



**From the
Beit Midrash of
Rav Julius**



**Not Having an Opinion
about Israel**

I recall my first trip to Israel very vividly. Although it was decades ago, I can reel off a day-by-day itinerary of everything we did on that two-week trip: every city or landmark we visited, every relative or friend that we met, and every event.

But what I recall most of all were the heated debates that we had about the

future of the Israel-Palestinian negotiations and agreements. All along, I felt that this was something that could be easily resolved, if only everybody would approach the topic with good faith and respect. Yet, by the time I got on the plane for the return, my humility finally kicked in, and I realized that this was not an easy problem, even with all the good faith and respect that the negotiators could bring to those discussions.

And when you get down to it, it seems the overriding issue is: How many non-Jewish Israelis can Israel suffer to have within its borders on its quest to maintain a Jewish state.

The original plan was the messianic pipe dream that only Jews would live in Israel. And yet, many of the leading Zionists in pre-State Palestine did favor a binational state that would be led by both Jews and Arabs, including Martin Buber, Judah Magnes and Hannah Arendt. As Hebrew University professor Dimitry Shumsky points out in his book *Beyond the Nation State: The Zionist Political Imagination from Pinsker to Ben-Gurion*, many of the mainstream Zionists did not envision a Jewish state but something closer to the binational state that many in the liberal Jewish world in America have been promoting.

But apparently believing in a binational state makes you an anti-Zionist today.

Rather than accepting that option, I went for the easy path of not being so interested. I would register any favorable or unfavorable news about Israel. But once the allotted time for focusing on the specifics of the event, so did my interest in the topic. At the same time, I started to move my interest in Israel and its

relationship with its Arab residents, generally down a peg, and then another peg, and then another. And with this new perspective, or as I label it a 'non-perspective,' I no longer get upset when I see instances of Jewish nationalism.

I do not think I am alone or in a tiny minority. For as long as I can remember, Israel had been a bipartisan issue in our country.

Continued On Next Page

For most of us, the Passover Seder is but a series of pleasant and private memories filled with a full table with family members and tales of fond remembrances.

For most of us, so many of those family participants are no longer with us. A sad truth but the reflections remain firmly embedded in our hearts and our minds. That is one good reason that our Beth Jacob community Seders have such meaning in today's life. At least we have an opportunity to be with others, not with the same family ties but with the ties of friendship and our association within synagogue life. It is not the same as before but it still provides a time to share and be together- and for that we are grateful.

And so, with the dedicated work of Arlene Dressler assisted by Alan Ruditzky and Rav Julius with additional assistance from Irene Schienberg, we conducted a well attended and (well fed) Seder experience -celebrating the first night of this holiday of freedom amidst the joy of a community religious experience.

Our catered meal was well received with the 28 attendees and there was plenty of time to share what will be a new, although somewhat different, set of memories for this was truly "a night different from all other nights".

There were several member families who were fortunate to be with other family members and enjoyed their own Seder in that fashion. To those who did, there is much joy in that. For those who shared the Beth Jacob setting, there was another sense of joy and, hopefully, in a post COVID era, a true Chag Sameach!

Thank you and Yasher Koach to Arlene and Alan -for their labor of love and dedication to Beth Jacob Synagogue!

Since the 1967 War, a large majority of Americans could be mustered to support virtually every position presented to our national government, or at least sufficiently enough to meet Israel's needs. However, in recent years Israel is becoming a partisan issue with larger numbers of the electorate opposing seemingly important Israeli interests.

But for me and my non-perspective, I keep my head low and do not adopt an aggressive position of support if the issue is being portrayed as a political one. Nevertheless, I extend the benefit of any doubts that I have to Israel's leaders in the context of my quiet support.

So, I no longer get upset by the decisions that Israeli leaders make. But even those within our community who may be heartened by Israel's recent forays into American politics, should be aware that it also comes from the same source that questions the religious validity of your Judaism. The same lack of a pluralistic perspective when it comes to relations with non-Jews in Israel, is also glaring in Israel's relations with nonorthodox Jews in the Diaspora. So, even if your political interests may be served by Israel's actions, your religious interests are treated with the greatest disrespect by Israel's ruling powers.

But I would like to end this monologue with what I think can be low hanging fruit with which we can all agree. Just before the Passover holiday, Israel experienced a series of lone wolf terrorist attacks over a period of a few weeks. And while there was no double-digit fatality list that is the new litmus test for getting us to stop what we are doing, nevertheless there seemed to be a strategy underlying these attacks that magnified the number of fatalities reported.

And though there are some who would naively claim that this was 'political' as the targets are 'Israelis' (as opposed to other political groups like Spaniards or Italians), the fact is each one of the targets was a Jew. And certainly on this day that I write this column being Yom HaShoah, there are no shades of gray here, no "but you should understand the oppression that the Palestinians are operating under." Death to Jews, death to any persons, has no excuse for its perpetration, no matter how compelling the circumstances. And certainly not where there seems to be some opportunity to be heard.

