

# The Jewish Post & Opinion

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## Shahar Peer: "A little girl from a small country" makes global difference

By Christopher Lancette



I had planned to conduct a video interview with world No. 24 Shahar Peer in a nice, quiet media tent at the inaugural Citi Open in College Park, Maryland. The lighting didn't quite do justice to Israel's highest ranked tennis player ever so we had to stroll outside and have the chat there – smack in the middle of the throng of fans that quickly surrounded us.

It's hard enough to do a good interview in private, let alone courtside ... especially when you're trying to penetrate the shield that pro athletes naturally thrust between themselves and pesky reporters. The whole point of *World Tennis Magazine's* "The Changeover" is to capture glimpses of a player's humanity.

The result?

Peer didn't just let her guard down: She opened her mind and her heart. She's a 24-year-old tennis star on the rise but she's also a woman with a lot to say about what matters in life.

She even turned the tables on me.

It's normally my job to put profile subjects at ease so I can extract the best stuff from them but I was a little nervous interviewing Peer on camera in public. I was afraid I was going to flub the pronunciation of her name or the questions I intended to ask. Peer looked me straight in the eyes, though, and made it clear she stood ready to have a real conversation and that I was in good hands with her.

Peer quickly revealed how much some of her school teachers still mean to her today. Faster than she puts away a volley, she also put her livelihood of pro tennis in astonishing perspective.

"Tennis is very important," she said. "I give everything to tennis, but there are other things except tennis and you need to be smart and to know other things than only hitting the ball."

We had already established a connection just one minute into the conversation.

Out of the corners of my eyes, I saw the crowd around us increase, leaning in and hanging on her every word. Something special was unfolding.

This was not just a star talking about backhands and breakpoint opportunities: The fans were getting to know Peer as a person right along with me.

The moment was right to bring up a conversation I knew would be impossible to cover and exit in the brief time we had together but I had to serve it up.

I asked her about her trip to the Auschwitz concentration camp with her Holocaust-survivor grandmother, Yuliana Eckstein, and her mom in April of 2010. She led "The March of the Living" – an annual walk between the Auschwitz and Birkenau extermination camps. Her grandmother's parents were sent to the gas chambers at Auschwitz.

Peer spoke gently about what that trip meant, sharing a story that's best viewed on the video rather than quoted here. Suffice it to say I was spellbound. So was the crowd.

The challenge for me at that moment was to figure out a way to transition from something so depressing to a question that might extract life lessons we as people can learn from what Peer said. I asked her why she has been so willing to use her celebrity status to take on major world issues when so many athletes are afraid to do so. It was Peer, after all, who forced the United Arab Emirates to reverse its policy of not allowing Israeli athletes to play within its borders.



Shahar Peer, Israel's highest ranked tennis player ever – No. 24 in the world. Photo © by Won-ok Kim, courtesy of World Tennis Magazine.

Again, the power of her words are best viewed directly but her concluding thought gave me goose bumps. She responded in the context of making a difference in Middle Eastern relations.

"If I can as a little girl from a small country do something for that and help the Jewish and Arabs kind of be together and understand each other – and be able to know that we are all human beings – that is very important for me."

I probably should have ended the interview right there but my brain was too busy trying to absorb the magnitude of what she just said. I was also contrasting the person I was interviewing with her persona on the court.

Moments before the interview, I had witnessed her physical power. She pounded ground strokes so hard in her first Citi Open match against Japan's Ryoko Fuda that I could have sworn I heard the balls actually yelp. And forget about trying to hit a winner past her: She made the 27 feet from sideline to sideline look as small as a croquet wicket. Peer on that day was invincible and invulnerable.

Yet there she was with me a short time later revealing her tenderness and femininity.

I asked her a final question about her practice of only allowing herself a dessert once a week while I tried to come up with my exit line. She said something about ice

(see Lancette, page 5)

# Editorial

I am very grateful to all those who have contributed to the newspaper with their suggestions, comments, and donations. I ask for donations so that I will be able to continue to print and mail the issues to those who do not have access to or do not know how to use a computer. A check can be mailed to our address as seen in the box on page 18 or we can receive credit card payments on our website on the Subscribe page under the donation button.

I have received four letters from incarcerated Jewish men from Florida, Texas, and Indiana thanking me for sending the newspaper to them. One commented that the reason he likes this newspaper is because it covers all the different branches of Judaism. Another said that their Jewish population is small and the other Jewish inmates all look forward to reading the newspaper because they do not receive a lot of current material on Judaism.

A few readers commented that they like sports news so I have included more of that in this issue. Also an inspiring story came from a long-time reader in New York. He had married a Catholic woman from Ireland and therefore not a lot of religious observance took place in their household when his son was growing up. He got an unexpected surprise when his son converted to Judaism while in college.

While editing Batya Medad's column on page 10, I commiserated with her about the hot weather they have been having. In Indianapolis we have either tied or broken the record for the most days in a row of 90 degrees or higher.

How one views the weather at any given time or place can be relative. For example, when I was interviewing people who attended the ALEPH Kallah in Redlands, Calif., the first person I talked to was Eliyahu Eckelberg from Phoenix. He said the weather at the Kallah was especially nice. Of course, it was ten degrees cooler than what he was used to. Then I talked to Marcia Brooks from Berkeley. She did not speak enthusiastically about the weather there. It was more than 10 degrees hotter than what she was accustomed to.

To make the most of this unusually hot summer, I decided to attempt growing something edible. I planted two cherry tomato plants and three different herbs – basil, parsley, and thyme. Recently I was pondering if it had been cost effective. I thought about how much I spent on the plants, the potting soil for the herbs, and a wire cone to place around the tomato

plants so they grow upward instead of falling over. I also thought about my labor such as watering them twice a day since we have had very little rain.

If I would have simply bought the tomatoes, it would have cost me less in time and money. However, I would have missed the joy of seeing a tiny limp plant become bigger and stronger every day. Watching little yellow flowers turn into tiny green balls that gradually grow bigger and turn red was priceless. Also imagine how fresh and tasty they are added to a salad right after being picked.

With the herbs I made a delicious pesto sauce by blending together in a food processor: 3 packed cups of basil, 3/4 of a cup packed parsley, 1/2 cup walnuts, 2 large garlic cloves and 1/2 cup olive oil. It was really scrumptious over pasta and steamed vegetables.

I was honored to be able to listen to another event that frequently takes place during the summer. This was not exactly the same as watching plants grow but not totally different. I was not able to attend the wedding of the daughter of good friends Tony and Lori Dreskin in Cleveland, but I was able to hear it on Skype. I had known the couple before they had children and the bride since she was born. I attended her *Bat Mitzvah* and saw how beautiful, talented, and accomplished she grew to be.

I was not able to see the ceremony but I saw a photo of the room where it was held before the ceremony started. I saw seated people waiting in anticipation. Everyone was dressed nicely and the room looked so festive. Even the chairs looked as if they were all dressed up.

The following are my thoughts as I listened. This *simcha* was taking place because of the love between two people. Although it was the reason for the event, I am not referring to the bride and groom. The love began way before that. The two people I mean are her parents. Their strong love for each other is what created this bride.

Even before she was born, they were conscientiously committed to making a life for her (and later a second daughter) that would be the best possible life that they could offer. I don't know the bride's grandparents very well and never knew her great-grandparents but I assume that was the case going all the way back.

On her wedding day, this bride stands under the *chuppah* as the link between all those whose love brought her into being and all that will be created by the love between her and her husband. May this legacy of love continue as long as they live and infinitely after. *Mazel Tov* to Ariel Dreskin and Matt Wellman!

Jennie Cohen, August 10, 2011 ★

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## On this date in Jewish history

On August 10, 1854

Zacharias Frankel became the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau, a new rabbinical school that he helped establish.

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

# Chassidic Rabbi

By RABBI BENZION COHEN

## Visiting Vancouver Part 2

In my last column I wrote about our adventures in Vancouver, and a very important lesson that I learned. Here is chapter two.

Four days after the Rebbe's birthday is Pesach, the time of our freedom. This year we made the *seider* with my sister-in-law and her family in Vancouver. We were very far from home, but our hosts made us feel very much at home. And most important, we felt true freedom.

What happened the first *Pesach*, 3,300 years ago? We left Egypt. For 130 years we had been slaves to Pharaoh. On that day we left Egypt and became free men. We experienced freedom. But what freedom do we experience when we celebrate *Pesach* now? Almost all of us live in a free world. Twenty years ago the iron curtain fell.

*Chassidus* teaches us about a modern day Pharaoh, and all of us are enslaved to him. He is none other than our *yetzer hara*, our evil influence. How does he enslave us? He is very clever and sneaky, and has any number of disguises. He knows our weaknesses and takes advantage of them.

Some of us are slaves to money. The evil influence tells us "Just think how happy you would be if you had a million dollars." We work like a slave for 20 years and make a million dollars. Did we find happiness? Not a chance. Then the evil influence says "What is a million dollars today? If you had 5 million for sure you would be happy."

Some of us are slaves to pride. We enjoy feeling superior. The evil influence is an expert at showing how wonderful we are and how terrible everyone else is. Then he magnifies their "crimes" and tells us to get angry at them and hate them. He ruins our relationships and makes our life a misery.

Some of us are slaves to modernity. The evil influence tells us that religion and belief in *Hashem* is just primitive superstitions. Our grandparents needed them but we don't. Of course it is possible to be a good and helpful person and thus have a somewhat decent life without Torah. But we will lose the really precious things. Having a good marriage is virtually impossible without Torah. And how can you be close to our Father in Heaven if you don't believe in Him?

Is there any hope? Yes, *Baruch Hashem*. Just like Moses took us out of Egypt, so in every generation there are Jewish leaders who can help us to overcome our evil influence. The Lubavitcher Rebbe and his followers have helped many millions to

# Jews' News

## URJ Biennial Dec. 14-18 Washington D.C.

NEW YORK – Online registration is officially open for the Union for Reform Judaism's 2011 North American Biennial. The URJ Biennial brings together nearly 5,000 people from hundreds of congregations. Reform Jewish lay leaders and professionals, youth, congregants, and clergy, are invited to learn, pray, share ideas, and make decisions



lead better and happier lives. Do you want a taste of real freedom? Visit your local Chabad House. If there isn't one in your community, there probably is one in the next town.

Note: Even if you do join Lubavitch, you will still have an evil influence. However, he will no longer be the boss. Instead of sitting on the throne and ruling your life, he will be hiding out on the sidelines, waiting for a chance to ambush you. In addition, it is possible to gradually win over our evil influence, and teach him to want good things.

During the past few months my own evil influence has been working over time. We have been involved in a building project accompanied by a lot of problems, arguments and aggravations. The evil influence succeeded to put all kinds of bad thoughts into my mind. My quality of life index went down a few percentage points.

As I wrote in my previous column, I realized that I had stopped loving certain individuals. I started to love them and began to feel much better.

Then along came *Pesach*. *Pesach* is the time of our freedom, and if we observe *Pesach* properly, we go free. Our fathers were freed then from Pharaoh, and we become free from the modern day Pharaoh, our evil influence.

In general, *Shabbos* and holidays are a taste of the world to come, a taste of *Moshiach*, a time of spirituality and holiness. We want *Moshiach* now! When *Moshiach* comes we will finally be completely free. There will be no more wars, and no evil influence to enslave us. We are now very close to *Moshiach*, and this *Pesach* I really felt it. I was free. My evil influence basically disappeared for the whole week. It was wonderful. It was great. It was amazing.

You can share this feeling. Go to your nearest Chabad House. Learn how to overcome your evil influence and do more mitzvahs to bring *Moshiach* now!

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about the policies of the Reform Movement.

The Biennial will take place Dec. 14-18, 2011 at the Gaylord Hotel and Convention Center in the greater Washington, DC area, and is expected to draw thousands of Reform Jews from across North America and the world.

Visit the URJ Biennial website <http://urjbiennial.zerista.com> for more information. ★

## Proposed ban on circumcision removed from San Fran. ballot

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 29, 2011 – In response to yesterday's ruling by a California judge, ordering that a proposed ban on circumcision be removed from the San Francisco ballot, Rabbi David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center, issued the following statement:

We welcome yesterday's ruling removing a proposed ban on circumcision from the ballot in San Francisco. We know, as the Court recognized yesterday, that the ban would have violated the free exercise of religion, a right afforded to all Americans in the Constitution. We further welcome Judge Loretta M. Giorgi's ruling that "the evidence presented is overwhelmingly persuasive that circumcision is a widely practiced medical procedure."

As Jews, the tradition of circumcision is essential as our longest standing ritual, symbolizing the covenant between God and Abraham. As Americans, circumcision represents free exercise of religion and parental choice, rights on which we are unwilling to compromise.

