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Happy Hanukkah!

Cover art by John Domont
(see About the Cover, p.2).

Editorial

This is a reprinting of my editorial from Jan. 14, 2004. Eli and Ethan, my two nephews mentioned below are now 14 and 13 respectively. They have grown to be such mensches, and to this day they still get along rather well, looking out for each other and not fighting too much. They both did a wonderful job at their double bar mitzvah in April.

Not everyone plays by the rules and sometimes that is okay. Our house seemed very quiet on Jan. 4 after all the out-of-town visitors left. When the 18th visitor had arrived, I stopped counting, so I do not know exactly how many of my family came to visit this December.

One of the highlights of this holiday season was playing dreidel with my nephews from Birmingham, Ala. Eli, age 5, and Ethan, age 4, are the two youngest of my sister Rena's three sons.

When I was growing up, we played dreidel sitting in a circle on the floor. One sibling took a turn spinning the dreidel, and everyone watched to see on which Hebrew letter it would land. Each person had a turn until it was back to the original spinner who would start the next round.

If it landed on *shin* the spinner would get 300 points. *Heh* was worth 50 points, *nun* was 5, and *gimel* was 3. After several spins, everyone would add their total points, and the one with highest was the winner.

We also had contests to see who could keep their dreidel spinning the longest, which one of us could keep the most dreidels spinning at once, and who could spin the dreidel upside down.

During *Hanukkah* this year, my sister took Eli and Ethan to the local Jewish Community Center where they had their choice of two different indoor pools in which to swim. When they returned to the house, Ethan said, "We went to a different JCC."

Eli and Ethan attend preschool at the JCC in Birmingham. It is a nice JCC, but smaller, which is not surprising because the Jewish community in Indianapolis is larger.

One of the boys was carrying a 3" x 5" card that said, "LET'S PLAY DREIDEL." When I read it, I saw the rules were very different. The most desired letter became the least and vice versa.

It said, "Everybody gets an equal number of pennies (or nuts) and puts one in the center for the pot. Each player gets a turn to spin the dreidel. If it lands with the *nun* up, the player gets nothing; with the *gimel* up, the player takes all the coins in the pot; with the *heh* up, the player takes half the coins, with the *shin*, the unlucky player gives one penny to the pot.

About the Cover

Hanukkah 5773

John Domont speaking about his art, light, and Hanukkah:

Hanukkah is the celebration of light....It is the time of gratitude and surrender to the darkness of winter and the unknown... the time for going within. We have an opportunity to learn from the lessons of sustained faith in life. This is a time of gratitude, trust and celebration. We celebrate LIFE, the light and opportunity of existence. Hanukkah is the kiss of trust and faith.



John Domont

About the artist: In his late 20s, Domont worked exclusively for conservation groups photographing threatened habitats and endangered species around the world. He photographed so many different mammals in water habitats that water became a primary focus for his artistic endeavors.

In the process of abstracting the qualities of water, as transformed into its various aspects of light, color, movement, and energy, he began to experience a relationship with painting. By 1983, painting had become the primary focus of his work.

(see About the Cover, page 4)

When the pot empties out after a *gimel*, each player puts a penny in and the game goes on."

I sat down to play this new version with the boys and all went well for the first two or three rounds. At that point, when it was either one's turn to spin, and the dreidel landed on a letter other than a *gimel* (win the pot of pennies), there was a pause in the game.

"That did not count, it accidentally hit my knee," or "I get to do it over because it was a bad spin," they would say. Mind you, when it was a *gimel*, there were no complaints.

The rules were altered. The new rules were: I put pennies in the pot. One of the nephews takes a turn. When his spins finally produce a *gimel*, he takes the pennies from the pot and adds them to his pile. Then I put more pennies in the pot. The other nephew gives it a whirl until he lands a *gimel*.

Three things impressed me. The first was that neither of the boys seemed to mind that much when the other one wanted to "do over" his spin. In my day, the response would have been, "Sorry it hit your knee, but it still counts," or "No do-overs allowed."

Secondly, how their eyes lit up when they "won" a few pennies. If they only knew that small amount would not be

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enough to buy even a candy bar. Last but not least was how well, at such a young age, they identified and uttered those Hebrew letters.

Happy Hanukkah 5773!

Jennie Cohen, December 5, 2012 ★

Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

A time of miracles

The days of *Chanukah* have a lot in common with our times. A lot of our people had assimilated into the Hellenistic culture. An enemy that outnumbered us by a hundred to one was trying to destroy us. The situation looked very bad, even hopeless. But a handful of the faithful, the Maccabees, put their trust in *Hashem*, and took action. In the end they saw many miracles, and they saved the Jewish people. (And they gave us a beautiful holiday.)

So today, a lot of our people are assimilated. We are surrounded by enemies who greatly outnumber us and are trying to destroy us. Sixty-two years ago, the Lubavitcher Rebbe and a handful of his followers began to take action. The situation is improving. We see miracles everywhere. Just a few days ago our enemies fired thousands of missiles at us. By great miracles, almost all of them missed their targets. More and more of the assimilated are returning to their faith. Now we hope to see very soon the greatest miracles of all, our complete and final redemption. There will be no more war, sickness or death.

Here are two miracles that I personally witnessed. About 40 years ago I spent one of the holidays by the Rebbe in Brooklyn. At the end of every holiday the Rebbe would make a *Farbrengen*. The Rebbe's followers would gather in 770 Eastern Parkway. The Rebbe would teach words of Torah, and then everyone would sing together and say "*Lechaim*, to life". Then the Rebbe would teach more words of Torah. This would last for at least a few hours.

Afterwards, the Rebbe would make *Havdalah* over a cup of wine. Then people would wait in line, and the Rebbe would give each of them a blessing and a little wine from his cup. (When the Rebbe's cup emptied, one of his secretaries would fill it up again). Thousands of people from all over New York would come to wait in line and get a blessing from the Rebbe. I waited in line. When my turn came, the Rebbe gave me a blessing and some wine. I said *Lechaim*, drank some of the wine, and started to walk away. After two or three steps, the Rebbe called me back. (If the Rebbe called you back, this was a very special privilege.) The Rebbe asked me if I was planning to visit my parents in Indianapolis. I said yes. Then the Rebbe poured some more wine into my cup and said, "This is for you father." He then



Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

Pirke Avot 4:9 – *Rabbi Yishmael his son said: He who shuns the office of judge rid himself of enmity, theft, and false swearing. He who presumptuously rules in Torah matters is foolish, wicked, and arrogant.*

Nov. 30, 2012, Vayishlach
Genesis 32:4–36:43, 16 Kislev 5773

This week's Torah portion, *Vayishlach*, contains one of the most compelling stories in Genesis if not the whole Torah. This is the story of Jacob who is returning home, but on this journey encounters a being that wrestles with him. Here is the passage from Genesis 32:

²⁴After taking them across the stream, he sent across all his possessions. ²⁵Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. ²⁶When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he wrenched Jacob's hip at its socket, so that the socket of his hip was strained as he wrestled with him. ²⁷Then he said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking." But he answered, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." ²⁸Said the other, "What is your name?" He replied, "Jacob." ²⁹Said he, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed." ³⁰Jacob asked, "Pray tell me your name." But he said, "You must not ask my name!"

Lots of questions: Was this a man or angel he encountered, as one place it says man and in another it says beings divine? Why couldn't this being be out past dawn? Why the mention about the hip? What is significant about the name change?



poured more wine into my cup and said, "This is for your mother."

I told my parents about the wine that the Rebbe sent them. They were happy to say a blessing and drink the wine. A few days later I was back home in Israel. Two months later I got a letter from Indianapolis. The doctor examined my mother, and found a tumor. They operated and removed it, and she was all right. A month later I got another letter. They found a tumor in my father's throat. He also had an operation to remove the tumor. Both of my parents had complete recoveries. My mother lived another 25 years and my father lived another 33 years.

