# The Kibbitzer

### **Congregation Beth Shalom of Brandon**

706 Bryan Road, Brandon, FL 33511 Phone (813) 681-6547 www.BethShalomBrandon.org

April 2025 Volume 35 Issue 11

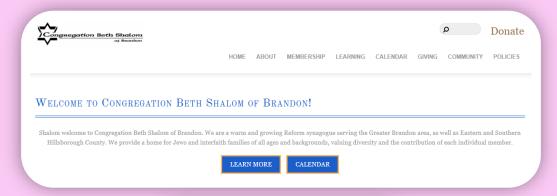


# New Website Launch Announcement!

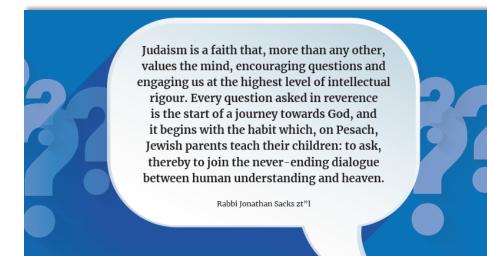
After months of dedicated collaboration with the URJ website support team, we are thrilled to announce that our brand-new website is now live at bethshalombrandon.org! While our previous site, bethshalom-brandon.org, will remain accessible until the end of April, we encourage you to explore the fresh features and design of our updated platform.

Please bear with us as we continue to refine and update various sections to ensure an optimal user experience. Your feedback is incredibly valuable to us. If you have any suggestions or comments, feel free to reach out to Toby Koch at tobykoch@hotmail.com.

# bethshalombrandon.org









Sayings about Passover by Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l

Pesach is the oldest and most transformative story of hope ever told.

It tells of how an otherwise undistinguished group of slaves found their way to freedom from the greatest and longest-lived empire of their time, indeed of any time.

It tells the revolutionary story of how the supreme Power intervened in history to liberate the supremely powerless.

It is a story of the defeat of probability by the force of possibility.

It defines what it is to be a Jew: a living symbol of hope.

For many years I was puzzled by the first words we say on Pesach: 'This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat it with us.'

What kind of hospitality is it to offer the hungry the bread of affliction?

Finally, though, I think I understood. The unleavened bread represents two things. It was the food eaten by slaves. But it was also the food eaten by the Israelites as they left Egypt in too much of a hurry to let the dough rise. It is the bread of affliction, but it is also the bread of freedom.

## The President's Corner



**Steve Billor** 

Shalom Everybody,

By the time you read this, we will already have had our Hamantaschen Bake-In in addition to our Purim service with Purim Spiel Play. Hoping we had a good turnout for both. I am so proud of our Bat Mitzvah student, Abby Rosenthal, for writing, directing and producing our Purim Play. Next in the works is our 2nd Night Passover Seder together on Sunday April 13th, 2025. Neil Spindel is putting together a Passover Haggadah that we will use at our future seders. We are making it short, educational and fun. We will be selling seats to cover our expenses and help support our Synagogue. Please join us for this festive event.

I continue posting about our Friday night Shabbat services as well as all other Beth Shalom events in the Fishhawk Jewish Families Facebook Page and I am still hoping that we draw a family to show up.

On a new topic, thanks to Gabe Lifschitz, Sandy Schwartz and Gerry Pliner. We have been receiving federal funds which have been helped us with many projects. Gerry coordinated with a company to request payment from the IRS for COVID related reimbursements. We received our first payment, which netted over \$8,000. We have two more requests in for the IRS that can deliver some much-needed financial relief to our congregation. We are all hoping that we are approved for these added reimbursements. This money can help us fix things in our building that were way out of our financial reach.

Additionally, I am reaching out to the Rabbinical Colleges to see if we can schedule an interim student rabbi. Student rabbis are students in rabbinical school who serve congregations as rabbis while they are still studying. A student rabbi leads services, teaches, performs life cycle events, and collaborates with lay leaders to plan for the congregation. Congregation Beth Shalom has had a student rabbi in the past and it was a successful experience. The rabbinical students are usually placed in July for the next term. I believe that the warm and sunny weather of Tampa Bay would be an attractive destination for a student rabbi.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming Passover Seder!

