



B'NAI SHALOM V'TIKVAH
NEWSLETTER

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August 2019 Edition

Welcome to the August 2019 Edition of our Newsletter! In this edition:

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Messages from the President – Ron King

B'nai Shalom v'Tikvah – Being Mature

As I documented in my speech “ B'nai Shalom v'Tikvah – A Holey People “ our congregation has come a long way from the days when Joanie Gertler and Harley Saltzman “ led us to the promised land “ and laid the foundation for this Reform Jewish community. While that speech took a slightly tongue in cheek approach to the history of BSVT; as we begin year twenty-six I would like to a moment to explore what BSVT is about today.

Being mature; at least in part; is being able to have greater breadth in viewing your role / responsibilities. B'nai Shalom v'Tikvah is no longer the congregation that hopes to provide a Hebrew school for your children, a place to come and worship in a liberal Jewish environment and an organization that provides for your life cycle needs. BSVT has accomplished that! In my view, being mature, means taking an important place in your community as well.

You may have noticed recently that the population in the Durham Region is about to explode. Development is everywhere! Your Board of Directors has supported our congregation's community involvement for many years. Our congregation has been committed to work with other faith groups in spreading fellowship and understanding. This year, with the partnership of the Durham District School Board, we joined with the other Jewish congregations in Durham to celebrate Jewish Heritage Month. More community programs are in the planning stages for 2020,

We continue to be full partners with other GTA Reform Jewish congregations in addressing issues on the provincial, federal and international level. We are examining the possibility of travelling to Chicago in December of this year to attend the Union of Reform Judaism Biennial.

(Please see related article in this newsletter.)

Our Board of Directors realizes that we cannot achieve our goals without enlisting congregants to serve on positions of responsibility. We also realize that BSVT must continue to promote our congregation for the purpose of attracting new members while



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remaining responsive to the needs of our congregants. In other words being mature means opening our doors those who want to join and supporting those who have already taken their place in our congregation. Hopefully B'nai Shalom v'Tikvah looks mature to you. It certainly does to me.

Ron King
President

The URJ Biennial

I know there were a number of B'nai Shalom v'Tikvah congregants who can recall the Union of Reform Judaism Biennial that took place at the Toronto Convention Centre a few years ago. While I was not able to attend every day of that event; the days I did attend were memorable. Interesting workshops, moving worship opportunities, musical entertainment of all sorts and engaging speakers. I am hopeful that once again I will be able to attend this biennial for personal reasons and in my role as president of our congregation.

Biennial 2019 takes place in **Chicago from December 11 to 15, 2019. Information regarding registration can be found on the union's website –www.urj.org.** Information about speakers and programs is just now being finalized. As I receive further information I will endeavour to make it available to our congregants.

One area of concern for me is security. I have contacted the union and asked for detailed information about the security that will be provided. My contact was unable to answer all my questions, so I am on hold until I am satisfied that the security arrangements meet my criteria for insuring safety.

If you have any questions regarding the biennial you may contact me and I will do my very best to help. One thing I do know is that the biennial will be worth the time and effort.



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ARZA – The American Reform Zionist Association

When you receive your membership package and turn to the voluntary contribution page there will be an item – ARZA -The American Reform Zionist Association. This Reform Jewish association is the North American voice for progressive Judaism in Israel. Its work involves support of Reform Jewish congregations in their efforts to receive equal status with the Israeli government (as conferred on other Jewish congregations). ARZA also has been working to support women's groups and other liberal Jewish causes in Israel.

Membership this year is doubly important since there will be an international conference of Zionist organizations this year and the determination for voting delegates is directly proportional to the number of registered members of each organization. Some Reform Jewish congregations in Toronto will automatically be registering their congregants and charging each congregant a nominal registration fee. YOUR BOARD HAS VOTED TO MAKE THE MEMBERSHIP TOTALLY VOLUNTARY.

THE MEMBERSHIP FEE IS \$18 / PERSON. HOWEVER, YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS ENTIRELY YOUR CHOICE.





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Save the Date – Sunday, October 20th

The B'nai Shalom v'Tikvah Sukkot celebration will be taking on a multi-faith flavour in 5780.

The celebration will take place in the afternoon of **Sunday, October 20th at Heber Down Conservation Area in Whitby**. Details of time and program to follow in next month's newsletter.

BE SURE TO SAVE THE DATE!





Save the Date!

Sunday, October 27th - 2:30-4:30



Come visit the Textile Museum, Toronto
with BSVT for a private tour of
Tapestry of Spirit:
The Torah Stitch by Stitch Project.

This exhibit presents the ambitious and social project to cross stitch the first 5 books of the Bible as well as sections of the Scriptures and the Qur'an. 1500 volunteers of many faiths have participated to make this exhibit a reality. Please invite your friends and neighbours as this would appeal to any faith.

\$20 per person (a portion of this will support the new school curriculum)

For more info go to textilemuseum.ca or see the June Newsletter



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Fundraising – Beryl Apelbaum

**Be Sure You Have *Your* Calendar
for the Jewish Year Ahead!**

5780

Plan for the coming Jewish Year with ease and confidence with this year's edition of the 2019- 2020 Calendars - now available for purchase at the September 7th service.

