



The Shofar

Website:
oraynu.org

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HAPPY PASSOVER

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Hope you've all been managing well through this very Canadian of winters with its frigid temperatures and lots of snow. The good news is that spring is not that far away—on the calendar, anyway!

Here's what your Oraynu team has in store for the next two months and beyond:

Our Family Purim Festival is on Sunday, March 3rd. Later that day, at 5 pm is our annual Show Your Heart event. This year the focus is Indigenous issues; it's called "Teach-ins, Tikkun Olam, Tov-li." It's also a fundraiser which includes dinner. See more on p. 3.

Rabbi Eva Goldfinger has one session left in this year's excellent lecture series: on March 21st. Even if you couldn't make the previous talks, you are still welcome to come learn with us.

Something new! On Saturday April 13th, Rabbi Denise Handlarski offers a Havdalah program with a discussion of Rosh Chodesh, the monthly New Moon festival. It promises to be a fascinating talk.

As always, we have two events for Passover: the School/Family Seder on April 14th, the Sunday preceding Passover, and then our First Night "Roots and Branches" Seder on Friday, April 19, which also happens to be Good Friday. (Wasn't the "Last Supper" purportedly a seder?) We hope you can join us and see how we mark Passover humanistically.

On Sunday, March 31st there will be another of our semi-annual introductory sessions on Humanistic Judaism. It's ideal for new and prospective Oraynu members

to learn about who we are and what we do. The Children's School Open House will be held the following week on April 7th. Both events take place at the school. Kindly spread the word to anyone whom you think may be interested in either our Congregation or School (which goes from the tots level to Bnai Mitzvah).

On April 28th, our Tikkin Olam Oraynu Committee is sponsoring a new tzedakah project, "The Period Purse," in collaboration with a volunteer organization that provides supplies to homeless women. Please help us support its success.

Looking ahead, we will mark Yom Ha'atzmaut—Israel's Independence Day on May 10th with a Shabbat program and a discussion entitled "State of the Union."

Besides the usual columns, there is a special note from Board President Mark Brender about this newsletter and a piece by Penny Parnes about being on the Board, plus lots of photos, Purim humour, a wonderful poem and a tribute to the late Amos Oz.

Happy rest of winter! Hope to see you at one of our many events really soon.

Sandi

Sandi Horwitz, Editor

BREAKING NEWS:

Newsletter going digital!!

Starting with our next issue, you will have the opportunity to receive *The Shofar* in your inbox instead of as a mailed copy. **See p. 6 for details.**

Members and guests are welcome to submit articles and letters and photographs. Please email: horwitz@rogers.com/ or mail to: Sandi Horwitz, 5 Bruce Farm Drive, Toronto ON M2H 1G2. Generally submissions should be no more than 800 words and should reflect a secular humanistic perspective. Please note that Oraynu reserves the right to decline or edit submissions in order to maintain the mutual respect our members enjoy and our reputation for fairness.

Letters and articles printed in this newsletter reflect the opinions of their writers and are not necessarily those of Oraynu Congregation.

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Rabbi
Denise
Handlarski



As many of you know, I am a fellow with Rabbis Without Borders. The program consisted of three retreats, and a ton of work in between. We learned about pluralism in Judaism and, to the credit of the program, they were very inclusive and affirming of the Humanistic perspective. We learned about positive psychology (lots of that stuff made its way into the Rosh Hashanah talk I gave "Can Humanists Be Happy?"). We assessed our own character strengths and how they impact or leadership style (I value authenticity/integrity most.... which is exactly why I'm a Humanistic Jew!). We learned about racism within Judaism and how we can combat it (I recommend reading "White Fragility" by Robin DiAngelo, one of our assigned texts).

Over the three retreats I got to meet interesting rabbis working in a variety of contexts, from clergy of synagogues, to chaplains for the military and schools, from Hillel rabbis to educator-rabbis. From JCC staff to freelancers starting up programs and communities of their own. One thing was consistent for all of us: we care deeply about the Jewish future, but we don't quite know what the Jewish future will look like.

There is no doubt that the Jewish world is changing. Some synagogues are closing. The relatively new movement of Humanistic Judaism is celebrating 50 years this year, and so is our own community (you're coming to our celebration in November, right?). Over 50 years we have accomplished so much: built communities, schools, liturgy, ritual, practices, life cycle programs, institutions, and more. We helped change the Jewish world. And the world continues to change around us, challenging us to adapt and grow along with it.

Over the next year I'm planning to share some of what I learned. I'll be looking for partners in delivering new and exciting programs, and opportunities for you to help lead them. I'll be asking you how we can work together to help combat antisemitism, racism, sexism, and other challenges. I'll be looking to experience more joy along with you, from Pow Wows, to bonfires, to plays, and to holidays that remind us to feel the moment and experience the beauty of being alive. And I'll be asking you to help chart the course for the Jewish future, Oraynu-style, right along with me. Can't wait!