We wish all of our readers a happy
(see Benzion, page 13)

There is no one correct answer to my questions or to the many others posed about this passage, but I have always liked the notion of Jacob not wrestling someone else, but with himself. Jacob, one of our patriarchs, was a less than above board person in my humble opinion. Much of this stems from his relationship with Esau, but he had other moments as well. At this point in the story, Jacob is returning to his homeland a rich man with many wives and possessions, but unresolved conflicts and issues. Before Jacob can really come home, he needs to deal with them. This passage is Jacob wrestling with himself. The new Jacob prevails in this match, but his thigh is injured as a sign to remember who he was lest he forget and return to his old ways. Jacob is even given a new name – Israel – that he can proudly bear as someone who wrestles with divine beings and is forgiven for his sins of the past.

I am sure that most of us could use a good wrestling match with an angel or some sort of being. All of us have issues we need to get past before we move contentedly into the future. These issues could be with family or friends. Maybe it is a struggle with work. Possibly it could be with Judaism. So often I hear from people the desire to find more engagement in Temple life. Some want to try and make *Shabbat* worship a regular part of their lives. Others look for a way to celebrate Judaism at home. I believe that these are good struggles to have in our lives and wrestling with them can only be for the good.

We've heard this said many times, "It is not Israel who kept the Sabbath, but the Sabbath that kept Israel." *Shabbat* is truly a blessing and making *Shabbat* in some form or some way brings that blessing closer to home. *Shabbat* can be observed with community at Temple and/or *Shabbat* can be observed at home. Whether it is the priestly blessing offered at an *Erev Shabbat* service or the blessings of candles, wine and challah at home, they all serve to engage the person with this special day of rest and the presence of God. *Shabbat* is not hard to do, but it doesn't happen without you. In the first set of the Ten Commandments in Exodus we are told to remember *Shabbat*, but the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy reminds us that we must observe it as well.

When you light your *Shabbat* candles this week, light one to help guide us through our struggles in life. Light the other candle to help lead us forward when we find the direction we want to go.

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. ★

Child survivors conference held in Cleveland

BY MICHAEL BLAIN

CLEVELAND – The International Jewish Child Survivors Conference, recently held in Cleveland, attracted some 500 delegates from several parts of the world. The full, long title of the gathering was “the 24th Annual World Federation Conference of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and their Descendants, Second and Third Generations, Spouses and Families.” The theme was “Legacy of Strength and Courage.”

As expected, the majority of attendees came from the United States, but also from Israel, Poland, Canada, Holland, United Kingdom and Peru. Many of the “child” survivors are now in their 80’s. I was 16 when liberated and am 84 now. The two co-chairs of the event, Rose Gelbert was a hidden small child in Poland; Morry Weiss was another hidden small child in Slovakia. Both are in their 70’s. Some of the survivors brought their children (second generation), and grandchildren (third generation) and some brought their non-survivor spouses.

There were a total of 38 workshops, panels, seminars and films. Seminar #8, for example, dealt with “The Impact of Survivors’ Aging on the Second and Third Generations.” Panel #10: “Jewish Rescue, Resistance – Untold Stories.” An overflow audience and a spirited discussion was held at Workshop #38: “Spirituality After the Holocaust: Where was God and where is He Now.”



Michael Blain (center, child survivor) with Sandy Lessig (right, second generation), Sylvia Blain (left, spouse of survivor).

Prominent speakers and panelist (total of 49) included academicians, authors, educators and survivors, to name but a few: Roman Kent, internationally known “voice of survivors,” he holds many distinguished positions: Chairman of American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors, treasurer of the Claims Conference and others.



Child Holocaust Survivors at Conference, L to R: Jeanette Buchwald, Judy Hersh, Sylvia Blain, Michael Blain, and Al Hersh.

Patrick Henry, PhD, has published books on Voltaire, Camus, Montaigne and others. His most recent book, *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France During the Holocaust* was published recently.

Mordecai Paldiel, PhD, is a leading scholar on the Rescue of Jews during the Holocaust. Dr Paldiel, born in Antwerp, Belgium and educated at Hebrew University and Temple University, now resides in Jerusalem.

Prof Eva Kahana, born in Budapest, survived as a young child by hiding in a church basement. She is currently Distinguished University Professor at Case Western University.



Three Child Holocaust Survivors, all three Korean War Veterans: Ted Hersh (left), his brother Al Hersh (right), Michael Blain (center).

Philip Bialowitz, is one of a very few survivors of Sobibor, the Nazi death camp. He is the author of *A Promise at Sobibor: A Jewish Boy's Story of Revolt and Survival in Nazi Occupied Poland*.

The Conference was held at the Renaissance Hotel, downtown Cleveland. All the meals were strictly kosher. There were daily and Shabbat religious services. When the Rabbi failed to show for one of the Shabbat Services, I volunteered to conduct the service. (My experience conducting services on board cruise ships and for seniors at Park Regency in Indianapolis came in handy.)

The Cleveland Conference was considered a great success by its organizers and attendees. Last year's Conference (see Blain, page 16)

ABOUT THE COVER

(continued from 2)

Domont's paintings are an expression of inspirations from nature and his relationship to the landscape. He strives to create harmony among the three forms of light available to an artist: surface light, the light of nature, and the light of spirit. His art is about presence and place.

Domont works in the Heartland, his home, where roads, pastures, fields, and forests are the essence of the landscape of the American Midwest. This countryside is both simple and nourishing. It is in the basics of the landscape that one can see and feel the beauty of the essential – the elements of land and sky, of nature and humanity coming together. Rather than portraying the realism of the country scene, Domont is in pursuit of the experimental expression. When one stands alone in a field with grain and sky, wind and color as companions, an experience of unity can occur.

Domont is interested in expressing the harmony of the seen and unseen. This experience of unity, which brings with it a sense of awe, supports and guides his work. His paintings are an attempt to honor the beauty and magic of living in our time and place.

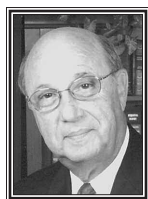
Domont spends his days painting, photographing and writing poetry. During the past two decades, his paintings have garnered wide recognition from collectors, museums, and other institutions. His large-scale works with saturated colors have been acquired by museums and hospitals.

In 2001, he received the prestigious Creative Renewal Fellowship, funded by Lilly Endowment Inc., and awarded by the Arts Council of Indianapolis. He used the funds to travel to China and Nepal, where he spent two and a half months writing, drawing, painting, and photographing. From November 2003 through January 2004, the Swope Museum of Art in Terre Haute featured an exhibit of his work, a mid-career retrospective.

In 2008 he was awarded American Artist Abroad by the United States government. He acted as an artist ambassador to the nation of Thailand. In 2009 he has received a second Creative Renewal Fellowship, funded by Lilly Endowment Inc., and awarded by the Arts Council of Indianapolis.

The Domont Studio Gallery is located at 545 S. East St. in Indianapolis, but you can check out his work on his Web site: www.domontgallery.com or email him: john@domontgallery.com.

Editor's note: The Hanukkah cover for this issue was made especially for you, dear readers and graced our cover in 2009. ★



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

Understanding and faith: The message of the season

Around this time each year we agonize over *Hanukkah* and Christmas. The greatest anxiety deals with whether these are truly religious holidays or the invention of merchants designed to encourage us to spend – spend – spend. Our celebrations have become a test of commercial endurance.

Christians claim that Jesus is no longer the central thought of the holiday and Jews decry the importance given to Hanukkah because of its proximity to Christmas.

First, allow me to address the concerns of our Christian neighbors and friends: No one can take the significance of the holiday away from you – only you can do that. How much emphasis is put into the giving and receiving instead of the message was not invented by others. Some non-Christians even complain when someone says “Merry Christmas” to them, knowing full well that they don’t celebrate the holiday. I suggest that it is a greeting of happiness and expectation – the willingness to share their joy with others and is not intended to insult but rather include them in the spirit of grace and gratitude.

