatedly targeted Jewish and Israeli sites.

“We fully recognise that the public – and in particular the Jewish community – will be concerned but I hope this investigation reassures them that we will not hesitate to take action if we identify there may be a threat to their safety, and will be relentless in our pursuit of those who may be responsible,” Vicki Evans, the senior national coordinator of U.K. counterterrorism policing, said in a statement.

The Crown Prosecution Service, which delivered the charges, wrote in a statement that the men were accused of “gathering information and undertaking reconnaissance of targets” that was “likely to assist a foreign intelligence service in carrying out UK-related activities.”

The Community Security Trust, Britain’s main antisemitism watchdog, thanked police and prosecutors for delivering the charges in a post on X.

“The charging of two individuals under the National Security Act indicates the seriousness of the threat faced by the Jewish community and the reason why security across the community remains so high,” the post read.

Security officials say the Iran war has contributed to an unusually high threat environment for Jews around the world,

with law enforcement stepping up their surveillance of Jewish sites with the aim of protecting them from threats.

In France, two brothers aged 20 and 22 were arrested after they flew a drone over a jail in the northern town of Longuenesse. Police then found weapons and an Islamic State flag in their car, and on investigation learned that the brothers had devised “a terror plot whose deadly and antisemitic nature appears to be established,” according to prosecutors.

Meanwhile, Belgium has announced that it is deploying its army to protect Jews and Jewish institutions there, sending soldiers to patrol what local media has reported to be about 20 sites across the country.

“Against a backdrop of rising anti-Semitism, the attack on the synagogue in Liège has once again demonstrated that the threat to the Jewish community in Belgium is very real,” Interior Minister Bernard Quintin said in a press release. “Ensuring the safety of our fellow citizens is the duty of the state in all its forms, regardless of any political considerations. The deployment of military personnel to reinforce security around Jewish sites will provide direct support to the police services.”

A new group that calls itself the Islamic Movement of the Companions of the Right, which is believed to be affiliated with Iran, claimed credit for the Belgium attack as well as two bombings of Jewish sites in the Netherlands. [HW](#)

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By Busarin Kittichareonsup



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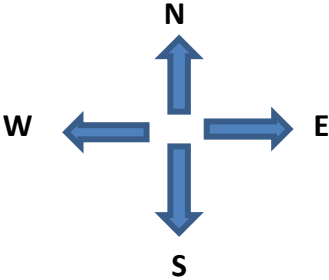
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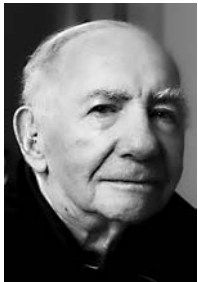
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# Talking to the King



*Editor's note:  
This story is being  
reprinted in memory  
of Ted Roberts in  
appreciation of his  
longtime service  
as a newspaper  
columnist.*

**By Ted Roberts**

(7/9/12) – My rabbi, beaming with Shabbos warmth, stood like the Rock of Gibraltar in the most strategic spot in our synagogue; the passageway from the sanctuary to the kiddush hall where tables of delicacies await the fatigued worshiper. We Jews are in the Guinness Book of Records, you know, for length of services. Catholics, Protestants, Zen Buddhists can speak their piece in under 30 minutes. (Zen Buddhists, naturally, are especially brief since they’re upside down – I wonder if their worshiping posture affects their digestion of their post-service kiddush?)

We not only win the “length of service” category, but also the “standing vs sitting time” contest. Consequently, I was faint with fatigue when I encountered Rabbi Bloom guarding the access to the tuna casserole, potato salad and herring that would revive me.

“Ah, uh, uh Ted,” said the rabbi, extending a big hand. “Good to see you.”

You can interpret that easily enough. He hardly remembered my name – because he hadn’t seen me in two months. Sometimes he says, “Welcome to Bais Yitzhak Synagogue” like he doesn’t even remember I’m a member. (Like I’m some homeless vagrant who needs a tuna casserole lunch.)

