

Happenings



Editor: Hallie (Chaya Sarah) Cantor

Newsletter of Yeshiva University Libraries

Fall 2023

Nation under Fire



On Oct. 7, Simchat Torah, Israel awoke to find herself under savage attack. We mourn the murder and injury of thousands; we await with great concern the fate of the missing and the hostages amidst the daily horrors unfolding in Gaza.

As many of our Yeshiva University community have either gone into IDF service or have friends and families in Israel, we pray for their safety and for lasting peace in the Middle East.

Just 50 years earlier, the tiny nation was plunged into similar terror. **Stephanie (Sarah Leah) Gross** recounts her experience at an Israeli hospital during the Yom Kippur War.



**“I just kept praying
the war would end”
Remembering the
Yom Kippur War
By Stephanie (Sarah Leah) Gross**

I had made Aliyah in January 1971. In the summer of 1973, I went to Jerusalem to celebrate Israel Independence Day with my cousin Dani, an IDF paratrooper. During the 25th anniversary parade, the IDF marched down Rehov Ben Yehuda in all its glory. Tanks tore up the tarmac and planes swooped overhead. We were proud!

The announcement of war in October, then, was a real shocker. I was in Hartford, CT, then, to visit my family. Immediately I bought an airline ticket to return to Israel. I will never forget the stopover at Stansted Airport! Young people were crawling over one another to get back to their army units. After landing in Lod, I went straight to my student dorm in Beer-Sheva.

There were various opportunities to volunteer. But please remember: No smartphones, no internet, and access to pay phones was very limited. Communication was very difficult, and worst of all, we were afraid of the USSR, certain we'd be nuked.

I started off rolling bandages at Soroka hospital, located across the street from the University of the Negev (now Ben-Gurion U). Because I had worked for two years as a nurse's aide back in Connecticut, I pushed to be more helpful. I served meals to wounded soldiers on both the surgical and neuro-optical wards.

I will never, ever forget the beds filled with bandaged young soldiers, lying in pain. Some had their guts shot out, others blinded. I just kept praying that the war would end. It was nerve-racking when local families were informed of the loss of a loved one. Many were Oriental Jews, and their hysterical screams were heartrending.

My heart goes out to all who are suffering the loss of fallen soldiers, murdered children, and hostages. I pray to G-d for a ceasefire today that will resolve this unbearable conflict.

Israel 101

Why is Israel constantly in the crosshairs? Who are the Palestinians? Is any kind of war justifiable?

Spearheaded by **Edith Lubetski**, Hedi Steinberg Library has designated a section called “Israel in our Hearts,” devoted to YU Library holdings on Israel, Zionism, and the Middle East, along with biographies of leaders, pioneers, and heroes (e.g. Golda Meir, Ariel Sharon, Benjamin Netanyahu). The goal: to provide the YU community with facts and information. In addition, the library staff--**Rina Krautwirth, Emily Apterbach, Hindishe Lee, Alex Kahgan, and Hallie (Chaya Sarah) Cantor**--have created a bibliography of the same name, which includes Hedi Steinberg and Gottesman (physical and electronic) holdings.



Bill of Health

Back in August, we received a “Hello everybody” along with the following message from **Justin Thomas**, who has been undergoing treatment for acute myeloid leukemia:

I wanted to update everyone that I am officially, as of the results of my third bone marrow biopsy, in remission! Thank you all for thinking of me, praying, sending good vibes, or just casually wishing I'd make it through. Because we're talking AML, just because I'm in remission, it doesn't mean I'm able to go home (let alone return to my regular life). But it does mean I'm not dying (of course there could still be complications like graft vs. host much time down the line when we get to do the bone marrow and stem cell transplants—the two things that will actually cure me and allow me to return to my normal life).

We pray to the Al-mighty for Justin’s continued and complete recovery, and we hope to see him back with us soon!

Mazel Tov!

To **Marlene Schiffman**, whose granddaughter in Israel had a baby girl!

