

The Jewish Post & Opinion

Volume 77, Number 10 • July 13, 2011 • 11 Tammuz 5771

www.jewishpostopinion.com



"Hey, Dad, I mean Abba, will my Big Wheeler make it there okay like that?" asks twenty month-old Haya (left) on her way from New Jersey to her new life in Ramat Bet Shemesh, Israel. Photo credit: Shahar Azran.

On their way to a new life in Israel!

Over 100 children were among the 245 Olim who departed JFK Airport on Monday, July 11, 2011 on this summer's first charter Aliyah flight organized by Nefesh B'Nefesh in cooperation with the Jewish Agency. On board the plane were 45 families and 51 singles, 15 of whom will be joining the IDF. The Olim range in age from 2 months to 81 years old.

Founded in 2002, Nefesh B'Nefesh in cooperation with the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency for Israel, is dedicated to revitalizing Aliyah from North America and the UK by removing or minimizing the financial, professional, logistical and social obstacles of Aliyah. The support and comprehensive social services provided by Nefesh B'Nefesh to its 27,000 newcomers, has ensured that 98% of its Olim have remained in Israel. Visit www.nbn.org.il. ✨

נפש Nefesh
בנפש B'Nefesh



Editorial

The theme of this year's 14th International Jewish Renewal Kallah was "Or Chadash: Enrich, Inspire, and Brighten Your Jewish Path." It was held June 2–July 3 at the University of Redlands in Southern California. Each biennial ALEPH Kallah is held in a different location all over the United States – making it easier for more people to eventually attend one that is close to them.

As I was unable to attend this year, I interviewed Eliyahu Eckelberg, a CPA from Phoenix, Ariz. to get the inside scoop. (Read more about Jewish Renewal on page 16 and see photos on page 20.)

Approximately 500 Jews from all denominations gathered for learning, praying, singing, dancing, chanting, drumming, *schmoozing*, eating (kosher vegetarian) and enjoying different kinds of entertainment. Of the three different choirs, a cappella singing was led by Cantor Linda Hirschhorn, Shir Ecstasy Kallah Jospel Choir was led by Sharon Dreyfus Alexander and Songs of Yearning & Celebration was led by Shoshana Brown. A Jazz-type singing performance was led by Cantor Richard Kaplan.

Programming for children called Kids Kallah was available with art, theater, singing, swimming and more as well as the Bechira Teen Program for ages 13–16. Teens spent four days camping in parks near the location of the Kallah. They learned wild plant identification and usage, basketry, hiking and campfire cooking. *Bechira* (choice) represents the conscious choices that each of us must make.

Adult attendees had a choice between several different morning and afternoon classes held Tuesday through Friday. The same class met each day in the morning or each afternoon for about two hours.

Eckelberg said his morning class, taught by Arthur Kurzweil, had a lot of information packed into it. The title was, "Talking with My Children and My Parents about Death: 18 Jewish Texts and Teachings I Study with My Family." The class description said, "Despite the inevitability of death, discussions on the topic of death and dying remain a taboo for so many of us." Jewish texts were studied that express the wisdom of our Sages on death and dying.

Arthur Kurzweil (www.arthurkurzweil.com) is a teacher, writer, publisher and a member of The Society of American Magicians. His books include *On the Road with Rabbi Steinsaltz*, *Pebbles of Wisdom*, *Kabbalah for Dummies*, *The Torah for Dummies*, and *From Generation to Generation*.

Eckelberg's afternoon class was titled, "God Only Loves What's Real: The Fieri

Teachings of the Kotzker Rebbe." It was taught by Yitzhak Buxbaum, a mystic, a *maggid*, and an author of ten books, including *Jewish Spiritual Practices* and *The Light and Fire of the Baal Shem Tov*. He founded and directs the first ever program to train and ordain *maggidim*.

Eckelberg said there aren't a lot of resources on teachings from this Rebbe as compared with many of the others. When I asked him what was meant by "God only loves what is real," Eckelberg replied, "God is present where he is invited in, where there is passion and aliveness." Another gleaning from this class was a quote from the Rebbe: "Many go to the Rebbe to find God, but God is everywhere. One should go to the Rebbe to find oneself." This Rebbe went into seclusion for the last 20 years of his life.

Eckelberg attended a one time evening class taught by Rabbi Wayne Dosick. It was a presentation from his upcoming book, *Who is God?* Those who attended got a preview from the book of meditations, prayers and chants to help one connect with God.

Rabbi Dosick is the Spiritual Guide of The Elijah Minyan and an adjunct professor at the University of San Diego. He is the author of several critically acclaimed books, including *The Golden Rules: The Ten Ethical Values Parents Need to Teach Their Children*.

This Kallah was Eckelberg's sixth. When I asked him how it compared to the others, he stated that it was held in a very beautiful setting. "This lends itself to people meeting by the dining hall and having conversations which made for a pleasant week".

"People came from all over the United States, Brazil, Canada, Israel and a few other countries," commented Eckelberg. "Music was a highlight for me. A wealth of talented people in one week in one place made for an abundance of wonderful performances," he reported.

Eckelberg said one of the reasons he liked the Friday night services was because it was more relaxed than what he has experienced in traditional services. "They were held outside in the shade and many people wore white," he remarked.

Our own P&O columnist, Melinda Ribner, taught a class titled, "Initiation into Kabbalistic Meditation and Jewish Spiritual Healing." In the class description it said, "Experience all the benefits of meditation and more within our own tradition!" Hopefully she will write about it for our next issue.

"The classes and Shabbat workshops met and exceeded our expectations," exclaimed Yehudit and Reuven Goldfarb of Tzfat and Berkeley.

And Marcia Brooks from Berkeley told me this was one of the best ALEPH

Inside this Issue

Nefesh B'Nefesh	Cover
Editorial	2
Rabbi Benzion Cohen (Chassidic Rabbi).....	3
Andy Heller	3
Rabbi Jon Adland (Shabbat Shalom).....	4
Melinda Ribner (Kabbalah of the Month)	5
Julie Waldman	5
Rabbi Eli Mallon (Jewish Spirituality)	6
Rabbi Irwin Wiener (Wiener's Wisdom)	7
Howard W. Karsh (Jewish America)	8
Rabbis Dennis and Sandy Sasso	8
Sybil Kaplan (Seen on the Israel Scene).....	9
Batya Medad (Musings from Shiloh)	9
Morton Gold (As I Heard It).....	11
Avi and Adele (Confidentially Yours)	11
Harold Jacobson/Rose Kleiner (Theater)	12
Amy Hirshberg Lederman (Jewish Educator)	13
Ted Roberts (Spoonful of Humor)	13
Rabbi Elliot B. Gertel (Media Watch).....	14
Zalman Project News	16
Tisha B'Av – Rosh HaShannah prayers ...	16
Dr. Morton I. Teicher (Book Reviews)	17
Rabbi Avi Shafran (An Observant Eye)	18
Sybil Kaplan (My Kosher Kitchen).....	19
ALEPH Kallah	20

The Jewish Post & Opinion

1427 W. 86th St. #281

Indianapolis, IN 46260

email: jpostopinion@gmail.com

phone and fax: (317) 405-8084

website: www.jewishpostopinion.com

Kallah's she has attended, and this was her ninth. She said the davenning was exceptional. "The Mincha and Maariv services opened my heart!" she declared with enthusiasm. She also communicated that the food was excellent and the outdoor pool was fabulous.

For more information about ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal and the ALEPH Kallah go to: www.aleph.org.

Jennie Cohen, July 13, 2011 ☆

Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

Visiting Vancouver Part 1

For eight months we have been busy building an addition to our apartment in Kfar Chabad. It hasn't been easy. There have been many difficulties and aggravations.

Two days after Purim we left Israel to visit our family and go to a wedding. Our first stop was to the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Brooklyn. Our son Shmuel and his family live there. Four days later we traveled to Buffalo, to spend a few days with our son Mendi and his family. From there we flew to Vancouver for the wedding of our niece. *Baruch Hashem*, it was a beautiful wedding, and let's wish the young couple a beautiful life. We stayed in Vancouver with my sister-in-law and her family until after Pesach.

Three days before Pesach is the birthday of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. How do we celebrate it? The Rebbe encourages everyone to make good resolutions on their birthday. The Rebbe has a general soul. His soul includes all of our souls. So the Rebbe's birthday is the birthday of every one of us. On the Rebbe's birthday we try to make good resolutions, and encourage everyone to make good resolutions. Now it is especially important to make and keep good resolutions, to bring *Moshiach* now! One *mitzvah* can tip the scales.

The new groom and I set out to do the Rebbe's Mitzvah Campaigns. Our first stop that day was the office of a Jewish organization. I walked in the front door and met the receptionist. I asked her if she lights Shabbos candles. She said no, and told me her story. She was born and grew up in Hadera, Israel. When she was 13 her family moved to Vancouver, 11 years ago. I told her that today is the birthday of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and suggested that she start lighting *Shabbos* candles. That would be a wonderful present to give the Rebbe on his birthday. I gave her two candles, and she agreed to light them.

In the next room a woman was sitting in front of her computer. I asked her if she lights Shabbos candles and she said yes. I asked if she was planning to attend a Pesach seder. She said that no, this year she and her husband were going on vacation to Hawaii, and they would miss the seder. I told her that the Chabad house in Hawaii would be very happy to host her and her family for the seder, and showed her on the web how to get in touch with Chabad anywhere in the world. Her face lit up and she thanked me.

In the next room a woman was sitting at a desk, and a man was talking to her. I

Call your mom!

BY ANDY HELLER

I've always considered myself to be a good son. After moving from Florida to Atlanta shortly after college, I made it a point to get home to Florida to see my parents once every six weeks. After all, my parents married late in life, so my mom and dad were as old as some of my peer's grandparents. I knew I wouldn't have them around forever. I also made it a point to call home every three or four days.

One day about 20 years ago, Dad called and told me Mom was upset. He said I



said, "*Shalom*," and asked him if he would like to put on *tefillin*. He said, "No," gave me a dirty look, pointed at the door and said, "Do you see that door?"

I was shocked. I said, "Are you throwing me out?" He said "No. I'm asking you politely to leave."

This wasn't the first time that I've been kicked out, or even the second time. However, it has been a few years since I was last kicked out, and it isn't pleasant. Why did this happen? I thought a lot about this. The next day I had a revelation. The Baal Shem Tov taught us that everything that happens is for a reason, and we must learn something from it. The man in the office didn't seem to love me very much. Am I also lacking in my love for my fellow man? I remembered all of the arguments involving our building project. Yes! That's it! I definitely needed to love certain people much more.

Chabad has been teaching me for the last 42 years how to love your fellow man. It isn't always easy. However, love is good and beautiful and feels great, and anger and hatred are evil, and make me feel just awful. I made the effort, did as I had been taught, and started to love certain people.

Soon I started to feel good, better that I had felt for many months. I learned an important lesson. We all face difficulties and aggravation in our lives. However it is of vital importance how we react. For example, if someone is arguing with me, I can listen to my evil side and get angry, and walk around for the next day (or week or month) in a very fowl mood. Or I can decide to listen to my good influence, and try to love the guy (or lady) who is arguing with me, and try to understand where they are coming from. This way the story can have a happier ending, and we can both walk away feeling good.

To be continued...

Rabbi Cohen lives in K'far Chabad, Israel. He can be reached by email at bzcohen@orange.net.il. ★

needed to call home more often. I found a lot of humor in this demand, as I knew that I already called home more than most. My mother was no stranger to effectively using "Jewish Guilt". While I knew I was being played a bit by mom, any son dealing with Jewish Guilt knows how helpless we are when our dear mothers use this wonderful skill. Of course mom got her point across, and from that day forward, even while on overseas business trips, I called home every day.

Not every call was a 30-minute conversation. Sometimes I just said a quick hello and told Mom something about my day. She was always proud of my professional accomplishments, but I did wonder how much of my business dealings really interested her. Still, she listened, asked basic questions, and said goodbye until tomorrow's call. Funny thing how my life became more interesting to Mom once I presented her with her first grandchildren.

A few years ago, my sister and I moved Mom from Florida to Atlanta where we live now. That meant we were able to see her about three times a week. Even though Mom became an intimate part of our (and her grandchildren's) lives, I still called Mom any day we didn't see her.

My dad passed away just about a decade ago. This year was the second mother's day without my mom. We miss her limitless love, her crazy sense of humor, her eccentric eating habits, her mispronunciation of every other name, and her wonderful naivety.

Yes, I know. Anyone who's experienced the loss of a parent or spouse reflects on those irreplaceable qualities of their departing loved one. But what I miss most is not one of her many special qualities. What I miss most is something that I believe may help you in your life as it has in mine.

Each and every one of us has only two or three things we do *every single day* of our lives. For me, the "daily task" of calling Mom became a staple in my life over the past two decades. What I once saw as an "obligation" became, because of her passing, the biggest void ever. Our daily phone calls.