Later, after dessert, he recovered from his amnesia, and we talked. I elaborated on my credentials as yes, a proud and semi observant member of our faith with a small weakness in the area of synagogue attendance. In defense of my position, I told him the story of the Holy Man of Bereshev:

Once there was a very old man in the town of Bereshev who never went to synagogue. Well, almost never. He attended only on the High Holydays, ex-

cept for Sabbath services in the Fall and Winter. The rest of the year the regular synagogue worshipers whispered with side-of-the-mouth comments during the S’homonai Esrai prayer. “See, Shmuel is not here, again.”

“Sure,” was the low and sideways reply – a technique mastered perfectly by regular synagogue attendees – “it’s Summer. He only comes Fall and Winter because we have a big stove and after the service, a kiddush with herring and 90-proof slivovitz.”

The attentive reader should be asking about now, “so why is he a holy man?” My cousin, Ben, also never attends shul – not even in Fall and Winter – he’s even holier, right?

No, you’re totally incorrect because your cousin, Ben, does not obey over 582 of the 613 mitzvahs. Remember that dozens of the 613 are no longer obeyable because they relate to the Temple that is no more. When this edifice is rebuilt – out-glittering the Cathedral at Rheims as well as the Bellagio Resort in Las Vegas – then Dov Mendel, the holy man of Bereshev’s, mitzvah average will be 613 for 613. Note that not one of the edicts originated on an otherwise slow day by the Creator, himself, says that Dov Mendel must regularly (“regularly” is the key word) attend the B’nai Shalom Synagogue in Bereshev, district of X, Russia – formerly Poland.

Furthermore, to expand on the dazzling moral and intellectuals of Dov Mendel, let me add that he led a totally blameless life that a Buddhist monk would have envied. Every mouse in Bereshev knew that you could nibble at the Chasid’s small stock of bread in total concentration without worry about the blow of a broomstick.

Widows regularly left notes on his door. “Dov, my arthritis is killing me – please come by Wednesday afternoon and chop me three days worth of firewood.”

Beside the Vistula River stood his simple wood-framed house containing more holy books than furniture. The Chasid had built a rude raft, which he tied to a tree at the water’s edge. Travelers hailed him from the further bank all

hours of the night for passage across the stream. He responded with a smile and usually he provided a schnapps and a makeshift bed of dried grass and a coverlet for the weary stranger.

Did I tell you that he was so erudite in regard to Torah and Talmud that through the woods of Bereshev came processions of scholars, litigants, and truth seekers to benefit from his illumination of the holy texts? Such was the case.

But still, said the local rabbi, who, of course, worried more about minion Saturday morning attendance and a kiddush minion than whether a gored goat was worth a cupful or a handful of silver as discussed in babu 3 of the Babylonian Talmud – not the Jerusalem Talmud that deals mainly with gored oxen rather than goats.

The holy man had it all. Good deeds, Torah, Talmud. He had, as the Chasids say, a soul that flamed with the intensity of the Shabbos candles. Except for that one small flaw; maybe small, but as conspicuous as a roach on your challah covering – he didn’t attend services.

So, one Tuesday in June the sunlight through the woods dappled shoulders of a three-man synagogue committee led by the rabbi. The holy man, who remembered how Abraham had greeted the three emissaries from the Lord in Genesis, invited in the rabbi and his delegation. He listened politely as they explained how beneficial it would be to the Jewish community of Bereshev if he – the wisest, most pious man in the district – would attend his local synagogue. After a suitable pause, as he meditated on their words, Dov Mendel offered his guests a slice of honey cake. Then, he told them a midrash that had governed the lives of his spiritually (liturgically) eccentric forebears:

Once, a good, but non-ritualistic Jew was walking the dusty streets of his village. He had no destination.

He did not communicate with his king. He did not participate. He was a loyal subject, but he wandered in the marketplace not on the mountaintop where the king lived. Until one day the king called his name. He shouted, but he was unheard. There were people whistling, shouting, bargaining all around him. The king’s voice said, come talk to me.