Calendar prices:

1 for \$10

2 for \$15

3 for \$20

4 for \$25

5 for \$30 and \$5 each after that.

If you would like a calendar(s) and cannot come to the September 7th service, please contact Beryl at beryla@sympatico.ca or 416-893-0035.



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Recognitions Club – Paula Rudner

Dear friends,

Would you believe that August is almost half over? Unbelievable how quickly this summer is passing – before you know it, it will be over - children will be heading back to school, and we'll be heading into Yom Tov!

In this August Newsletter, we have September's birthdays and Yarzheits, but no anniversaries. I have not heard about **any** simchas, which will be included as they happen, with details provided by you. So please don't forget to let me know when you have one you'd like to share :)

If you would like to be recognized in future Newsletters, but have never submitted yours, your children's, grandchildren's, or great-grandchildren's information, please read the "Reminder" below for details.

Paula Rudner, Ad Hoc and Recognitions

Warmest Birthday Wishes to:

September 02: Ingrid Thompson

September 03: Bonnie-Jo Benaksas, youngest child of Bryna Rudner, and sister to Paula Rudner

September 14: Vivian Laiwint

September 18: Michael Chasler, a past BSVT president and member, now living in England who keeps in touch regularly

September 22: Arlene Shulman



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September 22: Joe Thompson, husband of Ingrid Thompson

September 26: Ellie Byrne Thompson, granddaughter of Ingrid and Joe Thompson

A very Happy Birthday to all of you!

Our thoughts are with you for your Yartzheit:

September 04: Gayle Kahn, on the Yartzheit of your husband, Henry Kahn
(Elul 21, 5775)

September 16: Beryl Apfelbaum, on the Yartzheit of your father, Julius Geniele
(Tishrei 6, 5760)

May their memories be for a blessing.

Reminder: If you are interested in joining our 'Recognitions Club', and allowing us to honour your immediate family's birthdays, anniversaries or Yartzheits in the monthly Newsletter, please email me at pmrudner@rogers.com. It's so easy to do! Just send me the names and dates* for yours, your children's, your grandchildren's or great-grandchildren's birthdays; yours and your spouse's names and the full date of your anniversary, and the same information for your children's or grandchildren's anniversaries; the name, relationship to you or your spouse, and the full Gregorian date of the person for whom you have Yartzheit (both the Gregorian or Hebrew date should be provided, but it's not a problem if the Hebrew date is unknown - we'll gladly convert it for you).

*There is no need to provide the year for birthdays unless you wish to - just the month and day will be used, but as noted, the year must be provided for anniversaries and Yartzheits.

Simchas, including births, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, university graduations, engagements or weddings, are limited to you (i.e. BSVT members), your children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren. Details for each specific simcha are as described in the email headed "**Recognizing your Simchas**" that was distributed on December 9, 2017. If you have



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a simcha, but you no longer have a copy of the December 9th email, nor do you recall the details needed for publication, please email me, and I will be very happy to provide them to you. Your simcha will be included in the month the simcha will be, so details need to be provided to me with sufficient time to include it.

Please remember that all names should be provided as how you would like them to appear in the Newsletter. It's our honour and pleasure to celebrate you and yours!





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Festivals Report – Joanie Gertler

Calling for Volunteers for High Holiday Services!

Shalom all!

I hope that you all had a great summer. It is that time of year again when the call goes out for volunteers to help out BSVT with jobs for the upcoming High Holidays.

I need **Torah readers** and to fill **Aliyahs** and **Honours** for:

Erev Rosh Hashanah- Sunday Sept 29th,

Rosh Hashanah-Day 1- Monday Sept 30th, and

Rosh Hashanah-Day 2-Tuesday Oct 1st.

Kol Nidre- Tuesday evening-Oct 8th, and

Yom Kippur Day- Wed- Oct 9th.

We will also need people to help clean up before and after our **Rosh Hashanah Kiddushes for Day 1 and 2.**

Please e-mail if you would like to help volunteer for anything. .

You can e-mail me at gerjoanie@sympatico.ca with your request.

Enjoy the rest of the summer but, please volunteer for one of these jobs as BSVT does need YOU!!!

Thanks, so much.

Joanie Gertler



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Always of Interest...

Article submitted by John Stocker

Seaside Dining

Sea foraging for plants that grow along the shore has become a growing- and delicious- trend in Israel

By Diana Kessler

Everybody knows you can go to the beach in Israel to swim, sunbathe, read a sandy newspaper, and build a sandcastle with your kids. Not many know, though, that you can find bushes of delicious plants right on the shore and pick them for your dinner. Lately, sea foraging for plant life along Israel's Mediterranean coast has become a practice that more people are becoming aware of, as part of the ever-growing locavore food movement.

Even though sea plants grow along the entire coast of Israel, most of the country's sea foraging is done along Israel's Northern Coastal Plains—between Netanya and Haifa. “You just have to know where to look,” expert forager Yatir Sade told me. Sade is the founder of [Shirat Hasade](#), an Israeli gathering and foraging organization that organizes food-collecting workshops and tours. One of his tours is dedicated to sea foraging, which results in bags full of delicious, mysterious, and very healthy plants most of us have never heard of. Most of them can be eaten raw, pickled, or cooked. Some grow only in certain months; others grow all year long.