The Union for Reform Judaism has long affirmed the rite of circumcision, most recently in a June resolution passed by our Board of Trustees stating a clear opposition to this and other similar ballot measures. We welcome Judge Giorgi's ruling, and vow to oppose similar measures in the future with the same vigor our people have fought to defend our rights as Jews for millennia. ★

## Seeking heroes

NEW YORK, July 18, 2011 – The New York Board of Rabbis has been asked to assist the Jewish Partisans Educational Foundation (JPEF) in identifying Jewish partisans and their families residing in the metropolitan area. It is JPEF's intention to pay tribute to these courageous individuals at a benefit in New York City on Nov. 7, 2011.

These partisans resisted by fighting against the Nazis and their collaborators, destroying thousands of trains and convoys; (see News, page 4)





## Shabbat Shalom

By RABBI JON ADLAND

**Pirke Avot 1:13** – *Hillel used to say: He who aggrandizes his name, loses his name. He who does not increase his knowledge, decreases it. He who learns not, forfeits his life. He who makes unworthy use of the crown (of the Torah) shall pass away.*

August 5, 2011, D'varim  
(Deuteronomy 1:1–3:22) 5 Av 5771

It is Hall of Fame time in Canton, Ohio. For the uninitiated, that is the Pro Football Hall of Fame where football players who excelled in this game are honored and enshrined into immortality. I like sports and it is wonderful to praise those who were great at the game, but in the end, and this may be heresy, it is only a game. For these men, Sunday was their pulpit (okay now we can add in Thursday, Saturday, and Monday) and we were the congregation. For those of us who cared, we would spend the three plus hours cheering, moaning, going to the fridge at commercials, and then discussing the outcome of this clash of titans during the next week until the next game. Fans can be passionate. I follow my teams, hope they win, but get over it if they don't. It is when fan turns into fanatical that I worry. When someone's whole life is consumed by the events of a team or when nothing else matters but whether this team wins or loses, then I start to be concerned.

Religion is not too different. For the most part, the fan is you and me. Being Jewish is a part of who we are. We joyously celebrate the holidays. Life cycle events are appropriately filled with reverence and joy, or in the case of death with love, tender care, and grieving. We value the ethics of living a Jewish life and work toward *Tikkun Olam*, the healing and repair of a broken world. We do so while continuing to live as part of a multi-cultural, multi-religious world. My concern is with those who move from being a fan and participant in Jewish life into the fanatical where the religion is consuming and who is right is limited to those who think the same way.

I have no issue with observance. As a Reform Jew, I choose to participate as deeply and fully as is meaningful and uplifting in my life. Sandy and I light *Shabbat* candles every week when it is our time to do so. We chant *Kiddush*. We put up a *sukkah*. We prepare our home for *Pesach* as we think it should be done. We

give *tzedakkah* to help Jews and non-Jews. I wear a *kippah* when I pray, but not all the time. We observe and live our Jewish lives in a way that affirms who we are and connects us with our past and our community of the present.

Traditional Jews who strive to adhere to every detail of observance are blessed as well. Those who are *shomeir* (observe) *Shabbat* and *shomeir Kashrut* are connected to wonderful traditions.

It is those who cross over the line of observance into the realm of superiority, who believe that their way is the only way, and try to impose their will on others because if observance of Jewish law isn't done "correctly" then the Jewish world will never be right. Let's be fair, fanatics are on the opposite side as well. There are Jews who vehemently reject Jewish law and think that any person who participates at any level of observance is misguided. Their anti-religious attitude is as troubling to me as those who think their way is the only way. Often it is fanatics who cause religious conflicts because they are right and others are wrong. It may be internal conflicts or, as we've seen all too often, external conflicts that leave others shaking their heads at the nature of religion at all.

Religious fanaticism blocks out the realities of the world they actually live in. Religion helps build a community, but I truly believe that everyone's religious experience is very personal. Since my ordination in 1982, congregants have approached me in casual conversation to share with me where they are on the religious spectrum. This rainbow of beliefs and practices is a challenge, but also the beauty in the communities I have led.

At any *Erev Shabbat* service there are those who think about God, observance, or community a bit differently. This allows us to be fans roaring our approval at different moments and different times, but it tempers anyone from becoming a fanatic. Unlike the fans of a football game, Jewish fans get to participate as well and it is our participation that makes for a meaningful and moderate community.

When you light your *Shabbat* candles, light one for the opportunity we all have to be a part of this great ongoing experiment called Judaism. Light the other candle as a reminder that Judaism isn't monolithic, but made up of many ways and many parts that only lets the candle burn more brightly.

P.S. A shout out to Rabbi Marci Bloch, who worked with me in Indianapolis from 2003–2005, as she is got married Sunday.

*Rabbi Adland has been leading Reform 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. ★*

## Celebrating Shabbat

By RABBI DAVID WOLPE

Some of us are like the coyote in old road runner cartoons, forever careening off the cliff. So long as his feet keep moving, he stays suspended in mid-air. The moment he looks down and sees no foundation under him, he falls. Do we run so quickly because we fear falling? On *Shabbat*, stop. Build the foundation beneath your feet, and then move forward again.

Creating peace outside ourselves can help still the turbulence within. Let the flickering *Shabbat* candles remind you: The Hebrew word for spirit is "ruah," meaning *breath*. Breathe. Let go of the anger and abrasiveness that undercuts calm. For a moment stop striving, arranging, perfecting and being discouraged. God made this day. Celebrate, appreciate and praise. *Shabbat Shalom*.

*Rabbi Wolpe is the senior rabbi of Temple Sinai in Los Angeles and author of several books including Why Faith Matters. ★*



### NEWS

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most importantly, they saved thousands of lives. After the war, they had children and grandchildren – giving the world a living testament of those experiences.

JPEF ([www.jewishpartisans.org](http://www.jewishpartisans.org)) is the only organization in the world solely focused on bringing the history and life lessons of the Jewish partisans to educational and cultural institutions across the globe. Every major Holocaust organization in the country relies on JPEF's work.

We are asking for your help in finding these heroes. If you are aware of partisans and/or their families in your synagogue and/or community, please contact the NYBR office at [info@nybr.org](mailto:info@nybr.org) or 212-983-3521, or JPEF executive director Mitchell Braff at [mitch@jewishpartisans.org](mailto:mitch@jewishpartisans.org) or 415-563-2244.

*Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, executive vice president and Rabbi Bernhard Rosenberg. ★*

## Jewish Federation of Greater D.C. elects Stuart S. Kurlander

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington (JFGW), a large non-profit which last year raised and distributed \$28 million locally, in Israel and in 70 countries around the



(see News, page 5)



## Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

### Unfair judgments cloud our vision and limit our relationships

"I'm ashamed of myself" she whispered into the phone.

"Oh hi Mom, good to hear your voice," I responded. My mother has a tendency to begin our phone calls in the middle of a conversation she started before dialing my number.

"I played bridge today," she continued, "and was stuck with a real dud for a partner. Dumb-as-a-door-nail Debbie – absolutely no personality."

Let it be known: My mother has a tendency to judge people by outward appearances and first impressions. True, we all make assessments of others based on how they look, dress, talk, even eat, but her tendency to assess others – quickly – has always been a problem for me.

"So what happened, Mom?" I asked, knowing that whatever it was, it was bound to be a good topic for dinner conversation with my husband.

"We played bridge and just like I thought – she was terrible. Didn't concentrate on the game, kept looking around the room as if she couldn't wait to go home. I kept reminding her that it was her turn. But after the game, a woman at the next table came up to her and asked how she was doing. She answered so quietly I could barely hear."

"Not so good," Debbie whispered. "I'm waiting to hear from the doctor – about my kidneys. They aren't working right and I may need dialysis."

My Mom was shocked. It had never occurred to her that her "dud of a partner" might have been preoccupied with such a frightening thought. And she was ashamed – of herself and how quickly she had misjudged the situation and Debbie herself.

Mom got up and went over to Debbie and put her hand on her shoulder.

"I'm going to think of you all weekend and hope that you get good news," she said. Debbie thanked her and then, began to cry. It was the end of a mis-judgment and the beginning of a friendship.

On Monday, Mom called Debbie and learned that she wouldn't need dialysis after all. Mom hung up, but not before telling her that she looked forward to seeing her again soon. And she meant it.

It's so easy, so very human, to judge another person, whether it's a friend, family member or someone we barely know. The critical judge that lives within each of us creates a story, often not based in fact but in our own sense of reality. That story greatly influences how we relate to the person and becomes the lens through which we view him or her. Dumb Debbie. Arrogant Alice. Pretentious Peter. Our assessments are like sound bites; mini-definitions that categorize others but limit our ability to be in an authentic relationship with them.

These unfair assessments and judgments interfere with our ability to know and appreciate the real person who is sitting across the table from us, whether that table is in a classroom, boardroom or dining room. Once we conclude that a friend spends too much money (on things we don't value) or that a co-worker is after our job, all of the conversations and interactions we have with him or her will tend to validate our assessment. If my mother had not learned about Debbie's impending news about her kidneys, she would still think of her as dumb Debbie the next week at bridge and most likely find her conversations boring or dull.

We spend more time checking out and verifying the characteristics of a new car or kitchen appliance than we do the qualities of another human being. So how can we stop ourselves from jumping into judgments? How can stay open to others without limiting who they are in our minds?

The Torah commands us to: "love your neighbor as yourself." This is explained in the Ethics of the Fathers as a commandment of restraint: "What is hateful to you, do not do to others." In essence, the Golden Rule in Judaism commands us to refrain from doing to others what we don't want them to do to us.

Applying this rule to our tendency to judge others makes perfect sense. If I don't want others to make unfair judgments about me then I must avoid doing that myself. If I don't want my friends to judge me based on who I was five or even two years ago, then I have to be open to who they are and how they might have changed over time. To do otherwise denies a fundamental truth about human nature: that we are continually growing, changing and for many of us, striving to become the person we want to be.

I found another answer to this problem in yoga class when my teacher asked us to let go of all judgments for the hour we were on the mat. For just one hour we were to suspend our critical judge. We were to relinquish all judgments of how badly we thought we looked in eagle posture or how wobbly we felt in standing tree pose. We also were told not to judge others whom we thought were doing it

## LANCETTE

(continued from Cover)

cream but I got lost in her deep brown eyes and sweet smile. I was so transfixed by her gaze that I actually forgot my own name as I tried to sign off the interview. I had to switch in mid-breath from what should have been "For *World Tennis Magazine*, I'm Chris Lance" to a simple "Thank you so much for joining us."

No one has ever made me forget my name.

I stood there after we wrapped and watched Peer field another interview, a basic one about the win over the Japanese qualifier. The WTA's "Strong is Beautiful" campaign came to my mind as she spoke.

If you define strength not just by physical prowess but by character, I thought, Shahar Peer just may be the most beautiful woman in tennis.

*Christopher Lance is a Washington, D.C.-area freelance writer. He can be reached by email through his blog at <http://dcreflections.typepad.com>. (Reprinted with permission of the World Tennis Magazine, <http://www.worldtennismagazine.com>. ★*

## NEWS

(continued from page 4)

world, elected Stuart S. Kurlander as its new president. Mr. Kurlander, a local philanthropist, community leader and lawyer will oversee The Jewish Federation's Executive Committee and Board of Directors as well as partner with Chief Executive Officer, Steven A. Rakitt, to lead The Federation. Mr. Kurlander's leadership journey began in his childhood home of Indianapolis, Ind. "Growing up in a small town, we were expected to be active, informed, engaged and charitable members of our community. I have a long and rewarding leadership journey to this position and I am honored to serve as president of The Jewish Federation. I look forward to all we will accomplish together." ★

"better" or "worse" than we. Seemed like a simple request until I tried it. Ten minutes into class, I realized just how very hard it is.

We can quiet our judging mind only if we stay aware of our tendency to do it and then make an effort to stop. Sometimes we will succeed and when we do, we may find that our assessments were really barriers to intimacy; obstacles to having true friendship and understanding. That is why the sagely words written by Rabbi Hillel over 2,000 years ago still hold true today: "Do not judge another person until you have reached his place."

*Lederman lives in Tucson. Visit her website at [amyhirshberglederman.com](http://amyhirshberglederman.com). ★*

# How we treat young, elderly will illuminate our values



BY RABBI SANDY EISENBERG SASSO

In a July 16 column in *The New York Times*, Charles Blow calls attention to a report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics stating that half of the top 30 occupations expected to see the largest job growth in the next few years are low-paying.

Among those occupations are home care and health aides and child care workers. In 2008, child care workers earned on average less than \$20,000 a year and home health aides earned less than \$10 an hour.

If you listen carefully to political, educational and religious speeches, you might think otherwise.

There is universal agreement that quality preschool education is crucial for long-term success in school. The earlier the intervention, the more aggressive the head start our toddlers receive, the greater the likelihood of academic achievement. The long term benefits are indisputable.

At the other end of the age spectrum, concern for the increasing number of elderly in our country has generated discussions about our responsibility as a society to care for our aging population and ensure their human dignity.