The hurt and pain of this void is acute for me. But I realize this is the type of hurt and pain you want to feel after a loved one passes. After all, you can't rehash that argument you had a few months back. You can't take back what you wish you hadn't said. You can't forgive her for the childhood scars you carry today. For many, these "negative issues" become the dominant memory experienced once a loved one passes.

I knew someone who was haunted by an unreconciled disagreement she had (see Heller, page 4)



Shabbat Shalom

By RABBI JON ADLAND

Pirke Avot 1:9 – *Shimon ben Shetach said: Examine the witnesses diligently and be cautious in your words lest through them they learn to falsify.*

July 1, 2011, Chukkat
(Numbers 19:1–22:1) 29 Sivan 5771

Last night I ordered Chinese takeout. I opened the fortune cookie (which really isn't a fortune) and this is what it said: "Everything must have a beginning." I couldn't have said it better myself. Today is my first official day at Temple Israel of Canton, Ohio. My office is in an old classroom at the Canton Jewish Community Center where Temple Israel, Shaaray Torah and the Canton Jewish Federation will be housed while Shaaray Torah undergoes renovation to eventually become the home of the temple, synagogue and federation. My office is full of boxes, empty book shelves, filing cabinets, a desk, sofa, and bare walls.

"Everything must have a beginning" and this is how I am beginning the next part of my personal and professional journey. My collection of 29 years of books, papers and memories, ready to become my home away from home.

The real beginning of creating a home here in Canton began when the movers carried our "stuff" into our house, box after box after box until the house was filled with boxes, some furniture, and more boxes. Twenty-two days later Sandy and I have worked to create a home in this house and we are well on our way as almost every box has been opened, new furniture bought, and, most importantly, pictures are up on the walls.

"Everything must have a beginning" and tonight we will celebrate Shabbat in our home, but first we will put up our mezuzah which is the final act in not just creating a home, but a Jewish home. When our Shabbat dinner is concluded, then I am off to temple to celebrate Shabbat with my new community.

"Everything must have a beginning" and this evening is family night, birthday blessings and anniversary blessings. I can't think of a better way to cap off my new beginning than with Shabbat services.

I started this column in the mid 1990's by talking about Shabbat. I wanted to encourage people not to forget it is Friday and that Friday ends with the beginning of Shabbat. I hoped that I could lead a few

more people to find a way to embrace Shabbat in their lives. As Reform Jews our Shabbat observance has many paths. We are not Orthodox with the anticipation that the observance will be a certain way. We are given guideposts to help us and move us along, but we must choose what we feel is necessary to make Shabbat a part of who we are.

For some, it is Erev Shabbat services and the community of being with others. Singing, praying, schmoozing with others helps separate Shabbat from the other days of the week.

For others, it is a Shabbat dinner with blessings. Lighting Shabbat candles marks the separation from the rest of the week and watching Sandy light our tapers brings such peace to my soul knowing that Shabbat has begun. Sipping the Kiddush wine and chanting the prayer that reminds us of creation and redemption places me in a chain of tradition that stretches back so many centuries. We are "B'tzelem Elohim" created in God's image and I must keep that in mind in my encounters in the world around me. Redemption from slavery to freedom says to me that I must continue to work for *tikkun olam* (the repair of the world) as my freedom is a gift to help others. The final blessing is over Sandy's delicious *challah*. She transforms individual ingredients into a single product reminding me that our food should never be taken for granted, but thanks should be given.

For others, Shabbat is a day to be set aside as different from the other days. Maybe it is family time or hobby time or just quiet time. Regardless, it can be a day different from other days. A chance to recharge one's own personal batteries or a time just to separate from what happens every other day.

"Everything must have a beginning" and adding Shabbat to your week is a beginning that is filled with holiness, community, blessings, and God. This Shabbat is truly a beginning for Sandy and me and I thank God for this day, this new community, and our new friends.

When you light your Shabbat candles this evening, light one for the beginnings that happen in your life. I can only urge you to celebrate them. Light the other candle to help guide you from the beginning into the unknown. May the light of this candle remove the darkness and allow each step to feel as if it is a new beginning.

Let me end with a transliterated prayer we say at these special moments – *Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam shechehiyanu, v'ki-y'manu, v'higianu lazman ha-zeh*. (Thank You God for giving us life, sustaining us, and for bringing us to this special holy moment.) Amen.

Rabbi Adland has been leading Reform

HELLER

(continued from page 3)

with her mom. She carried this scar with her for years after her mother passed away and spoke of it frequently. This disagreement became the dominant memory of her mother – one she would have changed had she been able to turn back the clock. This dominant memory didn't produce smiles or tears of pleasure, but painful levels of guilt and sadness.

I consider myself lucky – not only because I had both my parents around and vibrant into their 80s, but because Dad did me a huge favor two decades ago. Unknowingly (or perhaps knowingly), he guaranteed that my dominant memory of Mom, while painful, is also pleasing. If there's such a thing as "good pain," then that's what I feel. Every day, the void of that missing phone call makes me smile – and makes me cry.

If you're lucky enough to have a mother who's alive today, answer this question: "If Mom left today, would my memories be dominated with thoughts that make me smile?" If your answer is no, do something about it while you still can. You may not have the chance tomorrow to create the memories you want to live with day after day.

I encourage you to follow these three simple suggestions – things you can do *today* to ensure you have the type and quality of memories you want.

- All past family squabbles and issues are not only small but they risk having a disproportionate impact once a family member passes. Forget them! If you have any issues in your family today, repair, solve, and compromise while you still can.

- Ask this question at the end of every conversation: "If (heaven forbid) I'm unable to speak to my mom (dad, sis, bro, friend, spouse) again, did this conversation end on a sour note? Would I have any regrets?" If your answer is yes, call back and change the ending!

- And, yes, do call your mom – every single day of the week.

Your loved ones won't be around forever, but their cherished memories will be with you your entire lifetime. How will you remember them?

Andy Heller lost his mother on Feb. 19, 2009. He is an author of two best selling real estate investing books and co-founder of online Real Estate networking site www.realtyjoin.com. He can be reached at andy.heller@realtyjoin.com. ★



congregations for more than 25 years in Lexington, Ky., and Indianapolis, Ind., and currently at Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio. He may be reached at j.adland@gmail.com. ★



Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

Kabbalistic forecast in Tammuz

Tammuz began July 3

We rely on weather forecasts when planning our days' activities, stock forecasts or charts to guide or monitor investing. Might it also be helpful to have a *kabbalistic* forecast for the month that serves as a guide to our spiritual growth?

"Thousands of years ago, the Jewish mystical tradition known as *Kabbalah* revealed a very profound and powerful system for healing and transformation. Though the knowledge remains obscure, it has influenced many current forms of healing. According to Kabbalah, the Jewish calendar as a whole is a road map for personal transformation.

"To the uninitiated, this material may seem mystical or superstitious, but that does not make it less true. Many things exist beyond our powers of conception or reasoning. Just as there are various season and fluctuations in our weather, there are also fluctuations in the spiritual energies available. Those who are attuned to these energies are aware of such changes and know how to use this knowledge for their personal growth and success. Rather than promoting fatalism, this knowledge actually increases our capacity to make meaningful and effective choices for our highest good."¹

"From a secular perspective, many think of the summer as a carefree time, a time to travel, relax, have fun, but according to Kabbalah, *Tammuz* is a heavy and challenging month. The heat one experiences is not just physical but also emotional and spiritual. That is why we need to be mindful of the emotional intensity of this month and why it is important to be particularly sensitive to ourselves and others this month. Tammuz is still ultimately a good and wonderful month but only if we know how to use its intense energy constructively. When we do this we grow through challenges in ways that may not be possible at any other period of the year."²

"The divine permutation for the month is reversed. Tammuz can be a time of reversals. We expect one thing to happen but something totally different happens. As much as we may like to think we are in control of our lives, we need to realize our limitations, let go and invite God into our

lives. This is one of the deep teachings of this month.

"As hard as it may be, we must realize that whatever happens to us can be an opportunity for growth and healing. We grow the most when confronting our greatest challenges. Tammuz is a month of judgment, we need to accept that nothing is accidental or coincidental. Through we have free will, everything is also divine providence."³

"The astrological sign for Tammuz is Cancer. The Hebrew word for cancer is *sartan*, which means "Satan", a name that reveals the difficulty of the tests of this month. The ruling body of Cancer is the moon. The moon is always changing, making Tammuz an emotional time with many ups and downs. One has to learn to ride the emotional rollercoaster of Tammuz."⁴

How do we grow through our challenges and tests? How do we see God amidst all the turmoil? This is the question of the month that we must be mindful of. According to this month, the fixing of this month is seeing. What we see reflects our thinking. This month we need to breathe, meditate and be open to see life more clearly and calmly. We need to question our assumptions. We can easily become upset about something that is not even true or do not know to be true. Take a moment to review your recent responses to events in your life. If you are upset about something or someone, might you be making assumptions that are not true? As my teacher Reb Shlomo [Carlebach], z"l, would often say, "What do we really know?"

We can all acknowledge that a response of fear, worry or anger to any challenge will not be helpful. Even though it may sometimes be an automatic response to become frightened and upset by major challenges and changes that occur in our lives, these emotions do not help us to cope or grow through the challenge.

What helps us to grow? Faith and gratitude is what helps us to transform. If we believe in God, if we talk to God, if we connect to God, we can find peace amidst chaos and strife. We can grow through challenges and become happier and better people. Learning Torah, reading psalms, personal and standard prayer, and meditation are each essential. And sometimes we have to simply let go of our struggle and our resistance to life as it is and get down on our knees (metaphorically or literally) to call out for divine assistance and faith. Try it sometimes. Get down on your knees and open yourself to God. It is one thing to stand before God, and another thing to be on your knees before God. I know that Jews do not usually do that. We Jews used to kneel before the Christians adopted

Kabbalah is clouded in confusion, legend, myth, magic and misrepresentation

BY JULIE WALDMAN

Recently the *Kabbalah* style (think Kosher Style – not kosher, but some of the foods would be found in kosher homes) has become popular, especially among the rich and famous set. It should not come as a great surprise that this new magical trend has so many celebrity followers. While these celebrities, from all walks of life; from the Hollywood wearers of \$27 red bracelets to ward off the evil eye, to the real estate moguls with their kabbalah gurus, to the just plain old rich and famous – they all have money in common. But they also often share a lack of inner peace, serenity and stability, those intangibles that money can't buy.

Conceptually, the Kabbalah is very simple. There is a superior, all-inclusive power, or "God," who controls everything. The entire world's energy descends from this all-inclusive force. The books and knowledge that comprise the Kabbalah holds the key to these hidden forces and the laws by which they influence us. Ultimately, the goal of this body of

(see Waldman, page 6)



this practice and then we stopped doing it so as to distinguish ourselves from them. If you have never gotten on your knees before God, either literally or metaphorically, you may not yet have opened yourself to receive divine love and compassion.

Thankfully, God is very much alive. As we say in our *Ashrei* prayer, "God is close to the brokenhearted and those who are crushed in spirit, God saves." It is we who need to call out and open ourselves to receive. Blessings for a transformational month of Tammuz.

Melinda (Mindy) Ribner, L.C.S.W. is a spiritual psychotherapist and healer in private practice (www.kabbalahoftheheart.com). She is a teacher of Jewish meditation and Kabbalah for over 25 years. Author of *Kabbalah Month by Month*, New Age Judaism, and *Everyday Kabbalah*, she is also the founder and director of Beit Miriam (www.Beitmiriam.org). She can be reached by email at Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com or Beitmiriam@msn.com.

1. *Kabbalah Month by Month*, introduction.
2. *Kabbalah Month by Month* pages 247–8
3. *Kabbalah Month by Month*, page 251
4. *Kabbalah Month by Month* ★



Jewish Spirituality

By RABBI ELI MALLON

Newton, the Besht, and Buber

Sir Isaac Newton (following Descartes and others) believed that there is a G-d, and that natural laws are signs of Divine Intelligence, demonstrating (if not proving) G-d's existence.

Yet, he saw Creation and its laws as something separate from G-d.

We still do today, based on what he taught and on the experience of our senses.

But, traditional Jewish liturgy refutes this: **המחדש בטובו בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית** (You renew the work of Creation every day.)¹

It means that G-d didn't simply create the "world" and leave it on its own. G-d's act of creation is continuous.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady, conveying the teaching of the Besht, his teacher's teacher, is even more emphatic:

"The power of the Creator must continuously be in the thing created."²

Or, as Rabbi Morris Lichtenstein wrote: "The Mind that called everything into existence is G-d, and His dwelling place is in the world He created³...Not only is the Divine Mind creative, He is *constantly* creative. There is no pause in His creation."⁴

The error they refute lies in believing that "Creation" – i.e. matter itself – exists separately from G-d.

The alternative is to see all that exists as a continual expression of something spiritual, rather than as opposed to or separate from it:

"Matter is not something apart from divinity, but only the visible aspect of divinity..."⁵

Spiritual thinking truly starts when we see matter as an expression of G-d's own existence; when we see Creation itself as a continuous, ongoing revelation of G-d's presence and Will.

