The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania will show the film “From Cairo to the Cloud – The World of the Cairo Geniza” on its website, www.jewishnepa.org, on Saturday, January 29, at 4:57 pm. To view the film, visit the website and click on the link to the film. The link will be live for 24 hours.

“For the past few years the Jewish Federation has been screening documents of interest free of charge to our Federation community as part of our winter programming,” said organizers of the event. “This year, you can watch the Jewish Film Festival winner ‘From Cairo to the Cloud’ from the comfort and safety of your own home.”

“From Cairo to the Cloud” tells the story of the Cairo Geniza, a treasure trove of manuscripts hidden for centuries in the geniza, or sacred storeroom, of an ancient synagogue in Cairo. The Cairo Geniza is a collection gathering, more varied and, arguably, more significant than the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is not only the largest cache of Jewish history ever found, it has been called a window into a vanished civilization, with half a million manuscript fragments illuminating more than a thousand years of Jewish, Christian and Muslim life in the heart of the Islamic world.

The film includes interviews with scholars, librarians and authors. Through those experts and the words of the medieval texts themselves, the film seeks to enlighten all those interested in learning how the Cairo Geniza has impacted the field of Jewish studies, Mediterranean, medieval and world history, manuscript studies, codicology and palaeography, and more. The film will discuss the different types of documents found in the geniza, which include religious, medical prescriptions, literary treasures and love letters, marriage contracts and business reports, magical amulets and children’s drawings. Manuscripts emerge from every segment of society, from the impoverished beggar to the celebrated scholar. Among the geniza’s many discoveries are hand-written drafts penned by Moses Maimonides, the 12th century rabbi, scholar, philosopher and physician.

After they were discovered, the documents in the geniza were dispersed among 70 different libraries and collections all over the world. Today, thanks to an international effort, the geniza archives have been digitally reunited. After a thousand years of silence, the documents have journeyed from Cairo to the cloud, where they are freely accessible online.

Sharansky responds to antisemitism panel: “Progressives” portray Jews as “oppressors”

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – Human-rights icon Natan Sharansky told an event on antisemitism on December 16 that too many progressive voices regard Jews as “oppressors,” and are not protecting individual freedom and human rights. He was speaking at an event countering a panel the day before on antisemitism headlined by Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), Professor Marc Lamont Hill and journalist Peter Beinart – individuals who have been accused of antisemitism.

Sharansky was joined by U.S. Assistant Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Ellie Cohanim and a range of other level speaking activists, amplifying the voices of actual Jewish leaders to provide an accurate account of antisemitism. The online event was organized by the Combat Anti-Semitism Movement, in partnership with the Tel Aviv Institute. It took place in the aftermath of the “Dismantling Anti-Semitism: Winning Justice” panel that featured Tlaib, a supporter of boycotting Israel; Hill, a Temple University professor who has endorsed the Palestinian slogan “from the river to the sea,” commonly viewed as a call to destroy Israel; and the panel’s sole Jewish participant, CNN commentator and New York Times columnist Beinart, who has publicly rejected the need for a Jewish state.

Sharansky said “today, there is an attempt to hijack the cause of human rights from Jews by so-called progressives… For the so-called progressives, all the world is the fight between ‘oppressors’ and ‘oppressed.’ ‘Oppressors’ are always wrong and the ‘oppressed’ are always right. There is no such thing as individual justice; it has to be for the group.”

He said in the eyes of these voices, “Jews are guilty of belonging to the wrong state – the state of Israel,” and that “Jews are accused as a group and Israel is accused as a Jewish state.”

Cohanim outlined her own personal and family background from Iran, emphasizing the hundreds of thousands of Jews originally from Arab and Middle Eastern countries. She said that there is a “pernicious new form of antisemitism” that seeks to erase this history. This era of history allows the accusation that Jews enjoy white privilege and are neo-colonialists,” she said.

Anila Ali, president and founder of American Muslims and Multifaith Women’s Empowerment Council, stated, “We believe that as Muslims we don’t get to define what antisemitism is. That is up to Jews.”

Relating specifically to the December 15 panel, she said, “When Tlaib’s office was contacted over this shaming of an antisemitism conference, she only called out white nationalists.”

