



Multidimensional hacking wars

Where is Israel's private cyberattack sector going?

• YONAH JEREMY BOB

Israel's private cyberattack sector has rocked global headlines in recent years, whether praised for stopping ISIS terrorism or scorned for facilitating human rights violations. But with all of the ups and downs, sometimes where things stand and where things are going seem covered in a thick haze.

The *Magazine* recently interviewed a wide number of key sources in or observing this sector (mostly anonymously, due to sensitivities) to cut through to the heart of the issues. It became clear that there are at least four trends and counter-trends which will determine the fate of the sector.

Until November 2021, Israel's cyber offense firms seemed to be expanding without limits, and years of media and human

rights criticism had at most affected the industry's tactics, but not at a strategic level.

Between 2011 and 2023, at least 74 governments contracted with commercial firms to obtain spyware or digital forensics technology, according to data collected by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

According to the Carnegie Endowment report, autocratic regimes were much likelier than democracies to purchase commercial spyware or digital forensics. Its statistics showed that 44 regimes classified as closed autocracies or electoral autocracies purchased surveillance technologies during the relevant years, as compared to 30 electoral democracies or liberal democracies.

Those statistics are interesting, but most significantly, the report crowned Israel as the leading exporter of spyware and digital forensics tools documented in its global inventory. It said 56 out of 74 governments have bought their commercial spyware from Israeli firms or Israel-connected firms, such as NSO Group, Cellebrite, Cytrox (connected to Intellexa) and



Candiru. (The report likely does not have as full exposure to how widespread such tools are emanating from autocratic countries like China or Russia.)

But in November 2021, when the US Commerce Department put Israeli cyber offense firms NSO Group and Candiru on what is effectively a blacklist (no formal global sanctions, but blocked from doing business in the US and tagged with a loud label of disapproval), both companies, and the sector in general in the Jewish state, suffered a body blow.

It did not help that, over time, NSO kept changing how many of its clients had violated the cyber tool limitations it had imposed on them as part of the licensing contract – from three countries, to five to 10.

That is trend No. 1.

Trend No. 2 is that no matter how badly the US, the global media and human rights groups disliked NSO and some of the other Israeli players in the field, the Israeli defense establishment was deep in their corner to help at least some of them survive.

What is surprising about this trend is that, within Israel, it was bipartisan, with everyone from Naftali Bennett to Benny Gantz to Benjamin Netanyahu supporting the sector and de-emphasizing regulation.

The *Magazine* has learned that NSO, in the hope of getting off the list, and likely in coordination with Israeli officials, even developed a major new aspect to its technology to be able to immediately identify any time a client tries to use its tools to hack a government cellphone.

However, after several months, it became clear that Israeli governmental support alone would not help NSO Group and others survive.

Despite any fighting on behalf of the sector, many in the sector feel that Israeli government officials failed to sufficiently go to the mat for them.

And yet, the *Magazine* learned that surprising trend No. 3 is that NSO Group and some other cyber firms were saved by none other than Europe.

Yes, there was an earlier stage where NSO and other Israeli firms made a ton of money from new Abraham Accords countries like the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco, even with some Israeli technology being sold to Saudi Arabia. But after November 2021, the Defense Ministry blocked the firms from selling to most of these and other autocratic countries. With only a few dozen countries still permitted, the crucial remaining clientele was European.

Despite the EU often being a lead critic against Israel regarding human rights, the *Magazine* has exclusively seen multiple emails from clients from Western European countries thanking NSO for its assistance as recently as February 10 of this year.

In the February 10 email, the official (virtually all of NSO's

clients are government law enforcement or intelligence agencies) said that the company's technological services had an enormous impact on "our society."

Moreover, in a January 23 email from a separate client which is also a Western European country, the client said that NSO's technology had helped lead to the confiscation of a large volume of drugs and explosives and probably even the prevention of a murder.

NSO has experienced serious shock waves. Its longtime CEO and face of the company, Shalev Hulio, was finally forced out a few months ago. But despite that and several months when it toyed with the idea of switching to a cyber defense company, the *Magazine* has learned that NSO is sticking almost entirely to cyber offense and that it has made a comeback, defying the numerous bankruptcy predictions.

It may not return to the level of dominance, profitability and power it reached in its heyday, but since it has not lost a single European client, the *Magazine* understands it also is not leaving the world stage anytime soon.

After meeting with certain EU officials in Brussels in February, I understood that they often separate the questions of public criticism of human rights and doing business when it comes to Israel and other countries in the Middle East, even if they are not democratic.

Incidentally, the reason that NSO will not likely regain its former stature is not only because it has failed for around 18 months to get off the US Commerce Department's black list. It is also because its fall left room for new competitors to pick up all the autocratic state business that NSO was forced to shed.

Tal Dilian

All of this brings us to the fourth trend, the new notorious names making rounds in the media since mid-2022, such as Tal Dilian's Intellexa and associated entities.

Like many of those who have run NSO, Dilian is a graduate of Israeli Military Intelligence.

In an extensive Lawfare blog post on March 24, Winnona DeSombre Bernsen – who previously spent five years in the cyber threat intelligence industry tracking nation-state and criminal cyber threats (at Google and Recorded Future) – detailed how Dilian stepped into areas of NSO's business.

Dilian was once a founder of an NSO subsidiary but went his own way almost a decade ago and created Intellexa. Dilian has been accused of not bothering with even the partial measures that NSO may have tried to use to mitigate human rights violations – or at least to mitigate the company's exposure to its clients violating rights.

According to many reports and even some official criminal probes in Greece, Dilian has used a mix of hacking technologies and psychological warfare on behalf of many of the



(FROM TOP L) NSO website, seen on a smartphone. (Joel Saget/AFP via Getty Images)

INTELLEXA CO-CEO Tal Dilian at his Cyprus home. (Yiannis Kourtoglou/Reuters)

THEN-NSO CEO Shalev Hulio gestures during an interview about the company's product, Eclipse, a system that commandeers and force-lands intruding drones. (Ammar Awad/Reuters)



countries that NSO eventually cut off because they abused its hacking tools. He has also, according to those reports, done business with other autocratic governments which NSO deemed too volatile even before any governments were in its face.

According to one account, both Dilian and NSO set up booths in the UAE at one of various recent security conferences there. As representatives of autocratic country after country were told by NSO representatives that they were not even allowed to speak to them, client after client then disappeared into Dilian's booth for extended conversations.

In an extensive report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace from March 14, Dilian's talent at making it either hard or impossible to track and penalize Intellexa was clearly highlighted.

With the Carnegie Endowment quoting the Light-house Reports, it noted that "three companies called Intellexa were registered, in Greece, Ireland and the British Virgin Islands. All three were owned by an Irish holding company, Thalestris. As Inside Story dug into company registers in Greece and Cyprus, they found that Thalestris also controlled companies named Apollo, Hermes, Mistrona, Dernova, Lorenzo and

Feroveno – some of which were seemingly registered to a rubble-strewn vacant lot in downtown Limassol."

Furthermore, "Thalestris, in turn, was partly dependent on money from another Virgin Islands entity, Chadera Enterprises, which – behind a veil of anonymity – was ultimately controlled by Dilian and two of his associates."

The Carnegie Endowment report also said that the EU is hopelessly split between countries that are trying to start to move toward greater oversight of cyber offense firms on one side, versus countries such as Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Malta, which are havens for spyware companies and are often trying to attract more such firms.

As a result of such firms changing corporate names and country headquarters, when law enforcement focuses on individual companies and individual countries, enforcement becomes a futile game of whack-a-mole. Either the founders behind the company, or some portion of the company's employees with a sufficient mix of technical and sales talent, will generally regroup under a new name or in a new place, leaving regulators scratching their heads.

There is another wrinkle in this fourth trend of

new players who could make it harder for the entire Israeli cyber offense sector to keep its name clean, or at least avoid a certain threshold of dirt that harms the business.

Team Jorge

The latest name from this group is Team Jorge. If some Israelis thought that a mix of criminal probes and negative media coverage would start to push Dilian out of the headlines and limit the harm he might bring on other companies in hurting Israel's brand, Team Jorge may make the reputational damage attributed to Dilian look minuscule.

According to a report by *The Guardian* and a range of other global media on February 15, Team Jorge is a team of Israeli contractors, including former intelligence and special forces officials, who are responsible for having manipulated more than 30 elections around the world through hacking, sabotage and automated misinformation.

This is the part where any Israeli detractors, hard-core privacy activists and competitors from other countries pounce to toss Team Jorge in with NSO and Dilian. All three companies, they say, come from graduates of Israel's intelligence community gone wild. And if Israel cannot restrain its former intelligence officials, an alliance of international media, human rights activists and government officials fighting for privacy rights, or competitors of Israel, will use this label to put all of these Israeli firms in their place.

There is one problem with this theory: NSO's expertise is only in hacking, and Dilian is also mostly focused in hacking, according to various reports, sprinkling in some psychological warfare as a sideshow.

In contrast, Team Jorge's primary expertise is social influence campaigns and psychological warfare, with maybe some occasional hacking as tactical support.

In other words, if Israel or some other country would want to stop former Israeli intelligence officials who are making headlines from doing what they do, they would be dealing with completely different phenomena with NSO/Dilian versus Team Jorge.

To stop a company like NSO, the Lawfare blog post said, export license regulations are only a fraction of the answer. The problem with export licenses, said the blog post, is that those rules are made for physical items which need to be shipped and leave a clearer physical trail to track and follow. Cyber products can be moved around with much less of a physical trail and can be relabeled much more easily as a "network traffic management system."

Given that there is less or nothing physical to inspect, some companies just assume that EU export license officers will not follow up on whatever paperwork they file. Still others just export their products without filing a license.

The Israeli firm NFV Systems was shut down recently – but only after it got away with selling surveillance technology without a license for about five years.

Some shady firms use intermediaries in other countries to sell to authoritarian countries so that they will not need to pack up if they get caught by their home country because legally, there is nothing to catch.

Various reports say that Israeli company Quadream sells its primary hacking tool through a sister company in Cyprus that holds Quadream stock and sells Quadream tools but is not Israeli and therefore is not under the jurisdiction of the Israeli Defense Ministry's export laws.

Some cyber and intelligence professionals would say that despite whatever mistakes NSO or Cellebrite or others have made, the fact that they sell their products with some oversight is better than the Chinese or the Russians with no oversight.

In other words, removing Israeli firms would not



mean fewer cyber offensive weapons being sold around the world. It would just mean they would be sold by others. If Dilian replaced NSO in some cases, China and Russia could replace Dilian.

That might be the worst-case scenario, but still other Israelis with cyber intelligence backgrounds say that sometimes when the US shoved Israeli companies out, they were replaced by US competitors. Whether the US competitors might be more careful or ethical than Israeli competitors can be debated (there have been extensive exposés of ex-US intelligence officials going rogue, working for autocratic states), but such a replacement definitely would raise questions about the ethics of the US move.

