As a sign of respect for those who perished and the few who survived the Auschwitz slave labor and death camp, the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania held a screening of the Auschwitz Commemoration Ceremony on January 27 at the Scranton Jewish Community Center. The ceremony had taken place earlier that day and featured close to 200 survivors, as well as many international dignitaries. Those attending the Commemorative Ceremony listened to the president of Poland, as well as the “traumatic and moving testimonies” of several Auschwitz survivors.

“Seventy-five years ago, on January 27, 1945, Red Army troops marched into the hell on earth known as Auschwitz—a German slave labor and death camp located in southern Poland,” said organizers of the event. “In total, an estimated 1.3 million people were sent to Auschwitz and at least 1.1 million of them were murdered. Around 90 percent of the victims were Jews, a number that represents approximately one-sixth of all Jews murdered during the Holocaust. When the mass killings were at their peak, an estimated 6,000 Jews were being gassed each day with cyanide-based Zyklon B gas. Those not killed in the gas chambers perished from starvation, forced labor and infectious diseases that spread unchecked through the camp. It was truly hell on earth.”

WNEP News of Scranton staff interviewed organizers of the Commemorative Ceremony screening and several of those who attended. The program was covered “extensively” on WNEP’s evening and morning news.

The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania extends its thanks to Jay Weiss, who assembled the equipment necessary for the Federation to undertake the showing of “this moving ceremony.”

Israelis government approves immigration of 400 Falash Mura

The Falash Mura’s ancestors were forced to convert to Christianity during the 19th and 20th centuries, and many in the 8,000-strong community have close relatives who have already moved to Israel. However, while more than 80 percent of the Falash Mura in Ethiopia say they have first-degree relatives already living in Israel, since they are officially not Jewish, they are not eligible for automatic Israeli citizenship under the country’s Law of Return and must receive special government permission to immigrate, and then undergo a conversion process once they arrive.

The recent decision met with opposition from Israeli Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit, who argued that it could be perceived as an election ploy. Mandelblit also argued that there has not been sufficient preparation for the move, and that not enough data had been gathered regarding the applicants for immigration.

The Cabinet decision comes as the Likud Party leads efforts to increase its support among the country’s Ethiopian community. The party has been running a high-profile campaign to reach out to Ethiopian Israelis ahead of the country’s March 2 elections. Pollsters estimate that as many as two seats may have shifted from Likud to the Blue and White Party in the September election due to anger and disappointment over what the community sees as government neglect of its needs.

Israelis government approves immigration of 400 Falash Mura

BY DOV LIPMAN

(JNS) – The Israeli government’s recent approval of a plan to allow nearly 400 Ethiopian Jews from the Falash Mura sect to immigrate to Israel has touched off political controversy in the country.

Following the February 9 Cabinet approval, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the move, which aims to reunite the Falash Mura with family members already living in Israel, was “just an additional step” in the process of aliya from Ethiopia. In 2015, Netanyahu’s government passed a decision to reunite all members of the Ethiopian Jewish community to Israel, but the plan has not been implemented largely due to budgetary issues.

“I am proud that as prime minister I brought thousands of Ethiopian brothers and sisters to Israel. We, of course, plan to continue doing so. This is just an additional step,” said Netanyah.

Former Likud MK Avraham Neguise, a member of the Ethiopian Israeli community, thanked Netanyahu following the announcement of the decision, and denied accusations the move was tied to the country’s upcoming elections.

“I thank the prime minister and the minister of absorption who accepted my ongoing demand to continue the immigration from Ethiopia,” Neguise told JNS. “This government decision is not connected to the election and has been on the table since my first day in the Knesset in 2015. The decision to allow the immigration of these 400 is not a new one; it is the number that was set in 2018, and a budget was already transferred for this in the last Knesset.”

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Last July, nationwide protests took place in Israel by Ethiopian Israelis upset over what they see as government neglect of its needs. The protests were at their peak, an estimated 16,000 Jews were being gassed each day with cyanide-based Zyklon B gas. Those not killed in the gas chambers perished from starvation, forced labor and infectious diseases that spread unchecked through the camp. It was truly hell on earth.”

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Netanyahu’s opponents were quick to pounce on the approval, with Blue and White leader Benny Gantz accusing the prime minister of “carrying out a cynical election campaign on the backs of Jews left behind in Ethiopia and their families here who he has neglected for a decade.”

See “Falash” on page 4

2020 UJA Campaign Update

Pay it forward & give to the 2020 Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania Annual Campaign!

Goal: $989,000

$841,494

as of Feb. 13, 2020

Candle lighting

February 21 5:25 pm
February 28 5:34 pm
March 6 5:42 pm

PLUS

Opinion 2
Dvar Torah 8
Despite the fact that we have lost several devoted members of our communities over the past year, our annual UJA Campaign (which concludes in May) shows that a significant number of our current Campaign donors have increased their gift this year over their last year of giving, or given a gift.

In addition, we have been fortunate in that several major UJA Campaign donors have been received and several Perpetual Annual Campaign Endowment Funds have been established through the Federation’s Legacies for Life Endowment Program.

As has been the policy of this Federation for decades, only 4.5 percent of the fair market value of each UJA Campaign gift will be included in the UJA Campaign Endowment Fund (determined on a annual basis as of December 31 of each year) will be added to our annual UJA Campaign, thus ensuring the perpetuation of these funds for future generations.

As an expression of our deep appreciation, all those who will be represented at Yad Vashem support the UJA Campaign Endowment Program. Funds have been received and several major UJA Campaign donors have been fortunate in that significant number of our current Campaign Endowment Program.