YAIR Update

- 33+ doctoral dissertations from the Belfer Program of the 1970s have been digitized and posted. Some are open access, if consent form was acquired from author or surviving relative.
- Bernard Revel faculty have consented to have their work shared on YAIR. Main players were Prof. Jacob Schacter and Dr. David Berger.
- *Catalog of University Authors*, FY 2022. **Stephanie (Sarah Leah) Gross** has begun to post items to YAIR. A star performer of interest is STEM faculty from both Ferkauf and Katz graduate programs.

Hi FOLIO!

Tuesday, Nov. 14th—Yeshiva University and the Cardozo School of Law will be kicking off their FOLIO implementation. FOLIO is set to become our next Integrated Library System (ILS), replacing Virtua after June 2024; EBSCO hosts will explain the start or step of the next migration process. Recording of session will be made available.

Averting Disaster

After revising the Disaster Plan for the Pollack/Gottesman building, **Rebecca Malamud** is working with **Edith Lubetski** and **Emily Apterbach** to put together a Disaster Plan for Hedi Steinberg.

All Eyes on AI

It's the fastest-growing app in history, a potential job-eater leaving many of us quaking in our boots. At our Lunch & Learn series, held Thursday, September 28th, **Wendy Kosakoff** addressed our concerns and curiosity through her presentation "ChatGPT101." Discussing this "AI chat bot that responds to queries in a conversational manner," she listed its mechanisms ("based on language, not logic"), its drawbacks ("bad at math"; has "hallucinations")—and its benefits ("explains complex topics"). Also mentioned was DALL-E, another up-and-coming AI system that can generate graphics—notwithstanding Wendy the Musician's failed attempts to create a "banana playing a violin." Her entire PowerPoint presentation can be found [here](#). Concerning AI's potential implications for libraries, **Paul Glassman** sent us the following [article](#):

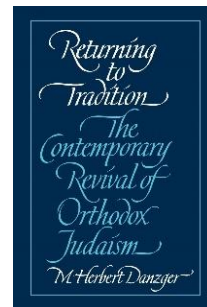


"Armchair in the shape of an avocado"
(courtesy of DALL-E)

Donations to HSL

Over three dozen Holocaust-themed books were donated to Hedi Steinberg Library by Arne and Bonnie Gurewitsch. The latter is a good friend of **Edith Lubetski** and a well-known speaker on Holocaust Studies.

The widow of Murray Herbert Danzger gave to Hedi Steinberg several boxes of his *Returning to Tradition: The Contemporary Revival of Orthodox Judaism* (Yale University Press, 1989). As a welcome and an introduction to the library, **Emily Apterbach** coordinated distribution of complimentary copies to faculty members. More complimentary copies have been available to students upon request.



Problem-Fixer

Just a quick note how far-reaching our database-checking project has become.

When **Hindishe Lee** reported to **Shulamis Hes** that our two databases from the National Library of Israel were faulty, Shulamis suggested that Hindishe contact NLI and provided her with e-mail contacts. It turned out that NLI hadn't even known they had a problem with their databases. They have since fixed it, "in all languages for both types," according to their e-mail, with a final "Thanks again for bringing up this issue."

Rare Collections



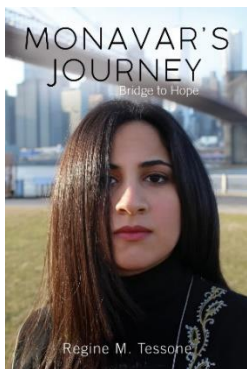
Pinkas Hevra Tehilim, 1864
(Gift of Ludwig and Erica Jesselson)

A new Rare Book Room brochure was created, both in online and print form, and under the leadership of **Shuli Berger**, to acquaint patrons with the world-class collections at Mendel Gottesman Library of Hebraica-Judaica—in particular the Alfred Solomon and Evelyn H. Solomon Rare Book Room, a glass-enclosed, climate-controlled secure facility. Thanks to purchases, gifts, bequests, and long-term loans, these holdings have grown from a small collection of manuscripts in 1917 to our current 8,000 books and 1,500 manuscripts, including 40 incunabula. The YULIS catalog contains descriptions of these items, such as the *Pinkas Hevra Tehilim* (left) which contains the records of a Psalms Society founded in 1864 by Jewish soldiers in the Russian Army during the reign of Alexander II. Other selected manuscripts are available in digital format on the YU library’s website.

