

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

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Cover photo by Steve Schuster.  
(see About the Cover, p.2)



# Editorial

As part of the Heartland Film Festival that took place in Indianapolis Oct. 18–27, I saw a movie that I highly recommend – *Besa: The Promise*. Before I mention details of this documentary, this Festival was started in Indianapolis in 1992 to showcase uplifting independent films that celebrate the positive aspects of life. These movies promote positive change in people's lives through the transformative power of film.

The Festival has expanded over time and is now one of the fastest growing in the country showing films from all over the world. As was the case in this viewing, frequently the filmmakers are at the theater afterward to answer questions from the audience.



Producer Bill Morgan, Managing Partner of JWM Productions makes his home in Carmel, Ind., immediately north of Indianapolis. He was on hand and stated that during the eight years it took to make the movie, approximately a dozen elderly witnesses filmed had died.

In advance of the showing, I received an email about the movie with a press release. After researching, I understood the movie is about, among others, a Muslim family from Albania during World War II who, at the risk of their own lives, hid a Jewish family from Bulgaria in their home.

In my email to the producers, I wrote that with the focus of media attention today on Muslim suicide bombers targeting Israeli Jews, it would be nice to see an example of the opposite. This brought to mind other times in history when Muslims were good to Jews such as when they were expelled from Spain in 1492 and were welcomed in Turkey and other Muslim countries. However, I said I would not attend if the movie had a lot of graphic violence.

One of the producers and editor, Christine Romero responded. "In our film, there are none of those images, although there are emotional stories told in the first person by rescuers and witnesses that reveal great bravery." She said this allows

# About the Cover

Early morning in the Jewish Quarter

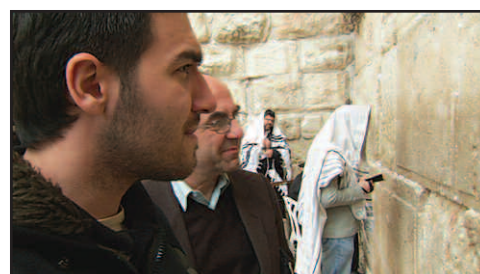
This photo by Steve Schuster, who visits Israel three or four times a year, was taken in Jerusalem in the summer of 2012.

Steve Schuster is a past-president of Temple Sinai in Worcester, Mass, and sits on the Massachusetts council of AIPAC. He and his wife Julie have four children, as well as six pets rescued from the streets in Israel. A writer and engineer, Steve is CEO and founder of Rainier, a leading PR agency for technology companies, including more than 40 Israeli firms. Steve travels to Israel every three months on business and is deeply committed to providing a voice in North America for Israel's innovation economy. Steve has BSEE and MBA degrees from Northeastern University and is an avid musician, vegetarian, hiker, photographer, gardener, and fitness enthusiast. Steve's Liberation Haggadah was published in 2009. He can be reached at [steve@rainierco.com](mailto:steve@rainierco.com). ★

Holocaust survivors and World War II veterans to enjoy an uplifting story about an important piece of history that is nearly unknown, without having to see a repeat of graphic images.

In this movie, Muslims who hid Jews started calling them by Muslim names and gave them Muslim garb to wear so that when the Nazis came and asked who they were, the Muslims could say they were distant family members who had come to stay with them.

When one of the Muslims was asked by one of the filmmakers what gave them the courage to risk their own lives for strangers, the response was that it is part of their religious beliefs. Also according to the Albanian moral code "besa" – which is practiced throughout this nation without regard to religion – when a person in need comes and asks for help, it becomes an obligation to help that person in every possible way. The Albanians stood up to the Nazis armed with this moral code.



Rexhep Hoxha (r) and his son Ermal (l) at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. ©JWM Productions, LLC.

According to the movie, approximately 2,000 Jewish lives were saved by Albanians, 70 percent of whom were

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Muslims. Also mentioned is that due to their sympathetic king, Albania was the only country in Eastern Europe who allowed refuge to the Jews.

(see Editorial, page 19)

# Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

## Proof

Why should we learn *Torah* and do *mitzvahs*? Because this is the will of *Hashem*, our Creator and Father.

What proof do we have that the *Torah* is from *Hashem*? The Lubavitcher Rebbe once offered a simple proof. It works! Those who live a life of *Torah* have success in all aspects of their life. They have peace of mind and happiness.

When you buy a new car, the manufacturer provides you with a handbook of instructions, how to take care of the car. If you follow the instructions you can enjoy your car for many years. If not you will have all kinds of trouble. *Hashem* created us, and gave us the *Torah*. In the *Torah* we find instructions and guidance how we should live our lives.

Take for example relationships. In *Chassidic* communities almost all children marry in their late teens and early twenties. This is usually their first relationship, and it usually lasts for a lifetime.

In the secular world some relationships survive only a few hours or a few days. There are a lot of lonely singles and divorcees out there. Some never marry and some marry a few times.

What are the secrets of success that we learn in the *Torah*? First of all, marriage is meant to be something very holy. It is the unification of two halves of one soul. When you were born, only half of your soul came down into your body. The other half came down into your future spouse. If you marry the right person you can experience wholeness. You are not just a half anymore. You are part of one whole. This is a beautiful experience.

After you realize the great beauty and importance of marriage you are willing to make sacrifices and work hard to make it succeed. Almost all marriages have rough spots and difficulties. If you experience how holy and wonderful marriage is, you won't just throw in the towel when the going gets rough.

Relationships before and outside of marriage are not allowed. This is an incentive to get married as soon as possible to the one right person.

How do you know if the person you are meeting is your soul mate? This is complicated. First, find your own soul. Our soul is hidden deep in our heart. It is possible to live your life and not even realize that you have a soul. To find your soul you have to look for it. When you feel holiness, on a holy day or at a holy place, this is from your soul.



# Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

Nov. 2, 2012, *Vayera*  
Gen. 18:1–22:24, 17 *Cheshvan* 5773

I feel inadequate to write about what happened this week. For those of us in northeast Ohio the eventual superstorm began with a typical front of rain that pushed through late last week bringing rain and cooler weather. The rain wasn't overwhelming – just rain. At the same time Hurricane Sandy was pushing up the east coast and, as its massive diameter moved inland, it stalled this front over Ohio and then merged with it, and it rained. (As I sit and write this morning, I can look out the window and actually see blue sky for the first time in over a week.)

Yes, this storm reached Ohio and knocked out power in our area, but it was much worse to the north as one gets closer to Cleveland. This storm was so huge that it hit every place that I've lived except St. Louis; at least I don't think it got to St. Louis. It was in Washington, DC, Lexington, Indianapolis, and Canton.

But my *kvetching* is meaningless as compared to the devastation and destruction this storm brought to New Jersey and New York. Unless your power has been out or you've been living absent of being connected to anything, then you've seen the pictures of the flooding in NYC, the fire in Queens, the drowning of Hoboken



I remember growing up in the secular world. I hardly ever prayed. When did I really pray? On *Yom Kippur*, the holiest day of the year.

When you help someone in need, when you cheer up someone who is sad, you feel a spiritual happiness. This is from your soul.

To learn about your soul and find it, learn *Chassidism*. *Chassidism* helps us to tune in into our soul and other matters of spirituality.

After you find your soul, begin to learn *Torah* and fulfill the *mitzvahs*. Find yourself a wise and experienced spiritual advisor to guide you. When you feel comfortable with this, ask your spiritual advisor if you are ready for marriage.

If you get a green light, then get in touch with a matchmaker. Matchmakers are *Hashem's* messengers to help people find their soul mates. Your spiritual advisor can recommend one.

If you feel that you have found your soul mate, go back to your spiritual advisor and  
(see Benzion, page 4)

and the destruction of miles upon miles of the New Jersey coastline.

Last night I watched a report on Staten Island that seems to have taken a huge hit, but the borough also seems to have been overlooked. It is finally getting the attention it needs. I know that New Yorkers are resilient and will fight to rebuild their broken lives, but losing everything so quickly is just hard. I don't know how else to put it.

I am married to a woman from Louisiana who jumped in her car and headed home to Baton Rouge right after Katrina passed through to do what she could for those whose lives had been turned upside down. I have relatives in Texas who weathered a hurricane. I remember Agnes coming through DC in 1972.

Anyone who has lived through or near – or has known others who have lived through or near – a hurricane, knows the power of water and the force of nature that we can't control. Long ago, people might have said it was the wrath of the gods taking out their anger on humans because of something we had done. Not so long ago people blamed this on the errant ways and lifestyles of some people. Like many others I know, they believe that this is just the way that nature works, but that doesn't make it any easier. We can predict and warn, but it doesn't stop the tide from rising, the waves from crashing, the winds from howling or the skies from raining.

The people affected by this storm are going to need our help. The government through FEMA is going to do what it can, but the Red Cross and other relief agencies need our support. It is going to take awhile to clean up the mess from this destruction and people will be in shelters and food lines for any number of days or longer. This is the time to give and be generous. There are many ways to give. Reform Judaism has created a relief fund, [urj.org/socialaction/issues/relief/hurricanes/](http://urj.org/socialaction/issues/relief/hurricanes/) please give here or to the relief fund of your choice. As President Obama and Governor Christie showed us, this is no time to play politics as we are talking about real lives and real people threatened in real ways.

When you light your Shabbat candles this evening, light one candle for all those who are stranded without power, without a home, without the comfort they had just last week. Light the other candle to bring comfort to those who lost a loved one. And though we don't usually light three candles, maybe just add a third one this evening to the first responders and all those helping others.

Rabbi Adland has been a Reform rabbi for more than 25 years with pulpits in Lexington, Ky., Indianapolis, Ind., and currently at Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio. He may be reached at [j.adland@gmail.com](mailto:j.adland@gmail.com). ★



# Live from Terre Haute, it's Elliott Gould!

CANDLES Annual Fundraiser

By SUSAN LERNER

How did TV and movie star, Elliott Gould, end up in Terre Haute, Ind., the weekend of Oct. 13, 2012? Oscar-nominated Gould is known for his roles in movies such as *M\*A\*S\*H*, *Ocean's Eleven*, *Ocean's Twelve*, *Ocean's Thirteen*, and *The Muppet Movie*, and has worked extensively in television, notably as Monica and Ross's father, Jack Geller, on the hit series *Friends*. He flew to Terre Haute to speak at the annual fall fundraiser for C.A.N.D.L.E.S. Holocaust Museum.

CANDLES is an acronym for Children of Auschwitz Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors, and its founder, Eva Kor, is one of those survivors. When Kor gave her usual Saturday presentation the afternoon of the fundraiser, Gould sat attentively in the audience, taking notes. "I'm here to support Eva, her work, and the museum," he said. Ms. Kor, an energetic and diminutive woman, began her presentation to the group of 20 by explaining that Hitler came to power in 1933, one year before she was born. "My destiny had already been decided."

Kor and her family were taken to Auschwitz by cattle car. They exited at an area called a selection platform, and it was here that she saw her parents and two older sisters for the last time. She lost everyone in her family but her twin, Miriam, within 30 minutes of their arrival. In a bathroom she saw three corpses, and at that moment she made a vow to do everything in her power to stay alive. Dr. Josef Mengele subjected Eva and Miriam to cruel and humiliating experiments, all in the name of science. "I spoiled the experiments. I survived," Kor remarked.

Kor's anguish didn't end when she and Miriam were freed from Nazi tyranny. Like many Holocaust survivors, she continued to suffer from after-effects of trauma. She now espouses an ideology that sets her apart from many others in her situation and sets CANDLES apart from Holocaust memorial organizations – she advocates forgiveness. She came to this conclusion over time, and her journey is captured in the documentary, *Forgiving Dr. Mengele*.

For Kor, forgiveness isn't dependent on whether or not the perpetrator atones, and it doesn't mean she forgets that crimes were committed. "It was time to forgive, but not to forget," she said. It wasn't until she forgave the Nazis that she was able to heal herself. She said, "Forgiveness gives me complete freedom from the pain."



Eva Kor and Elliot Gould. Photo credit: Jean Kristeller.

"I want to get to know Eva," Gould told me. At 74, Elliott Gould still sports his trademark curls and wry smile. Despite his decades-long film career, he didn't exhibit any evidence of a Hollywood ego. In speaking about celebrity and Judaism he said, "My Judaism is a fabric of who I am. I'm a good Jew, but I'm not observant. I believe that religion has to do with what kind of human being you are and how you live, not for the recognition you receive."

