

# *The Jewish* **Post & Opinion** • *National Edition*

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## *L'Shanah Tovah!*



*Seven Wells, Seven Oaths*  
Collage, watercolour, 2009  
By Anna Fine Foer  
(see About the Cover, p2)



# Editorial

One goal I have had since my father died four years ago was to try and resurrect his sense of humor. He had a knack for cracking a joke in tense situations. Then everyone would laugh and the tension would dissipate.

I remember once standing with him while he was talking to a well-known, distinguished rabbi who had been leading his congregation for many years. That year the High Holidays were coming early. The rabbi tells my father he is concerned about finding time to write his sermons. My father looks at him completely straight-faced and says, "I didn't know you were Jewish."

In a telephone conversation with Rabbi Israel Zoberman of Virginia Beach, Va., this week, he talked about the world not being in such a good place right now with all the unrest in the Middle East, the harsh weather and so forth. But he also said that as Jews we are to stay hopeful. I concurred and replied, "Isn't there a saying that it's always darkest before the dawn?"

I don't know what my father wrote about the Israelis and the Arabs before I was born or when I was growing up but in his last editorials at age 96, he was always optimistic that peace would eventually happen. What wouldn't hurt right now, for sure, is some of my father's humor. Since I'm not quick-witted like him, I'm not able to make a joke on the spot. So I figured out another way to ease tension. It is to not take every little mistake that happens so seriously.

Before I tell the following story that took place recently, let me make a disclaimer. Usually when I write about being positive, the readers think I go around upbeat all the time. Like everyone else, I have to work at being optimistic as much or more than the next person. This time it was a gut reaction without my striving and my hope is for more outcomes like it.

I usually make my own dinners from scratch, but in case I don't have time, I keep some in the freezer. All my stainless steel pans were dirty so I put my frozen packaged dinner in my toaster oven using a Pyrex (glass-like) pan. I had done that before with no problem. This time it was a new dish with fish, Ratatouille and rice. Ratatouille is an Italian vegetable dish made with eggplant and zucchini mixed with tomato sauce. Since I was especially hungry, it seemed to be taking too long to heat.

I started thinking that the Ratatouille would burn the pan so I decided to add some water. What I didn't realize is that the hot dish and cold water would not be happy with each other. The instant the water hit the pan, the pan exploded.

# About the Cover

This collage illustrates *Vayera*, the Torah portion read on the first day of *Rosh HaShanah*. It was made for Foer's son, Raphael for his *bar mitzva*h.

"Take these seven ewes from my hand," replied Avraham. It will be my proof that I dug this well. That area was therefore called Be'er-Sheva, since the two had made an oath there." *Vayera* 21:30-31

This passage is depicted in this piece with seven sheep and a well for each sheep. Sheva means "seven" and it means "oath," this passage is the connection between the two meanings of the word. The sheep are the sacrifice to seal the oath and the well, "be'er," is the proof that the land can be used by Avraham and his descendants.

Anna Fine Foer decided she was going to be an artist when she was 11 – the year she lived in Paris for a summer, visiting every museum and gallery in the city. As a fibers and crafts student at the Philadelphia College of Art (now University of the Arts), she became fascinated by the relationship between maps and the land they represent, embarking on a lifelong interest in maps and collage.

Foer immigrated to Israel, where she worked as a textile conservator in Haifa and at Tel Aviv's Ha'Aretz Museum. She studied at the Textile Conservation Centre at London's Courtauld Institute, and then worked in conservation for many museums, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Foer's work has appeared at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Maryland Governor's Mansion, and the Israeli Embassy; one of her pieces is in the permanent collection of the Haifa Museum of Art. She was awarded the Encouragement of Young Artists prize for work exhibited in the Artist's House in Jerusalem and received a Maryland State Arts Council grant for Individual Artists in 2008.

Foer grew up in Indianapolis, Ind. and now lives in Annapolis, Md., with her father and two sons. Please visit her website: [www.annafineart.com](http://www.annafineart.com).★



Usually I would have been upset at seeing glass flying everywhere and also having to throw out what would have been a good meal, but instead I broke out laughing.

We can be upset by the daily barrage of hindrances that come our way. In the long run, it might be easier if we simply chalk them up to experience and be glad that we learned something new. So if I have a resolution for 5772, let it be to look at challenges as opportunities to grow and not as another reason to get distraught.

The staff and the writers of *The Jewish Post*

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& Opinion wish all of you, our dear readers, a happy, healthy and humorous New Year.  
Jennie Cohen, September 14, 2011 ★

# Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

## Visiting Vancouver Part 3

In my last column I wrote about *Pesach* in Vancouver. Now I'll tell you about our trip home. The day after *Pesach* we were scheduled to fly to Toronto at six in the morning. We would wait for four hours in Toronto and then catch our flight to Israel.

We started to pack our suitcases, happy to be going home. However, soon some disturbing thoughts crept into my mind. I started to worry about the problems we would be facing as soon as we got home.

I said to myself "Oy Vey! That's my evil influence coming to bother me. I thought that I was finally free from him." "You wish," my evil influence said. "I just let you have a vacation, so that you could enjoy *Pesach*." "Hey! Take it easy," I told him. "At least leave me in peace until we get home."

*Baruch Hashem*, we arrived safely in Toronto. I found myself a quiet spot in the terminal, put on my *tallis* and *tefillin*, and said the morning prayers. As I was finishing, a young man approached me. He smiled and said, "Shalom." I answered, "Shalom." He asked whether I spoke Hebrew or English. I said, "both." Then he told me his story.

"I grew up here in Toronto. My parents are observant. When I was 12, I started to take drugs. No one knew about it, and for a while everything went fine. However, after a while the drugs stopped affecting me, so I started to take a double dose. Then after a while I had to double the dose again. When I was 16 I started to have stomach aches from the big doses. I would lie in bed in agony, and pray to *Hashem* to take the pain away. I promised never to touch the stuff again. Eventually the pain went away. However, I couldn't control myself, and after a few days I was back on the drugs.

"When I was 18 I couldn't take it anymore, and decided to commit suicide. I went down to the garage and drank a bottle of anti-freeze. I thought that my troubles were finally over. I went to my room, and collapsed on the floor.

"A miracle saved my life. Just then my mother walked into the room. She saw me unconscious on the floor and thought that I had overdosed. She rushed me to the hospital. They checked my blood and found the anti-freeze. They put me on a dialysis machine and cleaned my blood for eight hours.

"They saved my life, but the anti-freeze damaged my brain and kidneys. The doctors said my brain would function like a six-year-old for the rest of my life. After a few

# Thank You!

BY MELINDA RIBNER



I received permission for the sharing of this affirmation below in italics from the Chessed Kindness and Learning Foundation (cklffoundation@aol.com). They have printed it on a beautiful laminated card so it is easy to recite each day. If you would like a card or cards with this message printed on it, please contact me or them directly.

*Thank you Hashem, King of Kings and Master of the world!*

*Thank you for the infinite times that You have helped me, supported me, rescued me, encouraged me, cured me, guarded over me and made me happy.*

*Thank you for always being with me.*

*Thank you for giving me the strength to observe Your commandments, to do good deeds and pray. Thank You for all the times You helped me and I did not know how to say "Thank You."*

*Thank You for all the loving kindnesses You do for me each and every moment. Thank you for the breath I breathe.*

*Thank you Hashem for all the things that I do have and thank you Hashem even for the things I don't have.*

*Thank you for my periodic difficulties, my occasional setbacks, and for the times when I don't feel happy, because everything is for my ultimate benefit, even if I do not see that it is always for my best.*

*Deep in my heart, I know that everything*



days I had another miracle, and my brain miraculously healed. Then I had another miracle, my kidneys started to work again.

"I was in the hospital for two weeks, and gradually I recovered, and the pains went away. Soon I was back on the drugs. My mother tried her best to stop me from taking drugs. She was getting on my nerves, and after a while I left home. I went downtown and became a drug dealer. My mother would call me and plead with me to go to rehabilitation. Then I had another miracle. One day I decided to go to rehabilitation. So far I have succeeded."

A big smile came to his face. "I have been clean of drugs now for one year, two months and 18 days!

"I am now learning a trade in Israel. Four or five nights a week I go to meetings of N.A. (Narcotics Anonymous). We realize that by ourselves we are no match against this addiction. So we give our lives over to Hashem, and do what we can to support each other."

What an amazing story. And who did

that comes from You is the very best for me and designed especially for me in precision and exacting Divine Providence, of which only the King of Kings is capable.

*Thank You for the periodic times that are difficult for me for only that way they enable me to fully appreciate the good times, for only after being in darkness one can appreciate the light.*

*Thank you for the wonderful life You have given me.*

*Thank you for always listening to my prayers.*

*Creator of the World, I apologize from the bottom of my heart for all the times that I did not appreciate what You gave me, and instead of thanking You I only complained. I am dust and ashes, and You are the entire universe. Please do not ever cast me away.*

It is the expression of gratitude to God and each other that places us in the flow of blessing. It is the expression of gratitude to God that makes us joyful, no matter what is happening in our lives. It is the greatest gift we can give ourselves.

Let us all make a pledge to take time each day to express gratitude to *Hashem*. How joyful we would be if we lived each moment in the consciousness of the gift of life itself. How joyful we would be if we knew that everything is for the good.

Let's seize all the opportunities we are given each day to do something beautiful to someone. It could be a word, it could be a smile, and it could be an action.

You never know how a simple smile or a good word even from a stranger can open gates for a person. How much more so for people we love. If couples and

(see Ribner, page 4)

I hear it from? From the person who experienced it himself. And where did I hear it? In the middle of my trip home, in the airport in Toronto. Amazing! I asked myself "What am I supposed to learn from this? What is *Hashem* telling me?" Ah! I felt a flash of revelation. If this young man can overcome his evil influence, then so can I!

We are now in the first stages of our complete and final redemption. We still have an evil influence to overcome, but his power over us is getting weaker. Soon he will disappear completely. The forces of evil around us are slowly disintegrating. Evil regimes are falling one after another. Just like the young man I met in Toronto, people everywhere are coming closer to *Hashem*. It is up to us to learn more Torah and do more *Mitzvahs* to speed up the process and bring *Moshiach* now!

We wish all of our readers and all of Israel a good and sweet year.

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





## Shabbat Shalom

By RABBI JON ADLAND

September 9, 2011, Ki Teitzei  
(Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19), 10 Elul 5771

Sometimes when I sit down on Friday morning to write my Shabbat Shalom I find that it is writing itself and I think this is one of those times. Ten years ago today the world was a different place for us all to live in. Traveling on a plane wasn't as complicated. We didn't need 3 oz containers of anything or Ziploc bags. We didn't take off our shoes or take our laptops out of our bags (at least I don't think so.) We could carry a bottle of water through security. The country wasn't involved in two wars and I wasn't being sent the list of those military personnel who died each week.

The Adland family was living in Lexington, Ky., at least most of us. Josh was studying in Israel participating in the URJ's EIE High School semester abroad program. He was living at Kibbutz Tzuba. Sandy had received word that her aunt had passed away and she was making plans to travel on Tues., Sept. 11, to Dallas for the funeral. Sandy's mom, who had relocated to Lexington, had gone to New Jersey for a family wedding. In a month, Rachel would start preparing for her May bat mitzvah. I was in the midst of my High Holy Day preparation and anticipating the first event of The Interfaith Alliance of the Bluegrass on Tuesday evening. Normal. Everything was normal and life was as usual and then Sandy called me from the Pittsburgh airport and said, "Turn on the TV." Nothing was normal or the same after that.

A rabbi friend of mine who serves a congregation in a state that was devastated by tornados earlier this summer asked on a listserve why people were making such a big deal over this 10th anniversary of the day we now call 9/11. Though many responded on the listserve publicly, I communicated to him in a private email and wrote, "That day did change America and maybe even the world. This is a great moment for us to say to those who 'hate' that all of us suffered on that day and all of us have had to move to a new theological and sociological place. Now with all that has gone on in your state this year you may have had enough of tragedy, but don't dismiss this and miss an opportunity to build more bridges."

The Interfaith Alliance of the Bluegrass held its event that night, but we used the opportunity not only for a speech, but to build bridges. The Muslim community

## RIBNER

(continued from 3)

family members would express gratitude to each other each day for all the kindnesses they receive from each other, they would be happy with each other.

Let's not take anything for granted. Everything and everyone is precious. When we receive a kindness from another person, let's also be mindful to express our gratitude to Hashem and to them as well. We are all the hands and feet of Hashem.

