



# The Scroll

CAS Scroll - the weekly newsletter of Congregation Ahavas Shalom

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## AJC Welcomes French President Macron's Endorsement of Anti-Semitism Definition

American Jewish Committee (AJC) praised French President Emmanuel Macron's call tonight for France to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of anti-Semitism. The president's pledge came during his address to the annual dinner of CRIF, the umbrella organization representing French Jews, which took place amidst a new surge in attacks on Jews and Jewish sites in the country.

### **IHRA Working Definition of anti-Semitism**

*Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."*

Macron said Anti-Semitism is at its highest point since World War Two; adding, it's not only happening in France; but, throughout Europe and most Western Democracies.

"For the first time in many years, anti-Semitism is killing people again in France," said Macron, adding that French authorities "did not know how to react effectively."

The AJC call for action came following the release of a government report showing a 74 percent spike in anti-Semitic incidents during 2018, compared to the previous year. "President Macron's declaration endorsing the working definition is critically important and most welcome," said Simone

Rodan-Benzaquen, Director of AJC Europe, who attended the CRIF dinner. AJC has worked closely with successive French governments, praising the launch four years ago of a comprehensive plan to fight anti-Semitism and racism that included creation of the senior position of Inter-ministerial Delegate to Fight against Racism and anti-Semitism. “Clearly, well-intentioned government efforts over the past 18 years to effectively combat anti-Semitism have fallen short,” said Rodan-Benzaquen. “We at AJC will admit to considerable frustration that our efforts, as friends of France and beginning in 2001 with the Chirac presidency, took so long to bear any real fruit, but in this case better late than never.” ✨

## Sussex Renew Art exhibit & Auction a Big Success



*Young artist beams as she receives award*

This past Sunday, Congregation Ahavas Sholom opened the doors of the Jewish Museum of New Jersey (JMNJ) to the Sussex Renew Seventh Annual Art Exhibit & Auction. The congregation has hosted the event since its inception. The exhibit idea grew out of the synagogue’s determination to help the school build a new playground in the community. In tandem, the synagogue and the school worked for over eight years; organizing, planning, and fundraising to make the project a reality. Soon after, Congregation Ahavas Sholom president, Eric Freedman met Darlene Gearhart, who had just come on as the school’s new principal. Together, with one of Mrs. Gearhart’s first hires, art teacher Nelson Alvarez, they held

their first art exhibit and silent auction and never looked back. This week’s event drew approximately 100 people including one noteworthy public dignitary. Newark City Council president Mildred C. Crump, congratulated the students and praised the program for its “wonderful work,” saying such a program should be in more schools. The teacher’s dedication to their students was very apparent; but none more so than Lin Hong, a fourth grade math teacher who recently transferred to another district; but still came down to support her former students. According to Mr. Freedman, “The 7th Annual Sussex Ave. elementary school art exhibit is an outgrowth of Congregation Ahavas Sholom’s mission and commitment to the “passionate pursuit” of Tikkun Olam and Tzedukah in and around Newark.” Congratulations to all the students who presented their works at this year’s exhibit.



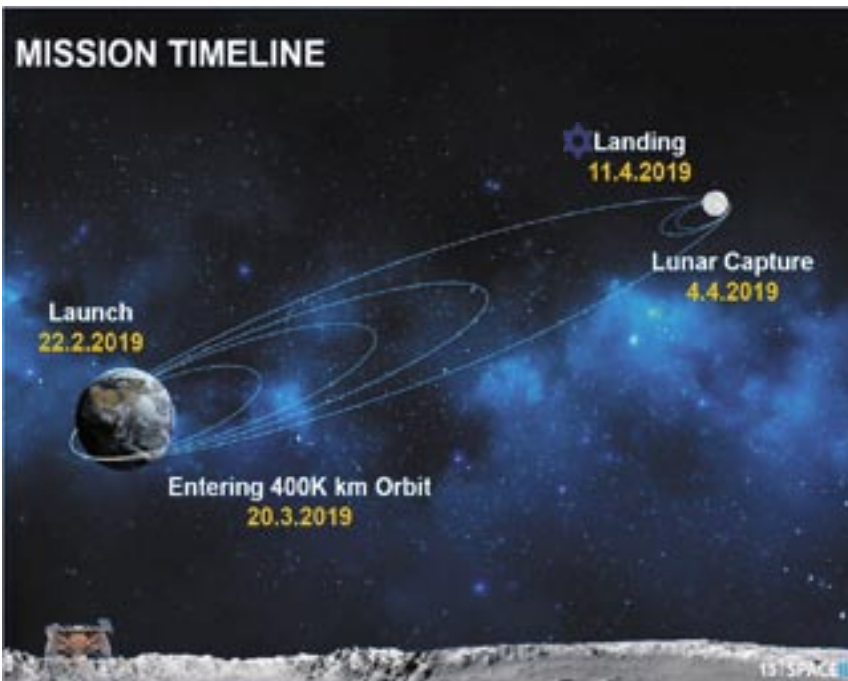
*Eric Freedman and City Council president, Mildred Crump pose with young artists.*