For Gould, those aren't empty words. He helped with the first Lubavitch telethon. He worked for Chabad when the Chabad house at UCLA was burned down. A project he's particularly proud of is a video he completed last year for Aish Hatorah, "Listen to Grandpa, Andy Ling." "I play Grandpa, and Andy Ling is my grandson, a 30-year-old who has lost his values and finds them by reconnecting with me."

Gould told me how, as a young man, he was held captive by his fears. Over the years he has, as he put it "learned to see through the darkness into the light." Along this path, he met a variety of people whose words of wisdom helped him. One of these pivotal figures was Indiana-born coach John Wooden, who spoke to Gould about love and the importance of maintaining balance in one's life.

CANDLES' fundraiser, billed as "Live from Terre Haute, It's Elliott Gould!" took place in a ballroom at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, a nearby institution which has long supported Kor's work. Before dinner, a five-piece band played standards while Gould obliged the crowd, glad-handing and posing for pictures. After dinner the band played the *M\*A\*S\*H* theme song as Mr. Gould took his place

## BENZION

(continued from page 3)

discuss the issue. If it looks positive, then ask the Rebbe, to make sure.

A good marriage is priceless. You have your soul mate, your partner for life. What is the price of a soul mate? Far above rubies. You can have priceless treasures, children and grandchildren, and so forth.

If a husband and wife merit and live their life together according to the Torah in peace and happiness, then the Divine Presence dwells with them in their house. This is a big step towards our complete and final redemption, the coming of *Moshiach*. At that time, soon, the entire world will be full of only peace and happiness, full of the knowledge of Hashem.

The Rebbe told us that it is up to us to bring *Moshiach*. If you are married, make your marriage better. How? Ask a spiritual advisor. If you are not yet married, try to find your soul mate and get married. Through this we can make our life better, and thus make the world that much better, and bring *Moshiach* now! Long live *Moshiach*!

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on the stage for an extended Q&A with the audience.

"It's a privilege and a blessing to be here," he said. Audience members asked Gould a variety of questions, from what it was like to be married to Barbra Streisand "a great privilege", to what's on his bucket list "to be a wonderful grandfather to my grandchildren". In one of the evening's funnier moments, someone asked him if former *Friends* cast member, Courtney Cox, had ever invited him to guest star on her new show, *Cougar Town*. "That would frighten me," said Gould.

When Mr. Gould finished answering questions, Eva Kor joined him onstage. She spoke about her upcoming educational trip to Auschwitz, and encouraged Gould and others to join her. Gould expressed genuine interest, and it was such a positive gesture that it brought to mind his remark concerning darkness and light. Kor had survived dark times most of us could barely imagine, and is now an advocate for self-healing through forgiveness. The work she does through CANDLES has lit the way for many. The evening concluded as she looked out at the crowd and said, "Never give up on your dreams."

Susan Lerner is a freelance writer living in Indianapolis. She is working towards an MFA in Creative Writing and posts book reviews at <http://booklerner.blogspot.com>. ★



## Smaller Congregations

BY RABBI AUDREY S. POLLACK

### Hakarat hatov – Recognizing the good

In Mid-October, a leadership team from our congregation participated in the Flourishing Congregations workshop, sponsored by the Indianapolis Center for Congregations. You can read more about the Indianapolis Center and the workshop here: [www.centerforcongregations.org/workshop/flourishing-congregations-moving-dreams-reality](http://www.centerforcongregations.org/workshop/flourishing-congregations-moving-dreams-reality).

The premise of Flourishing Congregations is that by asking the right questions and focusing on possibilities rather than problems, a congregational community will be able to see the larger picture and create energy, innovative ideas and solutions.

By asking, "What's the possibility we see in this situation?" we find that:

- what we ask determines what we find;
- what we find determines how we talk;
- how we talk determines how we imagine together;

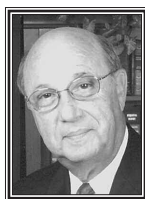
- how we imagine together determines what we achieve.

(Sue Hammond, *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*, pages 6-7.)

By beginning with the question of "What gives life when our congregation functions at its best?", we are able to search for the best in people, our congregation and the community around us. Our workshop day was a model for what we can do in our congregations – asking the right questions and using the assets that we already have.

We began the day with Appreciative Inquiry interviews, personal conversations with someone we did not know and asked questions like: "Tell me about an experience in your congregation when you felt most alive, most fulfilled, or most enthusiastic about the congregation" or "Tell me about a time when you most deeply felt a sense of belonging in the congregation." These stories helped us to uncover the positive core of our congregation's lives and lifted up the potentials and possibilities and reminded us that in every congregation something works very well.

Our day continued with World Cafe, a large group process where we met in successive rounds of small group conversations that created a "culture of dialogue" and allowed us to brainstorm and share ideas about best practices that work in our congregations and network to



## Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

### There is so much to be grateful for

In *Midrash Rabbah* it is written that Rabbi Aibo said: "When the Angels objected to the creation of man, God replied: 'And of what use are all of the good things I have created unless people are there to enjoy them?'"

Perhaps that is what Thanksgiving is all about. It is not only the good things that we realize for ourselves through the efforts of our labor, but also to understand that God gave us the ability to discover these treasures.

Thanksgiving enables us to comprehend the true meaning of life: To be thankful for all the harvests of our days. God is where God should be—in our hearts and minds, in our deeds and actions, in our relationships and understanding of each other.

Thanksgiving should help us realize that we are responsible for one another and that there can be no true jubilation without this moral standard. We are responsible to others for our actions and the consequences of those actions. We are responsible to God for those things that relate to our spiritual well-being. We are responsible to ourselves for purpose and meaning in our lives.

Our lives are so tenuous, our existence indeed fragile, and the gift of life so



find ways we can learn from each other and/or work together in the community.

We also spent time in the process of "Asset Mapping," using post-its and big sheets of paper as we considered what our assets, strengths and resources are and how we can match up unconnected assets to each other to strengthen our congregation and to create new ideas and new possibilities.

Not surprisingly, these resources can work well in congregational life because they focus on hope rather than dwelling on the negative, something that is the essence of what it means to be a community of faith.

Not surprisingly, also, is that in Judaism we have a Hebrew term, *hakarat hatov*, for this idea of appreciative inquiry, or looking for the positive, or being reminded that something works well. *Hakarat hatov* literally translates as "Recognizing the good."

(see Pollack, page 13)

temporary that we should take the time to celebrate, rejoice, and give thanks. "And of what use are all of the good things I have created unless people are there to enjoy them." God tells us to marvel in His creation, to take advantage of the very essence of life's wonderment. The very act of creation was and is the gift of a lifetime.

We have so much to be grateful for. We get up each morning and see all that is before us. We watch a bird fly and are astounded that it can soar into the unknown. We walk on the grass and are amazed that as seasons change so does nature. Children teach us about the cycle of time: They crawl, they walk, they make sounds, they talk, they grow and eventually wither and then we witness birth all over again. We lose a loved one but are comforted with the wonder of eternalness.

Thanksgiving is also a time to be thankful for our country and all that it represents to us and the world around us. America represents all that is good in the human spirit. We are a people devoted to the exploration of the imagination. We treasure benevolence and practice it every waking moment. But we also know that we have failings because we are human, created in the image of God to be godlike, but with fallibilities. We can offend, but we can also forgive; we at times are lonely but understand that love can erase that feeling of emptiness; we can be foolish but blend it with a modicum of discretion; we experience grief but temper it with understanding. We can be all these things and also realize that the journey of life is filled with all this and more because God invited us to participate in His gift of life – not the Angels, but us.

And Thanksgiving gives us the ability to be grateful for the men and women who serve this country with the same zeal of generations past. They serve on distant shores and here at home because they know that the price of liberty is vigilance and preparedness.

Families will gather together on this American holiday to feast on turkey, enjoy stories of yesterday's celebrations and make wishes for the dreams of tomorrow. We will reflect and finally come to the realization that the insignificant things that drag us down are not important if we are to survive as a nation. And we should never forget how fortunate we are as Americans.

This is what Thanksgiving is all about: God gave us the wonderfulness of life, the magic of day and night, the capacity to hope for a brighter tomorrow. And He did all this, not for the Angels, but for us.

Rabbi Irwin Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation. Comments to [ravyitz@cox.net](mailto:ravyitz@cox.net). His new book, *Living with Faith*, will be published in January, 2013. ★





## Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

### The inner work during Cheshvan

Began on Oct. 17.

Each month offers new opportunities for healing and transformation. In the previous month of *Tishrei*, we lived in a spiritual bubble of holidays. We were either preparing for a holiday or celebrating one. *Tishrei* is a time of receiving new visions and insights for new beginnings for the coming year.

Now in *Cheshvan* with no holidays, we begin to do the inner work to make our dreams and visions a reality. We actually undertake something new! We may make small changes that we can more easily incorporate into our lives and/or we may take huge leaps of faith and make some radical changes in our lives but we consciously do not do what we always did.

We all know that it often not easy to really change. As much as we may want change, there are forces within us that are frightened and resistant. Encountering our resistance is all part of the process of growth our souls desire.

The Torah portions for this month provide helpful guidance on how to change within ourselves so as to realize our new visions and potential. *Cheshvan* is welcomed with the reading of the Torah portion Noah. As you recall, Noah was instructed to build an ark to protect himself, his family and representatives of the animal species against the floods aimed to destroy the people and animals who had engaged in corrupt behavior that was not in accordance with divine intention for creation.

Similarly, we also need to build an ark within ourselves to afford us safety as we are further cleansed of the parts within ourselves that are not in alignment with our true nature and the blessings of newness that our souls desire. The ark we build ourselves provides a sanctuary for nurturing and maintaining the purity of the divine intention of our souls in the midst of the floods and challenges of this month, this year and throughout our life.

The Hebrew word for ark is *teva*, which means "word". The arks we build in our lives are the positive words of love, prayer and blessing that we utter. Positive words provide a sanctuary for us, and we need to fortify ourselves with them during this month. We each need to make a conscious

effort to speak positively, to express words of love and blessing more than we might do otherwise.

During *Cheshvan*, it is natural to find ourselves letting go – more than most other months – of what no longer serves the new spiritual order of blessing that we opened to in the month of *Tishrei*. Loss is common this month. Just as the trees shed their leaves in *Cheshvan*, we also shed parts of ourselves as we open to and reveal the new within us. It is a new year, a new order.

Let go of the desire for life to be the same as it was before. Holding on to such sentimentality will hold you back this year. What worked for us last year may not be even good for us this year. We need to let go gracefully as we deepen our opening and alignment to the new order.

As we move forward, we may become aware of the fears that have limited us in the past. Remember that what we fear often points us in the direction of where we need to go to experience more expansiveness and freedom. Our minds can give us many reasons to not do what we are afraid of doing. What enables us to go through our fear is faith. Faith is not a passive belief in a God external to us, but it is the experience of this Being, this holy Presence within us. When we go through our fears, we will naturally feel more energy and freedom.

Contact the spirit of the warrior this month to go forward in accordance with your dreams. Do not retreat. Do not settle. Be happy to let go of what keeps you back and joyful to open to the new. With God's help, we can defeat negative beliefs, fears and limiting concepts, live our dreams, and be happy to be who we really are.

I want to recommend a new book by Rabbi Dr. Cousens, *Torah as a Path of Enlightenment*. I began reading it again on *Shabbos Bereshit* and was literally thrilled. Rabbi Dr. Gabriel Cousens has been a trailblazer in the raw food movement. As a medical doctor who has been innovative in alternative medicine, he has helped to restore vibrant health to so many people who were unable to cure their chronic and acute illnesses elsewhere. What is not widely known is that he is a meditation master, a *kabbalistic* scholar and an observant Jew.

*Torah as a Path of Enlightenment* reveals the most profound teachings in an easy conversational tone that makes it accessible to people of all backgrounds. As he shares his research, wisdom and authentic source material, he opens the heart of the reader. Not only is the wisdom in the book holy, this book itself is a spiritual transmission. It is a wonderful doorway for spiritual seekers into the



## Jewish Ambassador

BY RABBI GABRIEL COUSENS, MD

### Shabbat service in Nigeria

Over the past few years, as a holistic physician focusing on Diabetes and a rabbi, I have been traveling to different countries doing humanitarian work in general, and setting up Diabetes prevention educational centers in specific. One of the most interesting visits was in December 2010. It was to an area in Nigeria, where I worked with the regional king, Chief C.A.C. Eronini, PhD. He is the king of Awo Mberi Kingdom, Owerri, Nigeria.