A panel of activists from diverse backgrounds debated various aspects of contemporary antisemitism, with many decrying the false contradiction too often presented between being both progressive and Jewish. Hen Mazzig, a senior fellow at the Tel Aviv Institute, said, “It is so harmful to feel that our identity is being challenged – that we must choose between our progressive values and the fight against antisemitism.”

Rabbi Sandra Lawson, associate chaplain for Jewish Life at Elon University in North Carolina, emphasized that “antisemitism is a problem, which is not a left or right problem.” That was a point also made by Craig Dershowitz, CEO of Artists 4 Israel and president of the Healing Arts Kits and Healing Ink. He said, “We need to recognize that the antisemitism we are seeing is not one model,” although he noted a common theme often is “the perceived power of the Jewish people.”

See “Panel” on page 8

Aiding Honduras

Members of Israel’s IDF have been helping to rebuild hurricane-ravaged Honduras.

Story on page 5

News in brief…

U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Egypt; U.S. may prosecute Daniel Pearl’s killer.

Stories on page 8

“Illegally taking hostages” of Whites

“In the face of the imminent danger of violence and atrocities, the government encourages the Illegally Taking Hostages of Whites movement to refrain from taking hostages,” said an official of the Geniza Research Unit, Cambridge University, wrote that it is “the first fully comprehensive film to examine the whole history of one of the world’s most remarkable, but not known, collections… Paymar has produced an ideal experience… a documentary on perhaps the most important archive of the Middle Ages with high production values and unquestionable authority.”

“From Cairo to the Cloud” was produced, directed and filmed by award-winning filmmaker Michelle Paymar. Her independent work has screened at festivals around the world, and she has credits as a director and writer of documentary and non-fiction television programs for NBC, ABC, CBS, PBS, CNBC, MTV, CTV, Travel, Discovery, History and other major broadcasters. Paymar has a master of fine arts degree in film directing from the American Film Institute and a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley.

Nick Kitchen, Take One, Cambridge Film Festival Reviews, called the film “meticulously researched, with a cast of engaging experts who enlighten and entertain with this extraordinary story. Anyone with a passing interest in history will find all this enthralling.”

Dr. Benjamin Outhwaite, head of Asian and African Collections and Genizah Research Unit, Cambridge University Library, wrote that it is “one of the most important archives of the Middle Ages with high production values and unquestionable authority.”

Jewish Federation of NEPA, 601 Jefferson Ave., Scranton, PA 18510

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VOLUME XIV, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 7, 2021

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Watauga, NY

Jewish Federation of NEPA

FEBRUARY 1, 2021

Candle lighting

January 8... 4:33 pm
January 15... 4:34 pm
January 22... 4:49 pm
January 29... 4:57 pm

PLUS

Opinion... 2
D’var Torah... 6
BY REPORTER STAFF

A variety of Jewish groups are offering online resources – educational and recreational – for those who are unable to come out of the house. Below is a list of some of those. The Reporter will publish additional listings as they become available.

The Jewish Publication Society will offer its “New Jewish Writing” series on the second Monday of the month with a reading by Cathy Lesser, author of “Jewish Holocaust: New Dimensions” free on Zoom. The sessions are Mordecai Paldiel: “Saving One’s Own: Jewish Rescuers and the Holocaust” on Monday, January 18; Mark Glickman: “Stolen Words: The Nazi Plunder of Jewish Books” on Monday, January 25; and “Judaism in the World: A Neo-Husadic Perspective” with Rabbi Arthur Green on Monday, February 8. For more information or to register, visit www.jtsa.edu/judaism-for-the-world.

The Siegal Lifelong Learning program at Case Western Reserve University will offer a variety of lectures during 2021. Upcoming courses include: “The Revolution/Evolution of Women Learning Torah in Trans-Denominational Judaism” with Mara Ron Ben Hail on Wednesday, January 20; “Great Opera – A Jewish Fantasy: Meysterer and Halevy in Focus” with Larry Josephovitz on Wednesdays, February 3-24; and “Law and the Holocaust in Film” with Cathy Lesser at Mankind on Tuesdays, February 9-23. For more information, visit www.case.edu/lifelonglearning/courses/whole.

The University of Pennsylvania’s Herbert D. Katz Center for Ethics and the Holocaust, an initiative of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, will hold a free online lecture series starting January 28. The first event features Leslie Barry, author of the novel “Newark Men,” who was trained by the mafia and FBI to fight the rising tide of organized crime. The event will begin on January 28, may be taken separately and are all held on Thursdays at 1:30 pm. For more information, visit https://case.edu/lifelonglearning/courses/whole.