# Israel Shoots for the Moon

 On Thursday, February 21, 2019, Israel, attempting to achieve the first private soft moon landing in history, launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida. The craft, dubbed Beresheet (In the beginning) launched, or more accurately, hitched a ride aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket at 8:45 p.m. local time. Beresheet is expected to detach from the SpaceX; but, will remain in the earth's orbit about a month, circling the earth to build up enough momentum to work its way into the moon's orbit. "After eight years of hard work, our dream has come true: We finally have a spacecraft," said SpaceIL CEO, Ido Anteby. Upon the launch, ASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine, released the following statement, "Congratulations to SpaceIL and the Israel Space Agency. This is a historic step for all nations and commercial space as we look to extend our collaborations beyond low-Earth orbit and on to the Moon. The project was funded by \$100 million in private donations, with a majority coming from Morris Kahn, \$40million, who also acted as the project's lightning rod, as well as, serving as SpaceIL's President. Additional donors include Dr. Miriam and Sheldon Adelson – whose \$24 million contribution enabled the project to continue – and Lynn Schusterman , Steven and Nancy Grand , Sylvan Adams ,



Sami Sagol and others. Since the establishment of SpaceIL, the task of landing an Israeli spacecraft on the moon has become a national project, with educational impact. The 5 foot, 1300 pound unmanned craft will travel a total of 4 million miles and is scheduled to achieve a soft landing on the Moon on April 11, 2019. ✨



### Birthday Wishes



**B**irthday wishes to the lovely Joan Podnos, who recently enjoyed a dream birthday. Joan, photographed here standing with her equally dapper husband, Alan, was able to avoid the traditional skipping around the social hall; by being away on vacation...I'll have to remember that for the future.



Max Herman, President JMNJ



Jeffrey Haveson

**T**wo more of our friends celebrated birthdays recently, Jeffrey Haveson and Max Herman. Fortunately, both were at Shabbat services and performed the obligatory skipping around the room like the great sports they are.

### Get Well Soon

We all join in wishing, our friend, Jennifer Crarey Oshiki (Jen) a speedy recovery.

**J**oin us this Saturday for Shabbat services. Strangers, visitors, friends, old and new; our doors are open to you. Looking for a new home? New members are always welcome at Congregation Ahavas Sholom services starts at 9:00AM. Our congregation is open and welcoming, so feel free to pay us a visit.

### Kiddush Sponsorship

**L**ast week Kiddush was sponsored by Dubra Shenker in honor of her mother's yahrzeit and Alene and Freddy's wedding. The cost of sponsoring Kiddush is \$150, which barely covers the cost of the lunch. Our goal is to have every Kiddush sponsored. To sponsor a Kiddush, email Rabbi Rosenbach or contact Alla Eicheldinger at [Alla7815@yahoo.com](mailto:Alla7815@yahoo.com). You can also help us by shopping, which doesn't cost any money, just a little time. We'll give you a list of items, you shop and we'll reimburse you.



# Simon Says

*Weekly insights from Rabbi Simon Rosebach*

The last three weeks, the Torah has dwelled upon the finery of the Mishkan and the finery of the priestly garb. On the other hand, I was thinking about a scene from the conclusion of “Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.”

Walter Donovan, who is the villain of the film, wants Indy to find the Holy Grail, because Donovan and the Nazis, with whom he is in league, think that the Grail’s magical powers (whatever they may be) will help the Nazi army in some unspecified way. Indy’s quest takes him to a mysterious site (the abandoned city of Petra), and Donovan shoots Indy’s father, potentially fatally wounding him, thus providing an incentive for Indy to perform three tasks to reach the Grail. Indy performs the three tasks and reaches the Grail room.

The Grail is guarded by a 1500-year-old knight, and is in a room with many chalices and goblets. Donovan follows the path blazed by Indy to the Grail room, and Donovan wants to be the first person to use



*B'nai Jeshurun, Newark NJ*

the Grail to drink from the miraculous waters, which are in a cistern in the Grail room. The knight warns the explorers that the true Grail will bring immortality, but any false grail will bring death. Donovan’s partner in crime, Elsa, selects a gaudy goblet, studded with jewels, and Donovan uses it to drink the miraculous waters. He dies, and the knight utters one of the lines that will live in movie lore forever: “he chose poorly.”

Indy needs to pour the miraculous waters over his father’s wound to save his father, but he faces so many choices. How can he be sure to pick the correct goblet?

Indy thinks that Jesus was a humble man, and he searches for the plainest goblet that he can find. He chooses a simple cup (described in the Wikipedia article as a “simple pewter cup” but in the scene it might be made of turned wood or ceramic), and he

drinks and he lives, prompting the knight to

say, “You chose wisely.” As you all know, Indy pours the miraculous water on his father’s wound

and he is healed.

