

ב"ה

HERMAN'S SUKKAH DEDICATION

**מועדים לשמחה
SUKKOT 5783/2022**

**SHABBOS HOUSE ROHR CHABAD JEWISH
STUDENT CENTER SERVING UALBANY**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the dedication of “Herman’s Sukkah” at Shabbos House.

UAlbany students today never met Herman, as he slowed and then stopped his participation at Shabbos House once his illness was diagnosed and as it progressed. Even alumni who remember him from Shabbat morning and holiday prayers with us (prior to 2015) might not know enough about this unusual and colorful person. As we dedicate the Shabbos House Sukkah to Herman’s memory, we hope to share a glimpse of him in this booklet, as well as his special enthusiasm for the Sukkot holiday.

We want to take this opportunity to thank Larry Wald, executor of Herman’s estate for all of his tremendous assistance and vision for this memorial.

Special thanks to Rich Farina and his carpentry team for their work on refurbishing the Sukkah flooring in Trex as well as fixing and strengthening underlying components, Mackey Electric for new lighting, the painting team, and Don Kelly of Tri-City Rentals for overseeing the project and the whole team for giving it lots of TLC. Thanks to Mr. Frank Smith for the handcrafted sign, Herman would appreciate that it wasn’t machine-made.

Thanks to Pridemark, Davey, J&J, Vogel and other local tree services who help us get the evergreen branches each year. Bamboo mats are Kosher and reusable, but Herman insisted on evergreen for his own Sukkah each year and insisted we have at least some evergreen for accent, color and vibe as well.

Many thanks to architect Don Stracher and contractor Yefim Baskin who built the new, bigger & better Shabbos House in 2008-9 and for their brilliant, beautiful and useful well-built deck & trellis design with slip-in walls for the Sukkah. 13 years later it remains the “new” Shabbos House!

Every year there’s a dedicated team of students that puts the Sukkah up at the annual Sukkah Building BBQ. Too numerous to individually name, their loving dedication and physical investment in the Sukkah helps make the Sukkah the special space it is. And to all who sing the Sukkahleh song and who appreciate Sukkot as a most special time of year at Shabbos House.

May Herman’s memory be for a blessing in this Sukkah, year after year!

Love, - and as Herman wished on holidays: Moadim L’Simcha!
Rabbi Mendel and Raizy Rubin & Family

The Sukkahleh Song

Thanks to enthusiastic students over the years, this Sukkahleh song has become a true Shabbos House Chabad favorite, sung every night in the Sukkah, and on other nights of the year as well.

This rhyming translation adaption (true to the song but not a literal translation) into English from the old original Yiddish “A Sukkahleh A Klayna” was done by Rabbi Israel Rubin, founder of Shabbos House in 1976, regional director of Capital Chabad.

My Sukkahleh is small,
not fancy at all
but is especially dear to me.
Schach I put on a bit,
hoping to cover it,
there I'd sit and think. (2x)

The wind was a cold one,
the cracked walls were old ones,
the candles were flickering low.
At times as if dying,
but suddenly rising,
as if they did not want to go. (2x)

My sweet little daughter
sensing the danger,
got scared and started to cry.
“Father,” she cried,
“Don't stay there outside
the Sukkah is going to fall!” (2x)

Fear not my child, its been quite a while
the Sukkahleh still stands strong.
The wind has been worse my dear,
but its almost two thousand years
yet the Sukkahleh still stands strong! (2x)



Photo taken on the night before the Dedication Ceremony Event

About Herman

Dr. Herman Prins Salomon was a professor of languages at UAlbany from 1969 until his retirement in 2010. Herman was fluent in ten languages and could write academically in almost all of them. He did extensive research on both sides of the Atlantic, authored numerous books and scholarly articles, with a special interest in Spanish-Portuguese Jewish history and traditions.