We can then look on physical laws, "gravity" for example, not as unchangeable natural phenomena, but as ongoing acts of G-d.

Because Descartes and Newton saw physical laws as separate from G-d, even while seeing the laws as evidence of Divine Intelligence, they caused us to see the world in what Martin Buber called an "Ich-Es" ("I-It") relationship:

"In the *Ich-Es* relationship, an individual treats other things, people, etc., as objects to be used and experienced... – how an object can serve the individual's interest."⁶

When we see the "laws" instead as

WALDMAN

(continued from page 5)

knowledge is to bring Jews close to G-d. Unfortunately, the Kabbalah has been twisted into a sort of self-help book despite the fact that most people who learn it haven't a clue what it's really about (in fact, they'd be quite surprised...if only they knew).

However, there are real interpreters of the Kabbalah who are blessed with the gift of explicating the practical lessons that can help people find inner peace. A *real mekubal* is not a kabbalist but rather a *Tzadik* connected to the Almighty and from that point of strength able to help others.

A famous example of a Mekubal is the Baba Sali, a Moroccan *chacham*. The Baba Sali was the descendant of an eminent rabbinic family and was renowned throughout the Jewish world for his holiness, piety and mystical abilities. He led the Moroccan immigration to Israel, and helped bring nearly the entire Jewish community from Morocco to live in Israel. His home in Netivot was always open to Jews from all walks of life seeking his blessing and advice. Jews continue to visit his gravesite in hopes that his continued prayers will help them get through life's difficulties.

Enter Rav Pinto. A scion of two families of Sephardic *chachamim* and *tzadikim*, Rav Pinto has an impressive and illustrious lineage. He is a descendant of the Chief Rabbi of Damascus, Rav Pinto, z'l, and a great-grandson of above-mentioned, Rabbi Yisrael Abuhatzeria, or the Baba Sali.

Rav Yehosheyahu Pinto, who has made headlines as the mentor of Lebron James, is not well known in the US – though given his guest list, he should be. It seems that his deep piety combined with the keys he holds to the blueprints called the Kabbalah has given him business acumen (especially in real-estate) that draws to him figures like Tshuva (think Plaza hotel), Ronn Torossian (PR), Michael Grimm (Republican vying for a spot in Congress), Malcolm Hoenlein, and Haim Revah. Yet despite all this publicity, his teachings are no gimmick and he has no agenda other than to help Jew and even gentile improve their own world.

Let's examine one subject he returns to



Rav Yehosheyahu Pinto

continuous acts of G-d, we begin to see the world as the Besht saw it and as Buber,

(see Mallon, page 7)

over and over – because it is a key to happiness and without happiness there is no true success – and that is the evil eye. It is a common idea in many societies and is even featured on the back of the dollar bill. (Look above the pyramid on the left hand side.)

In the Mishnah, *ayin harah* was used to describe a type of person who couldn't bear with equanimity the good fortune of others. Bad eye – bad person, Good eye – a *ferginer*.

In the Babylonian Talmud, the idea developed into something more potent with the power to actually inflict harm. The evil eye is considered a powerful negative force generated mostly by envy. According to Kabbalah, it is possible to remove negative influences and, more importantly, that we have the potential to eradicate negativity forever. The power of the eye (both literal and figurative), when understood from a Kabbalistic perspective, becomes as powerful a healing instrument as it can be a devastating channel of destruction. *What?* Its hard for modern man to accept that envy when described as a force (like energy) can harm anyway.

Rav Pinto is able explain the mystical angle in simple and practical terms. When someone or a group of people, out of jealousy or insecurity, focus on an individual or individuals that can create an *ayin harah* (evil force). A lesser form of this concept is insincere compliments, which might encourage more jealousy and insecurity.

If a person has the emotional strength to sincerely be happy at the success and popularity of another then this evil eye problem loses its strength. The cycle of jealousy that leads nowhere except to self-destruction can be mitigated or even stopped by one's own attitude.

This very practical connection between the seemingly mystical and everyday self-help is just one example of how Rav Pinto simplifies concepts and zeroes in on solutions.

As Rav Pinto explains, mysticism and self-improvement go hand in hand if approached correctly. Someone who wants to manipulate the system, so to speak, and use Kabbalah as some kind of a mystic tool will find himself wasting his time. Because, ultimately, Kabbalah is a tool for self-improvement which in itself impacts on all forces surrounding the individual. And that is Rav Pinto's message – a message that apparently speaks to many people.

Julie Waldman is Olah of 17 years and still loving living in Israel. She started her professional career at Random House, McGraw Hill and Cambridge University Press, and then moved on to digital books and finally to combining content with the technology. But she still has time to dabble in Torah and writing – her first and second love (after her children, God and her husband in no particular order). Contact her at waldmanjulie@gmail.com. ★



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

Never forget the men and women who have served

Perhaps this past July 4th we should have been thinking about something that eats at me each and every day, not just on special occasions designed to remind us of our blessings and what was involved to achieve what we have and continues to keep us vigilant.

I search the pages of the newspapers and watch the daily newscasts awaiting the casualty reports from Iraq and Afghanistan, and now Libya. They are nowhere to be found. In the early days of these conflicts we would be given the daily count. Commentators and reporters would highlight their stories with pictures of G.I.'s who now belong to the ages as their memories fade with their heroics.

Somehow the counting stopped. No longer do we hear the sad tales of IED explosions that ripped apart steel barricades and tore limbs and scattered them to the winds. Flesh that once formed a person rots in the sand and the soul is left to wonder what happened to the shell that contained its essence.

To bring you up to date in both Iraq and Afghanistan: 6,000 men and women have died on the field of battle; 33,000 have been wounded; 360,000 have been diagnosed with TBI – Traumatic Brain Injuries; 500 are amputees; countless others have not been diagnosed at all or, perhaps, misdiagnosed because the symptoms they display have not been named yet.

So, there you have it. You now are up to date with the statistics. But that is not where it should end.

Each of these men and women has someone who loves them, someone who cares, someone who misses them or misses their completeness; perhaps it is a mother or father; perchance a spouse or significant other; possibly a brother or sister; conceivably a friend or neighbor.

Each tragedy requires some type of mourning. But the most daunting is the loss of a child. We understand that in the course of human existence the younger bury the older. But when we are faced with the task of opening the earth to receive a child, not only do we mourn, but the angels sob uncontrollably for the pain which this loss inflicts.

Life is filled with anticipation and

MALLON

(continued from page 6)

influenced by the Besht, described it: "Ich-Du" ("I-Thou" or "I-You")*:

"Ich-Du is a relationship that stresses the mutual, holistic existence of two beings...this is the only way in which it is possible to interact with G-d...an Ich-Du relationship with anything or anyone connects in some way with the eternal relation to G-d."⁷

Ceasing to see natural laws merely as



expectation. We look at our creation, our child and begin this journey of contemplation and anticipation. Should he be a doctor? Should she be a teacher? Will she look like her mother or he like his father? Will I make the same mistakes my parents made or will I be different?

These dreams and visions are interrupted by tragedy. Our child has died and so has our posterity. Our child died alone in a distant place far from loved ones. Our child answered a call to arms and fell. The comrades who walked along side watched this horror and will live the nightmare over and over again. They know only too well the emptiness the loss brings.

They return to their barracks and see an empty bunk. We return to our child's room and see an empty bed. "Where is our little one?" "Why is there emptiness in our hearts?" "Everything moves around us but we are motionless. It is as though we are frozen in time.

The mystics teach us that to appreciate the joy and fulfillment of life we must experience pain. Are they trying to explain that bereavement is necessary to appreciate life? We all know that we are born to die, but there are paths to the end of the days that should not include the young. No, I believe the ancients were trying to help us cope with adversity, some so devastating as to cause us to languish in total sadness. I believe the message is that terrible things happen and we have the ability to overcome these troublesome experiences by learning to extend a helping hand and offering comfort and solace. This is our obligation as human beings. This is our duty as survivors.

I believe that is what the ancients were trying to tell us when they talked about pain and how to appreciate it because of the painless possibilities in our lives. It is never easy to explain away a loss – a loss of a child, but maybe we should try to understand that pain can be relieved with hope and faith and a belief that things happen and we need to learn to role with the punches so that life will continue.

And the same is true of being wounded physically or mentally. The same is true

(see Wiener, page 8)

"mechanical" operations, we find ourselves always in the Presence of G-d – the Divine "You" – because there is *no other presence; no separate force or power causing things to happen.*

But this is still only a *beginning.*

To go further spiritually, we must see all the events of our lives – even the most commonplace – not as automatic operations of an "It" (luck; fate; etc.), but as the intentional acts of a Loving, Divine "You" of Whom we are each, nevertheless, a part. "*I place G-d before me always.*"⁸

Rabbi Mallon first came as an adult to Jewish learning, after experience with Transcendental Meditation (TM), yoga, and other growth-producing modalities. He also studied Jewish Science and Visualization at the Society of Jewish Science in New York. Over the years, he has taught people of all ages as a bar/bat mitzvah instructor, Hebrew school teacher, cantor, pastoral counselor and rabbi, in addition to his work in public education. He received Jewish Science Practitioner (certification) in 1987, M.Ed. (Master's Degree in Education) in 1994, LMSW (Licensed Master of Social Work) in 2007, and Rabbinical ordination in 2008. He attended the Wurzwiler School of Social Work and Rabbinical Seminary International. He resides in New City, NY. View other works by him at <http://rabbieimallon.wordpress.com>.

1. end of first blessing preceding the *shachrit*/morning *Shema*.

2. R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi; *Tanya*; (section) "*Sha'ar Ha-Yichud v'Ha-Emunah*;" ch. 2; p. 291

3. Lichtenstein, Rabbi Morris: *Jewish Science and Health*; p. 7

4. *ibid.*, p. 16

5. *ibid.*, p. 17

6. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Buber; see also Buber, Martin; *I and Thou*

* German (Buber's 1st language) has two forms for "you": "Sie" is formal, used when addressing a "king," for example; "Du" is informal, even affectionate; used when addressing someone who is more intimately known – a dear friend, for example. Buber's original German title was "Ich und Du" – "I and You." In this, Buber might also have been consciously emulating Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev, another direct disciple of the Besht, who was famous for addressing G-d as "du." Buber's first English translator, Ronald Smith, chose "Thou" for its "reverential" connotations (which would be more suggested in German by "Sie") based on the King James Bible (which is itself no longer the standard). Walter Kaufmann did a later translation as "I-You," which more accurately reflects Buber's own usage.

7. *ibid.*

8. Psalm 16:8 ★



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Israel – where the heart and soul of Jews beats strongest

June 17, 2011 – It is a beautiful Friday morning in Israel. We are spending this last part of our trip in Ramat Eshkol, a Jerusalem neighborhood. We know the area, the places to shop and eat, and we know how to use the bus #4 to be on our way to anywhere. We have a wonderful view from our *mirpeset* (porch) of the Arab village of Shuafat. This morning everything seems serene. We know Shuafat well, at least from a distance. We have a son and his family who live in Ramat Shlomo on the other side of Shuafat. They are outside the “Green Line” although now a community of about 60,000, and if there were to be a peace agreement, Ramat Shlomo would fall into the category of a “land-swap,” areas that will not be given back, but literally swapped for other land, but no one seems to know which land and where.

This morning I took the #4 bus to Jaffa and walked down Agrippa to Machne Yehudah, Jerusalem’s central market. It was just beginning to be crowded with last minute shoppers. It was filled with the smells of aromatic spices and fresh fish, just one of the many contradictions in every form of life. The Israelis are the customers, the Israelis are the merchants, but the Arabs-Palestinians are the work force. Whatever dream the country held that immigrants and Israelis would be part of the blue collar workers has never, in the main, come true. The construction workers, the laborers and your fellow shoppers are Arabs. They work the tables in the high end restaurants in Mimilla, the new fashion center. If there is no acceptance of each other, there is a working tolerance. There is an open door to commerce.

In the Arab *Shuk* there seem to be more lookers and fewer shoppers, but the shuk is less a marketplace and more a long corridor of indistinguishable tourist shops, and as so, it depends how many busloads of tourists are crowding the city. The new electric train line which will go down Jaffa St. is still being tested. It was being tested when we were last here in December. After all this testing and no timetable for opening, it is mostly just ignored, but safely that is.

It's more than a song; it's a united show of civic spirit



BY RABBI
DENNIS C.
AND SANDY
EISENBERG SASSIO

At the conclusion of a recent synagogue Sabbath service, we invited the congregation to rise to sing “America the Beautiful.” As we customarily do, we called the young people in the congregation to come up to the pulpit for the closing blessings.

