



From Rabbi Carie



At the start of the *Pesach* story is the famed tale of Moses, floating in a basket in the Nile, saved from death by Pharaoh's daughter (*Bat Paroah*). The Torah tells us, *V'hinei Na'ar Bocheh* — "Behold a boy was crying." She sees this and takes him in. Interestingly, while we read that he was crying, the text says that Pharaoh's daughter saw (not heard, but saw) him and took pity on him. Perhaps, our commentators suggest, Moses didn't actually cry aloud. Perhaps his cry was silent — stopped up in the depths of his heart, with only sadness or terror reflected in the tears on his face.

This silent cry is the sound of the beginning of *Shemot*, the early years of oppression in Egypt. For, during this time, language fails—all voices but Pharaoh's are silenced. We don't hear even a groan, an expression of awareness, or moaning, or outrage, much less hope from the people. But the silence is broken when "The king of Egypt died...The Israelites groaned and cried out...G-d heard their moaning and remembered the covenant...and took notice of them." The people's crying moved G-d from a place of dispassion to one of compassion. It is this human cry that makes redemption possible, in the times of Moses and in our day.

This is the cry that we must open our hearts to today.

- We hear it in the cries of immigrants coming to our city — dreaming of a better life for their families.
- We hear it in the cry of the unhoused, the abused, the lost, abandoned and ignored in our neighborhood, across our country, and around the globe.

- It is a cry that has been ringing in our ears since October 7th, the cry of Israelis still reeling from the force of this horrific trauma; the cry of women whose rape and abuse on that day has been ignored by the very institutions established to protect women across the world from such horrendous abuse.
- It is the cry of Jews across the world since that tragic day, a cry against a sharp rise in anti-Semitism, a fear of danger and threat unknown in recent years.
- It is the cry of Jews in America longing to free hostages, to volunteer, to strive to help to imagine a better future...those who agree with decisions currently being made around the war, and those who fear that they will ultimately bring harm to their beloved land.
- This is the cry of Palestinian citizens of Israel — struggling as their country and their people are at war with one another.
- It is the cry of children in Gaza who just want a chance at a decent life.
- It is the cry of families whose loved ones, after nearly 180 days, remain hostage in Gaza.
- It is the cry of internal refugees in Israel who cannot return home because of rockets from *Hamas* or *Hizballah* and of families waiting anxiously for loved ones to return from war.
- It is the cry of liberal Jews — overwhelmed by the silence of the Progressive world to the pain of Israelis and Jews around the world on October 7th — even as they feel pain for the loss of life and the humanitarian need in Gaza.

With all of these cries screaming out in our midst, within our own community, we must not look away. Like *Bat Paroah*...Like G-d — we

[Continued on next page]



must TAKE NOTE. We must hear these cries... our own and those of others in our community and in our world.

And it is upon us, like *Bat Paroah*, to reach out our arms to others who are crying out...in pain, in fear, consumed by a sense of abandonment and danger...those feeling existential, as well as deeply emotional threats. It is upon us to hear all of these cries, and to be a place where they can be expressed without the added fear of being exiled from our community.

That, for me, is the challenge of being a *Kehilah Kedosha* (a holy community). When we can find a way to offer this form of compassion, we will begin to move toward our own and our people's redemption. It all starts with a cry...and with a willingness to hear. In this season of our festival of freedom and redemption, may we give ourselves permission to do both.

From Co-Presidents Martha Harrison and Elizabeth Wollman



"The whole entire world is a very narrow bridge and the main thing is to have no fear at, all" wrote Rebbe Nachman of Breslov in the late 18th century. His words have come to mind regularly since October 7th. It's been very hard not to feel helpless, hopeless and filled with trepidation in response to the despair and suffering that has rippled outward from Israel and Gaza since Hamas's brutal *Simchat Torah* attack, especially with so many innocent Israeli teenagers, peaceniks, kibbutzniks, old folks, and families were killed or taken hostage from *kibbutzim*, homes, beds, saferooms, a music festival. Bearing witness to the suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians since that horrific day has been hard enough without the subsequent spike in antisemitism, around the world and in our own communities, online and in our daily,

analog lives. These are such troubling times: so much of the world seems to be on fire, so many of us are carrying such grief, pain and anxiety.

Yet what has helped us enormously are frequent reminders that we are not alone, and that we are far from helpless. If anything good has come out of the horrors of the Israel-Gaza war, it surely emanates from community. Jews have been seeking out other Jews with whom to process and mourn, to cultivate and empower ourselves, to remind one another that despite our many political, cultural, and social differences, we remain committed to Jewish life, Jewish religious and cultural practices, and Jewish community. *Purim* was a powerful reminder of the importance of gathering and generating joy — we thank the whole congregation for its dedication and commitment to finding and embracing Jewish joy, even and perhaps especially, in sorrow.