Melinda (Mindy) Ribner, L.C.S.W. is a spiritual psychotherapist and healer in private practice ([www.kabbalahoftheheart.com](http://www.kabbalahoftheheart.com)). She is a teacher of Jewish meditation and Kabbalah for over 25 years. Author of Kabbalah Month by Month, New Age Judaism, and Everyday Kabbalah, she is also the founder and director of Beit Miriam ([www.Beitmiriam.org](http://www.Beitmiriam.org)). She can be reached by email at [Beitmiriam@msn.com](mailto:Beitmiriam@msn.com) or [Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com](mailto:Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com). Kabbalah Month by Month offers guidelines, meditations, strategies, stories to promote personal growth and healing each month. ★



that had lingered on the outside of the group not knowing exactly how to become a part of interfaith gatherings was now thrust into the center and we went from dialogue to trialogue.

I heard Eboo Patel, founder and president of the Interfaith Youth Core, say in a speech that terrorists aren't Muslims, Christians or Jews. They are terrorists, as no member of a religious group would blow up other people in the name of God or their religion. He is absolutely correct and those people who hijacked planes and flew them into buildings intent on murder or people in Israel who strap bombs to their chests and walk into a restaurant or people in the Middle East who pack explosives into cars and drive them into crowds are terrorists and murderers. Every religion should denounce those who murder and not give them places in whatever rewards exist in their religion after death. When I build bridges with Christians or Muslims, I am working with those who see a better tomorrow from our good works today.

For ten years and in three cities now I have worked to build bridges of understanding and cooperation. In Canton, this is just beginning, but in Indianapolis and Lexington I am proud of what I tried to accomplish. Xenophobia will just rip the fabric of a moral, just, loving, respectful, and tolerant society and I am not interested in that path. Beyond the security issues and all the other things that have changed our lives, I am going to reach out my hand to other people of faith and create a bridge that no plane or



## Why Faith Matters

From his Facebook posts.

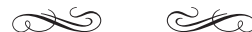
By RABBI DAVID WOLPE

Why do good? We sometimes think good should be rewarded, but if one can count on payback, then it is not pure goodness. "The reward of a mitzvah is the mitzvah," say the Rabbis. The story is told that once, as Mother Theresa cleaned the wounds of a leper, an onlooker said, "I wouldn't do that for a million dollars." Mother Theresa answered, "Neither would I."

Our mission is one of both heart and hands, to believe and to do. Each of us has an obligation to gather the broken pieces of God's world and knit them together. Since every individual is unique, every contribution is needed. I cannot do your work, nor you do mine. But we can join hands, raise sparks, embolden hearts, feed, clothe, encourage and inspire. Do not be indifferent to your own skill and spirit. Take your soul seriously. We need you.

The month before Rosh Hashana is about renewal, recreating ourselves to be better. The Kotzker Rebbe once told his disciples: "I was given the power to resurrect the dead, but I choose to do something more difficult – to resurrect the living." As we approach the Jewish new year, in goodness, in caring, in creativity, in faith and in love we can come to life anew.

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



bomb can destroy.

Tonight in Canton at Temple Israel we will add some prayers to remember 9/11. We will take some time to talk about that day and the last ten years. I believe that from the smoke that choked New York City, the fire that consumed a part of the Pentagon, and the bravery of those who died in Shanksville, we have begun to understand our neighbors better and appreciate that people of God truly seek and pray for a better tomorrow. There is still a long road to walk, but for me the road has been enriched by new friends that have joined me on this journey.

When you light your Shabbat candles this Friday, light one to help us remember all those whose lives were directly impacted by 9/11. That list is much too long. Light the other candle as a beacon of hope for a better tomorrow that is filled with the goodly presence of God.

Rabbi Adland is senior rabbi of Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio. He may be reached at [j.adland@gmail.com](mailto:j.adland@gmail.com). ★



## Jewish Educator

By AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

### Ten ways to be a *mentsch*

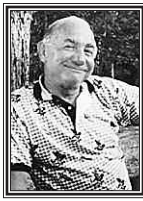
One New Year's Eve when I was six years old, I stayed up way past my bedtime and, crouching behind the living room door, looked on as my parents celebrated the night with friends. I silently watched as they twirled to the music of Tony Bennett, drank champagne from elegant glasses and toasted Happy New Year when the clock struck twelve. I couldn't wait to be grown-up – to wear black and gray silk lounge pants like my mother and have parties where I served tiny hotdogs wrapped in pastry. From my young vantage point, the night seemed magical, filled with celebration and friendship.

As Americans, we wish each other a *happy* new year on New Year's Eve and toast to a year of good health, friendship and success. Yet when the Jewish New Year rolls around, we wish each other something quite different. At *Rosh Hashana* we say: "*L'shanah Tova!*" – may you have a good new year, not a happy one. Why is that?

Although Judaism values joy and happiness as an important part of spiritual wholeness, we seek something more as the cornerstone of each New Year. To be a *mentsch* – a good, loving and caring person is what the Jewish New Year is all about. When we wish each other a good new year, the message we pass along is one of hope; that this year we will become more compassionate, loving, responsible and honest human beings and in doing so, make the world a better place for everyone.

So how do we go about becoming a "good" person? Judaism does not provide a singular rule, definition or value that categorically defines goodness. It understands the complexity of being human and that the variety of situations we will face and the many relationships we will have will make our ethical decision-making complicated, challenging and not amenable to rigid rules and standard regulations.

The beauty of Judaism is that it provides us with a system, a framework of morals and values that can help us in the daily choices we make in our efforts to be a good person. As in any system, the first step is to learn more about it – to study



## Spoonful of Humor

By TED ROBERTS

### Forgiveness is a sometimes thing

*Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* – as every Hebrew Day School student learns in pre-kindergarten – are about forgiveness. Jews of all theological stripes – even those whimsical souls who spread mayo on their pastrami, devour sweet rolls on Passover, and think the Pentateuch is an Olympic event – regard these holy days with extreme gravity.

Actually, the High Holidays, as they're called, are a ten-day period beginning with *Rosh Hashanah* (The New Year) and ending with *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement). On *Rosh Hashanah* the fate of the penitent for the coming year is written by the Celestial Judge and on *Yom Kippur* it is sealed in the Celestial Ledger.

The earnest penitent – during those tense ten days when even the angels tremble, we are told – pleads with the Creator for absolution. But deep down in the midnight of his soul there's a rumbling discontent. A distracting angst that darkens his hopes. The rub, you see, is that forgiveness for sins against one's

fellow humans must also come from the victim. So says the Talmud. That's why murder is such a heinous crime. You've destroyed the only source of your absolution. You've burned down your house and your insurance agency with the same torch.

When Jewish and Christian interfaith groups get together on Sunday for punch, cookies, and fellowship they talk for hours about the many similarities of the two sister faiths. "After all, we worship the same God – we share the Five Books of Moses" That's the mantra of unification. But eventually the talk comes around to areas of delicate disagreement. And after an invigorating debate on the identity and timing of the Messiah, the next topic is forgiveness, the balm of Gilead. Soon, both sides are metaphorically throwing oatmeal cookies at each other.

"Redemption must be earned like your daily bread," says Jewish doctrine. "It droppeth from the sky like the gentle rain," says Christianity. Raise your face and it will wash away your tears. Faith is the catalyst that metamorphs repentance into redemption.

This easy absolution is a cop-out to the Jewish mind that meditates on the *Yom Kippur* message of repentance. If it's pardon you're seeking, says Judaism, there's no dodging the plea to the aggrieved party.

Though prayer, the pleading with the Judge – is an essential element of (see Roberts, page 11)



what traditional Jewish wisdom has to say about things like caring for our parents, helping the needy, raising our children or dealing with business matters. Once we know more, we can use the tools we have been given – the Torah, our inner wisdom and free will – to enable us to act on what we know is good and right. The net result is that in studying more about what Judaism has to say, we create more opportunities for ourselves to become better parents, friends, professionals, community leaders and volunteers.

What are some of the Jewish guidelines that help us become better people? They are found throughout the Torah, Talmud and other sacred Jewish texts. While the following is by no means an exhaustive list, it is must-read for any syllabus on "How to be a *Mensch*."

1. *Love your neighbor as yourself.* (Leviticus 19:18)
2. *Do not do to others what is hateful unto you.* (Talmud, Shabbat 31a)
3. *Do not stand idly by while your neighbor's blood is shed.* (Leviticus 19:16)
4. *Justice, justice you shall pursue.* (Deuteronomy 16:20)

5. *Do not separate yourself from the community.* (Pirkei Avot 2:5)

6. *Do what is fair and good in the eyes of the Lord.* (Deuteronomy 6:18)

7. *Do not hate your brother in your heart.* (Leviticus 19:17)

8. *The world stands on three things: Torah study, service of God and acts of loving kindness.* (Pirkei Avot 1:2)

9. *He has told you what is good and what the Lord requires of you: To do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.* (Micah 6:8)

10. *You shall be holy, for I, the Lord God, am holy.* (Leviticus 19:2)

This year when someone wishes you *L'shana Tova*, remember that within those two words lies a deeper, more profound meaning. For in those words is the hope that this year will be a year of learning, opportunity and commitment to becoming a good (or better) person and the knowledge that the world will be enriched because of your efforts.

Lederman is an award winning author, Jewish educator, public speaker and attorney who lives in Tucson. Visit her website at [amyhirshberglederman.com](http://amyhirshberglederman.com). ★



# Meditating on somber anniversary

BY RABBI DENNIS C. SASSO



Most of us can vividly and painfully remember Sept. 11, 2001. Where were we? What were we doing? Who were we with when news of the devastating terrorist attacks reached us?

It was a bewildering and incredible sequence of events. Nineteen men boarded four airplanes and turned them into lethal weapons of hatred and destruction. We saw the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center crumble to dust as two planes penetrated them like spears. In an open field near Shanksville, Penn., another plane crashed, and a fourth dove into the Pentagon. In all, 2,973 people died and 24 are still listed as "missing."

The losses and the grief affected people of many faiths and ethnic origins. It cut across socio-economic and cultural differences. It impressed upon us the significance of the values of freedom and democracy we hold dear and it confronted us with the need to respond to this challenge with justice and prudence as we protected the nation's security and safety.

Much has happened in America and the world since Sept. 11, 2001. Our lives have not been the same. Getting on an airplane is no longer pleasant. Going into a public building or to a large gathering often requires that we be searched. We have become more suspicious. Thousands of Americans have died in the unfolding wars and conflicts that have engaged our nation. The world remains in a continuous nervous state of alert.

Politics and the economy have not been immune to the effects of 9/11. Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden are gone. Hosni Mubarak and Moammar Gadhafi are ousted. The Middle East is in upheaval. Peace seems elusive.

Many prayer services and memorials will take place to remember the events of 9/11 and honor the memories of those who died and the heroic efforts of many citizens 10 years ago. I offer this meditation as we observe the 10th anniversary of 9/11:

*Let us remember those who died as victims of terror, each of them an image of God, a universe of hopes;*

*Let us recall with gratitude, the heroism and courage of the first responders;*

*Let us remember the compassion and altruism of ordinary citizens who turned to help both strangers and friends;*

*Let us bring gifts of faith, justice and mercy to all who yearn for comfort and renewal;*



## Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

### The choices we make

During our lifetime we are faced with many choices that affect not only our lives but those around us as well. Some choices we make have lasting influences to the extent that they can alter our understanding of the beauty of living and also our happiness and sadness as we journey from youth to age.

Many choices are insignificant such as what to wear or when to retire or wake-up. And then there are selections that truly determine our future and even the present. For example: Taking care of our health – some of us are inclined to ignore signs that indicate the need for medical attention or advice. And even when we understand the ramifications of our decisions, we still have a tendency to push them to the back of our minds and instead go into denial.

Another example of poor judgment would be involvement in issues that create havoc in our lives such as interference in other lives and of course being judgmental. These surely are determinations that will surround us and all those around us with agony and despair. The results of these could also have a detrimental effect on our health because of internal turmoil and frustration.

Having the ability to choose is not always something we look forward to.



*Let us reject prejudice and violence against those who believe differently, dress differently and speak differently;*

*Let us combat stereotypes and refuse to speak or accept words of hatred and acts of intolerance;*

*Let us build bridges of civil conversation in order to create a just and caring society for all;*

*Let us rekindle hope and trust and let us dream of and labor for a time of understanding, harmony and solidarity;*

*Let us strengthen the hands of those who defend and the hearts of those who labor for peace;*

*Let us renew our commitment to the values of democracy, "to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" for all.*

Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso and his wife, Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, have been senior rabbis at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis since 1977. Reprinted with permission from the Indianapolis Star September 6, 2011. ★

Sometimes we would wish others to make choices for us so that we would not be bothered even thinking about our actions. That too is a choice.

All this leads us to the time at hand. It is a time for introspection as well as evaluation. The choices we make at this season will impact us for the foreseeable future. Our liturgy tells us that it is a time for responsibility – "Who shall live and who shall die" is a call to action. It is not written as a challenge but rather as an admonition to take charge of our lives and create for ourselves a life of happiness and joy, fully appreciating the fact that there are upheavals and sorrows.