Jewish religious slaughter should have been developed in the European Court of Justice by its very nature, it has always imposed a high standard of animal welfare, and not because respect for the sanctity of the act results in increased rates that animal welfare be compromised.

Nathan Lewin is a criminal-defense attorney with a Supreme Court practice who has taught at Georgetown, Harvard, University of Chicago, George Washington and Columbia law schools.

THE REPORTER ■ JANUARY 7, 2021

Jewish resources to occupy your family during social distancing – part 18

BY NATHAN LEWIS

(JNS) – The European Court of Justice is being Jewish by Israeli organizations around the world for its decision approving a federal lawsuit that ended with the Supreme Court’s decision effectively permits the destruction of Jewish religious slaughter (shechita).

Critics of the decision called it a “frontal assault” on the basic rights of Jews and Muslims. They claim that it free-thinking in America – no less so because it is performed on conscious animals – they conceded in court to knowing the issues presented to it. It held that stunning only affected “one aspect of the shechita.”

One must read the full decision of the court to understand why it is so obvious. It is apparent from the court’s decision that no one could call the court’s attention to a similar conflict in the United States Congress in 1957, when animals-rights groups pressed for the enactment of a federal Humane Slaughter law. The legislation promoted as an answer to animal rights directed that before being slaughtered “all cattle, calves, horses, mules, sheep, and other livestock” must be “rendered insensible to pain by a single blow or gunshot or an electrical, chemical or other means that is rapid and effective”.

The federal court concluded that kosher slaughter, as it was practiced in the United States, the initial draft provided that the court should not apply “any individual issues presented to it. It held that standing only affected “one aspect of the shechita."

In 1974, the fears of defenders of shechita were realized. A federal lawsuit was filed against the secretary of agriculture on behalf of “friends and guards for all livestock animals now and hereafter swathing slaughter in the United States.”

It held that stunning only affected “one aspect of the shechita.”

Another was Judge Edmund Palmieri, a Friendly, an icon of the federal judiciary. Under then applicable federal law, the court to knowing the issues presented to it. It held that stunning only affected “one aspect of the shechita.”

It held that stunning only affected “one aspect of the shechita.”

The court concluded that the provision permitting kosher slaughter, as it was practiced in the United States, as slaughter after stunning because the effect of the shechita cut is that the animal immediately loses consciousness. They pointed out that the Supreme Court affirmed the decision with the reasoning articulated in the opinion of Judge Palmieri’s opinion for the court to knowing the issues presented to it. It held that stunning only affected “one aspect of the shechita.”

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Bais Yaakov happenings

Michael Freund. “The story of this unique community that the founder and chairman of the Shavei Israel organization, Rabbi Yirzachek Feigenbaum, veteran principal and a world-renowned teacher from Toronto, is teaching a class in “Jewish Beliefs and Philosophy” via Zoom twice a week. With Zoom technology, the school is able to take advantage of speakers from anywhere in the world. Additionally, Rabbi Yisroel Brotsky is teaching a new class on “Hilchos Shabbos (Laws of Shabbos).” Also new this year is a Bais Yaakov Seminary program for post-high school students who would like to continue their Jewish education. So far, students have been attending twice weekly. Anyone post-high school who is interested in attending classes should call the school office at 570-347-5003.

Upcoming for the school will be a pizza sale and other food fund-raisers.

On Asarah B’Tevet, the 10th of Tevet, Bais Yaakov once again participated in the Zechor Yemos Olam Program and students were shown the video “Strike on Heaven,” which depicts the Nazis specifically targeting of rabbanim (rabbis) and shuls (synagogues). It portrayed how Hitler understood that the importance of rabbis and teachers to Judaism and the Jewish people. The video depicted the victory of Judaism over the hatred of the Nazis.

Members of India’s Bnei Menashe immigrate to Israel

BY SHAVEI ISRAEL STAFF

Ben Gurion Airport, Israel – “I am delighted to have the honor of bringing members of the Bnei Menashe community to Israel, after many years of waiting,” said the Minister of Aliyah and Integration MK Putna Tameno-Shete. “This follows the approval of a special government decision that I promoted for the immediate aliya of about 250 new olim.