Steve Billor



# **Building and Grounds**



Gabe Lifschitz

### TIME FOR SPRING CLEANING!

I will be organizing an all-members cleanup get-together in late April to clear debris around the building and take care of housekeeping tasks inside. The date and time will be announced in the Beth Shalom Info email and on the CBS Facebook page. Stay tuned for more details!

Taking care of CBS is a mitzvah, and every little bit you do is greatly appreciated. We need assistance with various handy skills such as interior electrical work, replacing light bulbs, fixing floor tiles, and plumbing. Additionally, there is a lot of tree debris to clear, and the damaged wooden fencing needs to be removed. We also have doors that need repair or replacement, and the blue canvas on the entrance awning needs to be replaced. If you know someone who regularly does work for you, please send their name and contact information to: cbs-building@outlook.com.

Thank you

Gabe Lifschitz





# Dinner With the Tribe

### **Tandoor Indian Cuisine**

Tandoor Indian Cuisine 805 East Brandon Blvd Brandon, FL 33511 Saturday
April 26, 2025
6:30 PM

After Pesach in April, we're ready for a change of pace with some Indian cuisine. One of the favorites in the Brandon area is Tandoor, a family restaurant reminiscent of small places in London. Don't worry about the food being too spicy; you can order it to your taste—mild, medium, or Indian hot. They offer a variety of vegetarian and meat dishes, including chicken, lamb, beef, and even goat. The prices are moderate, and the servings are generous, making it worth the short trip to have dinner with friends. Since it's a smaller restaurant, we need an accurate head count. Please let Anita know if you'll be joining us by emailing her at [niewdnarb@yahoo.com]



The stories told of Chelm are old Jewish folklore tales. They originated in Eastern Europe in the Yiddish language but have been told for generations.

### **Chelmites Who Refused to Tread on Snow**

Once upon a time, a stranger came to Chelm and was taken ill. He needed to be led to the hospital, but it happened to be winter. The Chelmites, who dearly loved the whiteness of snow, did not want him to spoil it with his footprints. So, they called a meeting to discuss the problem. At last, they arrived at a solution: they put the sick man on a board, and four of them simply carried him to the hospital.



# **Congregation Beth Shalom**

## **Shabbat Services**

Can't make it to services? Join us online with a live feed from Zoom or Facebook!

**Zoom Link:** 

https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/83776565288?pwd=V3RIZzRXWkdaTjhselBpNWJFTjlBUTo9

**Meeting ID:** 

837 7656 5288

**Passcode:** 

101324

**Facebook Link:** 

https://www.facebook.com/BethShalomBrandon/

#### **CBS Office Hours**

The administrative office is currently open by appointment only. We can be reached by calling the office, (813)681-6547, email, cbsbrandon@outlook.com.

Although our hours are limited, we are always here for you. Do not hesitate to reach out with any needs, concerns, or questions.

### **Congregation Beth Shalom**

provides a meaningful spiritual home for people of all ages and levels of knowledge, a place to learn and to question, a place to worship and to celebrate, and a place to find a community that cares.

### We offer:

- ☆ Friday worship services at 7:00 PM
- **⋄** Adult Education classes
- Communitywide events

# Advertise in the Kibbitzer!

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Becoming a partner in our congregation offers an opportunity for enduring friendships and a personal spiritual journey. A place in our Jewish community.

Members also have free access to many of our educational and entertainment events.



# The V'ahavta: A Blueprint for Learning Torah—by Neil Spindel

Neil Spindel
When Jack and Abby, our two B'nai mitzvah students, began their studies they had 15 months to learn everything—but they couldn't yet read Hebrew. Traditionally, students first master Hebrew reading before moving on to trope and Torah reading. But waiting three months to complete a Hebrew primer before starting on their service materials wasn't an option. Instead, I found a way to get them working on complex Hebrew right away: the V'ahavta.

Because our congregation sings the V'ahavta to the Torah trope melody, Jack and Abby already knew its tune. While they were still learning the aleph-bet, they were also perfecting their Hebrew enunciation and melody using a text they already recognized. This allowed them to fast-track their Hebrew reading skills while simultaneously preparing for Torah chanting—something that typically wouldn't happen until much later in their studies.

To help them bridge the gap, I created a color-coded study guide that matched a YouTube video series teaching trope. This guide helped them match the notes they were singing to the actual trope symbols, giving them a structured way to learn. Then, when it was time to start their Torah portions, I used the same colors to highlight the trope phrasing in their readings. Now, they had a clear reference system that connected everything: their Torah portion, the trope names, and the V'ahavta they had mastered.