We have the ability to choose life by living a wholesome life, and we certainly can determine our destiny by understanding that a path has been given that affords us this ability. Each Shabbat we repeat the words: "It is a tree of life to those who hold it fast, and all who cling to it find happiness. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace." The text, of course, refers to the study and understanding of Torah, of education and interpretation.

There are many choices in a lifetime, as stated before, and we do not always make the right ones; again, not because we are denying anything, but because we tend to ignore what is obvious. Here is where Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are designed to awaken us to our duty as human beings given the gift of life by a caring and loving God who wants nothing more than for us to enjoy that life and live it to the fullest. Who could ask for anything more?

This time known as the High Holidays, offers us an opportunity to look at ourselves and those around us enabling us to decide to what extent we want to embrace God, to what extent we can improve our lives, and how these decisions are part of a wider picture known as humanity.

All of the rules and laws found in Scripture are designed not to create hardship but to make our world a better place for all to enjoy. How do we help to achieve this? Simply by starting with ourselves. That is what God is telling us when He says, "Look, I am giving before you today a blessing and a curse." This is not an indication that if you choose not to follow the guide – the path – set out for us that we will die, but rather that if we choose to listen and do, we will surely have the ability to fulfill the meaning of the gift of life.

We were not created to be destroyed but rather to complete the task given us as so beautifully described by the Prophet Micah: "To do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God." That is the sum total of personal and collective acceptance.

(see Wiener, page 8)



## Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

### A yearning for change

If there is a common denominator in all of the movements, positive and negative, that we are watching, it may be a yearning for something better. There does not seem anything noble about the riots in London, and they might not, at first blush, seem related to the Middle East or Philadelphia or the recent "flash-mob" at the Wisconsin State Fair, but it is undeniable that there is something going on.

We have come to understand that the street vendor in Tunisia, who self immolation ignited this whole epidemic of change, was not a revolutionary or a terrorist. He was reacting to what he felt was a suffocating system that was preventing him from supporting this family. He could not have dreamed about changes in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and the other remarkable movement that has occurred in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and all over the world to open a window to change.

In Europe we have seen reaction to financial hardship in Greece and Spain. In London it was initiated by a single interaction with the police, but just like a perfect storm setting in a forest, the kindling was all there, dry and ready to burn. All over Europe there is a new first generation that wants to be treated differently than their immigrant parents who were docile, and willing to be at the bottom of the social heap. These young people were born in England, France and Spain and they want their chance.

The English are astounded at their bad manners. I would imagine that even 16,000 policeman in London will not be the final solution. There is something in the air. And in Philadelphia and Milwaukee, it may just look like irresponsible bands of young African Americans, but these young people appear to be simply trying to bust out, to allow the rest of us to know that they are alive and very unhappy. We may disapprove of their methods, but all have certainly gotten our attention.

Once the window or door is open, it doesn't close easily. Countries can't shut it down, and neither can movements. All over the United States local Federations are finding themselves losing power and money. In city after city, they are rushing forward with plans to re-enfranchise the disenfranchised. But once they get away, it



## Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

### Israel inside and outside

The Arab Spring seems to have run into a summer drought. It's like: Okay, there went the bad guys, what the hell do we do now? You cannot suddenly take a population from three to five generations of dictatorship and suddenly thrust them into democracy.

The United States had its problems becoming the United States. But at least the hearty planters and merchants who came from England for the most part had been part of a parliamentary system. The Arabs have no history of any kind of representative government and no model to follow. Tough times ahead. Count on it.

The Third Jewish Commonwealth was born of Socialist parents and by the third generation had decided on a mix of

is hard to get them back. I keep repeating the figures that get even more dire. Some say that less than 40% of Jews in the United States connect with anything Jewish.

In Israel they are protesting prices and cost of housing. It is surprising that the Palestinians have not had the sense to peacefully push an agenda. We have been fortunate since 1948, that if we had to have an enemy, we had one that is isolated, internally fractious and unable to get it together. It is not a secret that the Israeli government is surprised that in this particular time, they still do not understand how to act effectively on their own behalf.

We can't even keep score in Africa. We simply do not know what is happening there. It is difficult to understand how the misery goes on, and we are uncomfortable that the only reason so many children are dying and will die is that the world doesn't care enough to figure it all out. It is 2011, but somehow Black children starving to death fails to arouse us. We know it. We see it. But we do not even do the minimum to help where we can.

To suggest that all of this is somehow connected may not, at first look, seem plausible, but on the other hand it probably is.

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

Capitalism, Socialism and Theocracy as a formula for success. Nope. Does not, will not work. Want proof? Go count the tents rising all over the nation full of young people disillusioned with an unfair system that does not adequately reward its hard working middle class citizens – those who pay the taxes, serve in the army and go to work every day to keep their heads above water.

In Israel today, 30 percent of the wealth in the nation is controlled by three families. In the U.S. the top one percent controls 42 percent of the nation's wealth. Believe me, those who control the levers of power are pretty much the same in both countries. Folks in the U.S., are mad as hell. Folks in Israel have had a lot more to be angry about for a lot more years, and now that anger is turning inward.

As long as the State rewards people for not working or not serving in the army and makes it profitable to keep having children, those who do not follow the theory that life is just for studying Torah are going to get madder and eventually the system will fail.

The U.S. has plenty of Orthodox and even Ultra-Orthodox Jews. But they work. They do not work on Shabbat, they live a pious life and mostly observe Tikkun Olam. But, they do not throw rocks at those who choose to drive on Saturday.

The surprising thing about this present protest in Israel is that no opposition party has taken up the cry to bring these grievances to the floor of the Knesset and address them with concrete action.

The reason Socialism does not work is that some folks have the talent and ambition to do better than others who do not. Those who prosper under a semi-free market system deserve to be properly rewarded. Yes, the less fortunate should absolutely be given food, shelter and health care based on their needs and ability to pay.

Could it be that the system (like our own, here in the U.S.) is rigged? In Israel small parties like Shas and others backed by the Settler Movement can bring down a government. Is it time for true majority rule to take over in the Jewish State?

The United States. We are the only developed nation in the world where our elected representatives serve just two years, which means that soon after they find their way from their office to the Congressional Gym, they are out raising money for the next election. Does that mean that large donors can buy the congress? You damn betcha. They already have.

In Israel, there have always been rumors of pay-offs and out of country money swaying votes in the Knesset. Hey – just look at the  
(see Shipley, page 12)



# The 13 attributes of God's compassion



BY RABBI MOSHE  
BEN ASHER, PH.D.  
AND MAGIDAH  
KHULDA BAT SARAH

Thinking of the 13 attributes of God's compassion, the *yud gimel midot shel rachamim*, we're reminded of the heartfelt davening of them during High Holy Days.

When we allow ourselves the luxury of simply resonating to them spiritually, they're a significant source of comfort. We imagine that for most of us, most of the time, notwithstanding our ardent response to them, there's still substantial untapped spiritual potential in them. As we know more of the context and content of these 13 attributes of God's compassion, we imagine that the spiritual power of our davening may yet increase.

It was in response to Moses that the *yud gimel midot* were "revealed." With all that he had been shown and witnessed in his life, Moses – like us, that is, like the search of modern science – sought, according to Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808–1888), to understand the unity or uniformity of creation in all its apparent diversity. Moses wanted to see God directly and personally, in a manner of speaking – to see the *source* of the unity. But what he was actually shown was somewhat different.

He wasn't allowed to look at God but rather to look at what God looks at. That is, as the scripture says, "...God came down in the cloud and placed himself next to him [Moses] there..." (Exodus 34:5) So, standing in the same place, Moses sees what God sees, has the advantage of the same perspective. And the verse concludes, "...and [God] proclaimed God by name."

In Exodus 34:6 we read: "God passed before him and proclaimed: *Adoshem Adoshem*, God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in kindness and truth, preserver of kindness for thousands of generations, forgiver of iniquity, willful sin, and error, Who cleanses."

So how, precisely, do we get 13 attributes out of this list and what do they represent practically?

Our traditional Torah commentators, not surprisingly, have many different views of how to add up the 13 and what they mean – but our focus is on understanding them *naturalistically*, without reference to supernatural phenomena, relying instead on what we can comprehend with our intellect, rationality, and common sense.

*Adoshem* [1] *Adoshem* [2] – In the Talmud the repetition of God's name is said to affirm that, "I am He before a man sins and I am He after a man sins and does *teshuvah*, a God compassionate and gracious." (Rosh Hashanah 17b).

However, we have also learned that *Adoshem Adoshem*, God is God, represents the totality of all creation, both the underlying uniformity that continually manifests itself in the potential for the moral history and future of humankind, and the diversity we see, which is simply a manifestation of the free will God has given to us. Yet *Adoshem* remains *Adoshem*, ruling the world in a way that encourages us to achieve happiness and salvation (i.e., to save ourselves from all that would degrade and destroy us).

This inherent goodness of God and His creation manifests itself as:

*Eil* [3] – God: The source of all energy and life-giving force, which is given to us purely as a gift from the Creator;

*Rachum* [4] – compassionate (from the root *resh-chet-mem* – mother's womb): God's compassion is such that, whenever we stop destroying or degrading life while it still lives, God cares for it and returns it to life, including ourselves;

*Chanun* [5] – gracious (from the root *chet-nun-nun*, we derive *anan*, the dispensing cloud): God's energizing of the Creation knows no limits, so while we fritter it away, God endlessly replenishes it (which, of course, we take for granted);

*Erech apayim* [6] – slow to anger: We're allowed time to overcome our weaknesses and to learn slowly how to use the powers we've been given to uplift morally our own lives and the lives of those with whom we come into contact;

*Rav chesed* [7] – abundant in kindness (from the root *chet-samekh-dalet*, meaning complete devotion to another): To the extent we are devoted to extending God's goodness in the world, we are given extraordinary grants of energy and satisfaction for our efforts;

*Rav emet* [8] – abundant truth (from the root *alef-mem-nun*, to care for and bring up): God, however, like a good parent, does not humor our foibles and moral missteps, because that would be to our ultimate detriment, and so the Creator has arranged instructive consequences for us as a people – not simply for *me*, which we find particularly painful because they entail punishing outcomes for the innocent as well as the wrongdoers;

*Notzeir chesed la'alafim* [9] – preserver of kindness for thousands of generations: The love that we receive from God, the *simcha shel mitzvah*, the blessings and joy we receive from doing the *mitzvot*, act like the seed of a tree of human fulfillment to the thousandth generations into the

## WIENER

(continued from page 6)

The choices are given and now it is up to us to pick the path that puts us into a New Year that will be filled with hope and fulfillment.

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). ★

## On this date in Jewish history

On September 14, 1948

The Supreme Court of Israel was inaugurated.

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

future, which can be an incredible source of meaning and fulfillment in our own lives; think of Avraham in his tent – which do you think would give him the greater meaning, fulfillment, and contentment, getting a new tent, more camels, and a double portion of meat on his plate, or the knowledge that the goodness he shows to others will create blessings in the lives of his offspring for a thousand generations?

*Nosei avon* [10] *vafesha* [11] *v'chata'ah* [12] – forgiving (literally lifting up) iniquity, rebellion or willful sin, and carelessness or error: Not only does God provide forgiveness, but atonement, effectively short-circuiting – as Rabbi Hirsch teaches – the natural process of cause and effect, so that when we do *teshuvah*, the usual consequences of wrongdoing are lifted up from us; and

*V'nakei* [13] – and Who cleanses: When our *teshuvah* is genuine and complete, the effects of our wrongdoing on us are completely removed.

Of course, this list serves to describe the attributes of God that Moses was able to see – the uniformity or unity in the diversity – by taking God's perspective on the world.

It's certainly true that one would only see these attributes when looking at the creation if some significant portion of humankind was living in the image of God. So we have our marching orders if we want to see God or rather, as Moses did, see God's attributes.

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Rabbi Moshe ben Asher and Magidah Khulda bat Sarah are the Co-Directors of *Gather the People*, a nonprofit organization that provides Internet-based resources for congregational community organizing and development ([www.gatherthepeople.org](http://www.gatherthepeople.org)). ★





# Jerusalem Peacemaker

By ELIYAHU MCLEAN

## Building bridges between people in the Holy Land

In a time of momentous change in the Middle East, Jerusalem Peacemakers continues the work to build bridges between religions and peoples in the Holy Land. Inspired by protests for change in Israel and the Arab world, our circle of religious peacebuilders continue to hold the prophetic vision of a shared future in the region. With the recent escalation in southern of Israel and Gaza, it is important to hear also the positive stories. Projects and meetings continue the spirit and vision of the late Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bukhari, the co-founder of Jerusalem Peacemakers who left us over a year ago.