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The Reporter welcomes letters expressing personal interest to the Jewish community. All letters must be signed and include a phone number. The editor may withhold the name upon request.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MARK SILVERBERG

Mark Silverberg
Executive Director

Production Associate: Christi Sturdevant
Advisory Editor: Diana Sochor
Advertising Representative: Kathy Brown

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President: Esther Adelman
Executive Director: Mark Silverberg
Advisory Editor: Rabbi Rachel Evesman
Layout Editor: Diana Sochor
Advertising Representative: Bonnie Rozen
Byline: Kathy Brown
Production Associate: Chris Sturdekam

OPINIONS
The views expressed in editorials and opinion pieces are those of each author and not necessarily those of the reporter or the Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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The editor may withhold the name upon request.

Regular deadline is two weeks prior to the publication date.

Byline: Christi Sturdevant

THE REPORTER excerpts of the JCC.

BY MELANIE PHILLIPS

(212) 260-7406

In Poland, politicians and other authorities have turned a blind eye for years to the Iranian regime’s genocidal agenda toward Israel and the Jewish Diaspora, and has even been promoting measures that will effectively perpetuate the memory and the suffering of the victims of Nazi atrocities. In addition, the Iranian regime has produced, funded, and distributed anti-Jewish and anti-Israel incitement.

In 2016, University College London’s Centre for Holocaust Education concluded a three-year study of high-school students in England, where the Holocaust is the only compulsory subject on the national history curriculum. Although the vast majority of students said they wanted to learn about it to stop something similar happening again, there were disturbing gaps in their knowledge.

Many didn’t understand who the Nazis were or that they had collaborators in other countries, we will continue the legacy.

My sincerest thanks and appreciation to each of you.

The West mourns the Jewish dead, but what about the living?

BY MELANIE PHILLIPS

(212) 260-7406

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Federation showed the documentary “Land of Milk and Funny”

On February 8, the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania screened the “hilarious, yet moving” documentary “Land of Milk and Funny,” which featured scenes from some of comedian Avi Liberman’s “Charity Comedy” shows in Israel, in addition to including a “poignant tour” of the Holy Land. “As the community is aware, Liberman starred this past autumn at the Federation’s 2020 UJA Campaign Opening Event and his movie didn’t disappoint with great humor, interesting conversations with fellow comedians and, of course, the sights and sounds of Israel,” said event organizers.

“TikTok ‘responded immediately and removed the terror glorifying video,’” while i24News added that the app’s platform an animated video that glorifies Palestinian soldiers: a 2014 car-ramming attack; a 2015 stabbing from JNS.org.

The video, created as a computer animation, depicts four real-life deadly attacks against Israelis.

Numerous children participated in the program with their fathers and grandfathers.

SHDS held first Father and Son Breakfast

The Rabbi Yitzchok Werbin Memorial Auditorium at the Scranton Hebrew Day School was full on February 2 when the school held its first Father and Son Breakfast. Fathers and grandfathers joined their children and grandchildren at the program. The assembled were greeted with opening remarks from Head of School Rabbi Nosson Adler, which were followed by remarks from one of the eighth grade students, Bentzion Goldberg. “As the community is aware, Liberman starred this past autumn at the Federation’s 2020 UJA Campaign Opening Event and his movie didn’t disappoint with great humor, interesting conversations with fellow comedians and, of course, the sights and sounds of Israel,” said event organizers.

“TikTok ‘responded immediately and removed the terror glorifying video,’” while i24News added that the app’s platform an animated video that glorifies Palestinian soldiers: a 2014 car-ramming attack; a 2015 stabbing

An initiative of the Jewish Home, a skilled nursing facility, is to aid those suffering the effects of Parkinson’s disease. As part of its Parkinson’s program, the Jewish Home utilizes music therapy as a modality to control symptoms of the disease. Music therapy has been shown to help with voice and speech, as well as increasing muscle strength for better breathing and swallowing among other life quality and health benefits. The Robert H. Spitz Foundation made a grant in 2019 of $40,000 to support and enhance the program for the residents of the Jewish Home, Elan Gardens personal care residence and members of the Jewish Community Center.

Spitz Foundation grant addresses Parkinson disease

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NEWS IN BRIEF

TikTok removes animated video depicting deadly attacks against Israelis

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BY ELIANA RUDEE

(JNS) – In a move to foster academic exchange between Israeli and American universities, 28 professors from universities and colleges across the United States recently traveled to Israel for Jewish National Fund USA’s Faculty Fellowship Program.

To date, the program has brought 300 full-time U.S.-based academics for the fully paid intensive program in Israel, seeking to link the scholars with Israeli professors from their respective disciplines with the goal of developing collaborations, research projects, co-authoring articles and establishing exchange programs between faculty and students.

Participants of diverse disciplines met Israelis at all walks of life and heard from a variety of speakers, where they were exposed to contemporary Israeli society, culture, historical sites, the people and the way of life in Israel. The academics met with professionals and experts involved in government, industry, education, media and other sectors to understand the many facets of Israel’s evolving national and international policies.

As JNF is considered the leading philanthropic organization for Israel and as projects of the “startup nation” well, but Israel is a thriving country nevertheless. I don’t know how you could come to Israel and not be impressed,” he told JNS.

After visiting minority populations in Israel, Dutch reported that they “pointed out how things could be improved in Israel, but they are proud Israelis nevertheless, which was eye-opening to us.” He continued, “We met Druze people who served in the military, volunteering to be drafted. We visited Arab communities where they work with Israeli women for female empowerment – something we could do better at in the U.S."

