

בצרור החיים

Memorial Book



תשפ"ה—תשפ"ו | 2025

Rabbi Jan Caryl Kaufman, *editor*

With assistance from Ilana Moses

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Introduction

אשרי מי שגדל בתורה ועמלו בתורה, וגדל בשם טוב ונפטר בשם טוב מן העולם

Happy is one who grew up in Torah, whose labor is in Torah, who grew up with a good name, and who took leave of the world with a good name. (Berakhot 17a)

This book encompasses the biographies of our colleagues who sought only to spread their Torah. Each of them has taken leave of this world with a good name. Their careers were global in reach, stretching from the Falklands and the Seminario in Argentina to the corridors of the finest Israeli universities, with the majority residing in the United States, spanning from the East to West Coasts.

Last year I wrote that I was approaching the three score and ten the Psalmist gives us— (Psalms 90:10) ימי־שנותינו בהם שבעים שנה—and now, I have surpassed it. The greatest reward, as I see it, is that I now collect Social Security. Yet with the passing of years comes the inevitable aches and pains, and so I hope that my stamina and my mind will continue to enable me to carry on the work of this booklet, with which I have been involved for over 30 years. When I first began this sacred task, I knew many of the colleagues who had entered *olam ha'ba*, though they were, for the most part, senior figures—rabbis I looked up to and revered, some at a distance and many who made themselves warmly approachable.

With the passage of time, the composition of this book has shifted. Most of those who now appear in these pages are my

peers, though, *todah la'El*, most are still well beyond me in years. There are, however, several who are my contemporaries, and no doubt readers of my own generation will feel that the tenor of these lives rings uncomfortably close to home.

A number of the colleagues included in this year's volume began their careers in military chaplaincy, in the United States and elsewhere, a testament to their service to their homelands. When I first began working on the Memorial Booklet, many of those whom we honored had been born in the "old country"—some Holocaust survivors, others immigrants who arrived as children in the early part of the last century. This year, by contrast, only two were born in the old country, a quiet marker of generational change. During my years on the rabbinic staff of the RA, I was privileged to work with many of these colleagues on committees and other projects; for one colleague, I even had the honor of writing his recommendation for JTS.

As this year's volume comes together, we also mark a transition in our own work. We say farewell to Max N. Buchdahl, who has provided editorial assistance on this booklet since 2022. Max himself is an author, having written *Return of the Exiled* in 2014 while still a high school senior. We welcome Ilana Moses to this role; she is a second-year student in the Joint Program. As in every year, the *Azkarah* offers a poignant moment for reflection, and our past president, Rabbi Philip Scheim, will guide us once again on January 21.

יהי זכרם ברוך

Jan Caryl Kaufman

שבט תשפ"ו / January 2026

ר"ל, רבי יחזקאל אדלר, ז"ל
הרב יהושע בן חיים ומרים, ז"ל

Born: October 16, 1931; Kiel, Germany

Died: November 5, 2025/י"ד חשוון תשפ"ו; Jerusalem, Israel

After arriving in the United States from Berlin as a child in 1938, Rabbi Adler was raised in the Bronx and attended the Israel Salanter Yeshivah for elementary school. He then enrolled at the Samson Raphael Hirsch High School, where he encountered the ideology of Agudat Yisrael. Eventually, he had enough of their anti-Zionist thinking and left to graduate from public high school instead. In his own words, he was a “ferbrenter Zionist” from his earliest years and became a member of Betar. Like many of his generation, he attended CCNY, earning a BA in history in 1952, while also taking undergraduate courses at JTS alongside some of his Betar friends. He was ordained at JTS in 1958 and spent a year studying in Israel with a few classmates. Although the JTS administration initially disapproved of this “gap year,” it ultimately relented and granted the students academic credit.

After ordination, Rabbi Adler entered the US Army, serving as a chaplain for two years. He was stationed, among other places, in Würzburg, Germany, and remained in the US Army Reserves until 1968. Upon discharge, he became the spiritual leader of Temple Beth El in Ithaca, New York, from 1960–1962. For ten years, he served as the rabbi of Chisuk Emunah Congregation in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. While in Harrisburg, Rabbi Adler was highly active: he organized a

community Hebrew High School, became the part-time director of the United Synagogue of Eastern Pennsylvania (1966–1972), served as the Jewish spiritual counselor at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, for three years, and joined the faculty of Harrisburg Area Community College, where he taught American history. He was also one of the founders of the InterReligious Council of South Central Pennsylvania.

In 1972, Rabbi Adler fulfilled a lifelong dream and made *aliyah* with his family. He became the program director at the Gruss Center from 1972–1974 and taught Judaica at teachers' colleges throughout Israel from 1972–1985. Meanwhile, he took American studies courses at the Hebrew University from 1972–1975. After a divorce, Rabbi Adler married Hannah Zidon, a widow, in 1983. That same year, he became the managing editor and circulation director of the Jewish Bible Quarterly (jewishbible.org), which publishes articles, book reviews, and authoritative studies on biblical themes. Founded by Rabbi Louis Katzoff, ל"ו, it is the only Jewish-sponsored, English-language journal devoted exclusively to the Bible. Rabbi Adler authored dozens of articles for the publication, covering topics ranging from “Chronicles: The Neglected Book of the Bible” to “The Triple Tragedy of the Gedaliah Assassination” to “The Hidden Message of the Book of Esther: Assimilation is Not the Way to Salvation.” While at the journal, he also wrote articles on the annual *Hidon ha-Tanakh* for both youth and adults, amplifying the message of the contests.

Rabbi Adler continued serving the Jewish people through reserve duty in the IDF from 1978 until his discharge in 1986, including two tours in Lebanon. He promoted Conservative Judaism by leading High Holiday services in various *kehillot* throughout Israel and, in 1974, was sent to Tehran to conduct High Holiday services for the English-speaking community while the Shah was still in power. He became active in the daily minyan at the Agron Street shul, attending almost every day. Rabbi Adler lived in the Givat Mordecai neighborhood of Jerusalem and took pride in the fact that it was named after Maxwell Abell of Chicago, a lay leader of the Conservative movement.

Rabbi Adler's sermons incorporated traditional sources, both biblical and rabbinic, to transmit the wisdom of classical texts. He sought to show how the ancient rabbis understood human psychology and nature, then applied these insights in developing *halakhah* to make Judaism relevant and livable for both their contemporaries and future generations. In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded him a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, in 1986.

He is survived by his wife, Hannah; children, Rena, Leaura, Ilan, Yigal and Hila; and brothers, Steven and Seymour.

רב"ל, Samuel April
הרב שמואל בן הרב שמחה, ז"ל

Born: March 6, 1933; Butler, Pennsylvania

Died: January 16, 2025/ה'תשפ"ה ט"ז טבת תשפ"ה; Boca Raton, Florida

The son of Fanny and Rabbi Simon April, Rabbi April graduated from Yeshiva University with a BA in 1954, where he also played tennis. In 1955, he earned an MA in educational psychology from Columbia University. He went to Israel during the Sinai campaign, where he studied at the yeshiva in Hebron. He was ordained by Rabbi Isaac Halevi Herzog, Israel's Chief Rabbi, in 1956. Upon ordination, he became the rabbi of Temple Emanuel in Lakeland, Florida, where he met the love of his life, Judy Holober. The two married in 1958. During his tenure in Lakeland, Rabbi April expanded Jewish education for all age groups. He shepherded the building of a new synagogue facility, despite community opposition to the building—and, presumably, to a more influential Jewish presence in central Florida.

In 1958, Rabbi April became the spiritual leader of the Coral Way Jewish Center (which became Congregation Or-Olam) in Miami, a position he held until 1966. He was admitted to the Rabbinical Assembly in the same year. He was very involved in the local Jewish community, holding several committee chairmanships within the Rabbinical Association of Greater Miami. He became a Boy Scout chaplain, was initiated as a Mason, and served on the board of the Florida Home for Foster Children. The April family, with two children in tow, then moved to Congregation B'nai Zion in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where they remained until 1969.

In 1969, Rabbi April arrived in Cheltenham, Pennsylvania to lead Melrose B'nai Israel, a position he held for more than a decade. During that period, he served as Ethics Committee chair of the Greater Philadelphia Board of Rabbis. He then served Congregation Beth El in Massapequa, New York, from 1979–1982 before returning to Florida, first at a congregation in Pompano, then at Beth Israel of Century Village in Deerfield Beach for 13 years. He served as president of the North Broward Board of Rabbis and was a frequent radio and television commentator.

After retiring, Rabbi April authored the book, *Demythification and Demystification of the Bible*, which explores and corrects many misconceptions about the biblical text, especially those based on a mistranslation of the Hebrew Bible.

He was very proud to have been able to teach all his grandchildren their bar and bat mitzvah portions, and to have officiated at the weddings of his two oldest granddaughters.

He is survived by his children, Max (Pamela) and Liz (Dr. Carmi); grandchildren, Jennifer and Evan, Jessica and Evan, Joshua, Simcha and Bina, Akiva, Jacob, and Shoshana; and great-granddaughters Naomi, Rina, and Goldie. His wife, Judy, passed away April 11, 2025.