In a world that feels increasingly precarious and dangerous, Park Slope Jewish Center has been a balm — a place that we have been able to rely on for community, and for this we are enormously grateful. Serving our Jewish community has not only been an honor, it's been a real blessing at a time when so much of the world seems increasingly biased and hostile. PSJC has also been enormously inspiring: Despite — or maybe because of — the turbulence of the last half-year, we've noticed new energy at PSJC that has helped instill hope. The annual MLK Day of Service was a smashing success, as were smaller kiddush discussions organized by Rodfei Tzedek about the migrant and prison crises. We have opened our doors to CALA (Central American Legal Assistance) on Tuesdays each month so that newly arrived families can get help filing asylum papers. Such examples of *tikkun olam* pervade the building.

Even despite her own sorrow about the Israel-Hamas war, Rabbi Carie has remained a strong and steadfast spiritual leader who has actively encouraged the congregation to grieve, learn,



discuss, and process current events together — to look past our disagreements in an embrace of our dynamic, caring community. Rabbi Hayley has thrown herself into her role as Associate Rabbi, and we are delighted by her impact. Both rabbis have worked hard to offer new programming, spiritual approaches, ways to learn and study, and opportunities to reflect on and understand the complicated times we're living through. We thank them for their patience, generosity, loving care and leadership.

We are equally grateful for our caring, dedicated staff, all of whom have helped guide PSJC through these past months: Director of Education and Engagement Aileen Heiman wasted no time in rethinking approaches to Jewish education in times of crisis, carefully recalibrating the needs of our students and their families without resorting to “crisis curricula,” which can compound trauma. Our beloved Facility Manager, Patrick Francis, along with his staff, work very hard for us, but also have regularly offered comfort, kindness and allyship, for which we are deeply grateful. And our phenomenal Administrator, Stephanie Cooke, is ramping back up to full-time after a leave of absence — she is most easily reached by email at stephanie@psjc.org. — Welcome back!

We welcomed new board and executive committee members in January, and the energy around the meeting table has been palpable. Plans for the yard renovation are advancing rapidly. We have new committees dedicated to greening the building and to fundraising, and many board members and congregants are helping with projects to improve our wifi, kitchen, security features, and other aspects of the physical plant. We're grateful for everyone's hard work and positive energy, and we look forward to more fun — and fund-raising programs in the coming months.

Rabbi Nachman had a way with words; he left behind many sayings that aren't as well known as the one about the narrow bridge. One is:

“Let the good in me connect with the good in others, until the world is transformed through the compelling power of love.” We confess that seeing good in the world has sometimes been a challenge in the past months. Then again, at PSJC, the goodness and love are clearly flowing. Thank you all for the many ways you have helped transform our world — you make even the narrowest of bridges seem forgeable.

From Hayley Goldstein Associate Rabbi



I'll never forget the *Purim* of 2017, the first *Purim* of the Trump presidency. I'll never forget it for a few reasons. First, it was one of those times (which have seemed to become evermore frequent since) that my community asked itself, “How can we experience joy at a time

like this?” The second reason I'll never forget it was that I was dressed as a *Rebbetzin*, handing out pictures of the *Lubovitcher rebbe* and asking people all day if they had a place for *Shabbos*.

We are yet again poised to ask the same question: How can we possibly tap into the deep, deep joy of our holidays at a time like this? When destruction reigns in Gaza, when division amongst our people is the most palpable I remember in my lifetime, when anti-semitism is rampant, when there are still hostages being held underground.

Here is an understatement: it's complicated that our most joyous holidays, *Purim* and *Pesach*, are arriving now. Now, as we are in the midst of this war without an end in sight. Now, as October 7th is almost seven months behind us and yet feeling so fresh.

I'd like to offer the possibility that “joy,” at least in the Jewish sense, does not necessarily mean “happy.” According to Rabbi Alan Lew z”l:

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“Joy is any feeling fully felt, any experience we give our whole being to. We are conditioned to choose pleasure and to reject pain, but the truth is, any moment of our life fully inhabited, any feeling fully felt, any immersion in the full depth of life, can be the source of deep joy.”

Perhaps the deepest *simcha* comes from accepting and being with what is, even if it is sorrow, even if it is despair.

One highlight from my work since the fall was our 20s and 30s *Purim* party. A group of folks that I have been working with since the summer, but many of whom have only sought out community after October 7th, filled my tiny (even by Park Slope standards) apartment with joy and light. A catharsis we so desperately needed after nearly 6 months of this pain and unknown. It was a true expression of joy in the way Rabbi Lew understands it—a palpable presence in the moment, a full inhabitation of our experience, not trying to force ourselves into any particular state. My hope is to provide more spaces for us—including but not limited to 20s and 30s—to gather in prayer, over food or *Torah* learning and simply be together in whatever state we are in.

I wish us all a joyous *Pesach*, in this meaning of the word. May we be blessed with the capacity to truly be with what is, not trying to force ourselves into a particular state. And in that beingness, perhaps we will experience a different, deeper kind of joy, one of complexities and connection to one another and the world. The unique, complicated joy of being human.