On the one hand, we speak eloquently about the high value with which we hold the most vulnerable among us. On the other hand, low remuneration for those who serve the very young and the old belies the words we speak.

On the one hand, we are quick to quote sacred sources to bolster our political ideologies.

On the other hand, we ignore those same sources when they don't support the budgets we propose.

Would that those who seek deep cuts in Social Security and Medicare remembered the pleadings of the Psalmist:

"Cast us not away when we are old. When our strength is gone do not abandon us." (Psalm 71:9)

The ancient rabbis imagined what activities occupied God's days. They comment: "Since the destruction of the Temple, God has devoted a quarter of his day to teaching children." (Talmud)

Would that those who are quick to cut education budgets, divert funding from public schools through charters and vouchers, remembered that teaching the young is a divine undertaking.

In our society, however, neither of these commitments seems to be a priority.



# An Observant Eye

BY RABBI AVI SHAFRAN

## Hearing voices

*The words of fellow citizens merit our attention*

So many tears shed, so many words spoken, so many hearts twisted tight over the weeks, now, since the horrific, confounding, harrowing murder of Leiby Kletzky, *a"h*. With that distance of days, though – while we all still ache, and always will, over the loss – something somewhat peripheral to the tragedy deserves to be considered, something that's easily overlooked but shouldn't be.

How the non-Jewish world reacted.

*The Atlantic's* senior editor, Ta-Nehisi Coates, an African-American who writes about popular culture and social issues, lamented on his blog how he imagines Leiby's parents "will spend much of their lives questioning themselves. I am so sorry

We can ill afford to ignore the bookends of life, the early and latter years. The proposed cuts in the recent budget talks in education, social security and Medicare would hurt the young and the old the most.

There is no doubt that science, technology, engineering and mathematics, professions that are increasing and deservedly well paid, are crucial for our future. Without growth and innovation in these fields we will lose our competitive edge in the global economy.

But there is likewise no doubt that if we do not invest in our youngest children, we will have fewer people qualified to enter those professions on which our future depends. And in the end, what happens to moral fabric in a society so focused on ignoring the aging process that it abandons its elderly?

The late Sen. Hubert Humphrey once remarked: "The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

The test is still the same. The question is, who among us has the courage to pass it?

Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and her husband Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso have been senior rabbis at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis since 1977. Reprinted with permission from the Indianapolis Star July 26, 2011. ☆

about that, mostly because I don't think they did a single thing wrong.

"My heart goes out to the Kletzky family. Truly, I am so very sorry for their loss."

And, in a flash of raw emotion, he added a "P.S." ultimatum: "Please don't be stupid in comments. An immediate ban will come down on you, if you can't be civilized about this."

Agron Belica, a Muslim author, singer, and songwriter, wrote a song, "Brooklyn Boy," in memory of Leiby. "Whatever our faith—Jew, Muslim, Christian, etc.," he explained, "we share their mourning. May their faith strengthen [the family] in their sorrow and anguish."

Reports are that, at the time of Leiby's disappearance and the discovery of his murder, Twitter chirped incessantly and sadly with tweets about the tragedy from people from all ethnicities and walks of life. One under-140-character message, cited by *The New York Times* as speaking for many others, came from Erica Hill, a network news co-anchor; it was stark and to the point: "Heartbroken," she wrote, "for family of Leiby Kletzky."

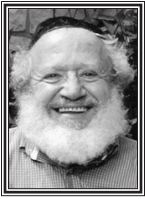
From kidnapping victim Elizabeth Smart's father Ed ("Our hearts are just broken for this family") to Irish writer Mike Farragher ("You cry along with the live coverage of the rabbi's bullhorn speech outside the temple that night, his voice breaking as he struggles to come to grips with savagery so deep...") to news broadcaster Bill Ritter ("I was honored to pay my respects" at the Kletzky *shiva* house and "honored that [the Kletzky] welcomed me in"), citizens of all sorts felt compelled to join in the collective Jewish mourning.

(It's wrenching to write, but the reaction of some Jews in the polluted realm of Blogistan, was, to put it mildly, less impressive. They sought to exploit the death of an innocent child, amazingly, to promote their rabid anti-*rabbonim* agenda. And a writer for the *New York Jewish Week*, whose beat seems to be negative portrayals of religious Jews, resorted to anonymous sources to insinuate that Brooklyn's Shomrim patrol group works at cross purposes with the police. The words of Yeshayahu 49:17 come sadly to mind.)

A cynic might dismiss the non-Jews' sentiments as less than really meaningful; after all, it would take quite a callous soul to not feel badly about the murder of an innocent child. But we too soon forget how things once were elsewhere not terribly long ago, when the deaths of innocent Jewish children were not mourned but sought (as they still are in some parts of the Middle East).

No, the feelings of our neighbors are real, and mean much, especially when seen  
(see Shafran, page 7)





## Jewish America

By HOWARD W. KARSH

### Change must come from within

MILWAUKEE, WISC., JULY 18, 2011 – This last week, the hearts and minds of the collected Jewish world were shaken with the brutal murder of an eight-year-old boy in New York City. And then, there was the aftershock, when we were to learn that the perpetrator was a Jew, as well. All of us were observers. None of us were participating in the search, in the apprehension, and now in the long process of the law. We have no way of displacing our grief. We don't know what to ask for, how we can prevent future tragedies. But we might feel better if we lament together.

What kind of a world do we live in? Simple, one part advances in technical devices, gadgets and quality of physical life, the other part a decline in values, morals, and ethics. Why do things like this happen? We do not know. How can we tolerate them? I suppose that in some way, we don't. Each insult to everything we believe in, changes the very nature of our view of the world. Did we recover from the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin, Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, and Bobby Kennedy? What happens to our souls when we know, somewhere in our consciousness that every day, children die of malnutrition, families are displaced or die in wars or battles. Lives being changed by drugs and drug wars. Our media, the part that is not involved with sensationalism, is filled with the misery of existence.

The family of this eight-year-old felt relatively safe, safe enough, with care, to let him walk 3 blocks home from day camp, in a neighborhood they knew and that was filled with people who looked like they look. They were wrong in their assumptions.

In Israel, everywhere we went, every window is barred, every door has multiple locks; every car has electronic theft systems, and the whole country, it seems is armed. The buses we took in Jerusalem were filled with soldiers carrying rifles, and regular people carrying guns. Even if we didn't talk about it, it was part of the landscape. At home, in every store, every item of value has theft protectors somewhere in the garment. A clerk, who talked with me about it, mused that the

real thieves know how to mask the units, and the bells only go off when some unsuspecting senior citizen has a garment that she paid for, but where the mechanism was not removed.

#### It is easy to point out the problems, what are the solutions?

We have to become an active part of change. We need to start out by changing ourselves. We have to spend the time to determine what we are doing in our daily lives to change our lives for the better, and what we can do to make a difference. I can tell you from my own experience, most people start out by thinking about how to change the world. It is almost always frustrating and ineffective.

We have to look at everything. How are we working toward our own potential? It is not a small order. If we want to change the world, we have to try to be a positive agent for change. We have to examine our relationships and maximize them, being a better son or daughter, a better husband or wife, father or mother, friend, community member. Are you beginning to understand why we need an army? We were hoping we could push a button, take a pill, or write a check.

If we can get by that first effort, we will move into the next ones with a greater understanding of what we have to do. We have to look at how we live and what we live for. We have to consider our health and the health of our families. When you fight a war – and we need to fight a war – you can't go in unfit, mentally or physically. And the pain of coming to grips with ourselves can hurt as much as what we feel after a demanding workout. To begin to make a difference, we have to be the best person that we can.

The list will present itself. The opportunities will present themselves. The calendar will remind us that every day counts.

We have to integrate our values, let them shine out, and do what it takes to live them.

If we want to end world hunger, we need to look for an opportunity to contribute to an organization that is making a difference. The important ingredient is to support your values.

You have to share them. You have to involve your family, because the only values you can transmit are the ones they see. Before you can influence them to live their values, they need to see you as a living model.

It requires changing, slowly changing. You have to determine how to work to live rather than working to live. You have to look at your priorities. You have to give to get. The hardest point is giving up what we want, what we need and becoming a giver.

#### SHAFRAN

(continued from page 6)

through the eyes of history. Then-mayor of New York City Ed Koch, leading the Ukrainian Day parade one year, told its grand marshal: "You know, if this were the old country this wouldn't be a parade, it would be a pogrom. I wouldn't be walking down

Fifth Avenue; I would be running...and you would be running after me." It was a darkly humorous comment from a famously outspoken politician. But it harbored more than the usual joke's element of truth.

How would the average European non-Jew a century ago have reacted to the murder of a Jewish child? Would he have reacted at all? And if the murderer turned out to be a Jew? That reaction isn't hard to imagine.

There are no guarantees that the present augurs the future. But the broad and heartfelt societal reaction to our community's recent tragedy should remind us that if we Jews have to remain in a state of *galus* (exile), those of us in America are fortunate to be awaiting Mashiach in a *malchus shel chessed* a "dominion of kindness," many of whose citizens well reflect that fact.

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



The world we live in didn't go into a nose dive when we weren't looking. There has always been decline, right from the time of the Garden of Eden, with Adam and Eve struggling to figure out how to right their personal wrong.

But if we are going to save ourselves, our families, our communities and beyond, we have to emotionally sign up to serve as a warrior for something better.

**1. Help rebuild families.** Devote yourself to the raising of children, grandchildren, making sure that they are growing up with values. Don't eliminate the idea of shame as a factor of honesty.

**2. Reconsider how you live.** Does the need for things, cause a lack of parenting, of being a husband to his wife, a wife to her husband.

**3. Try to raise your children, rather than farming out the work.**

**4. Do not assume that schools are responsible alone, for giving your children values.**

**5. Create positive experiences with faith.** Don't tell them, show them.

**6. Make Shabbos a part of your life.** Sit down with your family and celebrate family.

(see Karsh, page 8)

**KARSH**

(continued from page 7)

7. Do not come to believe that saving the world can happen until you save yourself and your family.

8. Live with values. Talk about values.

9. Take life seriously, yours and everyone else's.

10. Do not tolerate abuse, verbal, physical or emotional. If you see it, do something to stop it.

11. Take responsibility for your school, for your community.

12. Understand that we cannot be an island unto ourselves. If there is hunger, we must work to eliminate it.

13. Understand that as your life is divine, so is the life of every person on earth.

14. Don't confuse understanding the right to abortion with coming to believe it is right.

15. Do not come to believe that there is something good about people being able to do anything that they come to believe is good. That is an insane view of freedom.

But first and foremost, until that day comes when we begin to see a better world, value your family. Accept the responsibility to give them the tools they need to survive.

If a small child who is lost, understands that it is important to tell someone that he is lost, then looks for someone to call his parents, it is a lesson well taught. Unfortunately trust cannot be trusted without experience.

This eight-year-old had the right to grow and live. No mistake in judgment justifies what occurred, but this is the world we live in, and we must defend ourselves and our families against chance.

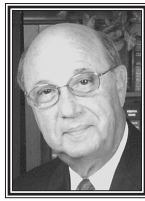
There is no blame in this child's death. No child should have met this end. But in the world we live in, there cannot be an expectation of things not happening. That is simply how it will be until we work together to change it.

The saddest fact is that if it were our universal purpose to bring a better life to everyone on earth, we could do it. It is only the absence of this will that allows such crime against humanity.

It is not G-d's will. It is rather our lack of understanding about the kind of world that we could create with the correct use of freedom of choice.

Recently I began writing for our local paper, the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*. The most interesting part, up to this point, has been the interchange. Every article brings comments. I am asking you to share your thoughts. We live in the same small world, see the same things, and suffer what is happening to the quality of our lives.

If you have something to share, please begin by sharing it with me, and I will try



## Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

### Sometimes it's so difficult to say thank you!

In *God's Little Acre*, a compilation of inspirational stories, there is one narrative that caught my eye because it speaks to the problems we have communicating with each other, and in turn with God. It is especially difficult when we have to say, "I'm sorry," but I believe just as embarrassing to say, "Thank you." Perhaps it is because saying thank you indicates indebtedness and we are reluctant to be beholden to someone.

Regardless, it is part of human relationships and important primarily due to the fact that we tend to forget to say kind things, or are too busy. There is so much to be grateful for, especially as we begin to enter the season of forgiveness and gratitude. Our tradition teaches that even as we mourn a loved one, we end that grief with a prayer called "Kaddish." It is not a prayer of sorrow but rather an affirmation of our understanding of life.

When darkness envelops us, we tend to concentrate on the loss and not remind ourselves of the goodness of life and the "Thank you" we owe God for sharing that life with us. It is so hard to say thank you when our pain seems to be too much to bear. But then, if we study the words, we get a clearer insight into birth and death and all that is in-between.

Thinking about this as we approach a time in our lives giving us the opportunity to step back and rejuvenate. Unfortunately we tend to wait for a prescribed time to be grateful and at the same time be regretful. And that is why the approaching season is so vital.