Along Israel's shores you can find sea rocket/arugula, a leaf that packs a punch of bitterness and salinity and is rich in iron and vitamin C. [Crithmum](#), which is also known



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as rock samphire or sea fennel, can be found not only in the Mediterranean, but also on the coasts of Britain. The Mediterranean saltbush is known in Hebrew as *maluah*, meaning “salty.” Saltbush has been eaten since the Stone Age and the Mediterranean version was mentioned as food in the Bible and in the Mishna. It can easily be gathered in Israel since it grows both in drought and in saline soils. Its leaves retain salt, which gives it its special flavor. And there is the [ice plant](#), which is covered with glistening bladder cells or water vesicles that look like ice—hence the name. It is rich in protein and contains antioxidants that can lower cholesterol and may reduce allergy symptoms. “Plants that grow near the sea have to cope with an extremely complex and difficult environment,” Sade told me. “They have to cope with high radiation, high saltiness, extreme temperature changes between the night and day, strong winds, sea spray, and lots of sand. These plants need to adapt to these difficult conditions, which makes them very durable. Some of them even depend on a lot of sun and salt, and some of them also grow in the desert.”

When I asked if these plants are similar to seaweed, Sade seemed appalled. “No! They are nothing like seaweed!” he said. “Seaweed is algae. These are real plants with flowers and seeds. Some of them, like the ice plant, *Crithmum*, and [Salicornia](#), are succulents. The fact that these plants grow next to the sea affects their texture and taste. They are juicy, crispy, and salty. They are meaty because this lets them dilute the salt that is in the soil with a lot of water so that the salt doesn’t dry them out.”



Yatir Sade forages wild Crithmum (Photo: Dana Kessler)

Traditionally, Arabs from the area used to pick these plants and use them as food. Sade told me that nowadays, not many Arabs do so anymore because there aren't many Arab villages left along the Israeli seashore. Even though foraging certainly isn't part of the Jewish Israeli tradition, in recent years a [foraging trend](#) has [emerged](#), which is part of the country's [vegan](#), [ecological](#), and [locavore](#) movements. The "new foragers," as Sade calls them, aren't very familiar with the very specific seashore plant life, but he is trying to change that. In addition to conducting sea foraging tours, he is collaborating with restaurants whose chefs are fascinated by the greenery that grows on Israel's shore. One of the restaurants that incorporate coastal plants is [Helena](#) in the ancient port of Caesarea—a restaurant with a killer view of the sea. "While sea foraging might be a less familiar concept to contemporary diners, the connection between the plant life of our oceans and the final dishes we consume has been an integral part of the centuries-old history of cuisine in Caesarea," said chef Amos Sion.

An integral part of Helena's appeal is a constantly changing *dégustation* menu for two. Last winter and spring, for almost six months, it was dedicated to a sea foraging



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theme—and Sion plans to do another one in a few months. It included various dishes containing locally picked sea herbs, such as sea fish tartare with watermelon, pickled green almonds, fried saltbush leaves, saffron, aioli, and tobiko; scallops in browned butter, sea arugula, and green grapes; and linguini with mussels, *Crithmum*, capers, and a cherry tomato confit. Sion makes a special Caesar salad from the ice plant, since it reminds him of lettuce—only better. “It’s much more juicy than lettuce, it’s amazing—it has a salty juice that reminds me of oysters,” he said.

“This menu was born because I wanted to use herbs and plants that grow right under my nose. We foraged from the whole [kurkar ridge](#) near us,” Sion said, referring to Givat Olga (the coastal neighborhood of Hadera), moshavim like Mikhmoret and Beit Yanai, and the port of Caesarea. “Yatir brought me all the different edible wild plants that grow on the shore or on the rocks next to the sea. I simply tasted them and built a menu around them. He taught me how to forage and I started doing it myself, in the mornings, together with my daughter. We go out to forage every two or three days.”

Sion uses four to six different sea herbs in his sea foraging menu—depending on the day. “It is quite difficult building a menu around foraged greens since this is not something that you order and get a steady supply of,” he explained. “You depend on what you find.”

Sion built the menu using his own palate and imagination. “I know people ate these plants in the area for thousands of years. I know the Greeks eat them and the Arabs do, too, even here in Jisr az-Zarqa [an Israeli Arab town just north of Caesarea]. But I didn’t research what they prepare with them. I created my own dishes based on taste and texture. It’s a lot of fun to work with raw materials that you are not familiar with, especially since they are local.”

Sion heard that a lot of people who ate his sea foraging menu then went out to forage themselves. “It’s amazing—people text me all the time!” he said. “I get loads of pictures from people at the beach asking me: Is this that? It’s fun to forage but you need to know what you’re doing.” Apart from watching out for poisonous or just plain yucky plants, you



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also need to know which ones are considered endangered and therefore illegal to pick, such as Mediterranean [wild thyme](#).

Like Sion, I, too, decided to learn from the master. My sea foraging tour with Sade took place on a beach near Caesarea on a smoldering hot but beautiful July morning. Equipped with a pocketknife and a big bag, Sade walked sprightly on the dunes barefoot, while I was careful not to get my sneakers wet and was constantly reapplying suntan lotion. We walked along the kurkar ridges and picked a variety of sea herbs, while Sade explained about each one of them.