### Arab-Jewish youth delegation to Auschwitz, November 2010

The late Sheikh Bukhari initiated this project: last Nov. 1–10, we sent a group of 8 Arab and Jewish Israeli youth to join 14 youth from Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Italy at the 'Bearing Witness Retreat' at the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. The youth encounter was a part of the larger annual retreat led by the Zen Peacemaker community. The event included reading names of victims of the Shoah, prayers from different traditions, listening circles, chanting traditional melodies in the children's barracks, a forgiveness ceremony. Even with all sides coming with feelings of victimhood, each side attempted to understand the pain of the other. All the youth came to feel a shared humanity, agreeing that rather than deepening the wounds with violence, we should create places of healing. Support came from the Religion Today Film Festival in Trento, Italy.

### Bridges with Gaza: Gaza-Sderot Conference, February 15, 2011

Jerusalem Peacemakers participated in a conference at the Sapir College in Sderot: "Gaza-Sderot: Moving from Crisis to



Photos (above and below) from the Jerusalem Hug 2011. By Rob Schrama.

Sustainability." Over 40 Palestinians came from Gaza, joining Israeli academics and NGO leaders in workshops about the role of civil society in improving the economy, health, and ecology for people on both sides of the border and region. Joining us from Gaza City were Sheikh Bukhari's daughter Amina and her husband. Together we led a workshop about the late Sheikh Bukhari's message of non-violence. More about this conference at: [www.gazasderot.org/main-e.htm](http://www.gazasderot.org/main-e.htm).

### Eretz Shalom event to honor Rabbi Froman, February 25, 2011

Rabbi Menachem Froman, pioneer in dialogue with the Muslim world, is ill with cancer. "Eretz Shalom" is the settler peace movement the rabbi initiated, promoting dialogue and co-operation with their Palestinian neighbors. Some advocate continuing to live in their homes in the West Bank as Jewish citizens in a future state of Palestine.

Eretz Shalom hosted an event to honor the legacy of Rabbi Froman on Feb. 25 at the Tzavta Theater in Tel Aviv. Joining were 100 Israelis and Palestinians, including settlers and Palestinians from the West Bank. Palestinian and Israeli musicians performed including Ehud Banai, Barry Sakharov and Shlomo Gronich, blessings were offered by national poets of Israel A.B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz, Rabbi Melchior and Sheikhs Abdel Salaam and Ghassan Manasra. More about Eretz Shalom: [www.eretzshalom.org](http://www.eretzshalom.org).

Rabbi Froman's close friend and Muslim partner is Haj Ibrahim Abuelhawa. Throughout the rabbi's illness, hospital stays, Ibrahim has been at his side. In May, Rabbi Froman married his son, groom Tzuri Shalom. Even in frail condition, Rabbi Froman stood on his feet to offer his blessings at the huppah and later to get up

from his wheelchair to dance with Haj Ibrahim at the wedding celebration.

### Boombamela Festival, April 21–22, 2011

Ibrahim and Eliyahu were guests of the Boombamela Festival in Eilat. At the central stage of the festival, we led a ceremony in front of hundreds of young Israelis on the subject of unity between the religions. Ibrahim blessed the audience, many of whom are soon to join the Israeli army, to become "soldiers of peace and love."

### One year memorial for Sheikh Kukhari, May 30, 2011

Gathering on May 30, 2011, Jews, Christians and Muslims came together to honor the memory of Shekh Abdul Aziz Bukhari, on the first anniversary of his death. The event was hosted at the Lutheran Redeemer Church in the Old City. Leading the evening was Izzeldin Bukhari, the sheikh's son, with wife and daughters of the sheikh present. Everyone was inspired to continue the work that Sheikh Bukhari started.

### Jerusalem Earth Walk, June 21, 2011

We held the Jerusalem Earth Walk as part of the global Earth Walk 2011 event, based in Tucson, Ariz. Coming together were 30 Israelis, friends from the USA and Palestinians from the Hebron area. We started with an opening prayer and dialogue circle in 'Gai Ben Hinnom' valley below the Cinemateque, walked together up Mt. Zion, through Zion Gate. We held a closing peace circle on the Old City rooftops overlooking the Holy Sepulcher church, Dome of the Rock and the Mount of Olives.

Upcoming updates about: the fifth annual Jerusalem Hug, the Abrahamic Reunion at the Tent of Sarah and Hagar in Faradis, interfaith Ramadan iftar in Jerusalem.

Pictures from these events: [www.flickr.com/photos/jerusalem\\_peacemakers/sets](http://www.flickr.com/photos/jerusalem_peacemakers/sets)

We are planning a USA speaking tour, Eliyahu and Muslim peacemaker Ghassan Manasra this November and December. If you are interested in hosting an event for one or both of us, contact us. We can offer presentations and workshops about religious peacemaking in the Holy Land, and tools for peace in the Judaism and Islam.

We can barely cover basic expenses for our projects. We urgently need your financial support to continue the work, to

(see McLean, page 10)





# Jewish Spirituality

By RABBI ELI MALLON

## The deaths of Nadav and Avihu recounted on Yom Kippur; why?

The Talmud teaches the general principle: The death of the righteous atones for sin:

*"Rabbi Ami said: Why is the death of Miriam next to [the laws of] the Parah Adumah [\*]? To tell you that just as the Parah Adumah atones [\*\*], so too, the death of the righteous atones."* [2]

*"Rabbi Elazar said: Why is [the death of] Aharon [next to laws of] priests' clothing? [To tell you that] just as priests' clothing atones, so too, the death of the righteous atones."* [3]

In parshah *Acharei Mot*, (Vayikra/Lev. 16), mention of the deaths of Nadav and Avihu are immediately followed by the account of the atonement procedure using the "scapegoat." The same principle as above would seem to apply.

"Vicarious atonement" is denied by Yehezkiel/Ezekiel: "The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not bear the sin of the father, nor shall the father bear the sin of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." [4]

But the Talmud doesn't seem to be saying that the "righteous" die *because* of our sins; rather, their death is a loss to us, and thereby atones for us.

The Zohar explains why the selection from "*Acharei Mot*" is recited on Yom Kippur:

*"All who have distress for the suffering of the just will have their sins pass from this world."*

*"For this reason, on Yom Kippur, we recite [perek Acharei Mot]: 'After the death of the two sons of Aaron,' so that people will hear and feel distress for the loss of the just, and their sins will be forgiven."*

*"For all who feel sorrow for the loss of the just, or who shed tears for them, the Holy One, Bless Him, announces, 'Your iniquity is taken away; your sin is purged' [5]."* [6]

Note: The Zohar doesn't mandate this reading for Yom Kippur. Rather, it comments on why it was in place – i.e. it was *already* customary when the Zohar was taught. It should also be noted that Nadav and Avihu don't die in this passage; the passage begins "After the deaths..."

The association between the Zohar's teaching and the Yom Kippur parshah isn't "arcane." It's mentioned in many popular, accessible sources.

But if we take the Zohar literally, it's not Nadav's and Avihu's deaths that atone, nor simply the reading of it alone. Only those who become "upset" by reading/hearing about their deaths, are given atonement. It's *our reaction* to their deaths that brings us atonement; not their deaths alone, as in the Talmud.

It's as if the Talmud is saying: The deaths of the righteous are a loss to us all. To which the Zohar is adding: Especially if we're selfless enough to realize it!

I've found myself having more empathy for Aharon, who experiences worse pain at losing his sons, than for Nadav and Avihu, who didn't seem to experience suffering in their deaths.

For that matter – in the course of the latter part of Torah, Mosheh experiences the deaths of his brother, sister, nephews and (presumably) his wife. Isn't he suffering, too? Shouldn't we feel some *rachmanut* for him? Is it atoning, or at least purifying, for us to do so?

Who are the "just" or "righteous?" Those who are innocent of sin. It doesn't mean that they never sinned; it means that they've repented of their sins, to the greatest extent possible.

What if we're troubled by the sufferings of those who die – innocently – in natural or man-made disasters (not of their own doing)? Even if we believe that this is their "karma," aren't we purified to some degree – in our hearts, at least – when we're upset by news of tragedies – especially to children? Like the death of a child at the hands of an abusive or neglectful parent; the deaths of children in pervasive famines (as in Africa, now), or in abusive, dangerous (child-)labor practices (especially where otherwise illegal, too)?

It also seems to me that the narrative of the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, and Aharon's quiet acceptance, echo the theme of the *Akeida*, which is read on Rosh HaShanah. Especially for the *m'kubalim* in Sfard, there was only one day of RH and one day of YK; thus the two Torah readings could be thematically "bookended."

Regarding cantillation (the melody of the public Torah-reading) on Yom Kippur, only the Ashkenazim, among all other Jewish traditions, use a special *nusach* or musical mode for this Torah-reading. The others all use the same mode as for any other Torah-reading during the year. According to Idelsohn, [7] because of the Zohar's statement regarding the atoning power of our tears, it became the Ashkenazic custom to read the *Yom Kippur-parshah* in the mode used by Sephardim for reading "Job" on *Tisha b'Av* – a mode that Idelsohn says "expresses complaint and sadness." Its use was later extended to the *Rosh HaShanah* readings as well. The *Minchah* (afternoon) reading

McLEAN

(continued from page 9)

keep alive the flame of hope and peace in the Holy Land.

To donate with a credit card by PayPal, visit [www.c-r-t.org/donate.php#nogo](http://www.c-r-t.org/donate.php#nogo) and click "Jerusalem Peacemakers."

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Shalom, Salaam, Eliyahu McLean, Jerusalem Peacemakers, director, [www.jerusalempeacemakers.org](http://www.jerusalempeacemakers.org). ✨



for Yom Kippur reverts back to using the standard Torah mode.

Rabbi Mallon first came as an adult to Jewish learning, after experience with Transcendental Meditation (TM), yoga, and other growth-producing modalities. He also studied Jewish Science and Visualization at the Society of Jewish Science in New York. Over the years, he has taught people of all ages as a bar/bat mitzvah instructor, Hebrew school teacher, cantor, pastoral counselor and rabbi, in addition to his work in public education.

Mallon received Jewish Science Practitioner (certification) in 1987, M.Ed. (Master's Degree in Education) in 1994, LMSW (Licensed Master of Social Work) in 2007, and Rabbinical ordination in 2008. He attended the Wurzwiler School of Social Work and Rabbinical Seminary International. He resides in New City, NY. View other works by him at <http://rabbielimallon.wordpress.com>.

[\*] Red Heifer

[\*\*] i.e. brings atonement

[1] illustration: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nadab\\_and\\_Abihu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nadab_and_Abihu)

[2] Mo'ed Katan 28a

[3] ibid

[4] Yehezkiel/Ezek. 18:20

[5] Yishiyahu/Isaiah 6:7

[6] Zohar; Acharei Mot; vol. III, 56b; Soncino vol.V, p. 35: see also the following link: [#9](http://www2.kabbalah.com/k/index.php/p=zohar/zohar&vol=32) where it's said that if we "contemplate" their deaths, we're "credited" as if we'd brought the Yom Kippur korban.

[7] Idelsohn, A.Z.; Jewish Music in Its Historical Development; p. 57 ✨





## Confidentially Yours

By AVI & ADELE

### How to juggle suitors

Dear Avi and Adele:

*I'm a 26 year-old female with an odd problem. I'm having a hard time juggling my very, very active dating life and have already begun to make blunders between the different dates I am having. For example, I was out with one guy for the second time the other night. In the middle of telling a story, I had that awful feeling in the pit of my stomach that I had just told him that same story a week ago. Oops!! I recognize I'm very lucky, but I desperately need some help keeping track of potential keepers?*

~ Raining Men

Dear Raining Men:

Every girl should be so lucky to have a swarm of men – nay, a veritable entourage! – buzzing about her. And, as you've identified, with great opportunity comes great challenge.

Mistakes can be made whether you're dating a pair of men, or what Adele calls a "Match.com *Minyan*." You not only have to worry about putting your best foot forward, but also keeping that foot out of your mouth. Facts, details, anecdotes can become the bane of your existence if you don't treat the business of dating like a, well, business.

Allocate a little brain power to what Avi calls "date management." Go high-tech with a spreadsheet or even your phone's contact-tracking capabilities to map out critical details. Or keep it low-tech with every girl's favorite tool: the little black book.

You'll find peace of mind by keeping a few mundane details at your fingertips. It's really the mundane you want to capture, unless you're a total hussy and can't recall which base you've rounded with whom without having to document when, where, and how.

So what to track? Consider any or all of the following:

Siblings/Parents (How many of each? Where do they live?)

Past date details (Where did you go? Who paid?)

Job/Company name/College

Faith (Is he Conservative, Reform, or other? Does he fast on *Yom Kippur*?)

Passions (What's his top hobby? What countries has he visited?)

Great embarrassment also comes from repeating stories about yourself. Things could get sticky – assuming that he knows

something about you when you haven't told him or even giving an old story an embellished encore. So be sure to note which major stories and details you've shared with him too.

One strategy that Avi uses with his first dates is to make sure to cover family, job and world travels before the check hits the table. That way, he can treat all future conversations as informed about his personal life.

