



# Carnegie Shul Chatter

April 21, 2022



*I hope you had* an enjoyable Seder and are having a great Passover.

At last Saturday's Zoom services, we were discussing which aspect of the Passover story we find most fascinating. Three of us all selected the exact same story, the tale of Nachson ben Aminadab.

On the following page is this incredible article focusing on this story, which was published in the Passover 2015 edition of the Carnegie Shul Shofar.

## Zoom in for Services

*Shabbat services are held by Zoom, at 10am and last 60-90 minutes. A link is sent to all Shul members; if you don't receive it, contact Wendy Panizzi at [panizziw@gmail.com](mailto:panizziw@gmail.com).*

## Why Not Passover?

When we talk of the High Holidays we talk of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur but not Passover. But, why not Passover?

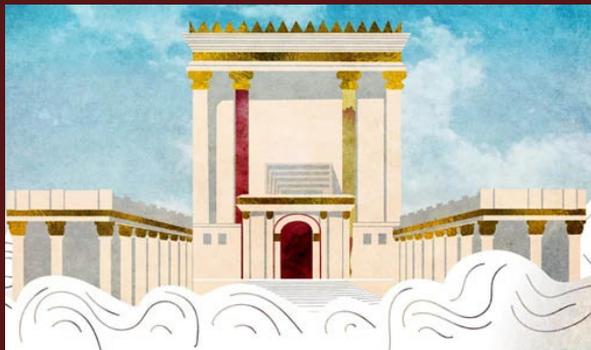
Granted, most Jews, even those who do not go to services any other time of the year, go to Shul on the High Holidays, and most Jews do not go to Shul on Pesach, but does that make Pesach any less important? And even though most of us don't go to Shul on Pesach, most of us do attend a Passover Seder retelling the incredible story of our deliverance and of our Exodus. So if Passover is not technically a High Holiday, it is certainly not far behind.

Passover not only marks our deliverance from bondage in Egypt, it also marks the beginning of our forty-year journey to the Holy Land. And during those forty years we received the Torah and Ten Commandment. What could be more important to us, as Jews?

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Oh, and one more thought. You know that we conclude our Seders by saying, “Next Year in Jerusalem,” but what do Jews who live in Jerusalem say? Well, we asked our son who lives in Israel and he told us they say the exact same thing. Why? Because it should be a Jerusalem that is truly the home of the Jewish people, with the Temple restored, and with the coming of Moshiach. And I will say Amen to that.



## Nachshon ben Aminadab – A Man of Courage and Faith

The plagues have been put upon the people of Egypt. The first born have been put to death. And finally Pharaoh lets the people go. But Pharaoh’s heart is hardened one more time, and this time Pharaoh’s chariots are about to overtake Moses and the Children of Israel near the Red Sea.

With the waters of the Red Sea in front of them and Pharaoh’s army approaching from behind, the destruction of the Jewish people certainly appears to be imminent. But

God tells Moses to lift up his staff and the sea splits, allowing the Israelites to pass through. Then, when the Israelites have reached safety on the other side, Moses lifts his staff once more and the waters of the sea engulf the pursuing Egyptians. At last, the Children of Israel have been delivered from Pharaoh and slavery in Egypt.

What an incredible story!

But wait, there is even more to the story than that. According to the Talmud, the waters of the Red Sea did not part immediately upon Moses lifting of his staff. Here is what happened next according to the book, *The Complete Story of Passover*: Moses lies prostrate before G-d, and calls out for Divine assistance. Israel is desperate. And on top of it all, the sea breaks out in a raging storm. It screams and howls and threatens to bury the people beneath its waves.



Suddenly Moses rises, and through the uproar of noise and fear calls out in a strong voice: “My brethren, G-d commands us to keep on our way!”

For a second the entire camp is frozen motionless with terror. Deadly silence spreads through the night. Endless moments of horror and confusion. Now that Moses’ command has sounded, they realize that G-d’s will has spoken to their hearts. They storm across the sands of the beach and jubilantly their voices sing out: “Who is with God, follow us!”

Nachshon, the son of Aminadab, prince of Judah, is first. He jumps into the rolling sea. The heaving waters rise higher and higher; but he does not care. He wants to die for the Almighty in selfless love. To His glory he offers his most precious possession, his life. After Nachshon, the entire people jumps into the sea. Exultantly they shout: “Hail our youth, the pride of our old age!” The roaring of the stormy east wind turns into crashing thunder. Like the call of a clarion sounds the voice from heaven: “To life, not death!”