What started as a practical learning tool turned out to be something much deeper. As I watched them confidently sing the V'ahavta, I revisited its meaning: Take these words to heart and teach them diligently to your children. I suddenly realized—the V'ahavta itself was the blueprint for my entire approach. It wasn't just a convenient song to practice—it was the very guiding principle for teaching Torah to the next generation.

Jack and Abby are now thriving in their Torah studies, and this method has proven to be not just effective, but transformative. By grounding their learning in something familiar, structuring it with clear references, and embracing the wisdom of the V'ahavta, we've built a meaningful, lasting connection to Torah chanting—one that they will carry with them long after their B'nai mitzvah.



# **Yahrzeits**



Samuel Lifschitz Father of Gabriel Lifschitz

Joseph Magdovitz Father-In-Law of Caren Magdovitz

Sylvia Pliner Mother of Gerald Pliner

Gladys Richter Grandmother of Neil Spindel

Pascuala Roldan Mother of Julie Shienbaum

Barbara Berkley Shapiro Mother of Janice Sperry

# **Candle Lighting Times**

Date	Time	Parsha	
Friday, April 4	7:21 PM	Vayikra	
Friday, April 11	7:24 PM	Tzav	
Saturday, April 12	8:18 PM	Passover	
Sunday, April 13	8:18 PM	Passover	
Friday, April 25	7:31 PM	Shemini	



## Join Us for Shabbat!

Every Friday night at 7:00 PM, our congregation comes together to welcome Shabbat with beautiful tunes and inspiring prayers. After the service, we continue the celebration with an oneg.

Would you like to sponsor an oneg to celebrate a mitzvah? Please reach out to Toby Koch at (813) 654-0877.





# Hamentaschen!





















# Purius Spiel

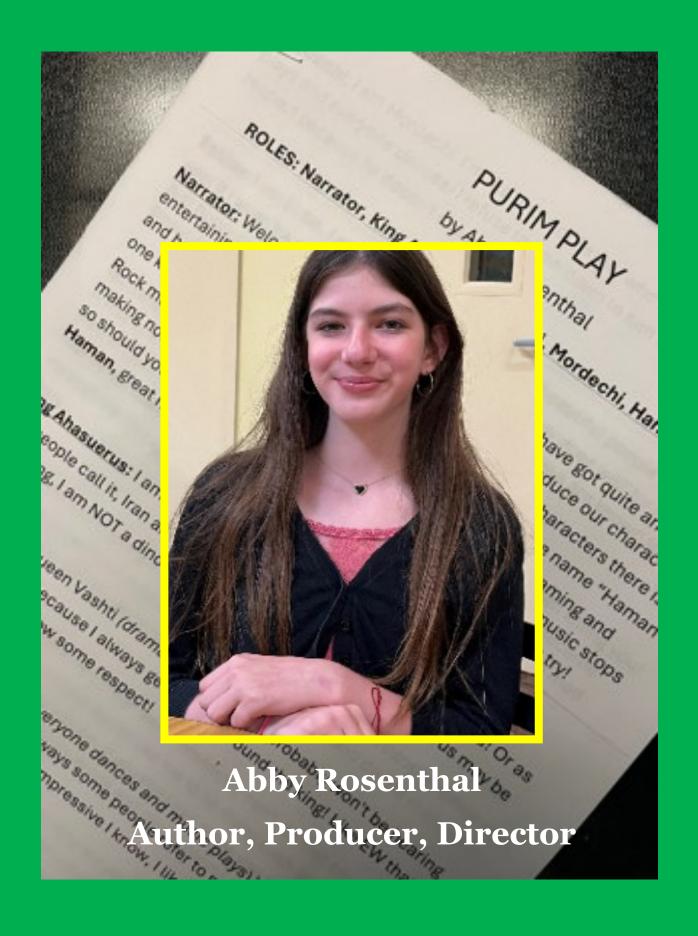














For inquires, contact Toby Koch at tobykoch@hotmail.com

"Prepare for the Seder with this tutorial on the Mah Nishtanah—the Four Questions."

To hear it sung, please click on the picture.



# The Four Questions on Passover Mah Nishtanah? Why is this Night Different from All other Nights?

Ma nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?