Oraynu's 50th Anniversary Celebration coming on Nov. 2nd

A timeline is being prepared starting with our origins in 1969 (and we do have documents from the Spring of that year!) to the present day. **But we need your help to tell the story.**

If you have any documents or photos, either from our SJA beginnings that help us explain our history or more recent Oraynu ones to enliven the 50th Anniversary Celebration event, please contact Jim Sadler at [jim.sadler@rogers.com/](mailto:jim.sadler@rogers.com)



NEW DATE for our Darwin Day "Puzzle of Mazel" Program

Tuesday, April 2 at 7:30 pm | Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell

Dr. Jeffrey S. Rosenthal will speak on his new book

"Knock on Wood: Luck, Chance, and the Meaning of Everything"

See our website: www.oraynu.org/ for more info and to register.

(Note: Originally scheduled for Feb. 12, this program was cancelled due to snowstorm)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, Mar. 3
10:00 am

Social Hall
Borochov Centre
272 Codsell Ave.
(Wilson Hts/Sheppard)



FAMILY/SCHOOL PURIM FESTIVAL

Participate in our interactive Purim Shpiel!
"It Happened in Shu-shan!"

NEW: Wear a costume to the festival and get your picture taken upon arrival at our *InstaPurim*TM photo booth!

PURIM CARNIVAL

Sculpey ~ Origami ~ Balloon Art ~ Face Painting ~ Hamentaschen for all!
Cupcake Decorating & Sale in aid of the Grandmothers for Grandmothers Project

PURIM TZEDAKAH: Collection of Kosher for Passover Food for National Council of Jewish Women's Passover Food Drive for needy Jewish Families
Matzah • Gefilte Fish • Canned Tuna • Tea • Canned Fruit/Apple Sauce • Jam • Grape/Apple Juice
Matzah Meal • Soup/Side Dishes • Passover Crackers • Macaroons/Cookies

Oraynu grandparents — bring your grandkids to join in the fun too!
Non-members welcome: Adults \$8, Children \$4, Family max. \$20

Sunday, Mar. 3
5:00 pm

Borochov Centre

SHOW YOUR HEART 2019 ~ Focus on Indigenous Issues: Teach-ins, Tikkun Olam, Tov-li

The Tikkun Olam Oraynu Committee brings you rotation-style teach-ins on issues affecting Indigenous Canadians. The four areas to be covered are: water rights, healthcare, education, disabilities.

Oraynuniks will share their expertise and bring in voices and research from Indigenous communities. At each station there will be opportunities to make a difference via letter writing and petitions.

After our teaching and Tikkun Olam-ing, there will be a light dinner served of Tov-li favourites including falafel and salads.

Tickets are \$15 (includes the dinner) and all profits from the evening will go towards supporting an Indigenous initiative (you'll get to vote on which one!).



Thursday, Mar. 21
7:00-9:30 pm

(Starts at 7 pm sharp, so do plan to arrive earlier)

Borochov Centre

ADULT EDUCATION with Rabbi Eva Goldfinger

Topic: Contemporary Ethical Revolutions: Which are MeToos and Which are NotMes

Did this title pique your interest? Join us for the final session of Rabbi Eva's excellent and well-attended series on **MeToo vs Not Me: Relevance of Jewish Teachings Through the Ages for Jews Today**. Even if you were not at the previous sessions you are still welcome to come learn with us.

Kindly pre-register.

Non-members welcome: \$20 per session

Unless otherwise indicated, kindly RSVP for ALL EVENTS:
416-385-3910 | roby@oraynu.org | via online event link

Sunday, Mar. 31
10:15 am

Oraynu Children's
School
131 Fenn Ave.
(Bayview/York Mills)

HUMANISTIC JUDAISM ~ WHAT, WHY, HOW

Led by Rabbi Denise and Sandi Horwitz



Tell your friends and family to come and learn about how Oraynu does Jewish. Perhaps come for a refresher yourself!

This is a presentation on what we have left behind, what we have retained, and what we have created to keep Judaism meaningful for secular/cultural Jews today.

Everyone welcome; no charge to attend

Kindly RSVP to Roby

Sunday, April 7
10:15 am

Oraynu Children's
School

ORAYNU CHILDREN'S SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Meet the staff and find out all about our acclaimed curriculum

Focus on Jewish culture, history and values from secular humanistic perspective

JK-Gr. 7 • Bnai Mitzvah Program • OraynuTots (1½-3½ yrs)
Jewish Festivals • Family Education • Hebrew • Tzedakah • Arts • Music

Help us promote Oraynu and Humanistic Judaism! Word of mouth increases awareness of both our School and Congregation. Tell others about what Oraynu means to you and your family. We know that school families are our best PR tools! Kindly RSVP.

School funded with support from



Saturday, Apr. 13
4:30 pm

Borochov Centre

HAVDALAH AND ROSH CHODESH - Jewish New Moon

The Jewish new moon is like a mini Rosh Hashanah, a time to regroup and recommit to one's goals. Traditionally a women's holiday, we'll explore the roots of Rosh Chodesh, contemporary practices, and do a sharing circle to get ready for the month, plus ... enjoy some snacks too. Program will be done by 6:30 pm, so you can still enjoy your evening.