Rabbis Carie and Hayley reading *Megillah*

From Aileen Heiman Director of Education and Engagement



It has been a challenging time since our fall newsletter, for the Jewish community, for Israel, for PSJC, and for each of us as individuals. At PSJC Hebrew School we remained true to our mission of creating safe space for students to process what is happening in the world around them through a Jewish lens, while simultaneously emphasizing joyful and meaningful Jewish moments. This meant that during a session you might find third graders acting out a story from the *Torah*, while the fourth grade asked questions about Jewish safe spaces, where the fifth grade learned a song about the Euphrates river and the seventh grade explored maps of Israel throughout history. We provided opportunities for parents to come together to ask questions about parenting in a time of uncertainty, offered resources for our faculty on a personal and professional level, and helped our teens process an increase in antisemitism in their schools. I am proud to be a part of a team that provided safe space for those outside of our immediate community as well, whether it was someone meditating in our sanctuary or someone seeking a hug in a local coffee shop. While pivoting to respond to these shifting conversations about Israel, we also relied on traditions, ancient and modern, to ground our students and community. There was the menorah lighting on the stoop, hot cocoa day, *Tu Bishvat* snack, snowball fights, and of course the *Purim* party and pie throwing!



Some of our Older Students



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This past fall I shared with you about current research trends in Jewish education and a map for Jewish learning and living created by the Jewish Education Project. One of these guideposts is helping students engage in difficult yet thoughtful conversations rooted in the Jewish tradition of questioning and debate, recognizing that no one person has an exclusive claim on the truth. We are excited to pilot a new program this year that exemplifies our *Beit Midrash* framework, a commitment to allowing students to think critically and creatively about their personal connection to Judaism, Israel, and community, thanks to the generosity of a donor. Partnering with local artist-educators from *Ashreynu*, students will be learning about a variety of Israeli artists and their relationships with Israel and Judaism, and creating personal art projects in similar artistic styles. We look forward to sharing these works with you on Hebrew School *Shabbat* as part of a gallery walk at *kiddush*.



Some of Our Younger Students

Additionally, this year I have been participating in the Israel in Depth Fellowship through the Jewish Education Project. I joined with a cohort of congregational senior educators and education directors for high-level learning on Israel and peoplehood education with the faculty of the Shalom Hartman Institute and will continue with one-on-one mentoring with a senior educator in the field. The fellowship began prior to October 7th, but the events of that day and subsequent weeks and months shifted the lens through which we saw our discussions, learning, and programming. This spring I will be traveling to Israel with a cohort of Jewish educa-

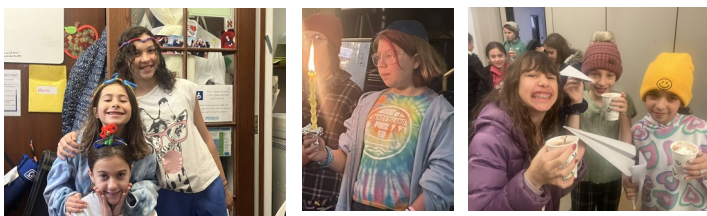
tors with the Jewish Education Project. We will be spending eight days both bearing witness to life on the ground in Israel in the current situation, while simultaneously thinking about shifts in Israel education. I look forward to returning to PSJC and working with Rabbi Carie, Rabbi Hayley, our Hebrew School team, and my mentor through the fellowship to integrate new enduring understandings and essential questions about the possibilities of a relationship with Israel throughout our curriculum and programming.



Rabbi Carie, Teachers and Students

As an original implementing partner in New York, PSJC is proud to announce that we are also partnering with PJ Library to be the Brooklyn host for their 18th Birthday Party celebration this June. We will be joined by partners from Hannah Senesh, Repair the World, The Neighborhood, and *Tkiya* to celebrate eighteen years of delivering free books to Jewish children. Join us as we explore Jewish books through hands-on activities, celebrate coming together at Sinai for Shavuot, and listen to the music of Rebecca Schoffer. Plus you cannot miss PSJC's annual *Shavuot Sinai* Sundaes (June 12th after services and 3:30-5) with new puns and toppings.

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Scenes from PSJC's Hebrew School

PSJC continues to grow, both in membership numbers and in all that we offer our students, families, members, and the neighborhood. We cannot do it without your help, so I invite you to think of a way to get involved directly or support our programming financially. If you would like to hear more about any of the above, you are new to PSJC, just checking us out, or have been around a long time want to learn more, reach out to Aileen Heiman, Director of Education and Engagement at aileen@psjc.org to meet for a cup of coffee or find me at an upcoming event.

From Cantor Judy Ribnick



The Passover seder is replete with beloved songs culled over the centuries: the Four Questions, *Avadim Hayinu*, One Morning (The Frog Song), *Dayeinu*, Miriam's Song, Let My People Go, *Hallel*, *Adir Hu*, *Echad Mi Yodea* and, one of the most beloved, *Chad Gadya*, sung at the end of the seder.

Most of us are familiar with happy melodies for *Chad Gadya*, filled with animals nipping and biting and outdoing one another until *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* (The Holy One) shows who is boss.

I offer below a very different setting of *Chad Gadya* by Chava Alberstein. Recorded in Israel in 1989, this great Israeli singer-songwriter took the traditional Aramaic song and added Hebrew

lyrics at the end that voice her distress about cycles of violence (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LofZyz7Nfn4>).