We noticed that many of the emerging adolescents, among them many non-Jewish friends of our bar mitzvah, were



We have talked before about the view of the world from Israel. There is a great deal of listening to the news, but unlike most Westerners, Israelis listen mostly between the lines. The newscasters read the facts, and the listening-Israelis tell you what that means. What it means is that anarchy and civil strife are never good for Jews in general, and Israelis, in particular. They knew what they had, both good and bad, but they do not know what they are going to get. The rhetoric sounds hopeful, but people are dying in Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and there is turmoil in Jordan and Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and who knows.

The Israelis who I meet are sitting on the sidelines, watching, making sure that all the defense operational units are “at ready” and trying to go on with their lives. Life has never been easy or determinable in Israel and the Middle East, and so they just live it, each and every day, and always with caution.

When I came back from Machne Yehudah this morning, I was carrying a significant size box of rolls. The bouquet was wonderful, but it was bulky, and I was back on the #4 bus. I kept my hand on my box on the chair just across from me, because bus riders always are on alert for an “owner-less-box.”

There is so much news being generated from so many places in the world, that Israel is not in the epi-center of the news, except in Israel, where the heart and soul of Jews beats strongest.

Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc., and can be reached at hkarsh@gmail.com. He has recently been named as a community columnist for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. ★

not singing.

We asked one youngster, “Don’t you know the words to this song?” She replied, “I don’t know Jewish songs!”

Amazed, we turned to another child and inquired, “Haven’t you learned this song in school?” He responded, “I think we were taught it in first grade, but I don’t remember.”

We left the service feeling discouraged. We have stood alongside those whose political affiliations were different from ours and sang these words. We may have disagreed politically, but we were one. We argued, we critiqued policy, but we were proud Americans. The song brought us together to help us remember who we were as a people – diverse, but one nation. Our children, it seems, don’t remember.

In a political atmosphere that is so polarized, it is sad that we are not teaching our children a common vocabulary of civic spirit and national pride. Clergy offer invocations and benedictions at civic events that often end up being sectarian and doctrinal expressions of faith that exclude rather than embrace American diversity.

Instead, we could use the rich and varied vocabulary of the “faith of America” which is contained in the founding documents, symbols, stories and music that have shaped the American narrative, that remind us not only how we comprise different states of beliefs and opinions, but how we are the United States.

Our students don’t know enough about our country’s heritage. In a recent federal examination, only 20 percent of fourth-graders, 17 percent of eighth-graders and 12 percent of 12th graders demonstrated proficiency in American history.

(see Sassos, page 9)



WIENER

(continued from page 7)

for remembering. Why has the counting stopped? Have we stopped caring? Do the men and women we send into battle not matter anymore? Have we become so complacent that we don’t have the time anymore to remember the name of a person who once lived or was once whole? Has watching the tragedies unfold before our very eyes hardened our hearts?

We should never forget and we should learn to live with memories that will help us reach another day filled with light and sunshine and the promise of tomorrow for us and the men and women who serve us with honor and distinction. We all deserve no less.

Rabbi Irwin Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at ravyitz@cox.net. ★



Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Returning home after 3 weeks in the "Old Country"

Well, either travel is too hard or we're getting old! Visiting five states and Canada in three weeks is really tiring and it is good to be home. Not that we didn't enjoy seeing Wilmington, Del., and the historical places of Philadelphia with our adopted niece and her new husband; not that we didn't enjoy Richmond, Va., with my old university days' friend; not that we didn't *kveil* in Atlanta over Barry's grandsons and visit his sons, daughter and my three cousins and shop Walmart extensively; not that we didn't enjoy my good friends in Florida, time in the sun and shopping till I dropped; not that we didn't enjoy Overland Park family, friends, the Kehilath Israel family and *Chronicle* offices and staff; not that we didn't enjoy Victoria, British Columbia, my daughter and her intended; and lastly, not that we didn't enjoy Heathrow Airport in London (well, that was too long a time). But all of that in three weeks was a lot.

We realized our taste buds had changed and we didn't enjoy eating in restaurants as much as we remembered. Stores offered too many choices even on basic items. Everything seemed cheaper than in Israel in terms of drugs, sundries, cosmetics, and clothes.

Back in Jerusalem, there seem to be more bike riders or maybe we're just more conscious of them because my daughter, Shara, and her significant other were riding a lot to get in shape for a two-day ride raising money for cancer. One day there was a naked bike run through downtown Victoria! (Shara and Rob did not participate.)

On our ride in to Jerusalem from the airport, the weather was bizarre for mid-June – cloudy and it sprinkled several times. My suitcase only made it from Canada to London so it did not arrive for two days, giving me two days of anxiety.

But life goes on. Next week I begin my "shuk walks" again – regular walks of Jerusalem's Jewish produce and other things market, Machaneh Yehudah, on a weekly basis. If you are coming here, do sign up for one. With the tour company of which he is sales manager, Barry is working on bringing more groups to

SASSOS

(continued from page 8)

Sadly, what unites us today is not historic memory but a commercialized pop culture whose symbols encourage a personal consumerist ethos instead of an ethic of collective responsibility, sacrifice and altruism. And so Memorial Day is mostly about sales and July 4th about fireworks.

Our public rhetoric is so inflamed that politicians are fearful of saying anything that will not please their political base lest they get burned. There appears to be no common will, no united resolve to take courageous stands on the serious issues facing America.

We urgently need a shared vocabulary and vision that will ground us in the historic ideals of democracy. We need a common civic liturgy to inspire us to come together not just for the good of our political party, our personal and business interests, but for the good of our country.

Katherine Lee Bates first wrote the poem that became the lyrics of "America the Beautiful" in 1893 while on a trip to Colorado. It first appeared in print on July 4, 1910, and quickly became a national hymn often competing with "The Star-Spangled Banner" in status and popularity. Here we are just over 100 years later, and the words and music that helped to shape national pride are no longer part of the vocabulary of the next generation.

Not every word of the song rings true. We might celebrate "amber waves of grain and purple mountain majesties" but assuredly question "alabaster cities undimmed by human tears."

But this was a song of hope and vision, meant to capture both natural splendor and human aspiration. It was a good piece of civic liturgy meant to inspire us and to unite us.

We need to remember that more than ever. *The Sassos, the first rabbinic couple, have been senior rabbis at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis for 34 years. Reprinted with permission from the Indianapolis Star July 5, 2011. ★*



Israel. The tour buses pass our apartment building in droves.

The shuk is just as crazy as anyone who has been there Friday will remember. And my weakness, ice coffee, still tastes great.

The segway company has a new location – down the street from us. (A segway is a two-wheeled vehicle on which you stand or balance and which you steer. I'm told the one and a half hour tours cost about \$52 and include use of helmet and instructions.)

I left behind a cookbook I plan to review



Musings from Shiloh

BY BATYA MEDAD

Adventures in America

June 28 – Good News, Bad News

Thank G-d the flight was fine. Good thing I took a sweater. The airplane was very cold. Another thing was that the Delta kosher breakfast was not a menu for me. Good thing that I had brought apples, almonds and a red pepper. And good news that we landed early, no problems. Bad news was that USA Passport Control was still on skeleton staff until 5 a.m., so we had to wait over half an hour.

June 29 – Jet Lag

It's me, the zombie blogging. I dozed deeply, if that's not an oxymoron, for an hour yesterday and then a short doze after a late dinner on the way to my sister and brother-in-laws' place. Then I was wide awake according to Israel time, so I kept talking to my sister-in-law much too late. My husband is blessed with the ability to sleep any time any place. Today a dear friend is taking us shopping, discount style. I don't really need much, but my husband does. No doubt, adventure #3 will be a "mall."

June 30 – Writing about summer camp

A few weeks ago, I saw that *Tablet*, a Jewish internet magazine, had asked for stories about camp. My camp experiences weren't very Jewish, so I didn't even attempt to enter anything. Instead I sent a note about it to the Betar list. A lot of our Betar friends got their start in Betar and Zionism by being sent to Camp Betar. So I had no doubt that there were some really great stories to be told. I just wondered if a Camp Betar story would be chosen among the winning ones. Too bad there's no "agent's fee." Eileen's story made it:

(see Medad, page 10)



for the *Chronicle*, so if anyone is coming to Jerusalem in the near future and will bring it to me, please contact me in care of the *Chronicle* and I will tell you where I left it. Anyone coming to Jerusalem anyway, do let the *Chronicle* know.

Sybil Kaplan is the "Creating a Stir" columnist for the *Jerusalem Post*; a food writer and lecturer; leader of "Shuk Walks" in Machaneh Yehudah; presenter on *RustyMikeRadio.com* with "Shuk Shopping;" and compiler/editor of eight kosher cookbooks. ★

MEDAD

(continued from page 9)

Homecoming*By Eileen Chupak Baranes, Camp Betar*

I first went to Camp Betar in Neversink, N.Y., when I was about 14 years old. I went there with my best friend, Shushie, whose mother found the camp. I had no idea whatsoever about Zionism, but I knew it was a Jewish camp.

The first year we were in the Kanaim group, which was the oldest group. We were two teenage girls from the Bronx who were into boys and not much else. I loved it there. It was fun. The girls and guys were fun, and the counselors weren't much older than we were.

Tisha B'Av came around. Whoever fasted was exempt from activities that day. So, of course Shushie and I fasted. We got bored sitting in the bunk, so we snuck out of camp and walked into Neversink, which was a small one-general-store town, to get supplies for after the fast. I remember buying a bottle of Mountain Dew and lots of munchies. Then we turned around and, to our surprise, saw all the head staff of camp in the store. Did we get in trouble! They confiscated what we bought and marched us back to the camp.

That night we had kitchen duty. We had to clean the kitchen and scrub down the stoves and ovens; it was terrible. We got so dirty and greasy; the showers in the bunks didn't have hot water so we had to take a cold shower to get the *shmutz* off of us.

But don't think that that was the end of our being bad. Our counselor, Barbara, didn't know how to handle us. She just finished high school and was going away to college. We didn't like her. One day we got a bucket of water, opened the door a little, and put it on the top of the door; we waited until she came in and she got the bucket of water on her head. For that she made a guy counselor take us on night maneuvers to scare us. But, please, we were from the Bronx (as a matter of fact so was he): Nothing scared us.

Until the end of camp I didn't have a clue about Zionism. Then the guys from Machon L'Madrichim came back from Israel. They had light in their eyes. They were like magic. I can't describe how I enjoyed listening to them talk of Israel and their experience and the Jewish destiny to live in Israel. After that I joined Betar and went to the meetings in the Bronx. Forty-six years after that I am still in Israel and do not have a moment's regret.

July 3 – Preparing for a “Plastic Wedding”

This time I'm prepared. We're in for another “plastic wedding.”

American Jewry has changed. In our day, decades ago, most Jewish weddings,

no matter how non-religious the families were, took a kosher caterer. A festive event necessitated “Jewish style” food, and the *goyim*, *traif* caterers, just didn't know how to fill up a Jewish stomach. Today, from what we have been told, things have changed.

But eating plastic wrapped kosher food at an “all Jewish” wedding is nothing compared to what someone I know recently went through. She decided that even though all the major players in a family wedding weren't really Jewish and it was even going to take place on Shabbat, she would attend so she could see her surviving parent, all her siblings, their kids and lots of cousins.

American Jewry has changed. I live in a special Jewish “bubble” in the holy city of Shiloh, thank G-d!

July 6 – Being “groped” in the hospital

I ended up having a “cousins club meeting” in a Long Island hospital. I don't know if the other people in the waiting room appreciated our sense of humor. Actually, there were cousins from both sides, all who loved to joke around. And the “groping” incident. It even put a smile on the face of the person we were visiting.

He was in a room for people awaiting and recovering from simple procedures and tests. The beds were separated by curtains, and no matter where I stood, people on the other side kept touching me. It certainly wasn't the sort of “hospital grope” one could report or even would want to. There was nothing sexual or intentional.

The staff also totally misinterpreted all the relationships, giving us more to laugh about. Let's wish *refuah shleimah*, complete recovery to all who need it.

July 7 – Bad time to visit Phoenix

Maybe I shouldn't go. I really must go to Phoenix, Ariz., even though there's a dangerous dust storm, and I have a bad cold and I feel awful. I can't not go. I have to see my parents.

My sister and her husband were out last night when the dust rolled in. Okay, not outside, but they entered the car in an indoor parking lot, heard the fire alarms, because the dust was thought to be smoke by the machines. Since almost everyone has totally air-conditioned homes, no windows are left open. I'm glad my kids and baby granddaughter were there last week.

Never dull, is it?

July 8 – You need a sense of humor

I'm in Arizona being hosted by my sister and her family and will spend Shabbat with a friend. We visited my parents who are in an “old age place” in Scottsdale. The place was started as an “independent living” facility with a few “assisted living” contracts. They've expanded the assisted

percentage, so there's a bit of a traffic jam during mealtimes from all the walkers and wheelchairs.

Those who function without help keep away and sit at separate tables if they are taking meals. They know that at least if their minds begin to go, they won't be thrown out.