Second, the Jewish commemoration of Hanukkah has developed into a contest. Presents and decorations are the order of the day, not the significance of the first episode in recorded history where people fought for their religious freedom. The lights on the Menorah are to remind us of the light offered us by God to live in peace and share that moment of redemption so that others can be what they want, do what they want, pray as they want and believe as they want.

So each year the dilemma of the holidays especially in interfaith households dominates the need for identification. There is the desire to show sensitivity and respect but there is a strong feeling of emptiness because the true meaning of the holidays are lost in the tangled web of evenness. In this environment, one holiday should not be celebrated more than the other so not to offend. The explanation to children should not become difficult thereby causing tension and confusion.

Everyone forgets that there is a connection between the two holidays other than the time of the year. The relationship can be found in one word: **Light**.

Christmas is a time of lights whether on a tree or in the decorations or the luminaries found on walkways designed to lead Christians to the path of birth and redemption. This is the darkest time of the year so the lights are there to illuminate our path thus avoiding the dark places of despair. While that may sound good and perhaps was the original intent of the lights, it has come to signify more and we should all respect the spiritual guidance that the lights are designed to enhance.

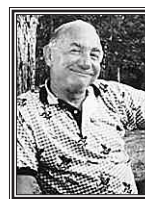
Hanukkah too is a time of lights. We all know the story of the one cruise of oil found in the Temple in Jerusalem when the Maccabees defeated the Syrian-Greek army and rushed to cleanse the Temple of all the defilement. The Menorah which was the symbol of the eternalness of God because the flame was never extinguished and is replicated today by the Eternal Light found over the Ark of the Covenant containing the Holy Scriptures, the Torah, needed oil to burn. The Talmud tells us that there was only enough oil for one night and it took eight days to purify and produce the oil and miracle of miracles, it lasted the eight days until new oil could be manufactured.

It doesn’t matter whether you believe the story or even if it is true, what does matter is what the story signifies to us and to all humanity: that the light of truth and dignity and freedom cannot be extinguished as long as we believe in the sanctify of life.

The religious freedom that was won 2400 years ago has been the light for all generations whether it be a light in the sky signifying a birth or a light in a mind bringing the message of salvation or a light on a table allowing us to feel free to read what we wish and understand the wishes and dreams of others.

Many things have happened throughout the course of history that should not be repeated. Many things have also happened throughout history which do need repeating and are lost in the hate and bigotry that cause the lights to go out. This time of the year should remind us of the eternal struggle of good and evil. We visit our respective houses of worship and pray for goodness to survive, for evil to be eradicated.

The lights are there to remind us that God cannot do this for us. He is lighting the way for us to do these things for ourselves. To me this is the message of Christmas. It certainly is the message of Hanukkah. We need to allow the lights of



Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

Chanukah 2012

I’ve gotta start saving up for *Chaunkah*. The older you get the heavier the fiscal load. Let me explain for some of my math deficient readers. A) You’re three years old – your financial resources equal those of Stockton, California – bubkes, zip, *garnisht*. Nobody expects a present. B) You’re eight years old. Gotta give Mom and Pop something – total expenditure five bucks. C) You’re 80 years old – swarms of grandkids, great-grandkids, uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces, and nephews. If you were Ben Bernake, you’d press the red button to print hundred dollar bills or sell stacks of treasuries. But since you’re not a treasury big wig, you got to raid your bank account. That’s what Chanukah has come to for me. I think some rare Christian anti-Semite in the twenties started the whole business. If they are gonna be broke due to Christmas giving, well the Jews may as well declare bankruptcy, too!

What I dislike about this expensive spurt of generosity is that it takes the spotlight off our huge Superbowl win over those Syrians, who haven’t changed from that day to this; aided by Persians, they’ve expanded their blood lust from just Jews to anybody hanging around the street corners, including Syrians. As some Greek philosopher who was probably deluged with obligations for Chanukah gifts said, “The more things change, the more they stay the same”.

But it was a famous victory and the first since the Canaanite victors of the previous millennia. Of course, as usual there were more than swords and shields involved.

(see Roberts, page 9)



the season to guide us in the path of survival. We all need the light – we all need each other.

To my Christian friends, it is my pleasure to say to you – “Merry Christmas.” To each other, it is an honor to say – “Happy Hanukkah.” Our prayer should be whether Jew of Gentile, whether Christmas or Hanukkah celebrant, that we use the lights – the common lights – to teach us true brotherhood and friendship.

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



Kabbalah of the Month

By MELINDA RIBNER

A light in the darkness

Kislev began on Nov. 15.

This year the month of *Kislev* was ushered in by a war between Hamas and Israel. At this time, we need to remember that the energy of this month is shaped by the holiday of *Chanukah*, the holiday of miracles. Chanukah occurs at the end of the month at the darkest time of the year to teach us that there is light amidst the darkness. At the darkest time, there is light and there will be light. Actually the light in the darkness shines even more brightly because of the darkness that surrounds it.

Our beautiful homeland, our miniature and gorgeous country Israel shines as a beautiful Chanukah light amidst the darkness of evil embodied in oppressive and tyrannical countries like Syria, Iran, Egypt, and Islamic surrogate groups for Iran such as Hamas and Hezbollah who each seek both to subjugate their own people and destroy our beautiful holy land along with all democratic countries based on Judaic values.

Rather than create societies that nurture freedom and prosperity, the rulers of these countries and groups oppress their own people and then blame Israel for the evil that they do. Remember that they will lie, they will photoshop, and they will conduct a media campaign to portray Israel as an evil oppressor and themselves as innocent victims. It is simply not true.

Why do they do this? What is the root of anti-Semitism? Why do the Jewish people often find themselves in the midst of the greatest evil? This is actually a subject matter that is addressed in depth in my new book, *The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women*. To say something briefly for now, I think that the root of most anti-Semitism is jealousy.

The very existence of the Jewish people is perceived as a direct challenge to the religions practices in these countries as well as to the rulers who seek to dominate the world for their selfish purposes. They look at the beauty and success of little Israel, and they simply are jealous. They mistakenly think that if they occupied the land of Israel that it would blossom for them. It would not. Israel blossoms for the Jewish people alone. This is not logical, but it is true nevertheless. Faith is greater

than reason. This is what we learn in the month of Kislev.

Let us remember that Kislev is the month when a small group of Maccabeans defeated the massive Greek armies and liberated the Holy Temple. And, may we also see miracles this month. The Jewish people have always lived on a level of miracles. During this month of Kislev we learn that life is miraculous. With faith and trust may we each be Chanukah candles that illuminate the darkness within and without.

Kislev is one of the darkest times of the year, yet it is a time of expansiveness, travel, and going forward in life with trust and faith. We are able to go forward and take risks this month because Kislev is a time of deepening faith and trust in God.

It is faith, not the mind that opens us to new possibilities and new dimensions, enabling us to go forward in ways that we could not do solely on our own. When we are limited by the mind, we are always tied down to what is known and familiar. We seek to understand why and how. Faith by definition is beyond the reasoning powers of the mind. Faith enables us to be present, to not dwell in the past or worry about the future, but live moment to moment fully with trust and fearlessness. The energy of Kislev is about actualizing one's dreams and visions.

Because God is in this world, life is always full of synchronicity but particularly this month we see the Divine Hand in what happens to us and in the world. One of the signs showing that we are living in accordance with our life purpose and Divine Will is that we are happy and are experiencing the magic and abundance of life. We receive many signs from the universe providing feedback that we are on course. Small miracles seem commonplace, an everyday occurrence. This awareness fills us with gratitude. The whole month is a time for thanksgiving. The more grateful we are, the more miracles we experience.