High stood the floods, and firm like walls. The Red Sea was rent asunder! And from the lips of the saved comes the call: “Judah is His sanctuary, Israel His kingdom!”

Wow! What incredible courage. What an incredible act of faith.

# The Kamala Harris, Doug Emhoff Passover seder: Brisket, gefilte fish and the Maxwell House Haggadah

By Lynn Sweet

WASHINGTON — What made Friday night different from all other nights at the home of Vice President Kamala Harris?

The answer to this “ma nishtana” question asked as we Jews observe Passover this week: It was the first known time a Passover seder was held at the Naval Observatory vice presidential residence. And this happened because Harris is married to Doug Emhoff, who is the first Jew to be the spouse of a president or vice president.

According to a White House official, the menu for the Passover meal consisted of matzoh ball soup; gefilte fish with horseradish; salmon; salad; brisket; chicken marsala; carrot tzimmes and potato kugel.



*Vice President Kamala Harris hosts, with husband Doug Emhoff, a Passover seder at the official residence. Left of Harris is her National Security Adviser, Phil Gordon; to her right, senior adviser for communications, Herbie Ziskend.*

When I reported on the Obama-era seders I found great interest from readers on what Haggadah was used after, in 2009, I broke the news it was the Maxwell House Haggadah. It was initially published in 1932 as a promotion for the coffee maker. Maxwell House coffee is now a brand of Kraft Heinz, based in Chicago.

Because of its simplicity — and it was free at the supermarket — the Maxwell House Haggadah caught on for folks who wanted a no-frills basic seder.

A Haggadah is a book outlining the order of the elements of the seder. Haggadahs can be long or short, traditional or modern, relate to current events or not, have a lot or a little Hebrew. I know a lot of people who create their own Haggadah — with the essential part the same: telling the story of the exodus of Jews from Egypt.

When the 18 guests assembled at the home of the vice president and second gentleman on Friday, a White House official told me they used the Maxwell House Haggadah to tell the story of the Jews fleeing Egypt to escape slavery.

“Everyone participated and read from the Haggadah,” the official said.

The Harris/Emhoff seder “looked very much like any other seder: sang “Dayenu,” did the four questions, hid the Afikomen (it was found), ate (the) “Hillel Sandwich,” discussed the meaning of Passover — and how it relates to the world today.”

Harris and Emhoff lit a menorah in their residence during Hanukkah and last October, they attached a mezuzah on their front door.

The origin story as far as my reporting on this topic goes like this: Obama’s Passover Seder tradition began during the 2008 presidential campaign by a group of staffers who found themselves in Harrisburg, Pa., for the Pennsylvania primary days before the first seder.

The campaign staffers — including Eric Lesser, now a Massachusetts state senator — and



Herbie Ziskend, now Harris' senior adviser for communications — invited then-Sen. Barack Obama to the seder. They used the Maxwell House Haggadah because that's what they could get on short notice.

## Rabbi Schiff Coming to the South Hills



On Monday, May 9, 2022, at 7 pm., Rabbi Danny Schiff will be returning to the South Hills JCC to speak on the topic of, "Tackling Jewish Anti-Zionism from A to Z."

According to Rabbi Schiff, "Anti-Zionism has long been a problem that frequently overlaps with anti-Semitism. Now we are seeing the emergence of an alarming new problem: anti-Zionism among our own, especially younger generations. Unlike previous younger generations that may have exhibited a detachment from Israel, what we are seeing now is active opposition and antagonism toward Israel. What is the extent of this problem, and how can we respond?"

The event, which is free and open to the public, is co-sponsored by the Carnegie Shul, along with the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, South Hills JCC, Congregation Beth El, Temple Emanuel. You can register by going to: <https://jewishpgh.org/event/tackling-jewish-anti-zionism-from-a-to-z-rabbi-danny-schiff/>.

Proof of vaccination will be required for this in person event in accordance with Federation's current policy.

## Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:

**Bessie Levine Bronstein**  
**Kate Broida York**  
**Esther Fisher**  
**Samuel Stern**

**Esther Kelson Herman**  
**Della Perloff**  
**Herbert E. Hirsh**  
**Abraham Lewis Kelson**

**William Spivak**  
**Esther Laya Coffee**  
**Eileen Ostfield**  
**Evelyn Wilk Kalson**

May their memory be for a blessing.

## Donations

The Carnegie Shul is most grateful for the following recent donations:

**Nancy K Stein**

*In memory of Evelyn Wilk Kalson*

**Lois Ash Metlika**

*In memory of Emanuel Ash*