Non-members welcome: \$15

Sunday, April 14
4:45 pm

Followed by
Pot-luck Dinner

Borochov Centre
Social Hall



We invite families to share in our SCHOOL PASSOVER SEDER

POT-LUCK DINNER CONTRIBUTION

Please choose one dish to serve 18 people, or two items to serve 9 people each.

SALAD or VEGETARIAN DISH or CHICKEN/BEEF or PRE-CUT DESSERT

NOTE: At our seder, we would like to provide you with a Jewish cultural, culinary experience.

Although your contributions do not need to be kosher, please do your best to bring Passover-style dishes. Our goal is to celebrate the holiday with traditional Passover foods.

ALLERGY ALERT: All potluck contributions must be free of nuts and poppy seeds. We have children with life-threatening allergies. Please avoid any cross-contamination with utensils that have contacted these foods when preparing dishes.

Guests and friends welcome: adults \$15, students \$7, children ages 4 and under \$4

RSVP by email by Sunday, March 31st to: robby@oraynu.org

Please indicate numbers attending + pot-luck contribution(s).

School Families, please note: NO CLASSES ON THE MORNING OF THE SEDER

Friday, Apr. 19
6:00 pm

Borochov Centre
Social Hall



Celebrate a humanist Passover with Oraynu at our
FIRST NIGHT SEDER (Adults/Teens/Older Kids)

Led by Barry Olshen and Sandi Horwitz

Authors (with Lisa Wright) of "Roots and Branches: A Humanist Haggadah for Passover"

Meal details: We will once again provide a delicious catered chicken main course (from Nortown). We ask that everyone bring a **salad OR Passover-style side dish (e.g. farfel, vegetable kugel or casserole) OR dessert, enough to feed 8 people.**

COST: Oraynu members: \$20 pp + potluck contribution

Oraynu members' immediate family: \$32 + potluck contribution

Other guests/friends/non-members: \$48 pp + potluck contribution

**** Must R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, April 10th ****

Sunday, April 28
12:30 - 2:30 pm

Oraynu Children's
School

All members and
guests welcome:
\$5 per person

Join us for **pizza and snacks** as we pack the purses for

THE PERIOD PURSE - A Tikkun Olam Oraynu Initiative

We are asking everyone to donate supplies, even if you can't attend April 28. Please bring them to any Oraynu program at the Borochov or Sunday School, up to and on April 28th.

We need:

- Ziploc bags
- New or used excellent condition purses, backpacks or totes (large only - must fit a box of tampons & pack of pads + comforting items)
- Tampons, pads and new Menstrual Cups. (Please do not send menstrual products from the dollar store)
- New black socks and new underwear (size large or extra large)
- Wipes (baby wipes, moist towelettes)
- New face cloths and bars of soap
- Chocolate bars and granola bars
- New or used good condition, washed scarves, hats, and mittens



The Period Purse is a volunteer-run non-profit organization that strives to achieve menstrual equity by providing menstruators experiencing homelessness access to free menstrual products, and to reduce the stigma surrounding periods through public education and advocacy. The organization launched in February 2017 with the goal of making one purse. Today, The Period Purse has handed out over 8,700 purses and over 7,800 refill period packs, each containing period products, comforting items and a motivational note. The Period Purse seeks to provide individuals experiencing homelessness with a much-needed emotional boost. For more information, visit: <https://www.theperiodpurse.com>

Friday, May 10
7:30 pm

Borochov Centre

SHABBAT & ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY / YOM HA-ATZMAUT — State of the Union



Many of us love Israel. Many of us are concerned about Israeli politics and policies. At this program we will discuss the 2018 Nation-State Law, the Expansion of Settlements, Anti-Zionism and/as Antisemitism (when it is, when it isn't, how do you know?) and more! We'll also have delicious Israeli snacks on hand to keep us going. Don't miss this opportunity to learn, to share, and to nosh!

Non-members welcome: \$15

Presenting *The Shofar* ... any way you want it

MARK BRENDER, President

It's a little known fact that when 1980s pop rock band Journey wrote their hit song of 1980, they were actually envisioning publicity for ... wait for it... Oraynu.

Oh, but it's true. Believe it or not, Steve Perry and the boys were looking to give a lyrical shout-out to the future of the famed publication you are reading at this very moment. That's right. Our beloved Shofar, edited by Sandi Horwitz since 1998! It makes perfect sense.

The song to which we refer, of course, is the guitar-riffing classic *Any Way You Want it (That's The Way You Need It)*.

You know you *need* The Shofar. You read it cover to cover six times a year. And now, in prophetic fulfillment of Journey's vision, those of you who prefer a digital version of The Shofar are finally in luck. **Oraynu is glad to offer digital delivery of the very same Shofar you have come to know and love, six times a year via email pdf right to your inbox. And ... each E-Shofar issue will come to you in full colour.**

If that's the way you want it!

For those who want to continue receiving The Shofar by regular mail, nothing will change. We merely ask that Oraynu members who prefer to receive an email version only, simply get in touch with Roby (robby@oraynu.org/ or phone 416-385-3910) to be put on the digital-only Shofar distribution list. You'll just need to confirm which email address you want it sent to, and you'll be helping the environment and saving Oraynu postage costs too.