None of this even touches the Team Jorge problem, which has to do with social media influence, or more simply: lying to lots of people online.

The Guardian, in partnership with 30 media outlets worldwide, reported that Team Jorge, led by former Israeli special forces operative Tal Hanan, overlaps with Demonan International (where Hanan is CEO), a company endorsed by the Defense Ministry.

Allegedly, Team Jorge offers its services to those looking to meddle in elections worldwide, as well as to corporate clients. In addition, reports said that a key component of the team's efforts to sway election outcomes is through social media.

According to *The Guardian*, Team Jorge used software known as Advanced Impact Media Solutions. This software controls over 30,000 fake social media profiles, all of which are used to spread disinformation or propaganda at high speed.

Team Jorge allegedly uses a "blogger machine" that creates websites which its fake social media accounts can use to increase the distribution capacity of its propaganda exponentially.

Going way beyond NSO's technological activities, the report said that the team sabotaged one election campaign by sending "a sex toy delivered via Amazon to the home of a politician, with the aim of giving his wife the false impression he was having an affair."

Once again, none of the above likely involves former Israeli intelligence officials disclosing classified information.

The endless (futile?) regulation maze

If the main issue, then, is lying, since when did it become illegal for politicians to lie?

Lying and promoting false rumors during election campaigns are unfortunately as old as campaigning, and certainly much older than today's fancy technologies, let alone massive social media machines.

However, ever since Russia interfered with the US election in 2016 and in other elections across the globe, many democracies started to define large social media campaigns, especially

if they are run by foreigners, as not only a crime but a severe threat to national security.

And yet this shift in public opinion probably has not gone anywhere near far enough to lead to a comprehensive crackdown by EU countries on Israel's cyber offense sector.

In February, the *Magazine* and some other reporters met with top EU officials to discuss the dangers of social media influence campaigns.

A major, thorough EU report noted how whereas China might distort day-to-day local news and "tactical" facts, Russia was ready to distort whole wider narratives which might encompass months or years of global historical events.

The *Magazine* pressed certain EU officials about whether they would be willing to block the wider Russian distortions, especially if it could be demonstrated that these distortions were linked to sanctionable or war crimes activities in Ukraine.

The response was an ode to the importance of free speech, even in the face of such massive and destructive Russian distortions.

And these were the kinds of officials who were more worried about privacy, as opposed to EU intelligence officials, who certainly consider privacy but whose main job is national security.

The Lawfare blog post seemed to hope to rally the EU, and later the US, to better define what activities could be listed as illegal. If anyone tries to apply this in the area of social media influence campaigns, it might be even more impossible than getting these countries to clearly state what kinds of cyber hacking business activities are illegal.

The *Magazine* has found that, among Israeli government and defense officials, there is little appetite for a law to prohibit its former intelligence officials from engaging in certain activities, even if those activities are not specifically defined as criminal. In fact, we understand that Israeli government officials' appetite for even more basic regulation of enforcing privacy standards for Israeli citizens in the commercial Israeli sector is weaker today than in the past.

Israel would like to allow cyber activities to hack "bad guys" and to help foreign law enforcement and intelligence agencies or social media campaigns to undermine regimes like the Islamic Republic of Iran. But how to do so while reigning in some very similar activities that Israel would find undesirable?

Given Israel's desire to allow cyber activities against bad guys, Israeli officials may be willing to continue to take the occasional black eye and embarrassing situation, to keep the Jewish state at or near the top of the cyberwarfare game.

For its part, NSO is smaller than before but has stabilized and survived. But even if it does someday exit the arena, the record almost certainly indicates that another Israeli competitor would take its place. ■



THE BIDEN administration has effectively blacklisted certain Israeli cyber firms.

(Samuel Corum/AFP via Getty Images)

NAFTALI BENNETT, speaking at the 2022 CyberTech Israel Conference and Exhibition, attempted to get NSO off the blacklist. (Tomer Neuberger/Flash90)

Who saved NSO Group and some other cyber firms? Surprisingly, Europe



THERE WAS an earlier stage when Israeli firms profited greatly from commerce with Abraham Accords countries.

(Karim Sahib/AFP via Getty Images)

THE CITIZEN LAB has been a leader in exposing wrongdoing by NSO clients or other Israeli cyber firms.

(Chris Helgren/Reuters)

Shir for Life

How losing a child to neuroblastoma fueled a mother's path to action

• JOANIE MARGULIES

No parent expects that common symptoms of illness will be more than just that. When Einat Dado Baralia's son Shir began exhibiting symptoms that were nothing too out of the ordinary, she was ultimately blindsided when his symptoms led to a diagnosis of a fatal childhood cancer.

Shir was just a toddler when he was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a cancer primarily affecting children under the age of five. Had his mother brushed off his symptoms as "just little kid things," her son's fight for his life might have come to a close much sooner.

Shir had exhibited symptoms that were frequently associated with "kid things," including but not limited to diarrhea. However, that tummy ache did not subside. His continued excretion was not necessarily more alarming than other symptoms, but his mother knew that she would not wait for it to pass before having him checked out by his doctor.

They wanted to cross everything off of their list. It could be a virus, it could be an allergy – the possibilities were endless. However, the resilience of this mother could not be tarnished.

One of the many devastating aspects of neuroblastoma, the cancer that took Shir too soon and kills around one-third of children with the disease – mostly under five years old – is that the symptoms don't show up as anything out of the ordinary.

What were some symptoms that led to the neuroblastoma diagnosis?

Shir's symptoms manifested in diarrhea, though the symptoms a child with neuroblastoma could have can be a range of options. Children diagnosed with neuroblastoma may have weight loss, lumps in their bellies, and pain in their bones, according to the American Cancer Society. Some other symptoms include loss of appetite or feeling already full, problems with going to the bathroom, and bruising around the eyes.

Other symptoms of the disease that may not have raised eyebrows initially include constant watery diarrhea, fever, irritability (caused by high blood pressure), a fast heart rate, flushed skin, and sweating. Though these symptoms were not the first ones to get Einat and her husband, Asaf, to assume that the diagnosis was cancer, they did want to eliminate every possible option before moving on.

They were not going to take the word of a single doctor but would keep seeking answers until one was found and confirmed. It took three months of testing and seeing different medical professionals before Shir's diagnosis was confirmed as neuroblastoma.

Einat reflected back on this grueling experience. "Medicine and scientific research have advanced so much in recent years. With this, how can it take so long to come across this?"

This emotional roller coaster is what launched an organization in honor of their son's memory, Shir for Life.

After those three months, Shir was finally diagnosed when an ultrasound revealed a massive tumor in his stomach. "Widespread metastases. Stage 4. High risk. It was the first time we ever heard this frightening word – 'neuroblastoma,'" the organization writes.

"I could see with my own eyes in the ultrasound, that Shir has a very big tumor in his belly... Within a week of this ter-



rible news, Shir had started treatment in our hometown in Israel," she told the *Magazine*. "After five long, hard months of chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and surgeries in Israel, which did not leave an impression on Shir's cancer, we left with our entire family and moved to New York to continue the treatment in a great hospital under a highly renowned doctor in New York.

"Even before treatments in New York began, first scans showed that the cancer was out of control and spread significantly in Shir's lungs," his mother said, choked up with an overwhelming sense of emotion. "It's not only spots now, but big masses. And a genuine question mark was raised whether we should go back to Israel even before we started."

There was no chance this family would give up hope. They would work to the last minute to make sure that they had done every possible thing to keep him alive and well.

Though he may not be standing here today, embracing the childhood that was brutally stolen from him, there is no doubt that he is looking down from up high at his parents' ongoing fight to make sure other children are given access to treatment and testing to help diagnose and eradicate this disease early on.

Understanding neuroblastoma – diagnosis and treatment

A rare form of childhood cancer that develops in parts of the peripheral nervous system, neuroblastoma primarily occurs in infants and children ranging from infancy to five years old.

Childhood cancer may not be as rare as we think. Data provided by Shir for Life, as well as the American and the Israel Cancer Associations, shows that childhood cancer rates had been on the rise in the preceding decades but have stabilized since 2010.

In Israel, 300 to 400 children will receive a cancer diagnosis annually. In the United States, around 9,910 children under the age of 15 will be diagnosed with cancer.

"Despite the fact that neuroblastoma is common in about



'IF THESE efforts can help even one child's fate, I'll be at peace.' (Illustrative; Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

THE DISEASE looks different from child to child. (Jon Tyson/Unsplash)

8% of childhood cancers, it is responsible for some 12% of the causes of death due to cancer in children," Einat said. "Every year, 15,000 kids will be diagnosed with this disease, and the mortality rate is just horrifying."

Of those 15,000, more than 5,000 will die, despite constant invasive treatment due to late diagnosis, by which time it will have reached stage four cancer and become metastatic.

Shir's parents were greatly troubled by the slow rates of treatment and lack of research in respect of neuroblastoma, whose symptoms are unknown in most cases. This created a burning desire in their hearts to raise funds to enable physician-researchers, such as Dr. Yael Mosse, to push extensively for roll-out clinical trials in order to help find a cure and ultimately to eradicate the disease.

After seeking treatment outside of Israel at New York's Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, and still falling short of the ultimate goal of finding a cure, this Israeli couple was connected to Dr. Yael Mosse, a pediatric oncologist and physician-scientist, who studied at Tel Aviv University's Sackler School of Medicine. Like Shir's parents, Mosse genuinely wanted to make sure that Shir was given every last fighting chance.

Though it is clear that Mosse approaches every patient with love and care as she would her own children, her connection with Shir also turned into a lifelong friendship and partnership of action with his parents.

"I wanted to know, and still want to know, what is the fuel that cancer thrives on? How can we keep the disease from outsmarting us? Cancer is truly thousands of different diseases, and we can only effectively eradicate it if we know where it comes from," Mosse told the *Magazine*.

Mosse, who has been working at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia for 20 years, has noted that it really does not get easier between cases, no matter how much time has passed.

"Especially in neuroblastoma, the disease looks different from kid to kid. Heterogeneity makes it hard to develop treatments. We've learned that this cancer, and cancer in general, sheds DNA into the bloodstream. With methods like liquid biopsies, a process

that doctors have been using for adult cancer cases for years, more can be done at every stage," Mosse said.

Persistence in the face of adversity

Mosse met Shir and his family after six months of chemo and antibody therapy, though it was increasingly clear that the disease was resistant. Before beginning treatments that may or may not be able to help prolong his life, Mosse had doctors back Israel describe the risks associated with what they would be trying to do. It was important to her that the family be fully briefed in Hebrew, to ensure full understanding.

They agreed, and proceeded to build a relationship while trying to give Shir the best fighting chance possible.

Mosse's connection with Shir, who despite being gravely ill was still happy, as children so often are in such circumstances, really connected her further to the work she was doing.