I am helping to set up a nutritional school for children to supply meals for all the kids, in addition to an organic garden and sprout house. The school is called, Academy for Success/Tree of Life Foundation Nutrition and Diabetes Prevention Center.



While visiting I noticed many Stars of David throughout the area. When I asked the king about this, he explained that his people were originally one of the  
(see Cousens, page 15)



depths of Torah, as well as nourishing food for those who are highly knowledgeable. Everyone will benefit from reading and meditating on the wisdom in this book.

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 more than 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)). Her new book, The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women will be coming out soon. She can be reached by email at [Beitmiriam@msn.com](mailto:Beitmiriam@msn.com) or [Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com](mailto:Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com). ★

# Gather the People



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

## Prayer as a uniting force

Sometimes when we pray, especially if we're alone and facing a crisis, it seems like we're trying to make some kind of "deal" with God – as if by supplicating oneself in prayer, God will grant what we pray for.

It's a difficult proposition, because much of the time we're not sure *who* or *what* or *how* God is to us – even when we're praying. At other times, say when the health or life of a child or spouse or parent is threatened, we're reduced to desperate entreaties that are little more than emergency bail-out communications to heaven. These prayers are all variations on a single theme: "Help! – please God, save this life!"

In our desperation it's a natural inclination to offer ourselves up to God in exchange for the Divine kindness we're seeking. So we're tempted to vow to live better lives, in effect to do God's will, if only our loved one is saved.

For many of us, unfortunately, our scientific outlook rejects the possibility of any connection between (a) our pathetic pleading and vow of future moral action, and (b) the hoped-for Divine intervention. So one way we commonly understand this desperate bargaining with God is simply as an attempt to satisfy our emotional need to maintain hope when all seems lost because we feel powerless.

But there is another, far more spiritually efficacious way to understand such vows. In Genesis 28:10–19, after Yaakov has managed to obtain for himself his father's blessing, he flees from his brother, from Eisav's anger and potential violence. He is going to the house of his maternal grandfather, his mother's father, Bethuel, to find a wife among the family of his uncle, his mother's brother, Lavan. On the way he has a dream in which he sees angels going up and down a ladder that reaches to heaven. When he wakes from the dream he realizes that he was in "the house of God...the gate of heaven." He takes the stone that he had used for a headrest as he slept, sets it up as a pillar, and then anoints it with oil.

The scripture then reads: "Then Yaakov

vowed a vow, saying: if God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back in peace to my father's house, then shall Adonai be my God. And this stone that I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house; and of all that You [God] shall give me, I shall surely give a tenth [back] to You." (Genesis 28:20–22)

Is this vow, in fact, nothing more than an effort by Yaakov to "bargain" with God? Is Yaakov saying, in effect, if You guard my safety and ensure my success on this trip, I'll build a house for You and give back ten percent of what I receive from Your goodness to promote and protect Your name in the world? And, by implication, if You don't do those things for me, I won't dedicate a house and 10 percent of my income to You?

Our Torah commentators explain that Yaakov's vow should *not* be interpreted as bargaining with God, because he had already been promised everything that he had asked for, and he had no reason to doubt God's word. Recall that in Genesis 28:15, God says to Yaakov in his dream: "Remember, I am with you: I will protect you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land."

The lesson is that Yaakov is not setting conditions for God; he is not bargaining; but instead he is expressing his commitment to do God's will if he is favored with the right conditions – that is, if the obstacles that would prevent him from serving God are removed. According to Nehama Leibowitz (1905–1997), "...If God would not grant him to return to his father's house, how would he be able to erect a temple on the spot? All that Yaakov's vow implied was: 'Give me the opportunity of serving You.'"

But why then should Yaakov question whether God is going to fulfill the promises he has already made to him? Because, as Nehama Leibowitz also teaches, in the Jewish tradition it is understood unequivocally that, "The righteous man cannot assume that he has been granted an irrevocable title deed to comfort and protection, and he has no longer to stand in awe of his Master but can do as he likes.... Yaakov did not cast doubt on God or His credibility, but on himself and his capacity to withstand temptation." Yaakov was implicitly questioning whether he had the ability to remain deserving of God's beneficence.

Yaakov was not bargaining with God but reinforcing through prayer his own commitment to use for the good all the benefits he might receive from God. According to the Midrash, Yaakov feared that because of his sinfulness he might lose the promised blessings, so he prayed

that God would return him to his father's house, physically whole and with all his possessions and knowledge, and protect him from idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed in the land he was entering. (Bereshit Rabbah 70:4)

The *Zohar* (literally, "radiance" – the classic of Jewish mystical commentary on the Torah and the primary work of Kabbalah) provides an insight into the sweep of Yaakov's vow. Yaakov is saying: "In the same way Elohim [God] will fulfill for me all these good promises, so I will draw toward Him from my region all those blessings and will *make Him the all-comprehensive uniting force*." (*Zohar*, Bereshit 1:150b) (Our emphasis.)

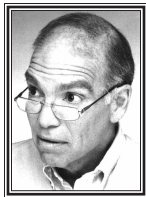
What, precisely, does Yaakov seek to have comprehensively united? Yaakov's words and deeds seemingly reflect an understanding that the conditions of his life are partly in his own hands, his own responsibility, partly in the hands of his family and community, Am Yisrael (the Jewish people), and partly a matter of Divine providence. In the crisis he faced, or those we face, there was for him, as there can be for us, a recognition that the outcomes we seek to influence rise or fall according to whether we are living and acting together, united as one in a community, in ways that complement God's creation.

Yet realistically it seems that acting together for the commonweal, united in a congregational community, requires that you love your neighbor as yourself, which on the face of it, given disparate interests and commonplace conflict in congregational life, is a seemingly unreasonable expectation. But the commentary of Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808–1888) on Genesis 50:17 teaches that we are *not* commanded to love our *neighbor* as ourself; the *mitzvah* reads *v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha* (Leviticus 19:18) – that is, we are expected to love only that which *belongs to our neighbor*, "his health, well being, happiness, and success," as if it were our own, regardless of our personal dislike or distaste for our neighbor.

How are we, in the light of Yaakov's vows, to formulate our own understanding and approach to seeking Divine intervention? The effect on us of vowing as Yaakov did is to say: If I am given an opportunity to shape the world in God's image, so as to avoid or diminish the pain of loss in the future, I will fully give of myself to do so; I will also act to encourage and support others to do so communally, regardless of our past differences.

Certainly we are not personally culpable for all the misfortune that occurs in the world, unless of course we have caused it directly. But as Rabbi Abraham Joshua (see Ben Asher/Bat Sarah, page 9)





## Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

### When worlds collide

What did you expect would happen? Nature abhors a vacuum. Remove a political structure that has been place for decades and have nothing to replace it with and what did you think would happen?

A revolution is a messy process. Our founders at least had an idea of what kind of a country they wanted when it was decided to break away from the United Kingdom. They knew they did not want a monarchy. They knew they wanted a form of government that would be elected at least by some of the people. They knew that they needed a separation of powers. Good start.

Israel too, had this idea. They chose a British model, but no monarchy. A parliamentary system, but no House of Lords. House of Lords? In a Jewish State? Are you kidding?

Egypt has not had an elected government for oh, maybe 5,000 years? Libya went from Kings to dictators, Syria was left by the French and replaced them with a military dictatorship. It goes on. And when the West finally woke up that it would no longer work to just pay off the strong men, it was too late. Into this vacuum swept the Jihadists. What did you expect?

Israel intelligence warned the U.S. in the Gulf war not to go dashing into Baghdad. They told us that if we toppled Saddam, Iran would be there in a New York minute. So we didn't.

Jim Baker, Bush #41's Secretary of State, told the Kurds to revolt, that we had their back. We didn't. And Saddam gassed thousands of them. We went in again, for as it turns out no reason and now it is a fine mess with the Iranians and the Jihadists just waiting it out till the next chapter, probably less than a year away.

The same Neo-Cons who counseled Bush #43 to go to war in Iraq are clamoring for us to "do something" in Syria. Sure. What? "Arm the rebels!" They tell Mitt and any Fox reporter who will listen. Well, fine. Who are the "Rebels"? Well at one point they may have been citizens who finally had enough of the Assad family. So they began street protest which escalated into Assad's army firing on them. So, they got some guns and tried to retaliate.

Did you believe that Al Qaeda and Hamas would let that opportunity pass? So now seasoned fighters from Iran and

Libya and even Yemen are leading squads of fighters who will topple the regime and then either recruit or wipe out the native resistance fighters.

You want to pick sides in that fight? We have tried that in Afghanistan. That's working out well, isn't it? Not. Israel is watching all this with a lot more interest than your average Sunday night football fan in America. Man, it is on their doorstep! Whatever happens in Syria or Iraq or certainly in Gaza and Egypt is of monumental importance to the Jewish State.

Iran? A totally different problem. When Jews don't agree about religious matters they argue, they scream and if gets bad enough they go create a different *shul* with those who agree with them. Not so with Muslims. When Shia and Sunni disagree, people die.

Iran is Shia Muslim but not Arab. The Saudis and most of the Middle East Muslims are Sunni. Well, you've got Wahabi, that crazy 12th century sect that the Saudis support through hundreds of Maddrasses throughout the region. And not to be outdone, the Shia have their Salafi sect that has moved in force into Syria with their own medieval ideas.

Altogether friends, it is a mess, a time bomb and of incredible danger to Israel. The U.S. is playing a cat and mouse game with Iran. There is a tipping point where the West – no, the world is going to have to decide that Iran is playing a game that can only end in the death of millions and the destruction of the State of Israel. We will reach that in the next few months.

Whoever is the president of the United States is going to have to make the most serious decision in generations. Franklin Roosevelt had the decision made for him when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. This explosion will do a lot more than take out a few ships. There will not be a ground war. It won't last that long.

Obviously we cannot let Iran have that power. If the standoff is to be Iran brandishing a weapon of mass destruction and Israel doing the same – the Ayatollahs and their Muslim Brotherhood will pull the trigger. It will get them to heaven, destroy their people and a lot of others.

We are at the point where some serious decisions are less than a year away. You can no longer "Put Iran on notice". Like the proverbial mule that will not move. First you have to hit him with a two by four to get his attention. It's serious folks. Deadly serious.

*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. ★*



## Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

### New York Times – "All the news that's fit to print"

*Except that Aurthur Ochs Sulzberger was born to Jewish parents*

It seems ironic that the *New York Times*, which is so careful to never omit the religious origin of every Jew who comes into the headlines, would on the occasion of the death of Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, fail to mention, that "he was born on Feb. 5, 1926 in New York City to Jewish parents Arthur Hayes Sulzberger and Iphigene Bertha Ochs (daughter of Adolph Ochs, the former publisher and owner of the *New York Times* and *Chattanooga Times*."

If you are readers of the *New York Times*, you are not surprised that in the full 13 pages of coverage, that his religious origins were not mentioned. It was definitely not by error. For whatever complex reasons, the latest generations of the Sulzberger family have twisted and turned over this simple issue. It would seem that they were but decided to rewrite that part of their history. It is also clear that they afforded that opportunity to no one else, especially Jews.

Some years ago I traveled to New York with Jewish teenagers to help them understand what it would be like to live in a culture within the United States where Jews were not a silent or hidden minority. The two year grant for this trip was sponsored by the foundation of Senator Herbert Kohl, the retiring U.S. Senator from Wisconsin.

On that trip we visited the grand Temple Emanuel on 5th Avenue. The sexton of the Temple who led our tour took us to the foyer to show us the plaques and families who funded this magnificent edifice, and center among them was the Ochs-Sulzberger family. He then added that although their initial contribution was large and meaningful, he believed that they could get even a larger gift from the present family from simply taking it down.