רבי אליעזר דיאמנד ז"ל

הרב אליעזר בן-ציון בן יהודה אידל וחייה גולדה, ז"ל

Born: March 23, 1952; Brooklyn, New York

Died: December 12, 2025/כ"ב כסלו תשפ"ו; Teaneck, New Jersey

A long journey—from the Mesivta of Long Beach, founded by his father, to Yeshiva University, from which he graduated with a BA in English in 1973 and at which he was ordained in 1977, and finally to a PhD at JTS awarded in 1990—Rabbi Diamond's career had a profound effect on generations of JTS students. He joined the JTS faculty in 1991 after an academic career at Stern College and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. He also headed a Yeshiva for *keruv* sponsored by Lincoln Square, and later was assistant principal at Frisch High School in New Jersey.

While at JTS, Rabbi Diamond also taught at the Hadar Institute and Drisha. He was named the Rabbi Judah Nadich Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics in 2000, a position from which he retired in 2024 as emeritus, having served as Area Coordinator of the Rabbinic Literatures and Cultures (Chair of the Talmud Department) from 2016 until his retirement.

In the announcement of his death, JTS Chancellor Shuly Rubin Schwartz noted, "Rabbi Diamond was an honored scholar, trusted religious and spiritual leader, and transformational Talmudist. Rabbi Diamond was not only an intellectual powerhouse, but had a deeply spiritual core. The combination of his intellect and his sensitivity gave him a

unique perspective on how to analyze texts, approach the liturgy, and live as an observant Jew.” (December 12, 2025).

Rabbi Diamond authored a chapter on the rabbinic period in the *Schocken Guide to Jewish Books*, as well as entries in the *Reader’s Guide to Judaism* and *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. In 2023, his capstone work, *Holy Men and Hunger Artists: Fasting and Asceticism in Rabbinic Culture*, was published by Oxford University Press. The RA’s publication, *The Observant Life*, contains a chapter by him entitled, “Torah Study.” He was working on editing a commentary on Yerushalmi Pesachim written by JTS Professor Louis Ginzberg, entitled פירושים והדושים בירושלמי forthcoming by Machon Schechter. Also in the works is a book on *tefillah* based on Rabbi Guy Austrian’s interviews with Rabbi Diamond.

Rabbi Diamond’s career encompassed not only the academic but a deeply spiritual and religious outpouring. He helped his students reach many dimensions of a full religious life, showing them that they could expose their vulnerabilities, as he shared his struggles with depression and mental illness and how he overcame them.

The JTA quoted several of his students as they shed light on Rabbi Diamond’s wonderful *middot*. “His wisdom changed the course of my rabbinate many times over, something I know to be true for many others,” wrote Rabbi Menachem Creditor, a scholar-in-residence and rabbi for the UJA-Federation of New York (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 12 December 2025).

Rabbi Ben Goldberg of Congregation KTI in Port Chester, New York, wrote on Facebook that Diamond has “passed on to the supernal yeshiva, where I imagine he will be as beloved as he was in all of the places he taught in this world.” He recalled his time in Diamond’s classes at JTS where it was clear to all that Diamond “cared deeply about his students. More than anything about Talmud, I’ll remember him writing lengthy (and unnecessary) notes of apology for saying something in class that might have been hurtful (which of course, it wasn’t).”

As residents of Teaneck and active members of Congregation Beth Sholom, Rabbi Diamond and his family were involved in many facets of synagogue life. He was always willing to share his Torah with fellow congregants. One of these fellow congregants, attorney Barry Lichtenberg, expressed in his eulogy at Rabbi Diamond’s funeral that he and Rabbi Diamond were the only two members of the shul who were graduates of the Mesivta. Lichtenberg joined the shul after he married noted author Sandee Brawarsky, a stalwart Conservative Jew. Another Beth Sholom member, JTS Bible professor Dr. Benjamin Sommer, said in his eulogy that, “Coming to JTS from Northwestern University, I had no way of knowing how much I would come to dislike the George Washington Bridge—except on the days that Eliezer and I carpooled together. I learned so much Torah, and so much about friendship, that the commute was actually rewarding, and bad traffic just meant I would be even better off when we finally got out of the car.”

Conservative Judaism has been truly enriched by Rabbi Diamond's teachings. He spent 15 years as scholar-in-residence at Camp Ramah, first in Ramah New England, then Ramah Canada, and finally in Ramah Berkshires for a decade, from 1997–2006. He taught dozens of colleagues over many years at JTS' RTI (now in collaboration with the RA) and taught widely for the Rabbinical Assembly. Rabbi Diamond taught so many online courses for the Rabbinical Assembly that listing them here would constitute a tome in itself; his online Torah commentaries and podcasts would fill an additional volume. Before widespread use of the internet, in the mid-1990s, Rabbi Diamond taught a Talmud class by telephone to RA members via conference call. He shared his Torah liberally with us, his colleagues—especially before *haggim*—giving us much *homer l'drush*. Most importantly, he served on the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards for the majority of the first two decades of the 21st century.

He is survived by his wife, our colleague, Rabbi Shelley Kniaz (whom he married in 1996); children, Aviva (Matt Krinsky), David, Tova (Andrew Gold), Yonadav Diamond, and Matan Kniaz-Diamond; grandchildren, Talia, Abe and Elle Krinsky, Ilan Zev Diamond, and Levi, Gabe and Shiloh Gold; brother, Rabbi Menachem Diamond; and many devoted nieces and nephews.

Rabbi Wayne Dosick, ז"ל
הרב זאב דוד בן חיים ואסתר רבקה, ז"ל

Born: August 6, 1947; Chicago, Illinois

Died: March 14, 2025/ה'תשפ"ה; Carlsbad, California

A native of the south side of Chicago, Rabbi Dosick was raised at Congregation Rodfei Zedek under the tutelage of Rabbi Ralph Simon. Rabbi Simon encouraged him to study at Hebrew Union College, where he entered as an undergraduate in the joint program with the University of Cincinnati. Rabbi Dosick graduated with a BA in English literature in 1969, and was ordained in 1973. After ordination, he became assistant rabbi at Congregation Beth Shalom in Wilmington, Delaware, followed by a stint as assistant director of the Synagogue Council of America.

In 1975, Rabbi Dosick became the rabbi of Congregation Beth El in La Jolla, California. He spent 48 years as a rabbi in the San Diego area, the longest-serving rabbi in the region. He was admitted to the Rabbinical Assembly in 1979. In 1981, Rabbi Dosick founded the Video Synagogue and created Kulanu Video Productions. He was producing podcasts before anyone knew what a podcast was. For decades, Rabbi Dosick's recorded service videos have been used by the homebound. Our colleague, Rabbi Stephen Shulman, wrote:

Among the many examples of Wayne's creativity is that in the early 1980s, he recorded a Kabbalat Shabbat service that could be broadcast in hospitals and nursing homes. I was working as a chaplain and

we rented the Video Synagogue. Wayne spoke to a group of the Chicago Board of Rabbis and chaplains and it was truly delightful to experience his *mentshlikhkeit* and engaging manner as he promoted this wonderful project. I remember going around the hospital the first Friday afternoon when we broadcast it and hearing the service in thirty patients' rooms! Wayne impacted so many in a multitude of settings.

New ventures beckoned when, in 1982, a small group of families in Solana Beach, CA (greater San Diego area) sought his leadership to create a new Conservative congregation. Beth Am, housed in a renovated tire store, showcased Rabbi Dosick's creativity and innovative programming. It quickly grew into a 450-family congregation, which he served until 1991.

Rabbi Dosick was deeply involved in his local Jewish community. He served on the board of directors of Mazon in the organization's early years. He also served on the boards of the San Diego Bureau of Jewish Education, the United Jewish Federation of Greater San Diego, and the Community Relations Committee of the United Jewish Federation. Rabbi Dosick was a founding member of the San Diego Jewish Academy, serving on its board of directors from 1979–1981. While in San Diego, he also earned a PhD at Columbia Pacific University.

In 1992, Rabbi Dosick and his wife, Ellen, a social worker, founded the Elijah Minyan, a Spiritual Renewal congregation. It became a “living laboratory” for exploring re-emerging Jewish spirituality. Rabbi Dosick was rabbi of the Elijah

minyan until his passing. In addition, he hosted several radio shows. His final radio project was SpiritTalk Live!: Journeys into Mind, Heart, and Soul, a monthly internet program on HealthyLife.net.

Rabbi Dosick was known as an outstanding and charismatic teacher at the San Diego High School of Jewish Studies. There, he served as a faculty member and member of the curriculum and coordination committees from 1977–1982. Rabbi Dosick also taught Jewish Studies at the University of San Diego, a Catholic school, as an adjunct and visiting associate professor from 1998–2005. Students voted him the best, most beloved professor in the college. He also chaired the Western States Regions of the Rabbinical Assembly annual convention in 1981.