The healing energy of this month is sleep. Though we sleep every night, it is still a mystery how we sleep and what occurs to us during sleep. Just as we must feel trust in God to go forward in our lives this month, we also demonstrate our trust in God through sleep. When we can let go into the mystery of sleep and sleep deeply, we emerge rested and renewed. So much healing occurs during a sleep state. When we sleep, we are told our soul is able to ascend to the higher worlds. Those who have purified their consciousness may receive true vision and understanding through dreams. Many dreams may be prophetic. This is the time to pay attention to your dreams.

"You have a right to dream. Your dreams

speak the message of the soul. They need not be logical. This is the month of paying attention to your dreams, listening to the part of yourself that is beyond the rational mind. During this month, we reclaim the pure faith of the child within who believes in miracles.

"The healing of sleep also means that this is a time when we should wake up from the sleepy dimension that we usually live in. When we sleep, we should sleep deeply. When we are awake, we should not be sleeping.

"Though the name Kislev itself is Babylonian in origin, the word *Kis* in Hebrew means 'pocket' and *lev* means 'heart'. This has been said to refer to the capacity to be a vessel for what your heart desires. Very often people may want and want, but they do not know how to receive what they want into their lives. They therefore stay in a place of wanting. During this month, we have a greater capacity to actually receive what we want, by just a small allowing within ourselves through faith. By the way, according to the Talmud, Kislev has also meant a time of unexpected money." From *Kabbalah Month by Month*.

The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women: Revealing the Divine Feminine

There are mysteries about the feminine within these archetypical stores of Biblical women that are not widely known and are important to know. Biblical women changed the world due to their courageous actions. Through the format of an interview, biblical women not only answer questions about their lives, they personally guide us to live more authentically and courageously. As archetypes of the feminine, biblical women identify and clarify for us the unique differences between men and women and empower us to be more of who we really are. As our collective mothers, they offer us practical guidance on love, sexuality, relationships, suffering, world events, as only a mother can do. Most importantly, this book invites its readers to reclaim the hidden and powerful path of feminine spirituality that has been almost lost to women and men today.

Melinda (Mindy) Ribner, L.C.S.W. is a spiritual psychotherapist and healer in private practice (www.kabbalahoftheheart.com). She is a teacher of Jewish meditation and Kabbalah for 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). Her new book, *The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women* will be coming out soon. She can be reached by email at Beitmiriam@msn.com or Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com. ★

Gather the People



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

A Chanukah Lesson: Ending a long night of darkness

Few sources of pain in this life are more intense than long-term estrangement from those we love. It's a darkness that's particularly painful at the time of year when we celebrate the Festival of Light. And it's especially agonizing when we're alienated from a parent or child. But it's also difficult when we're isolated from siblings or former friends.

- We experience the pain in many ways.
- We may find ourselves cut off not only from the particular loved one but others as well, such as other family members, friends, and even congregants, who have taken sides;
- We may perpetually carry bitterness that poisons other aspects of our lives, such as social relationships, participation in congregation and community, and work;
- We may have bad dreams and nightmares and psychosomatic symptoms, and we may unconsciously make lifestyle choices that undermine our health; and
- We may lie or dissemble to put a good face on the situation when we're asked about it.

Maybe the worst is that when thinking of a failed relationship, we tend to pre-occupy ourselves with self-pitying or self-righteous thoughts. And if we don't see ourselves as victims, we often imagine ourselves as righteous avengers – scheming on how eventually to get even.

In short, we lose perspective, which serves to sustain our suffering and prevent us from reaching out for reconciliation. In the worst-case scenario, we spiritually sicken and die alone in our old age, estranged from loved ones for reasons we can no longer recall. It's pathetically reminiscent of a Nipsy Russell comment – as if we're all saying to one another: "I will love you when you're old and gray, but I will not be with you!"

Is there a way out of this self-sustained suffering?

"Yes," some would say – we can end the suffering by one simple act: *forgiveness*. But forgiveness must in some way be

sought, or it isn't likely to be accepted.

Consider the lessons of the weekly Torah reading *parashat Miketz*: Could there be any greater basis for family estrangement than what Joseph experienced? His brothers sold him into slavery!

Much later, in the midst of a famine in Canaan, Joseph's father, Jacob, sends his remaining sons to Egypt, because it was known they could obtain food there. But, of course, unknown to them was the fact that Joseph had become viceroy to Pharaoh over all Egypt. (Genesis 42:1–2) Rabbi Nahum M. Sarna, one of our modern commentators, teaches that previously, when selling him into slavery, "...Joseph had been at the mercy of his brothers; now he is master of the situation, and they come as suppliants." (Sarna comment on Genesis 42:1–43:34)

When his brothers first came before him, Joseph acted like a stranger, hiding his identity from them, and of course his brothers didn't recognize him. (Genesis 42:8) Rabbi Sarna comments on Genesis 42:9, saying that, "Joseph now finds himself caught in a maelstrom of conflicting emotions...The instinctive desire for revenge is tempered by the knowledge that his father and brother back in Canaan may be starving and are dependent on the acquisition of provisions from Egypt. He is desperate for news of their welfare but dares not give himself away by overly anxious inquiry. Above all, he feels he must find out conclusively whether or not his brothers regret their actions and have truly reformed. He decides upon a series of tests."

In the first test he tells them to send one of their number back to Canaan to bring their brother Benjamin down to Egypt, while the rest of them remain in confinement. (Genesis 42:16)

At one point, in Joseph's presence, unaware that he understands Hebrew, the brothers say to each other: "...We are certainly guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear..." (Genesis 42:21)

Or Hachayim (Rabbi Chaim ben Attar, 1696–1744) teaches us that, "[Joseph]... then became aware that they were sorry for what they had done to him and considered themselves as having committed a sin against him."

Joseph turns and weeps, presumably because of their genuine contrition and regret, which certainly would confirm for him the likelihood of reconciliation.

But he isn't done testing them.

He arranges for his brothers to be specially seated for a meal he is hosting, placing them "from the oldest in the order of his seniority," and the brothers

were "astonished." (Genesis 42:33) The youngest brother [Benjamin] receives a portion that is several times larger than everyone else's. (Genesis 42:34)

This too, comments Rabbi Sarna (on Genesis 42:34), is a test "...to see whether this obvious favoritism would arouse their envy or expose any hostile feelings that they might harbor against the one who is now their father's favorite."

And there are more tests.

Why does Joseph test his brothers so thoroughly?

Despite the pain and suffering they have caused him, including a lengthy separation from his family and years in prison, Joseph is open to forgiving his brothers – but not perfunctorily.

To restate the point, forgiveness that is not sought is often not accepted when given – people often feel they have nothing for which to be forgiven, notwithstanding their misbehavior. If forgiveness is given without its being sought, it's not likely to relieve the emotional burden of the one who offers it.

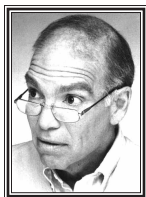
While our common sense tells us we can't persuade someone to seek our forgiveness, that's only partly true. By modeling the behavior we hope to encourage, we increase its probability in the other person. So we may encourage another to seek our forgiveness by saying to that person, "I imagine that I offended you, hurt your feelings, or somehow caused you pain or loss – is that true?"

But, certainly, when we believe that we have been injured or treated unjustly, we usually respond with resentment and hurt, not with forgiveness. Nonetheless, the question of which of these emotions will be expressed first, and with what intensity, is answered by the choices we make.

Our internal resentment typically is accompanied by outward expressions of anger or even rage, and our private hurts are accompanied by visible expressions of emotional anguish and pain or even tears. Internally these reactions run together – we experience them as cascading thoughts and feelings – but their external expression is a matter for us to choose.

Specifically, we can choose to express our anger or our hurt *first*. If, on the one hand, we want to *increase* the distance between those from whom we are estranged and ourselves, we may accomplish that end by expressing our *anger* first. If, on the other hand, we want to decrease the distance between those from whom we are estranged and ourselves, we accomplish that end by expressing our *hurt* first.