Also, consider creating a post-date checklist to review before future dates.

Too much to handle? Then maybe the big leagues aren't for you and you should scale down your efforts to give your dating life the love and attention it deserves. Whether you're handling your men as individuals or looking for the wholesale discount, remember that your best bet is to just be yourself. With that strategy, you'll hit a home run every time.

### On table manners

*Q: A guy I really like took me out on a 2nd date. He was a gentleman and offered to pay for the meal. However, I had leftovers and instead of letting me take them home, he insisted on eating them at the restaurant. His rationale? He paid for them. Should I feel insulted by this gesture or should I just be happy that he paid for the meal?*

~ Tacky Table Manners

Dear Tacky:

Confucius say: When you find yourself saying "Should I just be happy that he (fill in the blank)" you should really be happier moving on. And fast.

Your radar for weirdness is in a fine-tuned state in the early dating stages, since you have less emotional clutter and more sense of normal human decency. You are picking up on a behavior that somewhere deep in your psyche is not okay with you. Always – always listen to that little voice.

In this case in particular, we read this situation as a little more than off-putting. Your gentleman friend should still be on best behavior. And, so, if this is his A-game, we find ourselves offering a grade of D-minus. He paid, but that doesn't convey ownership of the food. And in fact, we wonder what else he might pull in this same vein: if he brought the *challah* for your Shabbat dinner, would he take the leftovers home with him? Tsk, tsk, tsk.

We recommend parting ways faster than Moses parted the Red Sea. Consider yourself warned and if you end up sticking with him until you say "*Ani l'dodi*," we bet that you'll be coming home from your honeymoon resort stay with hotel-sized

### ROBERTS

(continued from page 5)

Judaism, it's not quite the same as amnesty or even restitution: like fixing the fender of your neighbor's car that you bashed one midnight – inviting to supper your wife's cousin who you've ignored for years – returning the Social Security overpayment – praising the office competitor who you've routinely degraded around evaluation time. Which is more important, prayer or restitution? If the question comes up on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire", who knows? Use a Professor of Comparative Religion as your lifeline.

According to Jewish doctrine, the contrite sinner, in addition to his synagogue devotions, must run the gauntlet of those he has wronged. Even a merciful God is hesitant to pardon transgressions against humanity. He will forgive your violations of his legal code dealing with diet, Sabbath and worship. After all, you're made in his image. But if you malign your friend with slanderous accusations or misbehave with his wife, who's the virtual twin of Mariah Carey, then God shrugs. Better talk to them first, he says. Ask forgiveness. If they say okay, then come to me.

There's a rabbinical tale that says on the day after Rosh Hashanah, while the divine decree is formulated but as yet unsealed, the Magistrate of the universe takes control of every aggrieved human heart. And just as He hardened the heart of Pharaoh, he gentles those of the world's victims. They always grant absolution if sincerely petitioned by the sinner. Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, seekers of repentance fervently rely upon this comforting thought as they solicit their pardoners.

*Ted Roberts, a Rockower Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks at Jewish life with rare wit and insight. When he's not writing, Ted worships at Etz Chayim Synagogue in Huntsville, Ala., where for 25 years he has served as bar mitzvah teacher. His inspiration is his patient wife, Shirley. Check out his Web site: [www.wonderwordworks.com](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.* ★



shampoo souvenirs. Hey, he "bought" them, right?

Livin' and Lovin', Avi and Adele

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). ★



## Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

### When everything falls into place

*The Legend of Julie-Taymor Or The musical that killed everybody!* – at the New York International Fringe Festival.

In the theater world there comes along an occasional moment when everything falls into place – a moment in which viewer and show join together and soar into the stratosphere. In my 30-odd years in this profession, I have rarely experienced such moments. But when they do come, I'm ready to fall on my knees and thank the Powers That Be. Because then I realize why I pursue this work passionately.

Such a moment occurred recently at the 15th annual New York International Fringe Festival. The show, titled *The Legend of Julie Taymor*, satirizes the Broadway musical *Spider-Man – Turn off the Dark* and that show's director herself – the legendary Jewish-American director Julie Taymor.

Taymor, of course, has received her share of Tonys and other awards, particularly for *Lion King*. But something went wrong when she was given carte blanche to create *Spider-Man – Turn Off the Dark*. The show, in preparation and previews, went from disaster to disaster, both financially and artistically. Actors fell from the heights, while the show's budget rose out of sight. Ultimately, Taymor would be fired, and the show, under new direction would limp into reality.

So much for the original show, still stubbornly running on Broadway, while Taymor herself has disappeared into the shadows. But what targets for satire! And indeed the current little show, playing off-Broadway in the Fringe Festival, makes the most of it. Fringe shows usually have serious limitations, given the restrictions of budget, and at best must be seen as shows-in-process – although there are certainly nuggets to be found in the dross.

And here we have a remarkable show, perfect in every way – concept, performance, design, direction. It is outrageous and hilarious, spelled out in cartoon style. All the characters are cartoon creations, particularly the larger-than-life Julie Paymore (as she is named in the script). Director/choreographer Joe Barros and designers Michael Megliola (lighting), Rachel Guilfoyle (costumes), and Katie White (props), are undaunted by their small budget and pocket-size stage,

proceeding to turn lemons into lemonade. Instead of using three-dimensional objects, they offer cardboard guitars, suitcases, and so on. It works.

So does Barros's taut direction, and Travis Ferguson's script and David Fletcher's musical direction. Never a wasted word or moment or musical note! Ferguson has written the book and lyrics, with music and lyrics by Dave Ogrin. Jennifer Barnhart, playing the lead character with a wild glint in her eyes and an evil smile painted across her face, never falters. But she is well matched by the entire cast. Particularly engaging is Christopher Davis Carlisle as critic Lionel Weasel (a take-off on the *New York Post* columnist Michael Riedel).

Of course Ferguson's plot takes liberties with reality, as they trace the supposed rise and fall of the Broadway "Spider-Man" (in this show called "Spider-Dude"). Who knows what really went on with Taymor and her company – and the producers. But this is satire, and anything goes.

And go it does! In all, it is a memorable moment in theater. But can this satire, so pointedly (and probably unfairly) pointed at Julie Taymor, go on to a larger life? Would it be open to libel suits? Who knows. But what we do know is that, for this brief time in history, a remarkable show is working on all cylinders. God bless theater.

*Theater critic Irene Backalenick covers theater for national and regional publications. She has a Ph.D. in theater criticism from City University Graduate Center. Her book East Side Story – Ten Years with the Jewish Repertory Theatre won a first-place national book award in history. She welcomes comments at IreneBack@sbcglobal.net and invites you to visit her website: nytheater scene.com or at: jewish-theatre.com. ★*

## SHIPLEY

(continued from 7)

number of past mayors and even prime-ministers that have been indicted.

Okay – politics in any country at any time is never completely clean. Money talks. Campaigns are expensive. But in Israel? With its small population, limited geography and supposedly strong political campaign laws, it should not be a problem.

But – people are people regardless of religion, nationality or political philosophy.

As has always been the case, actions taken outside the land of Israel will dictate the priorities of the State. Based on which way the Arab wind blows, Israel will be affected. Turmoil in Syria can be good for Israel only if it blunts Iranian influence in the region. Hamas and Hezbollah are dedicated to the destruction of the State. A vote next month in the U.N. on the declaration of a Palestinian State cannot be good for anyone, not even the Palestinians.

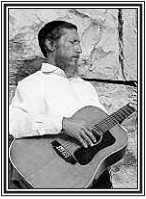
Within Israel, it is long overdue for things to change. Little, aggressive minorities cannot hold sway. It will take a strong leader and a lot of guts to do it. Is Bibi up to that? Who is on the horizon? Nir Barkat? The present mayor of Jerusalem has the right ideas. He is gutsy. Would he root out corruption and the inequities of the system? Am Israel Chai. God willing.

*Jim Shipley has had careers in broadcasting, distribution, advertising, and telecommunications. He began his working life in radio in Philadelphia. He has written his JP&O column for more than 20 years and is director of Trading Wise, an international trade and marketing company in Orlando, Fla. ★*



Jennifer Barnhart (of Broadway's *Avenue Q*) as Julie Paymore, sings about her new musical "Spider-Dude" with Lynn Craig (left) & Kiley L. McDonald (right) in *The Legend of Julie Taymor*. Photo by Dixie Sheridan.





## Healthy & Kosher

BY RABBI BENZION ELIYAHU LEHRER

### A diet for *Elul*

The Hebrew month of *Elul* is a word which can be rearranged to spell the word *El* meaning "to" equaling *lamed-vav*. *Lamed* has the numerical value of 30 and *vav* equals 6, totaling 36. This corresponds to the 36 lights which begin to reach from heaven to this world at *Chanukah*. The horoscope sign for *Elul* is the virgin so these 36 lights denote a purity from heaven which is untouched by this physical world. These pure lights bring blessings to our world.

On the first night of *Chanukah* we begin to kindle the lights with a single light. On night two, two lights and so on. After the end of the eighth night of *Chanukah* we reach a total of 36 lights, and then it is "New Years." *Year* in Hebrew (*yud-aleph-rash*) means "to shine light" and therefore what the world is declaring shortly after we have lit the 36 lights of *Chanukah* on the first of January is that the new light of blessing has now reached the world.

Mysteriously, at the very moment we reach "New Years," it is exactly when Jews all around the world are reading the weekly *Sedra* (which we read on *Shabbat*) which retells the story of how the new Israel Lights – this year's Children of Israel are now descending into *Mitzriyim*. The Hebrew word *Mitzriyim* (Egypt) shares the same letters as the Hebrew word *Metzarim*, meaning borders or limitations. For us, this means not only the borders and limitations of our lives here in this physical world but even more so the thoughts in ones own brain.

This idea is hinted at by the fact that our servitude in Egypt was to the children of *Cham* (*chet-mem*) the letters *mem-chat* (*mo-ach*) meaning "brain." Most of us are indeed enslaved by our brain, engrossed and living a life in which we are completely immersed and subjugated by our thoughts. Our job in the month of *Elul* is for us to reconnect to this high pure light to the degree that at New Years in January when it reaches to the borders of this world, it will remain pure and intact.

This new light is the light of change, for the month of *Elul* is our time of preparation for *Rosh Hashanah*, literally in Hebrew, *rosh*, (head) of the *shanah* (change). However, *Paro* (Pharaoh) the ruler of Egypt does not want to change and his fear is that the new Children of Israel (the Israelites) will take over and control

his land, meaning his conscious brain.

The food we choose to eat can have a very strong affect on our ability to let go of our old conscious selves, the *paro* within us and reach a better vision of a new us. Then this will help bring the new light of our pure soul back from heaven to reach us and cause a real change in our conscious mind here in this world.

The way this works is that those times of year when the light of our soul is, so to speak, very high as it is in the months of *Elul* and *Tishre*, we eat foods which have a more downward contracting effect on our bodies and mind. However once the light is here we eat more opening, expansive, upward energy foods.

In general we should eat foods which we call "centered" or "balanced." These are foods which are neither contractive nor expansive include the grains of Israel – wheat, spelt, barley, rye, and oats, and also rice. Millet, Quinoa, and kasha/buckwheat are also considered to be somewhat of a grain though our rabbis do not consider them to be what we call a *mazone* (sustaining food).

The contractive, downward energy foods include mainly animal products which cause us to feel more earth bound, practical, thus holding on to our conscious selves here, remaining more attached to this world. Cooking food such as vegetables instead of eating them raw also brings out its downward energy. Up energy foods include raw vegetables, fruits and juices, coffee, wine, alcohol, and drugs.

Most of us eat what we call "side to side" from contractive to expansive, often putting one's emphasis on either side, which has its time and place. Although after years of continual eating in this way, G-d forbid, it causes many of the major health problems of today's world.

Understanding your body and how to help you reach your balance and true health has many factors. Many aspects must be addressed for us to reach optimum health. These include such topics as time of year, climate, body shape, different styles of cooking, knowing when to eat raw foods, when to eat fruits, and so forth. I teach and counsel privately and publicly on the subject of the Jewish Year and good health.