We can also send the digital version to email addresses belonging to other family members included in your paid membership...if that's the way they want it, too. And remember, you can always access a slightly modified version of both the current issue, AND back issues, of The Shofar under the 'Links' tab at www.oraynu.org/

No fuss and no hassle -- that's the way you need it. Same Shofar, new journey!



Experiences on the Board of Oraynu

By PENNY PARNES, Board Secretary

I wanted to share some insights into being on the Board of Oraynu. It has been a very positive experience and a labour of love.

I "found" Oraynu about 10 years ago. After the death of my mother, I was searching for some type of connection to my Jewishness in terms of dealing with the reality of her passing. I went back to my earlier experiences which were largely within the Reform movement but found the message lacking for me personally. Then I found Oraynu and found a home! When joining about 4 years ago, I filled in a questionnaire asking what my interests were and I selected 'Board' among others. It didn't take long for a phone call asking if I would be interested in serving on the Board and the following spring at the Annual General Meeting I was elected to the Board. I had very little background with Oraynu but was, and continue to be, so impressed with it that I was willing to give it a try.

I can say that the experience has been extremely positive. The issues that the Board deals with are sometimes quite complex, but with 10 members all having diverse backgrounds and experiences we manage to work our way through the issues that come before us and we always learn something along the way.

An example of a recent meeting will give a flavor of some of the issues we deal with. At the January meeting there were a number of financial issues to deal with. Our Treasurer (Robert Horwitz) always presents us with great

documentation in advance so that those of us who are not financial whizzes have time to study it and think about our questions. In January, as at every meeting, we reviewed our current financial situation to make sure that we are operating within our means and according to plans approved at the last Annual meeting. We have also been looking at our investment policies to be sure that we protect our funds and have them work for us. We also have liaisons with various aspects of the Oraynu operations so have an opportunity to review what is going on with our school, with our administration and with our rabbis.

We meet about once per month and our President (Mark Brender) prepares a tight agenda along with a time line so that meetings are under 2 hours in length. Twice a year we have a review/planning meeting known as a 'Chew and Chat' (that was a new one for me) where Board members and staff to get together for a few hours and look at current issues. Our last C&C in December was an opportunity to look at things that are going well and things that we are proud of as well as how to measure our success. It was a lively discussion and no doubt will help us keep our eyes not only on the day to day but also on the larger context for our group.

In summary, I am grateful to have found Oraynu and grateful to have the opportunity to contribute. I hope that others in Oraynu will take advantage of this also.

Storytelling is common to every culture. Storytellers have catered to the need for a 'good story' since the beginning of civilization.

We all have our own favourite stories from childhood and, often, these tales are memorable because they are in some way fascinating or frightening. These stories include legends, myths and folktales. At the school, our story repertoire includes all of the above genres and, of course, a great deal of non-fictional, historical storytelling, too. Here's a look at some of the school events this winter that have involved stories or storytelling.

The Legend of the Children of Lodz Ghetto: Etti led the Grade 7 students and their parents in a special interpretive art presentation. At the basis of this program is a picture book that was created at the tailors' labour workshop in the Lodz Ghetto. The legend told and the pictures drawn were conceived by the children who worked there. In order to save as many children as possible, the children of the Lodz Ghetto were trained to work in factories like the tailors' workshop. Instead of describing the work they performed in statistical terms, the children told their story in the form of a legend, in the style of a fable. The content, form, and message of their legend, pays attention to the education/training of the children who were to work in the Lodz Ghetto factories. Etti guided the families through an analytical, responsive "tour" of the 18 poster panels that tell the story. The story came to us directly from Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center.

Tu B'shevat at Kensington Place Senior's Residence: After decorating terra cotta planters in class and transplanting baby tropical plants into them, Denise's Grade 1 and 2 students went to Kensington Place to sing Tu B'shevat songs for the senior residents. Their songs told the story of plants and trees growing. Their smiles in the photos on page ??? tell the story of how they brought joy to the hearts of the seniors who, along with their music teacher Mendy, they entertained through musical storytelling.

Rona Arato and *The Last Train, A Holocaust Story*: Shira, Miriam, Jenny and I were delighted to welcome children's author, Rona Arato, to the Grade 5 and 6 class for a special presentation on her award winning book, *The Last Train, A Holocaust Story*. This biographical book tells the true story about young brothers Paul (later Rona's husband) and Oscar Arato and their mother, Lenke, surviving the Nazi occupation during the final years of World War II. Rona read excerpts from her book and facilitated a question and answer forum. She presented astounding photos of the train liberators (American soldiers) and the liberated (concentration camp survivors) at the moment of their rescue and their reunion many years later. She also spoke about the process of writing this moving, biographical book several copies of which are currently circulating among our students.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski's Humanistic Jewish Self-defence: This interactive talk, facilitated by Rabbi Denise, supported our Bnai Mitzvah curriculum, which begins in Grade 6 and carries on throughout Grade 7. The students in both classes discussed topics such as Humanistic Jewish identity, HJ bar/bat mitzvah and HJ self-defence. You might be asking yourself, "What does this have to do with storytelling?" Well it's pretty hard to discuss the frequently asked questions about, and challenges to, Humanistic Judaism without telling one's own personal story. And, in fact, as we learned skills on how to deal with questions we have been asked about Humanistic Judaism, we all shared interesting aspect of our own cultural stories with one another.