Rabbi Dosick was the author of 10 books, which have benefited rabbinical colleagues and a wide lay audience alike. His titles include *Living Judaism: The Complete Guide to Jewish Belief, Tradition, and Practice* (2010), *The Real Name of God* אֱלֹהִים: *Embracing the Full Essence of the Divine* (2012), and *Radical Loving: One God, One World, One People* (2021). With wife Ellen, Rabbi Dosick also authored *Empowering Your Indigo Child: A Handbook for Parents of Children of Spirit* (2009).

Rabbi Dosick wrote over 400 bi-weekly columns for the *San Diego Jewish Times* before the publication closed. His books garnered him appearances on the Larry King Show and Good Morning America. As the founding dean of AJR in Los Angeles, Rabbi Dosick was very proud of his

multi-denominational affiliations—he was a member of the RA, CCAR, and Aleph. In 1998, HUC-JIR awarded him a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*. In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded him the same honorary degree in 2005.

He is survived by his wife, Ellen; and sister, Karen.

רבֿי מַרְק אֶלּוֹוִיטֵץ ז"ל
הרב מרדכי בן מאיר דוד, ז"ל

Born: May 20, 1938; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Died: November 17, 2025/כ"ו חשוון תשפ"ו; Birmingham,
Alabama

Our colleague, Rabbi Dr. Elovitz, passed away on November 17, 2025. He was born in Pittsburgh on May 20, 1938, to Lillian Werner Elovitz, ז"ל and Meyer David Elovitz, ז"ל. Rabbi Elovitz spent the last 55 years in Birmingham, where he raised his family. He was a USAF chaplain, an educator, litigator, and geopolitical expert who, along with his wife, Martha, traveled the world—when he wasn't playing tennis, tending to his garden, discussing world events, watching Alabama football, or entertaining his grandchildren.

Rabbi Elovitz was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1964, following which he entered the United States Air Force where he was stationed in Wiesbaden, Germany. He was a commissioned officer, entering the service as a chaplain and a captain and retiring as a major. In 1967, he was awarded the United States Air Force Commendation Medal for distinguished and meritorious service as a Jewish chaplain by Dr. Harold Brown, then secretary of the Air Force (and later Secretary of Defense under President Carter).

After discharge from his military service in 1967, Rabbi Elovitz was named associate rabbi to Rabbi Edward Sandrow (RA president, 1960–1962) at Temple Beth El in Cedarhurst, New York (Long Island). While in Cedarhurst he was active

with the New York Board of rabbis and through its radio and television departments delivered regular sermonettes on the local NBC station. In 1969, he became the rabbi of Congregation Beth El in Fairfield, Connecticut.

In 1970, Rabbi Elovitz was called to the pulpit of Temple Beth-El in Birmingham. Soon thereafter, he became involved in the nascent Soviet Jewry movement. Along with Rep. John Buchanan of Birmingham, Rabbi Elovitz testified before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe. He suggested the establishment of a Russo-Jewish/American-Jewish cultural exchange program whereby American rabbinical schools would send students to the Soviet Union along with books and other religious articles. In return, the Soviet Union would send Russian Jews to America for training. The first part of this proposal took place vigorously in the 1970s and 1980s while the second part was never realized due to the Soviet oppression of its Jews. He introduced many innovations at Temple Beth-El, including the introduction of musical instruments to enhance the service. In 1976, he was appointed to the Bioethics Committee of the RA, and had just published a pamphlet entitled, “The Right to Die: Medical Ethics, Law and Human Values,” (Alabama Committee for Humanities and Public Policy).

In 1977, Rabbi Elovitz left the active rabbinate, after receiving his JD and graduating with honors from the Cumberland School of Law in his hometown of Birmingham. The previous Rosh Hashanah, he delivered a stirring sermon about his decision to leave the pulpit giving the shul a year’s notice to find a successor. Over the decades, many of his prior

congregants would stop Dr. Elovitz (and members of his family) and make comments about how beloved Dr. Elovitz was and would always be by those members of Temple Beth-El whom he taught, confirmed, married, consoled, and otherwise supported over the years.

In addition to litigating, Rabbi Elovitz taught classes or was a guest lecturer at various universities and colleges, even commuting to serve as an adjunct professor at John Marshall Law School in Atlanta, where his daughter Rachel was then matriculating. He retired from law in 1996, and in the years that followed, became a world lecturer on geopolitics.

Rabbi Elovitz was the author of *A Century of Jewish Life in Dixie; the Birmingham Experience* (University, University of Alabama Press, 1974) and published articles in the *Jewish Spectator*, *Jewish Digest*, *The Torch*, *The Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle*, and *The Jerusalem Post*. He served as the associate editor of *Cumberland Law Review* and book editor for *The Reconstructionist*.

In addition to remaining a member of the Rabbinical Assembly during his legal career, Rabbi Elovitz was a member of the Association of Trial Lawyers; Birmingham Bar Association; Alabama Trial Lawyers Association; American Association of Jewish Chaplains, Institute of Religion and Mental Health, New York Board of Rabbis, and Birmingham Jewish Federation.

Rabbi Elovitz is survived by his wife, Martha; children Rachel Aliza Elovitz (Alex/Sasha), Michal Aviva Elovitz (Ari) and

Reuben Jeremiah Elovitz; brothers, Albert, Stuart and Shelley Elovitz; stepchildren; Hugo Marx (Julia), Hallie Webber (Will), Alice Goodsell (Blake), and Nathan (Nat) Marx; and 12 grandchildren.

This biographical entry was prepared with material provided by Rabbi Elovitz's daughter, Rachel Elovitz, Elovitz Family Law, Atlanta, GA.

Rabbi Shimon Hirschhorn, ז"ל

הרב שמעון משה בן מרדכי ומרים רבקה, ז"ל

Born: July 12, 1955; Jerusalem, Israel

Died: November 9, 2025/י"ח חשוון תשפ"ו; New York, New York

Our colleague, Rabbi Dianne Cohler-Esses, who eulogized Rabbi Hirschhorn, said he was “deeply rabbinic both personally and professionally.” The child of two Holocaust survivors, he was born in Jerusalem. When Rabbi Hirschhorn was four, his parents decided to move to Mannheim, the city where the Hirschhorns had lived for close to 400 years, and where his father, Mordechai, was kicked out of his gymnasium on Kristallnacht. Rabbi Hirschhorn ended up attending that same gymnasium. It was a mixed experience, to say the least. He shared stories about his teacher, a former Nazi, who once made him conjugate the verb “to gas” in front of the class. He was then kicked out of school at 17, ostensibly for asking too many questions. He spoke many languages, including the Hebrew of his country of birth, German of his country of rearing, French of his mother’s native country, Yiddish his mother’s *mamaloschen* (she was a French Jew via Poland, the land of her parents), and eventually English.

There followed time in Dusseldorf, where Rabbi Hirschhorn completed his gymnasium studies. He then entered the University in Gottingen, where he earned an undergraduate degree and an MA Diplom Agrar Ingenieur (agriculture) in 1981. His decision to study agriculture led to a brief stint as a shepherd in the south of France, after which he spent a year at Machon Pardes (1981–82).

Returning to Germany, Rabbi Hirschhorn turned to Jewish studies and attended a relatively new program at the University of Heidelberg. Impacted by his meeting with Rabbi Ismar Schorsch, then the chancellor of JTS, he decided to pursue JTS rabbinical school in 1988, after earning his MA from Heidelberg from the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien. Deeply affected by the death of his mother, Miriam, after her long battle with cancer when he was only 27 years old, Rabbi Hirschhorn began studying Gestalt therapy at the Gestalt Training program, Institut für Gestalttherapie und Körperarbeit in Heidelberg from 1982–1986. When he came to New York in 1988, Rabbi Hirschhorn enrolled in IPTAR, the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training until 1999, parallel to his rabbinic studies. He was ordained at JTS in 1993. He spent most of his professional career shepherding nursing home patients, their families, and staff through their end-of-life journeys, as well as helping his psychoanalytic patients make sense of the tangled threads of their lives' tapestries.

Rabbi Hirschhorn mentored countless rabbinical and cantorial students from YCT, JTS and AJR as they learned pastoral skills through their internship with the residents of the Hebrew Home. He led four-year long process groups for the rabbinical students at YCT, gently and wisely guiding their personal and professional growth.

Rabbi Hirschhorn brought his rabbinic and analytical worlds together through his groundbreaking role in IPTAR's re-specialization program, which gave future therapists who were new to mental health a beginning clinical experience. As chaplain at the Hebrew Home for the Aged, he opened the door for candidates to become "friendly visitors." As his

IPTAR colleague and friend Psychoanalyst Hattie B. Myers, PhD, CSW wrote in her tribute, “He taught academics, musicians, physicians, artists and writers, how to simply sit and be with another—with no agenda beyond just connecting. Those candidates in the first years of the program who had the privilege of working with Shimon, learned how to do this from the master. Many of those 'friendly visitors' matriculated to IPTAR’s analytic program, many became fellows and faculty members, and many have held positions of leadership at IPTAR.”

From 1985 to 1995 Rabbi Hirschhorn served many communities and organizations in various capacities, including as Rabbi in Missoula, MT; Learners Minyan leader at Town and Village Synagogue in Manhattan; Jewish chaplain at the Cardinal Cook Health Care Center; and service leader in Heidelberg (1985-6) and East Berlin (1990), as well as Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Toronto (Congregation Beth Tzedec) and others. In 1989, he led Shabbat and Holiday services for the residents at the Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged.