Rabbi Lehrer lives in Tsfat, Israel. As a health practitioner, he has given formal lectures both in Israel and abroad. In addition to counseling about diet, Rabbi Lehrer gives concerts with his twelve-string guitar expressing deep words of Torah. The New York Times wrote about his band: "The Returning Light" is "Jerusalem's hottest Jewish rock band." His CD called *Come Home* can be purchased on his website. He also has a health guesthouse where a Macrobiotic health counselor and cook are

## The Shofar

BY RABBI DAVID ZASLOW

First, we use the horn of a beast in order to become the beast; no intellect, submissive to its Master. Second, we become the horn itself. Not even a beast, but an inanimate horn to be blown by the blower just as we are blown into life. Third, we become the sound of the horn. Not even matter. But sound that fills great spaces and binds all objects and listeners just as the Holy One becomes the Holy Sound at Sinai that we hear. Fourth we become the air inside the sound. The silent air before it is blown into sound inside the horn of a beast. We become the silence of the Creator before creation. Last, we return. We become ourselves standing next to one another in the synagogue remembering what we had become, and where we had been. Only then can we hear the shofar: silence shaken into cries on a journey from one end of a bent beast's horn to the other. On a journey somewhere between our hearing and the sounds we hear, somewhere between the blower and the shofar blown, somewhere between the Creator and ourselves; between ourselves and ourselves. And from such a Place, in such a moment, there is no boundary between the head and its horn, between the beast and its burden, between its cries and the silence beneath its cries. From such a Place we say we hear the shofar blown. And only then is the mitzvah fulfilled, as are we full and filled. We glance at each other knowingly, hearing the Sound through the horns of our own bent lives. We all hear the same cries: our own cries to our Maker. Our Maker's cries to us.

Rabbi Zaslow leads *Havurah Shir Hadash* in Ashland, Ore. ✨



available to provide meals. Other services include healing massage, cooking classes, consultation and courses for those who want to become health counselors. His websites are: [www.thereturninglight.com](http://www.thereturninglight.com) or [www.jewishyeardiet.com](http://www.jewishyeardiet.com). To set up a diet counseling session and/or purchase his CD, email him at [benzion@jewishyeardiet.com](mailto:benzion@jewishyeardiet.com). ✨



# As I Heard It

REVIEWED BY MORTON GOLD

## The Spirit of Shalom 2nd CD more Jewish

In my last column I reviewed the first of two CD's in the 10th volume of the Spirit Series released jointly by the Cantors Assembly and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The title of this release is *The Spirit of Shalom*. (A subtitle is *Voices of the Conservative Movement*.)

I did not give high marks to the first of the two CD's. I felt that too many of the selections chosen reflected an undue emphasis on the popular or commercial sort of music. In fact if the text were changed, many of the compositions could just as easily be performed in non-Jewish arenas.

I also tried to go out of my way to separate the soloists (*hazzanim* all) from the music being performed. The soloists as well as their performances were all professional and well done. Beauty (visual or aural) may well lie in the eye or ear of the beholder. In my case I thought most of the works performed were lightweight and even unsuited to the theme of the CD.

While several selections in the second CD were of similar character, there were other compositions that surely represent the better, even the more Jewish nature of our people. As was the case in the first CD I observed that the works I felt were the best were written by composers who were active in Reform rather than Conservative temples. What follows are comments (some longer than others) on the fourteen selections on this second CD.

1. "*Shalom Aleikhem*" composed by S. Brazil. The tune as well as the rendition by Julie Jacobs is pleasant enough even though the drums are much too loud. I realize that the Hebrew letter Chet is currently spelled KHet in transliteration. This has been the case for several years now. It remains a visual obstacle. I can't change this but I can state that I think that it is awful. The folks who did this never trained a choir.

2. "Dream of Peace" composed and performed by A. Bensoussan with lyrics by P. Bensoussan. To my ears this pop style arrangement and performance suggests a dance floor or stage perhaps in Vegas! *Shalom* anyone?

3. "Peace by Piece" with music and lyrics by R. Solomon. This selection may very well be an anti-war song but I would dispute describing it as a "classic song." The rendition by Solomon is very good just the same. As with many commercial tunes, it does not end, but merely fades out.

4. "Prayer for Peace in The State of Israel" with music by A. Kaplan. Unlike the previous selection this composition sounds like it belongs to be heard in a temple. While the style of the music borders on a "pop" style there is no denying that it is nevertheless a moving work and one that expresses the feeling and emotion of the texts. The performance by Hazzan D. Lefkowitz and the Park Avenue Synagogue choir is as beautiful as it is musically expressive.

5. "*Shalom Aleikhem*" with music arranged by H. Pace and B. Shamash. When one removes the aural effect of musical wallpaper by the drums this just might be a very nice tune, if one could only hear it.

6. "*Hashkiveinu*" composed by M. Isaacson. This significant setting suggests quality from the outset. It is a t'fillah of musical significance and beauty. The rendition by Hazzan T. King is moving and expressive.

7. "*Sha'alu Sh'lom/Shalom Al Yisrael*" composed by S. Dulkan. This charming Chassidic type of melody is set in a "groovy" arrangement. "A tune with a beat." It is nicely sung by Hazzan J. Dulkan.

8. "*Shalom Aleikhem*" composed by Mike Stein and arranged by M. Asher. This pop style of another Chassidic tune was offsetting to me at first. I must confess that it grew on me despite my misgivings.

9. "*Shalom Rav*" composed by B. Steinberg. This beautiful setting of the liturgical text is wed to an outstanding rendition by Hazzan Louis Danto. As in the Isaacson work, these two, along with compositions by Finklestein and Wilensky are the best selections on this CD. What is good is very good indeed. If I had my druthers, there should have been more like them.

10. "*Sholem Tants*" composed by A. Ellstein and sung as well as performed by Sam Weiss. While I have heard different and perhaps more spirited versions of this wonderful tune, I would observe they all had their point of inspiration on Houston Street, (pronounced HOWstin) the street off Second Avenue in New York, not (H'YOUstun) the city in Texas. The bluegrass section while well done musically was not really stylistically appropriate. Nevertheless I feel that Hazzan Weiss sang it very well indeed.

11. "Study War No More/Lo Yisa Goy." The adage that comes to mind after listening to this is that if something does

## ShivaConnect.com helps sit shiva



"There is no time more difficult for a family than when they lose a loved one. We can't ease their pain, but ShivaConnect can help provide information and coordination for sitting *shiva*," said founder Sharon Rosen. ShivaConnect.com is a free resource that features educational articles, a personal *Shiva Registry* to conveniently post and share funeral and shiva details, and many other services that are helpful at a time of loss.

After more than a year of intricate programming and design, a mourner, relative or caring friend can now easily (see Shiva, page 17)



not add to something then it detracts from it. I can't figure out why it was chosen.

12. "*Sim Shalom*" composed and performed by R. Frieder and arranged by R. Yeddia. While this began as a serious work in a temple, it soon left the temple and entered the social hall. Just the same, the work is entertaining, even moving in spite of the ubiquitous drums.

13. "*Oseh Shalom*" composed by M. Finklestein, arr. by R.H. Dimmock and sung by Hazzan Emanuel Perlman. The rendition by Hazzan Perlman of this expressive work is nothing short of praiseworthy.

14. "*Yeish Li Halom*" composed by Moshe Wilensky. The lyrics are by Y. Mohat and the soloist is D. Berger. While Hazzan Berger sang musically, he should have had his part more pronounced and set above the piano part. One must observe that the arrangement and performance of Joyce Rosenzweig at the piano was really outstanding and a joy to hear. The music by Wilensky is a cut above the ordinary.

I would be remiss if I did not add that the layout of the booklet, done by Hazzan Sam Weiss is truly outstanding. The information about the text, the transliteration as well as the original text all add to the understanding of what is being performed. As a composer I would state that space permitting, at least some information about some of the composers would have been welcome as well.

While not intending to deliberately hurt anyone's feelings, I felt obliged to write what I felt to be the case. If I did so in the process, *s'lach na*.

Dr. Gold is a composer/conductor, pianist and retired educator. He may be reached at: [drmortongold@yahoo.com](mailto:drmortongold@yahoo.com). ★





## Media Watch

By RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

### Jewish women on recent TV

#### Hawthorne

The popular TNT series, *Hawthorne*, about dedicated nurses at a Richmond hospital, presented a curious episode about a religious Jewish woman, traditional but not Orthodox, who sings her own musical settings for Hebrew psalms and prayers. A determined young woman, she regards herself as in an inspired mission, at one point saying of the Psalms: "The words have been preserved. We don't know the melodies so I come up with my own."

The problem, the tragedy, is that she has tumors on her vocal chords that seem to be cancerous, and must decide between singing and living. If the voice box is preserved, the tumors could return.

When we first see and hear her, the young Jewish singer is kneeling and chanting *Esa Einai* ("I shall lift mine eyes," Psalm 121) right in front of a wall. Is this camera shot intended to evoke associations from a hospital room dry wall to the Western Wall in Jerusalem, or simply to provide the cue for her one-liner, "I was just praying, but it is more like talking to a wall"? Her bearded, *kippah*-sporting husband quips that this is one of his wife's better jokes.

Camille (Hannah Hodson) a young, college-bound African American woman, helping out at the hospital as E.R. scheduler, happens to be the daughter of head nurse Christina Hawthorne. She is genuinely concerned about the risks faced by the Jewish singer and song-writer. Yet the latter has it all figured out: "I believe my life and my voice are gifts from God. I hope to be a youth director in a few years." (No one wants to become a cantor any more?) Her husband adds, "We've prayed about this a lot and gotten counseling. We walk by faith." There is a genuine humility, despite her emphasis on her "gift," in her confession that she stutters except when she sings, tempered by her sincere confidence that she sings not so much to avoid stuttering as to share God with others.

It is admirable that writer Sibyl Gardner wants to show that Jews can be as guided by faith in their daily lives as Christians, and can even inspire Christians to embrace their own faith more. That is

what happens in this episode when the young E.R. scheduler decides to undergo a baptism (of sorts) as a result of her association with the songstress.

Our singer does express hurt, confusion and anger at the challenge to her faith – indeed, the mockery of her faith through sheer irony – by her illness: "Why do I have to choose between my voice and my life when all I wanted [was] to sing about my faith?" And is it faith or wishful thinking to which she gives voice when she exclaims: "I have to trust God. I have to believe that I won't [lose my voice]"?

Yet, sadly, lose her voice she does. Young Camille regards it as "beautiful" the way the songstress got down on her knees and prayed even after losing her voice. This inspires the young African American woman to ask a male friend to baptize her in a fountain even though he is not an ordained minister. "John the Baptist was not an ordained minister," she says. Of course, the production and direction crew manage to make the scene as erotic as possible.

While there are good and sincere things in this episode, I found it disappointing. After all, a fundamental principle of Judaism is that one must do everything possible to save one's life and the lives of others. Even the holy commandments (*mitzvot*) are operative only to the extent that people can "live by them." (Leviticus 18:5) That the singer and her husband must think twice about this reflects an ignorance of, or at least the ignoring of, a fundamental tenet of Judaism.

While I can understand psychological anguish and denial and agonies of faith and doubt in such a terrible scenario, I cannot understand why the opportunity was missed here, and in a medical series, to communicate that tenet in a dramatically satisfying and effective way. Isn't that important enough a concept to highlight for general viewers?

Also, in the end, the episode does not reflect well upon the African American women here. Camille actually tries to get the singer to postpone surgery, as if to protect the faith that she admires rather than to encourage the patient to be pro-active at saving her own life. When Camille decides that she wants religion, too, she wants it on her own terms, and virtually dismisses the African American (or any) church in her choice of a baptism ritual.

It is suggested in this episode, as well, that Camille's mother, Christina Hawthorne (Jada Pinkett Smith), the gutsy and idealistic head nurse, may be hiding from the police and from her husband evidence of foul play on the part of a police officer enamored of her, albeit against her attacker. But she comes across as more principled and thoughtful than the singing Jewish woman.

#### Blue Bloods

*Blue Bloods* is an impressive family drama/police drama about the New York City Superintendent of Police (Tom Selleck), a widower; his father, the former superintendent, and his two sons, both policeman, and daughter, a district attorney, and grandchildren who are often together in the stately family manse for dinners. This is an admirable and dignified family, dedicated to public service and to family. They are also devout Catholics, who appreciate and support the Roman Catholic Church, and are committed to preserving the Church at its best, according to its highest standards.

The family members also have standards, and this makes for touching and uplifting television. Needless to say, they regularly encounter criminals and characters who have no standards, and who would drag them down, if they could.

This is not only an excellent cops-and-criminals series, but one of TV's best family dramas ever, superbly written, acted and produced.

There was this one character, a woman who owns a trendy Manhattan nightclub, whom the Chief's son Danny (Donnie Wahlberg) must question after the shooting of the club's on-duty bouncer, on a busy night, at the door to the place. This woman, a society page sensation, is named Sabrina Glick (Gloria Votsis). While nothing is said about her ethnic and religious background, her name says something.

Her conduct says something, as well. From the minute she meets Danny, she continually flirts with him and makes overtures toward him, though he tells her immediately that he is married with children. She even writes her phone number on a slip of paper and hands it to him, and practically pulls him onto the dance floor, much to the shock of his outspoken female squad car partner. She sees an opening after Danny tells her (inappropriately, to be sure) that he was a rather untamable party guy and clubber before he got married.

When Danny's wife finds out whom he is questioning and who is calling him, she is uncomfortable, a situation exacerbated by Glick's celebrity and aggressiveness, and yes, by the slip of paper with her name and phone number on it. (The implication seems to be, and rightly so, that women who distribute such souvenirs want to cause trouble at men's homes.) If this were an old-time film, the word "hussy" would surely have been bandied about.