He was still singing, dancing, and being cheerful. "All I can see is this beautiful boy who just smiled. He had these amazing dimples. He danced and sang with his siblings, and his laughter was larger than life," she recalled.

She expressed a sense of responsibility to help this child, and her connection with the family quickly became an unbreakable bond that has endured through the years.

"Einat and Asaf, after Shir died, not only were devastated, but there was this immediate fire in Einat's soul that was so palpable. She's someone you can see wants to make a big difference – and she wants to do it now."

Now donations are needed more than ever to provide for clinical trials of liquid radiation for children. When children and their disease have genetic deformations, it creates further resistant cases and frequent relapses. Should the funding become available to make this childhood cancer-specific testing clinically approved, the pediatric test could be rolled out by the summer of 2023.

It has become increasingly clear that Einat Dado Baralia, Dr. Yael Mosse, and Shir for Life operate toward a specific goal: Some day, this won't be an issue for anyone. They will push until this disease has been

eradicated. "Not one more child should have to suffer from this. If I can change the fate of one kid, I can rest peacefully," Einat said. "Neuroblastoma may impact fewer people, but that does not make it any less worthy," she asserted.

Shir for Life wants to make sure that life can constantly evolve, especially for these children.

For more information: www.shirforlife.com



EINAT DADO BARALIA holds son Shir, alongside pediatric oncologist-physician scientist Dr. Yael Mosse. (Einat Baralia)

BEAUTIFUL BOY: Shir. (Einat Baralia)

VOICES FROM THE ARAB PRESS

A weekly selection of opinions and analyses from the Arab media around the world

COMPILED BY THE MEDIA LINE



A TEHRAN newspaper sports a cover photo of the Iranian and Saudi Arabian flags. (Majid Asgaripour/WANA via Reuters)

The recent Riyadh-Tehran rapprochement caused panic among regional actors such as Hassan Nasrallah

THE SECRET TO THE RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA & IRAN

Okaz, Saudi Arabia, March 25

What is the key to restoring relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran?

Could it be the rise of China's regional influence, with the geopolitical and economic difficulties it brings, or the war in Ukraine? Is it the kingdom's demands being met, with an emphasis on respecting the sovereignty of states and noninterference in their internal affairs? Could it be the strategic importance of the Middle East, its vital shipping routes to the global economy, the need to ensure security and stability, and the desire to halt destabilizing activities in the region? These are all plausible reasons for the two countries to restore relations.

There are several reasons behind the return of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The first is due to the wise Saudi policy, which is based on long-term strategic interests instead of short-term ones. This is despite the efforts of some global powers to draw the region into alliances that suit their interests.

Washington was eager to make Israel the alternative force to ensure regional stability, which would benefit Israel through its arms sales and allow for its infiltration into the Gulf security system. This is why former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett viewed the resumption of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran as a "political victory" for Tehran and a "fatal blow" to attempts to construct a regional alliance against the Islamic Republic.

Saudi Arabia did not take a passive approach in the face of attempts by Western powers to alter the regional balance of power. Instead, it followed the principles of good neighborliness and diplomatic dialogue in order to settle its differences. Musaed Al-Aiban, the Saudi national security adviser, recently reiterated his commitment to dialogue, declaring that the country would "adhere to the principles of dialogue and diplomacy to resolve differences" with its neighbors. Prince Faisal bin Farhan likewise affirmed the kingdom's vision of utilizing "political solutions and dialogue" to ensure peace in the region.

The war in Ukraine has marked a shift in global dynamics, ushering in a multipolar world. This shift has enabled the Middle East to play a more significant role in global and economic policies. The recent rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran caused fear and panic among regional actors such as Hassan Nasrallah, who stated: "We were surprised by the agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia, but we are confident that this agreement will not be to our detriment."

The *New York Times* reported that the US has become so embroiled in the affairs of its regional partners that its role as peacemaker has been taken over by China. The secret to restoring relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran lies in several key details. Most prominently, the kingdom's vision of preferring political solutions and dialogue over war and conflict. This has been confirmed by Saudi Arabia and serves as a reminder of the two countries' shared destiny and common goals.

Working together to build a model of prosperity and stability will benefit the entire people of the region.

— Osama Yamani

JOURNALISTS & NORMALIZATION

Al-Ahram, Egypt, March 22

I strongly object to the decision passed by the Journalists Syndicate's General Assembly prohibiting the normalization of relations with Israel. This is a wrong decision, both professionally and nationally. Professionally, journalists are not ordinary citizens. Their job is to research news and verify facts and events, particularly in countries that are opponents or competitors to their own. As an Egyptian citizen, I would like to be informed of the events in Israel, even if I disagree with its policies or its existence altogether. There are journalists from all over the world, including from Arab nations, such as Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco, as well as Palestinian journalists. There are also Arab channels for them, and correspondents in Israel. Therefore, I find this professional laziness, disguised as enthusiastic opposition to the Israeli entity, to be unacceptable.

Secondly, this decision is also wrong on a national level. Who is looking out for the Egyptian people and

citizens by preventing them from knowing what is happening in Israel? This reminds me of the atmosphere before the 1967 war, when knowledge about Israel was taboo. Do you remember the great journalist Ahmed Bahaa el-Din, who was inspired by the 1967 defeat to publish his famous book, *Israeliyyat?* Following the release of the book, the Egyptian public was finally able to become informed about Israel.

Finally, this decision of the Journalists Syndicate is legally wrong, as no institution has the right to prevent any citizen from having a legitimate right to travel to Israel! For informational purposes only, it is worth noting that the Taba crossing between Sinai and Israel witnessed the movement of more than half a million tourists from Israel last year, with 124,000 of them visiting Sharm el-Sheikh, and 54,000 coming to Cairo to explore its streets and enjoy its attractions.

— Osama Al-Ghazaly Harb

ISRAELI GOVERNMENT: ENEMY OF IRAN OR ITS ALLY?

Al Rai, Kuwait, March 24

The Palestinian people are not an "imaginary people," as Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich suggested at a recent symposium in Paris. His remarks provoked strong reactions from Jordan, which began to question the viability of the peace agreement signed between the two countries in 1994.

The Palestinian people are more present than ever in Palestine since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, despite the fact that a senior Israeli minister considers them "imaginary." This is because Israel eventually agreed to sign the Oslo Accords on the White House lawn, recognizing the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people who seek liberation and the restoration of their rights.

Despite Yasser Arafat's many mistakes, he nevertheless was able to uphold a Palestinian identity for a people who have continued to resist occupation. The Palestinian people will remain. Finance Minister Smotrich will eventually depart. What Israeli leaders such as Smotrich fail to understand is that living in superstitions is one thing, but what is happening

Today, the Iraq invasion is seen as one of the US's most egregious foreign policy mistakes



A US marine watches as a statue of Iraq's president Saddam Hussein falls in central Baghdad's Firdaus Square, 2003. (Goran Tomasevic/Reuters/File)

in Palestine is another. Israel cannot rid itself of the Palestinian people, no matter what tactics it employs.

Moreover, Israel's problem has become internal rather than with the Palestinians. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is occupied with his political future and how to evade imprisonment, and is not concerned with the future of Israel in the region, nor the opportunities it is missing. Netanyahu is doing whatever he can to stay out of court, after being accused of corruption. He remembers the image of his predecessor, Ehud Olmert, in prison after being found guilty of bribery.

It appears that Netanyahu is resigned to being at the mercy of right-wing ministers like Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, rather than being beholden to the judiciary and justice. This approach will ultimately lead him nowhere and he will eventually be confronted with the reality of a Palestinian people living on Palestinian land. This is an indisputable fact. As the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was known to say, the Palestinian people have a presence on the political map of the region, and one day they will appear on the geographical map of the Middle East.

There is an unavoidable question facing Minister Smotrich: what to do with the 7 to 8 million Palestinians living between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River? This question reveals the internal crisis gripping Israel. President [Isaac] Herzog's concerns about a possible civil war suggest a deep division between the religious and more secular Jewish populations, who have nothing to do with one another. Modern, hi-tech Tel Aviv stands in stark contrast to this conflict, with its success story and liberalism, which leave no room for error.

More important than the internal dissent within the Israeli military is the wariness of other countries in the region, especially Jordan, to establish normal relations with the Jewish state. This has caused questions to arise concerning the relationship between Israel and the current US administration, which appears to be dissatisfied with the Netanyahu government's lack of internal cohesion. What kind of government is this, which seeks to transfer the judiciary to its loyalists?

This government, controlled by settlers, is willing to ignore whatever is left of the Oslo Accords. What is this government that seeks to challenge Iran's nuclear program while simultaneously preventing any form of diplomatic engagement with its neighbors? It remains unclear if Netanyahu and his government are truly invested in confronting the "Iranian threat."

Smotrich's comments display an alarming lack of awareness of what is happening around him. Inter-

nally, Israel must consider its relationship with the Palestinians, who cannot simply be erased from the land of Palestine. Regionally, Israel must consider its peace agreement with Jordan, as well as its recent Abraham Accords with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco.

Finally, Israel must consider its relationship with the US and the military and political coordination between the two countries when it comes to Iran and its regional ambitions. The actions of the Israeli government, led by Netanyahu, appear to be contradictory. Is this government an adversary of the Islamic Republic of Iran or one of its covert allies? All the measures implemented by the finance minister, thus far, seem to be aimed at advancing Iran's expansionist ambitions. Who in the region can still trust Israel?

— Khairallah Khairallah

MEMORY OF THE IRAQ WAR

Al Ittihad, United Arab Emirates, March 24

Twenty years ago, in March 2003, the US launched an invasion of Iraq, with the goal of overthrowing Saddam Hussein, eliminating weapons of mass destruction, and fostering a more humane and democratic nation. Today, the invasion of Iraq is widely seen as one of the most egregious mistakes in US foreign policy in recent history.

Since 1941, the US has been involved in six major wars. Of those, World War II was the most devastating and destructive. Despite the immense number of casualties and the heavy economic toll, most Americans deemed it a "just war." Five years after the end of World War II, the Korean War, now known as the "forgotten war," was not a decisive conflict. Yet, as it was supported by the UN Security Council, it prevented the communist regime in the North from taking over the entire Korean peninsula. Today, South Korea is one of the most prosperous nations in the world.

The US military intervention in Vietnam began with limited assistance programs, but during Lyndon Johnson's administration hundreds of thousands of US soldiers were sent to fight in ground battles. Due to most of the recruits being inexperienced, casualties were high, and the war became increasingly unpopular. Following the election of Richard Nixon in 1968, the war escalated and spread to Cambodia. Nixon's successor, Gerald Ford, oversaw the humiliating withdrawal from Saigon in April 1975. Following this, the Americans vowed never to fight another land war in Asia.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush spearheaded a successful operation to liberate Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's invasion. This resulted in the destruction of major Iraqi fighting units. Despite this, Saddam Hussein continued to maintain a firm grip on power in Iraq.