I offer this not to replace our usual melodies, but as a compelling meditation during this terrible, complicated time of war in Israel and Gaza. After you listen to *Chad Gadya* by Chava Alberstein, listen to Juliet Spitzer's Version of *Chad Gadya* in both Aramaic and singable English ([www:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M37dxg6cbhc&list=OLAK5uy_k8FUz7g4ZCQsZ5r7MBQ9cumSVEven1Ao&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M37dxg6cbhc&list=OLAK5uy_k8FUz7g4ZCQsZ5r7MBQ9cumSVEven1Ao&index=1)).

After singing through all of *Chad Gadya's* verses, Chava Alberstein asks this:

Why are you singing this traditional song?
It's not yet spring and Passover's not here.
And what has changed for you? What has changed?

I have changed this year.

On all other nights I ask the four questions, but tonight I have one more:

How long will the cycle last?

How long will the cycle of violence last?

The chased and the chaser

The beaten and the beater

When will all this madness end?

I used to be a kid and a peaceful sheep

Today I am a tiger and a ravenous wolf.

I used to be a dove and I used to be a deer,

Today I don't know who I am anymore.

Deezvan abba beetray zuzay...

And we start all over again.

I was once told that the origin of Alberstein's melody is Yemenite, and then that it is Italian. In any case, it draws us in as it repeats and repeats, like the cycle of violence she is describing.

I pray for a return of the hostages, for an end to the suffering of innocent Israelis and Palestinians, for the cycle of peace to reign – *bim-hey-rah v'ya-mei-nu!* Speedily in our time!

A Chag Kasher v'Sameach – A Holy and Joyous Holiday – to all!

**From Stephanie Cooke
PSJC Administrator**



With the sun shining brighter and birdsong filling the air, we're embracing the vibrant spirit of spring. It's a season of renewal, growth, and anticipation for what lies ahead.

We are thrilled to share our exciting lineup of spring and summer events with you. From upcoming Passover services to the celebratory Pride Shabbat, there's something for everyone to look forward to! And with Membership renewal just around the corner, we're eager to continue building upon the strong bonds of our community.

Behind the scenes, none of this would be possible without the dedication of our maintenance team, led by Patrick Francis. His tireless efforts ensure that our events run smoothly and our building remains in impeccable condition. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Patrick and the new maintenance team for their hard work and dedication. Additionally, I want to express my gratitude to Antonia Tsangaris for her unwavering support to our community.

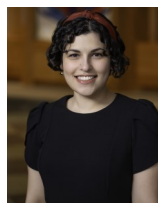
As we embark on this season of growth and renewal, let us continue to embrace the values of unity, compassion, and inclusivity that define our community. Together, we will make PSJC a place where everyone feels welcome and valued.

A Zissen Pesach!



Stephanie, Aileen, R. Hayley, R. Carie and Antonia

**From Talia Kaplan
Rabbinic Fellow**



When you read this newsletter, I will have concluded my tenure at PSJC, having just taught a three-part Talmud adult education series and worked with the leaders of *Rodfei Tzedek* advocating for asylum seekers and refugees. I feel so fortunate

to have learned and served in this special community over the past two years. Upon being ordained in May -- with Rabbi Carie Carter offering me a blessing and JTS *tallit* -- I will be moving to Overland Park, Kansas, with my fiancé, Patrick. There, I will serve as the Assistant Rabbi of Congregation *Beth Shalom*. I know that the conversations we have had, the moments of joy and pain we've shared, and this community's earnest engagement with Judaism will inform my leadership indefinitely. Many of you have heard me say this, but PSJC's commitment to being a teaching community is truly special. You all, in partnership with Rabbi Carter, have trained approximately 15-20 rabbinical students who now serve communities across the country. We are blessed to carry PSJC with us.

Chag Kasher v'Sameach!

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Co-Board Presidents	Martha Harrison and Elizabeth Wollman
Rabbi	Carie Carter
Associate Rabbi	Hayley Goldstein
Director of Education and Engagement	Aileen Heiman
Administrator	Stephanie Cooke
Newsletter Editor/Designer	Elizabeth Schnur

Photos courtesy of Adina Lerner, Aileen Heiman, and R. Hayley Goldstein

Speaking of Israel Update

Hamas's terrorist attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 in which approximately 1200 Israelis were murdered and 240 kidnapped and brought to Gaza as hostages, and the war between Israel and *Hamas* that has continued now for more than six months, has deeply affected not only Israel but the entire Jewish community. Our "Speaking of Israel" series has responded to this situation, one of the most challenging in Israel's 75-year history, with a number of speakers — addressing not only the murderous attack in the Gaza envelope (the populated areas in the Southern District of Israel that are within 7 kilometers of the Gaza Strip border), the massive number of Israelis displaced from their homes in that area and along Israel's northern border and the war in Gaza, but also the growing threat from *Hezbollah*. While PSJC has held other gatherings and discussions, what follows are a few of the events we have hosted on Zoom and in person.

Early in October, Rabbi Carter, Nir Sadovnik and Julie Hendel began a series of open circles for discussion of the ongoing situation. These open circles, which provide a safe space for participants to discuss their reactions, concerns and views, have met at various times throughout these past six months.

Former *shinshin* Aviv Kurnas spoke to us about social media and Israel.