Perhaps the following story, taken from *God's Little Acre*, will expand on these thoughts:

*Charles Plumb, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, was a jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected*

to share the best of it wherever I can.

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and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent 6 years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!" "How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb. "I packed your parachute," the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked!" Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about the man. Plumb says, "I kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform: a white hat, a bib in the back, and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said, Good morning, how are you? Or anything because you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor." Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the bowls of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know.

Now, Plumb asks his audience, "Who's packing your parachute?"

Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. Plumb also pointed out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory – he needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety.

Sometimes in the daily challenges that life give us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please, or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or just something nice for no reason. Maybe we even ignore people because they are different.

As the weeks and months progress, recognize people who pack your parachute. Most importantly remember the One who packs all our parachutes both in times of sadness and in times of gladness.

Life is a blessing with all of its trials and tribulation, and yes sometimes it is difficult to say thank you, but we need to try. I really believe we will all feel something different and wonderful.

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





## Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

### Bedouin women

When I lived in Israel in the 1970s and visited the Jerusalem Arab market frequently, I started to buy and collect Arab embroidery. I would have liked to have collected Jewish embroidery but with the exception of exceptionally expensive handiwork sold at the Maskit stores, founded by Ruth Dayan, most Jewish women were not continuing this art.

With each piece I bought, I asked the history and, at one point, many years later, I had the pieces framed, along with their histories. Most were done by Bedouin women.

When Media Central, a support services for foreign journalists, offered a tour for the foreign press on "Bedouin Women in the Negev," Barry and I were quick to sign up, despite the predicted temperatures in the high 90s and higher.

By 9 a.m. we were on our way out of downtown Jerusalem by bus with journalists from South America, Japan, China, and Norway. At 10:30, we arrived in the northern Negev town of Lakiya, a short distance northwest of Beersheba, capital of the Negev. Founded in 1992 specifically for Bedouin, Lakiya has a population of 13,000.

The Lakiya Negev Bedouin Weaving project was started in 1991. Today, it is sponsored by Sidreh, a not-for-profit organization, to empower Bedouin women to channel their skills into cottage industries. Established in 1998, Sidreh

works to represent and improve the socioeconomic situation of Bedouin women living in Israel.

We were ushered into a large tent where we sat on couches with pillows to hear the general manager, Khadra ElSaneh. Another Bedouin woman sat nearby on the floor weaving a large rug. We were served hot sweet tea in small glasses and, later, Turkish coffee in small demitasse cups.

Mrs. ElSaneh is 39 years old, has four children and finished high school. Her father was from the Negev and moved to Ramleh (near Lod and Ben Gurion Airport), where he married and where Khadra was born. The family returned to the Negev in 1994 and Khadra married at the age of 22.

Mrs. ElSaneh explained that 80% of Bedouin women are illiterate, so when the program was started, the women leaders went to the clans to get the approval of the clan leaders and the sheikhs and gain their trust. In the beginning, the men did not take them seriously, laughed at them and wouldn't let the women go out to work. Gradually, that changed and at first the women came together socially. Then the idea of working at home and becoming businesses was begun. Bedouin women soon recognized education was a good tool, and the women leaders began to give the women a chance to learn to read and write as well as to learn about areas of health, education, family and their rights.

Today there are 12 teachers who teach the 70 women from the age of 17 to 60, currently attending. First, they learn to read and write. Then they work to improve the language skills of the women in Hebrew, Arabic and English; the women learn how to use a computer, how to do marketing and public relations and accounting; how to do record writing and

evaluation as they work in these skills at home. To date, 1,400 women have "graduated" from this center. There is no resistance from the husbands in general and there are now two groups of men who have realized how the changes help them. Forty percent of the women are in situations with more than one wife in the household.

The women receive the traditional ground loom and pure local sheep wool (purchased from Negev shepherdesses) in their homes which they spin, dye, twin and weave; they choose the designs and are paid for their work.

Recently, six Bedouin women from the center went to the States – Santa Fe, New Mexico; Washington, D.C. and New York – to show their handiwork.

In another room, a woman sat on the floor sewing together a large carpet. The main show room has rugs, pillows, wall hangings, evening bags and coin purses for sale.

Another Bedouin speaker was Ama Elsana Al Hajooj, director of the Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development. She is a 38-year-old Bedouin, married and mother of twins, who told of growing up the fifth girl out of 13 siblings in a patriarchal community and traditional family. She chose to challenge the system as a Palestinian Bedouin citizen of Israel. She received a BA in social work from Ben-Gurion University and a Masters from McGill University. Today, she works in community development and women empowerment programs.

She explained that Bedouin is a way of life, not a nationality or citizenship, and they are 10% of the Arab population of Israel, between 182,000–200,000 in the Negev. Another 60,000 Bedouin live in the north of Israel.

The Bedouin are a community in transition "from our way of life to a new way of life."

In the 1960s, Israel decided to settle Bedouin in seven towns. In addition, there are others which are unrecognized villages.

The first schools in the recognized villages were started in the 1970s. They were attended mostly by the daughters of the Sheikhs; some tribes did not send their girls to school. Now some send girls to Italy or the U.S. to become doctors or lawyers. There are 1300 Bedouin women students at Ben Gurion University and four colleges. Three years ago, the first Bedouin woman became a doctor; there are 10 Bedouin women lawyers; three Bedouin women have completed PhDs; five more Bedouin women are working toward PhDs.

Still, 87% of the Bedouin women are unemployed.

After a lunch of *machlouba* (chicken (see Kaplan/Israel, page 10)



Khadra ElSaneh (L) conducts a workshop on Bedouin weaving. Photos by Barry A. Kaplan/Jerusalem.



## Musings from Shiloh

By BATYA MEDAD

### From an ancient golden bell to modern musakka

#### July 24 – Rare gold bell discovered in excavations in Jerusalem

The bell was apparently sewn to the garment worn by a high official in Jerusalem at the end of the Second Temple period (communicated by the Israel Antiquities Authority).



A rare gold bell with a small loop at its end was discovered during an archaeological excavation in the drainage channel that begins in the Shiloah Pool and continues from the City of David to the Jerusalem Archaeological Garden, near the Western Wall. The excavations are being conducted at the site on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, in cooperation with the Nature and Parks Authority and underwritten by Ir David Foundation.

According to the excavation directors, archaeologists Eli Shukron and Professor Ronny Reich of Haifa University, "It seems the bell was sewn on the garment worn by a high official in Jerusalem at the end of the Second Temple period (first century CE). The bell was exposed inside Jerusalem's main drainage channel at that time, among the layers of earth that had accumulated along the bottom of it. This drainage channel was built and hewn the length of the Western Wall of the Temple Mount, on the bottom of the slope descending to the Tyropoeon Valley. This drainage channel conveyed rainwater from different parts of the city, by way of the City of David and the Shiloah Pool, to Nahal Kidron.

The main street of the Jerusalem is in the region of the excavation, above the drainage channel. This road ascended from the Shiloah Pool in the City of David and an interchange, known today as

'Robinson's Arch', was built in it, by way of which people entered the Temple Mount. Apparently, the high official was walking in the Jerusalem street in the vicinity of Robinson's Arch and lost the gold bell that fell from his garment into the drainage channel beneath the road.

We know from sources that the high priests, who served in the Temple, used to hang a gold bell from the fringes of their robe. Thus, for example, in the 'Tetzaveh' Torah portion, in the Book of Exodus, there is a description of the high priest Aaron's robe: "All of blue... it shall have a binding of woven work... And upon the skirts of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the skirts thereof; and bells of gold between them round about." It is impossible to know for certain if the bell did indeed belong to one of the high priests; however, the possibility should not be entirely discounted.

#### July 26

Now I finally understand the reason why gold is so valuable. Think about how old this bell is.

#### July 30 – What happened to the weather?

It's too hot! It's much too hot! I can't take the heat! Yes, I'm back to feeling the heat, suffering from the heat. Yes, it's too hot!

Sorry for the rant.

And, yes, I know that in a few months I'll be kvetching about the cold. Why can't I just bottle the summer heat for winter and the winter cold for summer?

#### July 31 – 40 years!

According to the Jewish calendar, exactly 40 years and a couple of hours ago I became a mother. I didn't write "for the first time," because once a mother, always a mother.

With the birth of my first child, my life changed forever. All I had ever wanted to be was a mother. I had never planned any other profession. I expected my husband to provide all the financial resources we would need, just like my own father did. That part of my dream was a mistake, and we'll always suffer for that, unless one of us manages to write a great book, best seller, to provide us with a comfortable income for the rest of our lives.

This may not be "pc" in this modern world, but I still think that there's nothing more important than being a mother. What's the point of going through pregnancy and birth to give your child to others for raising and education? No, I'm not promoting "home-schooling." My first-born and I used to prepare for my parent-teacher conferences. I knew what to say and ask each teacher. By the time

#### KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page 9)

and rice) and Israeli salad, while sitting on the floor on cushions at a low table, we traveled from Lakiya, north, 40 minutes, to Achva College where we met Merri Minushkin from Brooklyn, N.Y., director of public relations and resource development and two women Bedouin students.

The college has 4,000 students (80% female) with tracks for people over 30, new immigrants such as Ethiopians who have a special mentoring program and Bedouin. In the special track for Bedouin, there is written and spoken Arabic, Hebrew and English. Approximately 15–20% of the students at Achva are Arab and Bedouin; 2% are men.

Manar Abu Riash is 20 years old, originally from Ramleh, married to someone she met during summer courses at Tel Aviv University and lives in the Bedouin town of Rahat. She majors in Middle Eastern Studies and history of the Jewish people. Her father is a social worker; her mother is an executive secretary at a health clinic and she has two sisters and a brother. She would like to continue studying to become a social worker because of the need for basic changes in the foundations of Bedouin society.

Tagreed Atagqa is 23 years old, studying Hebrew literature and language and also lives in Rahat. She is divorced, has a two-year-old son and is engaged. She has three sisters and three brothers. She drives her own car with a car pool from Rahat. When she graduates, she wants to teach Hebrew literature and be a youth group youth leader and educate the new generation.

The whole encounter with the two women in Lakiya and the two Bedouin students is an eye-opening experience of a significant minority in Israel.

*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. ★*

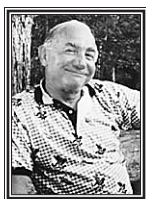


my younger ones were in school, I was a real professional...mother. Yes, being a parent is a profession.

One of the things that made me want to leave teaching was that the parents weren't playing their role properly. I even tried to get the school to invite the parents of remedial students for special parent-teacher get-togethers, so they'd learn how to help their children. After sitting alone at my desk for hours waiting for parents who didn't come to talk to me, I knew that I was wasting my time. I didn't even receive phone calls from parents who received

(see Medad, page 11)





## Spoonful of Humor

By TED ROBERTS

### My new Jewish food channel

I was watching the food channel last night. I don't know why the network hadn't filtered out Jewish viewers. After all, the pork resources of the world are finite, you know. But no harm done. Naturally, I looked away since they were making a pork roast. Not a respectable, rectangular brisket – not a voluptuous hen – not a happily bubbly kugel, but a lumpy, bumpy pork roast. A pork shoulder easily identifiable as the limb of a mud-coated animal that in his previous life used to run around grunting in the farmyard. In fact, my vivid imagination pictured Jews – food obsessed Jews – from all over America either clicking the remote or turning their eyes away. Jews, champion eaters of the world, and some smart alecky ad agency is offering forbidden fruit.

Ugh! Why not pickled pig knuckles? But as I sank deeper and deeper into my revulsion – BAM! – as Emeril says, the culinary idea of the century hit me. You spend \$100,000 a minute displaying Emeril, Rachael, and Martha. And a roast-loving Jewish viewer covers his face with his hands. At least that's what my rabbi told me to do. Don't look – not very effective marketing. But then the light bulb over my head exploded! The most stupendous merchandising idea of the decade. The best idea since Joseph went into the dream interpretation business. My best personal idea since I conceived of cat food spiked with birth control chemicals. (Don't worry, cats can't read! I'm talking birth suppression chemicals seeded in the cat food. Get it? No need for expensive feline surgery.)

My new idea! *A Jewish food channel!* Bring culinary civilization to the wilderness of Arkansas, Kansas, Idaho, and so forth. Backwoods hideouts and rural enclaves where natives shamelessly make sandwiches of bologna and white bread – then they grease them up with mayonnaise. They'd faint at the sight of a cinnamon bagel.

Why should only Northeasterners and a few émigrés in Florida salivate over a bowl of stuffed *kishke*, rolled cabbage, chopped liver? Tell the world! We cured Polio, didn't we? Split the atom, right? And practically single-handedly introduced a hesitant world to monotheism. Why shouldn't our fellow planetarians eat *rugelach* instead of

### MEDAD

(continued from page 10)

letters that their sons were failing English.