Sade's tours end with a cookout that takes place in nature. Since our private tour finished at noon on one of the hottest days of the year, we held our cooking workshop at his home in Karkur. I got easy tasks like picking leaves from foraged stems or chopping onions while Sade prepared a gourmet feast out of the greens we gathered along the shore, together with fish and seafood we purchased in the Arab town of Fureidis. Among other delicacies, he made blue spotted seabream tartar with *Salicornia* and other leaves, capers, raspberries, and the juice of unripe grapes he picked on his way home. Sade raved about the fact that the *Salicornia*, which we picked abundantly on the shore, is so popular these days that people started growing it and exporting it to restaurants in France. Chefs call it sea asparagus—even though just its looks are reminiscent of asparagus, not its taste. The *Crithmum* went into the sauce Sade made for the shrimp that also contained burnt tomatoes and ouzo and came straight from a classic Greek recipe. The other leaves made salads, mixed with fruit and vegetables. Sade is planning a collaboration with the new Tel Aviv restaurant Sachki Sachki. The highly regarded Italian restaurant Roberta Vinci in Pardes Hana-Karkur is also using sea foraged herbs that Sade picks for them. "We made a salad out of saltbush and *Crithmum* with strawberries, pickled onion, lemon, and olive oil. And I want to make vinaigrette sauce out of the *Crithmum* and serve it with raw fish," Roberta Vinci's chef Ido Feiner told me.



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Noa Levi, the chef of Casino San Remo—a restaurant/café/bar, and not really a casino—located in Jaffa, has started a tradition of serving a special foraging meal four times a year, one for each season. At the end of August, she plans a sea foraging meal, mixing foraged herbs from the seashore together with fish dishes. “Once I started learning about foraging in general, and specifically sea foraging, it opened my mind,” she told me. “Learning that there is food all around you, which has subtle tastes and many nuances, was fascinating to me.”

Like many others, Levi, too, fell in love with the ice plant. “It won’t be part of our sea foraging meal since its season is now over, but I totally fell in love with it. It’s a crazy plant!” she said. “Its leaves are very meaty with lots of juice inside and they are covered with something that looks like little crystals that are really crunchy. I fry them in tempura, which makes them even more crunchy. This plant is an amazing revelation!”

Article Submitted by Paula Rudner

Rome and Jerusalem: A Farewell Column

At age 16, I marked in the book "A Nation that Lives Alone" the words "Something historic has happened - there is a change." Now, as I leave for Rome, I will take with me the prisoners of Judea and Jerusalem, the ancient Jewish communities of Italy, and also my late parents.

by Dror Eydar

<https://www.israelhayom.com/2019/06/28/rome-and-jerusalem-a-farewell-column/>



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The summer of 1982 was steamy and hot. At the end of the Hebrew month of Sivan the IDF had already flooded into Lebanon and was fighting on the Beirut-Damascus road. In Israel, the internal war over the goals of the war and whether or not it was justified still hadn't started. For us, the 9th graders at Kiryat Yaakov Herzog, the junior high school attached to Midreshiyat Noam – including myself – were planning graduation festivities. Three years had passed since I had left my childhood cocoon for a place where I didn't know anybody. It was a special school, for elite religious Zionist students, with English discipline and a Spartan attitude. Some of the teachers were also university professors. We had three phys red instructors: one for ball games, one for track and field, and one for gym training, which - by the way - included written exams. Parent-teacher meetings were presented as a day of judgment, accompanied by apocalyptic descriptions of the sorrow we would cause our parents if we failed to meet our classroom and educational goals.

I arrived, curious, imagining the special boarding schools I had read about in the English children's literature I swallowed up. My innocent idealism broke down as I missed home, where almost nothing was demanded of me. Day after day, we were handed a page of Talmud to pore over, with commentaries in the tradition of the great yeshivas. I was spitting blood by the time I understood the Talmudic-style letters, sentences, and style, assets that have stayed with me all my life. I always had a hard time with frameworks. We were destined for the famous Midreshiyat Noam in Pardes Hanna, a place that stayed burned in the soul of everyone who passed through it more than any other educational institute or place of work, or even their army service. Meet any Midreshiyat Noam graduate anywhere, and tell him you went there, too, and immediately doors will open, even the doors of people's souls.

In the meantime, our graduation celebrations were dialed back out of respect for the war's fallen soldiers. We marked the end of junior high with a modest event. The administration surprised me. In my first two years, I had been labeled a troublemaker and was occasionally suspended. Now, at the end of my third year, they found it hard to



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say goodbye, and presented me with an award for excellence: a book inscribed with wishes for my future success.