His therapeutic work included being an assistant classroom teacher in a therapeutic nursery at CCNY (1990–93), assistant clinical instructor in psychology at Downstate Medical Center, New York (1989–93), work as a student therapist at the Psychosomatic Clinic University of Heidelberg (1986–87) and volunteer for pastoral counselling for SOS hotline in Heidelberg (1983–87), among others. Rabbi Hirschhorn spent the majority of his rabbinic career as the director of religious affairs and chaplain at the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale from 1995–2020, and as a licensed psychoanalyst in

private practice 1999–2025. While at the Hebrew Home, he tended to many of our colleagues and their families with great compassion and depth.

He earned great recognition and honors during his career, and in 2019 was named Chaplain of the Year by the National Association of Jewish Chaplains. He was the author of “*Tora, Wer Wird Dich Nun Erheben?*” *Pijutim Mimagenza*, a German-Hebrew annotated anthology of medieval liturgy and poetry for the High Holidays from Mainz. In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded him a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, in 2021.

A rebel, a shepherd, a pig farmer, a scholar of medieval Hebrew poetry, a rabbi, a chaplain, a psychoanalyst. A student, a teacher, a curious and intuitive soul. A besotted father, a romantic husband, a devoted son and nephew, loving brother and uncle. A creative cook, a deep thinker and even a deeper voiced singer of *zemirot* and French chanson. Rabbi Hirschhorn wore many *kippot* in his short 70 years on this earth, but all of them with unmistakable elegance and flair. On November 9, 2026 that heart gave out after a long illness, but he will forever reside in the hearts of all who knew and loved him.

He is survived by his wife, Cantor Natasha Hirschhorn; daughters, Miriam and Racheli; and sister, Yael Hirschhorn.

This biography of Rabbi Hirschhorn was in part based on material from his wife, Cantor Natasha Hirschhorn, Congregation Ansche Chesed, New York, NY.

Rabbi Alvin Kass, ז"ל
הרב אברהם בן יוסף הכהן וטובה חיה, ז"ל

Born: December 23, 1935; Patterson, New Jersey

Died: October 29, 2025/ז' חשוון תשפ"ו; New York, New York

The youngest police chaplain in NYPD history, Rabbi Kass was a 1957 graduate of Columbia University with a BA in history. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa, summa cum laude, and as class salutatorian. In the same year, he was awarded a BHL by JTS. The following year, Rabbi Kass received an MA from Columbia, also in history. He was ordained by JTS in 1962 and, in 1976, earned a PhD from NYU in the field of education. After ordination, he entered the United States Air Force, serving as a chaplain for two years, primarily stationed at Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois. He also served the Jewish community of Danville, Illinois.

Upon discharge from the Air Force, Rabbi Kass began his formal congregational rabbinate at the Astoria Center of Israel in Queens. For 36 years, he served as rabbi of the East Midwood Jewish Center in Brooklyn, and in 2014 was named rabbi emeritus. His communal involvement was legendary, and while he saw himself as a rabbi for the broader Jewish community, he was particularly devoted to Conservative Judaism. Rabbi Kass served as editor of the *United Synagogue Review* from 1965–1978, and from 1968–1972 he was on the RA Israel Committee. He edited the Mercaz newsletter from 1984–1986. He was on the Day School Committee of the United Synagogue and a member of its Commission on Jewish Education.

While serving in Astoria, Rabbi Kass was appointed a chaplain in the New York Police Department, a position he held actively until his death. He was the longest-serving chaplain in the NYPD. In 2002, he was promoted to Chief Chaplain shortly after the attacks of 9/11. A 2002 article in the *JTS Magazine* (Spring issue), described how “nothing could quite compare to that day when he escaped with his life, along with hundreds of the officers he was there to counsel.” He attended the funeral of every police officer killed and officiated at the funerals of the two Jewish officers who died. He led Rosh Hashanah services for a federal emergency response team at LaGuardia Airport identifying victims recovered from Ground Zero. He also served as a chaplain at the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. He was a member of the Honor Legion of the NYPD and a founding member of the Ethics Board of the NYPD.

NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch said, at his funeral, that “he shaped the moral heart of this department.” She recounted a story often told about Rabbi Kass: During his time at the NYPD, there was a hostage situation where a man was holding his girlfriend at gunpoint. No one could get through to this man and, after exhaustive negotiations with law enforcement, Rabbi Kass was called in to see if he could diffuse the situation. After all night negotiations, the suspect was hungry, so the NYPD brought two pastrami sandwiches from the Carnegie Deli—one for the suspect, and one for Rabbi Kass. Rabbi Kass offered the suspect a pastrami sandwich in exchange for his gun. The suspect agreed and turned the gun over to Rabbi Kass. But the danger was not yet

over: Sandwich in hand, the suspect revealed a second gun. Thinking quickly, Rabbi Kass offered the second sandwich for the second gun. The man surrendered, and the crisis was finally resolved. Since the Carnegie Deli (since closed) was not kosher, Rabbi Kass could not eat the pastrami sandwich anyway.

Another example of Rabbi Kass' courage occurred in 2020. While out on his daily walk, he was approached by a mugger who knocked him to the ground. The mugger saw Rabbi Kass's police shield, fled, and was arrested hours later. Rabbi Kass assured everyone he would continue walking, and indeed, he walked seven miles a day until shortly before his death.

Outside of the Police Department, Rabbi Kass served as president of the New York Board of Rabbis (1996–1998), president of the Brooklyn Board of Rabbis (1984–1986), and president of the Histadrut Ivrit of America (1981–1983). He served on the Brooklyn College Advisory Council, the board of the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, and on the board of the Hillel Foundation at Brooklyn College.

Rabbi Kass taught courses in philosophy and history at colleges and universities in the New York metropolitan area, including Long Island University, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, the New York Institute of Technology, Columbia University, and JTS.

He authored several publications: *Politics in New York State 1800 to 1830* (Syracuse University Press, 1965); co-editor, *Eyewitnesses to Jewish History* (UAHC, 1973); articles in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*; editor, *Proceedings, United Synagogue Biennial Convention* (various years); and “Watchman for the Community” in *The American Rabbi* (Ktav, 1977).

In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded him a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, in 1988. In June 2025, he was honored by the JTS Center for Pastoral Education for his career in the chaplaincy.

He is survived by his children, Sarah, Dr. Lewis (Sarah), and Dr. Danny (Debby Gillman) Kass; and grandchildren Bennett, Judah and Nava Kass. His wife, the late Miryom (Arnold) Kass, who passed away in 2017, was a graduate of the Joint Program of Columbia and JTS, former president of the Alumni Association of JTS, and actively involved in Jewish education throughout her career.

Rabbi Gilbert Kollin, ז"ל
הרב גדליה בן שלום מרדכי וחנה מרים, ז"ל

Born: May 3, 1934; Brooklyn, New York

Died: November 12, 2025/כ"א חשוון תשפ"ו; Pasadena,
California

A true son of Brooklyn, Rabbi Kollin spent the last 45 years of his life in Southern California. A 1956 graduate of Brooklyn College with a degree in sociology cum laude, he was president of Hillel and of the National Student Zionist Organization. Rabbi Kollin was ordained at JTS in 1961, the same year he married Yona Rosen. He was commissioned as a chaplain in the US Air Force, stationed at bases in Mississippi and Turkey, and remained as a reserve chaplain until retirement as lieutenant colonel in 1989.

After active duty, he assumed the pulpit of Knesseth Israel in Spokane, Washington, an Orthodox synagogue. In 1965, the shul merged with the Reform Temple-Emanuel to become Temple Beth Shalom, a Conservative congregation. Rabbi Kollin remained there until 1967, when he assumed the pulpit of Congregation Ner Tamid in Bellevue (suburban Seattle). He served there until 1970 before spending a year as assistant rabbi at Temple Emanu-El in Miami Beach, Florida.

In 1971, Rabbi Kollin became the rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Flint, Michigan. While there, he oversaw the construction of a new building and boasted an 80% post-bar/bat mitzvah retention rate in the Hebrew school. He was proud that many of the congregation's 200-plus students

attended Camp Ramah. In 1974, with the support of the local Reform rabbi, Rabbi Kollin persuaded the local Federation to write a strongly worded letter to Simcha Dinitz, then Israel's ambassador to the United States, regarding the Law of Return. At the time, the Knesset was debating whether to allow Jews converted by non-Orthodox rabbis to make *aliyah* under the Law of Return. The resolution read, in part, "that the [Federation] would object to any amendment of the Law of Return which would favor one form of Judaism over another."

From 1975–1980, Rabbi Kollin served as director of the JWB Jewish Welfare Board (now JCCA) Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy, the entity that endorses rabbis for the United States Armed Forces and assists Jewish chaplains in the service and at veterans' hospitals. In this role, he was responsible for the recruitment and counseling of chaplains, supported the delegations of the denominations—CCAR, RA and RCA, and visited military field installations in the US and 23 abroad. He took pride in having worked with military commands at every level, including the Office of the Chief of Chaplains at the Pentagon.