Shtetl Story Unit: In Garry's Grade 3-4 room, the parents are taking a turn at visiting the class to tell a shtetl story. Through hearing and telling shtetl tales, our families explore the humanistic Jewish values that were the foundation of the interpersonal relationships and system of social ethics that existed in the shtetl. Each week, the children and parents participate in a discussion on the values they learned from the story and in related activities. So far, the class has read *Zishe the Strongman*, *Ziggy's Big Idea*, *They Boy Who Stuck Out His Tongue*, *It Could Always Be Worse* and *Bone Button Borscht*. We hope that these stories will connect our families to the wisdom (and the fun) in our Yiddish folklore from the Shtetl and that the values learned will, by extension, create positive effects in their lives!



Oraynu's Teen Story: This is a story that I like to tell. Six (or sometimes eight) awesome teens show up on Sunday mornings at school. That school is Oraynu! They get up early and help out the staff, students and community at large. And now, six of them—Lasha, Jennie, Sarah, Kiern, Matthew and Noah—are going to Conclave together in Boston. They will be led by their chaperone, Shira. The HuJews Conclave is an annual North American teen and college conference sponsored by the Society for Humanistic Judaism. At Conclave, they will connect with their peers and engage in thought-provoking discussions, fun-filled workshops, rewarding community service activity, and much more. I can't wait to hear their Conclave stories when they return!

Come join us for another interactive cultural story—*It Happened in Shushan!*— at Purim on March 3rd at Borochoy.

See you at the school!

Steve

UPCOMING EVENTS AT ORAYNU CHILDREN'S SCHOOL

- Friday, March 1 – Sunday, March 3: Teen Conclave. Boston, MA. Teens grade 8 to 12
- Sunday, March 3: Purim Festival. Borochoy Centre, Social Hall, 272 Codsell Avenue (Allen Road and Sheppard). 10:00 am–12:30 pm. See p. 3 for details.
- Sunday, March 31: Grade 6 Intro to Bnai Mitzvah Meeting. Staff Room. 10:00 am – 12:30 pm.
- Sunday, March 31: Passover Food Drive Field Trip. Grades 5, 6 and 7. National Council of Jewish Women Council House. 1:00–2:00 pm.
- **Sunday, April 7: School Open House. 10:15 am-12:30 pm. Staff room. Invite a friend!**
- Sunday, April 14: Passover Family Seder. 4:45 pm. Borochoy Centre, Social Hall. See p. 4.
- Sunday, April 28: Yom Hashoah Remembrance Ceremony. For upper grades. 12:00-12:30 pm. Rm. 210.
- Sunday, May 5: Last day of school *Israel Field Day*. (All grades). This event includes a *Yom Ha'atzmaut Assembly* (students only). Room 103. 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Early dismissal.

REMEMBERING AMOZ OZ

Amos Oz, Israeli writer, novelist, journalist, and intellectual, died on December 28th at the age of 79. In a Jan. 7 article in the online Jerusalem Post, he was characterized by author Yarin Raban as “presenting a “bold and positive secular Jewish stance that serves as a beacon for Jews all over the world. Amos Oz was not only a literary giant, he was also an exemplary secular Jew.” Here are a couple of his quotes:



“I see myself as one of the legitimate heirs (of Jewish tradition), not as a stepchild, not as a rebellious son, and not as a bastard – but as an heir. And the implication of my status as an heir will certainly shock you; it implies that I am free to decide what part of this great estate will be in my living room and what will be stored in the basement. Of course, future generations have the full right to reorganize and furnish their lives as they wish. And I also have the right to ‘import’ from the outside and blend into my inheritance what I choose... this is the pluralism that I spoke earlier in its praise.” (From *In the Land of Israel*, 1982)

“It is not stones that interest us, not tribalism or chromosomes. Anyone who wants to trace the Jewish continuity and affirm its existence need not be an archaeologist or an anthropologist or a geneticist. There is no need to be an observant Jew. Not even a Jew at all... It is enough that a person be a reader.” (From *Jews and Words*, 2012; co-written with daughter Fania Oz-Salzberger)

(Editor's Note: I first learned about Amos Oz about 12 years ago when researching material with Barry Olshen and Lisa Wright for Oraynu's “Roots and Branches” humanist haggadah. His description of the moment that the resolution declaring statehood for Israel was announced, as written in his book *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, is one of the most powerful moments in our seder. Attendees often tear up when it is read, and it is NOT from the horseradish!)

Purim is a holiday of fun and merriment. This year it's on March 21st. Enjoy this tongue-in-cheek tale, which you must say aloud in order to get its "pun-ny" take. Thanks to Eva Goldfinger for submitting it. We don't know its origin or how old it is, but it appears on numerous websites.

THE WORLD FAMOUS STORY OF PURIM

The story of Purim is an international tale.