Sheb'khol haleilot anu okhlin hametz umatzah; halailah hazeh, kuloh matzah.

Sheb'khol haleilot anu okhlin sh'ar y'rakot; halailah hazeh, maror.

Sheb'khol haleilot ein anu matbilin afilu pa'am ehat; halailah hazeh, shtei f'amim.

Sheb'khol haleilot anu okhlin bein yoshvin uvein m'subin; halailah hazeh, kulanu m'subin. מַה־נִּשְׁתַנָּה הַלַּיִּלֶה הַנָּה מִבֶּל־ הַלֵּילוֹת?

שֶׁבְּכָל־הַלִּילוֹת אֲנוּ אוֹכְלִין חָמֵץ וּמִצָּה; הַלִּילָה הַזָּה, כָּלוֹ מַצָּה.

שָׁבְּכָל־הַלִּילוֹת אֲנוֹ אוֹכְלִין שְׁאָר יָרַקוֹת: הַלָּיִלָה הַוָּה. מֶרוֹר.

שַׁבְּכָל־הַלִּילוֹת אַין אֲנוֹ מַטְבִילִין אַפִּלוּ פַּעָם אָחָת; הַלַּיִלֶּה הַזֶּה, שָׁהֵי פָעָמִים:

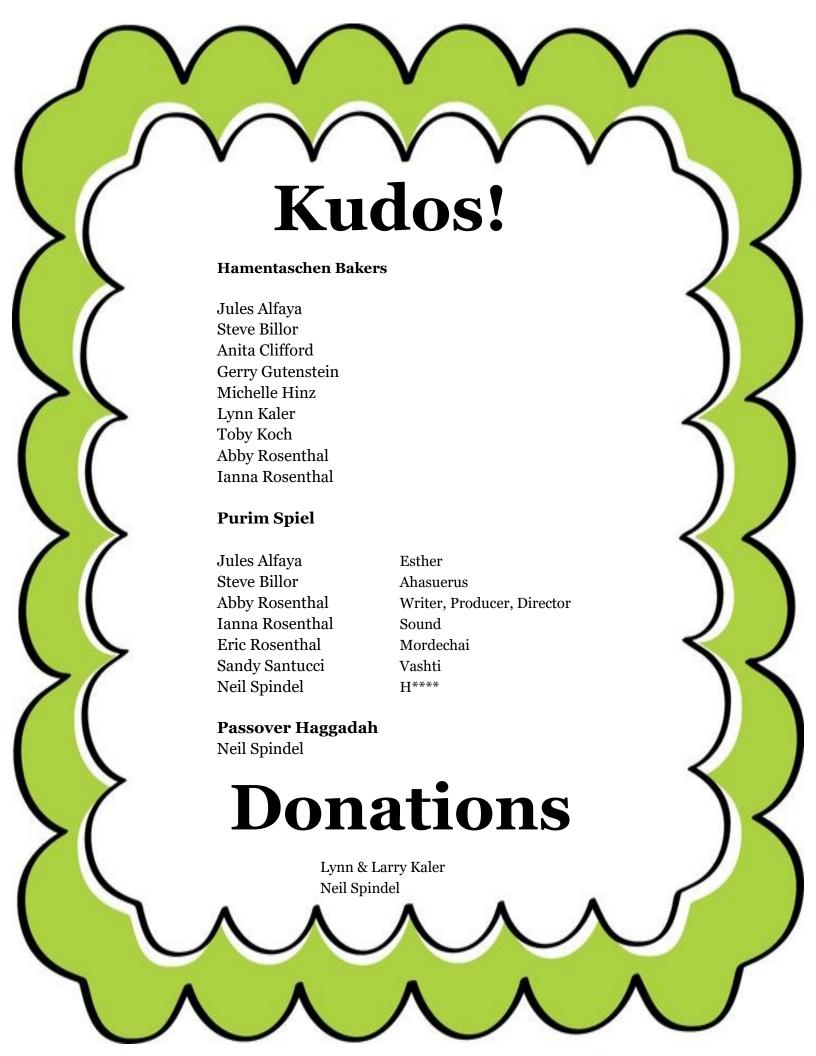
שָׁבְּכֶל־הַלֵּילוֹת אֲנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסָבִּין; הַלַּיִּלָה הַּוָּה, כּלנוּ מִסבִין. Why is this night different from all other nights?