The period from 1991 to 2001 was the height of American global power. The Soviet Union had backed the Gulf War and subsequently disbanded, in part due to its unsuccessful war in Afghanistan. This effectively marked the end of the Cold War. Then came September 11, 2001, when the US experienced a devastating terrorist attack. In response, the nation launched a military operation in Afghanistan to capture Osama bin Laden and topple the Taliban regime. However, the US also decided to remain in Afghanistan to rebuild the country.

Regrettably, the resources necessary to bring about this endeavor became unavailable when Washington chose to go to war with Iraq. The beginning of the Iraq War saw some success; Saddam Hussein was apprehended, and the US assumed control of the nation. However, due to mismanagement and a series of strategic missteps, attempts to establish a representative government were unsuccessful, leading to civil war and the loss of thousands of American and Iraqi lives. Additionally, these efforts have cost countless sums of money.

In 2011, the US formally put an end to its direct military engagement in Iraq, though leaving behind special forces and aviation for the purpose of suppressing the ISIS insurgency. Furthermore, the United States' military presence in Afghanistan continued until the abrupt withdrawal in the summer of 2021.

Opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has emboldened those who oppose US involvement in Ukraine. Critics argue that the neoconservatives who championed the decision to invade Iraq remain influential. Additionally, a coalition of left-wing anti-war organizations and neo-isolationists within the Republican party are using the failure of the Iraq war to challenge "the endless American wars."

The conclusion is that, so long as the US does not have troops fighting in Ukraine, public support for President Joe Biden's policy of arming Ukraine will remain. Yet, if there is a significant reversal in the war and an increase in hostilities, the memories of the Iraq and Afghanistan will be invoked to limit US intervention and seek a solution with Russia.

— Jeffrey Kemp

Translated by Asaf Zilberfarb.

Making 'seder' for life

Not just for the holidays

• MIRIAM GOLD

It's that time again. Purim just ended, and maybe the costumes are all put away, but the candy certainly is still everywhere. Passover is around the corner and the panic is setting in. Where should I start? How should I start? Why do I have all this stuff? *Help!*

When it comes to preparing for Passover, most people tend to think not

just about the practicals but also about the extras. Why just clean a room when I can take this time to get rid of unwanted items and organize them as well?

Organizing in the context of the holiday season is natural but not always the best time. With the myriad of holiday and Seder preparations, it's easy to understand why. Guests are expected, and you want your entire home to shine, but some people may be biting off more than they can chew when they open the Pandora's box of organizing.

The concept of organizing is not just about preparing the home for the holiday guests. *Organizing is about*



CLEANING FOR Passover: The fridge, of course, is a massive deal. (Photos: Miriam Gold)



A NEW cabinet for toys makes for a less cluttered playroom.



creating a life that is more efficient, productive and enjoyable all year round. Preparation for the holidays should only be just that – preparing for the holiday.

Organizing for life requires a mindset different from that of organizing for the holidays. It's not just about making things look good for a few weeks or even a month. It's about creating systems and routines that work for you and your lifestyle. It's about taking a holistic approach to your home, work and personal life.

Here are some tips for organizing for life:

Create a plan

The first step is to create a plan. Take some time to think about your goals, your schedule and your priorities. What areas of your home need the most attention? What changes do you want to make? Once you have a clear idea of

what you want to accomplish, you can start creating a plan that will help you get there.

For example, you want to declutter your guest room to use as a part-time office. Here are some steps you can take to implement this plan:

Start by removing items that don't belong in the guest room. Then, sort through the remaining items and decide what you want to keep, donate or trash.

Once you've decluttered and relocated items, make a list of the tasks you need to complete to turn the room into an office. Break down each task into small, manageable steps, setting specific tasks for each day. By breaking the project into smaller pieces, you will avoid feeling overwhelmed and stay motivated until the project is completed.

Declutter regularly

Clutter is a major obstacle to organizing. Having a cluttered space

makes it difficult to find what you need, creates unnecessary stress, and takes up valuable space. That's why decluttering regularly is so important. Set aside time each week to go through your belongings and get rid of anything you don't need or use. Organizing your space will make you feel more at ease and Zen.

Design systems and establish routines

Establishing systems and routines is crucial to maintain organization. It's not enough to just declutter and organize your space once and think it will always stay perfect. You need to create systems and routines that will help you maintain your organization over time.

Make sure to allocate specific spaces for each type of item, label everything clearly, and establish routines. This might include creating schedules for cleaning and paperwork, sorting through items such as toys and clothes, or regularly cleaning out your refrigerator or kitchen cabinets. Stick to your routines and adjust them as needed.

Make yourself a priority

Organizing for life isn't just about organizing your physical space. It also involves prioritizing self-care. This might include things like getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, and taking time for yourself to do the things you enjoy. When you prioritize self-care, you'll have more energy and focus to organize and fully live your life. So, find that time in your busy week and carve out some "me time."

Be flexible

Finally, it's essential to stay flexible when trying to maintain an organized lifestyle. Life is unpredictable, and things don't always go according to plan. That's why it's important to be adaptable and open to change. Everyone has different needs and preferences, and what works for one person may not work for another. The systems you put in place on day one may not always work for you and your family. If you find that a system or routine isn't working for you, don't be afraid to modify it or try something new.

CLEANING AND organizing are both important tasks that are often associated with Passover.

Cleaning is a tradition that involves removing all *hametz* [foods with leavening agents] from the home. Organizing, on the other hand, involves preparing the home for the holiday by organizing dishes, utensils and other Passover-specific items. While both cleaning and organizing are important for a successful holiday, they serve different purposes. Cleaning is necessary to remove hametz and maintain religious traditions, while organizing helps to create a functional and organized space for the holiday.

Organizing for life is about creating a more efficient, productive and Zen life all year round. By starting with a plan, decluttering regularly, creating systems and routines, prioritizing self-care and staying flexible, you can create a life that is organized and fulfilling.

So don't wait until the holidays to organize. You can start today by organizing one small space. Each

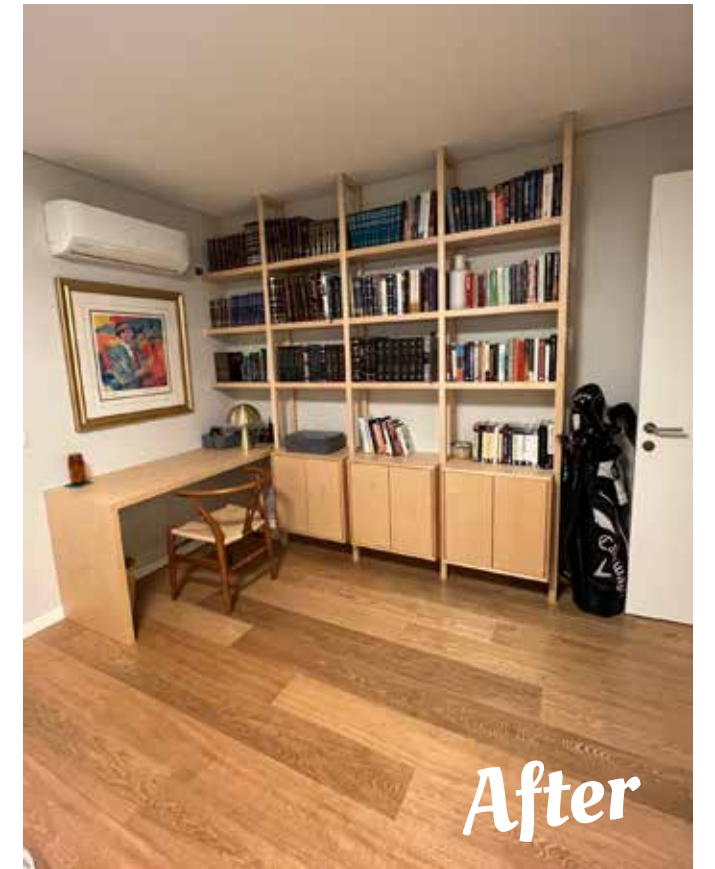
organized area will help you function better in the home and ultimately lead to a more enjoyable life.

Remember, when the Passover cleaning starts, do just that – clean for Passover. ■

The writer is a professional organizer. For more information: www.goldstandardorganizing.com

GETTING THE right cabinet is key: The writer had a carpenter build a piece to fit the room (and remove the rug).

LIFE IS better when you don't get agita every time you step into your closet.



DAVID BEN-GURION at a Seder with soldiers in a secret site in Jerusalem, April 23, 1948. (Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem; #PHG,1009717)



Noted Passover Seders in Jerusalem, 1948

April 23, 1948: 75 years ago

• DAVID GEFFEN

Preparations for the soldiers' Seders in Jerusalem in 1948 were under the jurisdiction of chief chaplain Shlomo Goren. In various locales in the city such as Ramat Rachel and Camp Schneller, the Seders were so packed that the participants had to stand. To ensure that the essentials were covered, Goren prepared an abridged version of the Haggadah.

In Goren's book *With Might and Strength*, he writes, "The city had been under siege for months. Supplies short, rations at starvation levels. No wine, no matzah (this will be explained), no eggs, nothing to make. A token Seder. No way for supplies to reach Jerusalem."

Though no description how it reached Jerusalem was proffered, Goren discovered 90 kilos of matzah in the city. The military governor of Jerusalem decided the matzah was for the citizens.

Goren was aghast; he argued with the governor because soldiers would be forced to eat *chametz*. "This is the first Jewish army in Jerusalem in 2,000 years – and they should eat chametz?"

Goren was an individual who could not be deterred.

Late one night in the week before Passover, he arranged for a truck and soldiers to accompany him, since he knew where the warehouse for provisions was in Jerusalem. He and the soldiers broke in, as there were no guards. They discovered the matzah, although it is not clear how many kilograms they put in the truck. The next morning, he spoke to the commander of the Jerusalem forces. "We have the matzah. I am requisitioning the amount I now possess. These Jerusalem soldiers will have a kosher Seder."

The chief chaplain's speech to the soldiers is found in his book. "I am sure you all know that it won't be possible for you all to stand at a Seder table and celebrate Pesach the way you are used to doing in your homes." Goren stressed how this Seder would be celebrated. "At least you will be able to mark this one night and observe the mitzvot, to eat some matzah, have some lettuce and drink a cup of wine – let's have a Seder." They also received a minimal amount of food to eat.

When the largest Seder got underway in Jerusalem, Goren announced that a special Elijah would be arriving, so the cup was filled for the special guest. To everyone's surprise, David Ben-Gurion, a symbolic Elijah, arrived, having been flown from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in a Piper Cub [a two-seat monoplane].