Ephraim Zinger, who was a prisoner of war in Syria during the *Yom Kippur* War, spoke with us about his experience, and reflected on those taken hostage in October.

To mark the *Shloshim* of October 7th, we joined synagogues from around the world in a memorial service coordinated by the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund and *Keren Heysod*. We also joined other Brownstone Brooklyn

synagogues for a *shloshim* memorial at Kane Street and another at CBE where funds were donated to support *Kibbutz Kfar Aza*, which suffered particularly heavy losses from the terrorist attack.

In early November, Rabbi Carter shared reflections on the UJA-organized solidarity mission to Israel, in which she participated. Rabbi Goldstein did the same when she returned from a similar experience in January.

During *Hanukkah* we hosted three Israelis from *kibbutzim* along the Gaza border. These survivors of October 7th shared their personal stories of what they experienced,

On the anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, Israeli intelligence officer Gil (he did not use his surname because he is still on active duty) shared with us his analysis of the ongoing war against *Hamas*.

We joined other Brownstone Brooklyn synagogues in the Project *Shema* workshop on confronting rising antisemitism in the context of the war against *Hamas*.

Avi Melamed, an Israeli expert on the Middle East, helped us to better understand the challenges to Israel in the context of the Iranian led attempt to establish a *Shiite* caliphate in the entire region.

Throughout this period, our Hebrew conversation group *Pitput* has focused several sessions on the ongoing situation.

- Joel Levy





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Positive Aging Initiative (PAI) Update

During the past season, PAI has continued to offer a varied range of programming, which has included outdoor events, activities at PSJC, and remote (Zoom) presentations to enjoy at home.

Since our last update, PAI members attended trips to the NY Historical Society, City Hall, the NY Public Library and the Moynihan Train Hall. These well-attended trips, led by guides provided by the institutions (who are often PSJC members as well), often include visiting areas and exhibitions not regularly available to the public.

“Walk & Talk” excursions provide both fun and exercise, as members explore areas of Brooklyn with which they might have had some familiarity, but still encounter many surprises. Walking tours of Carroll Gardens and Brighton Beach provided the pleasures of new discoveries about these areas and—invariably—the opportunity for a good lunch spot. We are excited to continue our exploration in the upcoming Williamsburg trip. Sue Herskovitz, an inveterate “walker in the city,” has been a fun and knowledgeable guide on our journeys.

PAI builds on successful activities and introduces new ones in response to member feedback. Tai Chi has become well established as helpful for both mind and body, and fun. Recently, Jan Orzeck and Helene Santo launched sessions in Mah Jongg, a game that many of us have heard of, but few have played. A recent “Evening of Song,” hosted by Roz Koch, drew an appreciative audience and we hope to continue with similar experiences in the spring.

The PAI Book Club, facilitated by Marjorie Rothenberg, has continued its program of member-selected readings and lively discussions. Recently, the group has read fiction by Celeste Ng (Our Missing Hearts), Russell Banks (Foregone), Geraldine Brooks (Horse), Ukrainian novelist Andrey Kurkov (Grey Bees) and a non-fiction work by Adam Hochschild exploring colonial harshness in the Congo (King Leopold’s Ghost). The group has become a cohesive one while remaining open to new members.



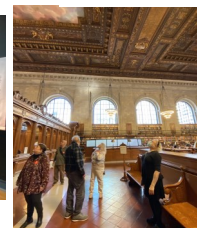
Chanukah cele-



Exploring Bright-
on Beach & Williamsburg



NY Historical
Society



NY Public Library



Pai Book Group

We haven’t neglected concern for our community. The PAI “PB&J Sandwiches and Hard-Boiled Eggs for CHIPS” program, coordinated by Roberta Moskowitz, has by now donated a total of 3827 PB&J sandwiches and 2,586 hard-boiled eggs to needy individuals at CHIPS.

Finally, the Shared Wisdom program continues to offer useful, interesting information to our members through remote (Zoom) presentations. Recently, we offered a five-part “End-of-Life” series which covered practical information about the significant issues related to preparations for a stage of life that people are often reluctant to face. Lenore Arons, Susana Honig, Jan Orzeck, Alan Palmer, and Michael Rieman took the lead in organizing and presenting these sessions, with significant help from PSJC’s Cemetery and Hevra Kadisha committees. Rabbi Carie followed up with an intriguing look at “Jewish Views of the Afterlife.” Other Shared Wisdom sessions included one on Memory Loss (Karen Abraham), Aristotle on Friendship (Ira Singer), Decoding the Digital Age (Leora Singer), and the MTA (Daniel Randel).

We celebrated *Sukkot* and *Hanukkah* together and shared the joy of friendships. PAI looks forward to growing member involvement and a new group of experiences, both at home and around the city. Please join us for PAI Shabbat on June 8th!