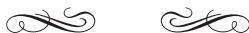
*A parent's role is to be an advocate for each child. That doesn't mean to blindly support everything your child does. It's to help your child and the "system" get along.*

I've learned an awful lot in the past 40 years. In some ways being a mother is nothing like I had expected, and in some ways it has been even more wonderful than my dreams. My five children are all very different. I love all five equally. It's hard to believe that I've been a mother for 40 years. In my mind, I'm just a teenager...

### August 5 – Working on Friday

Yes, today I have to go to work. I guess that one of the reasons I'm not enthused by the idea that Sunday's are being proposed as a "day off" is because I know that it'll just be another shopping day, like it is in the states now. So the poor schlubbs working low wages in stores will have more complicated lives.

My kids are all grown, so I don't have to



dull, doughy biscuits? And if there's a golf channel, a ping pong channel, an Albanian soccer channel, a mountain climbing channel, why not a Jewish cooking channel?

Furthermore – once my channel was established – ANYBODY could watch – even non-Jews, even my Southern friends who know of no fish except the bottom-feeding catfish. The first big show would be two hours of devotion to Gefilte catfish (and they're really hard to catch). And yes, I would reveal my *bubbe's* secret – a culinary concept called "over-raising". One stuffed cabbage – one cup of raisins. Her second secret, "skip the rice and heavy on chopped meat" – that, I'd save for the second show. But again, as to the audience, there'd be none of those filters – like we block kids from watching underwear commercials or worse, the typical bedroom programming. Even anti-Semites could watch as long as they didn't take notes! How long would it take to convert them around once they electronically viewed a bubbling, golden yellow kugel on a 332-inch screen?

And just to be ecumenical, occasionally we'd do Hungarian Goulash or Southern Fried Chicken or Irish Stew – in the early morning hours when all good Jews are spreading chopped liver on rye as a late night snack or dreaming of the same. Oh, and that white bread in the grocery store – also banned. There would only be one prohibition! We know far better than that. Never would we use that orange American cheese that my

(see Roberts, page 12)

figure out what to do with them when there isn't school. Most of us working in Yafiz are either older or younger than that stage. One of the hard-working full-time workers is a single-mother who had to take her kids in the other day. Salary does not cover the expense of a babysitter.

Yesterday I didn't get all the cooking done. I was tired, *ok, and lazy*. I only looked for guests this week for Shabbat lunch. Friday night, we eat so late, and I'll need the sleep.

### August 7 – Musakka, however you spell it and make it, it's a hit!

Since musakka isn't an English word, it can be spelled all different ways. And it can also be prepared innumerable ways. I'm pretty new to cooking/baking it, but consider me an enthusiastic convert. This one just has a layer of light green squash (I think they call it Mexican squash in Arizona,) a layer of eggplant, then chopped (ground) turkey or chicken flavored with tomato paste, an egg, onions and spices, and on top is another layer of eggplant as you can see. I dribbled a bit of oil on that top layer, because I didn't want it to dry out in the oven. I baked it uncovered, then covered in a hot oven until it "seemed" done.



A great advantage of musakka is that it's baked and served in the same pan. It also includes both vegetables and animal protein. You can make it "meatier" or more "vegetarian," low fat. For a very simple meal, just serve with a fresh salad. Since I eat a high proportion of vegetables at each meal, I served it with another vegetable dish plus the salad. (That's how I've kept the weight off, since I lost over 30 pounds – 15 kilo – a couple of years ago.)

Batya Medad is a veteran American olah, immigrant in Israel. She and her husband made aliyah in 1970 and have been in Shiloh since 1981. She's a wife, mother, grandmother, EFL Teacher, writer and photographer. Besides her articles and photographs we've been featuring in this publication for a number of years, Batya is very involved in the international cyber community as a Jewish blogger. She has two active blogs, <http://shilohmusings.blogspot.com> and <http://me-ander.blogspot.com>, besides having established the Kosher Cooking Carnival; details on me-ander. You can contact her at [shilohmuse@yahoo.com](mailto:shilohmuse@yahoo.com). ★





## My Kosher Kitchen

By SYBIL KAPLAN

### Guide to Israeli and world kosher wines

*Rogov's Guides 2011.* By Daniel Rogov. The Toby Press. 2-volume set. 500 pp. \$29.95.

Daniel Rogov is Israel's top wine critic and the only full-time wine critic in Israel as well as an expert on popular world kosher wines for the past 30 years. This year, this 7th edition of the *Guide to Israeli Wines* and 2nd edition of *Guide to World Kosher Wines* is an attractive two-volume set, enclosed in a fuchsia-pink box with the silhouette of a man smelling a wine glass.

The comprehensive, definitive *Guide to Israeli Wines* is a guide for selecting and storing Israeli wines as well as a compendium of Israel wineries and wines, classified according to a stringent form of scoring.

After a history of wines in Israel, the current and future state of wine production is discussed followed by grape-growing regions, grape varieties, vintage reports from 1976–2009, questions of *kashrut* and information on drinking habits. In the afterword is a guide to tasting wines, information about scoring, wine bottles, a glossary of wine terminology and contact information on the 161 wineries listed.

According to Rogov, the ten best wine producers are: Golan Heights, Yatir, Margalit, Castel, Clos de Gat, Flam, Chateau Golan, Pelter, Carmel and Galil Moutain.

Golan Heights released their first wines in 1984 and is located in Katzrin in the Golan Heights where it produces six million bottles of kosher wine a year under Yarden, Gamla and Golan labels.

Yatir is a kosher boutique winery, owned by Carmel and is located near Tel Arad in the Judean Hills and produces 150,000 bottles a year. Margalit was one of the early boutique wineries founded in 1989 and now located near Hadera where it produces between 17,000 and 21,000 bottles annually. Castel is located on Moshav Ramat Raziel in the Jerusalem Mountains and produces 100,000 bottles of kosher wine annually.

Clos de Gat is in the Jerusalem Mountains on Kibbutz Harel and produces 50,000 bottles annually.

Chateau Golan, on Moshav Eliad on the Golan Heights, produces 60,000 bottles a year. Pelter, on Moshav Ein Zivan in the Golan Heights, produces 80,000 bottles a year.

Carmel, the flagship winery of Israel in Rison Letzion and Zichron Ya'akov, is the largest wine producer in the country, producing more than 6.5 million bottles of kosher wine annually. Galil Mountain, on Kibbutz Yiron in the Upper Galilee, produces one million kosher bottles annually.

Wines judged 90–95 are exceptional in every way; those 96–100 are truly great wines. In this volume only one wine earned 96 points – Yarden 2006 from the Golan Heights Winery, kosher. One earned 95 points – Special Reserve 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon from Margalit Winery. Nine earned a score of 94 points and 20 earned a score of 93 points.

*Rogov's Guide to World Kosher Wines* categories wines as dry red and white, champagne and sparkling, rose and dessert wines and lists those from: Australia and New Zealand, Austria, Cyprus, France, Italy, Portugal, South Africa, Argentina, and Chile.

After an introduction and overview, there are essays on kosher wine, kosher vintage 2000–2009, drinking habits, scoring and wine language. The afterword includes a guide to tasting wines, glossary and wineries.

While a number of the wines scored in the low 90s, exceptional in every way, the only wines to receive a 94 were Napa Valley 2006, Cabernet Sauvignon from Covenant Winery in California; and Herzog Winery's Napa Valley 2006 Generation VIII, to Kalon, wineries in California and New York. In the scoring 95–100, truly great wines, the only wine listed was Hagafen Winery's Prix Melange, Napa Valley 2004 in California.

Anyone interested in wines and especially the growing wine industry of Israel will find these volumes and treasured gift. *Madrich Rogov l'Yayinot Yisrael*, the Hebrew edition, is also now available.

#### French Fish in Mushroom Sauce (4 servings)

- 1/2 can mushroom soup
- 1/3 can milk
- 4 pieces filet fish
- 2 Tbsp. chopped scallions
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. margarine or butter pieces
- 1/2 cup white wine or vermouth
- 3 Tbsp. margarine or butter
- 2 1/2 Tbsp. flour
- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- 1/4 tsp. lemon juice
- sliced mushrooms
- 1/4 cup grated Swiss cheese
- 1 Tbsp. margarine or butter pieces

#### ROBERTS

(continued from page 11)

Southern friends – *sprinkle over salad*. Not Gorgonzola, not Blue, not even Swiss, which is also sinful. But American cheese!

*Ted Roberts, a Rockover 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](http://www.wonderwordworks.com). Blogsite: [www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com](http://www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com). His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof can be bought at Amazon.com or lulu.com/content/127641. ★*



Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine mushroom soup and milk in a saucepan and heat. Arrange fish in a butter baking dish. Pour mushroom soup on top. Add scallions and 1 1/2 Tbsp. butter or margarine pieces. Add wine. Bake in oven 8–10 minutes. Melt 3 Tbsp. butter or margarine in a saucepan. Blend in flour. Add 1/2 cup fish liquid and whipping cream. Bring to a boil, add lemon juice. Spoon on top of fish. Add a few sliced mushrooms. Sprinkle cheese on top. Dot with margarine or butter pieces. Bake 20 minutes. Broil top to brown.

For this meat dish, try a red cabernet sauvignon, Merlo or cabernet-shiraz blend.

#### Swiss Steak (4 servings)

- 1–1 1/2 pounds beef steak
- 1/8 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- oil
- 1/2 chopped onion
- 1 crushed garlic clove
- 1 1/2 tsp. flour
- 1/3 cup beef broth
- 1 Tbsp. dry white wine
- 1/4 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbsp. tomato sauce
- 1/8 cup chopped green pepper
- 1/8 tsp. oregano

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place flour and paprika in a plastic bag. Coat meat. Heat oil in a frying pan. Brown meat 1–1/2 minutes on each side. Place in a greased baking dish. Add onion and garlic to drippings and cook a few minutes. Blend in flour, beef broth, wine, Worcestershire sauce, and tomato sauce. Add green pepper and oregano. Pour over steak. Bake in oven 50–60 minutes. Serve over noodles.

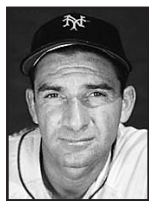
*Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, compiler and editor of nine kosher cookbooks, and feature writer.* ★

# Jews in Sports

## Jewish Sports Hall of Fame elects twelve

Eight men and four women have been elected to the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame (IJSJHOF) since their 2009 induction ceremonies in Israel. The following are those who were honored in 2010 and 2011. They join the more than 330 world-class athletes, sportsmen, and sportswomen who have been recognized by the IJSJHOF since 1979.

**Baseball: Sid Gordon**, a 13-year Major League power-hitting infielder-outfielder with the NY Giants, Pittsburgh Pirates and Boston Braves. The two-time NL All Star hit 25 or more home-run five consecutive seasons (1948-52), and was ranked among the League's top ten slugging averages.



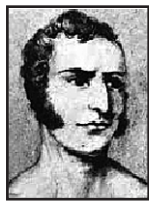
**Billiards: Michael Sigel** was pocket billiard's most dominant player in the 1980s, winning 10 World Championships and six U.S. Open titles. Sigel amassed 38 straight pool and 9-Ball titles during the decade. He won his first World title in 1976 and last in 1992, and ranked No. 2 in the World when he retired.



**Boxing: Max Baer** was World Heavyweight Boxing Champion 1934-1935. *Ring Magazine* named the Boxing Hall of Famer #22 on its list of the "100 Greatest Punchers of All-Time." He scored 52 KOs in 83 bouts.



**"Dutch Sam" Samuel Elias** - "The Terrible Jew," is regarded as the greatest small man in bare-knuckles ring history. The London-born 5'6"/135 lbs. son of Dutch parents fought his first match in 1801, and had more than 100 fights, with only one loss - his last one. Sam was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1997.



**Figure Skating: Ellen Burka**, the Holland-born concentration camp survivor, whose unique figure skating training techniques and groundbreaking choreography produced 26 Canadian Olympic and



World Championships medalists.

**Handball: Fred Lewis** is a six-time National Handball Four-Wall Singles Champion, and 3-time National Three-Wall Singles Champion - all between 1972 and 1981. He was the 1970s "Handball player of the Decade," and inducted into the sport's Hall of Fame in 1993.



**Horse Racing: Bobby Frankel** received thoroughbred horse racing's Eclipse Award (for "Outstanding Trainer") five times, including four years in a row: 2001-2003. During his career he amassed 3,654 1st place victories and \$227,947,775 career earnings. The second-winningest trainer in racing history was elected to the Museum of Racing Hall of Fame in 1995.



**Ice Hockey: Alfred Kuchevsky** was one of the top Russian ice hockey defensive stars of the 1950s. His Soviet teams won an Olympic gold medal in 1956 and bronze in 1960, as well as two golds, two silvers and a bronze at the 1954 thru 1960 World Championships. He was inducted to the Soviet/Russian Hall of Fame



**Judo: Yael Arad**, in 1992, earned the first-ever Olympic medal won by an Israeli - a silver medal in the Judo half-middleweight (61kg) event at the Barcelona Games. Internationally, Arad captured seven gold, eight silver and nine bronze medals.