Dutch voiced his hope that he will return to Israel next year on a teaching assignment and bring students back to some of the research facilities he saw. “There are wonderful opportunities to interact academically; you need to come here and see it,” he said.


Are you on the Jewish Federation’s email list?
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Send Dassy Ganz an email if you would like to join the list.
Dassy.ganz@jewishnepa.org

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ADL: Incidents of white-supremacist propaganda
From JNS.org

percent increase from the 894 off-campus incidents counted in 2018. Nonetheless, there were 433 campuses in 43 states and the District of Columbia in 2019. There were 410 on-campus incidents during the fall 2019 semester – more than double any proceeding year, making it the highest year on record for such activity in the United States, with 2,713 in 2019, from 1,214 the previous year – an average of more than four per day.

According to the ADL’s Center on Extremism, some 630 incidents were reported on college and university campuses, nearly double the 320 campus incidents reported nationwide in 2018. Campus incidents accounted for one-quarter of the total incidents of hate and intolerance created by the media organizations, the boots-on-the-ground groups can focus on maximizing the impact of their unique capabilities.

The organizations are primarily based in the United States (with some in the United Kingdom and Canada), where antisemitism has been said to be rising at alarming rates and mobilization against it is urgently needed. Some of the Impact Forum presenters include: Stop Antisemitism.org, Zachor Legal Institute, Campaign against Anti-Semitism UK, NGO Monitor and UN Watch.

Among its newest organizations is B’nai Brith Canada, which works to ensure Jewish unity and continuity in Canada, and support the state of Israel and global Jewry. “It’s an incredible concept expressing a results-oriented approach that I find really innovative, where we can interact with individual philanthropists and engage with charitable groups that combat hate and antisemitism,” B’nai Brith Canada’s CEO Michael Mos- tyn told JNS. “We can support other groups accomplishing great things for our community, and look at collaboration and ways to work together to combat hateful speech and action to make ourselves stronger.”

As fund-raising is a time-consuming and difficult undertaking for smaller nonprofit organizations, the forum philanthropists enable them to focus on their goals. In addition to offering financial support to the organizations, the Impact Forum shares with them cutting-edge research and encourages collaboration, synergy and force multiplication.

In a recent example of such collaborative efforts, “The New Anti-Semites” report was authored by two Impact Forum nonprofits – StopAntisemitism.org and Zachor Legal Institute – and was based on the research and analysis provided by other network organizations. The report was then endorsed by many more Impact Forum organizations that are helping spread the critical findings of the report and promoting the call to action.

“The Impact Forum addresses the critical need for a strategic network that changes the mindset of the Jewish community from defense to offense,” said Milstein. “It employs out-of-the-box strategies that effectively bring together the resources, talents and connections of philanthropists.

“Together,” continued Milstein, “our philanthropic network is eliminating redundancies, encouraging synergies between like-minded organizations and optimizing tools to maximize impact.”

BY ELIANA RUDEE
(JNS) – The Impact Forum has been called a “silver bullet” network with its pro-Israel network of Los-Angeles-based donors. Together, they leverage their combined philanthropic strength to support each other’s initiatives, collaborating and empowering a network of small- and mid-size nonprofit organizations – each punching substantially above their weight – to fight antisemitism, strengthen the state of Israel and advance the U.S.-Israel alliance.

Its innovative method lies in its multi-network collaboration between philanthropists and organizations to produce maximum impact for a shared cause of pro-Israel activism. Utilizing the “network effect,” it seeks to leverage local donors’ money by bringing together pro-Israel philanthropists who learn, support and empower ideologically aligned nonprofits that do work for the Jewish people.

Every six weeks, the philanthropists attend a luncheon or a dinner to introduce themselves to the other donors and hear from two members of the startup-like network of organizations that advance the forum’s mission. The presenting organizations are selected by a steering committee comprised of experienced and influential philanthropists in the community.

Since its establishment in 2017 by a group of Los Angeles philanthropists, the Impact Forum has raised more than $3 million for the nearly 50 organizations that have presented at their events.

Adam Milstein, a member of the philanthropists’ group that established the Impact Forum, spoke to a gathering of philanthropists in Los Angeles. (Photo courtesy of the Merona Leadership Foundation)

NEWS IN BRIEF
From JNS.org

ADL: Incidents of white-supremacist propaganda distribution doubled in 2019

White-supremacist propaganda distribution more than doubled in 2019 over the previous year, making it the highest year on record for such activity in the United States, according to new data released on Feb. 12 by the Anti-Defamation League. The number of incidents of hate groups leaving posters, flyers, banners and stickers in public increased to 2,713 in 2019, from 1,214 the previous year – an average of more than four per day.

“White supremacists see propaganda distribution, including fliering, leafleting and sticker pasting, as a convenient and practically anonymous way to promote their messages of hate and intolerance,” said ADL national President/CEO Jonathan Greenblatt in a statement. “While we know extremists and hate groups are able to spread their message without compromising their anonymity.”

According to the ADL’s Center on Extremism, some 630 incidents were reported on college and university campuses, nearly double the 320 campus incidents reported nationwide in 2018. Campus incidents accounted for one-quarter of the total incidents of white-supremacist propaganda distribution nationwide. White supremacists targeted a total of 433 campuses in 43 states and the District of Columbia in 2019. There were 410 on-campus incidents during the fall 2019 semester – more than double any proceeding year, and a 159 percent increase from the 158 incidents reported during the 2019 spring semester. Additionally, 2,083 off-campus incidents were reported in 2019 – a 133 percent increase from the 944 off campus incidents counted in 2018. Nonetheless, there were 20 percent fewer white-supremacist events in 2019 than 2018, down from 95 to 76 events. The number of flash demonstrations also declined, dropping from 43 to 26.