King Achashverosh was Finnish with his disobedient wife Vashti. "You Congo now!" he ordered her. After she had Ghana way, the king's messengers went Roman the land to find a new queen. And India end, the beautiful Esther won the crown.

Meanwhile, Mordechai sat outside the palace, where the Chile Haman would Czech up on him daily. "I Haiti you because you refuse to bow to me!" Haman scolded Mordechai. "USA very stubborn man. You Jews are such Bahamas! If you keep this up, Denmark my words! I will have all your people killed! Just Kuwait and see, you Turkey! "

Mordechai went into mourning and tore his clothes, a custom known as Korea. He urged Esther to plead with the king. The Jews fasted for three days and grew very Hungary. Esther approached the king and asked, "Kenya Belize come to a banquet I've prepared for you and Haman?" At the feast, she invited her guests to a second banquet to eat Samoa.

The king asked, "Esther, why Jamaica big meal like this? Just tell me what you want. Until half of my United Kingdom will I give you." Esther replied, "Spain full for me to say this, but Haman is Russian to kill my people." Haman's loud Wales could be heard as he carried Honduras this scene.

"Oman!" Haman cried bitterly. "Iraq my brains in an effort to destroy the Jews. But that sneaky Mordechai - Egypt me!" Haman and his ten sons were hanged and went immediately to the Netherlands. And to Sweden the deal, the Jews were allowed to Polish off the rest of their foes as well. "You lost your enemies and Uganda friend," the king smiled. And that is why the Purim story Israeli a miracle. God decided to China light on His chosen people.

So now, let's celebrate! Forget all your Syria's business and just be happy! Serb up some wine and Taiwan on! Happy Purim!!!

THE BOOK CORNER

Book Corner is a place to suggest books Oraynunikis may enjoy. Send your suggestions to Rabbi Denise for inclusion in the next Shofar: rabbidenise@oraynu.org/



This month's suggestion comes from Michael Elkin:

"God is in the Crowd – Twenty-first Century Judaism"

Tal Keinan – Penguin Random House Canada – 2018

Tal Keinan questions whether we, as Jews, will continue to exist in the future, and if it even matters. He discusses a number of items which should concern us all. Will the increasing secularization and intermarriage reduce the number of Jews so that we lose our collective strength? Will the increasing emigration from Israel of secular Jews, coupled with the increasing strength and numbers of the Orthodox Jews, result in a weakening of Israel from which there will be no recovery? Keinan takes the reader on a riveting adventure, weaving between past, present and future, and fusing narrative with theory to demonstrate Judaism's value to humanity and chart its path into the future.

"I highly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in and search for meaning and identity as a secular Jew." - Phillippe Weissberg on amazon.com/

SHJ's 50th ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND - Apr. 26-28



Join Rabbis Denise and Eva along with members across the Humanistic Jewish movement in celebrating 50 years of the Society for Humanistic Judaism! There is a fantastic schedule of programs planned with inspiring speakers. Join us in Farmington Hills MI at the Birmingham Temple — where Rabbi Sherwin Wine got it all started in 1969!

For info, go to: <https://shj.flywheelsites.com/conference/>

Grade 7s canvas for Out of the Cold

The Grade 7s complete at least six tzedakah projects each year. On February 3rd, they canvassed for funds for Out of the Cold (OOTC) at Loblaws at Yonge St. and Yonge Blvd. Out of the Cold serves warm meals and provides shelter for people experiencing homelessness. I am happy to report that they succeeded in raising a total of \$828. On February 10th, they continued their worthwhile fundraising activity canvassing in front of No Frills at Bathurst and Sheppard. They added another \$277 dollars to the total. The grand total for the project was \$1105! This wonderful sum has been used to purchase Tim Horton's and McDonald's gift cards and shoes from Value Village for the OOTC guests. We thank parent organizers Nicki, Tracy and Nancy, the management of the stores, their generous clientele and all the Grade 7 students, their parents and siblings for their enthusiastic efforts!

Thanks to dad Marc Gordon for the photos.



Celebrate Passover with Oraynu's own Haggadah!

ROOTS AND BRANCHES: A Humanist Haggadah for Passover

By Sandi Horwitz, Barry Olshen and Lisa Wright

Oraynu's haggadah offers a unique way to celebrate this holiday of freedom as the ancient story is paralleled with modern exodus experiences, and told through moving prose, poetry and graphics.

50 pages; includes Hebrew text, transliteration and music

\$10/copy

To order: Contact Roby at 416-385-3910 or robby@oraynu.org

Rabbi Karen Levy asked me to share this powerful poem written by Yehudah Amichai (1924-2000) who is regarded as the greatest modern Israeli poet. An article on www.gojerusalem.com/ notes that he “spent the decades of his life observing and recounting the stories of Jerusalem with an eye far keener than any journalist. His Jerusalem springs fully realized from his verse, formed with tenderness, with awe, with skepticism and with a quietly slanted humor - a poetic creation, yet as familiar to anyone who has set foot in the city as sun-warmed Jerusalem stone.”