The answer to this conundrum seems (see Ben Asher/Bat Sarah, page 19)



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

Who built it?

I heard David McCollough on 60 Minutes say that when he visited college campuses, a large number of the students did not realize that the 13 original colonies were on the east coast. Shocking? Not really.

Not when there are four million jobs in the U.S. begging for qualified employees and cannot get them. Not when manufacturers are opening their own "schools" to train American workers for the 21st century manufacturing skills they need.

Those politicians who would gut our educational system even more drastically are leading a parade to destruction of not just the American dream, but America itself. My grandmother went to school at the age of 63 to learn how to properly read and write English.

She and millions of immigrants like her are the ones who built this country. It was not the industrial millionaires who hired immigrants at starvation wages and tried to exploit them before they could learn the game of making it in America. It was the "Greenhorns" – with their dogged determination, with their constant fight for rights saying "that's not fair!" and winning at the election polls.

From Europe they came. The Poles, the Russians, the Italians and the Irish. And the Jews. Fleeing Czarist oppression, the Anti-Semitism of the Church, the oppressive laws that would not allow them to own land or pursue most trades, they came to the "Golden Medinah" – America!

They fought the status quo – a fight that meant death in Russia and Poland. They became the backbone of the Labor Movement that allowed millions of immigrants to rise out of poverty and carve out a position of equality and comfort.

Yes – they were Socialists whose sons became Democrats and Republicans as they moved up the economic ladder. My grandfather was a firebrand Socialist. He was also a Pacifist. The things he fought for are now part and parcel of what makes America, America.

He fought for child labor laws, for equal pay for equal work. He battled for overtime pay and decent working conditions. And today, because of that "Socialist", many of the things he espoused are the law and we are all better off because of Abe Shiplacoff and his associates.

Well, the Jews came and over the generations we have prospered. We no

longer speak Yiddish on the streets and in our homes. Samovars have long since been replaced with fine china and Keurig coffee makers.

And we beat overt discrimination against other new immigrants as well as our own. We fought for women's rights and even against the bigotry of some of our own for gay rights. We led the marches in Selma and Birmingham.

And now there are others who cry for the same shot at that elusive golden ring. Statisticians tell us that the Hispanic Market is worth three trillion dollars cumulatively. They, like the Jews, are not a single mass market. They represent different cultures and even different ways of speaking their own language.

American business is taking note of them. And now, so are the politicians. The Hispanic population, like the Jews all those years ago will not settle for the crumbs at the edge of the table. They want to earn their way in.

Asians? If any group resembles the Jews it is the Asians. Family oriented, focused on education, they are moving swiftly up the economic ladder. According to David Brooks in the *New York Times*, Asians and Hispanics, again like the Jews before them, know the role government should play in their daily lives. That is the things that they cannot do on their own.

The individual cannot build roads and bridges and dams. The individual cannot cope with huge natural disasters. Rugged individualism has its place. But not in a huge, diversified society where we are all, at the root of things interdependent.

This election was more than one party beating another. This election showed where the nation is heading. There was a time when my family could not buy a home in Shaker Heights, Ohio because we are Jews. That was struck down by the Supreme Court and we moved in – along with dozens of other Jews. The neighborhood did not fall apart. It prospered.

The exclusive business clubs of Cleveland and Philadelphia and yes, even Orlando were not open to Jews – or to women or Blacks for that matter. No longer. A few white men in back rooms no longer determine how things will be run.

Some years ago I had a client whose product looked like it could be sold on Rush Limbaugh's radio show. The calls we got were from, you guessed it, angry white men. I mean really angry! And hey – they had their guys in office!

Well, today it would be madness to advertise on that program, The times they are a'changin'. The new immigrants will follow the footsteps of the Jews. And those who would care to lead this nation are taking note. Karl Rove is facing reality.

(see Shipley, page 16)



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Floods, explosions, elections and General Petrayus

It has been a very busy month, and it will take some time to recover, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Our hearts go out to the victims of Hurricane Sandy, and to the community in Indianapolis, though much smaller it is frightening, because we do not know what caused the explosion.

For me, the fact that the election is over is a blessing. The vitriolic campaign, the scurrilous ads on TV, and then after \$6 billion spent, virtually no mandate and a government in Washington that appears much the same. America reelected President Obama, and simultaneously a Republican House of Representatives. Every member of the House was up for re-election, and for reasons unknown, this lack of real and practical change may be at dead end, with 2014 and 2016 already in the news.

And then there was the fall of an American Hero, and within all of the sordid accounts, and an ever-widening net of misbehavior come the public debate about public morality, or perhaps the willingness of the American public to simply "throw in the towel." Is it a question of "getting caught?" Is it a debate of the separation of work and play? Is it because we don't parse out the word "adultery" into "cheating, lying, and stealing"?

This is a conversation families need to have. They need to sit down with the family, at least those who are affected by life outside the family, to talk about values, and why Jews need to be careful to remember that while we live and work in the marketplace, we are not bound to accept its values. We need to determine as families, what our values are, and where they come from.

When the world begins to look like the covers of the newspapers in the grocery stores, we need to be realistic about our environment, not just the air we breathe, the toxic nature of the society in which we live. We may not be able to save the world, our country, our state, our city, our neighborhood, or our street, but we must save our family.

Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc., and can be reached at hkarsh@gmail.com. He is a community columnist for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. Submitted Nov. 14, 2012. ★



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

The ultimate balancing act: Letting go of our children

I waved goodbye to my son at the airport as he returned for his final semester of college, schlepping two very ratty looking duffel bags. The visit had been good, but not without its tensions. A variation of the old Henny Youngman joke crossed my mind.

"Take my child – please!" I thought, trying to swallow back the lump in my throat as I pulled away from the curb.

From the moment Joshua was born, his dad and I knew, at least intellectually, that someday he would grow up and leave home, as we would naturally want him to do. Our job, as his parents, was to raise him so that he could become independent and be ready and feel good about leaving us. But the years between that first awareness and the reality did not, unfortunately, prepare me for how best to parent him at this point in his life or how hard it would be for me to let go.

The parenting journey is a long and arduous one that requires more physical stamina than Superman, more psychological expertise than Freud and the financial resources of Bill Gates. At each age and stage of our children's lives, we must teach them how to encounter and maneuver through the world and provide them with age-appropriate skills, tools and guidance to enable them to become independent and self-sufficient. And as they learn, so do we, although often not quickly enough, to feel competent or confident as parents.

Somewhere in the back of my mind however, has been a feeling that once my children left home for good, things would become easier: The house would stay cleaner, my car wouldn't look like a dorm room, and my nights would be undisturbed by the sound of tires over our driveway at 3:00 a.m. What I didn't take into account however, was the emergence of an emotion that has hit me like a tsunami: Plain, old-fashioned fear. Fear that I can no longer protect my children from the big, bad world; fear that they won't be happy, or feel appreciated and loved; and fear that without their trusty mother by their side, they will make poor decisions and terrible mistakes.

I talk my fears over with my friends, my own mother (who can't resist telling me that what comes around, goes around) and my husband, who calms my fears with his faith in our kids. I am reassured that many parents struggle with emotional issues such as depression, anxiety and anger when their children separate from them and grow into adults. I look, as I often do, for answers in Jewish texts and find something that helps me almost as much as therapy.

There is a Hebrew phrase, *tzar gidul banim*, which means "the pain of raising children". It acknowledges that part of being a parent is to experience emotional anguish and periods of unhappiness, stress, concern and fear about our children. Jewish parenting wisdom suggests that we can do no better than to teach our children what they need to become independent and then put our faith in them, and God, that they will learn from their mistakes and find their true path.