## SCRIBBLER ON THE ROOF

By Ted Roberts

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Once a loyal subject of his majesty was wandering in the marketplace of Baghdad. He was wandering, said Dov Mendel, because he had no destination. Some mysterious yearning had drawn him from his room and after a 10-minute walk he found himself in the marketplace. Once there, he waited. For what, he was not sure. Then it was revealed to him. He clearly heard the king’s voice calling him. But he saw nothing except commoners like himself bargaining, examining the wares in the stalls; squeezing a plum here, a peach there, gossiping with one about another, commenting on the dress of their fellow worshipers. And above all, discussing politics – the management of the kingdom by the ruler who lived on the mountaintop – the ruler they had never seen. They praised him and asked his favor.

The jabber and babble of chatter was so loud he could barely hear the voice of his king. Then, after an unnatural silence around him, a voice rang in his ears.

“You must meet your king in the palace, not the marketplace.”

“And you talk to your king in private, not amongst your fellows in the marketplace. And the normal speech of your mouth is not the speech of your king. Speak only with your heart.”

*The syndicated humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the roof, has appeared in newspapers around the U.S., on National Public Radio, and numerous websites. HW*

# ISRAEL INSIGHTS ~ Bibi's Dilemma

**By Howard Weisband**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, known famously by his nickname, Bibi, faces a serious dilemma in the upcoming weeks.

The war with Iran continues, quite successfully with both Israeli and American forces working together in a closely coordinated fashion, somewhat historically unprecedented.

However, no matter how closely we follow the news and the constant alerts and updates, no one can accurately predict when or how the war will come to its conclusion. I dare say at this point, as I write on March 18, almost three weeks into the war, not even President Trump nor Prime Minister Netanyahu can accurately predict when they can say conclusively, “We have met our military objectives and are shutting down our air strikes and withdrawing our forces from the region.”

That’s the operational side of the war. In addition, there are multiple political dimensions, both domestic and international, for each country and each of the two leaders.

Undoubtedly the President takes these matters seriously, whether they be focused for instance in NATO or in the U.S. Congress. At home he is looking over his shoulder at the November mid-

term elections, their impact on Congress, and his ability to generate legislation.

Bibi faces a different scenario in Israel and therein lies his dilemma. The Prime Minister knows that Israel will have national elections in 2026, no later than October, and he seeks another term in office. Israel’s parliamentary system allows those elections to happen earlier if necessary or if conditions determine an advanced date.

In short, Bibi’s dilemma is to determine what is best first and foremost for himself, his Likud party, and ultimately, his ability to build a governing coalition of at least 61 seats in the Knesset, the more the better of course.

His first objective, in the midst of war, is to get a state budget passed by March 31. If not, Knesset standing law is that the Government will fall and new elections must take place. That would be “backing in” to elections, not advantageous at all to Bibi and the current Government. Competing factors exist so that there is no guarantee that the budget will pass by the end of the month, among them, adding sizable money to the Defense Ministry due to the war means that funds must be taken from other ministries. Moreover, cities in both the south and the north require substantial recon-

struction budgets, meaning more cuts elsewhere.

If he successfully gets the budget passed by March 31, Bibi will take a deep breath even as he continues to deal primarily with the war. Then its fallout, including the future of Iran and the status of the Mideast map: Lebanon and Hezbollah, Gaza, the Gulf states, and the Abraham Accords to name a few factors.

Honing in on his dilemma, Bibi knows that given his current successes alongside the U.S. in the war, his standing inside Israel is perhaps at his peak, certainly dating back to October 7, 2023.

Sam Sokol reported on March 4 in The Times of Israel that: “According to a poll conducted earlier this week by the Israel Democracy Institute, 74 percent of Jewish Israelis trust Netanyahu to manage the war properly, with 93% expressing support for Operation Roaring Lion and 57% backing continuing operations until the ayatollahs’ regime is overthrown.”

However, Bibi also knows that his own bump in the polls and that of the Likud is coming at the expense of his coalition partners, and not from parties in opposition. Therefore, were elections to be held in the near future he will again face an uphill slog to build a governing

coalition.

Additionally Bibi realizes that he has other general election issues to overcome, two of the largest being the public’s perception of his responsibility for the failures leading up to October 7 and the Governments relationship with the Haredi or ultra-Orthodox parties. The latter issue expresses itself in two hot button ways: increased funding to Haredi institutions and yeshivot, and the drafting, or not, of young Haredi men into the army.