If Indy’s thinking is correct (and it is in the movie), why do we need extravagant buildings in which to worship God? I have been in B’nai Jeshurun, and I have been in B’nai Abraham, and they are magnificent monuments. Beth Shalom in Livingston is only slightly less monumental. Even run-of-mill

synagogues are inspired architectural gems. Even Ahavas Sholom when it was built had a skylight, a stained-glass window, and a magnificent chandelier. To what end?

I don't know what B'nai Jeshurun cost to build, and I am not picking on B'nai Jeshurun. Saint Patrick's in New York City, or the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart just up the street, or the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (which took 100 years to build), to say nothing of the monumental cathedrals in Europe, are all examples of the same thing: a monumental building to house the glory of God.

That was what God wanted in the era of our ancestors. The Torah says that God dictated the dimensions, the contents, and the décor of the Mishkan, down to the very last detail. And our ancestors, sure that God wanted this display of finery, built two Temples, Solomon's Temple which was very grand, and Herod's Temple, which was even grander. Herod's Temple rivaled any building in the world when it was built.

But I can't help feel that if I were building a synagogue from scratch now, I would build a graceful, but simple structure. Who knows how much Jewish Family Service could benefit if such a sum weren't diverted to a building that, truth be told, is full only two or three days a year? To how many students could Golda Och Academy give scholarships if such a sum weren't diverted to such grand monuments? How many campers could the Y camps accommodate if they were enriched to the tune of grand edifices?

I understand that to build a building that houses, at its peak, 1100 families at one time, is not going to done cheaply. I understand that to house 1100 families the building will not be the size of my house. I can't help but feel that if God dictated the Torah now, God would specify a humble structure, and specify that the community's wealth should be directed to sustain the poor, the ill, the young, and the old, the people who can not take care of themselves. Providing for the downtrodden members of society and educating all of our children in a Jewish way gives more glory to God than a fancy building does. ✨

## Jewish Museum of New Jersey Unfolds New Exhibit this Sunday

The Jewish Museum of New Jersey is proud to present an exhibit of Nava Gidanian-Kagan's most recent body of work as well as a retrospective featuring many of the artist's earlier works. The exhibit, curated by M.Gosser, is called "Unfolding" and will open on Sunday, March 3, with a public reception from 1-4 p.m.

"The core subject of my work is the nature of impermanence and its manifestation in our daily life. Coming from an Iranian family, moving from Israel, where life and death are a daily struggle; I know that life is precious. "Written in Skin" (my recent body of work) is painted in layers of wax and oil, emulat-

*UNFOLDING*  
*Nava Gidanian-Kagan*



ing a memory of the body and its fragility. Abstracted within the figure; I am stretching the limits between what is seen and what can be represented, confronting mortality and vulnerability. The goal of my work is to bring these tender moments to the front of the stage; from my personal view to a universal one and transform them into a meaningful experience that embraces all shades of life.

Nava Gidanian-Kagan is an Iranian-Israeli artist based in New York and Jersey City. Her website is: [www.navagidanian.com](http://www.navagidanian.com).

“Unfolding” will continue through Sunday, May 5 with various programs happening on the Sunday afternoons in between March 3 and May 5. The Jewish Museum of New Jersey is located within the historic Congregation Ahavas Sholom (145 Broadway, Newark). The Museum is open Sundays from 1-5 p.m. and by appointment. Free off street parking is provided and a donation of \$10 is suggested. For directions or information, visit our website at: [www.jewishmuseumnj.org](http://www.jewishmuseumnj.org) or email [info@jewishmuseumnj.org](mailto:info@jewishmuseumnj.org)

## Jewish Cemetery vandalized in France.



Approximately 80 graves were vandalized in a cemetery in the village of Quatzenheim, in eastern France. Numerous headstones were spray painted with swastikas and suffered other unspecified abuse, according to local officials. The vandalized cemetery is located in France’s Alsace region, and is not very far from the German border. Jean-Luc Marx, a top security official in the region, condemned the attack and promised his full support to the community.

The vandalism occurred just days after an Alain Finkielkrau, A French Jewish, academic, writer, and son of a Holocaust survivor, was accosted

by a Yellow Vest protester as he walked down the street with his mother-in-law. The protester shouted at Finkielkrau, “Go home to Israel!”, and “France is ours.” Ironically, Finkielkrau was one of the few intellectuals who had supported their (Yellow Vest) cause. The vandalism was discovered just hours before a scheduled rally, to denounce anti-Semitism, was to take place at Republic Plaza. By Nightfall, thousands filled the streets calling for an end to the anti-Semitic attacks that have risen alarmingly in France over the last few years. According to police statistics, there were 500 instances reported in 2018. That represents a 74 percent jump in anti-Semitic acts over the previous year. The 550,000 Jews living in France represents the largest Jewish community in Europe. ✨