I was privileged while at Northwestern University to take a "fusion course of speech and history" to study the concept of "tenor of the times." Dr. Regge convincing argued and demonstrated that you cannot correctly judge the past on the values of the present. In part, that would

(see Karsh, page 9)





## Jewish Educator

By AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

### Rosh Hodesh gives us hope for renewal

On a warm August evening in 1997, I attended my first *Rosh Hodesh* group in a tiny apartment in Jerusalem to celebrate the cycle of the new moon. I had no idea at the time what a Rosh Hodesh group actually did but a dear friend convinced me to go along with her, so I did.

I entered the candle-lit apartment filled with women I did not know and immediately felt at home.

Aroma of my childhood permeated the room: the smell of olive oil, garlic and lemon beckoned me to peek into the tiny kitchen where three women worked shoulder-to-shoulder preparing food. Platters of stuffed grape leaves, plates of hummus and eggplant and bowls of dried fruit and nuts lined the counter top. My stomach confirmed what my mind already knew: I had come to the right place.

We gathered together in a circle and found seats wherever there was room. Some of us sat on the couch, others on the floor or the windowsill overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem. We were a mixture of faces, races and generations. To my right sat a small Moroccan woman with a nose ring and to my left sat a silver-haired woman with a British accent. Sunburned and freckled, I sat in the middle wearing bib overalls and a University of Arizona t-shirt.

We began the evening with the ancient Jewish ritual of acknowledging who we were through the lineage of our mothers. We introduced ourselves not as Amy or Elaine but as Amy, daughter of Elise, daughter of Jeanette, daughter of Sol. And then, as if pulled in by the power of the moon itself, we began telling our stories.

Woman by woman, country by country, generation by generation, we peeled away the layers of our defenses to uncover the history of our lives. Long after the last candle had burned out, we huddled together talking, listening, laughing and crying. No one wanted to leave the sanctity of that room; no one wanted to break the sacred ties we had created between us.

Since that night I have learned that Rosh Hodesh is not a "new age" concept but a very ancient one. In the First Temple period, before the Jewish lunar calendar was fixed, Rosh Hodesh (Hebrew for "head of the month") was a holiday of great significance because the dates for all

other holidays were based on the sighting of the new moon. The new moon's appearance was communicated to Jewish communities throughout Israel and the Diaspora by setting fires on the hilltops of Jerusalem, starting a chain reaction so that each community lit its own fire to alert its neighbors. Upon its sighting, sacrifices were offered, incense was burned, special prayers were chanted, festive meals were eaten and the *shofar* was blown.

Traditions pertaining to Rosh Hodesh have changed since the days of sacrifices and feasts. The holiday is observed 11 times each year (we skip it during the month of *Tishre*, because *Rosh Hashanah* celebrates the new year as well as the new month) and is celebrated by reciting special blessings and prayers in synagogue.

Rosh Hodesh has traditionally been identified as sacred for the women of Israel. According to tradition, the holiday was given to the women because they refused to surrender their jewelry for the making of the Golden Calf. As a result of their righteousness and faith, they were not required to work on Rosh Hodesh and ate festive meals and lit candles.

From the 16th to the early 20th century, women of Eastern Europe wrote special, personal Rosh Hodesh prayers on the sighting of the new moon called *tekhines*, expressing their innermost thoughts, feelings and hopes. The emergence of the feminist movement in the late 1960s inspired Jewish women to create new venues to discuss and explore their relationship to Jewish ritual, prayer, spirituality and community. Rosh Hodesh groups blossomed in apartments and dorm rooms across the country as a natural vehicle to bring Jewish women together to engage in meaningful Jewish conversation.

Over the past three decades, Rosh Hodesh groups have become a staple in the Jewish women's spiritual diet, providing a safe place to develop new rituals, discuss texts, develop prayer groups and provide support and encouragement for Jewish women worldwide. It is a beautiful holiday which provides Jews with the monthly opportunity to recognize the power of renewal and the continuing chance we all have to begin again.

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

**On this date in Jewish history**  
**On November 7, 1879**

Leon Trotsky, Russian statesman was born.

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

## BEN ASHER/BAT SARAH

(continued from page 7)

Heschel (1907–1972) said, "Few are guilty, but all are responsible." We are responsible, able to respond, for the good fortune of others and ourselves. There is hardly a situation in which, had each of us in our community lived a more Torah-based (religiously observant) life, outcomes individually and communally would not have been substantially changed for the better, the pain of loss significantly diminished for one and all.

Yaakov understood prayer as a uniting force, that potentially it links the well-being of the individual with that of his or her family, community, and people, through their action together guided by God. It was his commitment as a spiritual leader, acting and promoting communal action in the image of God that would sustain the social, economic, and political welfare of the people by ensuring the greatest possible access to God's blessings.

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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)).* ★

## KARSH

(continued from page 8)

explain to some degree why the *New York Times* always went out of its way to appear as objective in any news that involved Jews or the State of Israel. Its columnists, many of who were Jewish, obliged them by being super critical.

Abe Rosenthal, who wrote under the name A.M. Rosenthal, however went through a late life change, as did William Safire, and even Thomas Friedman, but in Friedman's case, it only happened when Yasser Arafat refused to allow him to direct the change of the course of Middle Eastern politics. But there were others like Anthony Lewis, who never let a good deed of the State of Israel go uncriticized.

There is no real contention that the *New York Times*, even with its lapses, is not one of the premier newspapers in America, it is just another lesson about Jews living uncomfortably in a free society, and not recognizing that the world has changed, and it is now okay to have been born a Jew.

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

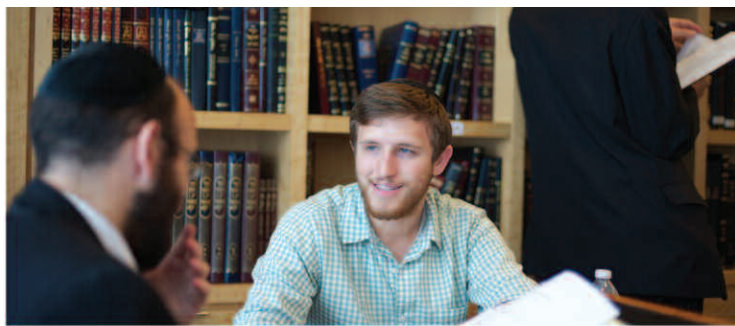


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## TOURO

A Record of Service to the Community



# Touro College: Jewish-sponsored higher education

**Touro College and University System** derives its name from Judah and Isaac Touro, leaders of colonial America, who represented the ideals upon which the College bases its mission. The school is America's largest and fastest-growing independent institution of higher and professional education under Jewish auspices.

Touro College was established to perpetuate and enrich the Jewish heritage and to support Jewish continuity, as well as to serve the general community in keeping with the historic Jewish commitment to the transmission of knowledge, social justice, and compassionate concern for, and service to, society.

Touro's schools provide diverse, innovative and engaging courses, ranging from business to law; speech pathology to Jewish studies; and education to medicine, nursing and pharmacy – all reflecting the Jewish commitment to values and respect for applied knowledge and discovery.

Touro College began with 35 male students in Manhattan in 1971. Today, more than 19,000 students are enrolled in Touro's various undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs at more than 32 campus locations throughout New York, and in California, Florida, Nevada, Israel, Germany, France, and Russia. One example – in 2007, Touro opened its College of Osteopathic

Medicine in Harlem, New York's first new medical school in nearly 30 years.

Touro has many advantages for Jewish students that other schools do not have. Not only are no classes held on Jewish holidays, but also no tests or papers are due the day after the conclusion of any Jewish holidays. This allows the Jewish students to observe the holidays without the pressure of assignments due the following day. All campuses are *Shommar Shabbos* and serve *Glatt kosher* food and they strive to accommodate the religious needs of their Jewish students as well as those of other faiths.

Each campus has its own demeanor to appeal to the constituency of its location. An education at Touro is regarded as affordable. State and federal scholarships are available where applicable. The College experience, however, consists of more than classroom instruction. Touro seeks to foster an atmosphere of warmth, in which close faculty-student relationships, student camaraderie and individual attention are nurtured in many ways.

The institution embraces and serves diverse and often underserved populations and neighborhoods. The undergraduate program, which serves the general population with programs for the underserved, has a student population of approximately 14 percent African-American, 10 percent Hispanic/Latino and seven percent Asian. Touro College also has a diverse faculty, and former students who enjoyed learning there end up coming back to teach. There is a mission driven undergraduate division that serves the Jewish community. It combines Torah

study with high caliber academic offerings to lead to a baccalaureate degree in a variety of majors.

**Dr. Bernard Lander**, a'h, founder and president of Touro College (1970-2010), was a social scientist and educator, a preeminent leader in the Jewish community and a pioneer in Jewish and general higher education. An ordained rabbi, he earned a doctorate in sociology from Columbia University. Dr. Lander's record of achievement in creating and building new educational institutions was unparalleled.



Along with a myriad of other achievements, Dr. Lander served as a consultant to three United States presidents. A former rabbi of Beth Jacob Congregation of Baltimore, Dr. Lander served more than 30 years as a vice president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

Speaking to a filled ballroom in New York City in 2007, a gathering to celebrate Touro's 36th anniversary, Dr. Lander summed up his drive and passion behind his achievements: "One should live a long life, but a life of meaning, purpose and creativity. This is the purpose of life and the purpose of Touro." An estimated 5,000 attended his funeral at Yeshiva Ohr Hachaim in New York in February 2010.

**Dr. Mark Hasten** of Indianapolis, Ind. is Chairman of Touro's Board of Trustees and Board of Overseers. At the time of Touro's 36th anniversary, he and his wife Anna Ruth



(see Touro College, page 12)

## Praise for Touro College

I am a graduate student at Touro College in the School of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Program. I am currently in my second to last semester of the program. I like that the school gives each student personal attention. Touro College has allowed me to reach my full potential. Since moving to New York City and becoming a student at Touro, I have become class president, helped make an existing volunteer program stronger and helped to organize a scholarship program.



opportunity to interact with the diverse student population. I am excited about finishing my clinical rotations and passing the boards so I can represent Touro College in the medical community. I am so grateful to Mark and Anna Ruth Hasten for their kindness to me and consider them to be my role models as community members, philanthropists, professionals and Jews.

~ Rachel "Shelly" Farahan,  
PA-S, President – Class of 2013,  
School of Health Sciences  
Manhattan Campus PA Program

Touro College provides an incredible opportunity for observant Jewish boys to study in *yeshiva* and also to get a great college education. I spent three years in yeshiva in Israel and Touro gave me 48 credits. I plan on graduating as a biology



major and, if possible, with a minor in history. I plan on going to medical school after I graduate.

~ Daniel Bentley,  
undergraduate student

I studied at Touro for graduate school only. Here are some of the reasons I liked Touro College:



- small classroom sizes
  - open door policy for meeting with faculty and deans
  - professors include nationally recognized experts in the field
  - curriculum focuses on the practical application of the material being learned
  - diverse student body including all ethnicities, races, and ages
- ~ Avi Rovinsky,  
recently graduated with  
a doctorate of physical therapy.



## Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

### God of vengeance

*God of Vengeance* is special, not only for its place in my heart, but, more importantly, for its place in the annals of Jewish theater. Written by Sholem Asch in the early 1900s, this devastating drama noted, for the first time, the existence of an amoral Jewish underground where cynicism and greed prevailed. In short, it sets out to prove that Jews are as human and fallible as anybody else.

The story deals with a Jewish brothel owner, who struggles to keep his own daughter “pure” – hoping to gain her a respectable marriage. But she falls in love with one of her father’s prostitutes, and the two elope. Thus Asch deals with a hitherto unknown, at least theatrically unknown, subject. The existence of Jewish brothels, Jewish prostitutes, Jewish Lesbians – all in a Jewish underground? Was this possible?

Apparently the Jewish community thought not, and Asch and his play were drummed out of his native Poland. (One is reminded of Spinoza, living in Amsterdam of the 1600s, who was excommunicated from the Jewish community for his unorthodox views.)

Given the time and the subject, one can indeed imagine the uproar which Asch’s play caused. How dare a writer suggest that such a world existed, then or ever?

But Asch took his play to the noted director Max Reinhardt in Berlin, who in 1907 mounted a wildly successful production. Originally written in Yiddish, *God of Vengeance* would be translated

into many tongues, playing throughout Europe.

But it surfaced in America in the 1920s, again causing controversy. A group called the Society for the Suppression of Vice lodged a complaint, and the entire New York cast was arrested. Ultimately charges would be dismissed, and *God of Vengeance* continued its rocky way.