On all other nights we eat leavened products and matzah, and on this night only matzah.

On all other nights we eat all vegetables, and on this night only bitter herbs.

On all other nights, we don't dip our food even once, and on this night we dip twice.

On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining, and on this night we only recline.



# Yom Hashoah: Holocaust Memorial Day

### By: My Jewish Learning

The full name of the day commemorating the victims of the Holocaust is "Yom Hashoah Ve-Hagevurah" — literally the "Day of (Remembrance of) the Holocaust and the Heroism." It is marked on the 27th day in the month of Nisan — a week after the seventh day of Passover, and a week before Yom Hazikaron (Memorial Day for Israel's fallen soldiers).

When the 27th of Nisan falls on a Friday or Sunday, Yom Hashoah is shifted to avoid conflicting with Shabbat. (The Hebrew calendar is fixed so that the 27th never falls on Shabbat itself.)

The date was selected by the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) on April 12, 1951. The full name became formal in a law that was enacted by the Knesset on August 19, 1953. Although the date was established by the Israeli government, it has become a day commemorated by Jewish communities and individuals worldwide.

In the early 1950s, education about the Holocaust emphasized the suffering inflicted on millions of European Jews by the Nazis. Surveys conducted in the late 1950s indicated that young Israelis did not sympathize with the victims of the Holocaust, since they believed that European Jews were "led like sheep for slaughter." The Israeli educational curriculum began to shift the emphasis to documenting how Jews resisted their Nazi tormentors through "passive resistance"—retaining their human dignity in the most unbearable conditions—and by "active resistance," fighting the Nazis in the ghettos and joining underground partisans who battled the Third Reich in its occupied countries.

### The Siren

Since the early 1960s, the sound of a siren on Yom Hashoah stops traffic and pedestrians throughout the State of Israel for two minutes of silent devotion. The siren blows at sundown as the holiday begins and once again at 11 a.m. the following morning. All radio and television programs during this day are connected in one way or another with the Jewish destiny in World War II, including personal interviews with survivors. Even the musical programs are adapted to the atmosphere of Yom Hashoah. There is no public entertainment on Yom Hashoah, as theaters, cinemas, pubs, and other public venues are closed throughout Israel.

Some Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox rabbis have never endorsed this memorial day, nor have they formally rejected it. There is no change in the daily religious services in Orthodox synagogues on Yom Hashoah. The Orthodox Rabbinate of Israel attempted to promote the Tenth of Tevet—a traditional fast day commemorating the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem in ancient times—as the "General Kaddish Day" in which Jews should recite the memorial prayer and light candles in memory of those who perished in the Holocaust. Several ultra-Orthodox rabbis have recommended adding piyyutim (religious poems) that were written by contemporary rabbis to the liturgy of Tisha B'Av and many communities follow this custom.



# Yom Hashoah: Holocaust Memorial Day

### By: My Jewish Learning

New Rituals pg 2

Rituals associated with Yom Hashoah are still being created and vary widely among synagogues. Attempts have also been made to observe this memorial day at home. One suggestion is that every Jewish home should light a yahrzeit (memorial) candle on this day

There have been numerous attempts to compose special liturgy (text and music) for Yom Hashoah. In 1988 the Reform movement published Six Days of Destruction. This book, co-authored by Elie Wiesel and Rabbi Albert Friedlander, was meant to be viewed as a "sixth scroll," a modern addition to the five scrolls that are read on specific holidays. Six narratives from Holocaust survivors are juxtaposed to the six days of creation found in Genesis.

One of the most recent achievements is Megillat Hashoah (The Holocaust Scroll) created by the Conservative movement as a joint project of rabbis and lay leaders in Canada, the U.S., and Israel. This Holocaust scroll contains personal recollections of Holocaust survivors and is written in biblical style. It was composed under the direction of Avigdor Shinan, a professor at Hebrew University.

While Yom Hashoah rituals are still in flux there is no question that this day holds great meaning for Jews worldwide. The overwhelming theme that runs through all observances is the importance of remembering — recalling the victims of this catastrophe and ensuring that such a tragedy never happen again.

The Shoah (Holocaust) posed an enormous challenge to Judaism and raised many questions: Can one be a believing Jew after the Holocaust? Where was God? How can one have faith in humanity? Facing this recent event in history, does it really matter if one practices Judaism?