My parents each suffer different versions of dementia. There seem to be lots of versions, variations, more than colors in the rainbow. They've made a friend there, a woman who lives on her own, propels herself around with the help of a walker. She considers herself very independent. All of the bus drivers in the area know her and where she must get off. The guy who brought my father his night meds told us that he used to work on the bus. They didn't let her off at the mall. She's very friendly with a very poor short-term memory. I was introduced to her numerous times, and she kept forgetting who I am.

She has latched herself onto my parents, since they like company, and she loves to be with people. My father doesn't seem to notice or mind the repetition and my mother loves the compliments and attention. My sister has known her for months now. While we were visiting my sister was taking care of some things for our parents and saw her in the lobby. The woman began a conversation, and my sister tried to explain that she had to get to her parents and suggested that the friend come along.

“But I don't think I've met your parents.”

No surprise that she didn't remember who I am when she couldn't remember my sister.

July 10 – Hanging Out in AZ

I've been enjoying my time in Arizona, at my sister's, seeing my parents, and now with friends for the weekend. I had a nice relaxing Shabbat and now we'll be off touring. That's a bonus, an unplanned surprise. G-d willing I'll write more about it later.

AZ is so different from Israel. Phoenix is enormous, and the Great Phoenix area is close to the size of Israel, at least Judea-Samaria and the coast combined. Without a car, you just can't survive here. They also have a lightrail which cost a fortune. Few people use it. Actually my brother-in-law is in that exclusive club, because there's a station by their house and it goes to his office.

Batya Medad is a veteran American olah, immigrant in Israel since 1970. She's a wife, mother, grandmother, EFL Teacher, writer and photographer. Besides her articles and photographs featured in this publication for a number of years, Batya is very involved in the international cyber community as a Jewish blogger: shilohmusings.blogspot.com and me-ander.blogspot.com. ★

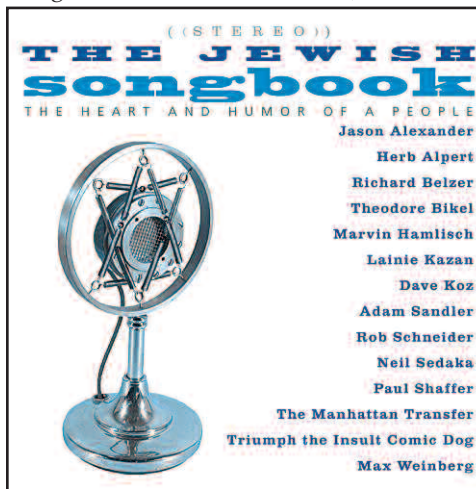


As I Heard It

REVIEWED BY MORTON GOLD

Jewish music for summer

"Summertime and the livin' is easy." So wrote Ira Gershwin as the lyrics for a song by the same name. That may be true for some, but for most of us that may not be exactly the case. For many whose living is now only a bit easier, there is a CD of Jewish merit that will fit nicely into this time of year. It is called *The Jewish Songbook: The Heart and Humor of a People*. (#826663-10900, c2008 Jewish Music Group LLC/Shout, distributed by Song BMG Entertainment Inc.)



The attraction on this CD is not the music that is being performed so much, but rather who is performing the various tunes. In classical music by contrast, most potential customers are seeking a performance of a particular work by a particular composer. In commercial music however, in almost every case, it is the performer that is the first and frequently the only consideration.

What is significant in this CD is the fact that while all the performers may be Jewish, they have made their reputations as American artists performing music for the general (non-Jewish) population. (There are several exceptions to this idea on this CD, namely Andy Statman, Alicia Svigals and Cantor Marcelo Gindlin.) The going philosophy seems to be that while it is okay to be Jewish, one shouldn't appear to be too Jewish. (Another exception is Matisyahu.)

We tend to honor and accept those of our tribe who have been accepted by the general population and made their (see Gold, page 12)



Confidentially Yours

BY AVI & ADELE

Is his failure to plan a sign?

Dear Avi and Adele:

I met a guy at a New Year's Eve party who seemed pretty into me. We went out a few times and had good time. He puts his arm around me when we go out, gives me kisses goodnight and holds my hand. In short, we enjoy each other's company. The problem is – he doesn't really ever ask me out on real dates. He waits until the last minute to call me and asks what I'm up to. By the time Friday comes around, I'm not sure whether to make plans with my girlfriends or wait until he calls me. Does his failure to plan mean he's "just not that into me" or is this just "a guy thing"?

~ Planful

Dear Planful:

You're saying "boo hoo" about this beau, but we're saying "boo" on your behavior too. Here's what's going right: You are having a good time, feeling a chemistry and seeing some of the signs of attraction (and we hope responding to them positively). However, you're also right to question what's going on. Are you top in his mind or are you destined to spend 40 years wandering the desert that is the Benign Bootycall?

The Benign Bootycall is what Avi and Adele call the "good enough girl," which we're afraid, Planful Polly, you've become. You're not a 10 for him; you're probably a 5.2 in his book. And the reason we know this? He's waiting until Shabbat morning or later to see if you're up for a little *Havdalah* fun. If you were a 10, he'd want to occupy a lot more of your time, things would probably progress more physically, and he'd want to fill up your time so no others could. In his world, if there's not a game on and he doesn't have another date and his houseplants have already been watered, then he'll call you up because you're "just good enough."

Don't believe us? Then you have two options: either have a come-to-Moses talk with your new flame or take the kosher bull by the horns and just make it happen. If you want to talk the talk, get ready to walk if you hear that he just isn't that into you. If you want to change the course of your life with dallying David, then saddle up and change the dynamic: a simple "I'm mapping out my next weekend – do you want to make plans?" should suffice. If he can't make a decision, then stick to your

guns when same-day plans arise and don't be available.

You're just as enabling to him as he is annoying to you, so fix it or forget it!

Should I travel with my girlfriend?

Dear Avi and Adele:

My girlfriend and I have been dating for 9 months and have begun discussing taking a vacation together. I'm overdue for a getaway, but not sure I'm prepared to travel with her. How do I know if we're ready for this big step?

~ Got Shpilkes

Dear Got Shpilkes:

So you like a girl, you've been dating her, and now you're shying away from the opportunity for a little R&R with a side of whoopee? Perhaps your concerns are bigger than your carry-on luggage restrictions.

Couples setting out for their first travel adventure together benefit from the careful consideration that you seem to want to give this matter. Proper planning includes not only getting the best deal on airfare and connecting with your cousin Sal who owns that hotel in Miami. Planning for your first trip also includes considering how you're going to handle nonstop time with your love so that you come back feeling even better about your *bashert* (soul mate).

Travel reveals a lot about a person: your gal may say she's low-key, but you find out she's truly high maintenance. Talking beforehand about your expectations for the trip is critical: who's paying for what? How much are you going out, and how do you fairly decide what you're going to do with your time? Are you packing Scrabble or your dancing shoes? And speaking of packing, do you both travel lightly or is it a problem for you if she must have shoes (and purse) to match each outfit? Do either of you have any dietary restrictions? What if she wants ice cream but you want steak? Talking about these things in advance can minimize frustration during the trip.

Traveling together can be like a trial-run for future living arrangements, so proceed with caution, and don't be shy about speaking up for the time you each need to yourself during the trip.

And while you're away, don't forget to shop for a *chotchke* (trinket) or two you can bring home for the whole *mishpocheh* (extended family), especially hers. If you're a potential future son-in-law, this should help endear you to her family.

Livin' and lovin', Avi and Adele

Please go to www.letmypeoplegrow.org – a blog dedicated to cultivating Jewish conversations on topics that matter, while educating, entertaining and engaging our national Jewish community. ✨

Theater

By HAROLD JACOBSON AND ROSE KLEINER

Canadian Theater brings works of Lerner and Loewe to new heights

Benedict Campbell and Deborah Hay in Niagara-on-the-Lake Shaw Festival's *My Fair Lady*

An apocryphal story has it that when 16th century Spanish explorers sailed by the northern most coast of the New World, the ship captain on one vessel pointed to a vast land mass and asked "What is that?" – to which one sailor replied "Acá nada," – "Nothing over there," – which is how Canada supposedly got its name.

The Spanish missed their chance because there was plenty over there then and now – including a theatrical scene with some of the best dramatic productions in the world.

The Shaw Festival, now celebrating its 50th anniversary is situated in what is arguably Canada's most beautiful town, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, is featuring a production of *My Fair Lady* which surpasses the original 1956 Broadway version and the famous movie with Rex Harrison and Audrey Hepburn.



(L-R) Deborah Hay and Benedict Campbell in *My Fair Lady*. Photo by David Cooper.

The writers were initially somewhat apprehensive before viewing the production, in the light of the play's history of high performance standards but were soon disarmed by the spectacular charm of Benedict Campbell as Henry Higgins and Deborah Hay as a delightful Eliza Doolittle. It is no wonder that the supporting cast of singers and dancers attracted an instantaneous, standing ovation at the play's end.

The two Shaw plays, *Heartbreak House* and *Candida*, though not as endearing as the Lerner and Loewe extravaganza,

provide nonetheless, insights both into the author's near magical use of the English language (despite his prolixity) and the historical interstices of upper class English society at the beginning of the 20th century. Both plays, expertly performed by the Shaw Festival repertory group, rehearse Shaw's sometimes "heretical" views on marriage, capitalism, religion, politics and love.

Geraint Wyn Davies in Stratford Ontario Festival's *Camelot*

Meanwhile in Stratford Ontario, at the Stratford Shakespearean Festival, the world's largest repertory company has mounted a stunning version of that other Lerner and Loewe musical, *Camelot*, starring Geraint Wyn Davies, a onetime television actor who has transitioned to the stage and has become a stellar figure in the Stratford Company.



(L-R) Geraint Wyn Davies and Kaylee Harwood in *Camelot*. Stratford Shakespearean Festival © 2011; photo by David Hou.

The origins of the Arthurian legend have been traced to a mysterious Roman soldier named Arturus who served in the 6th Victrix Legion station at York, England. The legend was expanded to include a King Arthur and his knights of the round table. On this wisp of a story, Lerner and Loewe confected a wonderful tale of chivalry, royalty, virtue and infidelity.

Wyn Davies as Arthur manages, through his acting talent, sharp elocution and marvelous mood changes to maintain the pace of the show. Kaylee Harwood, as Guinevere, has a powerful, sweet and pleasant singing voice and possesses great reserves of energy for her role as the queen.

Wyn Davies also plays Falstaff in a rollicking version of Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The make-up was so effective in Falstaff's case that many in the audience at the performance we saw were unaware that Davies, the star of *Camelot*, had been transformed into the corpulent, belching and lascivious Falstaff.

Great reserves of talent are also on display in *Richard III* in which for the first time in Stratford's history, a gifted actress, Seanna McKenna, takes on the role of the twisted pretender to the throne.

GOLD

(continued from page 11)

success as American performers who just happened to be Jewish. Such composers as Bloch and Bernstein are often programmed by non-Jewish conductors. That is fine with me, I might add, but the reason we are grateful for this token programming is that these composers are accepted by non Jewish audiences. We *kvell* that Kurt Well wrote a setting of the Kiddush but barely acknowledge sacred works by Jewish composers not known or popular with general audiences. (The list is a very long one.)

In the spirit of this easier season on living I do recommend the above mentioned CD. On hearing a keyboard performance of Queen Elizabeth I, an ambassador remarked that she played "very well, for a Queen." However, I do not have any such reservations to make about the performers on this CD. They are all pros and the performances reflect this quality. For a generation (or two, or even three) that are not familiar with the songs on this CD, this CD would make a marvelous introduction to the mostly secular world of Jewish song, mostly influenced by the Yiddish Theater that flourished in New York in the first half of the last century.

The performers include but are not limited to: Jason Alexander, Adam Sandler, Herb Alpert, Neil Sedaka and Barbra Streisand and many others. The "sidemen" are all first rate, I should add. There are 13 selections on the CD that range from "My Yiddishe Mamme", "Joe and Paul", "Sheyn Vi Di L'Vone" and "Avinu Malkeinu" among other songs. While it would or should take more than a very heartfelt performance of "Avinu Malkeinu" by Barbra Streisand to have one recognized as a *hazzan*, the Cantors Assembly should recognize her as an honorary *hazzan* on the basis of this rendition alone. I believe that the content of this CD lives up to its title. You be the judge.

Dr. Gold is a composer, pianist, and conductor. He may be reached at: drmortongold@yahoo.com. ★



Her performance is equal to any male Richard which the writers have witnessed in the past.

Not to be missed at Stratford this season is a daring stage adaptation of Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, a semi musical with bravura acting performances.

Jewish visitors to Stratford, Ontario will find many kosher products in the town's supermarkets. There is a kosher pizza restaurant on 4400 Queen St. in Niagara Falls, a 25 minute drive from Niagara-on-the-Lake. ★



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

My New Zealand Shabbat

It wasn't easy to get there but the effort was well worth it. A bus trip winding our way out of Queenstown took us to our first destination where we boarded a catamaran and crossed Lake Manapouri, its surface shimmering in the late morning sun. A second bus ride and seven rainbows later, we traversed Wilmot Pass where we saw our first view of Doubtful Sound glistening far below the cliffs. The winds were picking up and clouds filled the sky with uncertainty as we boarded the Fiordland Navigator, our home for the next two days. I had heard stories about the many "moods" of the Sound and checked to make sure my sea-sick pills were within easy reach.