- Michael Rieman

April

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July

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	1	2 PAI Makes Sandwic...	3 Wednesday Morni... Tai Chi	4 Yoga with Angela	5 Breathing into the ...	6 Shabbat Shacharit Havdalah
7	8	9	10 Wednesday Morni... Tai Chi	11 Yoga with Angela	12 Breathing into the ...	13 Shabbat Shacharit Havdalah
14	15	16 PAI Shared Wisdo...	17 Wednesday Morni... PAI Book Club: Th...	18 Yoga with Angela	19 Breathing into the ...	20 Shabbat Shacharit Havdalah
21 Difduf Bizman Bidud	22	23	24 Wednesday Morni... Tai Chi	25 Yoga with Angela	26 Breathing into the ...	27 Shabbat Shacharit Advanced Talmud Havdalah
28	29	30	31 Wednesday Morni... Tai Chi	1 Yoga with Angela	2 Breathing into the ...	3 Shabbat Shacharit

August

4	5	6	7 Wednesday Morni... Tai Chi	8 Yoga with Angela	9 Breathing into the ...	10 Shabbat Shacharit Havdalah
11 Difduf Bizman Bidud	12	13	14 Wednesday Morni... Tai Chi PAI Book Club: De...	15 Yoga with Angela	16 Breathing into the ...	17 Shabbat Shacharit Havdalah
18 Difduf Bizman Bidud	19	20	21 Wednesday Morni... Tai Chi	22 Yoga with Angela	23 Breathing into the ...	24 Shabbat Shacharit Advanced Talmud Havdalah
25	26	27	28 Wednesday Morni... Tai Chi	29 Yoga with Angela	30 Breathing into the ...	31 Shabbat Shacharit Havdalah

September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Wednesday Morni...	5 Yoga with Angela	6 Breathing into the ...	7 Shabbat Shacharit Havdalah
8	9	10	11 Wednesday Morni... Difduf Bizman Bidud	12 Yoga with Angela	13 Breathing into the ...	14 Shabbat Shacharit Havdalah
15 Difduf Bizman Bidud	16	17	18 Wednesday Morni... PAI Book Club: Thi...	19 Yoga with Angela	20 Breathing into the ...	21 Shabbat Shacharit Havdalah
22	23	24	25 Wednesday Morni...	26 Yoga with Angela	27 Breathing into the ...	28 Shabbat Shacharit Advanced Talmud Havdalah
29	30	1	2 Wednesday Morni... Erev Rosh Hashanah	3 Yoga with Angela Rosh Hashanah 1	4 Breathing into the ... Erev Rosh Hashanah 2	5 Selichot Shabbat Shacharit Havdalah

A Note from our *Shaliach*, Elad Bar Ilan

Back in the 60's, a group of Israeli farmers came to Levi Eshkol, the Israeli Prime Minister back then, and told him: "We are in big trouble Mr. Prime Minister. We are facing a drought!". Eshkol panicked and asked "A drought?! Where?" The farmers said: "In all of the south, from *Be'er Sheva* all the way to *Eilat*." Eshkol, they said, looked relieved "Ahhh, in the south," he said, "I thought in America..."

The connection between Israel and the US was always strong and meaningful — from the declaration in the UN on November 29th through all the highs and lows, the celebrations and wars. But the question we all ask ourselves now is, what will the future of this long distance relationship look like?

I don't have an answer or a prediction, I'll leave it to people much smarter than I am. But I will quote another Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir, who said in 1948 to the Jewish Federation, as they were debating if they should or should not support Israel during the War of Independence: "Israel will fight for its existence with or without your help. But without it, there is a chance our nation will go to the diaspora for another 2000 years."

May the spring symbolize the beginning of a better future for our nation, near and far, and freedom to all of the hostages held by the terrorists in Gaza.

Volunteering at the CALA Clinic at PSJC

The *Rodfei Tzedek* Committee has been very busy this season, focusing in part on prison reform and immigration. One of the speakers at the February Refugee *Shabbat* event that the Committee sponsored was Rebecca Press. In addition to being Senior Counsel to the Central American Legal Assistance (CALA) organization, Rebecca is the daughter of PSJC members Jean Berman and Aric Press and "grew up" at PSJC! Rebecca spoke clearly and passionately about the plight of immigrants in

general, and particularly those seeking asylum and refugee status. A major initial obstacle to achieving refugee status is facing the labyrinthine application process. CALA's mission is, "to protect and defend Central and South American asylum-seekers and to expand the civil rights of all immigrants," and one of the ways that they do this is to organize clinics all over New York, where immigrants can get assistance in filling out the required forms. For the past several months, PSJC has hosted these clinics on a monthly basis.

Inspired by Rebecca's presentation, I volunteered for the CALA clinic that meets at PSJC. It has proven to be a moving and eye-opening experience. Working together with a Spanish-language interpreter, I have partnered with immigrants from Venezuela, Peru and Honduras to complete the paperwork that helps them get one step closer to US citizenship. While volunteers play with their children, asylum seekers share their stories of the abuse, discrimination and violence that forced them to leave their homelands. I have frequently read of these horrors in the press, but hearing them first-hand makes them painfully real. Asylum seekers come with piles of documentation that must be transferred onto the application form, but the responsibility to fit their life stories of oppression into the boxes provided on the form is a far greater challenge. Filing an application is only one step in a multi-step multi-year process towards citizenship, but it is a beginning. I am grateful to be a small part of helping people on their journeys, and so glad that PSJC has embraced hosting the CALA clinic.