Jewish theologians and laity have struggled with these questions for decades. The very fact that Jews still identify Jewishly, practice their religion — and have embraced the observance of Yom Hashoah — answers some of the questions raised by the Holocaust.

### Yom HaShoah - A Moment of Silence in Israel





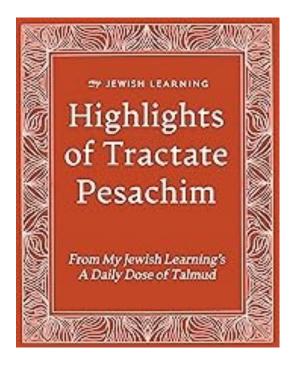
### What a Seder Would Have Been Like 1,800 Years Ago

April 26, 2024, Mosaic

The text of the Haggadah used by thousands if not millions of Jews at their seders this week derives largely from the Talmud; some passages are direct quotations. Yet much has also changed about the text since the time of the ancient rabbis, as **Rachel Scheinerman**, **Elliot Goldberg**, and **Lauren Tuchman** explain. Among the topics they discuss are the possibility that the Four Questions were not intended to be questions at all and the connection between the Haggadah and Shavuot, the next biblical holiday on the Jewish calendar. (Video, 59 minutes.)

# Click the Seder Plate for the video:





The pages within Tractate Pesachim are filled with details, laws, and some surprisingly entertaining stories related to the spring holiday of Passover. The Passover Seder mandates we ask (at least) four questions, but this tractate explores the many questions and contradictions the Rabbis wrestled with in the absence of a Temple in Jerusalem.

If you've visited Pesachim before or you are just learning that the Talmud informs our ritual practice today, *Highlights of Pesachim will help you find new meaning in however you mark this festival.* 

The beauty of the Passover ritual is that it is simultaneously familiar and mysterious. Our hope is that this exploration of the Talmudic writings on Passover will make it, for you, more of both."

Amazon.com

# The Blood Libel Is Very Old, but the Term Is Surprisingly New OBSERVATION: Philologos, March 19, 2025, Mosaic

A Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar described a report of "the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel" as a "blood label." One might have hoped for a higher level of literacy from Israel's number one diplomat.

Still, Sa'ar's blooper made me wonder. Where does the term "blood libel" come from? By whom was it first used and when?

What I learned surprised me. The accusation that Jews kill Christians, especially Christian children, to use their blood in religious ceremonies such as the baking of their Passover matzah is old. From its first appearance in 1144, when the body of a Christian boy found outside the English town of Norwich was ascribed to a Jewish ritual murder, there have been more than 150 similar incidents in European history; most are well -documented, having led to police investigations, trials, interventions by high authorities, and public uproars. Yet were this to lead one to think that the English term "blood libel," or its equivalent in other European languages, must be old too, one would be mistaken. "Blood libel" is actually, it turns out, a recent coinage, almost certainly less than a hundred years old.

What was the accusation that Jews killed Christians for their blood called before that? For a long time, nothing in particular, because as late as the first written history of it, composed in 1758 by the Italian cardinal Lorenzo Garganelli, later Pope Clement XIV, at the request of Pope Benedict XIV, it had no name. Garganelli's lengthy and impressively fair-minded study, which concluded that the accusation was false, spoke of it variously as "the crime imputed to the Jews," "this rumor of the use of blood," "the suspicions of such impious wickedness," "the stain of infanticide and homicide," "the utter imposture that Jews go in search of Christian blood," and so on, without grouping such paraphrases under a single rubric. There simply was none available.

This changed in the course of the 19th century, which saw a sharp rise both in anti-Semitism and in public protests against it, and the emergence of different terms in different languages for what today we call the blood libel, such as French la légende du sang ("the blood legend"), German der Ritualmordvorwurf ("the ritual murder blame"), Italian l'accusa del sangre ("the blood accusation"), and so forth. In English, the Italian formulation came to predominate. Thus, the monumental Jewish Encyclopedia of 1906 has a long entry on "Blood Accusation" in which the word "libel" does not appear even once, just as it did not appear in a protest lodged by British dignitaries against the arrest and trial of the Russian Jew Mendel Beilis on ritual murder charges in 1912. Signed by such personages as the bishop of London, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the dean of Westminster, this began:

We desire to associate ourselves with the protests signed in Russia, France, and Germany by leading Christian theologians, men of letters, scientists, politicians, and others against the attempt made in the city of Kieff [sic] to revive the hideous charge of Ritual Murder—known as the "Blood Accusation"—against Judaism and the Jewish people.