Our cruise began in open waters as we sailed past towering peaks adorned by glacier-fed waterfalls. On deck I hugged my jacket close as we navigated into the hidden waterways of the Sound, narrow passages between rainforest-clad islands that look like fingers on the map. In this remote wilderness area, we were treated to watching fur seals lounge on the rocks and swim in the water as their pups valiantly tried to dive and twist like the adults.

Before dinner, the skies opened up and a warm rain pelted down on those of us who were brave enough to kayak off the boat. I soon learned that four kilometers doesn't sound like a big distance when you are warm and dry. But the joy of watching my husband, Ray, paddle into hidden coves like Captain Cook kept me afloat and happy until we returned to the boat for a hot shower and a glass of New Zealand's sauvignon blanc. I said a blessing, not just over the wine because it was Friday night and the beginning of Shabbat, but for being so fortunate to be in this wondrous place at this time in my life.

The next morning we awoke to a totally different sound. It had rained all night and the boat was engulfed in a sultry mist. You could barely see the canyon walls through the ribbons of clouds that enveloped us and the constant sound of rushing water affirmed what our captain had told us at breakfast: that hundreds of waterfalls had emerged as a result of the rains.

Shabbat morning, 9:00 a.m., and not a *minyan* in sight. But what we had that morning, although not a synagogue

experience, was an opportunity to experience Shabbat in a way I will never forget.

The captain came on the intercom and asked for our attention. "For the next five minutes, I would like to ask you a favor: Be totally still and silent. Stay where you are, don't walk around or open doors or take photos or drink coffee. Just stand quietly and listen. I will turn off the boat's engines and generators and we will drift at sea in silence. Thank you."

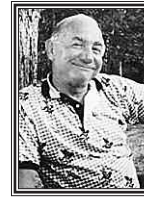
And with that, we were given a three bell warning so that each of us could find a place on board in which to take in the majesty of our surroundings. Twenty-four guests, one captain and a crew of six all stopped and stood and listened. There, hundreds of miles from any town or settlement in the most remote wilderness I have ever been to, we listened to the sounds of the world. The gentle tapping of rain as it hit the deck, water lapping against the bow of the boat, birds calling out in song, and water-flowing, gushing, pouring down over boulders and bush – presented to us as a gift. It was a moment in time that was timeless and we were both witness to and part of it.

Being totally present and fully appreciating creation and the Creator is what the Jewish Sabbath is all about. Shabbat is a day of rest, a day when we are commanded not to interfere with or try to control the physical world in which we live. It is meant to give us an opportunity to be free from the tyranny of the daily demands of work and life that often obscure our ability to really see, hear and appreciate the beauty around us. In this way, Sabbath rest is really a state of peace within us as well as peace between us and the natural world.

I didn't meet many Jews in New Zealand nor did I expect to. But I celebrated a moment in time that was the perfect Sabbath. As Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote so beautifully in his book *The Sabbath*: "The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to *holiness in time*. It is a day on which we are called to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world."

As we sailed back to port, the sun broke through the midst and the sky turned from grey to deep blue, marshmallow clouds generously topping the mountain peaks. I smiled to think that on a Kiwi cruise in the middle of nowhere, I had been given such a wonderful opportunity to truly experience Shabbat.

Lederman is an award winning author, Jewish educator, public speaker and attorney who lives in Tucson. Visit her website at amyhirshberglederman.com. ★



Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

Women's memory

Men and women are different. Yes, we men are usually bigger than them. That's one way of telling the difference. Hair length and style, though not infallible, can help, too. And usually they talk more on the phone and like to look in mirrors. If you encounter someone with all four characteristics, odds are she's a woman.

No matter our current cultural platitudes. No matter that there are slight, but profoundly important physiological variations, no matter that our hairstyles are similar, no matter that in this early 21st century we both wear pants, no matter that the glass ceiling has long since been shattered. Still, I say men and women are different – different species, like bears are bears and birds are birds – especially when it comes to mental aptitudes.

Observation No. 1: Women have better memories than men. Notice their insistence on precision when it comes to dates. "Thanks for the anniversary present, sweetie, but our 25th wedding anniversary is Feb. 15, not July 2. You're four months late." Some of them even descend to the hourly level. "Yes, Ted, you have the right day for our anniversary, but the wedding was at 11:30 and it is now 2:00. Why can't you get the hour straight?" I stand there turning in the wind.

And it's a rare matron who doesn't remember their children's and grandchildren's birthdays.

And how many times has your pal interrupted his vacation story to turn to his wife for data – "What hotel did we stay in?" – "Did I fall in the pool the first or second day?" – "Didn't we run into the Johnsons or was it the McDonalds?"

It never fails. Women don't forget, especially as age corrodes us men. Strange, I read that more women than men get Alzheimer's. But I challenge any husband to match wits with his wife on dates and locations of their married life. She'll whip you every time, guys.

Of course, this is not entirely to your disadvantage. It helps when you need Fred's phone number or if you're groping for the name of that restaurant where you had the Sazerac cocktail in New Orleans. But her mental storage capability is a real zinger when she rattles off the date, time, and location that you dented the garage washing machine with your left front

(see Roberts, page 14)



Media Watch

By RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

X-Men: First Class and The Hangover, Part II

Two of the summer's biggest movie blockbusters are about Jewish men – one vengeful, one not; one committed to a replacement for the Jewish people, one committed to his own inner demon. Here goes:

X-Men: First Class

X-Men: First Class does offer some history lessons. It makes the point that Nazis were evil during the Holocaust and beyond, all the more so because they were “just following orders.” It does recreate the Cuban Missile Crisis, complete with clips from President Kennedy's classic speeches.

But here, I'm afraid, its educational value, maybe all its value, stops. It doesn't offer any insight into Soviet evil. It suggests that the Communists, who were good Joes standing up for themselves no less than America, were duped by superhuman ex-Nazis into placing missiles in inappropriate places. Nothing here is taught about how the Soviets hated the Nazis for having attacked them, but were no less totalitarian than their better foe.

Yes, again, the film does “teach” about the Holocaust. But at what price? The price, it seems, is the suggestion that the Holocaust turned some Jews into monsters who have more in common with Nazis than they would admit. Such seems to be the case with X-men principal mutant Magneto, or Erik Lehnsherr (Michael Fassbender), who is motivated entirely by rage, hatred, contempt, revenge, and is willing to destroy himself and others in the process. Such is, indeed, the film's image of a Holocaust-victim, a gifted Jewish child turned gifted – and bitter – man.

Erik's life mission is to find and kill the Nazi officer, now named Shaw (Kevin Bacon, troublingly likable in the role) and sporting an American accent, who shot Erik's mother because the lad was unable to use under pressure his considerable powers of levitation and destruction. That Nazi officer turns out to be a previous-generation self-shielding energy-storing mutant.

The film, written by director Matthew Vaughn with Ashley Edward Miller, Zack Stentz, Jane Goldman and Sheldon



Turner, is rightly wary of those who espouse “New Age” manifestoes, especially where genetics are called “the key.” Shaw declares in the name of Nazism and eugenics, “This is our time, our age.” But the film spends much time prating about how the embittered Jewish character is the emotional mutant of the bunch, obsessed with vindictive designs. Several times Erik's contemporary, Professor Xavier (James McAvoy), a privileged British lad, warns his friend Erik about anger. “Anger's almost gotten you killed all this time,” is but one of Xavier's comments after Eric makes comments like, “I need the anger.” To Xavier's “Killing Shaw will not bring you peace,” Erik readily responds: “Peace was never an option.”

After a while the dialogue between the two sounds more and more like the confrontations between Jews and Christians who have accused Judaism of advocating non-forgiveness and a God of vengeance.

Erik does not seem to resent the charges; he has a burning desire to represent them. Xavier preaches some kind of “peace that surpasses all understanding.” His perspective is not Christian, though it mimics New Testament passages, especially where Jews are the subject. A good mutant mind-reader and thinker working with the gifts he has, Xavier decides that everything depends on how one “focuses.” As he puts it, “I believe that the true focus lies somewhere between rage and serenity.”

It would seem that the film advocates fighting bad New Age ideas with good New Age ideas, or at least “positive” New Age ideas. Xavier tries to teach Erik how to channel beautiful memories in order to “focus” most effectively. One of those memories, fleetingly shown, seems to have been a Chanukah menorah-lighting experience.

Most frightening – and, I think, despicable – about this film is that in the end, Erik is

ROBERTS

(continued from page 13)

bumper. “It was June 12, 1985 – about 2:30 – you were driving the green Chevy and there were three beer cans in the front seat.” If you press her, she'll recite your license plate number and tell you that you had on the blue sweater with the stain on the left sleeve.

The Harvard School of Gender has studied these phenomena in detail. But I, in my home-based laboratory (which, of course, I write off as a business office), have discovered this significant, infallible gender difference – never fails. Out of the blue – like Newton and his apple – it happened the other day.

“Can you believe that Simon is nine on the 12th of April?” Well, I know who Simon is – he's my grandson. But she knew his birthday. And after a brief quiz, I found she knew *everybody's* birthday, including my second cousin in Detroit. That's when the lightening bolt flashed similar to the childhood shock that vanilla ice cream is better when topped with chocolate syrup.

That on the negative side, that doctors carry needles in their white-coated pockets to stick in your arm. Women have better memories than men. How many times at a cocktail party have you sidled up to your wife and whispered, “What's the name of that carrotty blond? Remember, we met her at the Green's? I know her, but what's her name. I want to wish her a happy anniversary. She was married on 10 June at 11:15, you know.” I pick myself up off the floor. “I was only joking!!”

Ted Roberts, a Rockower Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks at Jewish life with rare wit and insight. When he's not writing, Ted worships at Etz Chayim Synagogue in Huntsville, Ala., where for 25 years he has served as bar mitzvah teacher. His inspiration is his patient wife, Shirley. Check out his Web site: www.wonderwordworks.com. Blogsite: www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com. His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof can be bought at Amazon.com or lulu.com/content/127641. ★



depicted as being in accord with Shaw, as agreeing with the latter's premises. Just as the Nazis had declared everyone else the enemy of the master race, so does Erik – in the name of the gifted mutants – declare that they must take out common humans before the latter attack them. That is Erik's take on “Never again,” a phrase that he uses precisely to justify a program of the “cleansing” (as the phrase goes in the annals of genocide) the human world by

(see Gertel, page 15)

GERTEL

(continued from page 14)

the mutants. Erik actually tells the Nazi: "I agree with everything you said. We are the future, but unfortunately, you killed my mother." In other words, "I agree with your racist premises but I have to kill you because you killed my mother. Otherwise, I'd consider joining forces."

While completely vile in and of itself, Erik's program of vengeance and "cleansing" is contrasted with the efforts of blue scaly mutant Raven (Jennifer Lawrence) to come to terms with her looks, to refrain from transforming herself into a blond beauty, and to be able to say, "Mutant and proud." Oddly, it is Erik who helps her to overcome her self-hatred, but his only qualification seems to be his internalization of Nazi hatred of others in service of his brother and sister mutants. The suggestion is also made that he took advantage of the young Raven's affections.

It would seem from *X-Men: First Class* that Jews, or at least Jewish mutants, are damned if they do and damned if they don't. They become vengeful monsters when persecuted, to the extent that they may not deserve the justice and compassion and help of those in society who "take the higher road." I have always feared that the *X-Men* series was coming awfully close to presenting Erik/Magneto in this way. In that progression of portrayal, this episode is not really the "first chapter" but the climax.

The Hangover Part II

As was to be expected, a sequel was made to the wildly popular *Hangover* (2009) movie, about things gone wrong at a bachelor party. This time it is Jewish dentist Stuart (Ed Helms) who is getting married. As was to be expected, something would be made of his being Jewish. Thankfully, the gratuitous references in the first film to his grandmother's Holocaust ring are gone, but so, it would seem, is any indication of future generations who would even care about such a ring.

This time, the action takes place in Thailand, the home of the intelligent and beautiful woman whom Stuart is about to marry. She has a brilliant and earnest younger brother, Teddy, who, at 16, is studying pre-med at a prestigious American university. He joins Stuart and his friends, including, after some concerns, Alan (Zach Galifianakis) the bizarre brother-in-law of happily-married friend Doug (Justin Bartha), last movie's groom, for the trip to Asia.

Soon after our hapless cohorts arrive in the land of beautiful scenery, they are prodded, by the women, after a formal engagement party, to enjoy themselves

with a few beers and a beach bonfire in lieu of the ordinary American bachelor party. Stuart has already been insulted by his soon-to-be father-in-law, who makes it clear that he does not consider dentists to be real doctors and that he regards Stuart as a rather bland and witless hack.