The soldiers were overwhelmed – the leader of their country, soon to be the nation of the Jewish people, had not forgotten them. In a little-known photo found at the Central Zionist Archives, the joy on their faces was clear for all to see as they surrounded Ben-Gurion, smiling away.

Chief chaplain Goren recalled a portion of Ben-Gurion's talk.

"Tonight, this is the first time in the 2,000 years of exile that the Jewish people are celebrating the festival of freedom and redemption as a free people back in its own land." Then he emphasized, "The Seder concludes with the hopeful words 'Next year in Jerusalem.' You men are in Jerusalem fighting to liberate it and fulfill that destiny. Do not yield but hold on to Jerusalem tenaciously."

Ben-Gurion spoke a bit longer than expected, with tears in his eyes, until it was time to return to his headquarters in Tel Aviv.

Dr. D. Thomas Lancaster, pastor of the Immanuel Beth Messianic Synagogue in Hudson, Wisconsin, described Ben-Gurion's unusual exit from the Seder. "The soldiers were so packed into the hall it was impossible for Ben-Gurion to make his way through the crowd to reach the exit." Just like a miracle, "the soldiers picked him up and passed him over their

heads, from one man to another so that he could exit the building and fly back to Tel Aviv."

CAPTURING THE impact of the siege of Jerusalem in 1948, *The New York Times* wrote: "The 106,000 Jewish inhabitants face starvation. Bread is rationed to a quarter of a loaf per person daily and there is little meat, poultry, fish, milk, butter, eggs or vegetables for the ordinary people. Even children are going hungry."

Despite the proximity of Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the food situation was infinitely better there. Ration card holders could get three kilos of potatoes, some chicken, and exchange sugar for matzah, which was also distributed free to the poor 10 days before Passover. Advertisements in Hebrew and English papers listed products which had been certified kosher for Passover, and Seder hospitality was advertised for those who needed it.

In 1988, one of the few books in English, *Letters from Jerusalem 1947-1948*, about Jerusalem in 1947 and 1948 appeared. It was written by American *oleh* (immigrant) Zipporah Porath.

The Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel published the work on the 40th anniversary of Israel's creation. The book went through three editions, is on Kindle, and was translated into Hebrew.

Porath was a Hagana volunteer before becoming a nurse. The letters featured in her book were the ones she sent to her parents. When her mother died in New York, she went for the funeral and found them.

Here is a sample of her singular style – March 23, 1948, she described the food situation: "For three weeks I've been waiting for my grocer to save me an egg... well today he did. With utmost tenderness, he wrapped my egg and placed it on top of my parcel. The entire bus ride I protected the egg vigilantly. Then bingo, right in front of the door, I missed a step, and my treasure went flying. Took the remains, added some powdered milk and powdered eggs and scrambled up a delicious dish."

On April 25, 1948, her boyfriend Yehuda took her to his family's Seder. They walked from her apartment in Kiryat Moshe through eerily quiet streets. As they walked, they greeted mutual friends, who sang loudly and waved to people on their balconies who were waiting for guests.

The main guests in Jerusalem were the 100 drivers who had braved the constant shooting and shelling to join the pre-Passover convoy to Jerusalem on Shabbat HaGadol, a week earlier. They were separated from their own families this Seder night, but having helped to provide Jerusalemites with food, they were welcomed everywhere.

As they neared Yehuda's family home, they passed the residence of chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac HaLevi Herzog, the president's grandfather.

In her letter after the seder held on April 23, which was Shabbat too, Porath wrote: "A thick security guard stood. The night before [chief] Rabbi [Yitzhak Halevi] Herzog had broadcast, over the Hagana radio. He addressed the women and men in the armed forces as makers of history and called upon them to draw courage from the Passover festival while invoking God's blessing upon them; Go in this your strength and redeem Israel forever."

It was the first time Porath attended a Sephardi Seder: "The reigning matriarch was a grandmother whose hand everyone kissed after Kiddush. While the Haggadah was recited in Hebrew, the important passages were reread in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) for her benefit. Whenever the conversation lapsed into Ladino, the children, little chauvanists, were generally upset and demanded that only Hebrew be spoken," she noted, before going on.

"The herbs were truly bitter, plucked from the fields like greens we now eat with our daily fare. There was mallow, a spinach-like vegetable, which grew prolifically in the open meadows around Jerusalem. Nutritionists had discovered that mallow had highly edible properties, whether raw or cooked, and it soon became a popular dish."

To Porath, the *haroset* tasted just like mortar, she said before continuing with a tale about the *afikoman*:

"The afikoman was placed in a napkin; its ends tied in a knot, and passed to each person at the table, who in turn slung it over a shoulder and held it there to symbolize the way the



Jews carried their belongings out of Egypt. When it fell into the hands of one of the children, it miraculously disappeared and was only forfeited against the promise of a book."

Porath and Yehuda decided to leave before the end of the Seder.

"It was still early when I arrived at home," she wrote. "I decided to walk over to the home of Professor and Mrs. Louis Guttman (Guttman was a leading statistician at the Hebrew University where he taught) in the HaMekasher neighborhood nearby, where the festivities were still underway."

NOW ON to another Seder being held on the night of April 23 when we meet another American *oleh*, Prof. David Macarov. After World War II, he returned to his home in Atlanta, Georgia following a military career during which he was mainly assigned to India. However, a Zionist all his life, Macarov felt compelled to make *aliyah* (immigrate) with his wife, Frieda, a nurse. They made *aliyah* in 1947 after David was told that he could use the GI Bill to pay for his studies at the Hebrew University.

Frieda describes their Seder on that April night: "As April dawned, my friend Bea Sirota Renov, by then a mother, spoke to me about the forthcoming Passover." Renov grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, and was a Zionist enthusiast throughout the

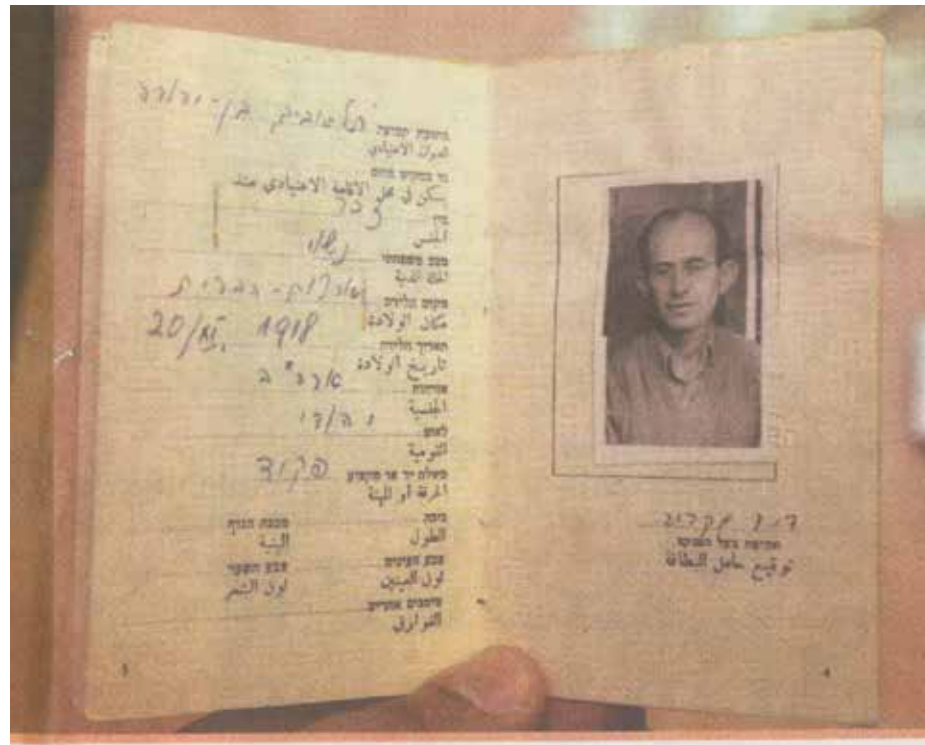
SHLOMO GOREN as a young soldier heading the IDF Military Rabbinate. (Wikimedia Commons)

'HAGGADAH SELECTIONS' by A. Allweil, 1948. (Provided by Pitts Theology Library, Emory University)

CURRENCY FROM the Mandate period. (Photos: Marc Israel Sellem)



DAVID MACAROV'S first Israeli identity card.



1930s and '40s. She was active in the Atlanta Young Judea youth group and at the religious school in the Shearith Israel synagogue, where, coincidentally, my grandfather Rav Tuvia Geffen z"l was the rabbi at the time. She spoke Yiddish with her parents, and during World War II, as president of Young Judea's southern region, she organized Hebrew-speaking groups for members.

"Bea informed me that it was best to have the Seder at their place," Frieda continued. "She explained that a neighbor had introduced her to the mallow plant, which grew wild and taught her what to prepare from it. As a result, her breast milk had risen in quality and Bea herself had gotten stronger since the birth of her daughter. The decision was made – Seder at the Renovs."

The only problem – little or no food. "Chief Rabbi Herzog [grandfather of President Isaac Herzog] understood how to help Jerusalem citizens who wanted to observe Passover in the midst of all this turmoil," David Macarov explained. "Herzog made a *psak* [halachic decision] – all food, even if it had hametz content, was kosher to eat on Passover." Whatever matzah chief chaplain Goren had left was available too.

A scientist as well as a noted Torah scholar, the chief rabbi calmed the religious fears of the 100,000 Jews living in Jerusalem.

Macarov told me that around April 10, 1948, there were rumors that a convoy would get through with food supplies before Passover. Seven days before Pesach, the trucks broke through. Macarov's vivid description of the convoy's arrival describes the scene:

"Go down to the Strings Bridge today in Jerusalem and imagine hundreds of Jerusalemites, no one counted them, lining Herzl Boulevard, and other crowds sprawled along Jaffa Road down to what was Shaare Zedek hospital all awaiting the convoy," he said. "The trucks became real as they emerged from the road below into the city. We were all in tears as we viewed what was plastered on every windshield – the biblical words *'Im eshkahech Yerushalayim...'* – 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither.' "We ran to the trucks driving in, grabbed the drivers, handed them flowers and embraced them as best we could. The local girls kissed all the drivers. The *Yam Suf* (Red Sea) into Jerusalem had been split, and the bearers of substance came through safely."

The Macarovs received eggs, a chicken, matzah

(from the looted warehouse) and dried foods, while the Renovs received more of everything because they had a baby.

Bea had stayed in Hadassah hospital for longer than usual after the birth, following an attack on the convoy carrying doctors and nurses to the hospital on Mount Scopus on April 13, 1948. The convoy was ambushed, and over seventy people were killed. In the weeks following, the one road from Hadassah to the city was watched closely to ensure it was secure. So, the Renovs were given the opportunity to stay on following their daughter's birth.

"I remember Jerusalem governor Dov Yosef, nattily dressed, shaking hands with the drivers and embracing them warmly," Macarov stressed. "From afar, it seemed to me Rabbi Herzog was blessing those who had gotten through."