Now there are some that think I am being naïve when I think that a Palestinian has equal rights with Jews in Israel. I do not harbor that thought at all. Instead, I believe that they have sufficient rights to bring them to a modicum of living from which they will be able to generate more rights. And more rights ...

And hopefully I will never have to wade into the intricacies and complexities of the Jewish Arab relationship to be forced to generate an opinion about something, that the greatest minds amongst our people have struggled unsuccessfully, and with far greater time and resources than I have.

So, I will not invest the necessary time and effort to generate any more opinions than necessary for my religious and cultural experience of Judaism; and leave its nationalistic endeavors to those that need to and are directly impacted by those decisions. And until someone shows me that Israel's leaders do not deserve the benefit of the doubt, they have my (silent) support.

B'Shalom,
Rav Julius

May Birthdays

- May 5 Will Camassar
- May 10 Joel Etra
Paul Deutsch
Gail Navick
- May 12 Steven Green
- May 18 Lisa Gawendo
- May 19 Harriet Burchman
Rona Rutchik
- May 21 Leah Berke
- May 28 Norman Katzoff
Al Ruditzky
- May 29 Amy Camassar



May Anniversaries

- May 12 Steve & Cathy Bokoff
- May 20 Steven & Pepi Green
- May 24 Michael & Vicki Seroussi
- May 25 Salvador & Ellen DeLeon
- May 29 Robert & Barbara Rothstein
- May 30 Evert & Lisa Gawendo

Candle Light Times

May 2022

- May 6 7:36 pm
- May 13 7:43 pm
- May 20 7:50 pm
- May 27 7:57 pm

Ba-rukh atah A-do-nai, e-lo-hay-nu-me-lekh ha-olam, a-sher kid-sha-nu-bemitz-vo-tav ve-tzi-vanu Le-had-lik ner shel Shabbat.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has sanctified us by Your commandments and has commanded us to kindle the Shabbat lights.

Mishebeirach

- Beth Camassar
- Billy Maynard
- Emma Fries
- Emma Clancy
- Janet Clancy
- Jenn Rockwell
- Joel Etra

- Joe Haroun
- Matthew Young
- Michael Clancy
- Rachel Wynn
- Tate Campbell
- Tiffany Gravel
- Wayne Rosenfield



MAY 2022 YAHRZEITS



May 2 1 Iyar

Esther Brauman—*Grandmother of Stacy Gould*

David Keyes

Saul Alofsin

Samuel Nelkin

May 3 2 Iyar

Evelyn Horstein

May 4 3 Iyar

Daniel Bason—*Father of Irval Labb*

Barney Berkman

Max Fern

May 5 4 Iyar

Lena Lahn

Charlotte Taylor

Diane Cramer

Samuel Mindel

May 6 5 Iyar

Barnet Maiofes

May 7 6 Iyar

Lillian Cooper—*Mother of Irene Schienberg*

Samuel Block

May 8 7 Iyar

Alyce Blinderman

Ernest Gootman

Ida Miller

May 9 8 Iyar

Abraham Orenstein

Louis Silver

May 10 9 Iyar

Urian Weishaus

Abraham Kirstein

May 11 10 Iyar

Herman Bruckner

Joseph Pearson

Isadore Florman

Aaron Furman

Kurt Hopfer

12 May 11 Iyar

Ethel Kivelewitz

May 13 12 Iyar

Bessie Budnick

Rose Sogolow

Anna Segal

May 14 13 Iyar

Barbara Rubenstein

Isaac Gordon – *Father of Michael Gordon*

Celia Caroline

May 15 14 Iyar

Frances Horwitz

Martha Gorfain

Jennie Millstein

Harold Katz

May 16 15 Iyar

Iaac Segal

Goldie Mandell

Rebecca Trachtenberg

May 17 16 Iyar

Samuel Rabinovitch

Jacob Slosberg

May 18 17 Iyar

Jacob Crumb

Pauline Pollack

May 19 18 Iyar

Moses Gilman

May 20 19 Iyar

Aaron Kivelewitz

Morris Pearson

Paul Agranovitch

Tillie Segal

May 21 20 Iyar

Max Steinman

May 22 21 Iyar

Susan Wolf – *Mother of Marc Wolf*

Annie Abelman

Stelle Gruskin-Littman – *Grandmother of Marc Bokoff*

May 23 22 Iyar

Zena Bokoff – *Mother of Marc Bokoff*

May 24 23 Iyar

Helen Frumer

Jerry Keyes

Rhoda Zeller

Jacob Kessler

May 25 24 Iyar

Ida Eisenstein

Adelaide Knasin Gruskin

Walter Navick – *Father of Jerry and Murray Navick*

Minnie Beit

Lee Krieger – *Aunt of Stacy Gould*

Rose Silverstein

May 27 26 Iyar

David Bernstein

Leon Israelit

Naomi Drelinger

May 28 27 Iyar

Howard Hirschkowitz

May 29 28 Iyar

Hyman Aaron Cooper

Gilbert Fishbone

Betty Block

May 30 29 Iyar

Joseph Drelinger

Anita Goldstein

May 31 1 Sivan

Max Korman – *Uncle of Paul Deutsch*