**Rena Kenokogi**, Brooklyn-born Rusty Glickman, is considered "the mother of women's judo." In 1980 she organized the first Women's World Judo Championships, and was responsible for the inclusion of women's judo as an Olympics event (debuted at the 1988 Games). Rena was inducted into the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame in 1984.



**Media: Leonard Koppett** is the only sports journalist elected to both the baseball and basketball halls of fame - the J.G. Taylor Spink Award (baseball) in 1992, and Curt Gowdy Media Award (basketball) in 1994. Koppett was a reporter and columnist for the *New York Herald Tribune*, *NY Post*, and *New York Times*. He authored 16 books on sports.



**Tennis: Ilana Kloss**, the World's No. 1 ranked women's tennis Doubles player in 1976, won the U.S. Open, U.S. Clay Courts, British Hard Courts, Italian Open, German Open, Hilton Head Open, and French Open Mixed Doubles crowns. In 1991, the South African succeeded Billy Jean King as Executive Director of World Team Tennis (WTT), and was named its CEO/Commissioner in 2001.



Read more about each of these honorees at: [www.JewishSports.net](http://www.JewishSports.net).

### Lifetime achievement honorees: Moshe Theumim and Bob Levy

The IJSJHOF's Lifetime Achievement honors were bestowed upon Israel's Moshe Theumim in 2010, and Philadelphia Robert Levy in 2011.

Theumim, chairman of the Board of Israel's GITAM/BBDO and the Porter Novelli Company, was presented his Award at a special luncheon in his honor at Wingate Institute, this past December.



Bob Levy, chairman of DRT Industries, Inc., and successful chair of the Philadelphia Sports Congress, is a name synonymous with sports in the City of Independence. An elected member of the University of Pennsylvania Tennis Hall of Fame, he chaired the U.S. Maccabiah tennis teams in 1977, 1981, 1985, 1989, and was honorary chair of the 1993 team.



The Robert P. Levy Stable is a highly successful thoroughbred racing and breeding venture that includes four Eclipse Awards and a Belmont Stakes champion. Levy chairs the Board of Atlantic City Racing Association, and is a long time director of the Thoroughbred Racing Association.

In 1953, Bob founded and organized the Little Quakers football team, an age and weight group of young All Stars that, to this day, maintain a reputation as one of the finest boys teams in America. His many honors include recognition by the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame, and he is recipient of the John B. Kelly Award for "unselfishly contributing directly to extending the future of our youth through the medium of sports".

Moshe Theumim, in 1997, led a group of Israeli businessmen who purchased the foundering Hapoel Tel-Aviv Soccer Club and managed it to 1998 and 1999 Israel National Cup championships.

(see *Jews in Sports*, page 14)





## Media Watch

By RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

### WWII-era themes

The short-lived series, *Off the Map*, dealt early on with the topic of Nazi war criminals. The program followed, among other doctors, Mina Minard, (Mamie Gummer) who was starting her career anew in a clinic in South America after having been responsible for the death of a young man while working at a large American urban hospital. The show was about her efforts to redeem herself, if indeed her error was not beyond her control.

At the beginning of an episode titled, "On the Mean Streets of San Miguel," we meet an elderly patient who looks remarkably like Ralph Waite (of *Walton's* fame), who indeed portrays the Nazi. We learn that this man is an 86-year-old beloved teacher of small children who is suffering from oral cancer.

For some reason, the man feels compelled to confess to Minard. He volunteers that he is from Hungary and "made bad choices." "I've lived a long life, I am ready to go," he confides. "He adds: "Take my teeth. I've got gold fillings in my teeth. Take them. And I've got jewelry, gold jewelry. Take them all. It's not mine. I took it...from them. I've done bad things."

Dr. Minard is determined to do the math. "You said you came here from Hungary 64 years ago? That's 1942. What is your real name?" He announces himself as Karl Gustav Wolf, SS." Minard tells her colleague, "He's a Nazi." Wolf does not deny it. He admits to being a guard in a concentration camp.

A colleague, already pegging Minard as over-zealous, says that Wolf was 16 years of age "when he signed up," and that he "didn't even know what he was doing." In this village, Wolf is known as "Abuelito," a beloved grandfather figure who saved the life of at least one native child by carrying this pupil to the clinic.

Minard makes it clear that she wants Wolf to live so that he can go on trial. This puts a new spin on the physician's commitment to keeping a patient alive. She says: "He doesn't get to die today when they're coming for him tomorrow. He had a great life. He's been hiding out in paradise for 60 years. One more day and he gets the judgment that he deserves. I'm not going to let him suffer, but I am going to give him one more day." She insists on performing a procedure on him to prevent asphyxiation so that the families of his



*Off the Map* – (L-R) Ed Begley Jr., Mamie Gummer, Dru Nabarrete, Ralph Waite, and Mikealani Perales. © ABC Television.

victims will get to see his face and to know that "he didn't get away with it."

A colleague who happens to be African American tries to understand her determination to see this man punished. He wants to know, "Who [better, whom] did you lose?" He asks if it was a great-grandparent or someone fighting overseas. She waits to frame her reply for her elderly Nazi war criminal patient: "I didn't lose anyone. I'm not Jewish. I'm not Catholic. I'm not gay. I'm not crippled. I'm not a gypsy. I think that my ancestors actually came over on the Mayflower or something. My father's on the board of the biggest hospital in Boston."

It is here that she indicates that her father pulled strings for her "as if killing that kid never even happened." She says that she could have run away, but came to South America to face her consequences, not to hide, and that she paid for her mistake. Obviously, she expects the dying Nazi to do the same, even if his day of reckoning is indeed but a day.

Even in her vehemence, however, Minard is gentle with the local children who ask about their teacher. When they ask what's wrong with him and when he's coming back, she answers that he has a tooth infection and will be fine. Writers Jenna Bans and Christine Boylan obviously believe that it is to Minard's credit to protect her patient's reputation from the children in this way. I won't quibble with that.

What bothers me is the moral equivalency held up here. Minard (and the writers?) employ the Nazi's story to tell the Minard story. We assume, however, that the doctor has killed accidentally. Is this Nazi along with most other Nazis to be assumed to have acted in circumstances beyond their control, if they were young when they went into Hitler's service? Are they to be regarded as not knowing what they were doing?

#### Leverage

The TNT Network's amusing thriller, *Leverage*, about a band of adept deceivers who outwit criminals and other malefactors (a fine cast led by actor Timothy Hutton of *Ordinary People* fame) announced an episode about art stolen during World

#### JEWS IN SPORTS

(continued from page 13)

They expanded the Club's professional activities to include a comprehensive program directed at employing soccer as a tool for social change. The program included several hundred soccer/futbol schools in low socio-economic neighborhoods, serving 20,000 children in all sectors of Israel – including new immigrants, Arabs and Druze, those with special needs, boarding schools, and sheltered workshops for at-risk youths.

Moshe has been editor of *Darban*, Israel's national student newspaper, and was editor of *Yediot Ha'achronot*, Israel's leading daily newspaper.

A Chair for Communications in his name was established at Tel Aviv University, recognizing his contributions to the communications and media sector of Israel.

Bob Levy will receive his Lifetime Award at a special luncheon in his honor later this year. ★



War II. Naturally, I expected a Holocaust theme, as there is already a genre of TV drama about artworks stolen from Jewish families by the murderous Nazis. There is also a tremendous body of literature on this.

Surprisingly, the script by Chris Downey did not mention Jews at all. The victim here is Charles Lawson, an octogenarian African American man, affectingly played by Danny Glover, and Aldis Hodge (as a younger man in flashbacks), who knows something about a stolen Van Gogh painting and is being pursued by a vicious Billionaires Club who are desperate to find the treasure, valued at \$100 million.

In 1944, we learn, Lawson saved his platoon, battling Nazis in France, from a German sniper. He found a priceless Van Gogh painting on the person of the lone German shooter. While deciding what to do about the painting, the young soldier was told that the Bronze Medal will be given to a white person in the squadron because Uncle Sam does not give credit for such things to Negroes. That rendered him rather unwilling to turn over the painting.

Through beautifully acted flashbacks, we learn that Charles enlisted in the first place because he had learned French from Dorothy Ross (Beth Riesgraf), a childhood friend who became the organist at the skating rink in his home town, a blond beauty who was the daughter of the local lumber baron. The latter was not above having his hirelings threaten and beat Charles when word got out that the two young people were falling in love and

(see Gertel, page 15)



## GERTEL

(continued from page 14)

planning, at Charles's urging, to run away together to France.

Yet Dorothy is unable to leave her family and her town, despite her love for Charles. In time she marries and has a daughter. She passes away after her husband, only a couple of years before Charles, tired and ill, returns to his home town to find that there are unscrupulous individuals searching for the painting and for him. We learn that Charles had given the painting to Dorothy for safe keeping, and he finds comfort in learning that she had been loyal to him in her own way, though they never saw each other again after his one brief visit upon returning from war.

The episode is touching, and rightly raises concerns and issues regarding the treatment of blacks who served their country in World War II. The writer makes a point of saying that the German soldier had saved the painting from a fire in a French museum. This is certainly a legitimate scenario. Not every account about stolen art has to be Holocaust-related. Jews do not have a copyright on being discriminated against. Indeed, most Jews regard it as a solemn obligation to tell the story of the Holocaust in order to ensure that bigotry and discrimination are fought and overcome.

But in view of the existing genre of dramas on stolen Holocaust art or jewelry, there is something in-your-face in this episode that suggests: "This is not the story that you expect. The victim is not the one you expect."

Is that simply the impression of one who has followed Holocaust dramas, or is the writer himself uncertain of his message? After all, he suggests at one point that the painting was among *confiscated* artworks placed in that museum. (So a German soldier rescues a painting from an Ally-bombed German museum and takes it to war with him in France?) Would it have made a difference had the masterpiece been identified as having been in that museum for many years before Hitler's rise to power? Is the absence of such a clarification tantamount to pitting suffering against suffering and discrimination against discrimination?

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. ★

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# Jewish Theater

## The Seed of Abraham finds its roots at the Fringe

*Sometimes all it takes is a leap of faith*

Love is a battlefield. From Jerome Avenue to Jerusalem, two brothers with big dreams for the stage and the beloved girl upstairs confront their own personal conflicts in *The Seed of Abraham*, a new musical coming to The New York International Fringe Festival Aug. 14–25.

Written by playwright Bob Zaslow with music and lyrics by Kenny Karen, *The Seed of Abraham* takes its audience back to the year 1967. In Israel, guns blaze, bombs fall, and a young nation fights for its life during the Six Day War. In the Bronx, three young people fight for their dreams. Benjamin (Barry DeBois), a promising singer, Abie (Caleb Teicher), a talented dancer, and Leah (Joey Ama Dio), a budding journalist, defy their parents' wishes and now find themselves on the brink of success. But when war breaks out in the Holy Land, loyalties are tested, and their fates hang in the balance forcing them to decide: do they answer to themselves, to their families – or to God?

As they sing the opening song, "The Old Bronx Cheer," the lights and movement telegraph something unmistakable – this is going to be one old-fashioned, Broadway-type show. Using rear screen projection for backgrounds, audiences will



(L-R) Joey Ama Dio (Leah), Barry DeBois (Ben), and Caleb Teicher (Abie).

get the feeling for locations like Morris Avenue, the 92nd Street Y, a synagogue and the city of Jerusalem.

"I originally decided to write this show because I wanted to find a way to share Kenny Karen's beautiful songs with a larger audience," says Zaslow, who added, "I heard his CD, *Choir Boy*, and listened to it over and over again. Eventually, a vague story formulated out of the air, with about six or so songs from the CD as the core of the story. Then, as the story grew and took on a life of its own, I asked Kenny to write some original songs where I thought dialogue couldn't do the job as well as a song could." Karen hopped on board. "Bob's genuine enthusiasm was the catalyst for our joining forces," says Karen. "The song 'Jerusalem Is Mine' was my initial foray into contemporary Judaic song writing. Although it has been sung by many recording and concert artists over the years, my son Caleb offers his interpretation as Abie in the show. It's as if the baton has been passed to a new generation. I'm very proud."

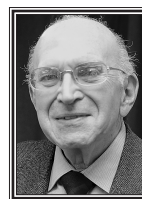
In addition to DeBois, Ama Dio and Teicher (who is also the show's Choreographer), Sally Burtenshaw directs a talented cast that includes Denise DeMirjian (Miriam), Walt Frasier (Mailman/Nightclub Owner/Speaker), Jonathan Kline\* (Morrie), John Anthony Lopez (Joshua), Ricky Alan Saunders (Chorus, U/S to Benjamin and Abie) and Amy Beth Williams (Frieda).