Not the things to say to a nice Jewish boy. But Stuart, though hurt, is not a vengeful guy (unlike the depiction of other Jews nowadays), and, besides, he has his hands full with the totally erratic Alan, who told everybody at the party about Stuart's drunken marriage to a Las Vegas prostitute (in the first movie) and is obviously and ominously jealous of Teddy.



Needless to say, the boys (with the exception of happily-married Doug, who was spared last time as well) awake under frightful and insane conditions in a cheap Bangkok hotel, in the company of what turns out to be a drug-dealing monkey. Stuart is distressed to find that he has a tattoo on his face à la Mike Tyson. And horror of horrors, there is a severed finger in the room with Ted's college ring on it (again with the rings), particularly disconcerting after Teddy's virtual musical performance, melodiously stroking strings with his fingers the night before. Worse yet, Teddy is missing.

The boys spend most of the film searching for Teddy and being told that "the city" chews up teenagers like him and never returns them. They try to re-construct what happened the night before and find that they have made enemies of street vendors as well as of vicious mobsters and even of Buddhist monks. All seems lost until the dentist is challenged by troubled criminal Mr. Chow (Ken Jeong), foolishly invited to the party by Alan, "Come on,

Stuey. Use that big Jewish brain."

And indeed, Stu does figure out where Teddy is, and gets everyone back on time for the wedding, which is performed by an Asian minister (?) wearing a *tallit*-like shawl with a crucifix on it. So on one level, this film is a tribute to the *Yiddische keppele* (or *kupf*), the "Jewish head" or Jewish brain, like the film, *Independence Day*, for example. But it also drains Stuart of any attachment to Judaism and suggests that what is not brought to Thailand does not linger beyond Thailand.

The film also suggests that what happens in Vegas (the scene of the previous romp) does *not* stay in Vegas. After all, Alan has blabbed about Stuart's brief marriage that resulted from the last hangover. Due to unintentional substance abuse this time (explained by the end of the film), Stuart has had an encounter with another prostitute. At first he is crestfallen at the violation of what he calls "my moral code." He laments, "I have a weakness for prostitutes...I have a demon in me."

But by the end of the film, however, Stuart is downright proud of himself. He confronts his father-in-law to be with the mantra, "There's a demon in me." That demon, he declares, "takes me to some pretty weird places." But it also enabled him to triumph: "We took on Bangkok and won...because of the demon in me."

One thinks, of course, of the traditional Jewish teaching that each human being possesses a *yetzer ha-ra* and a *yetzer ha-tov*, a bad inclination and a good inclination, and that it is our duty, through the teachings of the Torah, to overcome the bad *yetzer*, which is very powerful from our youth. (Gen. 8:21) This film ends up suggesting that it is meritorious to make bad decisions in life, or at least in Stuart's life, if this brings out the demon which makes one a more interesting person and therefore a more worthy son-in-law in order to assimilate into global culture, both the good and the ugly aspects of it.

While *The Hangover Part II* seems innocuous enough as a fun romp, writers Craig Mazin and Scott Armstrong, together with director-writer Todd Phillips, send the bad message that one should actually build on one's character flaws and indulge one's weaknesses in order to broaden one's horizons.

Rabbi Gertel has been spiritual leader of Conservative Congregation Rodfei Zedek since 1988. A native of Springfield, Mass., he attended Columbia University and Jewish Theological Seminary. He is the author of two books, *What Jews Know about Salvation* and *Over the Top Judaism: Precedents and Trends in the Depiction of Jewish Beliefs and Observances in Film and Television*. He has been media critic for The Jewish Post & Opinion since 1979. ★

Jews' News

Reb Zalman Legacy Project partners with the University of Colorado's Jewish Studies Program

After almost ten years of work, the Reb Zalman Legacy Project of the Yesod Foundation has achieved its original mission – to find a permanent and stable home for the archives of Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, ensuring that his legacy of teaching and wisdom will continue to benefit generations to come.

After almost a year of negotiations, Reb Zalman's archives will be donated to the University of Colorado at Boulder and a new partnership

will begin with the University's Program in Jewish Studies, headed by Dr. David Shneer. Having sealed this new relationship, the Reb Zalman Legacy Project will soon turn over responsibility for the legacy embodied in Reb Zalman's archives to the Program in Jewish Studies and the Archives Department at the University of Colorado. The Reb Zalman Legacy Project will then cease its activities and Netanel Miles-Yepetz, as its director, will take on a smaller, advisory role in Jewish Studies, helping it and the Archives Department to describe and utilize the wonderful materials of Reb Zalman's collection.

Miles-Yepetz wrote, "From the time I first began to dig through boxes in Reb Zalman's basement in the spring of 2002, I knew that I had entered upon a very special project. And although it has gone through many changes over the years, the major goals and spirit have remained the same. This is due in large part to the tremendous personal commitment of the board members of the Yesod Foundation – Ron Claman, Tizah Firestone, David Friedman, Thomas Hast, and Bobbie Zelkind – who held the vision throughout. I am tremendously grateful to them for allowing me to be a part of this work, and for their loving commitment to Reb Zalman and his legacy.

"In the last decade, we have accomplished much that we hope will be of lasting value, including: the listing and description of much of the archived materials; the digitization of the original photo and audio tape collections, as well as various books and other writings by Reb Zalman; the



Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

Omer-type prayers – Tisha B'Av to Rosh HaShannah

Sefiras HaBinyan – Building the Realm

A message from Gabbai Seth Fishman, BLOG Editor (From Reb Zalman Legacy Project – www.rzlp.org):

Reb Zalman wrote: "People who have worked on their awareness have pointed out that there are 49 days from the end of Tisha B'Av (the fast of the 9th of Av) to the day before Rosh HaShannah. In counting S'feerah between Pesach and Shavuot, we make our way downward from Chesed of Chesed to Malchut of Malchut. During the Elul season, we make our way upward from Malchut of Malchut to Chesed of Chesed." (A Guide for Starting Your New Incarnation, 2001, ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal, p. 1)

So here's a suggestion for how to do the counting at this time of year, (for example, as I write this it is 16 Av, 5768 / August 16, 2008):

Ribbono shel Olam: I hereby prepare myself for Sefiras HaBinyan – a counting for building God's realm during the time between Tisha B'Av and Rosh HaShannah.

Today there are 44 days left until Rosh HaShannah, which is 6 weeks and 2 days, Gevurah Sheb'Malchut.

Dear God: Please let me be a vessel for Your light and help to align me with Your will. May this period of Sefirat HaBinyan



production of two books and CDs of Reb Zalman's musical compositions; the production of various CDs and DVDs related to Reb Zalman's work; the sponsoring of two major volumes of Reb Zalman's teachings on Hasidism, the second of which, *A Hidden Light*, is recently published; the creation of a discussion guide for Reb Zalman's popular book, *Jewish with Feeling*; the creation of three web sites and on-line courses; and numerous public events featuring Reb Zalman.

"Though the Reb Zalman Legacy Project, in its current incarnation, will soon cease, those of us who have been with it from the beginning are truly excited to witness the birth of its new incarnation at the University of Colorado, and to see the new possibilities that a partnership with a vital Jewish Studies program will create. And we hope that others too will understand that this is not an end, but a new beginning and a new phase of the same work. Currently, the Program in Jewish Studies at the University of Colorado is at work on a special 'Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi' page for its web site that is scheduled to be launched in the Fall of 2011, and in time hopes to create an independent site related to Reb Zalman's archive."★

and the New Year be for good, for peace and for blessing for all of Israel [Substitute here your particular identification] and let us say, Amen.

There are seven weeks during this period, just as there are from Pesach to Shavuot. We start counting one full day after Tisha B'Av ends (i.e., the night when 11 of Av begins). We ascend, starting with *Malchut Sheb'Malchut* and up to *Chesed Sheb'Chesed*. The counting is in the spirit of this time of our calendar.

Above, I have offered a suggestion for a way to do this. It can be inserted in the *Maariv* service at the point where we count during the Omer. If numbers descend, we can keep our counting consistent with the way of counting during the Omer (i.e. with Chesed of Chesed as one and Malchut of Malchut as forty-nine.)

I'm also suggesting the name *Sefiras HaBinyan* (Building the Realm). Reb Zalman again:

"The Hebrew word for return or repentance is *t'shuvah*. According to the Zohar, this can be read as *tashoov hay* (returning the Hay), explained by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi as repairing the *gahloot* (exile, of the *sh'chinnah*) The Divine indwelling... [Bringing] back the hay to the *yud-hay-vav*, *tahshoov hay*, ...is also known as *binyahn hah-mahlchoot* (building the realm). What *tahshoov hay* in this way means is that we are bringing it back, we are making the connection, so that the *yud-hay-vav* should be able to come all the way down to the hay." (ibid, p. 23)

By focusing on *Sefirot* each day, we connect to the Divine Attributes. So on an individual level, we can build the realm within us. (To read more on the topic of how putting one's attention toward the *Sefirot* functions in us, please see the above referenced work, "A Guide For Starting Your New Incarnation," and also, "Tree of Life of Sacred Time" both available from Aleph Resources.)

If your community has already established traditions related to the counting between Tisha B'Av and Rosh HaShannah which you can share, or if you have some ideas/suggestions, please add a comment to this post. I've provided my suggestions here, but I would like to learn about how others have come to do this practice.

Gabbai Seth Fishman is a secular Jew who made a transition to being religious through having participated in the Philadelphia P'nai Or community in the early 1990's which included the opportunity to study with Reb Zalman when he still lived there. To help in the publication of some of Reb Zalman's teachings, he started the website's BLOG (www.rzlp.org/wordpress) which contains various pieces that include some core teachings of Jewish Renewal. He can be reached at rebzgabbai@verizon.net. ★

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Young Catholic fights to save Russian Jewish refusenik

Swimming in the Daylight. By Lisa C. Paul. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2011. 298 Pages. \$24.95.

This heart-warming memoir describes the relationship between Inna Meiman, a Russian Jewish *refusenik* and Lisa, the author, a young Catholic from Appleton, Wisc., who is a student at the University of Minnesota where she is specializing in Russian. Before becoming a senior, she spends 1983–84 in Moscow in order to advance her familiarity with the language and the Soviet Union. Lisa stays on for a second year, working as a nanny for Joan and Paul Smith, an American family with two small daughters. Paul runs the Russian office of the Caterpillar Tractor Company.



Lisa takes lessons with Inna, a doctoral degree recipient in English from the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages where she taught for several years. She was forced out of this job after being refused a visa to leave the Soviet Union. To earn some money, she gives private Russian lessons to Americans and is pleased to add Lisa to her small group of students. Inna is married to Naum, also a *refusenik* who participates in the Moscow Helsinki Watch Group, fighting for human rights in the Soviet Union. The most pressing reason why Inna and Naum want to leave the U.S.S.R. is the fact that she has a malignant tumor on her neck and requires treatment beyond what she can grudgingly obtain from the Russian doctors. She has received invitations from several countries to come for medical care but the Russian authorities will not grant her a visa.

Lisa describes her 1984–85 year in Moscow, including accounts of her many friends, both Russian and American; her mother's visit; her lessons with Inna; and the deterioration of Inna's health. To publicize Inna's situation, Lisa arranges for her to be interviewed by an American journalist, hoping that an American TV network might broadcast all or part of the

story. After Lisa returns home in June, 1985, she presses for the interview to appear with some modest success as a consequence of her persistence. Meanwhile, she learns that Inna's health is becoming worse. She finally decides to go on a hunger strike in December, 1985 in order to publicize Inna's plight. She hopes that her fast will gain attention beyond Minneapolis and indeed it does. She is invited to hold a press conference in Washington which is attended by newspapermen and aides to several members of Congress.

In June, 1986, Lisa completes her studies at the University of Minnesota and takes a job in Washington while indefatigably continuing her efforts on behalf of Inna. Finally, in January, 1987, Inna is granted a visa and comes to Washington without Naum whose application to leave Russia was again denied. Unfortunately, it is too late to save Inna. Naum is finally given a visa to go to Israel where he died in 2001 at the age of 89.

Despite the sad ending, this is an inspiring success story. What Lisa achieved is a tribute to the power of one determined individual to bring about important change. She is truly a Righteous Gentile who fully merits our gratitude for her persistence and tenacity. We are all in her debt.

Strident clash between tradition and modernity

Jerusalem Maiden. By Talia Carner. New York: Harper, 2011. 454 Pages. \$14.99.

This remarkable story begins in Jerusalem in 1911 where 12-year old Esther Kaminsky, the precocious *Jerusalem Maiden*, lives with her Orthodox family in Me'ah She'arim. Her father's horizons had been broadened when he worked briefly in an American bank. As a result, he sent Esther to the Evelina de Rothschild School where English was the language of instruction and where she was befriended by her teacher, a French woman, who encouraged Esther to develop her artistic talent. She also introduced Esther to her son, Pierre, who eventually became a leading sculptor and an important person in Esther's life.