On December 15, 252 new olim from the Bnei Menashe community landed in Israel. Hailing from northeast India, they have preserved the Jewish tradition across generations. Their aliya is the result of a government decision that was promoted by Tameno-Shete, with the support of the chief rabbis of Israel, Rabbi David Baruch Lau; Minister of the Interior MK Aryeh Machluf Deri; and Foreign Minister MK Gabi Ashkenazi.

“The Bnei Menashe community is close to my heart. Upon assuming the position of minister, I made expediting the aliya of the Bnei Menashe community a top priority,” said Tameno-Shete. “I am happy to have the honor of renewing their aliya following my advancement of a special government decision that was approved unanimously. I will continue acting on behalf of the Bnei Menashe community to ensure and expedite the aliya of the remaining members of the community in India. We are blessed to see their arrival to Israel during the festival of Hanukkah - this is a tremendous light for us all. We will accompany and help all the olim throughout their process of absorption and we will do everything we can to support their successful integration into Israeli society.

The aliya of hundreds of members of the Bnei Menashe community follows months of preparation spearheaded by the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration in cooperation with the Shavei Israel organization. The olim have been waiting for many years to make aliya. Upon assuming the position of Minister of Aliyah and Integration, Tameno-Shete made this issue a priority for the Ministry, which led to the government decision that paved the way for the aliya. “As we celebrate the festival of Hanukkah and the miracle of the flask of oil, the aliya of the lost tribe of Bnei Menashe after 2,700 years of exile is itself a modern-day Hanukkah miracle and for that we thank Minister Tameno-Shete,” said the founder and chairman of the Shavei Israel organization, Michael Freund. “The story of this unique community that maintained its connection to the Jewish people and the land of Israel down through the generations is powerful and inspiring, and I fervently hope that we will soon see all the remaining Bnei Menashe make aliya as well.”

Out of the hundreds of olim who arrived in Israel, there were some 50 families and 24 single individuals, four infants under the age of 2 years old, 39 children aged 12 years old or younger, and 19 seniors aged 62 years or older. The olim will undergo an absorption process at the airport, and from there they will be sent to quarantine according to Ministry of Health restrictions and regulations of absorption and we will do everything we can to support them.

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The Ministry of Aliyah and Integration in cooperation with the Shavei Israel organization has been working for many years to make aliya of the Bnei Menashe community. The aliya decision was approved unanimously by the government following a special government decision promoted by Tameno-Shete.

“Our aliya is the result of a government decision that was approved unanimously. I will continue acting on behalf of the Bnei Menashe community to ensure and expedite the aliya of the remaining members of the community in India. We are blessed to see their arrival to Israel during the festival of Hanukkah - this is a tremendous light for us all. We will accompany and help all the olim throughout their process of absorption and we will do everything we can to support their successful integration into Israeli society.”

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JANUARY 7, 2021  ■ THE REPORTER

Check out the Federation’s new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook
Those who missed the National Museum of American lifelong learning/lectures/time-24.pm. For more information or to register, visit https://case.edu/Classes will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays, February 16 from February-June. To see the complete list or to register, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6Bxx1nCIFg.

Our heartfelt thanks to the following contributors:

Baila and her son who has autism; and "Irmi," a documentary from January 13-26. Among the films being shown are "Here We Are," a tale of parental devotion focusing on a 12-year-old autistic boy; "Hannah and Her Sisters," a new documentary that tells the inspiring life story of Irmi Selver, a Jewish refugee who fled her hometown of Chemnitz, Germany, in 1938. There is a cost for the tickets.

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for remembering Project Joy this year in such a generous way. Due to COVID-19, we had to make many changes, but we were still able to make over 125 children experience a fabulous holiday experience.

Many local organizations such as St. Joseph Center, Lackawanna Children & Youth, and Catherine McAuley Center provided us with children’s gifts. Our families and friends who received gift wrapped toys from their own wish lists, clothing, multiple books, and stuffed animals. Thanks to Joe Hollander’s efforts, special toothbrush kits were donated by the Scranton Primary Health Care Center.

This year, Jewish Family Services requested multiple gift cards for their families due to COVID-19 prevalence. To cover the need for more presents this year, we had to make many changes, but we were still able to make over 125 children experience a fabulous holiday experience.