In 1974, director Ran Avni offered *God of Vengeance* (translated into English by Joseph Landis) as his opening play when he founded the Jewish Repertory Theatre in New York City. For this reviewer, the play was duly noted in my doctoral thesis on the JRT. Because I missed this and earlier incarnations, I would follow every production over the years whenever the play surfaced.

Why? Because *God of Vengeance* is more than shocking. Not only does it rock the very foundations of religious values, but it takes a remarkable look at human behavior, Jewish or otherwise.

And now, to this reviewer’s delight, the play again comes to life, produced by the off-Broadway company Marvell Rep. Though the story no longer has the power to shock in these free-wheeling times, it is a respectable production, with a solid cast. Particularly effective are the “downstairs” scenes where the high-spirited “girls” enjoy cavorting in the spring rain. But director Lenny Leibowitz should have toned down his lead Sam Tsoutsouvas, who delivers most lines with a high-pitched scream. This performance is not worthy of Tsoutsouvas’s usually excellent work.

But we must be grateful that Marvell Rep keeps history alive, as this production reminds us, once again, of the seminal role played by *God of Vengeance*. Students of Jewish theater and its history will appreciate this effort.

*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](mailto:IreneBack@sbcglobal.net) and invites you to visit her website: [nytheater.scene.com](http://nytheater.scene.com) or at: [jewish-theatre.com](http://jewish-theatre.com). ★



### TOURO COLLEGE

(continued from page 11)

donated \$10 million to the school.

Dr. Lander had these comments about the Hastens: “Mark and Anna Ruth Hasten are dear friends of Touro College. Mark has ably served Touro for over two decades. Together, Mark and Anna Ruth have served as pillars of the Jewish community of Indianapolis, where they, with Mark’s brother Hart and his wife Simona, established and built the Hasten Hebrew Academy. They have built a family that is devoted to the ideals and values for which our institution stands. My friendship with Mark and Anna Ruth has grown out of our mutual commitment to Jewish education and the Jewish people. My dear friend Mark has led a particularly extraordinary and heroic life.”

In 2010, **Alan Kadish, M.D.**, was appointed president and CEO, and Rabbi Doniel Lander chancellor. A distinguished scholar, academic and administrator, Dr. Kadish joined Touro in September 2009 as senior provost and chief operating officer from Northwestern University, where he was a prominent cardiologist. Dr. Kadish is dedicated to delivering quality and accessible education to Touro’s large and varied student body, and to ensuring that all students enter the workforce prepared to meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive economic climate.



Founder Dr. Lander’s son, **Rabbi Doniel Lander**, continues after more than 25 years as *Rosh HaYeshiva* of the Institute for Advanced Talmudic Studies at Yeshiva Ohr Hachaim, a rabbinical seminary in Kew Gardens Hills, Queens that is also part of the Touro network. He has also served as chairman of Touro College’s budget committee. Rabbi Lander earned his bachelor’s degree from Touro College at age 19 and graduated as valedictorian of his class. He received rabbinic ordination from Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik at age 23 and his MBA from NYU at the age of 26.



More detailed information can be found on the school’s website at [www.touro.edu](http://www.touro.edu). ★



Left to right: Joy Franz, Leanne Agmon, and Molly Stoller in *God of Vengeance*. Photo credit: Jill Usdan.





## Yiddish for Everyday

By HENYA CHAIET

### What my clever mother used to say – part 2

**Hert zach tzoo Yiddishe frient, dee mahme vil eich zaugen nauch ah por verter.** (Listen up Yiddish friends, my mother has a few more words for you.)

1) **Mitt ayn tauchess ken men nischt tansen auf tzveh chasehness.** (Since you only have one behind, you can't dance at two weddings at the same time.)

2) **Ahz meh vil dem maulzeit orentlich halten dahf menem in tzveh tzoohsch palten.** (If you want to be fair, sometimes you have to divide the portions.)

3) **Ahz meh grate nischt aun erev Shabbas, haut men nischt auf Shabbas.** (If you don't prepare ahead as in the case of Shabbas, on Shabbas it's too late.)

4) **Far altz coomt ah-tzeit.** (Everything in its own time.)

5) **Farnem zich dee hent vet zein shtil dee kaup.** (Busy your hands and your head will be quiet.)

6) **Altz in aynem iz nischt tau by kaynem.** (In life, no one has it all.)

On the passing of our youngest sister who had been ill for many years, my mother comforted us with these words:

7) **Gaut vase vauser toot.** (G-d knows what's best.)

8) **Gelt feart dos velt.** (Money rules the world.)

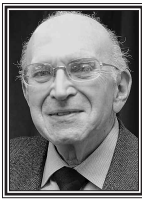
On marriage, mother had this advice for her five daughters when considering a husband:

9) **Cook nischt far shanekeit auder reichkeit, cook far menschlichkeit.** (Don't look for beauty or riches, look for good character.)

In the spring when the trees and flowers started to blossom she would comment:

10) **Altz coomt tzuhr rick fun erd nor der mensch nischt.** (Everything returns from the earth except man.)

Henya Chaiet is the Yiddish name for Mrs. A. Helen Feinn. Born in 1924 ten days before Passover, her parents had come to America one year prior. They spoke only Yiddish at home so that is all she spoke until age five when she started kindergarten. She then learned English, but has always loved Yiddish and speaks it whenever possible. Chaiet lived in La Porte and Michigan City, Ind., from 1952 to 1978 and currently resides in Walnut Creek, Calif. ★

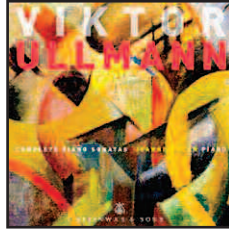


## As I Heard It

By MORTON GOLD

### Piano sonatas of Viktor Ullmann

Jeanne Golan has performed a real *mitzvah*. No, that word is not used here literally as a commandment, but rather colloquially to mean a good deed. She has recorded all seven piano sonatas by Viktor Ullmann on an excellent Model D Steinway grand piano and recently released under the Arkiv Label 30014.



Mr. Ullmann was a Czech composer (1898–1944) and the equal to other 20th century composers such as Bartok, Janacek, Prokofiev and Toch. He composed these piano sonatas between 1936 and 1944. The last three were written at the Terezin concentration camp. His life was cut short in 1944 when he was transported to Auschwitz where he met his untimely end.

While his fame rests on the opera *The Emperor Atlantis*, which he also wrote while at Terezin, these seven sonatas are an arresting group of pieces which add much to the literature of 20th century piano music. I do not want to give the impression that listening to these seven sonatas will be a venture in "easy listening" or that you will come away with a variety of tuneful melodies in your head. A recognizable song like melody is an exception in these rather than the rule.

For the most part the music is dense in texture with fistfuls of notes in both hands. While not atonal, the tonality (or poly-tonality) is more free than fixed. I will note that all of these pieces are original, and I suspect as exciting to play as they are to hear. There are many musical surprises in the group.

For example in Sonata No. 3, (Track No. 9) one will find a very tonal treatment of a melody by Mozart. The character of the last three works vary from the sinister, (No. 5) to a grotesque like treatment of phrases that are reminiscent of something that might have been written by Gershwin (No. 6). While the first movement of No. 7 seems romantic (by comparison) there are more expressive phrases here than in the other sonatas. There is even a Variation and Fugue on a Hebrew melody (which I

## POLLACK

(continued from page 5)

In other words, *Hakarat Hatov* is about gratitude. Gratitude is about recognizing the good that is already part of our lives; it requires us to think about all of the things that we can be grateful for that we already have. No matter how hard things might seem or what a difficult time we might be going through, we can always find something to be grateful for. *Hakarat hatov* asks us to recognize the good that we already have, to acknowledge that what we have is a gift and to be thankful for it and to give thanks to the One who gave it to us, whether the source of the gift is another person, or the Source of All, God.

As Jews we start each day with the *Modeh Ani* blessing, thanking God for the most important gift of all, the gift of life. The short morning blessings that follow remind us to be grateful for the most basic capacities – to stand, to get dressed, to use the bathroom; all of which are the most fundamental parts of our existence and without which we would be unable to go on and do all of the *mitzvot* that we have the potential to do in each day.

As we approach the holiday of Thanksgiving this year, may we find an attitude of gratitude, and may we awaken each day with the *middah* of *Hakarat Hatov*, consciously recognizing the good in our lives.

Rabbi Pollack is celebrating her 10th anniversary as leader of Temple Israel in West Lafayette, Ind. Reprinted from their Nov. 2012 bulletin. ★



didn't recognize) in the last movement. I would add that if one enjoys listening to the piano music of Prokofiev, then one will also enjoy listening to Ullmann.

It was a revelation for me to hear these sonatas performed, and I believe that they were given a first rate performance by Ms. Golan. She earned her undergraduate degree from Yale and her Masters and DMA degrees from the Eastman School of Music. She is currently Professor of Music at SUNY/Nassau. Her blog, Ullmann at Hand: A Pianist's Journey may be found at [jeannegolan.com](http://jeannegolan.com).

There are not that many pianists who could perform any one of these, no less than all seven. For what it is worth I wish to add my congratulations to Ms. Golan for a significant achievement. She played these with warmth, musicality and accuracy as well. No mean achievement.

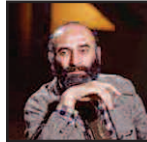
Dr. Gold is a composer/conductor as well as arts reviewer and can be reached at: [drmortongold@yahoo.com](mailto:drmortongold@yahoo.com). ★



# Holocaust survivor John Hirsch immortalized at Stratford Shakespeare Festival

BY HAROLD JACOBSON AND ROSE KLEINER

STRATFORD ONTARIO CANADA – This year the venerable Stratford Shakespeare Festival, the largest repertory theater in North America, offered 14 dramas, musicals and monologues to celebrate its 60th season. Among the most thoughtful of its presentations was a dramatization of the life of John Hirsch, a Hungarian Jewish Holocaust survivor, at Stratford's intimate Studio Theatre. The play was "conceived" by Alon Nashman and Paul Tompson.



John Hirsch  
1930–1989

Hirsch managed to survive both the Hungarian fascists and the Nazis in Budapest, although the immediate members of his family were deported and died in the death camps. After the war, Hirsch made his way to Winnipeg Canada where he began his theatrical career. His directorial talents were many and from Winnipeg he moved on to Ottawa, Toronto and Stratford, Ontario where in 1976 he was responsible for the highly acclaimed production of *The Three Sisters*. He served as the artistic director of the Stratford Festival from 1981–1985 and his tenure there was marked by vigorous productions of both Shakespearean and modern plays and musicals.

In the 1980's Hirsch's reputation had come to the attention of the theater world in the United States, where he was invited to share his directorial talents in several American venues. His fame reached the Israeli cultural worlds as well and he was invited to direct several works at the famous Habimah Theatre in Tel Aviv.

Alon Nashman's treatment of Hirsch, who for obvious reasons was a deeply tormented individual, is candid to a fault as he highlights Hirsch's organizing genius, disciplined approach to theatre – as well as the abrasive, some would say, tyrannical side of his character. Hirsch died tragically at a very young age.

Theater goers were exposed this season to what was probably the most brilliant one man monologue yet seen at the Festival. Recent Academy Award winner Christopher Plummer (*The Sound of Music*) delivered a powerful reconstruction, in flawless English and French, of passages from the great books which nurtured his literary tastes. With an impish sense of humor Plummer regaled his audience with



## An Observant Eye

BY RABBI AVI SHAFRAN

### Misguided marking

In slow but clear Hebrew and with an endearingly wry smile, the elderly Jewish lady recalls a trip to America one summer with her sister. At a bank, she recounts, the teller, a young woman, said to her. "Oh, you have numbers on your arms! Yours ends with a '4' and hers with a '5'! That's cool!"

The *bubbeh's* smile widens and her eyes seem to twinkle as she recounts her response to the girl. "You're right," she quietly told her in English. "It's cool... It's from another epoch of our life. It's cool."

The testimony is offered in a documentary film, "Numbered," whose US premiere is scheduled for later this month at a Chicago film festival. The film's focus, however, is not so much on the cluelessness of young Americans but rather on the attitudes of different tattooed survivors to the memory-marks they carry day-in, day-out on their arms. And on the recent trend among some young Israelis who seek to perpetuate a connection to the Holocaust and the Jewish people by tattooing their own arms with numbers borne by concentration camp inmates.