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Mourns

Continued from page 2

in atrocities against the Jews before, during and after the Nazi period.

In Britain, researchers say the Holocaust is often taught as a self-congratulatory way that focuses on the country’s role in defeating Nazism, while failing to mention that it also barred the Jews in Nazi Europe from taking refuge in Palestine – a policy running counter to Britain’s legal obligations at the time.

Holocaust education has also been used to promote a dangerous moral and cultural relativism. It is credited with sensitizing children to harmful cultural stereotypes, intolerance and dehumanization. But its implicit message is that anyone is capable of such evil.

As a result, the Holocaust tends to be bracketed with other mass slaughters. According to Mike Levy, a Holocaust educator in Cambridge, England, there is “an atmosphere of fatigue in the air when it comes to talking about the Holocaust,” with students and teachers wanting to “learn more about other genocides and thus contaminate it.” He wrote: “Children need to be taught that there is not a competition about which genocide is worse.”

In the United States, historian Yehuda Bauer has said: “The Holocaust is too often turned into a game of competition about which genocide is worse.”

But the Nazi genocide of the Jews was unique because German Nazism was unique. Its main driver was not racism, as people call it today, nor hatred of “the other,” nor its dehumanizing view of certain groups in society – a view the Nazis shared with much progressive Western opinion in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The core of German Nazism was instead its antisemitism – its paranoid and deranged view of the Jewish people as an evil conspiracy of positively supernatural proportions, which therefore had to be wiped off the face of the earth. This is not replicable or recognizable in any other form of prejudice, bigotry or hatred. It was, and is, reserved against the Jews alone.

Unless Jew-hatred is recognized for the unique phenomenon that it is – and unless the West’s children are taught the history of the Jewish people and its contributions to civilization – neither Holocaust memorials, museums nor education materials will teach them the true meaning of “never again.”

Melanie Phillips, a British journalist, broadcaster and author, writes a weekly column for JNS. Currently a columnist for The Times of London, her personal and political memoir, “Guardian Angel,” has been published by Bombardier, which also published her first novel, “The Legacy,” in 2018. Her work can be found at www.melaniephillips.com.
WIZO celebrates 100 years of caring for the disadvantaged in Israel

BY ELIANA RUDEE

(JNS) – The Women’s International Zionist Organization celebrated its centennial year recently in Israel. At the conference held from January 19-23, more than 1,000 women representing leaders of Jewish communities from 46 countries attended and recognized WIZO’s contributions to Israeli society over the last century.

Conference participants hailed from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Italy, India, Panama, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Monaco, South Africa, Australia and more.

Established in 1920 as a Zionist women’s movement, WIZO was created as a result of a lack of sufficient representation for women in Zionist centers, and for the purpose of helping women and children in the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine. During the pre-state years, WIZO established the first and only women’s political party in Israel, as well as the first education and welfare services, day-care centers, Tipat Chalav (“A Drop of Milk”) baby clinics and youth villages.

Today, it represents the largest social organization in Israel, working to promote the status of women, educate children and youth, and improve the welfare of disadvantaged populations.

“When WIZO was established, public services in ‘Palestine’ were extremely limited, leaving many unmet social needs,” noted newly elected WIZO Chairperson Anita Friedman on the occasion of the anniversary.

“Even today, in a country where developed and rich public services operate, many unmet needs still exist,” she told JNS. “In the face of changing reality and the ever-changing world, WIZO is constantly working to identify the next goals, the next public struggles and the projects that will save people on the one hand, and strengthen Israeli society as a whole on the other.”

According to Friedman, caring for weaker segments in society is a special sensitivity in Judaism and in Israel. “From the Jewish communities in the Diaspora to the independent state of Israel, the community supporting those in need and not letting anyone fall by the wayside is a value that is present in every sector, every tier of the population, in every community of Israel,” she said.

“WIZO is an important pillar of this way of thinking and acting, and in effect implements the talmudic saying of kol Israel arevim zeh ba’ezeh (‘All of Israel are responsible for each other’) through social projects that offer a hand to help the most disadvantaged – abused women, at-risk children, youth whose school frameworks have given up on them, and teenage girls and young women who need help and guidance,” she added.

At the recent conference, workshops on leadership development were held and key issues discussed relating to the Jewish people and society in Israel. Topics included advancing the status of women in Israel and Zionist institutions; dealing with rising antisemitism and public awareness of Israel; the economic and social challenges facing Israel; sexual harassment and gender inequality; reducing pay gaps and promoting populations at risk; and deepening connections between the younger generation in the Diaspora and the state of Israel.

The leaders visited WIZO projects, including schools and youth villages, shelters for battered women and violence treatment centers, day-care centers, “warm homes” for teenage girls and emergency centers for at-risk children. Among the initiatives that the organization is promoting for Israeli society in the framework of the centennial events is the distribution of study scholarships for youth at risk.

Friedman, a Colombia native, succeeds Rivka Lazovsky, who served for the past eight years in the role as chairperson, heading the organization and its 800 institutions and educational establishments in Israel. Friedman will also be responsible for liaising with all branches of local government agencies, as well as public welding.

Esther Mor, president of the WIZO, addressed the organization’s conference celebrating its centennial in Tel Aviv. (Photo courtesy of WIZO via Facebook)

According to Friedman, caring for weaker segments in society is a special sensitivity in Judaism and in Israel. “From the Jewish communities in the Diaspora to the independent state of Israel, the community supporting those in need and not letting anyone fall by the wayside is a value that is present in every sector, every tier of the population, in every community of Israel,” she said.