We missed having our wrappers this year, but Jeff and I wrapped them ourselves at our home. We really look forward to having them back next year for a fun wrapping morning.

For each of you, our heartfelt thanks! Also our gratitude goes out to Mindy and Jessica (UJC Staff) and Dan Cardonick for all of their hard work on this project.

Carol and Jack Nogin
Susan and Rick Jacobson
Gail and Mike Greenstein
Carol and Jeff Leventhal
Targat Dickson City
Rich & Carl Leventhal Mohler
Sam’s Club
Wegmans
Don & Joyce Douglas
Villa Capri Cruisers Car Club
Faye & Rick Bishop
Phyllis & Michael Weinberg
Jodie and Larry Golden
Lindsay Leventhal
Richard & Carole Fine
Janice & Harris Cutler
Mark & Jared Davis
Margery Rosenzweig
Cheryl & Michael Friedman
Lisa & Sam Starr
Barb and Lou Niven
Frayda Frozzen
Robin & Jeffrey Jacobson
Scanton Toyota
Jackie and George Fueso
Weis Market Clarks Summit
Beverly Klein
Elaine Shepard
Bob & Faye Rosenberg
Margie & Lou Shapiro

Carol Leventhal
Project Joy Chairperson

Carol Leventhal, Project Joy Chairperson

Jeff Leventhal

Jeff Leventhal (Best Elf Ever)
IDF provides hope in hurricane-ravaged Honduras

BY YAAKOV LAPPIN

(JNS) – Helping a Honduran village hit extremely hard by hurricanes to go from being almost empty to increasingly being refilled with its inhabitants was called “a powerful experience” for members of the Israeli assistance delegation sent there recently.

Amir Shalom, the Israel Ministry of Defense representative to Mexico and Central America, played a key role in organizing the Israel Defense Forces Home Front Command and Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegation, and shared the experience with JNS.

“The more we were there, the more we saw people going back to the village,” he said. “We felt that we were a real part of the hope of the villagers. They invited us to their homes. We helped them rebuild. That includes taking the mud out of their homes, clearing the main streets and witnessing their incredible dedication.”

Just days earlier, Shalom recalled receiving a call from Israel and was told to begin immediate preparations for the delegation’s arrival. This involved coordinating with the Honduran Defense Ministry and preparing the ground for the Israeli delegation’s arrival.

“I’m glad to say that our connection with the Honduran Defense Ministry is good and thanks to these friendly relations, we received full support from the country’s president,” reported Shalom. “We received everything that we needed, including the helicopter and plane transport.”

The IDF aid delegation conducted a seven-day mission that included a series of operations in the cities of San Pedro Sula and La Lima, which were severely affected.

It returned to Israel on December 10.

The two Category 4 hurricanes, Eta and Iota, struck the Central American country in November, leaving behind mudslides and widespread devastation.

The aid delegation came up with a number of ways to provide engineering and medical care.

Simultaneously, the members of the aid delegation helped rebuild the village of Cruz de Valencia, which was most severely damaged, through the refurbishment of houses in the village, the installation of solar lighting and the connection of a water system. As a result, hundreds of residents returned from shelters back to their homes.

In addition, engineering surveys and damage assessments were conducted for hundreds of residences, said the IDF.

During their mission, the forces operated advanced mapping technology for engineering damage assessment.

Senior officials of the Honduran government personally took part in the delegation’s activity.

The delegation was led by the commander of the National Rescue Unit, Col. (res.) Golan Vach, and consisted of 15 reservists, accompanied by staff from the Israeli embassy in Honduras and supported by experts from Israel. It reached northeastern Honduras – an area severely affected by the two hurricanes – chosen by the delegation as the location where it could provide a maximum level of assistance.

“We had clear objectives, which were defined in Israel. First and foremost, the goal was to help Honduras deal with the aftermath in two of its states,” said Shalom. “We set out to help the state and civilians at the level of the individual. To find ways to return them to their homes.”

With many civilians gathered in shelters, the delegation wanted to get them back home as soon as possible.

A second objective, he said, was to help state officials deal with and mitigate future disasters.

As the delegation worked, experts back in Israel continued to think up solutions and process data, presenting insights based on data analysis to enhance the delegation’s decision-making. Israeli health and engineering experts held virtual meetings with their Honduran counterparts to look at solutions for draining floodwater and dealing with overflowing dams.