Born on March 1, 1930 (1st of Adar, 5690), to Ivan (Yitzchak) and Sophia (Shifra) Wilhelmina (Prins) Salomon. Herman was especially eager that we have these painted portraits of his parents (which hung in his Manhattan apartment) included in remembering him.



Ivan was a merchant who dealt in tobacco or similar imports and traveled to the Far East. Herman knew all types of exotic and interesting things from his father's travels. Herman had half-siblings from his father's first marriage: Robert, Emma & Theodore; and a sister Els Bendheim, (matriarch of a large prominent family in both the United States and Israel) who like him was a child of Ivan & Sophia.

His mother Sophia (Ivan's second wife) was the daughter of the well-regarded Rabbi Eliezer Lipman Prins, a businessman turned scholar who had a total of 12 children from two marriages. His eldest son married the daughter of Rabbi Marcus Lehman. R' E.L.P.'s library of 6,000 volumes is now at the Lifschitz College of Education in Jerusalem. Herman's sister Els Bendheim published several books on this grandfather's lineage, scholarship, writings, publications and other accomplishments.

Herman and his family escaped the Holocaust leaving Holland just in time to arrive in Montreal Canada in 1939. The family later relocated to New York City, where Herman studied at NYU. He returned to the Netherlands for a masters at University of Amsterdam, later another masters from NYU, and his PhD at Nijmegen in Holland. He also received an honorary doctorate from



Herman's Knighting Ceremony

the University of Lisbon. He began teaching at UAlbany in 1969 and retired from UAlbany in 2010. In 2011 he was knighted as Knight of the Order of Orange-Nassau by the Queen of the Netherlands for his work in promoting Dutch language and history.

As mentioned earlier he spoke ten languages fluently and knew their literature and culture. But his focus & expertise was the Spanish-Portuguese Inquisition and Spanish-Portuguese Jewish history and people, liturgy and traditions. His



earlier works included "Marrano Factory" and writings by Rabbi Saul HaLevi Mortera of Amsterdam (something he brought up each year when the "Red Heifer" was read in the Torah) and the family history of Isaac dePinto of Antwerp & Amsterdam. He wrote many scholarly articles for various

publications here and abroad including YU's "American Sephardi" journal which he edited. In later years he unearthed & annotated terrible writings of Portuguese Inquisitor Antonio Ribeiro de Abreu who defended Inquisition horrors against critiques of the Jesuit Antonio Vieira. He also transcribed and prepared for publication meeting-minutes of Jewish communal affairs from hundreds of years ago - bringing them to life. Herman worked assiduously on these manuscripts even when confined to a nursing home for rehab, he turned the little room into a bustling office of academic research, complete with computers, manuscripts & a Portuguese assistant, even bottles of wine...



He was distinctive for his unusual dress: knicker shorts with knee socks, often wearing a boy-scout or similar uniform, and a beige 4-pinned "campaign hat" & a backpack. His Kippa was large with designs or felt applique usually with something about Portugal. We later learned that when praying in NY and Philadelphia he wore an elegant old-fashioned top-hat and tailored suits, but that's not the way he usually dressed here in Albany. In later years he had a walking stick, though he walked (or marched) like a trooper. Once he lost his walking stick in the Judge Holt wooded property (since purchased by UAlbany) behind his home and he cajoled our kids into helping him find it in the woods. It was found and he promptly tapped each one of them on their heads with it.

He'd ride everywhere on his bicycle, as far as the Kosher Price Chopper and other stores that he'd frequent, he even bounced back from being hit by a truck while riding. Back in the 1990s he would often frequent the Kosher Dining on Dutch Quad, where he had his very particular and exacting orders of the chef, and was not the easiest customer to please.