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Mishpatim: from six to eternity

BY RABBI BARUCH BINYAMIN HAKohen MELMAN, TEMPLE ISRAEL OF THE POCONOS

Mishpatim, Exodus 21:1-24:18

This week’s parashah, Mishpatim, follows on the heels of the Decalogue and immediately we read about the eveny (Hebrew: eved). The plain meaning, of course, is that it refers to the Hebrew slave who refrains manumission (freedom) in the seventh year. Why does it follow the eveny Hashidruth, the Ten Commandments? A seemingly pedestrian legal ruling appears in the Torah immediately after the most awesome, literally earth-shak-

The midrash relates that Hashem was Israel’s spouse under the Sinai chuppah as the mountain was held over their heads. While it might have occurred to separate those who are truly in love, at whom she saw or thought of her love being tested! Upon insisting he remain with her Master, the eved (servant/slave) makes a declaration saying, “Ahavi et adoni ve’ti biti ve’et bani le etze chofshu.” (Ex. 21:5) This is usually translated as “I love my master and my wife and my children – I will not go out of your door.” But it is not about love in the present. It says that love was so clear at the smoking mountain becomes less clear over time. The certainty of keeping the Torah that fades over time. The heady impact of standing at Sinai is paramount to its proper understanding.

What’s important to understand is that the Torah recognizes that the intensity of romantic love necessarily fades over time. The heayy impact of standing at Sinai faded over time. The certainty of keeping the Torah was so clear at the smoking mountain becomes less clear down the long road of time’s tested journeys. Hashem is saying, “You can go free if you really want to. You can be free of your obligations to me, and vice versa.” But the eved says, “No.” And although the intensity of the romantic love may have faded, I still want to stay with you forever.” He says, “My wife and children (my Torah and mitzvot) are connected to me so deeply. How could I dare live apart from them? How could I dare leave my home for another?”

At right: The leaders of WIZO visited WIZO projects, including schools and youth villages, shelters for battered women and violence treatment centers, day-care centers, “sacred spaces” for teenage girls and emergency centers for at-risk children. (Photo courtesy of WIZO via Facebook)

This is not to say that he doesn’t love them in the present. The plain meaning, of course, is that it refers to the Hebrew slave who refrains manumission (freedom) in the seventh year. Why does it follow the eveny Hashidruth, the Ten Commandments? A seemingly pedestrian legal ruling appears in the Torah immediately after the most awesome, literally earth-shak-

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New president of Technion seeks “soft sciences” to meld with Israeli high-tech

BY CARIN M. SMILK

(JNS) — It seems that not a week goes by without hearing news of some technological breakthrough undertaken by Israelis. The biomedical developments alone—heart surgery using sound waves, the first country to perform an artificial nerve implant, innovative ways of detecting cancer cells in the human body—have made international headlines, with more advances to come.

Many of these can be credited to the nation’s academic institutions; while small in number, they remain big in productivity.

“The Technion Israel Institute of Technology is one of them. Quietly going about doing the research and development it does, the world-renowned university in Haifa has possessed marked breakthroughs since its beginnings in 1913—a full 35 years before the establishment of modern-day Israel. Well, maybe not so quietly. Recently, it has been reported that the Technion will handle two experiments as part of a joint Israeli-Iranian microgravity medical-experimentation project and space launch slated for the end of March. (See related article on page 6.)

But leaving these impressive ventures aside, what it really comes down to is the innovation of its students and faculty, coupled with its administrative leadership, which for the past several months has been led by Uri Sivan of the school’s faculty of physics. Priorly elected last February 7, he took the helm as president on October 1.

Sivan, points out that Israel has gone through tremendous changes in the past three decades as the economy has transformed dramatically, and the technological impact has grown along with it. “The country today is booming,” he told JNS. “There has been a technological revolution that has led to Israel being called the ‘startup nation.’

Developments in the biomedical industry, computer science, health and human services, mathematics, engineering, security and defense contribute to the making of ‘a world-class university that educates technological and societal leaders,’ notes Sivan. And one’s that inclusive, he adds.

Being in Haifa and farther from the politics that embolden Israel’s other major cities of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, students can more unobtrusively go about their business of academics and research. Being in Israel’s diverse north, Technion also draws a significant number of Arab students—about 20 percent—as part of its total enrollment of about 9,500 undergraduates and 4,500 graduate students. Add to that a minority empowerment program that includes boosts for Ethiopian, women and haredi students.

“We aim to be an island of pluralism and tolerance, to seek out a beacon for those values,” says Sivan. “We are creating a just and non-discriminatory environment where everybody feels good and brings their individual potential to the maximum so as to succeed. Our social role is very important to us.”

Sivan and Dr. Ohad Zohar of the Russell Berrie Nanotechnology Institute at the Technion (of which Sivan is founding director, and headed between 2005 and 2010) engraved the entire Hebrew Bible onto a small silicon chip. On a gold-plated silicon chip the size of a grain of sugar, the “Nano Bible” was written as part of an educational program developed to increase young people’s interest in science and nanotechnology. Its text consists of more than 1.2 million letters carved with a focused beam of gallium ions and must be magnified 100,000 times to be readable, according to the American Technion Society.