Tzar gidul banim also means that children, as well as parents, must feel pain, discomfort, and distress in order to become fully functioning human beings. As parents, we can not and should not attempt to remove or eradicate all unhappiness, disappointment, failure, or stress from our children's lives. Without those realities, our children will actually be weaker and less prepared to face the world alone. By facing them, they will learn to cope, accommodate, adjust and become stronger and more resilient.

I admit, although not without some embarrassment, that my anxiety about letting go and relinquishing control of my children is based on my fears about what will happen to them when I do. My concerns range from the inane to the existential: Will they wear a jacket in winter and eat a good breakfast? Are they choosing the right courses, spending too much money, developing meaningful friendships? Will college prepare them for life or even for graduate school? Once again, I am comforted by a very powerful, mystical concept in Judaism as I struggle to quiet the inner chatter of my mind.

Tsimtsum means "contraction of the Divine" and is a *Kabbalistic* term describing the origins of the universe. Jewish mystics believe that originally the entire world was filled up by God and there was not space for anything else to exist. In order for the world to come into being, God had to withdraw some of God's presence to allow creation to occur. But in pulling back, God did not disappear. The Torah is replete with stories that describe God's continuing involvement in the world. They teach us two things: not only did God not withdraw from the world once it was created, but He dwelled close by and provided continuing

ROBERTS

(continued from page 5)

Two powerful philosophies, Grecian and Jewish clashed. And the Greeks, for all their civilized reputation, were as pagan as a mud-sculptured idol. But oddly enough, our war with the Syrian Greek armies was not a black and white divide between us and them. Many Jews, more cultural than spiritual, sympathized with our enemy – hard to understand their religious regression to Stone Age gods – multiple gods who fought and lusted like humans. A truce of the old lure of idolatry, which we succumbed to throughout our first two millennia in the land of milk and honey and idols. Amazing that it was so hard to extinguish while in the background the Creator constantly thunders about His unique and solitary role as Creator. And how often does he promulgate: "I am a jealous God"?

Anyhow, this is a long way from my four dozen youngsters who line up for gifts in front of my bank, my Visa card, my car loan and then there's my Uncle Harry who hasn't worked – through good times and bad – since 2006.

It's hard to be Jewish. It would have been nice if our rebellion against Rome, a century or two later, had been successful. There, too, was a split within the Jewish community. Juno and Jupiter unbelievably attracted some of our fickle ancestors. And the Roman victors rubbed the Temple. Did He not tell us He was a jealous G-d?

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 and Blog: www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com. His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof can be bought at Amazon.com or lulu.com. ★



help and guidance to His creation.

Tsimtsum suggests an appropriate model for parenting adult children: That as parents, we must "contract" our presence in order for our children to become adults. We must withdraw – our opinions, ideas, demands and expectations – and remove ourselves to give them space to create their own realities, pursue their own dreams, falter and make their own mistakes. But we need not remove our support and love and can continue to remain close enough to be there when they need us. The trick as a parent is finding that balance.

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



Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

The Golden Land

The Golden Land has returned to the New York stage, thanks to the talented people at The National Yiddish Theatre – Folksbiene. And how lucky for all of us, particularly those of us who recall the immigrant experience of our own parents or grandparents! It is the definitive tale of the eastern European Jews, moving from *shtetl* life overseas to the golden land.

In this strong new production, the essence of the original show remains intact. On a bare stage, with the simplest of props, the story emerges. Under the flawless direction of Bryna Wasserman (Folksbiene's Executive Director), the story moves ahead fluidly, blending words, music, choreography. Each scene strikes an emotional chord, certainly for Jews in the audience – but also for any immigrant or the descendant of an immigrant. In short, just about any American should relate to the theme of this glorious musical.

The Golden Land takes the Jewish immigrants from their first landing on American shores, to life on the teeming lower East Side, to the uptown moves, to the Depression, to tragedy of the Triangle fire, to growing political awareness, to the Holocaust era. In short, it is the Jewish-American history of the 20th century. For this viewer, the most heart-breaking scene surfaced when the immigrants landed and one man's family was sent back. (New arrivals, routinely checked for any health issue, were weeded out and rejected.) The

Jewish Theater

BY HAROLD JACOBSON

Tom Dugan's Nazi Hunter: Simon Wiesenthal

TORONTO – Since 1976 and the success of Quebec's separatist elements (they now form a minority government in that province) a seismic demographic shift has occurred in the Jewish community of Canada.

Whereas Montreal had always been the leading Jewish center in Canada, it is now Toronto which has replaced the Quebec city as the cultural, religious



Tom Dugan

song "Lozt Arayn" ("Let Them In") said it all.

The show (created by Zalmen Mlotek, Folksbiene's Artistic Director, and Moishe Rosenfeld) made its initial New York appearance in 1985. Mlotek and Rosenfeld had researched, assembled and adapted some 48 Yiddish songs (mostly translated into English). And now a gifted young cast – Cooper Grodin, Stacey Harris, Andrew Keltz, Daniella Rabbani, as well as veterans Bob Ader and Sandy Rosenberg, once again brings the story to life.

The Golden Land played off-Broadway at the Baruch Performing Arts Center East 24th Street in Manhattan through Dec. 2. Perhaps, with *mahzel*, the show will be extended. [Folksbiene will resume performances from Dec. 19 to Jan. 6, after concluding its announced five-week run on Dec. 2.]

See Irene Backalenick bio on page 16.

and political heart of Canadian Jewry.

This is reflected in the gigantic growth of Toronto in general – now the largest conurbation in Canada with more than five million people in the Greater Toronto area and – the increase in Toronto's Jewish population, now estimated to be in the 250,000 range.

The Jewish profile in the city is reflected in its multitude of synagogues, yeshivas, day schools, and recreational centers which represent a broad spectrum of ethnic, cultural and religious norms.

It is also seen in the theatrical scene, where two Jewish theatre groups, Teatron and The Harold Green Jewish Theatre have been offering Jewish fare for several years.

In this context the latter group has just mounted *Tom Dugan's Nazi Hunter: Simon Wiesenthal* at The Toronto Center for the Performing Arts.

There are several ironies attached to Dugan's virtuoso one man performance about a man who dedicated his life to tracking down Nazi war criminals. The play was written by Dugan, an Irish Catholic writer and experienced film actor who has not only executed a brilliant reconstruction of Wiesenthal on stage but has done his homework on the Nazi Hunter's world view.

Another irony, not mentioned in the play, is that Wiesenthal refused to step foot in Canada because he believed, with considerable evidence to support his views, that Canada was delinquent in identifying and prosecuting Nazi war criminals, despite his efforts to supply Canadian government officials with the relevant evidence.

A third ironical aspect to this performance is that Dugan's Wiesenthal was reluctant (as was Wiesenthal himself) to use the term six million, preferring rather to speak constantly of the eleven million victims of Nazism, that is, six million Jews and five million gentiles.

In his re-creation of Wiesenthal's life, Dugan covers all the bases – including the Yiddish-German-Polish resonances in his English, his miraculous survival in several concentration camps, his reunion with his wife after the war – and, of course, his relentless pursuit of the Nazi executioners of Jews and gentiles.

The only discordant note in the Dugan-Wiesenthal play was the illogical assertion that *all murders* are wrong, even those committed by Jews against the Nazis. Dugan was correctly quoting Wiesenthal but Wiesenthal was wrong on this point.

But that is another story. Kudos to Tom Dugan for a deeply moving, provocative and engaging portrait of the Nazi Hunter whose death in 2005 robbed us of the one person who spent his life witnessing for the millions who had perished. ★



Clockwise from left: Andrew Keltz, Sandy Rosenberg, Cooper Grodin, Stacey Harris, Bob Ader, Daniella Rabbani in The National Yiddish Theatre – Folksbiene production of *The Golden Land*.

When Israelis are injured in rocket attacks, the speed of the response can mean life or death.