Herman was fiercely independent and determinedly did everything his own way. He had a distinctive sense of humor. He plastered his bathroom walls with critical letters from his department chair. He had a small crusade of his own against "the downfall of the humanities". A short English-language article (a pushback to modernity) that he wrote that we especially enjoyed was titled: "Cell Phones: The 11th Plague". It expressed both his humor and writing ability. A big pet peeve of his was the colloquial usage by modern students of the word: "like" and would quote that when Rabbi Eliezer ben Azarya of the Haggadah said, "I am like a man of seventy" - Herman would say, "He must have been a student at SUNY Albany..." Ironic, perhaps, that our Sukkah logo reads (from Pharell's "Happy Song"): "Like a Room without a Roof!"

Herman may have lived in a small house near the dead-end of Norwood Street, tucked away behind the old Interfaith Center/Chapel House - a house filled to the brim with books and manuscripts in various European languages - but his horizons went far beyond. He was at home in great libraries, he knew all types of obscure things, he was a great retainer of customs and traditions of a time gone by. He was proficient in literatures and plays and poetry, knew the in's and out's of grammar in 10 different languages, he would be at ease speaking about George Bernard Shaw and Saul HaLevi Mortera in the same breath. He quoted French plays when explaining a Haftorah. He listened regularly to Dutch TV broadcasts, and traveled semi-regularly to Portugal, Spain and Holland for his research. On occasion he would have a Dutch or Portuguese assistant stay in his home to assist with translations and research.

He had a NYC apartment near Central Park, close to the old historic Spanish Portuguese congregation, where he was an active member & participant. For



Jewish holidays he often traveled to Montreal, where he enjoyed the Moroccan Synagogue, or to Philadelphia where he would pray and often lead part of services at the historic Cong. Mikveh Israel. Sometimes he'd prepare a short sermon or message. He liked to show us pieces he wrote for "American Sephardi" the YU publication he was editor of, regarding background of a certain liturgy or custom or research into historical figures. He was both an old-school traditionalist and a secular academic critic - at the same time.



But most Shabbat mornings he prayed with us, the Jewish campus community at UAlbany, first at Chapel House (later the Interfaith Center) which was just a short path through the woods to his home on Norwood Street, and later at Shabbos House once the new building was built. We don't have

many pictures of Herman because most of the time he joined us was on Shabbat or holidays but these are pictures from weekday prayers with Torah readings, such as Rosh Chodesh & Purim.



Although he was the only one (or one of few) to use it, he made sure we were stocked with deSola Pool small blue Sephardic prayerbooks. He would sit on a high stool (later at Shabbos House would stack two chairs). If the Bima was too far forward, he would rearrange the furniture to ensure the seating surrounded it, and liked when the chairs all faced the Bima as he was accustomed. For many years, most Shabbat mornings (unless a student had a Bar-Mitzvah anniversary or weeks when he was away) Herman read the Haftorah.

Herman's Haftorah was something special. He read it in the Spanish-Portuguese melody, of course, but it was a dramatic read, with gusto, dynamic at parts, but always clear and flawless, lyrical and melodic. There are certain

Haftorahs that those of us who remember still can hear Herman's voice saying certain passages... especially that closing line of "Goalaynu..."

There was a matter that caused some consternation and disagreement between us, but that mellowed & warmed over time, regarding his stern and harsh correction of students Hebrew grammar and pronunciation. He was tutored very well in grammar from a young age (his father engaged tutors for him as teachers) and could be quite insistent, relentless and unforgiving. We (Rabbi Mendel etc) took pride in students taking initiative and leading the services and/or reading Torah, and didn't want them to feel stifled or inhibited by constant corrections. The Kometz sound was something he wouldn't let slip by, "Kodshecha, Kodshecha!" may still ring in the ears of some alumni...