The book was "A Nation that Lives Alone" by Yaakov Herzog, whom my school was named after. Herzog was born in Dublin, Ireland, the son of Rabbi Yitzhak Herzog, who would become the second chief rabbi of Israel. As the son of a great Torah scholar, he studied with one of the elder rabbis and was ordained as a rabbi and a dayan [a rabbinical court judge]. After that, he completed a doctorate in international law in Canada. He became a diplomat, a diplomatic advisor to David Ben-Gurion, and Israel's ambassador to Canada. But more than anything else, he was a shining spokesman for the state of Israel and the Jewish people. He was known for a debate he held with British historian Professor Arnold Toynbee, who declared that the Jewish people had no right to claim the Land of Israel because it was nothing more than a historic "fossil." He also claimed that in the War of Independence, the Jews had done things to the Arabs that were similar to what the Nazis had done to them during World War II. Herzog tore Toynbee's claims apart. Later, Toynbee would admit that he had misunderstood the Jewish people.

The first 40 pages of Herzog's book lay out the debate, and I read it hungrily. Later on came Herzog's important speeches in which he wonderfully brought together the various worlds in which he was equally at home: Judaism, the Bible, Jewish law and commentaries, western literature, history, law, philosophy, and more. I read, astonished and uplifted, and said to myself, I want to do the same things one day. When I page through the book now, notes I made as a youth on sections that I learned almost by heart, leap off the page.

When you flip through the book at random, it almost always falls open to page 62. Today, I see that as a sign of things to come. In a lecture marking Israel's 20th anniversary, Herzog spoke about four areas of dialogue between us and the world, that began following Israel's great victory in the 1967 Six-Day War and the return to Jerusalem: Israel and the Arab world; Jerusalem and Rome; Israel and the diplomats of



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the world; and our new dialogue with the rest of the Jewish world. On the specific page I mentioned, Herzog discusses dialogue between Jerusalem and Rome.

Shortly after the Six-Day War, Herzog travelled to Rome. He had been in charge of the matter of Jerusalem and religious affairs since the state was founded. In Israel's early years, the Vatican created a storm in the Catholic world; UN resolutions were passed against Israel, and they didn't want the seat of government to be moved to Jerusalem. Herzog recalls that he came to Rome in September 1948, a few months after the state was founded. They approached the Vatican's internal affairs minister, who said, "Gentlemen, I hear that you arrived from Palestina three days ago." Herzog replied, "We came from Israel three days ago." The words stuck in his throat - he was struck dumb when he realized what he had said - "that after 2,000 years we were the first ones who had the privilege of entering that world fortress and saying, gentlemen, something historic has happened, there is a change." Even then, as a kid not yet 16 years old, I marked that passage with excitement.

Many years later, in March of 2015, I had the privilege of being present in the US Congress when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke against the international nuclear agreement with Iran. One section of the glorious speech moved me more than anything else, to the point where I got goose bumps. In the section for honored dignitaries sat author Elie Wiesel. "I wish I could promise you, Elie, that the lessons of history have been learned," Netanyahu said, looking at Wiesel. "I can only urge the leaders of the world not to repeat the mistakes of the past. Not to sacrifice the future for the present; not to ignore aggression in the hopes of gaining an illusory peace." Then he looked at the audience - senators and congress people from the strongest superpower in the world - and said, "But I can guarantee you this, the days when the Jewish people remained passive in the face of genocidal enemies, those days are over. We are no longer scattered among the nations, powerless to defend ourselves. We restored our sovereignty in our ancient home. And the soldiers who defend our home have boundless courage. For the first time in 100 generations, we, the Jewish people, can



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defend ourselves. This is why as prime minister of Israel, I can promise you one more thing: Even if Israel has to stand alone, Israel will stand!"

A few hours later, I was sitting in a café in Washington, trying to calm down and understand why I was so excited. It seemed to me that I had Herzog in mind while I was listening to the speech in Congress. In my imagination I saw the prime minister of the Jewish state arriving in Rome in our time, 2,000 years late, and announcing to the world: Am Yisrael Chai! (The Jewish people live!)

Now I am heading for Rome to represent the same people that rose from the ashes time after time, even after the collapse of that empire. As I leave for Rome, I will take the memory of the prisoners of Judea and Jerusalem, who were humiliated in the Roman victory parades, which brought back the pillaged holy objects of the Temple as the citizens of the empire mocked. The Emperor Vespasian marched at the head of the procession, followed by his son Titus, the destroyer of Jerusalem. The onlookers included Jews whose hearts grieved at the offense to their people, their homeland, and their religion. The Italian Jewish community and particularly the Roman community are one of the oldest in the Jewish world, dating back to the first century BCE, around the same time when Rome entered Judea and Jerusalem with its army under the commander Pompey. The Roman general took advantage of the dispute between brothers Judah Aristobulus and Yohanan Horkonos over the kingdom, and our people began to lose their independence. Since then and through to today, there has been a Jewish presence in the boot-shaped land, with its own ancient customs, traditions, and versions of prayer that are different from those of other Jewish communities.