The Seder night fell on Shabbat. There were the two families; four American-born Jerusalemites – David and Frieda Macarov, Jerry and Bea Renov – and the new Sabra Renov baby, all seated under the stairway for protection. They took a deep breath, slowly realizing that they had left the US and were living in Jerusalem.

Macarov, who had a very good memory, recounted almost every detail to me. "Seder is the order we give to life." (The word *seder* means "order"). "This Jerusalem Seder is much, much more. It is freedom, it is on our own soil, it is the laughing and crying of a baby born here. Our ancestors were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, our sisters and brothers were slaves and slaughtered in Europe, but remnants have survived, with God's help... and are in this special city tonight."

Jerry Renov added, "We are eating the bread of affliction, the staple of the desert wanderers; but just as they were privileged to enter the land, we are too."

He then made the blessing "*Sheheyanu vekimanu vehigyanu lazman hazeh*" (we are alive and blessed to reach this moment).

"The Renovs had their supplies for the Seder at their home and the Macarovs brought something as well, so by pooling we had special fare for the Seder. Two carrots, some matzah, three potatoes, wine and 100 grams of frozen meat."

Porath, after visiting the Guttmans, dropped in at that Seder as well. She captured their Seder with these words: "What a unique feeling it was to celebrate the festival of freedom, living with the hope that our own homeland would soon be independent. A few days

after Israel became a state, Jerry became one of the first pilots in the Israel Air Force. Everyone in Jerusalem soon knew who he was because one of his tasks was to drop the mail into Jerusalem."

THE MILITARY outpost in Yemin Moshe was the site of a dramatic Seder attended, among others, by an enterprising reporter named Malka Raymist.

Raymist pulled strings, going through a retired American Air Force Jewish chaplain to reach the Hagana headquarters. There, after several phone calls, she got a signed pass to enter Yemin Moshe.

On Friday evening, April 23, at the Public Information Office just off King David Street, she crossed over to a British sentry post, had her pass checked and walked toward the Windmill. At an unmanned roadblock, she shouted; but as no one answered, she slipped under the barbed wire.

Only then did a soldier appear to check her pass and clear her entrance. As they made their way through a trench, they had to duck quickly when shots whizzed by their heads.

Finally, after walking through winding streets and buildings with large gaping holes, she and her escort got to the command post. After quizzing her briefly, the commander welcomed her. Arriving at the Seder, they saw a long table set with a white tablecloth, matzot and flowers. There were many bottles of wine, mostly gifts from Jerusalem inhabitants of the Yemin Moshe neighborhood.

The soldiers began to arrive – Orientals, Germans, Poles and Hungarians. The few remaining Yemin Moshe civilian residents soon appeared, including a patriarchal figure with a long white beard, dressed in a festive robe that contrasted with all the khaki uniforms. The Seder had a flavor of its own, "full of merriment despite the place and time," according to Raymist. They used a Haggadah illustrated by noted artist Ariea Allweil for the joint military forces. The Haggadah comprised traditional extracts, original illustrations and appropriate Hebrew poems. (A copy of this Passover treasure, from 75 years ago, survived and made its way to the Pitts Library at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta.)

Selections were read from it and the traditional Seder songs resounded. With patriarchal grace, an old Yemin Moshe resident blessed all assembled. The four sons were represented by the soldiers – each one taking his turn.

Between the third and fourth cups of wine, the phone rang. The commander grabbed it and called for silence. As soon as he hung up, he announced: "Twenty men – outside with me." Grabbing their rifles, they left quickly. Soon the firing began in earnest and then slowly subsided. One by one the soldiers returned, and as they sat down, another bowl of hot soup was brought out to each one.

After everyone had eaten, the commander made a speech, as unforgettable today as when it was then. "We now are celebrating our liberation from the Egyptian yoke. But at the same time, we are fighting to liberate ourselves and our country from other yokes. The odds are against us," he stressed. "Have no illusions. The worst is yet to come. When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and saw what rotten human material he had on his hands, he decided to get rid of it by remaining with them for 40 years in the desert and letting them die out."

"However," he continued, echoing the Passover message heard throughout the country that year, "Moses had time. We have no time – only a few weeks, and we must do it now. Be prepared for the worst. Be prepared to give everything. We are fighting for a better future. We are fighting the final battle to free ourselves forever from all yokes. We are fighting for a Jewish state." ■

Parent-child communication

Some do's and don'ts



PSYCH TALK
DR. MIKE GROPPER

Growing up in a home with screaming or overly punitive parents is more common than many people would want to believe. On the other hand, there are parents who know how to speak to their kids in a way that shows respect while still laying out the expectations and rules of acceptable behavior in the family.

Over the years, I have seen many parents who complain that their child is bullying a younger sibling or acting aggressively in school. Some parents tell me that their child is depressed.

Oftentimes, there appears to be a serious communication problem between the parent and the child. There are many possible reasons for this problem. Perhaps the parents themselves have never learned effective communication skills.

Sometimes there is a serious marital relationship problem, and the marital tension takes a toll on the kids. In another instance, a child may be biologically prone to hyperactive behavior, and this triggers a parent's limit to being patient. There are many things that can trigger anger in a parent, which may result in a parent acting more verbally and/or physically aggressive to a child.

Nevertheless, research on the topic of effective parent-child communication is abundant, and there are many lessons to be learned from this body of knowledge. Below, I highlight some of the major points I have found helpful in my work with parents.

Give choices whenever possible

Connect before you express

Parent-child communication is more effective when a parent tries first to get the child to make eye contact. Before talking, the parent should ask the child to look at him/her in the eyes, and only then begin speaking to the child. Eye contact is the critical factor.

Don't use physical punishment

The parent who regularly resorts to physical punishment can be sure that the child will most likely use the same approach with others in his environment. It may express itself in physical aggression toward siblings, peers, or possibly toward the parents. Invariably, the child who is hit regularly by a parent will suffer from low self-esteem, and this can last a lifetime.

Instead, teach children, by talking to them, what they did wrong. Start talking to children from the time they are young, make sure they understand the rules, repeat them regularly, and explain why they are important to you.

Granted, some kids are more challenging, and they may make you very angry. But, clearly, physical punishment will not be effective, neither in the short run nor in the long run. Parents who have anger man-



(Yossi Aloni/Flash90)

Instead of "Let Rivka have a turn," say "I want you to let Rivka have a turn now." This works well with children who want to please but don't like being ordered. By saying "I want," you give a reason for compliance rather than just an order.

'When... then...'

"When you get your teeth brushed, then we'll begin the story." "When your work is finished, then you can watch TV." "When," which implies that you expect obedience, works better than "if," which suggests that the child has a choice when you don't mean to give him/her one.

Give choices

As a general rule, everyone likes some control, even your kids. So give choices whenever possible, such as "Do you want to put your pajamas on first or brush your teeth first?"

agement problems may need to seek out therapy to learn how to manage their anger.

Be aware of your tone of voice

It's not usually what people say but how they say it that makes the difference in being heard correctly. Like adults, children are more likely to be attentive if spoken to in a respectful way. Don't underestimate your kids' sensitivities to your verbal delivery.

Don't embarrass your children

No one likes to be embarrassed or humiliated in front of others. In the heat of the moment, many parents have been guilty of calling their kids out in front of relatives or friends.

The parent's anger may be expressed by the use of name-calling or cursing designed to sting and get the child's attention.

As a result of the parent's behavior, the child will feel resentment and embarrassment. This is especially true for a teenager, who may feel downright humiliated when an angry parent calls him/her out in front of friends. It is always a good idea to pull the child aside, go to a private space away from others, and then say what you want to say.

Keep it simple and clear

Whenever possible, don't beat around the bush when you have something important to convey to your child. Be clear and concise. Both young children and teenagers appreciate their parents being frank and asking direct questions, such as "Where are you going?" and agreeing on a time to be home.

Ask the child to repeat what you stated

Too often, parent-child disputes occur because of misunderstandings. "Oh, I thought you said I can come home at 11 p.m." A simple, helpful rule in communicating is to say what you have to say, and then immediately ask your child to repeat what he/she heard you say. This way, you can check whether the child actually and accurately understood what you communicated.

Begin your directives with 'I want.'

Instead of "Get down," say "I want you to get down."

Write down reminders

Children, especially preteens and teenagers, don't like to be constantly reminded. They feel that they are being nagged. Studies have shown that parents leaving humorous notes – such as "Don't forget to put the dishes in the dish washer, Spider-Man is coming over this evening" – can put a humorous spin on parental directives. Try it and sit back and enjoy the results.

Talk the child down

The louder your child yells, the softer you respond. Let your child ventilate while you interject timely comments: "I understand" or "Can I help?" Sometimes, just having a caring listener available will wind down the tantrum. If you come in at your child's level, you have two tantrums to deal with. Be the adult for him/her.

Give advance notice

"We are leaving soon. Say bye-bye to the toys, bye-bye to the girls..."

Let your child know that you are interested in his/her day

One of the ways a parent can show a child that he/she really cares is to ask how his/her day was. You'd be surprised how much good communication can come out when we ask this question. Too often, busy parents, struggling with their own stress, overlook the mood status of their children.

Kids are never too old to be reminded that you love them and are proud of their accomplishments. In my view, this is critical in helping a child to build positive self-esteem.

While parenting is tough business, it can also be the most enjoyable work you'll ever do in your life. No parent is perfect, but all parents can improve their communication skills with their children. The rewards are endless. Our children learn so much about communication from how we act as parents. ■

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SEDER NIGHT is a Roman-style banquet with a focus on wine. (Miriam Alster)



BLUE-AND-WHITE PASSOVER



• ADAM MONTEFIORE

In honor of Israel's 75th year, I would like to recommend that only Israeli wines be chosen for this year's Seder night. The buildup to the festival has been so divisive that I would like to think of everyone linking arms at Passover through the wines they drink. The Israeli flags everywhere make me feel particularly patriotic.

An Israeli wine by my reckoning is one where a vineyard owner, farmer or grower has carefully nurtured the vine, getting his or her hands dirty. An Israeli wine is not one grown overseas, shipped to the Holy Land in bulk and blended here. There have been instances of wines marketed as Israeli wines that are nothing of the sort. The truth on the back label is apparent only to the eagle-eyed or strictly religious, who read back labels carefully.

It is true we live in a post-truth world of fake news and alternative facts, and even prime ministers and presidents can lie without shame; so maybe this should not be such a surprise. I would expect higher standards from our wine brethren, though. The abuse is not widespread, but the culprits were two large wineries. To falsify a label in this way is, at worst, downright dishonest. At best, it is simply inept. Either way, it does not show a great deal of respect for the customer.