Speaking to JNS on the final day of the delegation’s mission, Shalom said the digital database system used by the Home Front Command team played a key part, providing “a much brighter picture of the area, and giving decision-makers the ability to know where to prioritize their efforts and allocate resources.”

The village of Cruz de Valencia saw 280 homes – a third of the village’s housing – erased in the natural disaster with families left only with floors. “We decided to simply get to this village and bring back its infrastructure, electricity and water, and to return villagers to their homes,” said Shalom.

Damage surveys revealed the fastest ways of rebuilding roofs while also marking out residences that were no longer safe for habitation.

Delegation members relied on their experiences and expertise in multiple disciplines, including past disaster-relief missions. “The Israeli character is about not giving up – about striving to engage under challenges and looking for solutions,” said Shalom. “It was incredible to see all of the personnel working in layers of mud in hand in hand with the inhabitants to return the village to what it was.”

The team also passed on recommendations to the villagers on how to quickly rebuild in the event of a future destructive storm. “We are sure we are leaving an imprint here, a kind of hope for these people. We chose this village because it was hit really hard,” said Shalom, adding that Vach decided to place the focus on the most difficult challenge.

“We left tomorrow, and there is not a miraculous transformation that occurred here,” he acknowledged, “but at least we could influence and give a real supporting push.”

The villages in this part of the world are managed by committees of locals, and the head of the committee, called “patronato,” gave the delegation a tour of the damage. Shalom said, “We got to a corner of the village and she showed us her house, or where it once stood. Nothing was left. We saw a moving sight after we managed to activate a functioning water supply, which equals life. When there is water, more people can come back,” described Shalom. “We did another tour, entering the homes and asking how we can help. We entered one of the homes and saw a mother cooking in her kitchen, pots on the gas, the smell of food was present. We saw that they’re coming back. That things are going back to normal. You can cook.”

The IDF aid delegation conducted a seven-day mission that included a series of operations in the cities of San Pedro Sula and La Lima, which were severely affected. (Photo courtesy of IDF Spokesperson’s Unit)

Friends of The Reporter make big news!

The Federation is asking members of its communities to support its “Friends of The Reporter” Campaign which seeks to raise $5,000 to assist in funding the newspaper.

The newspaper is delivered twice of month (except for December and July which are single issue months) to each and every identifiable Jewish home in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The Reporter is the primary intercommunal newspaper of the Jewish communities of Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties. Supplementing synagogue newsletters, bulletins and e-mails, The Reporter is issued to hundreds of Jewish households throughout our region. Over the past several years, the publishing cost of the newspaper has increased dramatically although the newspaper continues to be provided at no charge to members of our Jewish communities in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Federation has assumed the financial responsibility of funding the newspaper at a cost of $23,990 per year and asks only that its readers assist it in raising $5,000 as part of its “Friends of The Reporter” Campaign to offset a small share of these expenses.

Your gift to fund our regional Jewish newspaper matters a great deal to our readers and we would be very grateful for your financial support.

As always, your comments, opinions & suggestions are always welcome.

With best wishes,
Mark Silverberg, Executive Director
Jewish Federation of NE Pennsylvania
601 Jefferson Avenue
Scranton, PA 18510
ABINGTON TORAH CENTER
Rabbi David Saks
President: Richard Rutta
Jewish Heritage Congregation
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Sunday morning service 9 am at Elion Gardens, 465 Vernd Rd., Clarks Summit, PA

BETH SHALOM CONGREGATION
Rabbi Yuessel Brosky
150 Vine St., Dunmore, PA 18510 (corner of Vine & Clay Ave.)
570-346-5002 • fax: 570-346-8800
Weekday – Shulavit: Sun. 8am; Mon., Thurs. & Rosh Chodesh 6:30 am; Tues., Wed. & Fri. 6:45 am; Sat. & holidays 8:45 am.
Minchah during the week is approx. 10 minutes before sunset, following by Maariv.