A Luxury

By YEHUDAH AMICHAH

My uncle is buried at Sheikh Badr, my other uncle
Is scattered in the Carpathians, my father is buried in Sanhedria,
My grandmother on the Mount of Olives, and all their forefathers
Are buried in a half-destroyed Jewish graveyard
Among the villages of Lower Franconia,
Near rivers and forests that are not Jerusalem.

Grandfather, Grandfather, who converted heavy-eyed cows
In his barn underneath the kitchen and got up at four in the morning.
I inherited this earliness from him. With a mouth
Bitter from nightmares, I go out to feed my bad dreams.

Grandfather, Grandfather, chief rabbi of my life,
Sell my pains the way you used to sell
Khametz on Passover eve: so that they stay in me and even go on hurting
But won't be mine. Won't belong to me.

So many tombstones are scattered in the past of my life,
Engraved names like the names of stations
Where the train doesn't stop any more.

How will I cover all the distances on my own routes,
How will I make connections among them all? I can't afford
To maintain such an expensive railway system. It's a luxury.

GRADE 1-2 TRIP TZEDAKAH OUTING

Here are some lovely photos from the Grade 1 and 2 Tu B'shevat trip to Kensington Place Retirement Residence. There were 25 seniors in attendance at the program. The kids were great, accompanied by teacher Denise Lawee and Mendy Bisk on guitar, and the seniors appreciated them. Thanks to teen volunteers Lasha, Sarah, Sharon and to Jennie for her fine photography.



CELEBRATING A HUMANISTIC PASSOVER

**This year
the first night
of Passover is
April 19th.**

Passover, which begins on the evening preceding the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month of Nissan, is the great spring celebration of the Jewish people. Passover began as a nature holiday, celebrating new life. In the priestly and rabbinic traditions, it became a commemoration of the biblical exodus and the escape from slavery in ancient Egypt. This familiar tale, contained in the traditional *Haggada*, is retold each year at the *seder*, the Passover celebration.

Humanistic Jews view the biblical Exodus story as one of the most powerful myths of the Jewish people, a tale that relates the courage and determination of a people fleeing slavery for freedom. Humanistic Jews question the traditional explanations of Pesach. There is no evidence that the Exodus occurred or that the Hebrew people were in Egypt in the numbers described.

So what is meant by a Humanistic Passover celebration? For one thing, Humanistic Jews continue the tradition of telling the Exodus story, but they accept that it is a story, not history. A secular Passover celebration emphasizes the themes of human freedom and dignity, the power of human beings to change their destiny, and the power of hope. Humanistic Jews recognize the power and value of many episodes in Jewish history, not only ancient times. Events of the twentieth century record the courage of millions of Jews who left the land of their birth, escape persecution and seek freedom in Palestine and the land of Israel. Passover recognizes the struggles of millions of people to overcome oppression to achieve freedom and equality. The immigration from Eastern Europe to America, perhaps the largest Jewish Exodus ever, is a powerful part of a Humanistic Passover. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising against the Nazis in 1943 began on the first night of Passover; including a commemoration of this struggle provides a meaningful true story of a people fight for dignity, using their own power to control their destinies. A Humanist Passover celebration is thus a celebration of human courage and human power, of the quest for human dignity and equality. This is what makes it one of the most meaningful and enduring Jewish holidays today.

Seder literally means "order," as in the "order of events" at the Passover dinner. Most celebrations reflect the ancient and traditional celebration of the holiday and include new meanings for today. Humanistic Jews add modern stories of human struggles and connect these with current issues and concerns. To the listing of the 10 ancient plagues, a cultural Seder might add modern plagues that we are battling today. The ancient tale becomes the non-theistic story of a people's quest for freedom, providing a symbol for later struggles for freedom. To the symbols on the traditional Seder plate (haroset, bitter herbs, roasted egg, parsley, lamb shankbone), the Humanist Jewish seder plate might include two other symbols: an orange, representing the historical marginalization of those in the lesbian and homosexual communities (it may also suggest the fruitfulness for all Jews who contribute to Judaism) and a potato, recognizing the suffering and starvation of those in concentration camps during the Holocaust. Some Humanistic Jews add a cup of water for Miriam next to the cup of wine for Elijah, again symbolizing the role of women within the history of the Jewish people.

The retelling of our modern struggles for freedom from oppression contribute to make Passover a more meaningful and powerful community celebration for Humanistic Jews.

For more Oraynu news and conversation, log onto our Facebook page. FB is a great place to connect with fellow members, share ideas, and stay up-to-date on events. We'll be posting thoughts frequently and hope you chime in with opinions and relevant links of your own. Please 'like' the page, share it with friends and keep it lively.



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OFFICE MANAGER/CONTACT US

ROBY SADLER roby@oraynu.org

416-385-3910

MAILING ADDRESS

156 Duncan Mill Rd., Suite 14

Toronto ON M3B 3N2

WEBSITE

www.oraynu.org

WHAT WE BELIEVE ...