I have no problem with a winery choosing not to make wine during *shmita* (the sabbatical year) or a winery marketing wines made abroad. Just do not make it appear that they are Israeli wines from Israeli vineyards. Don't encourage the malpractice. If you find a wine made abroad dressed as an Israeli wine, put

it back on the shelf. It is not Purim! Choose a wine that is authentically grown and made in Israel.

Passover requires us to drink four cups in the style of a Roman banquet. The modern-style dinner would start with a sparkling wine, have a white wine with the first courses, a red wine with the main course, and end with a sweet dessert wine. Here you have your four cups – or glasses.

As usual, I recommend wines by price. I take great pride in having an under NIS 50 category. I regard with scorn the so-called experts who sneer "We don't drink wines under NIS 50." No one should feel any shame or peer pressure in buying on price.

There are some trends in Israeli wine. The appreciation and consumption of white wines is on the up. These wines go better with both our climate and our cuisine than reds. In a meal where you have to drink more wine than usual, if you go white the cumulative effect will be lighter. Also, it is no longer passé to drink rosé. You can even be a wine connoisseur and be seen to enjoy rosé these days. However, I appreciate that most will be looking for red wines.

Wine drinkers: Up to NIS 50

Tabor Har Chardonnay 2022. All Tabor Winery's whites are excellent. This Chardonnay is particularly good value. Lean and clean. Tabor specializes in what it calls the ecological vineyards.

Recanati Yonatan White 2022. A delicious, unpretentious wine made from Colombar and Sauvignon Blanc. Nicely crisp and very refreshing. Recanati Winery has now settled into its new winery in the Upper Galilee.

Galil Mountain Bar White 2022. Beautifully fresh,

fragrant white. Made from Viognier and Sauvignon Blanc. The two varieties are very complementary. Galil Mountain is a pioneer of true sustainability in both the vineyards and the winery.

Hayotzer Bereshit Merlot 2021. For those who like a wine round and soft. Easy drinking and good value. This is the entry level for Hayotzer Winery. The parent company, Arza, was founded in the 1950s by a branch of the Shor family, which traces its winemaking past back to 1848.

Carmel Selected Cabernet Sauvignon 2022. This is a light, fruit forward, refreshing wine. Selected is a 50-year-old brand, and Carmel is the historic winery of Israel. Always popular and with a good following.

Zion Estate Shiraz 2021. Juicy, fruity and lively. This is a cracking wine. Such good value. Founded in 1848, Zion Winery is Israel's oldest existing winery. For 175 years, the owner, manager and even the winemaker have been members of the Shor family.

Golan Heights, Hermon, Mount Hermon Red 2022. Fruity, with mouth-filling flavor, Hermon Red is light and very accessible and will never let you down. It is Israel's largest-selling wine, and it is easy to understand why. Consistent drinkability year in, year out.

Wine lovers: NIS 51-NIS 99

Jerusalem Vineyard Winery, SLB 2022. A great value Sauvignon Blanc that ticks all the boxes. Aromatic, crisp, with a refreshing finish. Jerusalem Vineyard Winery is based in Atarot, and its visitors' center is at the Montefiore Windmill in the Yemin Moshe-Mishkenot Sha'ananim neighborhood, in the heart of Jerusalem. Certainly a best buy.

Gush Etzion, Lone Oak Tree, Gewurztraminer



(FROM L) 1848 Orient Red 2021; Bat Shlomo Sauvignon Blanc 2022; Golan Heights Mount Hermon Red 2022; Tulip Syrah Reserve 2021; Vitkin Carignan 2020; Golan Heights Yarden Allone Habashan Merlot 2018; Galil Mountain Bar White 2022; Darom Rose 2022; Barkan Platinum Cabernet Sauvignon 2020; Carmel Selected Cabernet Sauvignon 2022. (Photos: Wineries mentioned; Darom: Ayal Keren)

2021. Such a pleasure to taste a dry Gewurz in Israel. It has all the spice and aromatics you look for, and you would expect a touch of sweetness to follow. A very nice, original wine from the 900-meter-elevation vineyards in the Jerusalem mountains. I could have also confidently recommended its Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc.

Binyamina Green Bin Rosé 2022. Attractive fun labels for this new look wine. Like the label, the wine is fun, unpretentious to drink. Exactly what rosé should be like... and I liked the screw top. Binyamina is a winery in its 71st year. It is true that neither the front label nor the headline of the back label nor the colored bottle makes it easy to understand this is a rosé. However, once you unlock the secret, enjoy it.

Darom Rosé 2022. This is the entry-level arm of Yatir Winery. *Darom* means "south." The rosé and white are both excellent. This was made from Zinfandel (rare in Israel) and Grenache. Salmon pink in color, delicate nose with good acidity. Yatir Winery is situated at Tel Arad in the northeastern Negev.

Tura Limited Edition 2021. A summer red made from Dolcetto and Marselan. I loved it. Red berries and cherries, and a prominent acidity, make this a refreshing fun wine. Perfect for lunchtime or hot summer evenings. Tura Winery is consistently making some very good wines. The Cabs and Merlots are regular winners in my book.

1848 Orient Red 2021. Simply beautiful. Old-world, delicate, understated Mediterranean blend made from Marselan, Argaman and Syrah. 1848 Winery is the small, boutique winery founded by the eighth generation of the Shor family.

Barkan Platinum Cabernet Sauvignon 2020. Ignore the bombastic look and the ultra-heavy bottle. The wine is the opposite of the packaging: elegant, well made, and it demands another *shluk* (taste). Barkan is Israel's largest winery, situated alongside Israel's largest vineyard at Hulda.

Connoisseurs: NIS 100-149

Bat Shlomo Sauvignon Blanc 2022. Very good Sauvignon Blanc. Always delivers. Aromatic, with good mouth feel, complexity and a fresh finish. The glass stopper is useful to keep. Bat Shlomo Vineyards Visitors' Center and the exquisitely furnished Farmhouse, a beautiful boutique hotel, are side by side. The winery's rosé is also excellent.

Nana Chardonnay 2022. Showcasing the quality of white wines from the Negev, this Chardonnay from the high-elevation Mitzpe Ramon is a velvety combination of tradition and modernity. High-quality and moreish [causing a desire for more]. Nana Winery is leading the way in the desert.

Gavriel Blend 2016. Gavriel Winery is a *garagiste*

winery on the Golan Heights, named after Gavriel, whose life of promise was tragically cut short in a terrorist attack. The wine is a blend of Cab, Merlot and Syrah. It is flavorful, rich and smooth. It needed time to open up. When I tasted it, I raised a glass to Gavriel, may his memory be a blessing; to Chaim Hoter, the owner-winemaker-father, to wish him improved health; and to small wineries everywhere to encourage them to continue making wine with individuality and character. *Yishar koah* (well done!) and *behatzlaha* (good luck)

Tulip Syrah Reserve 2021. A perennial favorite of mine. Full-bodied, oaky, with good fruit, a touch of smoked meat and a flavor-led finish. I understand Tulip's winemaker, David Bar-Ilan, is on the move. We will miss him. Tulip is loved by us all for caring about adults with special needs... and the wines are great, too!

Shiloh Secret Reserve Petit Verdot 2020. Most follow the extraordinary success in competitions of Shiloh's Cabernets, but the wines across the board also win awards. This is rich, full-bodied and quite oaky. There are not so many varietal Petit Verdots about, and this is a good one.

Psagot Homeland 2020. This is a blend of Cabernet, Shiraz, Petit Verdot and Petit Sirah. Bordeaux meets the Mediterranean. It has abundant fruit, mouth-coating flavor and a long finish. Nice wine.

Vitkin Carignan 2020. If you are looking for our adopted or heritage variety, then look no further. Vitkin Winery is the pioneer of quality Carignan in Israel and, after 20 years, this expression is still the standard. A lovely wine with good complexity.

Feinschmeckers [Foodies]: NIS 150+

Alexander Syrah Reserve 2020. This is big, bold, bursting with fruit and flavor. Put alongside the right steak, it will taste just fine. Alexander is the answer for those who like powerful, oaky wines, but they are well made in a style that is popular with consumers.

Golan Heights, Yarden Allone Habashan Merlot 2018. One of the finest Merlots I have tasted in Israel. Layers of aroma, flavor and complexity. Allone Habashan was a vineyard with the leafroll virus, which the Golan Heights Winery replanted from its own nursery and propagation block. The quality is better than ever and attests to the winery's unprecedented investment in quality.

Teperberg Providence 2018. This is the limited edition flagship wine of Teperberg, our largest family winery. The wine is made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Syrah. It has bold blackberry and black currant flavors, with an earthy backdrop and a touch of spice. It is opulent but finishes with a focused elegance.



A BEAUTIFUL Chardonnay from the deepest Negev Desert. (Nana Winery)

Jerusalem Quintessence Reserve 2010. A luscious, sweet dessert wine, perfect for the fourth glass. Made from Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling grapes that were frozen. I love what we call pudding wines, but this is best sipped and savored on its own. Serve it ice cold, even from the freezer. This is a Jerusalem Winery different from the one in Atarot. It is a sister brand to Ramat Hebron and is based in Kiryat Arba.

LET'S ALL come together and enjoy Passover with a glass in hand. May we appreciate the quality, diversity and variety of Israeli wine. Our growers and winemakers deserve your support, and we should support our own. Consider it a mitzvah to buy blue-and-white. ■

The writer is a wine industry insider turned wine writer, who has advanced Israeli wines for 35 years. He is referred to as the English voice of Israeli wine. www.adammontefiore.com



EAST MEETS WEST THIS PASSOVER



FIVE SENSES: The writer with Gur Arye.

• Text, photos & styling: PASCALE PEREZ-RUBIN

One of my favorite things about what I do for a living is that I'm constantly meeting interesting people doing such creative work in the culinary world. And this week was one of the most exciting ever. In preparation for my Passover column, I invited chef Yaniv Gur Arye of Nahlaot Cuisine to join me in my kitchen to prepare a few festive dishes for the upcoming holiday.

Gur Arye, who completed a degree in culinary arts in the Faculty of Food Engineering at the Technion, is always collecting wild plants and developing and innovating new foodtech products. He teaches a course called Using Five Senses in the Kitchen, where he shares with participants the massive amount of information he's learned over the years through trial and error in his kitchen, in university labs and while working in the food industry. Gur Aryeh involves all the senses, paying close attention to flavors, aromas, textures, appearance and sound – in short, all the ways in which food affects us.

He teaches students how to create a dish, while balancing tradition and innovation, which is especially important as we prepare for the Seder meal we will all soon be sharing with family and friends. Ritual plays a significant role in the retelling of the Passover story of slavery to freedom as we continue traditions that are passed down from one generation to the next. Even as we adapt to new culinary cultures and strive to create gourmet dishes, there will always remain aspects of traditional foods we recall from our childhood.