In 2009, President Shimon Peres presented the Nano Bible to Pope Benedict XVI during his official visit to the Vatican. Three of the copies are at the Vatican Library; the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC; and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

Over the course of his career, he has been awarded the Mifal HaPais Landau Prize for the Sciences and Research, the Rothschild Foundation Bruno Prize, the Israel Academy of Sciences Bergmann Prize, the Technion’s Hershel Rich Innovation Award and the Taub Award for Excellence in Research. He also sits on a number of scientific advisory boards.

Now, he’s intent on applying his prodigious scholarly contributions to a new phase of work at the university—that of building other less concrete bridges to the world?

The first, he explains, is continuing a process that started several years ago in relation to the network of multidisciplinary centers at Technion. “We are in the process of restructuring our research to build on human health, energy, environmental sustainability, education and advanced manufacturing. These subjects cannot be addressed in a single discipline.”

Practically, he adds, this means restructuring the campus as well, physically housing these areas of research and its researchers together. More foreign faculty would help us in “this global world” and endeavor, says Sivan.

Second, he speaks to a different type of education in areas of math, science and engineering. “We aim at the highest bracket; our graduates lead the industry,” he says. “But we have to start to center leadership skills in a more general arena, on nontraditional studies like entrepreneurship, ethics, environmental awareness—skills that are different from conventional engineering. We believe these are essential for the technological leaders of tomorrow.” He calls them “soft skills,” though integral in the making of contemporary researchers, scientists and engineers.

And lastly, he considers the ecosystem within the industry—what he describes as the loss of a monopoly over knowledge. “Just a few years ago, university professors were the sole source of information and authority. This is not the case now. People have easy access to information and there have been major developments in communication; basic research is now done in the outside industry and not as much in academia.”

And so, one of his goals is also one of his challenges. “The companies doing research today don’t necessarily represent the interest of societies, as universities do. They focus on commercialization. It’s the flip side of the startup nation: how to serve society versus financial gain.”

One way to do that, he says, is to build ties with the industry on both local and global scale. “We need to reach a new understanding with those companies,” stresses Sivan. “They need to understand that their long-term interest is in preserving academic interest and protecting curiosity-driven research. We need to streamline the technology transfer from the university to tech and startup companies.”

In medicine and academia, he states (cave audible sigh). “It is challenging. We’re going to work on that.”

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For more information or to discuss these planned giving options, please contact Mark Silverberg, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of NEPA, 570-961-2300 (x) or mark.silverberg@jewishnepa.org.

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Exemption from federal estate tax on donations

Receive guaranteed fixed income that is partially tax-free

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Current & future savings on income taxes, plus fixed, stable payments

Avoid capital gains tax on the sale of a home or other real estate

Donate the real estate or sell it to a charity at a bargain price

An income tax reduction plus reduction or elimination of capital gains tax

Create a charitable gift of future interest, called a remainder life estate

Name a charity as the beneficiary of the remainder of the retirement assets after your lifetime

Tax relief to your family on inherited assets

Create a charitable gift of future intent

Contribute a life insurance policy you no longer need to a favorite cause & designate a charity as the owner

Tax advantages plus use of the property

Receive secure, fixed income for life while avoiding market risks

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Make a large gift with little cost to you

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Create a charitable remainder unitrust

Variable payments for life plus tax advantages

Make an irrevocable gift during your lifetime

Name a charity as the beneficiary of assets in a living trust

Full control of the trust terms during your lifetime
BY EDEN ZUREK

(JNS) – The Dead Sea is a haven of relaxation for the many thousands of visitors who flock to the lowest place on Earth. Visitors love to take advantage of the natural spa treatments and float on the sea’s tranquil shades of water to recharge their batteries and heal.

However, they also recently made their way down to the Dead Sea for a lot more than relaxation. Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem’s Department of Industrial Design, held a three-day off-site seminar to spark creativity and opportunity in the minds of its students, inspiring them to produce innovative new designs.

The Dead Sea Seminar has taken place every December since 2004 and was the brainchild of Professor Ami Drach, then-chairman of the Department of Industrial Design. After his sudden death seven years ago, the department decided to honor his beloved mentor and keep his tradition alive by dedicating future seminars in his memory. The seminar introduces different approaches to craft, including ancient, manual and computerized. Methods and techniques are presented by the department’s lecturers alongside guest designers from abroad in a variety of workshops, such as blacksmithing, sand-casting, Bedouin-style weaving, plastic rotation, wood-engraving and 3D printing with mud and coffee.

Though the seminar is officially run by the Department of Industrial Design, it’s evident that the students are involved in every step of the process. They take part in all arrangements, workshops, kitchen duties and even financial expenses. The seminar isn’t created for them; rather, it is created by them. For example, last year, the students decided that they no longer wanted to use plastic cutlery as the ecological aspect is a focal part of the seminar. Therefore, this year, each person brought their own set of cutlery, plates and cups.

When the students are not spending their time working and creating, they are most likely to be found setting up their own tents, doing yoga and bonding around the bonfire. One of the main values highlighted throughout the seminar is teamwork. “Each person comes from a different background and has their own unique set of skills to share,” said student Erez Eitan. “We all work together, combining ideas to create new and wonderful things.”

During the seminar, students are encouraged to open their minds and think outside the box. “We are here to experiment and find new solutions,” said Rabia Ghebier, an exchange student from Germany. “This workshop is an opportunity to remember the simplicity and beauty of nature, and the world of art. This place allows us to put our worries aside and stop disconnect from all the limitations that are holding you back,” described Huissoud. “It is fantastic for the students to learn about all of these primitive techniques, which challenge their current ways of thinking and creating. We encourage them to search for alternatives, and since we live in such a materialistic age, we wanted to take the students back to the roots of crafting, start from zero and rethink everything they know in order to create a better and more sustainable future.”