Indeed, although the Beilis case became an international cause célèbre, the term "blood libel," by which it is routinely referred to today, never appears to have been used for it by its contemporaries. Nor do we encounter the term a decade-and-a-half later, when the temporary disappearance (she later was found alive and well) on September 22, 1928 of four-year-old Barbara Griffith in the upstate New York town of Massena led to charges that she was the victim of Jewish ritual murder.

An October 4 letter from the superintendent of the New York state police to Governor Alfred Smith spoke of conducting "an exhaustive hearing . . . in reference to the charges [that have] revived the ancient slander that human sacrifice was at one time part of the Jewish ritual," while an article on October 11 in the Adirondack Record-Elizabethtown Post spoke of "a rumor that ritual sacrifice has been committed . . . in what has become known as the Massena incident." When shortly afterwards, Louis Marshall, then chairman of the American Jewish Committee, demanded a public apology for the incident from Massena's mayor, he called it "a gross calumny," while a November 10 meeting of the Committee's executive referred to it as "this slander."

By then, it must be said, the word "libel" had already been used in connection with the "blood accusation," since in 1924, when the Anglo-Jewish historian Cecil Roth came out with the first published version of Cardinal Garganelli's report to Pope Benedict, he named the slim volume The Ritual Murder Libel and the Jews. And yet Roth did not call his book "The Blood Libel and the Jews," as he would have done had the term been an accepted one then.

"Blood libel," then, did not enter English usage before the 1930s. Just when and how it did so demands a separate investigation. I would, however, suggest two likely contributing factors. One is the American Jewish community, increasingly active in those years in defending Jewish causes in the public arena. "Blood accusation" could not have sat well with it, since an accusation, while not necessarily true, is not necessarily false, either. Whatever alternative to "blood accusation" Jews might have preferred, they probably had something to do with one being found.

And if so, the choice of "libel" may have been influenced by the Hebrew word alilah in the expression alilat dam, the standard way of referring to the blood libel in Hebrew since at least the early 19th century. Dam means blood in Hebrew while an alilah is precisely a libel, that is, a lie told with the intention of doing someone harm, and American Jewish leaders, or at least the rabbis among them, would certainly have been familiar with the term and might have sought its English equivalent.

In any case, it's good that "blood libel" has replaced "blood accusation." An accusation, even if false, can be made in good faith and so may call for a serious rebuttal. A libel can only be made in bad faith. About this the foreign minister is right. There's no more point in arguing with the United Nations about Israel than there is in arguing with someone about whether Jews really kill Christians for their blood.



Blood libel, Sandomierz Cathedral, by Charles de Prevot. Wikimedia

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### The Kibbitzer

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The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host

John Martin 1836

Before a vast expanse of sea and sky, Moses raises high his staff, summoning a wave to engulf the barely discernible soldiers, horses, and chariots of the pharaoh's army. Safe ashore at right, the Israelites look on in awe at the miracle, described in Exodus 14:26-31. The present drawing is a highly representative work by the English Romantic artist John Martin (1786-1864), who was admired by the public for his dramatic compositions featuring minute figures in sweeping, apocalyptic landscapes.



# **April 2025**

# Seder at CBS for the second night: Sunday, April 13th

April 4 Sandy Schwartz
April 11 Anita Clifford
April 18 Steve Billor
April 26 Gabe Lifschitz



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Erev Shabbat Service 7:00	5
6	7	8	9 Hebrew Lessons 6:00 PM	10	Erev Shabbat Service 7:00	Passover First Night
Passover Second Night Seder CBS	14	15	16 Hebrew Lessons 6:00 PM	17	18 Erev Shabbat Service 7:00	19
20 Food Bank 1 PM to 3 PM	21	22	23 Hebrew Lessons 6:00 PM	24 Yom HaShoah	25 Erev Shabbat Service 7:00	26
27	28	29	30 Hebrew Lessons 6:00 PM Yom HaZikaron	1 Yom HaAtzma'ut	2	3