Many pundits feel that Bibi would thus not want to capitalize on his current personal war time popularity, banking on the possibility of a greater national achievement, for instance, normalization with Saudi Arabia.

In brief, that’s Bibi’s dilemma: elections now or later?

*Howard Weisband served as Assistant Executive Director (1975-77) and Executive Director (1977-84) of the Memphis Jewish Federation. Following Aliyah with his family in 1986, he served as Secretary General of the Jewish Agency for Israel through 1997, and then in other senior professional positions in Israel. Now retired, he and Kayla live in Jerusalem. He can be reached at hweisband@gmail.com HW*

# The Station Highlights Kosher Wine and Spirits Ahead of Passover

We all know that wine plays an essential role during Seder. As Passover approaches, Memphis’ first liquor superstore in the heart of East Memphis is helping us prepare for the holiday with a curated selection of kosher wines and spirits.

Recently opened on White Station Road just south of Poplar, The Station offers one of Memphis’ largest selections of kosher wines and spirits, including well-known brands that have long been associated with celebrations and family traditions, such as Mogen David, Manischewitz and Kedem.

In addition to these traditional options, The Station also carries premium kosher wines from Baron Herzog, a respected California winery known for its high-quality kosher varietals, and Carmel Selected, one of Israel’s historic wineries. Sparkling and sweeter wines are also available, including bottles from Bartenura, the popular Italian Moscato recognized for its distinctive blue bottle.

Other kosher selections at The Station include wines from Jeunesse and Roshi,



giving customers a variety of choices that range from celebratory sparkling wines to approachable reds and whites.

“We wanted to make sure everyone in the Memphis Jewish community who wants a good selection of kosher wines could easily find what they’re looking for at The Station, especially around important holidays like Passover,” said Nick Scott, general manager of The Sta-

tion. “Our goal is to offer both the traditional favorites people know and love, along with some higher-end options for those who want to try something new.”

The Station offers more than kosher wine. It even offers a full array of kosher whiskey such as aperitifs, bourbon and vodka, including date-infused vodka.

Ron Belz said he bought Kosher Passover wine for his entire family. “For all of us, wine is a part of the meaningful tradition of Passover,” he said. “I’m pleased that The Station offers a full selection so this year I don’t have to go from store to store looking for what I want and need.”

Also filling its 25,000 square feet of space, The Station also carries a full array of wine, spirits, beer, and a wide selection of gifts, food, niche sodas, non-alcoholic beverages as well as other items that complement wine and cocktails.

Ethan Edwards, owner of The Station, said that even though he isn’t Jewish he has always understood the importance of wine in traditional holiday meals. “Truthfully I’m glad that The Station



can be part of the centuries-old celebration of Passover, especially by making it easier for the Memphis Jewish community to easily find what they need.” **HW**

## Hand-Me-Down Family Recipes

(Editor’s favorite!)

Share your family recipes.  
Send to  
[info@HebrewWatchman.com](mailto:info@HebrewWatchman.com)

Matzo Kugel - Bettye Berlin (From Neal's mom)

12 matzo - soaked/squeezed  
9 eggs  
1 1/2 tsp salt  
1 1/2 cup sugar  
3/4 cup oil  
3 tsp cinnamon  
1 1/2 cups chopped nuts (almonds)  
5-6 apples chopped

grease baking dish line with soaked matza  
mix everything except nuts, then add nuts  
mix again. Pour over matza & mix. Add  
Apples & mix again.  
Bake 50 minutes at 350°

# Happy Passover

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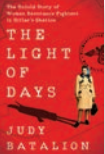
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**Tuesday, April 14, 2026 | 27 Nisan 5786**  
6:00pm | Doors Open at 5:30pm  
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KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
**Judy Batalion**



Granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, Judy is the author of *The Light of Days*, a New York Times and international bestseller and the winner of both a National Book Award and a Canadian Jewish Literary Award. Her debut novel, *The Last Woman of Warsaw*, will be released in early April 2026. [Books available at Novel Memphis](#)

**PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED**  
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