I am a descendant of the priests of the First Temple. After the destruction of the first temple (586 BCE), my ancestors decided to stay in exile in Babylon and Persia and not answer the call of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, who went back some 70 years later to the Land of Israel to build Jerusalem and the Second Temple. The Jewish elite was well-integrated in the ruling systems of Babylon and Persia, and left it to the unsophisticated folks to change history. When the state of Israel was established, 2,500



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years later, my late parents decided to cut the bonds of exile and make aliyah to the young state. My father would say that the Messiah, for whom our people had waited for so many years, was before our eyes in the form of our own new independent state. When they made aliyah, they spent 10 years in an immigrant transfer camp, and what were those camps, if not refugee camps? But unlike our neighbors, my parents didn't complain, and like the rest of our brothers and sisters, busied themselves starting a family and building a country out of the ruins and making it bloom. In their modest way, they joined the pioneers of the Petach Tikva, "Emma hamoshavot" (the mother of all colonies), who created a gate of hope (= Petach Tikva in Hebrew) in our people's national consciousness as early as 1878. I will carry them with me to Rome, as well.

Ancient Rome no longer exists, only ruins of it. After it, Italy rose, a vibrant and exciting nation. The history of Italy's unification in the 19th century is similar in a number of aspects to the history of our national resurrection in the 20th century. Israelis (and Jews in general) like the Italian people. Language, culture, literature, philosophy, religions, music, sculpture, architecture, history, sport, cars and motorcycles, economy, trade, fashion, military and diplomatic cooperation, space, innovation, good food, and plenty of other areas that I've forgotten. Look around – you'll certainly find something Italian in your lives. Italy is also an important partner in Europe and in the EU, and as we see day after day, activity on the old continent on behalf of our people and our country is needed now more than ever. I will do everything I can to justify the trust that has been placed in me.

I don't know how to end 12 years of writing for this paper, and another decade and half of published writing before that. It is difficult for me to stop, and what stopping means is hard for my soul and my heart and my mind. In the past few years, I tended to stay up Wednesday nights, wandering around the quiet rooms of my home and bringing a new column to light at dawn. Every week, I was asked to reinvent myself, even in moments of personal sorrow and grief - to put my feelings aside and write about the matter of the day or the period or rise above them. "This is the poem/ from my mind I carried it, until it



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grew / The pacing of sleepless nights / From the table to the window, from wall to wall / From picture and eyes bleary from lack of sleep." That is how poet Natan Alterman described his work. That is how I thought about mine.

It wasn't for myself or for my love of writing or the joy of debate that I wrote for so many years, even if these were in my mind – it was mostly for the sake of my people and my homeland and my heritage. I argued with ideological and political opponents as a public emissary, speaking in the name of the masses who did not always take the time to frame their words carefully. I did it for them. Often I wonder, do the rival speakers who insult public officials not understand that by doing so, they were insulting the public who voted for those leaders?

And who were the people in whose name I wanted to speak? Mostly the "second Israel," which included my blessed parents. During my childhood and youth and adulthood I searched for a scrap of a column that would move me and express my opinions. Eagerly, I would look at page after page of the newspapers, and I found mostly people who were speaking against me and against my beliefs. Only on the fringes of the newspaper would I occasionally find a writer or two whose columns had been sidelined. But in contrast, all around me - my family, my neighborhood, my street, and the schools I went to - they spoke differently. Journalism was supposed to reflect the range of voices among the public, but it spoke in only one voice. It was as if we were dumb. This, at least, was one of my formative experiences. That is why I began writing for the public.

In my columns, I tried to not only present debate and sharpen opinions, but also encourage and recognize what is good. We are a people who survived death who have the privilege our ancestors were denied for centuries: of returning to Zion and founding the Third Kingdom of Israel, which is the state of Israel. I couldn't sit by as our top leaders and writers poured boiling oil on the people who refused to follow their advice and predicted tough scenarios and a black future. Only a moment ago we rose from the ashes, 1,813 years after we lost our independence and our sovereignty. Why was it so



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urgent for them to scare people about how much evil and bitterness awaits us and how we aren't aware of how bad things are for us right now? From the dawn of our existence, this people has been accustomed to prophets. And look at how all our prophets knew to include words of comfort in their predictions, how to steady trembling knees, and point out the good and tell the people that the time of our redemption had arrived. A prophet whose prophecy is nothing but gloom and doom is singled out as a false one. Let us learn from the true prophets.

And another important idea guided my writing, something our sages called "the opposite is true." It's true that the conservative-right-wing-traditional camp comprises a majority of Israeli society, but the main power centers where elections aren't held – academia, the legal system, culture, and the media – are still in the grip and under the control of the old elite, which refuses to move aside and make room (not give up its place!). There has been a change in the media, due in a great part to the influential presence of Israel Hayom and social media. Other news outlets are now bringing more journalists and reporters on board who present the voice that has been silenced and excluded for years.

And that voice is the voice of the Land of Israel, the voice of Jewish tradition and the Torah, the voice of the "second Israel," the voice of a free economy, standing up for our national rights, our right to self-defense against our enemies even if that means a pre-emptive strike, the voice of the nascent conservative elite, which is increasingly taking its place at the helm of the Zionist ship, and not only in government, but also in intellectual spheres, in the legal system, in culture, and in society.

Therefore, I saw myself deeply obligated to representing the other side of the public debate, even if at times I was booed and insulted and slandered for it. I took those insults and wore them like medals of honor. I tried to explain and back up my claims as deeply as newspaper writing allows. I admit that I was not given an opportunity for fruitful dialogue with ideological opponents. Many good people among them read me regularly and even responded to me personally, but the vast majority - even those who



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would carry on a dialogue behind the scenes – opted not to do it publicly. You can guess why.