A Boy Scout in his youth, Rabbi Kollin served as Jewish chaplain general for the National and International Scout Jamborees from 1963–1979. There, he recruited rabbis to serve as chaplains, conducted services, provided kosher food—especially for the Israeli delegation—and hosted visitors. From 1975–1980, he was the rabbi of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting.

In 1980, Rabbi Kollin and his family went westward. He became the rabbi of Hollywood Temple Beth El, serving the congregation until 1989. He was an early adopter of the Shalom Aleichem Hebrew reading program, and his communal involvements ran deep. He was a founding member of CHIP-IN—the Hollywood Homeless Coalition and served on the Social Needs Committee of the Community Redevelopment Agency of Hollywood. During his time at Beth El, Rabbi Kollin was also president of the Western States Region of the Rabbinical Assembly. In 1988, he honored Beth El's many Holocaust survivors by bringing a Czech Torah scroll to the synagogue. After he almost missed his flight bringing the Torah back from the Westminster Trust in London, Rabbi Kollin was upgraded to first class. He told the airline that he was a *shaliah mitzvah*.

In 1989, the family moved to Pasadena, California. Rabbi Kollin was invited to become the spiritual leader of the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center, a role he held until his retirement in 2003, when he was named rabbi emeritus. In those years, he revitalized the morning Shabbat service, established a close relationship with Pasadena's Muslim community after 9/11, conducted classes sponsored by the American Jewish University at the temple, and welcomed interfaith families into the congregation, among many other accomplishments. He served on the Chaplain's Coordinating Committee of the California Department of Corrections, the Committee on Medical Ethics of St. Luke's Medical Center, and the Chaplains Corps of the local police department. He served as president of the Southern California Board of Rabbis from 1999–2001.

Rabbi Kollin remained very active in retirement, teaching and serving as chaplain in many capacities. He was the Jewish chaplain at the City of Hope hospital, a member of the *bet din* at AJU, and generously officiated at life-cycle events when asked. At Rabbi Kollin's funeral, our colleague Rabbi Joshua Levine-Grater, his successor at Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center, spoke lovingly about Rabbi Kollin, describing how helpful he was during the two decades they overlapped. He emphasized that Rabbi Kollin would offer advice when asked, explaining what he would do—never telling Rabbi Grater what to do.

The Rabbinical Assembly is grateful for Rabbi Kollin's service as chair of the Keruv Committee from 1990–1992, and as a member of the Executive Council from 1990–1993. Rabbi Kollin also wrote articles in numerous journals including *The Jerusalem Post*, *Conservative Judaism*, *Judaism*, *Spectator*, *the Journal of Reform Judaism*, and *Midstream*. In recognition of his years of service, the Jewish Theological Seminary awarded him a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, in 1986.

His beloved, Yona, died in 2009. In 2012, Rabbi Kollin found love again and married Cynthia Cohen. He is survived by his wife, Cynthia; children, Dalia (Noah) Taft, Daniel (Keren) Kollin, and Eytan (Denise) Kollin; and grandchildren, Nathan, Kayla, Eliana, Yoanna, and Gavriel.

Rabbi Charles Kraus, ז"ל
הרב יצחק בן הרב שמואל וטובא, ז"ל

Born: December 5, 1930; Satoraljaújhely, Hungary

Died: July 1, 2025/ה' תמוז תשפ"ה; Elkins Park, Pennsylvania

A Holocaust survivor and the son of a rabbi, Rabbi Kraus immigrated to the United States at age 18. After the German occupation of Hungary, he lived briefly in the local ghetto before being deported to a concentration camp in May 1944. His mother, brother, and most of his extended family were murdered. Rabbi Kraus survived the war along with his father, who later remarried; he is survived by a stepsister.

After the war, Rabbi Kraus studied at the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of Budapest. Following his immigration to the United States, he graduated from Washington Irving High School in New York City and went on to study at New York University and Brooklyn College. In 1956, he earned a BA in political science with honors. During this period, he also obtained a teaching license from the New York City Board of Education. Seeking an enlightened Jewish intellectual environment, he pursued further studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary's Teachers Institute and was ordained by the rabbinical school in 1960.

In 1965, he married fellow Hungarian Holocaust survivor Agnes Miller in the synagogue of the Jewish Theological Seminary of Budapest. Rabbi Kraus served congregations including the South Shore Jewish Center in Bellmore, New York, the Trumbull Jewish Community in Connecticut

(greater Hartford area) and Temple Beth Abraham in Brooklyn. In 1976, he began a rabbinic career of more than thirty years in the Philadelphia area. He served as spiritual leader of Beth Tefilah in Yeadon, and, in 1992, assumed the pulpit of Beth Emeth-B'nai Yitzhok in Northeast Philadelphia. He also served as president of the Greater Philadelphia Rabbinical Assembly and as vice president of the Philadelphia Board of Rabbis.

In 1989, Rabbi Kraus was certified as a *mesader gittin* by the Rabbinical Assembly. In this role, he helped hundreds of couples complete their Jewish divorces with sensitivity and care. He took great pride in his service on these *batei din*, which demanded exceptional emotional strength and pastoral skill.

In 1994, the Rabbinical Assembly launched Ravnet, its rabbinic listserv. Soon after, Rabbi Kraus emerged as a guiding presence and intellectual beacon on the platform. Colleagues revered his postings for their scholarship, erudition, and compassion. When colleagues chose to leave Ravnet, many contacted Rabbi Kraus directly to ensure they would continue receiving his writings. Hundreds of colleagues benefited from his thoughtful contributions, a role he continued to hold when Ravnet later evolved into RA-Connections. He remained a devoted learner until his final days, finding joy both in study and in sharing it—something Agnes wishes colleagues to know and appreciate.

Upon his retirement in 2000, Rabbi Kraus joined Congregation Beth Sholom in Elkins Park, where he taught classes and became a beloved congregant. In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded him a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, in 1986.

He is survived by his wife, Agnes; daughters, Audrey Kraus (David Diamond) and Michelle Kraus; sister, Hedy Needle; brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Judy and George Szekely; grandchildren, Hannah, Harry, and Benjamin Diamond; nephews, Joshua and Jonathan Needle and Andrew Szekely; and niece, Jennifer Bloomgarden.

Rabbi Mark Mallach, ז"ל

הרב מנחם מענדל בן חיים וולדה דבורה, ז"ל

Born: April 15, 1954; Washington, District of Columbia

Died: April 16, 2025/ה'תשפ"ה ניסן תשפ"ה; Springfield, New Jersey

After a successful career as a pharmacist in the Baltimore-Washington area, Rabbi Mallach embarked on a second career in the rabbinate. Before ordination, he graduated from the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy in 1979, after returning stateside from studies in Israel. While abroad in 1975, he met and married Genya, a chemical engineer from the former Soviet Union. The Mallachs later lived in the Annapolis area, where they were active members of Congregation Kol Ami (now Kol Shalom); for several years, the editor of this publication served as the Mallach family rabbi. During those years, the family's level of observance deepened, which in part inspired Rabbi Mallach to enter rabbinical school. He was ordained at JTS in 1994, becoming the first registered pharmacist to be ordained a Conservative rabbi. While in rabbinical school, he earned prizes of excellence in Talmud and homiletics.

Upon ordination, Rabbi Mallach was named assistant rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom in Livingston, followed by a brief tenure in West Palm Beach, Florida. In 1999, he became the senior rabbi of Temple Beth Am (now Temple Beth Am Yisrael) in Springfield, New Jersey, where he served until he was named rabbi emeritus upon retirement in 2020.

Rabbi Mallach used his wealth of experience as a lay leader of local synagogues, as a student of the Torah, and as a spiritual leader to teach Jewish traditions and embrace life. Driven by unwavering commitment and dedication and imbued with a sense of kedushah, he elevated many souls.

Rabbi Mallach was also very active in community affairs. He was the President of the Springfield Interfaith Clergy Council and the Chairman of the Joint Chaplaincy Committee of the Greater Federation of MetroWest, which hired and supervised Jewish chaplains in the region.

As an avid, life-long bicyclist, Rabbi Mallach often commuted to his pharmacy jobs by bicycle. During his rabbinate, he was frequently spotted cycling along local roads. In 2004, Rabbi Mallach completed a cross-country bicycle ride as a charitable fundraiser for the Healing Heart Foundation and to establish his synagogue's Religious School Education Endowment Fund.

Rabbi Mallach is survived by his wife, Genya; daughters, Elana Rosenbaum (Scott) and Ester Mallach (Ryan); and grandchildren Hayley, Hayden, Hayzel, Winter, and River.

Rabbi Bezalel “Buzzy” Porten, ז”ל

הרב בצלאל משה בן בנימין, ז”ל

Born: February 14, 1931; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Died: February 24, 2025/ה'תשפ"ה; Jerusalem, Israel

A graduate of Temple University and Gratz College, Rabbi Porten was ordained at JTS in 1957 while simultaneously working towards a PhD in Jewish History under Columbia University's distinguished scholar, Salo Baron. Upon ordination, Rabbi Porten received a deferment from the Chaplaincy Advisory Board of the Jewish Welfare Board, postponing his military service so he could continue pursuing his scholarship. Rabbi Louis Finkelstein, then the chancellor of JTS, arranged for him to be a member of the Program for Special Studies. The program offered a substantial stipend for a period of three years.