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Rabbi Eliezer Kleinman
President: Liza Ross Lucy
Contact person: Cheryl Badger, Congregation Administrator
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CONGREGATION B’N AI
Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Rabbi Peg Kershonbaum
President: Stacy Mitgang
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Friday evening Shabbat service 8 pm
Saturday morning Shabbat service 9:30 am

MACHZIKHE HADAS SYNAGOGUE
Rabbi Mordechai Fine
President: Moshe Fink
600 Monroe Ave., Scranton, PA 18510
570-342-6271

OHEV ZEDEK CONGREGATION
Rabbi Mordechai Fine
1432 Mulberry St., Scranton, PA 18510

TEMPLE HESED
Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz
President: Herbert Adelman, Cheryl Friedman & Steve Setchell
1 Knox St., Scranton, PA 18505 (Off Lake Scranton Rd.)
570-344-7201 • website: www.TempleHesed.org
E-mail: templehesed@msn.com
First Friday Shabbat 6pm, other Fridays 8 pm, Chanting Circle Saturdays at 11:30 am

TEMPLE ISRAEL OF DUNMORE
Contact person: Jay Schectman, 570-954-9354
Temple Israel of Dunmore
610 Vine St., Dunmore, PA 18512
Saturday morning Shabbat 7:30 am, also services for Yizkor

TEMPLE ISRAEL OF THE POCONOS
Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi Rabbi Miriam Spitzer
Cantor: Vladimir Aronson • President: Howard Spitzer
918 East Gibson St., Scranton, PA 18510 (located at the corner of Gibson & Monroe Sts.)
570-342-0530 • e-mail: office@templeisraelspitzer.org
Mon. & Thurs. 7:15 am, Tues. & Fri. 7:30 am, Rosh Chodesh & Chagow weekdays, 7 am; Shabbat morning service 9:30 am

D’VAR TORAH
What’s in a name?

BY RABBI MARJORIE BERMAN
Shemot, Exodus 1:1-6:1

The Book of Exodus, which we start this week, is called Shemot in Hebrew. It simply means “names.” Why begin the story of exile and redemption by naming? What does it mean to know who we are? How does it lead to redemption?

For Jews, names have always been important. To name something brings it into being, gives you power over it and enables you to have knowledge that goes beyond the surface. In Genesis, all beings are created simply by being named by God; God says, “Let there be light,” and there is light. When Adam, the first earth being, is given the task of naming the animals, there is an implication that by naming them, he becomes responsible for them – they are now part of a covenantal relationship. Jewish mystics, according to Kabbalistic tradition, could work magic by knowing the secret names of God and the names that we give a child are imbued with power. The power of hope, of memory, and of kavanah – of honoring those that have gone before.

In the last half-century, a powerful and evocative practice has emerged in relation to the Holocaust. For 24 hours on Yom Hashoah, people read out the names of those that were murdered. By doing so, we remember that those who were taken were actual humans: mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, shopkeepers, scholars, peddlers and farmers. We name those that were lost as a way of remembering their humanity and their stories – to help us to attain some grasp of the unimaginable number of those who died. By naming those that were killed, we, in small measure, confront the reality of the devastation. The Black Lives Matter movement has adopted this practice as well, with the injunction, “Say Their Names!” It, too, seeks to humanize, to give names and faces and stories to those that have been taken, and to force us to confront the reality of what systemic racism has wrought on the lives of Black Americans and on the soul of our country.

Each day, as the numbers of COVID-19 mount in Northeastern Pennsylvania, in the U.S. and in the world, I find myself becoming numb. I have done funerals for those that have died of the disease, lost beloved congregants, had friends and family who have been sick with it, and it is still incomprehensible to me. The vastness of the numbers defies my imagination to envision the extent of those who are suffering.

But Judaism teaches us that this is what we must do. We cannot lose sight that each of the two million people who have died of COVID had family, friends, histories, communities, homes, hopes... Some of you reading this know this first-hand. The New York Times is doing an ongoing series called “Those We’ve Lost” with the intent of conveying “the human toll of COVID-19 by putting faces and names to the growing numbers of the dead, and to portray them in all their variety.” It is both heartbreaking and heartening to read these obituaries. They are loving and inspirational, beautiful and deeply sad. They remind us that behind each of the daily tallies and the graphs, there are hundreds of thousands of human beings that we have lost – those who lived lives of failures and triumphs, like all of us.

If we have not personally lost someone, it feels so incredibly difficult to stay “awake” during this time – to actually confront our mortality on a daily basis and to take in the magnitude of the loss that is all around us. But our tradition teaches us in the Psalms, “Teach us to number our days, that we may attain a heart of wisdom.” Sometimes it can be too much. But when we stay con- nected to the reality of what is happening and when we give it a name, we keep our hearts open. We have the opportunity to be filled with gratitude for the days that we are given and to face the grief that lies within us.