Book Talks



YU Library Book Talks, moderated by **Shulamis Hes**, began Thursday, Sept. 7, with Dr. Elazar Hurvitz—creator and curator of the Eli Michael Microfilm Center for Genizah Studies, Emeritus Professor of Bible, and Dr. Samuel Belkin Chair in Judaic Studies—speaking at Mendel Gottesman Library about his travels in Egypt to uncover manuscripts and other materials. He also presented attendees with a “tour” of both the Cairo and YU Genizahs. (No recording available.)



On Tuesday, Sept. 12, Regine M. Tessone—entrepreneur, former Spiritual Advisor to Sephardic students at Stern College, and author of *Monavar’s Journey: Bridge to Hope* (Palmetto Publishing, 2022)—gave a lively discussion of her biography, which covered her childhood in Iran and her family’s flight from the country minutes before the outbreak of the Islamic revolution. [Audio-recording here:](#)



In “Behind the Scenes with Amy Koffsky: The Making of a Children’s Book,” held Tuesday, Oct. 17th, and co-hosted by **Tina Weiss** (subbing for Shulamis) and **J.B. Holderness**, prolific author, illustrator, and Stern alumna Amy Koffsky discussed the how-tos of publishing for our youngest people. During the Zoom event (nearly 100 attendees!), co-sponsored by the Stern College Programs in Art, Education, English and Speech Pathology and Audiology, Ms. Koffsky discussed the power of emotions in storytelling and summed up the craft and business with the following advice: “Write about something you care about!” YouTube recording [here:](#)

Private Notes

Through METRO's Continuing Education Scholarship Program, **Deena Schwimmer** was awarded funding to take the Society of American Archivists' web course "Privacy and Confidentiality Issues in Digital Archives." Anyone who wishes to receive the course slides or hear more on this topic should contact her directly.

Hallie (Chaya Sarah) Cantor joined the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors.

Another "Fine" Mess

s) While working in the library at a university, I was often shocked by the excuses students would use to get out of paying their fees for overdue books. One evening an older student returned two books that were way overdue and threw a fit over the "outrageous" \$2 fee that I asked her to pay.

I tried to explain how much she owed for each day, but she insisted she should be exempt. "You don't understand," she blurted out. "I didn't even read them!"

(Photo/meme courtesy of **Hindishe Lee**.)

She wasn't "fine" with fines.

Luckily, we at YU Libraries do anticipate less of a problem with late-or non-returned books now that most overdue charges have been abolished.

(But, ahem . . . other problems stay the same.)



More Odd Couplings from the Secret Files of Marlene Schiffman

The imperial animal / by Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox

Dix [10] Commandements: dissertation homiletique / Saadia Gaon; traduite par Isaac Morali

Fragments saved from the fire / Mary Anne Ashley

The fragmentation of reason / Stephen Stich

Business ethics: studies in fair competition / Frank C. Fox

Canine behavior / Michael W. Fox

What schools are for / John I. Goodlad

Communication for the hearing impaired / Ed. Herbert J. Oyer

Electronic music / Allen Strange

The history of art history / Udo Kultermann

Humanity: an introduction to cultural anthropology / James G. Peoples

Management control models / Earl P. Strong

The Dead Sea and its surroundings / V. Arad [Hebrew: dry]

Seek the Lord! / A. Vanlier Hunter

The therapy of desire / Martha Craven Nussbaum

Paradise Lost / G. K. Hunter