According to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum's Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, such tattooing was introduced at Auschwitz in the autumn of 1941 and in Birkenau the following March. After the war, some survivors whose arms bore the inked record of their ordeals sought to remove the reminders. Others wore them with pride.

A well-known *teshuvah*, or *responsum*, by Rav Ephraim Oshry (*She'eilos Uteshuvos Mima'amakim*, 4:22) advised a woman who wished to have her concentration camp tattoo surgically removed to regard it instead as a badge of honor. It is told that Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, *zt"l*, the Satmar Rov, once counseled a follower seeking a blessing to go into a shul and find a man with numbers inked into his skin; such a

person, the Rov explained, is worthy of providing a meaningful *bracha*.

But the thought of Jews today electing to subject their bodies to markings like those the Nazis and their collaborators used to dehumanize their forebears grates – or should grate – like a knife run across the edge of a glass.

And indeed, there has been no dearth of criticism of the newly number-tattooed. Their actions have been labeled a fashion-statement hijacking of the Holocaust; characterized as an effort to usurp others' identities; condemned as a trivialization of the horrific.

The contemporary Holocaust remembrance enterprise is, to be sure, deeply inappropriate, but – in the manner of the Berditcher's spirit of seeing good in all Jews – it, or at least the motivation behind it, might be regarded more generously.

Ten young number-tattooed Jews interviewed by *The New York Times* last month, in the reporter's words "echoed one another's motivations: they wanted to be intimately, eternally bonded to their survivor-relative. And they wanted to live the mantra 'Never forget' with something that would constantly provoke questions and conversation."

Worthy goals, if misguided means. What is mostly missing, though, from all the criticism is what should be the most fundamental one: that a tattoo – even a well-intentioned one – is forbidden by the Torah.

"You shall not make a cut in your flesh for the dead," it states, "and a tattoo you shall not place upon yourselves – I am Hashem" (*Vayikra*, 19:28). And that prohibition remains even – one might argue *especially* – if one's intentions are sublime. For the opinion of R. Shimon ben Yehudah in the name of R. Shimon (*Makkos* 21a) is that the phrase "I am Hashem" implies that the prohibition specifically refers to a tattoo of Hashem's name!

And so an irony practically screams out here. *Klal Yisrael* is only a nation by virtue of the Torah. Throughout all of the vicissitudes of our history and all the challenges our people has faced, what has always ensured our survival, indeed, our eternal nature, is that which bonds us to our Creator: the study and practice of Torah. Those are the keys to Jewish unity and Jewish eternity.

Pity the newly number-tattooed. Not only are they unintentionally punishing their Jewish souls by their actions, they are undermining the very things – memory, their historical heritage, Jewish peoplehood – that they seek to preserve.

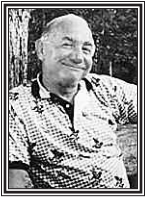
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quotations from memory from a mixture of *Alice in Wonderland*, Shakespeare, and a score of other authors – all delivered with impeccable Plummerian diction.

The Montreal, Quebec born actor, now 83, delighted audiences with a total recall (see Jacobson/Kleiner, page 18)





## Spoonful of Humor

By TED ROBERTS

### Thanksgiving – A Puritan Pesach

It's strange how the human mind, like the thermostat on my den wall, turns itself on and off. Like the other day my mind transported me back 50 years; an afternoon in 1951 when my wide-ranging imagination contemplated supper. Hmm, probably those egg-battered veal chops my mother made so well.

It was a legitimate topic for contemplation since it was 5:00 p.m. – supper was near. But it was sort of inappropriate since I was in my American History classroom and the professor was lecturing about what we then called "Indians". These noble Native Americans hated breaded veal chops. And they could never have fried one up because they were totally free of matzoh meal, guns, rum, iron skillets, and the circular concept we call the wheel, until those pale-faced Europeans came along. So, I mentally dumped my platter of veal chops in the kitchen garbage as the professor's voice rang out loud and clear: "Some historians believed that, after the Diaspora, the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel reappeared out of the mists of North America as the Algonquin, Narragansett, and Iroquois Native Americans".

Can you believe this? Though he had a PhD and I only had a *Bar Mitzvah* certificate on my bedroom wall, I knew he was wrong because I never heard of a Native American doing up a golden fried, *matzoh* meal-breaded veal chop like my mama and her sisters used to make.

But he was right in that some historians held to this belief. Doesn't Narragansett sound a little like Naftali. But those friendly New England Aborigines brought corn and turkey to that first Thanksgiving feast – not *Tzimmus* or brisket in dark onion sauce.

So, as usual, I consulted my rabbi. I cornered him in his study and asked him straight out, "Since maybe, perhaps, it could be, that the Massapeka tribe of North America is the Manasseh tribe of Israel, why isn't Thanksgiving a Jewish holiday?"

His eyes appraised my sanity like Noah's anonymous wife looked at him when he announced his naval construction program in Dry Gulch Valley. "Have a chair, Ted. Here, have a nice chocolate chip cookie. Lean back and breathe deeply."

He was no stranger to my quest for Judaica. He began to sound like my history professor of long ago. And his eyes bored into mine like he thought I was asleep and dreaming of veal chops. The parallels, he claimed, were more apparent between those hungry Puritans – not the noble Native Americans – and our ancestors.

That's what he tried to say, but I rushed on to elaborate. I told him that I had checked my biblical concordance and found the Hebrew word *Todah* 20 times from Leviticus to Jonah – and guess what it meant? THANKSGIVING! That's what.

He nodded in agreement likewise King Solomon learned to do when each of his thousand wives complained about the excess jewelry, cosmetics, and gold spangled gowns of the other 999. Such a king. A thousand wives and he never paid a cent of alimony. And you can believe he sat down to a hot supper every night. No wonder he was smart enough to write Ecclesiastes.

Anyhow, my rabbi and I, after a few more chocolate chip cookies, decided that yes it was *Halachically* correct to celebrate Thanksgiving. So many Jewish parallels. And not coincidentally. Those dark-robed Puritans (don't they look like *Chasids* in the paintings?) worshipped, with minor exception, the Lord G-d of Hosts who thunders in the *Chumash* more than the socially conscious Allfather of the prophets, or the mushy narrator of Song of Songs and Ruth, or the philosopher-king of Ecclesiastes.

Many of them were fluent in Hebrew, we are told by historians. And they certainly saw their flight from the English church as analogous to our Egyptian Exodus many millennia earlier; the waves of the Atlantic instead of the sand dunes of Sinai.

That first Massachusetts Bay Thanksgiving was all about gratitude for a bountiful, nourishing harvest and a successful, watery exodus from England and its repressive church. To our Jewish ears, it sounds a lot like Passover and *Shavuot*; with maybe a touch of *Chanukah's* chauvinism. If it doesn't feel Jewish enough for you, stuff the turkey with *matzohbrei* and sing *Dayenu*. Crown the evening with a prayer for America and Israel.

*Ted Roberts, a Rockower Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks at Jewish life with rare wit and insight. Ted worships at Etz Chayim Synagogue in Huntsville, Ala., where he has served as bar mitzvah teacher. Check out his Web site: [www.wonderwordworks.com](http://www.wonderwordworks.com) and Blog: [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. ★*

### COUSENS

(continued from page 6)

lost Jewish tribes and that this fact has been validated by genetic testing. (Although they spoke their own tribal language with each other, they spoke English with me.)



I offered to lead a *Shabbat* ceremony for the tribes under his kingship and the associated tribal chieftains. He agreed and I led a meaningful Shabbat with 13 chieftains and their families in attendance, as well as the king's 111-year-old father. *Challah* was made and I led a *motzi* and *kiddish*. As part of my Shabbat service, and particularly meaningful in this case, was sharing the energies of *S'micha M'shefa* with them. Three days later, when I ran into the king's father, he was still "flying high" from the Shabbat experience and receiving the lineage energy. He relayed to me how significant it was for him to connect to his Jewish lineage.

For me it was powerful to activate the lost connection with this tribe, and to feel my blood connection with them. One never knows what one is going to run into when one is doing *tzedakah* at this level. It is truly a great blessing to be serving *Hashem* in this way.

I have also started programs in Ghana, Ethiopia, and Cameroon. I am amazed to the extent that the Jewish world has spread out and is so receptive to reconnecting.

*Rabbi Gabriel Cousens, MD, is founder and director of the Tree of Life Rejuvenation Center and the Tree of Life Foundation ([www.treeoflife.nu](http://www.treeoflife.nu)) where he has developed a program to heal diabetes naturally. He lectures on this program in the U.S. and Israel where he has also set up this program. He is the author of several books including: Spiritual Nutrition, Conscious Eating, Rainbow Green Life Food Cuisine, Depression Free for Life, Creating Peace By Being Peace, and others. He especially likes to inspire Jewish people back into the Jewish way of life as a great spiritual path equal to any of the Eastern or Western paths that many American and Jewish Israelis have been attracted to. His particular focus is the Shabbat, which he feels is the sacred cornerstone of Jewish life. ★*



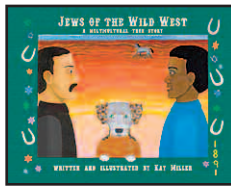
## Book Review

By KAY MILLER

### "Jewish Cowgirl" on the trail of her roots

*Jews of the Wild West: a Multicultural True Story.* By Kay Miller. Colossal Image Printing. 2012

Kay Miller knew that her Jewish grandmother Ruth Ilfeld grew up in Albuquerque. Ruth told Kay that once when she was riding her horse as a child, the pair heard music in the air. The horse began to dance. Ruth found out later to her amusement that her horse had previously been owned by a circus.



Each summer as an adult Ruth would visit her grandfather Abraham Staab's magnificent Victorian house in Santa Fe at La Posada. Ruth was living in Ohio by then. You can visit Abraham's house too.

When Kay was in her late teens her mother gave her a book about Jewish settlers of the Wild West. There were chapters about her ancestors in the book. They had left Germany in the mid 1800s to escape their ghetto and military conscription to find wealth and adventure in America. New Mexico was the logical starting point because relatives were already there. After some years of struggle Charles Ilfeld and Abraham Staab eventually became the leading merchants of the state.

Many years after receiving the book from her mother Kay visited New Mexico. By coincidence there was an exhibit at the Palace of the Governors History Museum in Santa Fe about Jewish settlers of New Mexico. Kay saw photos and some artifacts of her ancestors in the exhibit and she purchased the exhibit book. That was the beginning of her quest to learn more. With her background as a painter she hoped to illustrate as well as document her roots.

In Kay's research she discovered that many people associate the Hebrew over the entrance to St. Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe with Abraham Staab's generosity towards his friend Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy, the same Archbishop that Willa Cather wrote about in *Death Comes*



## Book Review

REVIEWED BY CANTOR JANICE ROGER

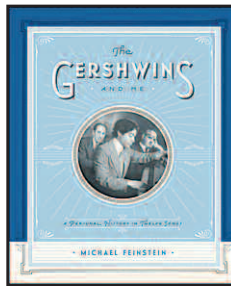
### Music is the refuge that rescues and revives the soul

*The Gershwins and Me: A Personal History in Twelve Songs.* By Michael Feinstein, with Ian Jackman. New York: Simon & Schuster. 2012. 352 pages. \$45.

'S wonderful, 's marvelous that Michael Feinstein, dubbed "The Ambassador of the Great American Songbook," has created this beautiful homage to the brothers Gershwin, George and Ira.

As Feinstein noted in a recent interview, there are already many books about Gershwin and his compositions, most of them linear. What makes this opus fresh?

First of all, the author's love of the 1920s and 1930s. Music was a dominant force in American society from the end of World War I through the next two decades. While acknowledging that he would have enjoyed experiencing the musical creativity and art of the time, Feinstein believes that he lives now not by accident but so he can work to ensure that the music of the early



for the Archbishop.

In a book written by Catholic nun Blandina Segale, Kay read about how Julia Staab, Abraham's wife was nearly robbed by Billy the Kid.

Charles Ilfeld befriended the freed slave Montgomery Bell. Charles made Montgomery an agent for his mercantile business. Montgomery did well enough to start his own business and he built one of the first two story houses in the town of Las Vegas, N.M. Charles' department store, built in 1882 is now part of the Plaza Hotel in that quaint, historic town.