He had his favorite melodies. He would insist on singing "Az Yashir Moshe" the biblical Song at the Sea, every week in his distinctive unforgettable tune. He would even tell us that there are slight variations between the Amsterdam tune and the New York tune (he was acutely aware and detailed about things like that) and when it was appropriate to sing which. When it came to Hallel on Rosh Chodesh or Holidays he would sing his "Baruch Haba" and his "Hodu LaHashem Ki Tob!" tunes along with several lines he loved and would not rely on our tunes. If the Minyan did one set of Hoshanot and his custom was another, he'd insist on doing his aloud afterwards and insist that others join in with him. He sang "Bendigamos" before grace-after-meals. And many



Herman (back to camera) leading a song at Moshe Rubin's Bris (2000)

other songs, traditions, customs and nuances of which he was a master. He was a human repository of heritage and custom, some of which few others remember. At our son Moshe's Bris in 2000, he printed out and sang the "Yam L'Yabasha" Judah HaLevi poem about the Splitting of the Sea (a favorite theme of Herman's) which also has references and relevance to a circumcision. In his last few years praying with us he added a poem by Solomon Ibn Gabirol titled "Shachar Avekeshcha". He printed it for us on paper and we'd sing it together each Shabbat morning before services began.

Another Shabbat ritual was his 3-tea-bags-steeped tea before prayers, and after prayers (he rarely, aside for maybe Passover, stayed to eat with the students) he would make a dynamic melodic Kiddush over a glass of his French or Italian wine (he gave us a stopper to preserve it from week to week) and he'd enjoy Adaphina eggs (cooked overnight in and absorbing the flavor and color of the Cholent) dipped into lemon juice and olive oil. He had his simple pleasures.



Herman was a most unusual man and introduced us to all types of things. Pictured here Herman introduces our children to the exotic Durian fruit with surprising inner texture & taste, not to mention its overpowering aroma. You see the twinkle

in his eye! He once recounted to us a bizarre story of the great lengths he once went through to procure some specially shipped Dutch herring. After telling us the story he went ahead to ship us some of that herring, too! Some years later for our daughter Sara's Bas-Mitzvah Herman knocked at the door carrying in a weighty bag. He told her he bought her a Durian as a gift. She reluctantly took the bag which was surprisingly light - because all there was inside the big oversized bag was a check. Once he came to our home while we were away and the babysitter, a Russian-Jewish immigrant, was surprised and taken aback at the strange intruder. She asked him, "Who are you?" Herman replied with great confidence and zero hesitation: "I am George Washington!" Herman's humor at work!

After a long illness that robbed him of his proud independence, Herman passed away on Saturday night, January 31st, 2021 (18th of Shevat). We had extended UAlbany break that year due to Covid. Shabbat morning we were looking at the Torah portion of the week "Beshalach" that contained the "Song at the Sea" which Herman was insistent on singing aloud every Shabbat we prayed together and we thought of him. Raizy insisted that we go over and sing it with him. We walked over to his home in the bitter cold, Corrine let us in, and we sat by his bedside. We sang the "Az Yashir" in the tune he would sing it, and also said the Shema to him. Later that Sat Night he passed away.

Surely he's singing "Az Yashir" on high. May his memory be a blessing.

Herman and Sukkot

Herman loved the Sukkot holiday. He was very much a Sukkot enthusiast!

Each year (going back to our arrival in 1997) he would pay the cost of covering his own Sukkah (which sans-Schach stood in his backyard all year), the Shabbos House Sukkah, and the one outside Dutch Quad Kosher dining - to ensure it had evergreen Schach, not only (the very Kosher) bamboo mats.

Rabbi Galperin (Raizy's father) has a special knack and zest for choosing high quality Etrogim, and large ones at that. In keeping with a Chabad tradition there's a preference for Etrogim from Calabria Italy, which was perfect for Herman who had a huge liking for things Italian and French (his wines had to be from France or Italy). Each year Rabbi Galperin would choose Herman an extra large Italian Etrog in which Herman took great pride. At the end of the holiday he'd ask for all of our Etrogim (but only the ones from Italy!) which he'd have an Italian friend turn into Etrog jam or marmalade. Interesting, because Herman wasn't one to eat sweets, but this was a specialty he liked.