Huissoud was invited to the seminar by artist Omer Polak, product designer and graduate of Bezalel Academy. Polak, who lives in Berlin, agrees with Huissoud’s approach. “The seminar is amazing in its concept that it is low-tech and takes place in the lowest place in the world, allowing for the return of ancient crafts,” said Polak. “In a world full of machines and high-tech, we sometimes forget the basics of using our hands and nature to create. Things that are developed during these few days can serve the students throughout their entire careers.”

Ido Ferber, a Bezalel Academy graduate who organized this year’s seminar, explained that “the industrial revolution almost completely obliterated the craft workers, thereby creating a gap in which the artisans disappeared. The purpose of this seminar is to bring it back to life, and make it relevant to this day and age.” According to Sefi Hefetz, head of the Department of Industrial Design, “The seminar is somewhat of a ‘sandbox’ – a metaphor for a place where ideas are formed through working hands and raw materials.”

The Dead Sea can be compared to a desert island in many ways, disconnected from the ordinary rhythm of life. Ironically, this disconnection from the rest of the world can create a ‘deep connection’ between participants. “There have been some great breakthroughs at this seminar, but the main value that this experience encourages is community – a human bonding between the students and everyone else,” said product designer Dov Ganchrow, one of Drach’s close friends and a senior lecturer at Bezalel Academy. “I come back every year, and the faces are usually very familiar. With most of us bringing spouses and children along, it’s become a wonderful reunion and family experience.”

Students in the Department of Industrial Design at Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem utilized a hand-built wooden bicycle to scrap and shape natural materials at the annual Dead Sea Seminar earlier in February. (Photo courtesy of Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem)

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For more information contact Mark Silverberg at Mark.Silverberg@jewishnepa.org or call 570-961-2300, ext. 1.
From JNS.org

Israel’s water technology is helping Gazans get clean drinking water

By JNS STAFF

(JNS) – A machine that produces safe, clean drinking water manufactured by the Israeli-based company Watergen was inaugurated on February 12 in the neighborhood of Abasan al-Kabira in the Gaza Strip as part of a pilot project.

The “GEN-M” is an atmospheric water generator (or AWG) that weighs 790 kilograms and can generate as much as 800 liters of water per day. The GEN-M will be connected to solar panels, providing the AWG with a source of power.

A clean drinking source of water is its coastal aquifer; however, its water supply has been rapidly depleting over the last several decades due to overextraction. The redlining of aquifers has resulted in line-watering in, further polluting the water in the aquifer. More than 90 percent of water from the aquifer is unfit for consumption; as a result, Gazans have been forced to turn to desalination plants for purchasing desalinated water from local desalination plants.

Watergen’s management said, “Responding in accordance with our belief that every human being, regardless of race, gender or religion, has a fundamental right to clean drinking water, we are helping some of Israel’s next-door neighbors gain access to freshwater—a resource lacking in Gaza. We hope that our provision of an AWG will help solve the water crisis and serve as a step forward toward mutual collaboration.”

The project is a result of cooperative efforts between Watergen, Israel’s Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, the Palestinian NGO Damour for Community Development and the Abasan al-Kabira municipality. The Kennedy Leigh Foundation is funding the pilot as part of the Arava Institute’s Track II Environmental Forum.

The Coordination and Liaison Administration (or CLA) to the Gaza Strip had overseen the transportation of the GEN-M to Gaza through the Kerem Shalom Crossing.

The head of the CLA, Maj. Gen. Iyad Sarchan approved the shipment of the GEN-M as part of a policy that seeks to prevent any further deterioration to the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip associated with the enclave’s lack of fresh water.

Watergen’s patented, heat-exchange GENius technology contained in the GEN-M unit creates water by cooling humidity contained in the air. The GEN-M unit contains an internal water treatment system and needs no infrastructure except a source of electricity in order to operate.

David Lehrer, director of the Arava Institute, said, “The introduction of Watergen into Gaza is not only a proof of concept for a cutting-edge technology, but proof that Palestinians and Israelis can do more than launch attacks at each other. We can instead work together to improve lives, solve humanitarian problems, build trust and restore hope.”

Neteriyah: Israel is mapping lands for annexation

Israel has begun to map the Judea and Samaria lands that Israel will annex, said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at an election campaign rally in Ma‘ale Adumin on Feb. 8. “We are already at the height of the process of mapping the area that, according to the Trump plan, will become part of the state of Israel. It won’t take too long,” he said. With Israeli election campaigns under way, the Likud, and Blue and White parties have repeatedly made annexation of parts of Judea and Samaria, including the Jordan Valley, eliciting many reactions both for and against.

Netanyahu’s statements occur less than two weeks after U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled his Middle East peace plan, which gave American approval for annexation, paving the way for the next Israeli government to actualize its campaign promises.

Israel upset at Belgium for inviting “terror supporters” to U.N. Security Council

Israel is furious at Belgium for continuing to act against Israel at the United Nations Security Council, including inviting a “one-sided, radical” pro-Palestinian activist to address council members.

Belgium, which currently holds the rotating presidency for the UNSC, has invited Brad Parker, a senior official for a nonprofit called Defense for Children International – Palestine (or DCI-P), to speak at the council’s session. DCI-P accuses Israel of committing war crimes against children in the Balfour Movement and has ties to the U.S.-designated terrorist organization Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. “Belgium has positioned itself as one of the Security Council member states most hostile toward Israel,” Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lior Hattai told The Times of Israel. “Inviting a one-sided radical activist such as Mr. Parker to brief the Security Council is yet another negative record,” Israeli Ambassador to the U.N. Danny Danon wrote a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres saying DCI-P is “an arm of the PFLP in order to enact diplomatic terror against Israel... a plan that promotes peace and security in the world has no room for people like Parker.”