If anyone has any doubts about Glick's brazen designs, the worst suspicions of her motives seem confirmed when she recommends that Danny buy some flimsy

(see Gertel, page 16)



# Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

## Soulful outpouring

*Falling out of Time.* By David Grossman. Hakkibutz Hameuchad Publishing House. 2011. pp. 187. In Hebrew.

Premier Israeli author David Grossman's latest literary accomplishment is an uncommon, emotionally engaging and thought-provoking soulful outpouring in a very measured manner. Using poetry and prose while accentuating the former – "Poetry is the language of my bereavement" (p. 153) – Grossman expresses perhaps better than any Israeli before, the complex psychological condition and dynamics of loss which so sadly has been an all too frequent phenomenon in the life of the State of Israel.

The Jewish state has endured unending cycles of bloodshed with the sacrificial deaths of its youth "in our eternal war" (p. 79), contrary to nature's law for "a father should not outlive his son" (p. 96). We recall the tragic killing of Grossman's son, Uri, and his three comrades in their tank in the waning hours of the controversial 2006 second Lebanon war, alluded to in Grossman's 2008 classic, *Isha Borachat MibSORA* (A Woman Fleeing Notification) and its 2010 English edition, *Until the End of the Land*, (in which an Israeli mother refuses to accept the reality she predicted of her son's death on military duty.

In the present volume the loss notification by a special military team, is presented to the shocked parents (The Grossmans) in language resembling Nathan Alterman's famous poem of the sacrificial young man and woman representing Israel's youth who won the 1948 War of Independence. "We opened the door for them/this one/ here we stood/you and I, shoulder to shoulder/and they/on the threshold/and we/ opposite them/and they/with compassion/measured/and quietly standing, and breathing within us/the spirit/of the dead" (p.12).

The interconnectedness and close proximity between life and death are tenderly captured. "How they stand/life and death facing each other/how they

**GERTEL**

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lingerie for his wife as a peace offering. A sheepish Danny complies with this questionable recommendation. Even his car partner realizes that such a gift is not appropriate for a wife, but the former decides to let Danny go through with it in order to find out the hard way that he needs to be faithful and respectful to his wife on every level.

It seems that Ms. Glick knew what she was doing in getting Danny to do something offensive to his wife. Indeed, in the juxtaposition of scenes Ms. Glick is compared to a dominatrix who also tried to seduce Danny. That is not a flattering comparison. Danny is wise enough to resist the advances of both. At one point, when Sabrina Glick asks him, "What does your wife have that I don't have?" Danny replies, "Me."



hum/toward each other./How they touch/how/intertwined/they are/in their nakedness' root./How constantly they pour/and transfuse/from one to the other/and back, like a couple,/like two beloved ones,/the essence/of their being (p. 171-2). The poet-author hints at the perhaps exaggerated all too human fear of death and what it is all about. "More than anything/we are afraid/of the hope. Of what awaits beyond/the wall we dare not think" (p.151).

Survivor's guilt is present here to, along with an audacious, brutally honest incredible expression of the painful troubling residue of embedded memory. "How many years, God-how many tears-/ so take-take-take the bundle/of your bones-and get out-get out/from our life-did you hear? From l-i-f-e!" (p. 139).

The book's title, *Nofel Michutz Lazman* (Falling out of Time), reflects the Hebrew verb Nafal (he fell) when referring to a military casualty with the author-poet so movingly sharing with us from the depths of his aching and yearning soul. "I see you/but I don't touch/I don't feel you/in the time senses/of mine" (p.64). David Grossman, a wounded father of a fallen son and hero in Israel's defense, is a political and social activist becoming Israel's conscience regardless of our particular political ideology. He should – with his current literary offering of brilliance on a theme so compound and relevant to Israel and the human condition – be a serious candidate for the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Rabbi Israel Zoberman, who translated all quotes, is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Va. He grew up in Haifa, Israel. ★

For a while it seems that Sabrina Glick may be a suspect. Then it appears that she was the intended victim because of other inappropriate seductive behavior with another woman's man. In any event, we have here in one of television's most popular dramas, about a wholesome and dedicated family, a woman with a very Jewish-sounding name who represents the very antithesis of their values. Is this a genre-in-the-making of (certain?) Jewish women depicted as seductresses lacking in moral scruples?

## Flashpoint

At last, at long last, a popular TV series offers an admiring and sympathetic portrayal of a Jewish woman, or at least the suggestion of a Jewish woman. That series is none other than *Flashpoint*, one of the most gripping, suspenseful, affecting and, often deeply moving programs ever on television, an impressive Canadian production about a SWAT team that rescues hostages with ingenuity, thoughtfulness, care and heart.

One episode introduced us to Marina Levin (Sonya Salomaa), a company executive, who is bright and beautiful and gracious. More impressive, she is willing to sacrifice herself, if necessary, for the welfare of her employees, especially when she is being stalked by a gun-wielding former employee whom she had to fire. Because of her graciousness and kindness, courage and self-sacrifice, even under stress, even while terminating a troubled worker, she is able to help the police to stop that deranged man, who is still enamored of her.

Writers Mark Ellis and Stephanie Morgenstern might have been more explicit than depicting a Jewish woman in name only, but this is still better than all the bad characters who suggest Jews in name only. But should we be concerned that at the end of the episode Marina comes to the police station to personally thank the officer who saved her, and accepts his invitation to go out for coffee without knowing whether or not he is married with children? One hopes that there are not shades of Sabrina Glick (see, above, *Blue Bloods*) in this developing story – and character.

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. ★







## Book Review

REVIEWED BY ARNOLD AGES

### A wealth of provocative ideas

*Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle.* By Dan Senor and Saul Singer. A Council of Foreign Relations Book. (New York, 2009) 304 Pages.

Among the many insights offered by the co-authors of this marvellous book is the anticipatory explanation of the unrest that has swept the Arab world since January 2011. Although published two years before the upheavals in Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain and Syria, and in a book which deals primarily with Israel's miracle economy, the Senor-Singer treatise nonetheless explains the malaise in the Arab world as the authors saw it as resulting primarily from massive economic stagnation.

With the same thoroughness that they applied to Israel's economic infrastructure Senor-Singer show that the Arab world was facing in 2009 the need to produce 80 million new jobs in order to meet the burgeoning Arab population growth indices and that enlightened Arab planners were well aware of this predicament. Senor-Singer did not necessarily envisage the revolutionary fervor which erupted in 2011 in the Arab world, ostensibly in pursuit of democratic rights but there is no doubt that economics was one of the triggers to the seismic events.

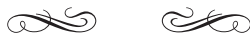
This information bonus is an illuminating by-product of the Senor-Singer exploration of the architecture of Israel's extraordinary profile as a world leader in business – which they explain by reference to several unique aspects of that nation's social contract. While many reasons may be offered to explain the statistical evidence of Israel's stunning presence on NASDAQ and other stock markets and its amazing profile in information technology and instrumentation, it is possible to narrow down the specific factors which have produced Israel as the "start-up" nation par excellence.

Both Senor and Singer have strong personal credentials to have undertaken their study. Dan Senor, a Harvard MBA, was Paul Bremer's advisor when the latter

#### SHIVA

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enter pertinent information on a private *Shiva Registry* page. Much more than an



was America's top civilian commander in Iraq under the second Bush administration. A venture capitalist with investments in Israel, Senor is well acquainted with Israeli society and is on a first name basis with hundreds of Israeli business, government and military people. His father, the late James Senor, was at one time the head of the Israel Bonds office in Toronto, Canada. Saul Singer was for many years an editorial and feature writer for *The Jerusalem Post* but is no longer with the newspaper. His knowledge of Israeli society has been carefully honed over many years.

The Arab boycott of Israel which began even before the rise of the State is, as Senor-Singer suggest, perhaps the main impetus for the nation's need to leapfrog over the attempts on the part of the Arab cousinhood to strangle the country economically, militarily and politically. This murderous ideology has had indirect influences on Israel's army, on the social character of the body politic and on the lives of ordinary citizens. The Arab world's intractable hostility and vast numerical superiority demanded that Israel's army in particular develop modalities of creativity, ingenuity and strategic thinking.

These could only be achieved by ignoring the congealed hierarchical structures that were part and parcel of military thinking from time immemorial. Thus Tzahal or the IDF, as it is known in English, looked for its leadership cadres without reference to rank, age or experience. Criticism from everyone was welcomed and consensus achieved only after wrangling over alternatives. What might be considered as insubordinate impertinence in other armies was considered a tactical advantage in Israel. The winnowing process thus saw brilliant young recruits taking command of units consisting often of older men.

What is the link between this military mentality and Israel's sprint to the top in the technology and dot.com wars? Senor-Singer show that this way of thinking was imported by demobilized soldiers into their business lives where a readiness to expose every idea to radical buffeting produced original scenarios and that failure sometimes gave birth to better ideas. The best examples of this are reproduced in the book. Pay Pal, the credit car facility and Intel, the chip manufacture discovered that contentious Israeli engineers and computer geeks, though they lacked the courteous civility

(see Ages, page 19)

online Jewish obituary, it includes funeral and shiva dates, times, places, interactive directions, mourners' contact information, food notes, synagogue affiliations, family charitable requests, eulogies and who to call if you have a question. A direct link to the Shiva Registry page can then be emailed, texted, tweeted, posted on Facebook or found through a search on ShivaConnect's home page.

With "just a click," family and friends learn sitting shiva details, find local delis to deliver shiva platters, view and post food already planned, make charitable donations, find helpful resources, read eulogies and send thoughtful messages to mourners. Each *Shiva Registry* is typically viewed by more than 100 visitors, making it convenient to "connect" with people both near and far. "People have no idea how helpful posting a Registry can be... until they use it," added Sharon. "Mourning families appreciate fewer phone calls, less stress, confusion and wasted food."

ShivaConnect has articles that are of interest to Jews and non-Jews about customs, traditions and preparing your home for sitting shiva, visiting the shiva house, Jewish prayers, poems, and *kaddish*. Another unique feature is the "Yahrzeit Reminder" which is emailed each year a week before the anniversary date, noting when to light a memorial candle.

ShivaConnect was developed by Sharon Rosen, who turned to the internet for help when her beloved Mother passed away. She searched for local Jewish funeral homes and information about Jewish shiva customs, sent emails to friends thanking them for their support and to tell them of her mother's passing. Another email was sent with final arrangements information and one more with location, days, and times for sitting shiva. She found the internet to be the most efficient and comfortable way to communicate.

Stress grew as the phone kept ringing with questions about food. Friends continued to call asking what was needed, when to send it and people from out of town called not knowing where to order from. An abundance of food was delivered, platters were taken back to delicatessens for overnight refrigeration and others were donated to a local shelter.

Exhausted and overwhelmed by this experience, Sharon thought, "There must be a better way!" and conceived the idea of an all-inclusive online resource to conveniently provide information, assistance and coordination of the bereavement period.

ShivaConnect.com is a tribute to her Mother, who always gave love and support to family and her many friends. For more information contact: Sharon Rosen, srosen@shivconnect.com, 561-289-1028. ★



## My Kosher Kitchen

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

### Honey cakes

Tishpishti originated in Turkey and was popular for Passover because it has no flour. The dense cake is soaked in syrup. The Sephardic Jews who lived in Turkey after being expelled from Spain in 1492 adopted this dish whose words mean quick and done, a quickly baked cake. Some say it was always served on Rosh Hashanah.

#### Tishpishti

- 2 cups ground almonds, hazelnuts, pistachios, or walnuts
- 1 cup cake meal
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. cloves or allspice
- 6 separated eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp. orange juice
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp. grated lemon or orange peel

#### Syrup Topping

- 3/4 cup honey
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup water
- 1/4 cup lemon juice

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a rectangular baking pan. In a mixing bowl, combine nuts, cake meal, cinnamon and cloves. In another bowl, beat egg yolks with sugar. Add to nut mixture along with orange juice, oil and orange or lemon zest. Beat egg whites in another bowl until stiff. Fold into batter. Pour into cake pan and bake 45 minutes. Place honey, sugar, water and lemon juice in a saucepan. Stir until sugar dissolves. Increase heat, bring to a boil and cook for 1 minute. Let cool. When cake is baked and cooled, cut into squares or diamonds. Drizzle syrup over cake. Serve warm or at room temperature.

#### Mom's Honey Loaf Cake

*I don't recall my mom (z"l) baking this, but it is in my collection as hers.*

- 3-1/2 cups flour
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1-1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 4 eggs

## Book Review

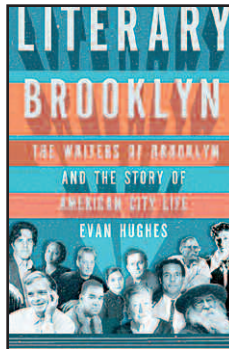
REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

### Literary capital

*Literary Brooklyn.* By Evan Hughes. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2012. 337 Pages. \$17.