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Yiddish for Everyday

By HENYA CHAIET

How we celebrated Chanukah

Yiddisheh kinder hert zich tzoo un mir vellen reddem vegen Chanukah. Oy Chanukah; Chanukah ah yom tov ah shayner. (Yiddish friends listen up and we will talk about the holiday of Chanukah.)

Ven ich hob geven ah klayneh kinde flegen mine mutters mishpaucheh cumen tzoo zamen bye dee bubbeh un zaydehfar Chanukah. (When I was a child my mother's family came together for a Chanukah get together at my grandparents's.)

Mir flegen an tzinden dee licht un zingen shaneh lidehlach. (We would light the candles and sing lovely Chanukah songs.)

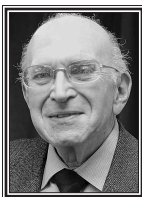
Der nauch iz geven ah Chanukah sudeh. (After the lighting of the candles came a wonderful feast.) *Gehbroteneh ganz dee bubbeh haut gehmacht schmaltz fun der ganz un gehmacht dee latkes mit dee schmaltz.* (Roasted goose with latkes that grandma fried in the goose fat that she rendered.) *Dos haut gehat zayer ah gooten tam un haut farshmekt dee ganseh hoyz.* (These latkes had a special taste and the odors permeated the entire house.)

Nauchen sudeh haut mehn geh shplit in dreidel un geh gessen nislach. (After dinner we played dreidel and ate assorted nuts that we had to shell.) *Unzereh elteren flegen shpilen corten.* (Our parents played cards.) *Ahzeh hoben mir farbracht mit unzer mishpaucheh.* (This is the way our family celebrated Chanukah.)

Tzoom letzden haut der zaydeh gehgeben alleh kinder ah zilber dauler. (At the very end of the evening we would all line up and grandpa gave each of us a silver dollar.) *Dee tantes hoben unz gehgeben tzen cent.* (All the aunties each gave us a dime.) *Mir hoben zich zayer gehfrayt mit undzer Chanukah gelt.* (We were very happy with our Chanukah gelt.)

Haynt iz ah andersheh velt ich vunder tzoo zich ahlayn, velen mineh kinder un kindz kinder hauben dee shaneh gehdanken en zayer eltereh yorn vee ich haub? (The world is so different today sometimes I wonder and think to myself, will my children and grandchildren have the wonderful memories of Chanukah that I do now that I am old?)

Haut ah fraylachen Chanukah un esst dee hayseh zoodekeh latkes mit ayer mishpaucheh. (I hope all of you will



As I Heard It

By MORTON GOLD

A good gift for Chanukah

There is a new CD in the Spirit Series (Volume 11) released as a joint project of the Cantors Assembly and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The CD was produced by Hazzan David Propis with translations, commentary and booklet layout by Hazzan Sam Weiss.

The 27 selections on this CD are in a variety of styles and genres. The performances are drawn from selections from CD's performed from a talented group of cantors. The selections traverse the path from styles youths currently know to contents they may not know but culturally speaking should get to know.

From my perspective (as a composer and also as a critic) the contents (not the performances) of the first 15 selections are uneven in quality. I believe that song No. 13, "What Shabbos Means to Me" is the best of the early group. The music and lyrics are by Hazzan Martin Goldstein, and performed by him and taken from his CD "Pirke Avi." I also liked commentary in the booklet that goes with the song and gives the young listener a clue as to what he or she is going to hear.

I also liked No. 4, "Modeh Ani", music by Rabbi Dan Liben and also No. 7, "L'Dor Vador", music by Craig Taubman. In spite of the style which evoked the spirit of Xavier Cugat, I also liked No. 10 "Shake Another Hand/Shabbat Feeling". Both are charming.

Another song of merit is No. 13, "We Sing Shabbat, We Sing Shalom" with music and lyrics by Ellen Allard. The words as well as the music go very well together.

I want the reader to understand that if I

enjoy some piping hot latkes together with your families.)

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. Email: afeinn@gmail.com. ★

did not mention any other selection it was either because I could not find positive things to write about them or as in the case of No. 6 "Ashrei", I simply thought that it was tasteless and let it go at that.

The selections from No. 16 on are all on another level. These are songs that if the young listener did not know, he or she ought to know. For parents and grandparents, the same may be said. All the performances range from good to very good indeed and should give one listening pleasure for many years to come. Most of these songs are part of our collective Jewish cultural experience, and should they not be so, then they ought to be.

I found the introductory remarks to each of these songs to be commendable and to the point. It is risky for me to single out one and perhaps not another. Nevertheless, here goes. No. 15, "Saleinu", music by Saleinu, has a lovely melody, sweetly sung by Hazzan Ilene Keys with drum accompaniment. Why no accompaniment other than a drum?

No. 17 is "Lama Suka Zu" performed by Hazzan Benjamin Maissner, arranged by Ken Rabow. This is beautifully sung with an effective arrangement featuring a fine lute player. No. 18, "Ocho Kandelikas" is performed by Hazzan Elana Rosenfeld and Park Avenue school choir. This melody by Flory Jagoda with Greek lyrics gets a superlative performance.

No. 19, In "Ein Torah" is an original composition by Michahel Isaacson. This is a class effort and receives a performance by Hazzan Lam and the Stephen S. Wise Temple Children's Choir that is both dignified and expressive. No. 21, is "Oyfn Pripetshik". This oldie by Mark Warshawsky receives an expressive rendition by Hazzan Katchko-Gray. No. 22, the familiar "Tum-Balalayke" has an unusual instrument ensemble accompanying the sweet clear soprano of Kimberly Konrad.

No. 23 is "Der Rebe Elimeylekh." There are not adequate kudos to be said about any performance by Hazzan Leon Lissek. No. 25 is "Rozhines Mit Mandlen." Hazzan David Propis sings this gem by A. Goldfaden beautifully. I find the accompaniment at a level that tends to obscure the vocal part. No. 26, "I Still Believe" with music by Hazzan Marshall Portnoy and performed by him. The arrangement is by Maxine Jaffe with the stirring lyrics by Susan Callen and Portnoy. This is an effective pairing of music and lyrics.

The concluding selection, "Bless the Children" music and lyrics by Hazzan Simon Spiro is performed and arranged by S. Spiro. Spiro has a sweet lyric tenor and performs this song that pairs meaningful lyrics with a pop flavor melody. While this CD would be appropriate for Chanukah (see Gold, page 13)



Holocaust Educator

By MIRIAM ZIMMERMAN

Veteran's Day, 2012

A typical Sunday in my car running errands, half listening to an NPR (National Public Radio) report. A Navy man had been denied medical benefits for treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder on the grounds that he had not been in combat. A clerk in the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) researched his case and discovered his ship had indeed been in combat, thus qualifying him for treatment. She resubmitted his case with the appropriate recommendation and was subsequently fired.

Details of that story are sketchy since I was concentrating on the minutiae of my everyday life. Later, I listened to President Obama's stirring Veteran's Day proclamation describing the ending of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a transition for returning veterans.

The President promised, "As a grateful Nation, it is our task to make that transition possible – to ensure our returning heroes can share in the opportunities they have given so much to defend. The freedoms we cherish endure because of their service and sacrifice, and our country must strive to honor our veterans by fulfilling our responsibilities to them and upholding the sacred trust we share with all who have served."

Tell that to the returning vets waiting for months/years to receive medical treatment for their wounds, both physical and psychological. For the full text of the President's proclamation, browse to www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/docs/veterans_day_proclamation.pdf.

Veteran's Day occurs the day after the anniversary of Kristallnacht, the Nazi pogrom against the Jews during the night of November 9–10, 1938 in Germany and Austria. My opa (grandfather), David Lowenstein of blessed memory, survived Krystallnacht by driving all night, from one town to the next, successfully evading the pillaging hordes. He witnessed first-hand the destruction of the synagogues that night in town after town.