Perhaps Shemot – Exodus – begins the story of our redemption with names because we can only truly See “Name” on page 8
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Please remember to donate to our Annual Campaign!

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The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania
601 Jefferson Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510
For more information, please call 961-2300
Mark it “2021 UJA Campaign” or pledge through our website at www.jewishnepa.org

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For further information on gifting stocks in payment of your pledge to our Annual UJA Campaign, please contact the Federation at 570-961-2300 (ext. 3) for details.
U.S. says it’s ready to prosecute Daniel Pearl murder suspect

The U.S. Department of Justice stands ready to prosecute Omar Sheikh, who had his conviction for the 2002 murder of American Jewish journalist Daniel Pearl overturned in December by a provincial court in Pakistan. In a statement on Dec. 29, Acting U.S. Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen said: “We understand that Pakistani authorities are taking steps to ensure that Omar Sheikh remains in custody while the Supreme Court appeal seeking to reinstate his conviction continues. The separate judicial rulings reversing his conviction and ordering his release are an affront to terrorism victims everywhere. We remain grateful for the Pakistani government’s actions to appeal such rulings to ensure that he and his co-defendants are held accountable. If, however, those efforts do not succeed, the United States stands ready to take custody of Omar Sheikh to stand trial here. We cannot allow him to evade justice for his role in Daniel Pearl’s abduction and murder.” The Pakistani Supreme Court was scheduled to resume its hearing about Sheikh on Jan. 5. The Pearl family’s attorney, Faisal Siddiqi, said he expects the court to rule on the appeal by the end of January. The United States announced a grand-jury indictment against Sheikh for acts of terrorism against Pearl, who at the time was working for The Wall Street Journal, as well as an American tourist who was kidnapped in India in 1994.

U.S. approves $290 million “smart” bomb sale to Saudi Arabia

The U.S. State Department has approved the sale of 3,000 “smart” bombs to Saudi Arabia for $290 million, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency announced on Dec. 29. The Saudis had requested the GBU-39 Small Diameter Bomb Munitions, which “will improve Saudi Arabia’s capability to meet current and future threats by increasing its stocks of long-range, precision air-to-ground munitions,” the agency said in a statement. The news came a week after the U.S. State Department notified Congress it was moving ahead with issuing a license for Raytheon to directly sell to Saudi Arabia 7,500 Paveway air-to-ground precision-guided bombs at an estimated $478 million, according to The Hill. Separately on Dec. 29, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency announced that approval had been granted for the sale to Kuwait of eight AH-64E Apache helicopters, as well as the U.S. policy of requiring the AH-64E Apache Longbow attack helicopters to the AH-64E configuration. The estimated cost of the sale is $4 billion. The U.S. agency also announced the approval of the sale to Egypt of Sniper Advanced Targeting Pods (or ATPs) and related equipment for an estimated cost of $65.6 million.

Panel . . . . . . Continued from page 1

Arizona State House Rep. Alma Hernandez, a Jewish Mexican American, said, “I am a very progressive Dem- ocrat, but being told that I have to choose between being part of the progressive movement or support Israel is not something I am prepared to compromise on.”

On the question of where attitudes toward Israel become antisemitic, Ashager Araro, founder of Batta-Ethiopian Israeli Heritage Center, commented, “Once you say that the Jewish people are the only people who don’t have the right to self-determination, it is antisemitism.”

Mahnin Shuje, executive director of Pueblo Development Commission, called for education toward a better understanding of Zionism as self-determination, saying “the banning of Zionists from these [progressive] spaces takes authority away from our narratives.”

Combat Anti-Semitism Movement Director Sacha Roytman-Drataw explained that “our event was an image. We are a part of the Divine. We are not created to give up in the face of an unseen but powerful virus. We are free to make our own choices, to find our way to becoming partners with God and to attempt to do our part in healing the world. This is the story of our redemption.”

Rabbi Marjorie Berman is a spiritual director at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

Name. . . . . . Continued from page 6

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania is to rescue the imperiled, care for the vulnerable, support Israel and world Jewry, and revitalize and perpetuate Jewish life in Northeastern Pennsylvania.