The production team includes Shelby Taylor Love (Stage Manager), Laura Bremen (Lighting Designer), Phillip Rudy (Sound Designer), Catherine Siracusa (Costume Designer), Carolyn Emery (ACR), Lisa Marie Maher (ASM) and Ben Houghton (Assistant Musical Director). Executive Producer for *The Seed of Abraham* is Marni LaRose.

All performances are at The Bleecker Street Theatre in New York City. Tickets can be purchased by calling 866-468-7619 or online through [www.fringenyc.org](http://www.fringenyc.org). For more information on the show visit: [www.seedofabrahammusical.com](http://www.seedofabrahammusical.com). ★



(L-R) Barry DeBois (Ben) and Joey Ama Dio (Leah). Photo Credits: Marni LaRose.



## As I Heard It

REVIEWED BY MORTON GOLD

## Jewish music "light"

The Cantors Assembly in conjunction with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism has issued a two CD set, Volume 10 of The Spirit Series under the heading "The Spirit of Shalom", Voices of the Conservative Movement. This column will be devoted to the first of the two CD's.

With regards to the texts selected, all deal with the yearning for peace, between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and for all people everywhere. I have nothing but praise for this concept. I do have a problem with the musical part of the first CD. (I haven't yet listened to the 2nd.)

Musically speaking, for the majority of the selections, the approach is simplistic, and while entertaining, designed to appeal to the musically unsophisticated. The style is American popular music, light. With few exceptions, either with regards to performance or content, the selections are lightweight, more suitable as encores rather than the main course selections.

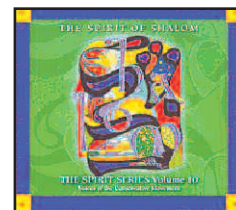
With the exception of Numbers 3 and 5, selections one through seven have more in common with each other than significant differences between them. I am not referring to the performances or the performers here. While the voices of the soloists are light, the singing is good and the arrangements are professional.

What turned me off is the music itself. While these selections may, of course be performed in the synagogue or temple, they suggest a program designed for an audience of teens following the service in the social hall.

This genre may currently be in vogue especially in California, but if these selections are what the Conservative Movement now purports to be Jewish music, then the word "light" ought to be added to the title.

The committee of cantors that selected these pieces is all learned and experienced *hazzanim*. My observations have nothing to do with them personally or collectively but rather with the compositions selected for this CD. The booklet with the CD's is excellent and a good guide to the texts which is often more appealing than the music.

Selection No. 1, "Shir Shalom" uses children's voices and has a "catchy" tune. Selection No. 2, "Oseh Shalom" has a phrase (see Gold, page 17)







## Confidentially Yours

BY AVI & ADELE

### On dating stalkers

Dear Avi and Adele,

*I'm a 28 year old male who contacted online a 24 year old woman a few weeks ago. We went out once, and I liked her alright, but I don't want to pursue things further, and I told her so (unlike most men!) in the nicest way possible. Well, she has proceeded to contact me at work, online, at home, has found me on Facebook, and keeps trying to reach me. Seems pretty immature if you ask me. What can I do to make the stalking stop? ~ Should I be Scared?*

Dear Scared,

Wowzers, you have what some might call a Class 5 Clinger. The problem isn't you and the problem isn't really your little sticky-like-glue girl...the problem comes from her experience with so many men out there who have tread this path before you.

Think about it: she's gone on countless other first dates. These dates have either progressed to a second date or have not gone further. Most guys don't have the confidence (or decency) to be clear with their Ms. Not Right, so they'll usually say things like "I had a great time" or "I'll call you" or whatever other line works to wrap up the date and get them out the door. But in her experience, more times than not, the guy doesn't mean what he says. Which bodes poorly for you: if you said that you don't want things to move forward, why should she believe you? None of her other guys meant what they said, after all!

So she's not going to let it go, because she thinks there's no logic in listening to what you say. In this case, action is the best reaction to her behavior. Hide your Facebook profile from her entirely (either make yourself un-searchable for a month or add her to your block list). Remove her from any of your chat accounts or make yourself invisible when you're online. Set up a filter on your email that sends all her messages straight to the trash. Once you've done all that, send her the "Final Email," which should read something like "Dear Gertie, I have received your emails, texts and messages. I do not wish to pursue a relationship or friendship with you and ask that you stop contacting me. Be well. – Avi."

Abrupt? Sure. Direct? You bet. But she needs to hear you clearly. There's no need to be scared of this behavior, but if you don't take action you're tacitly encouraging her to continue.

### On hosting out-of-town suitors

Dear Avi and Adele,

*I'm a 33 year old woman who recently met someone on J-date who lives out of town. He's 37. We met in Chicago – where neither of us are from – so that we could meet on neutral ground and went on two dates throughout the weekend. We had a really good time and I'm really excited to say that now he's coming to visit me. Challenge is: Where should he stay? While I've enjoyed getting to know him for the past few months, both on the phone and in person, I'm not sure it's really appropriate to have him stay with me, even though we are both old enough to be mature about the situation. Should he stay with me (I do have a guestroom) or in a hotel? ~"Chai-ly" Hospitable*

Dear Chai-ly,

Are you feeling like a lady of a certain generation? Are you looking to us to set your moral code? That's never a good idea, since we all know that Adele has few (if any) standards!

We're not certain where your hesitation is coming from, although we recognize that it's cloaked in what you're alluding to as some sort of morality. Who says what is appropriate or not appropriate for two very adult individuals? We're sure not going to weigh in on that!

But we will say that what's probably most important at this juncture is that you figure out what you really want out of this visit. Do you want a lot of one-on-one time? Then have him stay over! Do you want to still keep up the pretense of dating as if you both lived in the same city? Then book him a room at the Hilton. You already have the answer you need; you're just not asking the right question.

Supporting a long-distance relationship is tough and visits can be even tougher if you're hoping for a marathon of togetherness. As you make your decision, consider how much time you want to yourself, what sort of out-of-the-house activities you'll enjoy and if there are certain things you want to do together-but-separate. (Adele takes all of her long-distance-loves to the opera, not because she enjoys it or even understands it, but because she's able to put her attention away from the guy while still sitting next to him.)

In the end, it wouldn't hurt you to have a hotel room at your service and if he doesn't end up using it, more power to you!

To submit questions to Confidentially Yours: Avi and Adele, please email [aa@letmypeoplegrow.org](mailto:aa@letmypeoplegrow.org). For additional Jewish content, please go to [www.letmypeoplegrow.org](http://www.letmypeoplegrow.org). ★

### GOLD

(continued from page 16)

repeated (I lost count) but has a lovely descant well sung by an unidentified soprano. No. 3, "Live in Peace Together" is a modal tune in the style of Middle Eastern music, with drums. It really does belong in this collection. In No. 4, "Hinei BaShalom" the text is more appealing than the music.

No. 5, "Eggad", has a real voice (Leon Lisak), an arresting melodic line with an orchestra yet. This sort of thing might give folks ideas! No. 6 is "U'fros Aleinu". The opening phrase could be sung in Temple I suppose. After that, welcome to Carnival. No. 7 is "Sha'alu Sh'lom Y'rushalayim. Not much difference in style or performance between No. 6 and No. 7. Take your pick. No. 8 is "Prophecy of Peace". Okay, if one really wants to have a popular or American commercial style of music, let it be of original quality as this one is. Sam Glaser made a really fine arrangement which enhances the beauty of this selection.

No. 9, "Sim Shalom" has pop style but with a Latin accent. Still, this one is very well done. However, change the text and one would never know that this is an example of Jewish music. No. 10 is "Shalom Rav" (Klepper). In this case familiarity does not breed contempt. On the contrary, I have nothing but admiration for a work that is now several decades old. This classic work has aged very well. It is very well performed. No. 11 is "Sim Shalom". This very kosher piece is Jewish because, simply put, it is. It does not attempt to be some kind of cultural hybrid. It is what it is and it is performed very well.

No. 12 is "One Light, One Sun". This is a musically lightweight work with a sequence type of melody. However, it is very well performed. No. 13 is "Yihyu L'ratzon" with music by Charles Davidson. It is well that the concluding work on this CD is by a serious composer of synagogue music. I find it strange however that of the two significant compositions on this CD of music under the aegis of the Conservative Movement, two are by composers whose achievements are under the auspices of the Reform movement!

To conclude, all of the pieces selected for this CD are well performed. My taste may not coincide with yours. You may very well actually like the compositions I did not. If so, that is your right. However, I must call them as I hear them. It was not my intention to offend the committee who selected these works. If left to me, I would have omitted more than one of their choices. In the fullness of time I will turn my attention to the second of CD's in Volume 10. Shalom.

Dr. Gold is a prize winning composer, conductor and has been involved with Jewish music all his life. He may be reached at: [drmorton.gold@yahoo.com](mailto:drmorton.gold@yahoo.com). ★





## Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

### A serious novel on Auschwitz

*Till We Meet Again.* By Robert D. Friedman. Dominion Press. 2010. Pp. 486.

The Tidewater community, the Jewish and general ones, surely lovingly remembers and even reveres the memory of our own Anne Altenhaus Friedman who till her untimely passing was such a vital force for good through her active participation and public speaking as a member of the remarkable Holocaust Commission of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater. A Holocaust survivor from Antwerp, Belgium, along with her sister Mina, Anne left an indelible mark on all who knew her, retaining her beauty and nobility, dignity and courage till the very end as she struggled with a terminal illness.

Her son, budding author Robert D. Friedman, proves to be a true literary talent as he pays homage to his surviving mom and aunt, and all who perished in the consuming Shoah, in a large tome that is an irresistible read. The fictional novel with roots in Anne



Altenhaus Friedman's family's trying saga during WWII, takes us to the bittersweet journey of the book's protagonist, 16-year-old Hannah Altenberg, who along with her younger sister and twin brothers lived comfortable, carefree lives, even privileged ones in a loving upper middle class Jewish home with their physician father and doting mother, not realizing that all that would radically change.

With the German invasion of Belgium and the capital Antwerp's occupation on May 10, 1940, the state of the Jewish population gradually deteriorated with many leaving for America and others including Hannah's family and particularly her father, hesitating about such a drastic move while falsely hoping that their situation would stabilize. Dr. Altenberg was leery about giving up his medical practice and later on would admit to his tragic mistake. Though once escaping the Altenberg's made another costly error in judgment when they chose to return to

their familiar home in face of the experienced difficulties of being on the run with fellow refugees. Guy, Hannah's heroic and resourceful boyfriend who joined the Belgium Resistance, had a special connection to the Altenbergs. His mom was at one time Dr. Altenberg's girlfriend and his father saved the doctor during WWI while fighting ironically on the German side.

We learn of the discrimination, social isolation and hostility faced by the Altenbergs despite the doctor's kindness to all, and even Lucy, Hanna's best friend, turning on her. One morning they found on their front door an unmistakable message and warning, "Jews go away". In the nick of time, before round-up and deportation, Guy takes them into hiding with its loss of basic comforts, but that proved to be only a temporary shelter from an obsessive enemy pursuing them. Upon separation from Hanna, Guy's parting words to his beloved and equally dedicated friend whose life he saved more than once, "till I see you again" (the book's title), would in time be fulfilled upon liberation from Auschwitz. Following a terrifying ordeal only Hannah and her sister Birna survived, with Hannah even witnessing the hanging of her brother Bernard.

The incarceration in Auschwitz's unmitigated darkness of evil began with the infamous Selection Process that Sylvia, the older, experienced and devoted Polish Jewish inmate who took Hannah under her loving and protective wings, describes with dark humor, "the Selection Process is the Nazi version of Yom Kippur, because this is the Day of Atonement for a lot of us and Madov and Mengele are God." (p. 254).

Sylvia, a rabbi's daughter, used to be a university professor of Math and Physics, speaking five languages. A caught escapee from Birkenau, her motherly reaching out to support Hannah and Birna gave, no doubt, purpose and meaning to her own threatened life, thus helping Sylvia survive, as we are reminded of Dr. Viktor Frankl. He is the famous survivor and psychiatrist, who established the School of Logotherapy. That is therapy through finding meaning in one's life, irrespective of the circumstances.

Hannah is sadistically forced to fight with other women and the losing party each time is to die. In stark literary realism we are exposed to the unbridled bestiality of those running the death camp, and the painful dehumanization of the many innocent victims prior to their indescribable death. In the midst of the hopeless existence at Auschwitz, a ray of sunshine emerges with the perhaps unlikely romance between Birna and Major Eric,

the "Good German", who is no less than the stepson of evil incarnate Commandant Schmidt, whose wife, Eric's mother, is equally barbaric. Interestingly, Sylvia came to the conclusion that all the Nazis are to be condemned but not all the Germans.

A serious novel on Auschwitz is obviously a unique challenge, with the author's moral obligation to remain faithful to what Auschwitz was and always represent, yet allowing an author artistic license of creative freedom. That said, Robert Friedman develops an intriguing plot while succeeding in maintaining a reasonable balance. A sequel to this revealing book is in the works along with a screen play.