- Elizabeth Schnur



Scenes from the CALA Clinic



MLK Day of Service

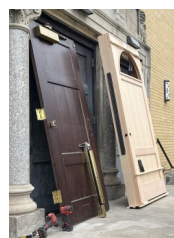
MLK Day of Service has become an important institution in the life of PSJC. For two hours on the Sunday of MLK weekend, every year for over a decade, more than 100 volunteers from all corners of PSJC and beyond come together to do good for our broader community. This year we made soup kits and sandwiches, prepared frozen meals and made packages of snacks for local shelters and food banks. The knitting circle made baby blankets to donate. Volunteers also collected books for the Brooklyn Book Bodega, Metro Cards for newly arrived working people, money for several charities in Israel, and signatures for HIAS-sponsored immigration reform. But the best way to represent the energy and community of MLK Day of Service is to go with the old adage: A picture is worth a 1000 words (see below)!

-Elizabeth Wollman



MLK Day of Service 2024

Out with the Old and in with the New!



Coming soon to a synagogue near you! After a long wait, our custom-designed beautiful new front doors have arrived. In addition to looking great, they will enhance our building security.

- E Schnur

Kishkush/Pitput

Many years ago, PSJC member Michal Tamuz organized an in-person conversation group for Hebrew speakers of varying proficiency, called “Kishkush,” a Hebrew word that roughly translates to “chitchat.” When COVID hit, the group moved to Zoom and was renamed “*Pitput bizman Bidud*” (chatter in the time of isolation), and since October 7th the group underwent another name change to “*Pitput bizman Milchamah*” (chatter in the time of war). The hour-long format involves a beginning and end song — usually contemporary music videos — that bracket a topic-based Hebrew conversation. In our most recent session, Joel Levy spoke about his recent visit to Israel as a member of the Jewish Community Project solidarity mission to Israel. *Pitput* is a great way to beef up and practice your Hebrew! New participants are welcome — check the PSJC website for schedule and Zoom information. Thanks to Michal, frequently assisted by Danny Marcu, for keeping the conversation going!

- E. Schnur



MLK Day of Service 2024

An Update from the *Hevra Kadisha*

Chesed Shel Emet: The Ultimate Kindness

Psalms are used in many aspects of Jewish life. They are found in many different prayers, and as part of many different rituals, both happy and sad. They are recited in times of distress and at times of joy.

It is customary to recite certain psalms when performing *Shmira*, the pre-burial ritual of sitting with and guarding the body of one who has died, and particular psalms are customary for the funeral service as well.

Over recent months the *Hevra Kadisha* and the Adult Ed committee have been co-sponsoring a series of classes taught by Rabbi Carter to learn more about the Book of Psalms. We have been exploring some specific psalms together in an interactive setting.

In recent sessions, we studied Psalm 23 which begins with the verse “*Mizmor l’David Adonai ro’i lo echsar*” (A song of David, *Adonai* is my shepherd, I shall not want) and Psalm 121 which begins with the verses “*Shir lamaalot esa eini el heharim meayin yavo ezri? Ezri meim Adonai oseh shamayim vaaaretz.*” (A song for ascents, I raise my eyes to the mountains, from where does my help come? My help comes from Adonai the creator of heaven and earth).

We discussed the broad mix of imagery to be found in the psalms including imagery of and references to the beauty of the natural world and imagery describing difficult or adversarial situations as well. We discussed how aspects of the psalms resonate differently at different moments in our lives and often with particular poignancy when considering the end of life.

Psalm 23 ends with the verse “*Ach Tov vchesed yirdefuni kol yemei chayai, vshavti bveit Adonai kol yemei chayai*” (Only goodness and loving kindness shall pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of Adonai for the length of my days).

The verse speaks of *chesed*, loving kindness. Caring for someone who has passed away is known as *chesed shel emet*, the truest form of kindness because it can never be repaid. Accompanying and caring for the body of someone who has passed away with respect and kindness is an act of abiding love, and can bring comfort to their family and friends as well.

We welcome all who want to help the community through the meaningful work of caring for the deceased and thus also for the living. Please reach out to us through email at hevra.kadisha@psjc.org to learn more about PSJC’s *Hevra Kadisha*.

- Eden Wofsey and Florence Hutner
Co-Chairs, PSJC *Hevra Kadisha*



“Making the Shroud” - Prague ca 1772
From Paintings Documenting the Chevrah Kadisha
Gomle Chasadim (The Holy Brotherhood of Those Who
Perform Charitable Deeds) of Prague

From the Cemetery Committee

PSJC holds rights to gravesites at Beth David Cemetery (in Elmont, Long Island, near Belmont Racetrack) and New Mount Carmel Cemetery (in Glendale, Queens, near the Jackie Robinson Interborough Parkway). Graves in these cemeteries, like others in and around New York City, are scarce and valuable — but members of PSJC in good standing may purchase them from PSJC at favorable prices (as of January 1, 2024, \$1,350 per standard grave in Beth David Cemetery; \$1,800 in Mt. Carmel). The Board has approved price rises to \$1,800 and \$2,700, respectively, on July 1, 2024.