After completing his PhD in 1964, which included a year in Israel and a stint at the College of Jewish Studies in Chicago, Rabbi Porten held several teaching positions in the University of California system. This included a visiting assistant professorship at UC Berkeley in the Department of Near Eastern Languages, and an assistant professorship in the anthropology department at UC Davis. In 1968, Rabbi Porten and his family made *aliyah*, and Rabbi Porten began teaching at Haifa University. In 1969, he joined the Jewish History faculty at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where, in 1980, he was appointed associate professor. He held the position for over 40 years before he was named professor emeritus.

Rabbi Porten's research focused on the Jewish community at Elephantine, Aramaic papyri, and the Idumean Ostraca from the Persian period. The Porten family spent summers at Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, where Rabbi Porten was affectionately known as Mr. Elephantine. Many remember his chanting of *kinot* after the reading of *Eikhah* at camp. His sabbaticals included teaching positions at York University in Toronto, Yale University, Cambridge University, the University of Sydney, the University of Pennsylvania, and JTS.

Rabbi Porten authored several books and over a hundred articles. He is most notable for *Archives From Elephantine; The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony*; *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English* (vol. I-IV); and *The Elephantine Papyri in English and Textbook of Aramaic Ostraca from 30 Idumea*. Other works include *Aramaic-Demotic Equivalents: Who is the Borrower and who the Lender?*; *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyeses to Constantine and Beyond*; *Aramaic Documents from Egypt: A Key-Word-in-Context Concordance*; and *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic*.

Rabbi Porten was known for his mentorship of young scholars and rabbinical students, especially those who studied with him during their rabbinical school year in Israel. In 1996, rabbinical student Matt Eisenfeld מ"ט and his fiancée, Sara Duker ל"ט, were murdered in a horrific terrorist attack on their way to visit Petra. Matt's last paper was written for his class with Rabbi Porten, which was saved on Rabbi Edward

Bernstein's computer when Matt's computer broke. In Rabbi Bernstein's book, *Love Finer Than Wine: The Writings of Matthew Eisenfeld and Sara Duker*, Rabbi Porten wrote a heartfelt introduction to Matt's essay on *Shir HaShirim*.

Dr. Jack Sasson, professor emeritus at Vanderbilt University, wrote in an obituary that Rabbi Porten's "studies provide critical insights into ancient Jewish communities, cross-cultural interactions, and historical continuity in the Mediterranean world. Additionally, he was praised for his mentorship of rising scholars and his contributions to literary analysis of prayer and the Bible, influencing audiences in both academic and public settings."

In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded Rabbi Porten a Doctor of Hebrew Letters, *honoris causa*, in 1986.

Rabbi Porten is survived by his children, Joshua, Avi, Gavriel, and Nomi; partner, Rina Harrison; 11 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and brother, Charles. He was predeceased by his wife, Deborah who died in 2009.

רב"ל אליהו יהודה בן הרב יעקב ורחל, ז"ל
Rabbi Elijah J. Schochet, ז"ל

Born: May 27, 1934; Chicago, Illinois

Died: January 1, 2026/י"ב טבת תשפ"ו; Valley Village,
California

A scion of the Lithuanian yeshivah world of Volozhin and Slobodka, Rabbi Elijah J. Schochet was the grandson of Rabbi Hayim Tzvi Rubenstein, founder and first dean of the Hebrew Theological College in Chicago. He was also related to the Kaminetsky rabbinic dynasty and was a first cousin of Rabbi Berel Wein, ז"ל, longtime executive director of the Orthodox Union.

Born in Chicago, Rabbi Schochet moved to Los Angeles at the age of eleven. He graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, earning a BA cum laude in psychology in 1956, and was ordained at The Jewish Theological Seminary in 1960.

Following ordination, Rabbi Schochet became the founding rabbi of Congregation Beth Kodesh in Canoga Park (greater Los Angeles area). Established by two dozen families in a house behind a gas station, the congregation grew steadily under his leadership. He was granted life tenure in 1978. In 1994, Beth Kodesh merged with Congregation Beth Ami to form Shomrei Torah Congregation (now HaMakomLA), a vibrant 450-family community for which Rabbi Schochet oversaw a \$7 million building project.

He retired in 1999 and was named rabbi emeritus. In retirement, Rabbi Schochet moved to Valley Village, in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley, where he became active in Shaarey Zedek Congregation, an Orthodox synagogue attended by his children and many members of his extended family.

One of Rabbi Schochet's proudest accomplishments was the founding of Kadima Hebrew Academy (now Kadima Day School) in the western San Fernando Valley, which he established together with his wife, Penina, in 1970. Marking its fiftieth anniversary in 2020, the school continues to be a significant force in Jewish day school education.

Continuing his family's scholarly tradition, Rabbi Schochet earned a doctorate from JTS in 1967 under the direction of Rabbi Saul Lieberman, ז"ל. During his years in Los Angeles, he also became a licensed marriage and family counselor in the state of California.

Rabbi Schochet served the Rabbinical Assembly in numerous leadership roles, including as president of the Western States Region and as a member of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards during the 1970s. In 1977, when the Rabbinical Assembly asked Chancellor Gerson Cohen to appoint a blue-ribbon Commission on the Ordination of Women, Rabbi Schochet was selected as a member.

He was the author of seven books: *Bach: Rabbi Joel Sirkes—His Life, Works, and Times*, an expanded version of his doctoral dissertation; *A Responsum of Surrender*, an analysis of a censored *teshuvot* long out of print; *Taz: Rabbi*

David Halevi, incorporating material from his father-in-law, the Bach; *Animal Life in Jewish Tradition: Attitudes and Relationships*, inspired by his children's love of animals; *Amalek: The Enemy Within*, written with the encouragement of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel; *The Hasidic Movement and the Gaon of Vilna*; and *Saul Lieberman: The Man and His Work*, co-authored with Rabbi Solomon Spiro.

A master teacher, Rabbi Schochet taught at the University of Judaism throughout his career and, after retirement, served as a full professor at the Academy for Jewish Religion. Upon news of his passing, tributes from students poured in. Rabbi Amiel Monson wrote: "He kept me in line, was always complimenting me, and gave me the confidence to be a rabbi. Every time we spoke, the first thing he asked was what I was studying. He made sure I was always learning and honing my knowledge of Judaism. I carry his wisdom, guidance, and love with me every day."

In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded Rabbi Schochet a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, in 1986.

He is survived by his wife, Penina; children, Daniel (Taly ל"ד), Joel (Andi), Lisa (Alan); and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

רב הרב חיים נחום בן אברהם וברונא, ז"ל
Rabbi Herbert N. Schwartz, ז"ל

Born: April 13, 1943; Chicago, Illinois

Died: November 22, 2025/ב' כסלו תשפ"ו; Potomac, Maryland

A native of the South Side of Chicago, Rabbi Schwartz graduated from the University of Michigan with a BA in political science in 1964. He then entered the rabbinical school at JTS, where he was ordained in 1970. While in rabbinical school, he met Sharon Karp, and the two married in 1965. During his studies, Rabbi Schwartz and Sharon would spend Shabbat in Gramercy Park, leading services for the deaf in sign language—very uncommon in those days. He published a monograph entitled *Religious Education of the Handicapped – A Problem of Religious Symbols for the Deaf*.

Upon ordination, Rabbi Schwartz assumed the pulpit of Ohev Tzedek in Youngstown, Ohio, followed by nine years as rabbi of B'nai Jeshurun in Cleveland, during which time he earned an MA in education from Kent State University in 1973. In 1983, the Schwartz family moved to New England, where he was called to the pulpit of Temple Beth El in Springfield, Massachusetts. He served in Springfield until his retirement in 2008, when he was named rabbi emeritus. During his rabbinic career, Rabbi Schwartz marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and visited refuseniks in the former Soviet Union. Upon assuming the Beth El pulpit he represented the Rabbinical Assembly on a joint education committee with United Synagogue (1983–1985).

In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded him a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, in 1996.

According to the Beth El website,

Under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Herbert Schwartz, installed as rabbi in 1983, there was increasing emphasis on *tikkun olam*. Members volunteered to feed the hungry and homeless at Loaves and Fishes and volunteered in local nursing homes through Project Ezra, allowing Christian staff time off for their holidays. Congregants donated truckloads of household goods and clothing to help new immigrants from Somalia, Ethiopia, and the former Soviet Union settle in the area.

Rabbi Schwartz was always interested in the relationship between religion and health care, and Springfield gave him the perfect opportunity to explore this field. He became active at Baystate Hospital in its ethics program and chaplaincy service. He was chair of the Baystate Community Health Committee and chair of the Visiting Nurses Association, and a member of the Health Council of Springfield. He was the “unofficial rabbi” of the Jewish nursing home, teaching staff about Jewish tradition. He was also a member of the Physicians of Western Massachusetts Mercy Hospital Annual Ethics Program Committee. He served on the board of the United Way, was a member of the Pregnancy Prevention/Low Infant Birth Weight Task Force, and helped develop a ban on smoking in restaurants. He championed clean needle

exchange programs and was a member of the AIDS Prevention Task Force.