Ludwig Ilfeld lent his horse Maude to Teddy Roosevelt to ride in the Rough Rider's parade. Not only did Ludwig organize the parade he also rode in Teddy's inauguration parade. Ludwig was a member of the National Guard and led troops into battle on horseback in the Spanish American War.

(see Miller, page 18)



years of the Great American Songbook lives on.

Secondly, Feinstein is devoted to his subjects – the brothers Gershwin. He cares deeply about them and their relationship with each other. This book relies heavily on conversations that Feinstein had with Ira Gershwin and his circle of friends and colleagues during the six years he catalogued Gershwin's recordings and archives. These reveal the deep and abiding devotion Ira had for his younger brother. Finally, Feinstein's zeal for music shines through the text in comments like, "When all else falls apart, music is the refuge that rescues and revives the soul."

As the title reveals, the book is organized around 12 of the Gershwin brothers' songs. The format for the book evolved from Feinstein's imagination as he tried to determine what the book would be. He needed a format that would best serve the anecdotes and stories he wanted to include. It was a challenge to choose only 12 from the myriad of songs the brothers composed because Feinstein loves so many of them. He chose songs that provided an "aural cross section" and were the best springboards for the story he planned to tell. As each chapter unfolds, it is clear that the choice of song does, indeed, reflect a particular aspect of the history of the brothers' collaboration.

*The Gershwins and Me* is written for a broad audience. Feinstein wanted to create a book that would be of interest to those who know nothing about the Gershwins and the America in which they lived and worked. It was also important to create a book that was inviting and would be of interest to Gershwin fans – who will find a treasure trove of memorabilia, including photos and reproductions of artifacts from the Gershwin and Feinstein collections among the pages of "fly on the wall" anecdotes and stories.

This personal history provides a wonderful distillation of the era that produced so much music. According to Feinstein, "all the elements that made Gershwin who he was came from the collective experience that made America what it was at the time." New York was a melting pot and the "swagger and energy of Gershwin's melodies and harmonies was directly

(see Roger, page 19)



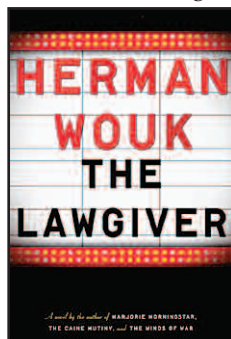
# Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

## Unusual novel worth reading

*The Lawgiver*. By Herman Wouk. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012. 292 Pages. \$25.99.

Sixty-four years ago, Simon & Schuster published Herman Wouk's first novel, *Aurora Dawn*. He went on to write eleven more novels, three plays, and three non-fiction books. In 1951, Wouk



received the Pulitzer Prize for *The Caine Mutiny*, later made into a popular play and movie. *Marjorie Morningstar* was the best-selling novel of 1955 and *Youngblood Hawke*, a fictional biography of Thomas Wolfe, appeared in 1961. Two popular accounts of World War II, *The Winds of War* (1971) and *War and Remembrance* (1978) were produced as a well-received TV miniseries.

Now, at the age of 97, Wouk has written an unusual novel about putting together a film dealing with the life of Moses. It is unusual in that, rather than the customary narrative, it consists of letters, memos, e-mail messages, news articles, transcripts, and recorded conversations. It is also rather singular in that Wouk and his wife appear as characters in the book under their real names. Unfortunately, she died in March, 2011 while the book was being written. A touching epilogue by Wouk refers to her death at the age of 90 after 63 years of marriage and to his indebtedness to her for everything he wrote. This new book opens with a complicated effort to persuade Wouk to write a film about the life of Moses. It just happens that Wouk has been thinking for a long time about writing a novel on this subject and so he agrees to act as a consultant if a writer-director can be found who, in Wouk's judgment, is up to the task.

The sponsor of the venture is an eccentric Australian uranium tycoon who is not fazed when told that the cost of the project might be \$200 million. The proposed writer-director is Margolit Solovei, a rabbi's daughter with a "deep Jewish background" that is submerged in her Hollywood success. Tentatively approved by both Wouk and the Australian, she begins writing the script and seeking an actor for the role of Moses.

The complications that ensue are often hilarious and sometimes difficult to follow as the scene shifts over large distances and involves developments rather thinly connected to the major emphasis of the story. But – all's well that ends well. Wouk approves Solovei's screenplay; the movie is a smash hit – even the Arabic version.

Readers will undoubtedly marvel at the ability of a 97-year-old author to produce a book with such an unusual format. Regardless of their opinion about the book's design, anything written by Herman Wouk is worth reading and *The Lawgiver* is no exception.

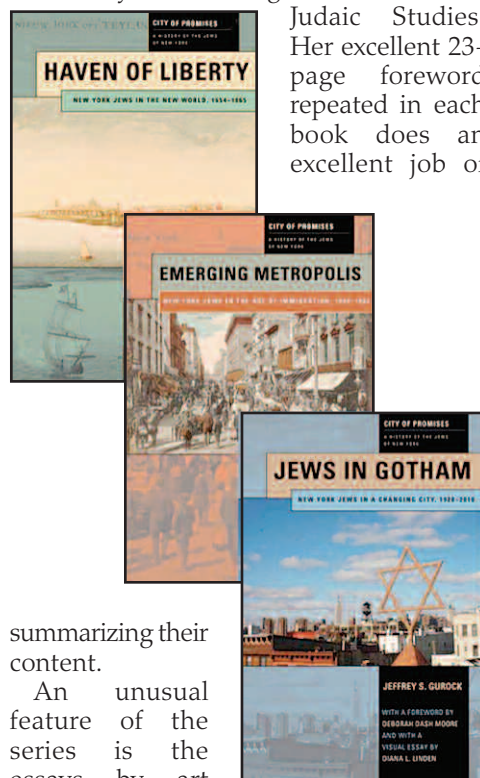
## Important contribution on New York's Jews

*City of Promises: A History of the Jews of New York*. Edited by Deborah Dash Moore. 3 Volumes. (boxed set) New York: New York University Press, 2012. \$99.

Volume 1 – *Haven of Liberty*. By Howard B. Rock. 397 pages. Volume 2 – *Emerging Metropolis*. By Annie Polland and Daniel Soyer. 392 pages. Volume 3 – *Jews in Gotham*. By Jeffrey S. Gurock. 355 pages.

Covering the years from 1654 to 2010, these three volumes present the history of Jews in New York City. The general editor for the series, Deborah Dash Moore, is history professor and director of the University of Michigan's Center for

Judaic Studies. Her excellent 23-page foreword repeated in each book does an excellent job of



summarizing their content.

An unusual feature of the series is the essays by art historian, Diana L. Linden, that supplement the historical chronicle by presenting and discussing the "visual and material culture" of each period. The extensive

storehouse from which she drew required challenging choices that are inevitably open to question. Nevertheless, Linden's contribution augments our understanding.

The first volume begins with the 1654 landing of 23 Dutch Jews from Recife, Brazil in New Amsterdam. Their unwelcome reception by Peter Stuyvesant changed ten years later when the British took over and New Amsterdam became New York. The rest of the book moves through the Civil War, focusing on the Jews and their synagogues as they became integrated into American society, providing the basis for New York becoming the destination for European immigrants.

The second volume examines the impact of mass migration as New York's Jewish population grew, making New York "the capital not only of American but also of world Jewry." This development was accompanied by the vast growth of Jewish organizations both locally and nationally with New York serving as headquarters. The 1840–1920 period saw the greatest surge of Jews coming from Europe to the United States. Mention is made of the "Federation of Jewish Charities" but there is no discussion here nor in the third volume of the important Federation of Jewish Philanthropies.

Jeffrey S. Gurock, author of the third volume, is a Yeshiva University professor of Jewish history with many publications to his credit. He continues here his focus on the neighborhood thus omitting many aspects of New York's Jewish history in the 20th century such as the social agencies, including the 92nd Street Y, and other Jewish community centers. Despite his affiliation with Yeshiva University, Gurock makes no reference to its Albert Einstein College of Medicine, founded in 1955 as the first American medical school under Jewish auspices. Other omissions include the Center for Jewish History and the important relationship between the Jewish community and the Cardinals of the Catholic Church. Emphasis on Jewish neighborhoods facilitates Gurock's discussion of racial conflict.

Minor errors mar the books. In Volume 2, Page 141, "sitting on the chains" should be "sitting on the chairs." Page 197, Simon Brentano is identified as a "publisher." He was a bookseller. Page 204, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia is called non-Jewish. His Jewish mother was named "Coen". In Volume 3, Page 43, Wilkins Avenue is called "Wilkins Street." On Page 49, graduates of Townsend Harris High School were said to be "virtually assured" admission to CCNY. They *were* assured admission. On Page 49, Daniel Bell is called a "professor of social sciences." He

(see Teicher, page 19)



## My Kosher Kitchen

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

### Sweet potatoes for Thanksgiving

Even though Thanksgiving probably has its roots in *Sukkot* which is celebrated two months earlier this year, many Americans in Israel retain the habit of celebrating it, frequently on the next evening, Friday.

Canned cranberry sauce is available but it's probably double what a can costs in the U.S. Dried cranberries are readily available, but I have never seen raw ones. Whole turkey can be ordered from many butchers although turkey necks, wings and legs are readily available year round. (I don't know what they do with the other parts!) Israeli pumpkin is sold by the piece (approximately \$.65 a pound) and works perfectly well for pumpkin pie, pudding and other desserts.

Sweet potatoes are available most of the year also but for some reason they tend to be about four times higher in price than regular potatoes. Here are some different recipes with sweet potatoes.

#### Sweet potato-cranberry tart (8 servings)

I adapted this from a magazine, but forgot to jot down which one; still, I've changed it a lot.

8 large peeled sweet potatoes,  
sliced crosswise  
1/2 cup water  
1/4 cup melted, unsalted  
pareve margarine  
2 Tbsp. Sabra liquor  
3/4 cup cranberries  
1/2 cup water  
1/3 cup brown sugar  
1/8 tsp. cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease an oval baking dish. Arrange sweet potatoes in concentric circles, overlapping slightly. Pour 1/2 cup water on top, cover with foil and bake 40 minutes. Increase oven to 425 degrees F. Mix melted margarine with Sabra in a small bowl, spoon over sweet potatoes. Bake 15 minutes, baste then continue baking 10 minutes more. Combine cranberries with 1/2 cup water and brown sugar in a saucepan and boil until cranberries start to burst. Drain and reserve liquid. Add cinnamon to cranberry

#### JACOBSON/KLEINER (continued from page 14)

of a mother who tutored him in the arts and with a recitation of half a hundred verses and paragraphs from the world's greatest poems, novels and plays. The instantaneous standing ovation which greeted him on opening night speaks to

liquid and spoon over sweet potatoes. Bake 5 minutes then baste. Bake 10 minutes more. Scatter cranberries on top and continue baking 5 minutes more. Serve hot or warm.

#### Sweet Potato Soufflé (6-8 servings)

6 large sweet potatoes  
5 Tbsp. pareve margarine  
2/3 cup non-dairy creamer  
5 Tbsp. brown sugar  
1/2 tsp. nutmeg  
5 Tbsp. sherry or  
2 1/2 tsp. rum  
juice and rind of 1 orange (optional)  
4 eggs  
2 Tbsp. chopped nuts  
2 Tbsp. sugar  
2 Tbsp. cinnamon

Grease a soufflé dish and preheat oven to 350°F. Place potatoes in water, bring to a boil, cook until soft. Drain, peel and mash in a bowl. Add margarine, non-dairy creamer, brown sugar, nutmeg, sherry or rum, orange juice and rind. Mix. Separate eggs. Add yolks to sweet potato mixture. Beat whites in a bowl until stiff then fold into potato mixture. Pour into greased casserole. Combine nuts, sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle on top. Bake in preheated oven 25 minutes and serve immediately.

#### Diabetic Sweet Potatoes Casserole (12 servings)

12 sweet potatoes  
3 Tbsp. unsalted pareve margarine  
1/4 cup Amaretto  
3/4 tsp. nutmeg  
3 Tbsp. diabetic brown sugar  
juice of 1 1/2 oranges, saving skins

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a baking dish. Bake potatoes until soft. Scoop out flesh into a bowl. Add margarine, Amaretto, nutmeg and brown sugar and mash well. Spoon into a greased casserole. Pour juice on top. Slice oranges and arrange slices on top. Bake in oven 30 minutes.