- ◆ A Jew is someone who identifies with the history, culture, and fate of the Jewish people.
- ◆ Judaism encompasses the civilization created by the Jewish people. It includes art and music, folk culture, and the treasured masterpieces of our great writers and thinkers, from the Bible to the present.
- ◆ We have the power and responsibility to shape our own lives independent of supernatural authority.
- ◆ Our ethics and morality serve human needs. We participate in *tikkun olam* (building a better world) for all people.
- ◆ We strive to express our Jewishness in a manner consistent with our beliefs.
- ◆ We stand in solidarity with the State of Israel and with Jewish communities in Toronto and around the world.
- ◆ The freedom and dignity of the Jewish people must go hand in hand with the freedom and dignity of all people.
- ◆ We warmly welcome into our community all those who share our values and who are connected to the Jewish people, whether by birth, adopted identity or by family relationship.

ORAYNU TRIBUTE DONATIONS/CARDS

Members and friends can choose to honour a person or an event (memorial, birth, birthday, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage, anniversary, achievement, etc.) by making a tax-receiptable donation of \$18 or more to Oraynu. An **Oraynu Tribute Card** will be sent to the person or family of the honouree and the donation will be also recognized in *The Shofar*.

To arrange this, please contact Roby at:

416-385-3910 | roby@oraynu.org

PASTORAL AND EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Jewish Guidance is a service that many of our members expect from their congregational leaders. Oraynu provides part-time services of:

- Steve Shabes for guidance about Jewish education for children and youth
- Rabbi Eva Goldfinger, for guidance regarding life cycle transitions and conversion
- Rabbi Karen Levy, Rabbi Eva Goldfinger and Rabbi Denise HandlarSKI for pastoral guidance regarding intermarriage, Jewish practices, adult education and ethics

Guidance is offered, but not counseling or tutoring, which can be provided on a fee-for-service basis. **For referral to the appropriate person, contact Roby at: 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org/**

GET INVOLVED!

- Chesed Circle (Sunshine Committee) - Roby Sadler: roby@oraynu.org
- Fund Raising Oraynu (FRO) - Contact either Mark Brender: mbrender11@gmail.com OR Steve Shabes: stevenshaves@yahoo.ca
- Tikkun Olam Oraynu - Rabbi Denise: rabbidenise@oraynu.org
- New Member Welcome - Rabbi Denise: as above
- School Committee - Chair, Erin Winocur: ewinocur@rogers.com

THE SHOFAR is a bi-monthly publication of
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EDITOR: SANDI HORWITZ

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**Julia & Henry Koschitzky
Centre for Jewish Education**
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Check website
for updates:
oraynu.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sunday, March 3 at 10:00 am FAMILY PURIM FESTIVAL** (More info: p. 3)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre Social Hall, 272 Codsell Ave

- Sunday, March 3 at 5:00 pm** (p. 3)
SHOW YOUR HEART 2019 — “Teach-Ins, Tikkun Olam, Tov-Li”
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave

- Saturday, Mar. 9 at 8:00 pm FOUR QUARTERS OF JERUSALEM Concert** (See website)
Location: Jeanne Lamon Hall, Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. W.

- Thursday, Mar 21 at 7:00 pm ADULT EDUCATION with Rabbi Eva** (p. 3)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave

- Sunday, Mar. 31 at 10:15 am HUMANISTIC JUDAISM~WHAT, WHY HOW** (p. 4)
Location: St. Andrew’s Jr. High School, 131 Fenn Ave. (Bayview/York Mills)

- Tuesday, April 2 at 7:30 pm RESCHEDULED DATE: “The Puzzle of Mazel”** (p. 2)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave

- Sunday, April 7 at 10:15 am CHILDREN’S SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE** (p. 4)
Location: St. Andrew’s Jr. High School, 131 Fenn Ave. (Bayview/York Mills)

- Saturday, April 13 at 4:30 pm HAVDALAH AND ROSH CHODESH** (p. 4)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave

- Sunday, April 14 at 4:45 pm FAMILY/SCHOOL SEDER** (p. 4)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave

- Friday, April 19 at 6:00 pm ADULT/TEEN FIRST NIGHT SEDER** (p. 5)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave

- Friday-Sunday, April 26-28 SHJ@50 CELEBRATION WEEKEND** (p. 9)
Location: Birmingham Temple, Farmington Hills MI

- Sunday, April 28 at 12:30 pm “THE PERIOD PURSE” TZEDAKAH EVENT** (p. 5)
Location: St. Andrew’s Jr. High School, 131 Fenn Ave. (Bayview/York Mills)

- Friday May 10 at 7:30 pm ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY: State of the Union** (p. 5)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

For all events,
kindly RSVP
to Roby:
416-385-3910 or
roby@oraynu.org
*For potlucks,
indicate your
contribution and
number attending.*



LAST WORD: Topics for Dinner Table or Car Talks



Inject a little more Judaism into the life of your family. Here’s a suggestion from Rabbi Denise for a topic of conversation for your next dinner party, around your family table, or in the car on the way to Sunday school.

This issue’s topic is:

We are in the month of Adar, which is meant to be a joyful month. This is the month of the playful holiday of Purim. And is also known as a “pregnant” month in a leap year (this is one of them!) when we experience a double Adar. That’s right, we repeat the whole month over again!

What can you do to bring more joy to your life this month?