And now the time has come to say goodbye. Our sages taught us that it is not incumbent upon us to finish the task, but neither we are free to absolve ourselves from it (tractate Avot 2:16). I never thought that I have a grasp of the complete truth, but I had a hang of it to the best of my understanding. I am thankful for the privilege I had of serving my people on the battlefield of intellect and writing. Now I am about to take on the diplomatic battlefield. I will try to be a faithful emissary for our people, our country, and our ancient heritage. A new chapter in my life is beginning, a chapter that is one small page in our people's ancient book of life. "There is no end to this upward path / the ends of paths are full only of longing." (Alterman, who else?)

My thanks to all the readers throughout the years. A small request: please send me your responses to this email address: Dror.Eydar.Bye@gmail.com. I'll be very happy to receive them. Thank you to everyone I met and worked with, or who touched me or my soul or my mind. We'll meet along the way, and see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of our lives!



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Article submitted by Cliff Frumkin

What a beautiful article about Israel, and written by an incredible Italian with a real backbone in journalism! Why Israel is the World's Best Nation. The writer, an Italian journalist with Il Foglio, writes twice weekly.

Cliff

Why Israel is the World's Best Nation

Giulio Meotti

With all the accusations hurled at us, it is good to see a "righteous Gentile" who appreciates the uniqueness of Israel in the family of nations.

I don't know another nation on earth which since its founding, than seventy years ago, had to sacrifice 23,000 soldiers.

I don't know another nation on earth without recognized borders.

I don't know another nation on earth whose population lives under a perpetual emotional strain.

I don't know another nation on earth threatened to be wiped off the map.

I don't know another nation on earth so threatened by boycotts all over the world.

I don't know another nation on earth where winners tend to lose wars.

I don't know another nation on earth which provides its own enemy with water, electricity, food, weapons, and medical treatment.

I don't know another nation on earth where guests on official visits utter disrespectful and offensive words.

But I also don't know another nation on earth which has recorded so many miracles.

Imagine a helpless, naked Jew at the gas ovens facing a Nazi official, who thinks he will



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get rid of the "Jewish cancer", get rid of this unique phenomenon of 2,000 years.
Could that helpless, naked Jew imagine that in 60 years other Jews will be flying F-16's in the skies over Israel?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel's population today would be nine times that of 1948, the year of the state's creation?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel is much happier than all the European countries?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel has the highest production of scientific publications per capita in the world?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel has the highest worldwide publication of new books?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel is the only nation which began the XXI century with a net gain in the number of trees?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel has with largest number of chess grandmasters per capita of any city in the world?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel is the nation whose academics produce more scientific papers per capita than anywhere else in the world?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel is the nation with the highest ratio of university degrees to the population in the world?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel is the country which, in proportion to its population, with the largest number of startup companies in the world?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel is the country with the highest percentage in the world of home computers per capita?

Could that helpless Jew imagine that Israel is the nation with the largest immigrant-absorbing model on earth?

Unfortunately, you will not find Israel's goodness and superiority in the media (also Israeli), because it doesn't fit in with the stereotype of the colonialist Zionist occupier. In the world's consciousness, the word "Israel" must be equated with fear.



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Israel just came out of another war against terrorists whose value is less than that of animals. Do you know of any animal species sheltering behind its own children? But the Jewish State, despite its media, its cynical politicians, establishment, once again showed the world it is the best humanity has to offer.

This hope is impressed in the faces of Israel's fallen soldiers, its wounded and injured soldiers. In those faces there is joy de vivre, not sadness or hatred.

Terrorists and their Western appeasers want to destroy Israel because it is a light unto the nations.





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6 Ways to Prepare for the High Holidays

As summer winds down and the back-to-school season approaches, so, too, do the High Holidays of [Rosh HaShanah](#) and [Yom Kippur](#), which begin the Jewish New Year with a 10-day period of prayer, self-reflection, and repentance. Our tradition provides us with several reminders of the upcoming Days of Awe (“Yamim Nora-im” in Hebrew), as well as ways we can prepare during [Elul, the Hebrew month that precedes them](#).

1. Make time for spiritual self-reflection and study.

Elul customarily is a time to engage in spiritual self-reflection and evaluation. As we face our transgressions and strive to be better people in the coming year, it’s equally important to [focus on self-care](#) and our own spiritual nourishment. The Hebrew letters that comprise the word “Elul” – *aleph, lamed, vav, lamed* – are an acronym for “*Ani l’dodi v’dodi li*,” a verse from Song of Songs that means “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.” Most often interpreted as love poetry between two people, the phrase also reflects the love between God and the Jewish people, especially at this season, as we assess our actions and behaviors during the past year and hope for blessings in the coming year.

Elul can also be a time for study. Beginning in the 16th century, Jews began to prepare for the High Holidays by studying a midrashic text, *Maish Avraham Avinu* (“The Tale of Abraham our Patriarch”). Exploring the early life of Abraham, this midrash (interpretation of a biblical narrative or story) reflects on the themes of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. [A Faithful Heart](#) by Rabbi Benjamin Levy offers a translation and commentary on this text that takes readers on a journey of spiritual preparation.