He loved the Hoshanot prayers - in his version. He loved the rhyming lyrics and understood (and sometimes pointed out) many of the hidden references. He had a special emphasis for the "Ani Vaho" refrain. One year we got super-tall Hoshanot branches and he really loved that (but we can't seem to find that picture yet).

One year in the Sukkah he shared two beautiful stories of "Willow Jews" (somewhat different than his usual style) see online: shabboshouse.org/mendels-messages/willow-jews-stories-from-curacao-and-rome/

Shabbos House was founded in 1976 at a small corner house at (what was then 67 Fuller but later became) 316 Fuller Road. By 2000 it began to outgrow 316 and by 2003 plans developed to build a new, bigger and better Shabbos House, two doors down at 320 Fuller. But the Zoning approval process lasted nearly 5 years! One effort was to get neighbors to write letters of support. Being that Herman was a nearby Guilderland resident we asked him to write a letter. One of the arguments he used was the necessity of the large Sukkah at Shabbos House for all of Guilderland since the verse describes all nations (including non-Jews) inside a Sukkah... See his letter to the Guilderland Zoning/Planning Board on next page >

It is most fitting to dedicate the Sukkah in Herman's lasting memory.



UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

College of Arts and Sciences
Languages, Literatures and Cultures
French Studies
Hispanic and Italian Studies
Slavic and Eurasian Studies

September 16, 2007

Mr. Ken Runion, Town Supervisor
and Mr. Peter Barber, Chairman, Zoning Board of Appeals
Town Hall of Guilderland
5209 Western Turnpike
Guilderland, New York 12084

Dear Sirs,

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Herman Prins Salomon, Professor of Portuguese and Dutch Languages and Literatures in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at UAlbany. I reside at 32 Norwood Street, McKownville, just off campus.

I am writing this letter to explain my association with Rabbi Menahem M. Rubin and Mrs. Reiza Rubin-Galperin, who are the Spiritual Leaders of the Jewish Student Community. They reside at 316 Fuller Road (a stone's throw from my own house). Their home serves as a religious focal point for that Student Community, providing meals on the Sabbath and holy days to students who participate in the religious services and even to some who do not. Rabbi Rubin's home doubles, in fact, as a Jewish Religious Center, providing spiritual and physical nourishment to many students and is appropriately named "The Sabbath House."

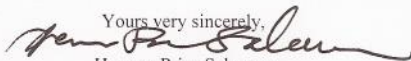
As a neighbor and co-religionist I often drop by at the spiritual gatherings taking place in the "Sabbath House" and am always impressed by the intense devotion and feelings of joyful togetherness manifested by all participants during the festive meals, Bible and Talmudic study sessions that take place there.

The back yard of the "Sabbath House" contains an essential part of the Jewish religious panoply, making it such an attractive focal point for the students and an asset to the whole neighborhood. It is a deck that flourishes during one week come the autumn holy days improperly called Tabernacles (really "Booths") transformed into a sizeable rustic Booth, covered with evergreens, recalling the Booths in which the Israelites dwelled for forty years during their wanderings in the Wilderness (or Desert). As Scripture foretells (Zechariah 14, 16-19) all the Nations of the world one day will join the Jews in keeping the Feast of Booths. In the meantime the wonderful Booth in the back yard of the "Sabbath House" is a religious beacon for the neighborhood.

As of now this wonderful center is confined to extremely limited space, hardly allowing the Rabbi and his fine family (five children 2-10) to live, work and play simultaneously with the other functions of the "Sabbath House." Moreover, to provide the physical nourishment to the students more kitchen-space is needed and those who frequent the religious study groups and meals (sometimes over a hundred) are cramped for space. Quite some expansion is required, that will in now way affect the tranquility and rural ambience of the neighborhood, especially in consideration of the fact that the rabbi and his family will continue to live in the expanded facility..

Thanking you for your attention, I beg to remain,

Yours very sincerely,



Herman Prins Salomon

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לעילוי נשמת
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