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

the quality of his performance.

Perhaps the sleeper presentation this season at Stratford was *Wanderlust*, Director Morris Panych's paean of praise for the unique Canadian poet, Robert Service, known as the "Bard of the Yukon" whose haunting poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee" is reconfigured in this biography of a Canadian writer who spent many years in Canada's barren north and yet celebrated the awesome beauty of the Yukon with rugged verse forms and rhyme schemes that are unforgettable. A musical score integrated into the poet's verses and his life as a bank clerk made this one of the most surprising and entertaining events at Stratford this year. *Wanderlust* ran until the end of September.

Cymbeline, one of Shakespeare's lesser known works, *Much Ado About Nothing* (with arguably Canada's greatest Shakespearean actor, Ben Carlson) and his *Henry V* were on the playbill this season at Stratford. These three musicals – The inimitable *Pirates of Penzance* (a boisterous and joyful version), *The Matchmaker*, and *42nd Street* – which extended to the end of September and October all drew enthusiastic crowds. ★

#### MILLER

(continued from 16)

An Ilfeld/Staab descendant Robert Nordhaus was an original member of the 10th Mountain Division of the U.S. Army and fought the Nazi's in the mountains of Europe on skis and snowshoes. When he returned to Albuquerque he became a lawyer whose specialty was Native American rights. Robert won a landmark U.S. Supreme court case on behalf of the Jicarilla Apaches. They honored him by making him an honorary member of the tribe.

As a ski enthusiast Robert started the Sandia Peak Ski Slopes near Albuquerque with business partner Ben Abruzzo. Robert had the world's longest passenger tramway built up Sandia Mountain. Over 9 million people have ridden the Sandia Tram.

These are just a fraction of the facts that Kay discovered about her ancestry. She went on to tell the tale in this picture book. Her folk art illustrations with borders of horseshoes, stars of David and chili peppers, frame the tale.

Her trail ride has come full circle. That same history museum shop in Santa Fe now carries *Jews of the Wild West*.

Kay Miller is the author and illustrator of *Jews of the Wild West* a Multicultural True Story. She is a Jewish Book Council Network author, illustrator. For more information go to [www.jewsgowest.com](http://www.jewsgowest.com). ★



**ROGER**

(continued from 16)

conspired by his environment. You can feel the New York of the 1920s in *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Porgy and Bess* is filled with the art deco feeling of the 1930s."

The reader will also learn about the work styles and personalities of the brothers Gershwin. Ira preferred to hear the melody before creating lyrics. He also made suggestions to George which resulted in a better melody. The strength of the partnership which paired two very different individuals – the driven George and the relaxed Ira – is paralleled by George's preference for the New York lifestyle and Ira's penchant for laid back Los Angeles.

Feinstein writes that George always wanted to learn more about the craft of composition – he asked classical greats like Ravel, Stravinsky, Nadia Boulanger and Schoenberg to teach him. None would take him on as a student because he was already so good at composing. George, however, was not satisfied just to be a good song writer. He also wanted to create more serious compositions and challenge himself and the standards of his time. He knew, however, that he had to be ready before he could begin a composition. For example, it took George nine years from the time he first read the story of *Porgy and Bess* until he began setting pen to paper.

A bonus of *The Gershwins and Me* is the compact disc with the twelve songs referenced in the title performed by Feinstein with Cyrus Chestnut at the piano. Each track reveals the depth of emotion that inspired the book. The loving interpretations are punctuated by Chestnut's accompaniments combining Gershwin harmonies with Chestnut's facile jazz technique. The pairing parallels aspects of the partnership between George and Ira. The result is a disc which is easy to listen to and will reveal new riches upon subsequent hearings. The final track includes Feinstein's commentary on each song and his interpretation of it.

It is hard to imagine anyone but Feinstein, with his solid credentials as an interpreter of Gershwin and his years of friendship with Ira Gershwin, writing this book. The stories and anecdotes will transport the reader back in time and, hopefully, will lead to deeper enjoyment and understanding of the Gershwin brothers' music. *The Gershwins and Me* is a valuable resource, its author a master storyteller and singer. As Ira Gershwin wrote, "Who Cares?" Well, this writer hopes many, many people already do!

Cantor Roger has served Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation since 1979. She is married to Brandon Roger and they have two sons, Eddie and Miles. ★

**EDITORIAL**

(continued from 2)

Although most of us have heard stories told by Holocaust survivors, what was unique about *Besa: The Promise* is that one is able to see actual footage of one survivor's situation almost 70 years later. The movie, *Forgiving Dr. Mengele* about Auschwitz survivor Eva Kor – which I saw at The Heartland Film Festival six years ago – has a moving scene with her and other children walking out the front gate on liberation day Jan. 27, 1945. However, later I found out that scene was staged for the camera and actually filmed the following day.

In our Holocaust issue last April ([www.jewishpostopinion.com/Jewishpost/NAT\\_4-25-12.pdf](http://www.jewishpostopinion.com/Jewishpost/NAT_4-25-12.pdf)) I wrote a story about Harry Cybulski and Dora Goldberg, sibling survivors who had been hidden on a farm in a village about 25 miles from Paris. At the time they arrived, he was age 4 and she was 9. They were told not to speak Hebrew or Yiddish or give any sign whatsoever that they are Jewish. Only the farmer and his wife would know. When they returned on a visit 50 years later, they were shocked to find the whole village knew. Even though German soldiers lived there, everyone kept it a secret. It would have been extraordinary to be with Cybulski and Goldberg when they were told this news.

This is what this movie does. The viewer gets to see a very emotional meeting when Rexhep Hoxha, son of the Muslim-Albanian rescuer visits Aron Etrogy at his home in Israel. Etrogy was 10 when his family fled Sofia, Bulgaria and escaped to Tirana, Albania. This meeting takes place more than 60 years after the war with no contact taking place in the years between.

Portraits by Norman H. Gershman, a renowned Jewish-American photographer who is determined to document first-person accounts of the Albanian Muslims who rescued Jews, are blended with animation, rare archival film, and poignant interviews with witnesses. The film is directed by Rachel Goslins. Another producer is Jason Williams. Music is composed by Philip Glass, one of the most influential composers of the late 20th century, and director of photography is British cinematographer Neil Barrett.

Jennie Cohen, November 7, 2012 ★

**TEICHER**

(continued from 17)

was a professor of sociology. Page 62 refers to Lucy Dawidowicz as "Schildkret" and "Schildkraut." Page 192 identifies Hadassah as "Israel's foremost social welfare agency." The Ministry of Social

Welfare, Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency would dispute this.

Despite these slight mistakes, the three volumes are an important contribution to our understanding New York's Jews.

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

**KAPLAN/ISRAEL**

(continued from page 20)

530 beds, 20 operating rooms). Before and after the countdown, there were live views of the Tower with someone doing interviews then fireworks were shooting off from the roof. More fireworks went off on the convention center stage. What a spectacular ceremony!

Wednesday, I was privileged to hear and write about an amazing symposium panel on "The Public Relations Battle," featuring on-line "Times of Israel" editor, David Horovitz; Director of the Israel office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Dr. Ephraim Zuroff; and Chief Rabbi of Efrat, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin.

Thursday it was like old times again as I attended the Business meeting of Hadassah which included the re-election of Marcie Natan as National President and Ellyn Lyons as National Treasurer and the election of Judy Shereck as National Secretary.

A significant resolution was unanimously passed – reaffirming Hadassah's commitment to and support for freedom of worship for all women at the Western Wall. The "Women at the Wall" had, once again, been rebuffed in their attempt to pray on Rosh Chodesh at the wall.

The Credentials Committee confirmed there were 1,497 registered people, representing 359 chapters in 40 states with 350 male Associates in attendance. Hadassah Israel – in the amount of 300 – acted as volunteers at hotels and events.

That evening, the central event of the Centennial celebration was presenting the Henrietta Szold Prize to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. A gala group of singers came through the audience afterward, letting loose gigantic Hadassah balloons.

The surge of energy and enthusiasm that I always felt when attending National Conventions was still there, and anyone who missed this convention celebrating Hadassah's first century has missed an unforgettable experience!

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, lecturer and cookbook author. She also leads walks through Machaneh Yehudah, the Jewish produce market in English. ★



## Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

# Hadassah celebrates its centennial in Jerusalem

I think I've been a member of Hadassah about 25 years, but I grew up with Hadassah before that – being in its youth movement in Greater Kansas City as a preteen and later as a teen; going on its Israel summer leadership program, counseling at two Young Judaea camps; leading local clubs and directing region clubs during college and seeing my mother (z"l) active in Hadassah. (My husband, Barry, also grew up in Young Judaea, was a region president, attended National camp, went on its second year course to Israel and counseled at another camp.)

Then there was a long period where Hadassah was not in my life until I returned to the Greater Kansas City area to live and start up the ladder – from chapter board member to chapter president to region president and National board member.

Four years ago, when we returned to Israel, I became active in Hadassah-Israel and am now in my second year as co-president of the younger women's English-speaking chapter in Jerusalem. Needless to say, when the PR director of Hadassah in Israel, Barbara Soifer, a journalist I quite admire, asked me to join the Communication Team to write about the Centennial convention, this was seeing Hadassah from different angles.

Saturday evening, I was at the Mall, by Hadassah Hospital Ein Kerem – interviewing Region and Big Chapter

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presidents, who were under the guidance of Marlene Post, former National President. That was the beginning of a whirlwind week which, for me, was a combination of attending events, writing and filing stories and seeing old National board colleagues.

A late night tour of the new Sarah Wetson Davidson Tower with Ron Krummer, Hadassah Ein Kerem PR director, was very interesting although I had actually been part of the first tour of the Tower back in April when a Kansas City nurse-friend came and wanted a tour and we were lucky to be granted one.

Seeing the ribbon cutting of the Heritage Center was amazing – a real history of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America – now for all to see, off the lobby information area.

Sunday evening I was at the Israel Museum, interviewing members of the Society of Major Donors (contributors of \$100,000 or more). I accompanied them on their tour of the new sections of the Museum. Before the gala dinner for them, I heard Meret and Bella Meyer, reminisce about their grandfather, Marc Chagall. In the new Tower, there are 12 windows designed by Chagall which will be available for sponsorship, in order to finance part of the Tower, as a joint venture with Christie's of London.

Monday found me at Bet Shmuel, with its beautiful, breathtaking views of the Old City Walls, interviewing Keepers of the Gate. These special individuals are donors obligated to donate at least \$1000 a year. A special appeal was made for those present to step up their commitments and to male Associates who now are Keeper Associates.

Region dinners were held that evening, and I had organized the one for my region at Racha, a downtown Georgian restaurant. More than 75 people attending from Chicago and Great Plains Region added a lot of fun for me – renewing old acquaintances.

Tuesday evening, Barry and I were at Binyanei Haoma – Convention Center – to watch the launch of the Sarah Wetsman

## Jewish Students Need Your Help!



**8th Graders of the Hasten Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis are fundraising for the annual educational trip to Israel with the**

**JOURNEY TO ISRAEL 5K Run/Walk**

**Sunday, NOVEMBER 18, 2012**

Please "Run in Spirit" by registering online at **HHA.org** or **Active.com** till Nov. 16th, or **Donating** by calling HHA's office at **317/251-1261** thru March 31, 2013.



Marcie Natan, National President of Hadassah, with Israel President Shimon Peres at the official launching of the Sarah Wetsman Davidson Tower of Hadassah Hospital in Ein Kerem unveiling the new Hadassah Centennial stamp in Israel.

Davidson Tower, in the presence of President Shimon Peres and Ambassador Dan Shapira. To our surprise, as we sat on the aisle seats reserved for press, both the President and Ambassador paused as they walked by us and shook our hands!

The new Israeli stamp, marking Hadassah's centennial, was also launched that evening, and I look forward to buying some and using them on all the letters I send out of Israel.

The culmination of the \$363 million dollar campaign was the official launching of the Sarah Wetsman Davidson Tower (14 floors above ground, 5 floors below (see Kaplan/Israel, page 19)