During World War II, USO entertainers produced laughter and hooting when they began their show by shouting – "Is there anyone here from Brooklyn?" With their accent of "dese and dems and dose," and with their hapless baseball team, the Brooklyn Dodgers, residents of Brooklyn were often the butt of jokes. Attitudes improved in 1947 when Jackie Robinson, the first Black major leaguer, joined the team but ten years later, despair and anger greeted the move of the Dodgers to Los Angeles, a symbol of Brooklyn's decline. Nevertheless, 2,500,000 people live in Brooklyn. If it were a separate city, it would be among America's largest cities. Its 450,000 Jews make Brooklyn is one of the world's centers of Jewish population. Many Jewish writers have made and are making Brooklyn their home. They are included in this masterful presentation of Brooklyn's literary history.

Evan Hughes, critic and journalist, and a Brooklyn resident, has written a lively account of Brooklyn as home to many writers, beginning with Walt Whitman, "the grandfather of literary Brooklyn." Hughes's analysis of Whitman and his *Leaves of Grass*



- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups honey
- 1/2 cup strong coffee
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts

Preheat oven to 325°F. Grease two loaf pans or a rectangular baking pan. Combine flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, ginger and nutmeg in a bowl. Beat eggs and sugar in another bowl until fluffy. Add oil, honey and coffee. Stir in flour mixture. Add raisins and nuts. Pour into two loaf pans or a rectangular baking pan. Bake 1 and a half hours.

*Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food and feature writer, cookbook author and lecturer, who lives in Jerusalem. ★*

is a brilliant introduction to his consideration of other writers who lived in Brooklyn. Henry Miller grew up in there and inherited anti-Semitism from his middle-class family. Miller moved to Paris where he wrote *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn*, both banned in the United States. Ironically, one of Miller's two unhappy marriages was to a Jew and *Tropic of Cancer* was eventually published in America by Grove Press, run by Barney Rosset, a half-Jew.

Hughes considers Hart Crane, Marianne Moore, and Thomas Wolfe before he comes to the first of the Jewish writers he examines, Daniel Fuchs, Bernard Malamud, and Alfred Kazin, all raised in Brooklyn by immigrant parents. They made the long trip from Brooklyn to City College with its predominantly Jewish student body and they each made important contributions to American literature. Following insightful discussions of Brooklyn residents Richard Wright, Truman Capote, and William Styron, Hughes devotes a chapter to Norman Mailer who grew up in the Jewish neighborhoods of Flatbush and Crown Heights before attending Harvard. Soon after graduating in 1943, he was married, drafted, and sent to the Pacific theater where he saw combat. He returned to his wife and to Brooklyn after the war, immediately beginning to work on the novel that became *The Naked and the Dead*. After its enormous success, Mailer cultivated his image as a tough man, developing a substantial drinking problem. He kept living in Brooklyn where he raised his eight children, having been married six times. Infatuated with violence, he continued to write, winning two Pulitzer prizes and running for Mayor of New York in 1969. Hughes cites Kazin's laudatory appraisal of Mailer and offers his own evaluation, asserting that Mailer was determined to show that he was a "Brooklyn street fighter."

Jewish playwright Arthur Miller is among the other writers considered by Hughes before concluding his admirable book with a chapter on Brooklyn today as a "literary capital" whose writers enable us better to grasp "the whole incomprehensible whirl of American life." Current, former, and future residents of Brooklyn, as well as everyone else, will find this to be an informative and entertaining presentation.

### Novel on Brighton Beach community of Russian immigrants

*Vaclav & Lena.* By Haley Tanner. New York: Dial Press, 2011. 295 Pages. \$25.

This first novel marks the appearance (see Teicher, page 19)



## AGES

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admired in the West, challenged their American interlocutors to re-think basic technical concepts – with portentous results.

One of the surprises in this volume is the high praise reserved for Israeli President Shimon Peres, who encouraged the authors in their research and accorded them significant meeting time for discussions.

*Start-up Nation* contains not only a wealth of provocative ideas but is written in an attractive English style which will captivate the reader.

*Arnold Ages is "Distinguished Emeritus Professor" University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario Canada. A personal note about Dan Senior, the co-author of this book. More than 20 years ago James Senior, then the head of the Israel Bond Office in Toronto, and a good friend, called me to ask if I would offer to give a d'var Torah at his son Dan's bar mitzvah, the following week. I gladly agreed. Two days later, without warning, James died. I never got to give the d'var Torah but I have been following Dan's career ever since then. ★*



## TEICHER

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on the literary scene of Haley Tanner, a new novelist who clearly demonstrates here her fine talent and who creates the expectation of more good work to come. She is a skilled character portrayer, painting vivid pictures of the



two who give the book its title and of the secondary individuals who are involved with them. Tanner also excels in describing the backdrop for her story – the Brighton Beach, Brooklyn community of Russian immigrants, many of whom are Jews.

In the initial part of the book, Vaclav and Lena are young schoolmates who spend a considerable amount of time together and who have agreed that they will eventually be husband and wife. Vaclav helps Lena with her school work and she has agreed to be his assistant as he prepares to perform as a magician. Vaclav's mother, Rasia, who works as a receptionist and clerk at a medical supply company, ascertains that Lena is living under filthy conditions with her aunt who is a prostitute. Eventually, as the narrative develops, we learn the consequences of this discovery, one of which is that Vaclav and Lena are separated for seven years.

Tanner successfully loops her readers into the circle of her chronicle as she amplifies her description of the two lovers whose status as Russian newcomers complicates and agitates their lives. Their adaptation to life in America and to their troubled experiences evokes a sympathetic and caring concern. The author's well-developed originality is fully demonstrated as her novel unfolds with ample humor and fervor.

Born in the Bronx, New York in 1982, Tanner earned her B.A. from Clark University and her M.F.A. from the New School. She held a variety of jobs as a waitress, police dispatcher, bank teller, and tutor. The tutoring involved helping students in Brighton Beach do their homework and prepare for exams. During this work, she was inspired to write about Vaclav and Lena. They appeared first in a short story she composed for a class assignment while she was studying for her master's degree. Later, she spent three years expanding this short story into the present novel.

There is a touching dedication at the beginning of the book to Tanner's late husband: "Gavin, my partner in crime, my lovely assistant, my comrade, and the very best husband a girl could have, you are still my rising sun." After an illness that lasted for six years, Gavin died of cancer at the beginning of 2011 when Tanner was 28 years old. She now lives in Brooklyn with her two dogs and with the furniture that Gavin made from reclaimed wood.

*Dr. Morton I. Teicher spent many summers as a youngster in Brooklyn's Coney Island. He married a Brooklyn girl and lived there briefly after World War II. His first social work experience was as a volunteer in a Brooklyn settlement house. He has been a frequent visitor to Israel since 1963 and 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. Dr. Teicher is the Founding Dean, Wurzwiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University and Dean Emeritus, School of Social Work, UNC at Chapel Hill. ★*



## KAPLAN/ISRAEL

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Esther contacted a few wineries in the north of Israel and received a call from Jonathan Tishbi, owner of the sixth largest winery in Israel, Tishbi Estate Winery. She soon met with him, and he offered her a job as an English tour guide, assisting with English marketing, working in the Visitors' Center and waitressing.

A week later, she packed up her bags and moved from Jerusalem to Zichron Yaacov.

"Working at a winery is somewhat of a

romantic concept, and it inspired me on a daily basis, especially living in such a beautiful town that was from the first pioneers of the First Aliyah in 1882."

Esther took the bus to work each day and looked over the vineyards of the Binyamina Valley and the hills of the Carmel Mountains.

"I was in awe at the beauty and proud so many Jewish people went to build the land of Israel."

She worked in Hebrew with the staff, computers and customers. The first time she waitressed on a busy day, she ended up crying in the bathroom, asking herself, what was a 26-year-old American with two degrees and 10 years of work experience doing there? But over the course of time and support, the staff taught her to have confidence in Hebrew to waitress, talk to the kitchen staff and conduct a wine tasting.

After eight months, Esther realized there was a demand for organized wine tours in Israel. So two years ago, she decided to start My Israel Wine Tours, conducting wine tours in English. Esther explains the history of Israeli wine, the modern day trends in the Israeli wine industry and the art and science of wine making. A wine tour takes a visitor to three wineries, a brewery, a nice restaurant for lunch and sometimes a dairy.

"From its launching in January 2010, I have taken 500 people on more than 100 wine tours all around Israel's wine regions which are the Golan Heights, the Galilee, Carmel, Jerusalem and the Negev."

Although there were many challenges as an English speaker, Esther hired an accountant, a graphic designer and has received the support of the wineries.

Esther says the Israelis she has met have also given her great support because she is part of building an industry and she had the *chutzpa* to go for her dreams.

In July, Esther married Jonathan Amerikaner, a cinematographer from California, who made aliyah two years ago. The couple lives in Givatayim.

In the future, Esther says her vision is just for the next two years. "I would like to run My Israel Wine Tours from behind the scenes, doing VIP sales, marketing and PR and have trained wine experts who can take people in French, Russian, English and maybe even Hebrew. I want to have five tours a day going out!"

For more information, check out her website, MyIsraelWineTours.com or email her at myisraelwinetours@gmail.com.

*Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, cookbook author and Jerusalem Post columnist who leads shuk tours in the Jerusalem Jewish Machaneh Yehudah market and has a weekly radio spot, Shuk Shopping, on the internet radio station RustyMikeRadio.com. ★*



## Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

### Being a part of Jerusalem history

The Kaplans were part of history. We rode the light rail in its first day of operation! The project of a light rail from the suburb of Pisgat Zeev through East Jerusalem, downtown and out to Mount Herzl was initiated in 1995. Construction started to disrupt Jerusalem in 2002.

For the past few months, the train has been making trial runs through Jerusalem, and booths sprouted up everywhere asking people to get their special cards with a photo to use when riding.

Fri., Aug. 19, the trains started running at 5:30 a.m. and were free for the next two weeks without showing the card or paying. Barry and I met downtown a little after noon and made our way to the stop at the corner of King George and Jaffa Road.

Do you know what a sardine feels like? Or maybe an anchovy? We were pushed on to the train along with many, many others including many religious men with strollers, holding on to their other children, who were not certain what this was all about.

A beautiful Arab girl in traditional headdress, blue nail polish and blue eye makeup got on with some young Arab boys; families, senior citizens, young couples, teenagers, people of all ages and classes were gathered to take this ride.

Barry rode it two stops, crammed against the doors, and left at Machaneh

Yehudah, the produce market. I got a seat and decided to ride it a few stops and over the Santiago Calatrava light train bridge located near the Central Bus Station. The location is considered as the "modern entrance" to the City of Jerusalem. In ancient times, this road connected the old city of Jerusalem with the Tel Aviv Highway, Jaffo at the Mediterranean Sea, and Herzl Boulevard, one of the most important arteries of the new city of Jerusalem.

Calatrava designed this cable-stayed bridge with a single inclined pylon that creates a clear visual direction towards the city. The cables are arranged in a parabolic shape which develops three-dimensionally in space, thus amplifying the impressive visual impact unique for this bridge. Overall, the strings and form of this structure suggest a giant harp – the harp of King David, as a symbol of the holy city – inspiring city residents to call it the "Bridge of Strings."

As I rode along, I noticed the buses running on the streets were noticeably less filled with passengers. At least three white-shirted people were at each station, on both sides, handing out information

brochures and making sure people were far back from the edges of the platforms. Arriving at the first stop after the bridge, I got off, crossed the tracks and got on the crowded train heading back to the city.

The 13.8 kilometer line (8 1/2 miles) will take approximately 42 minutes from end to end. During rush hour, it will run every four minutes; off times, it will run every 10 minutes. It will run Sunday through Thursday from 5:30 a.m. until midnight; no word on the Friday hours. It will not run Saturday, and it will begin running Saturday evening half an hour after Shabbat ends. I can hardly wait to ride from one end to the other!

#### The woman and the wine tours

When 25 year old Esther Cohen made *aliyah* from Peabody, Mass., in June 2008, she took advantage of the five months living at a residential Ulpan (language-study program) in Jerusalem then discovered her Hebrew wasn't what she thought it should be to get a job.



Esther Cohen started My Israel Wine Tours, conducting wine tours in English.

"Wine was a hobby of mine from my travel experience in New Zealand and Europe and a friend who owned a liquor store in Boston. I liked drinking wine, I knew that Israel had a developing wine industry and if I was going to learn Hebrew, I figured it ought to be doing something that I enjoyed," she said.

(see Kaplan/Israel, page 19)



The Jerusalem light rail in its first day of operation. Photos by Barry A. Kaplan/Jerusalem.