In retirement, Rabbi Schwartz and Sharon moved to Washington, DC, where they joined Adas Israel Congregation. The synagogue quickly sought his expertise and talents. He taught classes, officiated at life-cycle functions, and gave sage advice to the clergy. He also served as an interim rabbi in 2017, when the synagogue was transitioning to its current model of a co-senior rabbi team of Rabbis Aaron Alexander and Lauren Holtzblatt. At his funeral, both rabbis spoke about his unique contribution to the synagogue. When asked to teach a class for potential converts to Judaism on Tanakh and biblical theology, Rabbi Alexander recalled walking past the beit midrash and seeing the class dancing in a circle with Rabbi Schwartz, with the Torah unfurled on its reading stand—this was how he wanted to show the joy of being Jewish. The joy of being Jewish was what he most wanted to convey.

In the note that Rabbi Amy Wallk, Rabbi Schwartz's successor at Beth El, sent to the congregation upon his death, she wrote,

He cultivated many friendships and shepherded so many individuals and families through significant lifecycle moments. Over the years, so many people have shared stories with me about what Rabbi Schwartz did for them, how he showed up at just the right moment, and how he guided them through challenging personal moments. Rabbi Schwartz loved

this community and devoted himself to its well-being, not only while serving as its rabbi, but throughout his retirement in Washington, DC.

He is survived by his wife, Sharon; children, Doniel Schwartz (Joanna), Alisa Silverman (Adam), and Rachel Rubin (Robert); grandchildren, Gabriela Lewis (Stephen), Amalia Rubin (Brian), Abe and Aden Silverman, and Abby and Hannah Chaikin; great-granddaughter, Hannah Lewis; brother, Robert Schwartz (Judy); and sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Mira and our colleague, Rabbi Lee Levine.

Rabbi Dina Shargel ז"ל

הרב דינה רות בת הרב נחום דוד וביילע יהודית, ז"ל

Born: June 22, 1960

Died: February 27, 2025/ה'תשפ"ה שבט ט"ז

The daughter of our colleague, Rabbi Dr. Nahum Shargel, and noted Jewish historian, Dr. Baila Round Shargel, Rabbi Shargel graduated from Brandeis University with a BA in music in 1982. It was at Brandeis that she met David Projansky, whom she married shortly after graduation. Rabbi Shargel began her career as a music teacher. She taught mostly in Jewish pre-schools in Westchester County, in the suburbs of New York City. With her 40th birthday looming over the horizon, she made the bold decision to enter the JTS rabbinical school, receiving ordination in 2006. Rabbi Shargel then became the ritual director at Temple Israel in White Plains, New York, a position she served until 2019.

Rabbi Shargel was known as a patient, precise, and insightful teacher—skills which came, perhaps, from her days teaching pre-school and her rigorous musical training. Nothing gave her more pleasure than teaching Torah reading and *nusah* to those who wanted to increase their liturgical skills. Rabbi Shargel was a Torah reader par excellence and knew every *pintalech* of every *nusah* in great detail. She garnered the highest respect and praise as a Torah reader. Overseeing the daily minyan at Temple Israel, she shepherded many to a deeper level of observance as she guided them through their year of mourning. She delighted in teaching her cadre of b'nai

mitzvah students and adult learners, as well as playing guitar for the students in Temple Israel's pre-school.

In addition, she was a prolific writer during her rabbinic career. She contributed an essay entitled "Hanukkah Lights and Shabbat Lights" in *Modern Reflections on Hanukkah* (ed. Rabbi Menachem Creditor). She wrote for many publications, both on a local and national level, including an article on Friday night kiddush for the RA's very own website, ExploringJudaism.org, and a stirring piece for the Rabbinical Assembly on burying her father-in-law, a US Army veteran. Her writings have appeared in publications such as *Zeremim* and the *New Jersey Jewish Standard*. Rabbi Shargel served as interim rabbi of the Fairlawn Jewish Center from 2019–2020 before taking up part-time work in chaplaincy and tutoring a wide variety of private students. She joined her colleagues at RTI (Rabbinic Training Institute) in January 2025 where she was thrilled to be with her colleagues. Only a few weeks later, she entered hospice.

She is survived by her husband, David Projansky; sons, Yoni, and Ari; father, Rabbi Nahum Shargel; siblings, Drs. Rebecca and Raphael. She was predeceased by her mother, Dr. Baila Round Shargel, and brother, Jonathan.

רב'ל פֿרעדריק עפֿראים האַלמאן וואַרשאַו, ז"ל

הרב אפרים בן משה, ז"ל

Born: March 9, 1940; Albany, New York

Died: April 21, 2025/ה'תשפ"ה; כ"ד ניסן תשפ"ה; Los Angeles, California

A 1962 graduate of UCLA with a degree in Near Eastern Studies, Rabbi Warsaw also earned a BRE in 1964 from the University of Judaism (now the American Jewish University). While he was in rabbinical school and after his ordination in 1968, he was assistant to Rabbi Mordecai Waxman at Temple Israel of Great Neck (suburban New York City), in charge of the youth program. It was under his tutelage that the Youth House of Temple Israel was expanded both physically and in terms of its programming. Rabbi Warsaw was known as the “pied piper of the Youth House,” as students of all ages rallied to him. During that time, he also earned an MA in Curriculum Theory and Instructional Technology at Columbia University in 1972. While at the Youth House, he pioneered innovative curricula that have been widely emulated.

In 1972, Rabbi Warsaw traveled westward to become assistant to Rabbi Harold Schulweis at Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California (in greater Los Angeles), where he continued his pioneering programs in innovative Jewish education. Among his accomplishments were increasing the student body to over 1,000 students during his three years at the synagogue, becoming the largest Jewish school in Los Angeles; compiling a Friday Evening Seder, a family guide to Friday night rituals (used in many synagogues); instituting monthly Friday Eve dinners at the congregation, focusing on

family participation (a given today, but not 50+ years ago); and instituting family-oriented services on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings, which consistently attracted large numbers of people of all ages. Most importantly, he conceived and introduced the innovative 13 Mitzvot Program for bar/bat mitzvah students, including both students and parents, making each bar/bat mitzvah a personalized spiritual experience. This was in addition to the curriculum he innovated for the many *havurot* that Rabbi Schulweis introduced at the synagogue and that, over the years, were emulated in synagogues throughout North America.

In 1975, Rabbi Warshaw became the director of the Jewish Day School in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida (now known as the Posnack School). He finished the 1970s as director of the Valley Jewish Day School in Phoenix, Arizona.

The decade of the 1980s saw Rabbi Warshaw fulfill a lifelong dream and move to Israel. He built a home in Jerusalem and continued his Jewish learning at the Ben-Zvi Institute of the Hebrew University and at the Hartman Institute. He changed his name to Efraim Ben-Yakir and started an import-export business, Ben-Yakir Imports, an international supplier of aerospace, military, and electronic components to Israeli hi-tech industries. Ben-Yakir Imports represented American, European, and Far-Eastern manufacturers and suppliers.

He returned to the United States and in 1991 became the rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in Burbank, CA, where the synagogue witnessed a 30% increase in membership. While in Burbank, he revived the Friday night service by establishing the

monthly Friday Nite Forum, a series of interactive evenings following services, which involved debates, panel discussions, and guest speakers on controversial, relevant social issues. As always, he introduced innovative and expansive educational programs. In 1994, he became the rabbi of Rodef Sholom Temple in Hampton, Virginia. While at Rodef Sholom, as he did in Burbank, Rabbi Warshaw organized a monthly forum series as part of the Friday night service. In his vision as a Jewish educator, he taught congregants to deliver *divrei Torah*, never threatened by relinquishing his pulpit on occasion. For several years, he was rabbi of Temple Emanu-El of the Palm Beaches (Florida), after which he moved back to California, becoming the Rabbi of Programming and Education at Congregation Beth El in La Jolla from 1998–2000. In 2010, he assumed the pulpit of Temple Ner Tamid in Downey, CA.

He was the author of numerous articles in the field of Jewish education, including: “The School as Community: Jewish Education and Ecstasy,” Synagogue School, Spring 1972; “Survey of Student Attitudes on Jewish Education,” Jewish Education, Winter 1972; “My Educational Credo,” Your Child, March 1975; and “The Role and Responsibilities of the Director of a Hebrew Day School,” Central Agency for Jewish Education, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, 1980.

In 2012, Rabbi Warshaw established a not-for-profit connecting people to the Bible and Israel, and he was director of resources and development for IsraelBibleValley.com. In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological

Seminary awarded him a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, in 1994.

He is survived by his wife, Yehudit; children, Ari, Maytal, and Yaacov; and seven grandchildren.