At an early age, girls in Esther's community were betrothed by their parents without any participation in the decision by the prospective bride. Her job was to support

her husband in his scholarly pursuits and to produce sons. The often unhappy consequence of this custom is vividly described for Esther, her relatives, and friends. It was a particular source of sorrow for Esther who faced the conflict between adhering to tradition and expressing her creative talent. She is tempted by Pierre to join him at Jerusalem's Bezalel Academy where talented pupils study art and she is also coaxed by her musically gifted first cousin to defy convention and marry him. He takes her to a church where he plays the organ and where she is overwhelmed by the great works of art. However, her religious convictions persuade her to follow the prescribed pattern and to become the bride of a man she does not know who was selected for her by her father. His name is Nathan Bloomenthal and he turns out to be a modern Jew who is a wealthy merchant and who lives in Jaffa but travels a good deal to buy and sell china. Among his customers is the sultan of the Turkish empire which was then ruling over Palestine and whose soldiers had recently kidnapped Esther's younger brother for military service. Esther's father hopes that his new son-in-law can help secure the release of his son.

Tragedies beset Esther including the deaths of her mother, another brother, and the suicide of her friend who was unhappily married. As it turns out, she makes her peace with her own marriage, settles in Jaffa, and soon has three children but she continues to long for opportunities to express her skill in painting. When Esther's sister is divorced because she failed to produce any children after eight years of marriage, Esther takes her into her home where she looks after the three children, freeing Esther to travel.

Esther decides to join Nathan in Europe where he is on business. However, three days before she landed in Marseille, he left for Vienna. He instructs her to wait in Paris for a month until he will be able to come there. What follows is the realization of her fantasies as she is reunited with her French teacher from Jerusalem and her son, Pierre. She also meets Chaim Soutine, one of the Jewish painters who became the School of Paris. These three friends encourage her to resume painting and she produces a number of canvases that are scheduled for an exhibition. Esther is forced to confront the essential conflict that has dogged her life for so long. This permeates the scene and the challenging choices that Esther has to make.

This profoundly moving story grabs the reader's attention from the very beginning and never lets go. The author, Talia Carner, is a seventh generation Sabra, born in

(see Teicher, page 18)





An Observant Eye

BY RABBI AVI SHAFRAN

Where less can be more

"Can she have a cookie with a Pentagon-K on the box?" the voice on the phone asked and, after receiving my polite but negative response (a Pentagon-K? – now the Defense Department's in the *kashrus* business? Who knew?), responded, "Fine, I'll leave those in the cupboard."

It was the sort of conversation (emphasis on "sort") that my wife and I had more than occasionally during the 1980s and early 1990s, when we lived in a city with only a small Jewishly observant community, and our children's friends included not only other *frum* (observant) kids but children from less-observant families. The parents of those children knew that our kosher standards – whether regarding food, activities or entertainment – were different from theirs. And when our kids visited their homes, our less-observant neighbors – no less than we did for their visiting children with food sensitivities or allergies – took pains to make sure all special needs were fully accommodated.

Some might consider that situation clumsy, uncomfortable, even dangerous. But to us it was invaluable. We are grateful to G-d that we were able to live "out of town" for so long and only moved to New York (compelled by circumstances) after most of our children's formative years.

Admitting that fact tends to raise eyebrows – at least those of people who never actually lived in a small *frum* community. "Come on," the eyebrows' owners respond, "you don't mean to say that an environment with fewer *frum* Jews and Jewish educational opportunities, with more challenges to observance and more "foreign" influences, is *superior*, do you?"

Well, put that way, I'm hesitant to respond. But still and all, there are advantages to precisely such an environment.

Yes, in a large observant community, there are like-minded people pretty much everywhere you look, synagogues of all manner of custom; *Maariv*, (evening prayer services) at any hour of the night, meat restaurants and pizza places and kosher bakeries galore. Men's and women's *yeshivos* and seminaries of varied stripes, ritual holiday objects available seasonally on street corners, choices of study partners and observant neighbors, study halls and Torah classes. There are wedding

TEICHER

(continued from page 17)

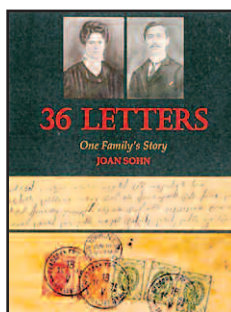
Tel Aviv. She participated in the Six-Day War, was educated at Hebrew University and came to the United States in 1974. She has written extensively about women's issues and she has published two previous novels. Carner and her husband have four children; they live in Long Island and Manhattan.

Lifestyle of two million Jewish immigrants 1880-1920

36 Letters. By Joan Sohn. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2010. 116 Pages. \$18.

Most of today's native born American Jews are descended from the two million immigrants who came to the United States between 1880 and 1920 from Russia and its neighboring countries. Knowledge about these forerunners is fading as their sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters die. A few family circles have encouraged inquiry about and even visits to the *shtetls* in Eastern Europe where their ancestors originally lived, although emigration and the Holocaust put an end to these communities. Interest in what for many is rapidly becoming ancient history may well be the basis for the widespread popularity of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Further evidence of the continuing curiosity about the experiences of our forebears is contained in this collection of



halls and, may their services not be needed, Jewish burial societies.

And yet, the other side of the scales holds treasures of its own, some of them even born of the lack of religious amenities.

Variety may be the spice of life, and religious customs are certainly important. But when the numbers of "*shul* Jews" in a community are only sufficient to populate one or two places of prayer, Jews of different stripes have no choice but to worship among others whom, were they all living in a big city, they might never have met, much less bonded with as friends. Dearth of eateries are offset by increases in invitations for celebrations and Sabbath meals.

Torah classes and study partners? Well, (see Shafran, page 19)

July 13, 2011 The Jewish Post & Opinion 18

36 letters written between 1904 and 1906, buttressed by supplementary information that explains the era and the environment in which they were written. Taken together, the letters and the additional data provide a rich picture of what life was like for the vast tide of Jewish immigrants who reached the United States during the last 20 years of the 19th century and the first 20 years of the 20th century.

The letters were written primarily by Hyman Korman who came to the United States in December, 1904 and Yetta Yesersky Korman who arrived in July, 1905. They were married a month after she landed. Among their children was Sarah Korman Moss who found the letters in a brown grocery store bag in her father's apartment after he died in 1970. Sarah's brother, Sam, kept the letters and other documents intact. His niece, Joan Sohn, daughter of Sarah Korman Moss, and granddaughter of Hyman and Yetta Korman, found the letters and composed this book. She is an expert in graphic design who grew up in the family's Philadelphia home and then settled in Toronto 35 years ago after her marriage. Her artistic competence is manifested in the layout and conception of this book.

Although the letters stand on their own as vivid descriptions of the romance between Hyman and Yetta Korman as well as their family relationships, Sohn was not content simply to present the letters. She precedes them by describing what life was like in Russia for the Jews, especially for those forcibly drafted for military service. The changing nature of the situation is briefly traced under the regimes of the various czars and the impetus to get out as a consequence of the pogroms is examined.

The letters themselves are accompanied by useful pictures and by helpful marginal notes that enable readers to follow the somewhat archaic language in which they were written. Taken together, we are able to learn about Jewish customs as well as about the trials and tribulations of Hyman and Yetta during their year and a half separation before she finally joined him in America. History comes to life as these letters personalize the experiences of one Jewish immigrant couple, thus humanizing the generally bland statement that two million Jews came to America in a 40-year period. By presenting these letters, Sohn has not only preserved the memory of her grandparents but has managed to exemplify what life was like for these two million Jews. We are in her debt.

Anthropologist and social worker, Dr. Morton I. Teicher is the Founding Dean, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University and Dean Emeritus, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. ★



My Kosher Kitchen

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Before Tisha B'Av

It is customary to refrain from eating meat the nine days before *Tisha B'Av* because it is a day of mourning for the destruction of the First and Second Temples as well as other tragedies in Jewish history. Pasta is a good choice for meals.

Pasta-Stuffed Red Peppers (4 servings)

8 red peppers
1/2 pound spaghetti
1/4 cup olive oil
2 crushed garlic cloves
3 large chopped tomatoes
1/4 cup finely chopped
pitted black olives
2 Tbsp. minced parsley
1/2 tsp. dry oregano
1/4 cup olive oil



Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a baking dish. Pierce red peppers in a few places, place in a baking dish and roast for 20 minutes. Cool, cut off tops and remove seeds. Boil water in a pot. Add spaghetti and cook 7 minutes. Drain. Place in a bowl.

Heat oil in a frying pan. Sauté garlic until golden. Add tomatoes and cook 15 minutes. Add olives and cook 5 minutes. Stir in parsley and oregano and toss with spaghetti. Fill peppers with spaghetti mixture. Drizzle with 1/4 cup olive oil. Bake in oven 25–30 minutes. Garnish with more minced parsley before serving.

Lasagna Rolls (4 servings)

2 1/2 pounds halved tomatoes
4 crushed garlic cloves
3 Tbsp. olive oil
2 pounds eggplant, cut in 1-inch pieces
3 Tbsp. olive oil
6 lasagna noodles
1 pound Ricotta cheese
1 ounce grated Parmesan cheese
1 egg yolk
1 cup tomato sauce or spaghetti sauce



Photos by Barry A. Kaplan, Jerusalem, taken at Machaneh Yehudah, Jerusalem's Jewish produce market.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Grease a baking dish. Toss tomatoes and garlic in 3 Tbsp. olive oil. Place in baking dish. Toss eggplant with 3 Tbsp. oil and add to baking dish. Bake in oven 50 minutes. Heat water in a pot, add lasagna and cook 7 minutes. Drain. Cut each in half. Grease another baking dish. Spoon half the cooked vegetables into the dish. Combine cheeses and egg yolk in a bowl. Lay noodles on counter, spread 3 Tbsp. cheese mixture on each noodle and roll up. Place on top of veggies. Combine rest of veggies with tomato or spaghetti sauce. Spread on top lasagna rolls. Cover with foil. Bake 20 minutes.



Pasta Frittata (4 servings)

2 cups cold, leftover spaghetti
2 Tbsp. margarine
3/4 cup chopped green peppers or
half green and half yellow
3/4 cup chopped red peppers or
half red and half orange
1/2 cup chopped onions
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
5 eggs
1/3 cup milk
2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 tsp. dry basil
chopped parsley

Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a baking dish. Rinse spaghetti in hot water and drain. Heat margarine in an ovenproof frying pan. Sauté peppers and onions 5 minutes. Add spaghetti and cook 3 minutes. Add mozzarella cheese. Beat

SHAFRAN

(continued from page 18)

out-of-town does mean fewer opportunities. But more impetus, too, to take advantage of what is available (and less ability to lay low and think no one will notice). Being an integral part of a necessarily cohesive, small community, moreover, rather than a nameless member of a large one demands of a Jew that he or she not only write a check to the burial society or *Eruv* Committee but become an actual, active participant in such endeavors.

It is true that large observant communities can provide a measure of healthy insularity from the surrounding culture. But hard as the residents of religious neighborhoods may try to keep "the city" at bay, it will always have ways of infiltrating our enclaves. And metropolises tend to cook up the worst stews of challenges to Torah mores and proper behavior.

Smaller cities are hardly oases of healthy mores and manners. But the challenges they present are of a different order than those of New York or Los Angeles. Traditional values and civility are less rare, and more readily inform public discourse and behavior.

Out of town living isn't for everyone. But Jews in the most heavily Jewish neighborhoods of *frumdom* could do worse than consider – if their work and family circumstances allow, and their spouses agree – the thought that leaving the plethora of *shuls* and bakeries behind and becoming important members of less endowed environments might just turn out to be the best decision they ever made.

© 2011 AMI MAGAZINE

Rabbi Shafraan is an editor at large and columnist for Ami Magazine. Communications to: rabbishafran@ami-magazine.org. ★

On this date in Jewish history

On July 13, 1096
Jerusalem captured
by Crusaders.

~ From *The Jewish Book of Days* published by
Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, Inc., New York.

eggs, milk, Parmesan cheese and basil in a bowl. Pour over spaghetti and cook until eggs are almost set. Bake in oven for 8 minutes or until set. Garnish with parsley and cut into wedges to serve.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, compiler and editor of nine kosher cookbooks, and feature writer. ★

2011 ALEPH Kallah



Photos (L-R) **Top row:** Bobby & Arthur Kurzweil & Moshe Kurzweil, Executive Director of ALEPH Debra Kolodny, Rabbi Wayne Dosick; **2nd row:** Sandra Strauss & Karen Roekard, Jeremy Parnes & Miriam Bright; **3rd row:** a friendly encounter between classes, Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan & Rabbi Marcia Prager; **4th row:** Eli Lester's Rhythm and Jews band, Spencer Eisner & Blair Karsh, Ruth Broyde-Sharone; **Bottom row:** Ron Feldman, Reuven & Yehudit Goldfarb, Eliyahu Eckelberg.