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Norwegian People’s Aid signed the November 2018 letter to Bachelet calling for the bombs and multiple attempts to break through the Gaza-Israel border fence. Finally, PCHR is involved in the U.S.-designated terrorist group Hamas’s “marches of return,” included close cooperation between PCHR and the terrorist group. For example, the department have maintained close ties with the terrorist organization Hamas, which he called on her to publish the blacklist. Sourani and the head of PCHR’s legal that letter. PCHR Chairman Raji Sourani met with Bachelet in November 2018 in his role in numerous terrorist activities. In August 2019, Jabarin met with the U.N. Another NGO, Al-Haq, and its director general, Shawan Jabarin, were also “heavily involved” in calling for the creation, publication and release of the UNHRC database. Jabarin is a former senior member of the PFLP who has served time in prison due to his involvement in the August 2019 bombing, leading the terror cell behind the explosion. Shnerb’s brother and father were injured in the attack. Arbeed was found to have taken an active role in the August 2019 bombing, leading the terror cell behind the attack and detonating the bomb himself near the Israeli community of Dolev. Another NGO, Al-Haq, and its director general, Shawan Jabarin, were also “heavily involved” in calling for the creation, publication and release of the UNHRC database. Jabarin is a former senior member of the PFLP who has served time in prison due to his role in numerous terrorist activities. In August 2019, Jabarin met with the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and handed her a letter on behalf of some 100 organizations demanding publication of the database. The letter demanded that the issue be discussed at the upcoming UNHRC session held in September 2019. A third NGO, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, signed that letter. PCHR Chairman Raji Sourani met with Bachelet in November 2018 in which he called on her to publish the blacklist. Sourani and the head of PCHR’s legal department have maintained close ties with the terrorist organization Hamas, which included close cooperation between PCHR and the terrorist group. For example, the PCHR is involved in the U.S.-designated terrorist group Hamas’s “marches of return,” which are characterized by a high level of violence, including shooting attacks, fire-bombs and multiple attempts to break through the Gaza-Israel border fence. Finally, Norwegian People’s Aid signed the November 2018 letter to Bachelet calling for the blacklist’s publication. In April 2018, U.S. authorities announced that NPA – an NGO that conducts humanitarian activities and had been receiving American government funding for years – was fined $2 million by the United States following an investigation that found that between 2012 and 2016, the NPA transferred funds for Gazan youth-empowerment projects, in which Hamas and PFLP operatives took part. The investigation also revealed that the NPA provided various services to Iran between 2001 and 2008. Following these findings, it was determined that the organization’s efforts for the U.S. Agency for International Development were inconsistent with their public statements. The investigation report found that between 2012 and 2016, the NPA transferred funds for Gazan youth-empowerment projects, in which Hamas and PFLP operatives took part. The investigation also revealed that the NPA provided various services to Iran between 2001 and 2008. Following these findings, it was determined that the organization’s efforts for the U.S. Agency for International Development were inconsistent with their public statements. The investigation report found that the NPA’s operations were found to be false. “This is another disgraceful decision by the Human Rights Council, which proves once again the U.N.’s consistent antisemitism and Israel-hatred,” said Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Gilad Erdan. “The UNHRC, which consists of tyrannical states and despotic regimes, proves once again that it is a rotten institution that makes delusional decisions which have no connection to actual human rights.” U.S. Senate passes resolution to limit Trump on military action regarding Iran The U.S. Senate passed a resolution on Feb. 13 to curb U.S. President Donald Trump’s ability to enact future U.S. military action against Iran without congressional approval. The tally of the War Powers Resolution was 55-45. Sens. Rand Paul (R-KY), Mike Lee (R-UT), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Todd Young (R-IN), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Jerry Moran (R-KS), Susan Collins (R-ME) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) were the Republicans who voted in favor of the measure, which was introduced by Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) after the U.S. elimination on Jan. 3 of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani. An amendment introduced by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) commending Trump, in addition to both the U.S. military and intelligence community, for Soleimani’s demise passed 64-34. Ten Democrats joined all 53 Republicans in voting for it. The resolution now goes to the Democratic-majority U.S. House of Representatives, where it is expected to pass. Trump has threatened to veto it. A similar resolution passed the House in January, but Senate Republicans indicated they would only be interested in going ahead with Kaine’s version.

Dutch city to keep street signs claiming Israeli cities are located in “Palestine”

A Dutch city has decided to postpone a decision to change street signs that identify Israeli cities as Palestinians, JTA reported on Feb. 9. A spokesperson of the municipality in eastern Netherlands on Feb. 7 wrote on Twitter that the signs recognize the cities as being located in Palestine would be changed, “but in the framework of regular replacement, which is now not on the table.” The cities referred to on the street signs in Heerlen are “Eindhoven” and “Gent.” The municipality agreed to change the signs following a push by Dutch Jews and Israeli advocates to do so. Likied Nederland, a local association supportive of Israel’s Likud ruling party, complained that the current designation was politicalized, and that Palestinians intend to “wipe Israel off the map.” Critics of the signs have again started on social media, particularly in the wake of the Trump administration’s Mideast peace plan. In response, the municipal’s spokesperson tried to appease the situation by saying on Feb. 7 that the reference to Palestine was to “biblical Palestine,” even though neither the New Testament nor the Hebrew Bible make mention of a “Palestine.”