Rabbi Aryeh (Lawrence) Wineman, ז"ל

הרב אריה בן שלמה הלוי ושרה, ז"ל

Born: May 27, 1932; Toledo, Ohio

Died: July 24, 2025/תשפ"ה כ"ט תמוז; Northampton,
Massachusetts

A passionate teacher and scholar extraordinaire in the field of Kabbalah and Hasidut, Rabbi Wineman received his BA from Washington University in St Louis, Phi Beta Kappa, in 1954. He double-majored in English literature and philosophy. This blend of inquiry and poetry sparked a lifelong journey of academic study and discourse. He was ordained at JTS in 1959, after which he became associate Hillel director at The Ohio State University in Columbus. Rabbi Wineman spent the years 1962–1973 working in Israel, mostly at Nitzanim Youth Village, associated with Youth Aliyah. He served as rabbi of the village synagogue, as a teacher of Bible and Judaica, and in programming cultural activities. This warm community held a special place in his heart, and he built connections with his students and colleagues that were sustained across great distances and over many decades.

Rabbi Wineman returned to the US to pursue doctoral studies in Modern Hebrew Literature at UCLA and was awarded a PhD in 1977. In that same year, he married Dorothy Colodner. In 1975, he assumed the pulpit of Congregation Kol Shofar in San Rafael, California (now in Tiburon, greater San Francisco area). From 1985 to 2008, he was the spiritual leader of Temple Beth El in Troy, New York (greater Albany area). It was in Troy that he was able to fold together his responsibilities as a rabbi with serious scholarship and

thoughtful teaching. During these years, he served as advisor to the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute-Russell Sage Hillel, taught courses at various local colleges and universities, and was a frequent teacher and enthusiastic participant in the National Havurah Committee's annual Summer Institute.

A prolific author and scholar, Rabbi Wineman published several books, including *Beyond Appearances: Stories from the Kabbalistic Ethical Writings*; *Mystic Tales from the Zohar*; *The Hasidic Parable: An Anthology with Commentary*; *Letters of Light: Passages from Ma'or Vashemesh*; and *Agada and Art: Studies in the Works of Agnon* (in Hebrew). His final book, *The Hasidic Moses*, was published in 2019. He also published numerous articles on Hebrew literature and Jewish mysticism in various scholarly journals. In addition to the Rabbinical Assembly, he was a member of the Association for Jewish Studies and the National Association for Professors of Hebrew.

In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded him a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, in 1984.

Upon retirement, Rabbi Wineman moved to Northampton, Massachusetts, where he devoted his time to scholarship, sharing his deep knowledge, and taking long, contemplative walks.

He is survived by his children, Immanuel, Temima, and Ayala. His wife, Dorothy, died in 2005.

רביִּיִּלֵּפֶה קַרְלוֹס יַאֵף, ז"ל
הרב שמעיה בן שלמה ורבקה, ז"ל

Born: January 18, 1953; Buenos Aires, Argentina

Died: October 7, 2025/ט"ז תשרי תשפ"ו; Buenos Aires,
Argentina

If someone asked Rabbi Yafe why he chose the path of the rabbinate, he would often answer, almost instinctively:

“Because I wanted to be a *madrikh* all my life.”

That simple sentence says far more than it seems. It reflects a deep vocation to educate, accompany, guide, and walk alongside others, rather than to occupy a position of formal authority. For him, education was never merely about transmitting knowledge; it was about learning how to truly see each person, to understand what they needed to hear and when. The *madrikh* always came before the rabbi.

Rabbi Yafe was born and raised in a Sephardic family from Izmir, Turkey, immersed from an early age in a world shaped by traditions, melodies, flavors, and languages that expressed a distinctive way of living Judaism. He grew up listening to Sephardic prayers and *piyyutim*, breathing in a warm, familial, and musical Judaism, where identity was transmitted as much through gestures and sounds as through words. That environment left a lasting imprint on him.

Rabbi Yafe was blessed with a remarkable voice—a voice that did not merely sing, but conveyed emotion, intention, and meaning. Music was always a gateway to spirituality, a pedagogical tool, and a language of connection. Yet just as his voice created presence, his ability to listen created relationships. He listened without haste, without judgment, without the need for immediate solutions. In that listening, many found a sense of belonging, comfort, and purpose.

From there emerged the educator, the *madrikh*, and later the rabbi who would profoundly shape the lives of countless individuals and communities.

His years at Bet El Community as a *madrikh* and *moreh* in Talmud Torah, together with his formative studies at the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary under the extraordinary mentorship of Rabbis Mordechai Edery and Marshall Meyer, prepared him to lead his first community in Córdoba—a community that, forty years later, continues to remember him with deep affection and longing.

Rabbi Yafe attended Jewish schools in Argentina and earned a BA from the Hebrew University in 1980 with distinction in Bible. In 1981, he was ordained at Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano.

His passion for the texts of the Tanakh, which he knew by heart, and his unwavering commitment to continued learning and growth, led him to the United States, where he pursued a doctorate in biblical studies. Teaching was his great passion, and listening to him was an honor. He published *Profetas*

Reyes y Hacendados En La Epoca Biblica (Prophets, Kings, and Landowners in Biblical Times) in 2000. In recognition of his years of service, The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded him a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, in 2012.

I had the privilege of sharing many years at his side. I was Rabbi Yafe's student and witnessed his devoted leadership as dean of the Seminario from 1997-2004, where he embraced with integrity and dedication the immense responsibility of shaping future rabbis for the Jewish people. His strong and confident character set the direction and inspired admiration among many of us—at times with love, at times with challenge.

I was also his disciple in our professional work together, participating in, activating, and carrying forward his dreams, his projects, and his extraordinary capacity to build community. For 25 years, Rabbi Yafe devoted his life to the creation of the Bet Hillel Community, which became an extended family. Previously Rabbi Yafe served as rabbi in Cordoba, Argentina, and was a chaplain in the Falklands during its war with England. Together with Debbie, whom he married in 1979, he built a model of community in which the personal and the communal were not in opposition, but mutually sustaining—a home with open doors, a shared table, and leadership grounded in closeness and care. Rabbi Yafe knew each person, understood what made us laugh and what made us cry, and was genuinely present. There lies the strength of his enduring leadership, and also the depth of the pain we feel in his absence.

In my own rabbinate, I carry his words on my lips, his melodies in my heart, and his love for this vocation.

May his memory be a blessing, and may all of us who were nourished by his wisdom and leadership be worthy continuers of his legacy.

Rabbi Yafe is survived by his wife, Debbie (née Brandstadter); children, Martin and Pablo; and grandchildren, Dante, Lior, Victoria, and Luisa.

This biographical entry of Rabbi Yafe was prepared by our colleague, Rabbi Sarina Vitas, Vice President of the LARA Rabbinical Assembly.

Rabbinic Spouses

Judith E. Holober April, ז"ל

יהודית בת שאול, ז"ל

Wife of Rabbi Samuel April, ז"ל

Sandra Schachter Crain, ז"ל

שיינא מלכה בת שאול ושרה לאה, ז"ל

Widow of Rabbi Donald Crain, ז"ל; sister of Rabbi Stanley

Schachter, ז"ל (Dr. Lifsa);

and niece of Rabbi Solomon Faber, ז"ל

Maxine Gornish Elkins, ז"ל

מרית בת מלכה ויצחק הלוי, ז"ל

Wife of Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins

Carole Goldstein, ז"ל

חיה שרה בת אפרים סענדער ולאה דבורה, ז"ל

Wife of Rabbi Nason Goldstein and sister of Bernice (Rabbi

Shlomo, ז"ל) Balter

Rose Halpern, ז"ל

שושנה (רייזל) בת יעקב וחיה רחל, ז"ל

Widow of Rabbi Martin Halpern, ז"ל

ז"ל, Dena Horn

דינה בת הרב משה יעקב הלוי ורחל, ז"ל

Wife of Rabbi William Horn, mother of Dr. Ora Horn (Rabbi Joseph) Prouser, and Dassy Horn (Rabbi Randall) Mark, sister of Rabbi Samuel Mendelowitz, ז"ל

ז"ל, Sheila Romirowsky

שרה חנה בת יעקב הכהן, ז"ל

Wife of Rabbi Mitchell Romirowsky and daughter-in-law of Rabbi J. Harold Romirowsky, ז"ל

ז"ל, Beverly Gottlieb Schnitzer

בתייה חיה בת משה ושושנה, ז"ל

Wife of Rabbi Jonathan Schnitzer; sister-in-law of Lisa Schnitzer (Rabbi Richard) Plavin; and daughter-in-law of Rabbi Jeshaja Schnitzer, ז"ל

ז"ל, Ilana Hoffer Skoff

אילנה בת אליהו ועדנה, ז"ל

Wife of Rabbi Joshua Skoff, mother of Rabbi Jared Skoff, sister-in-law of Rabbi Yonina Skoff; and daughter-in-law of Rabbi Benson Skoff, ז"ל

ז"ל, Judith Nelson Sosland

יהודית חיה בת הרב צבי אריה ועטל, ז"ל

Widow of Rabbi Henry Sosland, ז"ל; mother of Rabbi Abigail Sosland; sister of Rabbi David Nelson; and daughter of Rabbi Harry Nelson, ז"ל