[This Is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared: The Days of Awe as a Journey of Transformation](#), a book by Alan Lew, and [Jewels of Elul](#), a daily email that contains brief



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stories and anecdotes from a variety of sources, are other selections that may offer inspiration at this season. [Learn more about how you can observe the month of Elul.](#)

2. Involve children in holiday preparations.

The Days of Awe can be made more meaningful for the children in our lives if we take time to involve them in holiday preparations. For example, polishing silver, setting the table, and helping prepare special holiday foods all are great ways to engage children in preparing for the Days of Awe. Tina Wasserman's cookbook for kids, [Entrée to Judaism for Families](#), provides essential tools for helping children learn to cook with confidence, with clear, step-by-step instructions for every recipe and tips for adults to make the experience safe and rewarding.

Reading stories with young children is another way to help them get excited about the Jewish New Year. Many authors have written children's books for the High Holidays. [Sophie and the Shofar](#), for example, is a delightful tale about a dog named Farfel and a shofar that has gone missing.

3. Visit the cemetery.

[It is customary for Jews to visit the graves of friends and relatives](#) in the days prior to Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. We recall our loved ones in the *Yizkor* liturgy on Yom Kippur and visiting their graves during Elul often provides us with the opportunity to reflect on their lives and to feel a renewed sense of closeness and connection to them. Visiting the graves of loved ones also can add poignancy and perspective to the High Holidays.



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4. Plan a High Holiday menu.

For those who love to cook, Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur offer a time to make family favorites and try new recipes. Spending Elul thinking about and planning to prepare holiday recipes is a wonderful way to get ready for the New Year, a time during which we often host friends and family. Frequently, fond memories of Jewish holidays center on family gatherings and delicious meals.

In [Entrée to Judaism](#), [Tina Wasserman](#) offers an international array of recipes for Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, as well as a fascinating look at the traditions behind many of the foods we eat. [Find lots of other holiday recipes on ReformJudaism.org.](#)

5. Listen to the sounds of the High Holidays.

Customarily, the shofar (a ram's horn) is sounded daily during the month of Elul (except on [Shabbat](#)), both as a reminder that the shofar will be blown on Rosh HaShanah and as a wakeup call of sorts, reminding us of the upcoming High Holidays and urging us to begin our preparations. Watch this video to [learn how to blow the shofar](#). Also during Elul, we add Psalm 27 to our worship services. Beginning with the words, "Adonai is my light and my help; whom should I fear?", this psalm beseeches God to protect us from our enemies and urges us to put our faith in God.

Listening to the memorable [tunes of the Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur liturgy](#) can also help us reacquaint ourselves with the sounds of this time of year. Whether you listen to *Avinu Malkeinu* during a quiet time of the day, *Shiviti Adonai* on a walk, or *Al Cheit* on an iPod before bed, familiar melodies can both summon memories of long ago and help you look forward to the New Year.



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6. Attend Selichot services.

The month of Elul culminates with *Selichot* (which literally means “forgiveness”) services, when we gather in our congregations to recite special prayers of penitence that include beautiful Jewish religious poetry. [Find a congregation near you](#) for *Selichot* services.

Customarily, Jews recite *Selichot* beginning late at night on the Saturday before Rosh HaShanah and continue before dawn on the days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. (Depending on the calendar, congregations may observe *Selichot* in the hours before midnight on the Saturday night a week prior to Rosh HaShanah.) This moving service urges us to reflect on the year that is ending. With strains of the High Holiday melodies as a backdrop, we utter our first confession of the season, as well as *Sh'ma Koleinu*, asking God to hear our voices.

How will you prepare for the New Year?

Reprinted from ReformJudaism.com - <https://reformjudaism.org/preparing-high-holidays>





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**DON'T WORRY
BE JEWISH**

On the Lighter Side...





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Dates for BSVT services - July 2019-August 2019

Sat., Sept. 7, 2019 – 10:00 a.m.	Shabbat
Sat., Sept. 21, 2019 – 10:00 a.m.	Shabbat Lay Service
Sun., Sept. 29, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.	Erev Rosh Hashanah
Mon., Sept. 30, 2019 -10:00 a.m.	Rosh Hashanah – Day 1
Tues., Oct. 1, 2019 – 9:00 a.m. /10:00 a.m.	Tashlich / Rosh Hashanah –Day 2
Mon., Oct. 8, 2019 - 7:00 p.m.	Kol Nidre
Tues., Oct. 9, 2019 – 10:00 a.m.	Yom Kippur
Mon., Oct. 21, 2019 – 7:30 p.m.	Erev Simcha Torah
Sat., Nov. 9, 2019 – 10:00 a.m.	Shabbat

Kiddush/Onex Sponsors

If you would like to sponsor a Kiddush/Oleg, perhaps to mark a birthday, anniversary or other special event, please contact Beryl Oelbaum at beryla@sympatico.ca.

Notes:

Torah Study commences at 9:00 a.m., and Shabbat morning services commence at 10:00 a.m. Evening services commence at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Watch for ad hoc messages. All are welcome to attend Torah Study, but please notify Deborah Leek at healthydirections@yahoo.ca, if you plan to attend.



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The Art of Judaism



Rosh Hashanah – Romero Britto