Guy's letter that Hannah safeguarded at her own mortal risk is surely in the spirit of Anne Frank as well as the other Anne, Anne Altenhaus Friedman, "the enemy can break my bones but they can't break my spirit. Although there is death all around us, I have a strong will to live so I can hold you once more and never let you go. With my parents gone and hope fading fast I have a million reasons to die, but one reason to live, so I can see you again. Till I see you again..." (p.1).

The author's maternal grandparents, Isaac and Pepi Altenhaus, on the way to Auschwitz where they perished, were able to throw out of the train a last message to their daughters Anne and Mina who were ordered to an orphanage where they survived in spite of close calls. The sisters received their parents parting words at the war's end from a family friend to whom it was addressed. The note which was picked up by an unknown person and was sent to the address on it, assured the two girls not to worry for their parents were merely being relocated to a labor camp. One wonders if the parents really believed it themselves or sought to allay their daughters' fears. The historical note is now found in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

*Rabbi Dr. Isreal Zoberman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Va. He is the son of Polish Holocaust survivors, spending his early childhood in the Germany's Wetzlar Displaced Persons Camp (1947-1949). ☆*

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# Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

## Another role for American Jews in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

*A New Voice for Israel.* By Jeremy Ben-Ami. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 256 Pages. \$26.

It is an American myth that every problem has a solution. Neither the history of the world nor the belief systems of other societies substantiate this notion. Our failed efforts to help the Israelis and the Palestinians resolve their intractable differences sadly demonstrate the delusional nature of this dogma.

Jeremy Ben-Ami, author of this powerful and persuasive presentation, robustly rejects the notion that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is beyond unraveling. He translated his sincere and earnest conviction into action by establishing J Street in 2008. That increasingly forceful and effective organization provides fresh leadership to the American Jewish community by earnestly advocating a revitalized two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ben-Ami repudiates the view of older American Jewish organizations that automatically echo the posture of the Israeli government regardless of whether or not it is dominated by right-wing politicians who are dubious about the prospects of peace with the Palestinians. Up to now, these entrenched groups have successfully influenced American foreign policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

J Street offers a rousing alternative perspective, urging impressively that the United States should persuade Israel to give up the land required for the Palestinians to have their own state. It conclusively argues that this will both disentangle the clash and insure a Jewish majority in a democratic Israel.

Since this is a condensed oversimplification of J Street's position, readers are strongly urged to get hold of this clearly written book in order to reach their own conclusion. In a few communities, reading the book may

be the only way to consider J Street's views because Ben-Ami's spirited challenge to the status quo has resulted in his occasionally being blocked from speaking at some synagogues and Jewish organizations.

The opening chapters of the book describe Ben-Ami's forbears, who were part of the First Aliyah, immigrants who came to Palestine from Russia in the 1880s. He discusses the pioneering days, as experienced by his great-grandparents and he tells about the involvements of his parents and grandparents. Oddly enough in view of Ben-Ami's progressive views, his father was a right-wing follower of Vladimir Jabotinsky and a member of Irgun. He was sent to the United States in 1939 where he was a member of "the Bergson group," charged with combating the prevailing anti-Zionist views and with raising funds to support Jewish immigration to Palestine. He remained in the United States, serving in the American army during World War II and settling on New York's West Side where Ben-Ami was born.

The book contains a detailed account of how J Street was founded and the origin of its name but, most of all, it focuses on lucidly and comprehensively presenting Ben-Ami's perspective on what should be the up-to-date attitude of American Jews towards the Israeli-Palestinian strife.

This is a welcome and valuable addition to the debate about the role of American Jews, demonstrating forthrightly that there is a perspective other than the one that has been dominant for so long. The stance presented here energetically attempts to refute the idea that the Israeli-Palestinian situation is a problem without a solution.

## Eleventh novel is electrifying thriller

*Portrait of a Spy.* By Daniel Silva. New York: Harper Collins, 2011. 456 Pages. \$26.99.

This electrifying thriller by Daniel Silva is his eleventh novel featuring Gabriel Allon. First introduced in 2000 in *The Kill Artist*, this appealing and daring Mossad agent hides his identity by working as an art restorer. Here, he takes on one of his most challenging assignments.

Allon is living with his wife, Chiara, at the edge of the cliffs in Cornwall, England

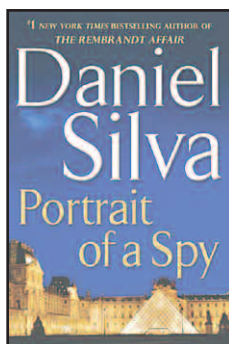
under the name of Giovanni Rossi. They are visiting Julian Isherwood, a London art dealer, to discuss restoration of a painting, suspected to be by Titian, just after they learn that terrorist bombs have exploded in Paris and Copenhagen killing 65 people. Isherwood is a volunteer aide to Mossad with the task of helping to maintain Allon's cover as an art restorer, a skill at which he is most adept. After completing the business with Isherwood, Allon and his wife are walking through Covent Garden en route to lunch when Allon spots a man he suspects of being a suicide bomber. He is prevented from shooting the man by two London policemen who are alarmed by seeing a gun about to be fired in Covent Garden. The bomb goes off, killing 18 people and critically injuring many others. Allon is quickly released from custody by Scotland Yard, presumably at the insistence of British intelligence which is aware of his true identity.

Allon and Chiara return to Cornwall where he is visited by the head of Israel's intelligence service who asks Allon to go to Washington to meet with the CIA which believes it knows who is behind the three bombings. Silva is so up-to-date in his writing that he indicates his awareness of the recent killing of Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan by describing the latest terrorist as "the new Bin Laden." He is portrayed as Rashid, an American-born Muslim cleric, living in Yemen. Rashid is modeled on Anwar al-Awlaki, an imam born in New Mexico and educated in the United States. He is a dangerous al-Qaeda leader who is on the CIA target list for assassination.

The narrative, which has been relatively straight-forward up to this point, now becomes intriguingly complex. A number of characters are introduced, including a large Mossad team and Sarah Bancroft, an art historian and CIA agent who has worked with Allon in the past. The most interesting individual is Nadia, a very wealthy Arab heiress who was at the scene some years ago when Allon killed her father. A complicated scheme is developed that involves persuading Nadia to participate in an intricate plot designed to oust Rashid. We learn more about him and his colleagues.

After several shifts of scene, the exciting and tense action finally moves to Dubai and Saudi Arabia. What ensues there will keep readers glued to the pages of the book in order to learn the final outcome. The usual upshot of "good guys" winning and "bad guys" losing is far too simplistic a result for Silva. He provides a satisfactory-unsatisfactory termination that demonstrates once again his masterful control of the spy thriller genre.

(see Teicher, page 20)





# A look at Minsk

Home of my ancestors

BY MARVIN J. MIGDOL



It's Friday, 6:10 p.m. in Tel Aviv and the El Al Boeing 738 airplane is taking off. Taking off for where? Minsk, of course, and it will land at 9 p.m., with a Business Class if you so desire. Minsk – where today Jews constitute about one-half of one percent of the population? That's right, pad'ner. There's also a flight on Tuesdays. The fare is \$407 round trip. Kosher food? Of course!

The U.S. Migdol family was among the many who originated in Minsk, now Belarus and formerly Russia and occasionally Poland. In 2009 it had a population of 1.8 million. You may have never heard of it but it's the capital and largest city in Belarus. (See photos at: <http://www.minskcityguide.net/photo-gallery/minsk-down-town-photos/>.)

The earliest references to the city date to the 11th century (1067). In 1242 it became a part of Lithuania. It was annexed from Poland by Russia in 1793. It has a warm summer climate but on January 17, 1940 the record low was -40°F. The record high is 95°F.

The city's founding is believed to be Sept. 2, 1067. It went back and forth between Poland and Russia. By 1790, it had a population of 7,000 and most residents were Jews and Poles. It became a railroad link between Moscow and Warsaw.

During WWI, Minsk was a battle-front city. At the time of WWII Minsk was one of the largest Nazi-run ghettos, housing over 100,000 Jews.

At the 1897 census, Jews were the largest ethnic group in Minsk, constituting 47,500 out of 91,000 people. Jews were 52%, Russians 25% and Poles 11%.

Very few Jews survived the Holocaust. By 1959 the Jewish population there was 3.4% Jews. By 1999 the Jewish population dwindled to .6% of the Minsk population. The Jewish population peaked in the early 1970s at 50,000, but some estimated that it was more than double that amount. Mass-scale emigration to Israel, the U.S. and even Germany took away many. There are about 10,000 Jews in Minsk today.

Amazingly, Yiddish remained a major language in Minsk until the 20th century. Most speak Russian today. English is the most popular international language.

Between 30–50% of Minsk's people practice no organized religion. Of those who recognize a religion, 70% are Russian Orthodox, 15–20% Roman Catholic and 5% Protestants. There are few Jews or

TEICHER

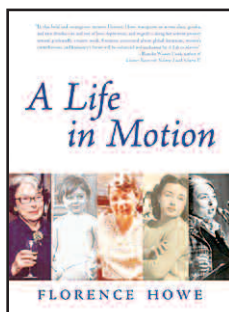
(continued from page 19)

## Women's movement and Feminist Press founder

*A Life in Motion.* By Florence Howe. New York: The Feminist Press, 2011. 586 Pages. \$24.95.

Early in her appropriately named memoir, Florence Howe describes her subway ride from her Brooklyn home to Hunter College High School in Manhattan, a trip she continued to make for seven years as she completed her three high school years and her four years at Hunter College. She has been traveling ever since both in the United States and overseas. This book exhaustively recounts her many trips after she helped to start the women's movement and became the founder of the Feminist Press.

By contrast, she refers tersely to her four husbands and "several lovers in between," identifying the husbands only by one initial and not naming the lovers. She devotes somewhat more detail to her own family, especially her troubled relationship with her mother, an unhappy woman who eventually developed Alzheimer's Disease. Howe felt closer to her maternal grandparents, her "Baba and Zaida," with whom she spoke Yiddish. Her grandfather also taught her Hebrew. Howe's father was an uneducated taxi driver and gambler who eventually killed himself, as did her younger brother. She sadly writes



Muslims practicing their religion in an organized fashion.

Bribes and stealing of mobile phones are among the most common of crimes. That reminds me, what does Minsk have in common with Dallas, Texas? Lee Harvey Oswald was a resident of Minsk for 30 months in the late 1950s–early 1960s. He was sent there to work in a factory and defecting from the U.S. to the Soviet Union.

Do you know the favorite song of the Russian food inspector? It was dinnertime in Russia So-Ve-Et.

Well, now if you'll excuse me, I'll have a vodka!

Marvin Migdol is a Dallas-based writer who has written for the P-O for 46 years. Contact him at [fmmigdol@gmail.com](mailto:fmmigdol@gmail.com). ★

that she was "ashamed of my parents, of poverty, and ugly clothing and furniture."

Howe did well in her English studies at college; she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and encouraged to pursue graduate education. After a year at Smith College where, among other things, she learned "about being a Jew in a land populated by Gentiles," she entered the doctoral program at the University of Wisconsin, having made the move to the mid-West because she had married a man who was a graduate student at the University of Chicago. When he dropped out, she went with him to New York, having completed the requirements for the Ph.D., save for the dissertation. She found a job at Hofstra and, cryptically, she mentions her divorce and her marriage to a Hofstra colleague who went to work in Baltimore. She was employed there by Goucher College, beginning in 1960. During her eleven years at Goucher, she started to teach women's studies and also, after spending a month during the Freedom Summer of 1964 in a Jackson, Mississippi Freedom School, she included racism in her courses.

Maintaining the pattern of elliptical references to her husbands, Howe writes briefly that she divorced her third husband and re-married in 1966. This marriage lasted 20 years, finally ending partly because Howe was more and more involved in the women's movement and the Feminist Press. In 1971, she became a professor at Old Westbury, a new Long Island campus in the State University of New York system, where she transferred the Feminist Press that she had started in Baltimore.

Most of the rest of the book describes her constant international travel on behalf of the Feminist Press, including accounts of her encouraging many women writers and then working to obtain grants to support them and to subsidize publication. The problems of administering and funding a publishing house are explored. A notable omission from the narrative is the bare mention of her attending the 1985 UN conference on women in Nairobi without saying anything about the hateful efforts there to condemn Zionism and Israel.

Howe decided to forego a chronological presentation in favor of one organized by topic. The result is some repetition and choppy. Nevertheless, her candidly forthright account provides biographical data alongside of a valuable history of how the women's movement began.

Dr. Morton I. Teicher has been a frequent visitor to Israel since 1963. He helped to establish the School of Social Work at Bar Ilan University. In 1975, he served as a visiting professor in Jerusalem and he later co-authored a book on Project Renewal. ★