The Cemetery Committee is authorized to complete the paperwork on behalf of PSJC relating to these three cemeteries. You can get more details about purchasing graves, registering deeds with the cemeteries, restrictions regarding burials, etc. by contacting the office, the Rabbi or the Committee (email: cemetery@psjc.org). The Committee works closely with other PSJC working groups regarding end-of-life issues: the *Hevra Kadisha* (*taharah*, *shmirah*, etc.); the Simple Funeral Plan (funeral and burial); the *G'mach* supporting ill members, *shiva*, supporting grieving members, etc.).

- Matthew Eilenberg

A Note from Avodah

There are many signs that perhaps it really is spring. Baseball is being played both in the major stadiums and in the slightly less vaunted fields of Prospect Park. The calendar is about to turn the last page on *Adar's* reprise. The temperatures are still chilly, but flowers and trees are doing their best to assert that in fact spring may have in fact sprung. Though the most notable sign of spring is that, as *Purim* fades in our minds, the existential dread of *Pesach's* imminent arrival grows.

I must admit, as usual I am not ready to give myself over to the manic preparations of *Pesach*. However, this year, in particular, things are different. I cannot fully prepare for my own liberation while so many fellow Jews are held as hostages in Gaza. While the traditions of the seder will remain unchanged, I cannot help but think that this year's maggid may take on a different, more aspirational tone. I have full faith that Rabbi Carie and others, as was done for *Purim*, will be able to help set the right balance between recognizing the importance of engaging the centuries old traditions that have brought our people through many dark times and acknowledging the current pain and anguish of many in our community.

Ultimately, my mental preparedness notwithstanding, *Pesach* will come and pass. The *Avodah* committee will complete its annual rite of coordinating the High Holy Day season, with

a short cheesecake-related interlude. Though High Holy Day planning and coordination will remain one of the larger public functions of the *Avodah* committee, this year the Committee will embark on an ambitious course of private study under Rabbi Carie's tutelage, including the formal structure of prayer (*matbe'ah tefillah*) at PSJC, our continued relationship with Zoom, and methods for inclusion of non-Jewish family members in life cycle events. We look forward to completing our study and helping to bring an enhanced prayer product to the PSJC community in 2024 and beyond. *A zissen Pesach!!*

- Eli Wolfhagen, Chair



Purim at PSJC

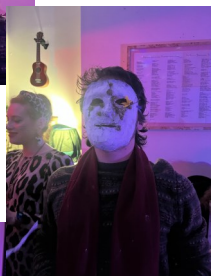
Many of us thought long and hard this year about whether or not to go forward with a *Purim* celebration in light of the October 7th attacks, hostage-taking, and ongoing *matzav* (situation) in Israel and Gaza. However, as a community we decided to move forward to embrace *Purim*, and its message of resilience and hope.

On *Erev Purim* we dressed up, had a PJ party for kids, read the *Megillah* in multiple languages (Hebrew, Ladino and multiple Yiddish dialects) and enjoyed the annual *Purim Spiel* (satirical story). This year the *spiel* was dedicated to the memory of Rabbi Jeff Marker, z"l, and riffed on Rabbi Jeff's beloved Grateful Dead and other music from that era; a video of the *spiel* will be available on the website soon.

On *Purim* Day we chanted the *Megillah* once again, and then there was partying all around, with traditional carnival games, face painting, bouncy house, a barbecue, and killer Bloody Marys and Mimosas! R. Hayley also organized a fun 20s and 30s *seudah* (meal) later that day.

Thanks to all who made this possible, and especially to Patrick and his crew. See the back page for *Purim* photos!

- E Schnur



Megillah and Spiel Brought to You By:

- Megillah Readers**
 Chapter 1 – Avi Fisher/Roz Koch / R. Hayley Goldstein
 Chapter 2 – Daniel Soyer/Jeanne Stellman/Susana Honig
 Chapter 3 – Elizabeth Schnur
 Chapter 4 – Erik Lieber
 Chapter 5 – Rabbi Carie Carter
 Chapter 6 – Nir Sadovnik
 Chapter 7 – Rina Rinkovich Spielberg & Janno Lieber
 Chapter 8 – Matthew Eilenberg
 Chapter 9 – Eli Wolhagen
 Chapter 10 – Rabbi Hayley Goldstein

Megillah PowerPoint and Video
 Elizabeth Schnur

Spiel Producer: Elizabeth Schnur
Musical Director/Genius: Nir Sadovnik
Directors: Elizabeth Schnur & Julie Weintraub
Choreography Advisor: Louise Heit

Spiel Cast
 Fran Hawthorne (Narrator)
 Peter Holmes
 Abby Ingber
 Erik Lieber
 Gavrielle Levine
 Jan Orzock
 Alan Palmer
 Joan Seitelman
 Elizabeth Schnur
 Julie Weintraub
 Eli Wolhagen

Musicians
 Nir Sadovnik
 Noah Garfinkel
 Marc Rentzer
 Robert Walker

Spiel Writers
 Abby Ingber
 Erik Lieber
 Elizabeth Schnur
 Julie Weintraub
 Eli Wolhagen

PowerPoint and Prompter Operators:
 Ariella Pusey, Avi Fisher,
 Antonia Tsangaris