In the spirit of the Festival of Freedom, blended together with family traditions, Gur Arye shared with me four fantastic kosher for Passover recipes. The first recipe is for fish-stuffed artichoke hearts in a sauce made from fava beans. Artichokes and fava beans are commonly featured in Moroccan Passover recipes. Once again, he blends East and West to create this dish, as he claims the ground fish in the artichoke heart is reminiscent of the Ashkenazi gefilte fish.

The second one is for wood sorrel and Swiss chard soup with chicken-stuffed matzah balls. Gur Arye

created this recipe based on a Moroccan Passover *kubbeh* in sour sauce recipe he recalls from his childhood, which he then meshed with traditional Ashkenazi *kneidlach* (matzah ball) soup. He calls this new invention *kubbelach*.

The third dish, which he calls *zeroa netuya* (the outstretched arm that God used to take the Jews out of slavery in Egypt), is lamb shoulder stuffed with *haroset*, which symbolizes the mortar the Israelites used to make bricks in Egypt. This dish mirrors the "Hillel sandwich," which is eaten during the reading of the Haggadah at the Seder meal, which brings together the sweet *haroset* and *maror* (bitter herbs). The celery in the recipe symbolizes the *karpas*, which is reminiscent of springtime and renewal, and is featured on the Seder plate, along with the horseradish, which is used for *maror*.

For dessert, Gur Arye has prepared a chocolate mousse, which is served with a drizzle of olive oil, pieces of matzah and coconut caramel cream. His inspiration for this dish was a dessert made with coconut flakes, whipped egg whites, peanuts and matzah dipped in syrup, which he remembers from growing up. This is his old/new version.

Wishing everyone a wonderful and delicious Passover!

FISH-STUFFED ARTICHOKE HEARTS IN FAVA BEAN SAUCE

Makes 8 servings.

Stuffed artichokes:

350 gr. fresh fish filet, skinless
1 onion, finely chopped
1 bunch of cilantro, chopped
1 Tbsp. matzah meal
¼ tsp. sweet paprika
1/8 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. salt
8 artichoke hearts (fresh or frozen), peeled and cleaned

Sauce:

1 kg. fava beans, peeled
3 Tbsp. olive oil

TiPascale

Freezing the chicken balls makes it easier to add them to the matzah balls.

You can prepare the matzah balls a few hours ahead of time and store them in the fridge until ready to serve.

You can prepare the soup a few days ahead and store in the fridge until ready to serve.

ic and cumin and continue cooking another 3 minutes. Add water to cover and bring to a boil. Add the stuffed artichokes and cook over low heat for 20 minutes. You can add more water if necessary.

Add the coriander and cook another 5 minutes.
Garnish with cilantro and serve.

Level of difficulty: Medium
Time: 1.5 hours
Status: Parve

KUBBELACH: WOOD SORREL & SWISS CHARD SOUP WITH CHICKEN-STUFFED MATZAH BALLS

Makes 8 servings.

Soup:

2 packages wood sorrel
2 packages Swiss chard
4 Tbsp. olive oil
2 chicken thighs
1 onion, finely chopped
5 garlic cloves, chopped
1 package celery (stalks and leaves), chopped
Salt, to taste
2 lemons, juice and zest

Matzah ball filling:

150 gr. chicken (from soup), ground
1 onion, chopped and sautéed in olive oil until it turns golden brown
2 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped
1 tsp. baharat (spice mixture)
Salt, to taste

Matzah balls:

(Makes 16 balls with a diameter of 4-5 cm.)
4 medium eggs
1 tsp. salt
Pinch baking soda
Pinch turmeric
100 gr. matzah meal
100 ml. oil (or melted chicken or beef fat, olive oil or vegetable oil)

To make the soup: Separate the white and green parts of the Swiss chard. Clean the white parts well, and chop the green pieces and the wood sorrel into large pieces.

Heat the olive oil in a large pan and sauté the chicken pieces on both sides until they've browned nicely. Remove them and put aside.

Add the onion, garlic, celery and white parts of the Swiss chard to the pan and sauté over low heat for 10 minutes until they soften and turn golden brown. Add a little salt and then return the chicken thighs to the pan. Add 2 liters of water to the pan and bring to a boil. Lower the heat, cover the pot and cook for 50 minutes.

Add the Swiss chard and wood sorrel. Cook for 30 more minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning. Add the lemon juice and zest and cook for another 10 minutes.

Remove the chicken pieces and let them cool completely before preparing the filling.

To prepare the filling: Pull the pieces of chicken off the bones with your fingers and chop the chicken finely. Mix the chopped chicken with the fried onion and cilantro, and season with baharat and salt. Mix well. Prepare 24 balls with the chicken mixture that weigh between 15 grams and 20 grams. Put the balls in the freezer so that they can set.

To make the matzah balls: Add the eggs, salt, baking soda and turmeric to a bowl and mix well. Add the



1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 tomatoes, peeled and diced
1 Tbsp. pickled lemon, chopped
1 tsp. cumin
¼ tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
¼ tsp. coriander
Serving suggestion:
Cilantro, chopped

To prepare the stuffed artichokes: Chop finely or grind the fish and mix with the onion, cilantro, matzah meal, salt and paprika. Form balls and then press them into the artichoke hearts.

To prepare the sauce: Blanch the fava beans in boiling water for 1 minute, then cool them down in ice water and remove the skins. Alternatively, you can use frozen pre-peeled beans.

Pour the olive oil into a large pan and sauté the onion and garlic until they've turned golden brown. Add the tomatoes, beans, pickled lemon, salt, pepper, turmer-

matzah meal and oil, and mix well.

Let the matzah ball mixture set in the fridge for 30 minutes. Form 24 matzah balls from the mixture. Flatten the matzah ball a little, and then press one of the frozen chicken balls into the matzah ball, and close matzah ball mixture around it so that the chicken ball is tucked inside. Prepare the rest of the matzah balls in the same fashion. Boil a pot of salted water. Once it begins to boil, add the matzah balls and cook over medium heat for 25 minutes. Prepare a bowl of ice water, and when the matzah balls have finished cooking, remove them and place them in the ice water to stop the cooking process.

When ready to serve, heat the soup, taste and add salt or lemon if necessary.

Add the matzah balls back to the soup and heat the soup for 5 minutes, then serve.

Level of difficulty: Medium
Time: 3 hours
Status: Meat

ZEROA NETUYA LAMB SHOULDER STUFFED WITH HAROSET

Makes 8 servings.

Haroset:

100 gr. whole almonds
100 gr. walnuts
75 gr. hazelnuts
75 gr. peanuts
1 tsp. ras el hanout or ground horseradish
400 gr. silan
100 gr. pomegranate concentrate

Lamb:

1 lamb shoulder (1.5 kg.-2 kg.). Ask butcher to separate meat from bone and to flatten. Cook bone with the meat.
Salt and pepper, to taste
2 tsp. horseradish, grated
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 bottle dry red wine
250 ml. water
½ tsp. ras el hanout
½ tsp. salt
4 celery roots, quartered
2 beets, cut into eighths
16 garlic cloves, whole in their skins

To prepare the haroset: Place all the nuts in one layer on a tray and roast in an oven that has been preheated to 170° for 15-20 minutes until they turn golden brown.

Let them come back to room temperature, then grind them coarsely in a food processor.

Transfer the nut mixture to a bowl, and add the ras el hanout. Gradually add the silan and pomegranate concentrate while mixing until mixture becomes like a paste.

To prepare the lamb: Slice the meat on your work surface, then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Spread a layer of haroset on the meat, then sprinkle horseradish on top. Roll the meat into a roll and secure with netting, which you can ask for at the butcher. Alternatively, you can secure the meat with a piece of cloth or string.

Heat the oil in a large pot and place the rolled-up lamb shoulder in the center. Sear on all sides until it's golden brown. Remove and place on a plate. Add the bone to the pot and sear on all its sides. Next, pour the wine and water into the pot, and season with ras el hanout and salt. Bring to a boil and cook over low heat for 20 minutes.

Place the lamb and bone in a baking tray, then ar-



range the vegetables around the meat and bone and pour the wine mixture on top. Cover the pan with a lid or baking paper and then foil on top, securing the foil tightly.

Heat the oven to 150° and cook the lamb for 3 hours, basting meat and vegetables with juices from pan once during that time.

Remove the lamb from the pan and let it cool completely. If the gravy is too thin, continue reducing it on the stove top until it thickens.

Before serving, slice the lamb shoulder (it's easier to slice when cold). Arrange the slices in a pan with the vegetables and heat for 10 minutes in an oven that was preheated to 170°.

Level of difficulty: Easy-medium
Time: 4.5 hours
Status: Meat

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE, OLIVE OIL AND CARAMEL COCONUT MATZAH

Makes 8 servings.

Mousse:

200 gr. bittersweet chocolate 60% cocoa
125 ml. coconut cream
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. cinnamon
Small pinch of pepper (to enhance chocolate flavor)
2 egg whites
4 egg yolks
50 gr. sugar

Caramel matzah:

2 pieces matzah
¼ cup olive oil for frying
200 gr. sugar
250 ml. coconut cream
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. corn flour, dissolved in a little water

Toppings:

Olive oil
Chopped roasted peanuts

To prepare the mousse: Place the chocolate, coconut cream and spices in a glass bowl and melt in the

microwave for 30 seconds at a time, stirring in between each time. Remove from the microwave and stir in the egg yolks. In the bowl of an electric mixer, whip the egg whites with the sugar until stiff peaks form.

Gently fold the egg white mixture into the chocolate. Spoon the mousse into individual goblets or transfer to a serving bowl. Store in the fridge until serving.

To make the caramel matzah: Wet the matzah pieces with water, then wrap them in a towel. Use a knife to cut each piece of matzah into 8 rectangles.

Heat the olive oil in a pan and fry the matzah pieces on both sides until they turn golden brown.

Take them out of the pan and place them on paper towels. Dissolve the sugar with a few spoonfuls of water until it turns an amber color.

Heat the coconut cream with the salt in a pot and bring it to a boil. Slowly pour the coconut cream into the caramel while stirring. Continue cooking the mixture for a few more minutes until it is smooth. Add the mixture to the corn flour mixture and stir. Just before serving, heat up the caramel sauce and then dip the matzah pieces in the caramel. Take a spoon and dip it in olive oil, then drizzle over the mousse and add a few pieces of caramel matzah. Drizzle a spoonful of caramel sauce over each serving of mousse, then sprinkle with roasted peanut pieces.

Level of difficulty: Easy-medium
Time: 1 hour
Status: Parve

Serving dishes: Courtesy TRÉS Tableware; 26 Hahadarim Road, Kfar Bilu; trestableware.com/

Translated by Hannah Hochner.

Want to watch step-by-step instructions on how to prepare my recipes and see pictures of the dishes before this column is published each week?



Join Pascale for a spectacular sneak preview in her private kitchen on Instagram @pascal_perez_rubin or at pascalpr.co.il.