From the safety of Indiana, to where my father, also of blessed memory, fled in 1937, Dad sent the necessary documents to Germany to

enable his parents, my opa and oma (grandmother) to immigrate to the United States. Opa allowed visa after visa to expire, as my father desperately tried to convince him to escape. I have concluded over the years that Opa considered himself German first and then a Jew. Besides, Opa felt that his status as a German war veteran would protect him.

As a decorated veteran of the First World War (the "War to End All Wars"), Opa felt immune to Nazi persecutions. Veterans were held in high esteem in Germany at that time, even Jewish war veterans. Opa could say, "I fought for the Kaiser (Wilhelm II)," as Dad used to quote him, proudly, over the years.

I am grateful to my cousin Linda Loewenstein who very recently scanned many family photos and documents, including Opa's certificate of award.



Reads: In The Name Of The Leaders And The Imperial Chancellors To The Businessman, David Loewenstein In Gelsenkirchen, BuerHas Been Conferred The Cross Of Honor For Veterans Per The July 13th, 1934 Edict, In Memory Of World War 1914/1918, By The Imperial President And General Field Marshall Von Hindenburg February 28, 1935. (Translation by my daughter Leah Z. Sharp)

The date on Opa's certificate, February 28, 1935, amazed me. It is one month shy of two years after Hitler came to power, and almost two years after laws were passed to exclude Jews from the civil service and professions. Yet, the Nazi government continued to issue Veterans' awards to Jews.

Google helped me find the source of the story of "Navy veteran Hosea Roundtree, whose claim for disability compensation was denied by the VA despite Roundtree suffering flashbacks of a shelling he witnessed in Beirut while aboard a U.S. Navy ship in 1983." NPR evidently picked up the story from journalist Aaron Glantz of the Center for Investigative Reporting.

Roundtree wound up homeless after a mental breakdown. After an appeal and two decades since his original filing, he is still waiting to hear from the VA. Jamie Fox, the VA disability claims representative who helped him and was subsequently

BENZION

(continued from page 3)

Chanukah. May the candles that you light in the *Menorah* bring much light and happiness into your homes and lives. This *mitzvah* and all of the mitzvahs that we do make the world holier and better and soon we will see *Moshiach*.

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

GOLD

(continued from page 12)

giving, it would be so for any occasion. It is a CD that while intended for the young can be enjoyed by folks of any age.

Dr. Gold is a composer/conductor and can be reached at: 6 Webster St. Springvale, Maine 04083. ★

fired by the VA, is herself a Navy veteran.

If the Nazis can honor a Jewish veteran two years after Hitler came to power, then surely, the United States can treat its veterans better. For the full story of the disgraceful backlog in the VA for veterans' benefits by journalist Glantz, see: www.news10.net/news/article/216883/2/Accuracy-isnt-priority-as-VA-battles-disability-claims-backlog.

Although I am a peace advocate bordering on an anti-war activist, I feel that veterans are heroes and deserve reward for their service on behalf of the United States of America. This includes processing their claims in a timely manner with a bias toward helping them rather than toward denying them benefits. Unfortunately, as Glantz revealed in his investigation, the opposite is happening today.

To remain preoccupied with the minutiae of my everyday life and to ignore the injustices around me puts me in peril of being in the role of a bystander. If enough voices are raised in protest, the VA could be held accountable and our veterans receive the treatment they deserve. President Obama's proclamation would then become a reality instead of empty rhetoric.

Post-script re: my grandparents. Finally, Dad convinced Opa that he would not be safe in Nazi Germany. My oma and opa departed on the last ship that left the European continent before World War II broke out, from neutral Portugal. They lived in Terre Haute, Ind., my hometown, until their deaths in the 1950's.

Dr. Miriam L. Zimmerman is professor emerita at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, Calif. She can be reached at mzimmerman@ndnu.edu. ★



My opa, David Loewenstein, Feb. 2, 1878 – Dec. 27, 1950



Media Watch

By RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Law and Order SVU

Law and Order SVU is the last surviving series of the once top-of-the-ratings *Law and Order* franchise. This may be the last season of a series which has, in recent years, become salaciously formulaic.

Like other venues in the *Law and Order* mix, this surviving hour has occasionally trotted out nasty and vulgar Jews, while featuring a few admirable and likable Jewish cops and district attorneys. But it has begun its newest season by featuring venal and wayward Jews with aplomb, by invoking old stereotypes of Jews, and, in one case, by dishonoring a respected character thought by this reviewer to have been intended as a Jewish character.

Call me oversensitive, but the first two episodes (aired consecutively as the season debut) seemed to have one and only goal: to play out every old canard about murderous, hypocritical and scheming Jews.

Captain Donald Cragen (Dann Florek) finds himself in bed with a slain prostitute, and cannot remember what happened. His colleagues rush in to prove his innocence. It turns out that he had hired some prostitutes he had met during a covert operation, but only paid them for company and conversation. He indulged in such companionship-for-hire because he was "lonely." The bad decision lands him in prison and also as a pawn in the battle of vicious rivals, a pimp vs. a madam.

The bottom line is that the respected captain has acted unprofessionally. Some years ago he responded knowingly to the word "*mitzvah*" in an early episode, one of the first times the biblical/Hebrew word was used on television. The suggestion, or so I thought, was that he was Jewish. But not much has been made of it since. Nothing is said here. Are we to regard him as a Jewish character in a moment of weakness?

Be that as it may, at the very beginning of that first episode of the 2012–2013 TV season, we are introduced to another possible Jewish character who is cunning and obnoxious, a lawyer, Exley (which can be a Jewish name), who represents the murderous madam. Ron Rifkin, who has played Jewish characters in long-running series, was chosen for the part. His character tries to create conflict between police partners and insincerely inquires about a district attorney's sick daughter. He relishes bringing down the captain, distributing

compromising photographs with glee. He is ultimately fired by the madam who claims that he misunderstood the nature of their relationship after she made bail. While it is made clear that she may be lying, the possibility remains that he is a lecher and a Jew.

At the end of the two-part opener, we learn that Exley bribed the district attorney mother of a disabled child by delivering checks from the madam to cover the child's medical costs, and then blackmailed the mom into doing the madam's bidding. So Exley is the chief enabler of prostitution and murder.

There is no doubt, however, that this season's opening episodes of *Law and Order SVU* offered one of the ugliest portrayals of a Jew in TV history. The madam's arch rival is a "squirrely" little Jew named Bart Ganzel (Peter Jacobson of *House* fame), who runs an "escort service." A glimpse of Ganzel was provided in last season's finale, written by David Silbert. There, a governor was murdered, perhaps by a prostitute, and an underage prostitute at a fancy party was traced to Ganzel. The murdered prostitute found in bed with Captain Cragen, Carissa (Pippa Black), had been Ganzel's fiancée (as well as sex pawn). Ganzel blames his madam rival for sending the underage prostitute, suggesting that such a scenario is against his principles.

When the officers come calling, Ganzel's lawyer, Barry (Reg E. Cathey) a dapper and well-spoken African American gentleman, chides them, "You barge in here while my client is sitting *shiva*. Have you no shame?" Ganzel is "sitting shiva" by eating (Jewish ethnic?) food served by prostitutes and watching videos of his kissing the deceased prostitute, whom he describes as "the most precious thing in my life" – with the emphasis, I suppose, on "thing." After eating and watching the videos, Ganzel decides that he needs to cover up the mirror for seven days. When his lawyer suggests that he go to work to take his mind off his loss, Ganzel indignantly responds that it is inappropriate to work for the seven days of shiva. He is "rewarded" for his "observance," or at least for his nervous busyness during it, when he finds a bugging device in his own apartment.

Ganzel is rude and ungracious to everyone, including the police, especially female officers: "No offense, sweetheart, but if you could nail me, too, you would." (His lawyer finds it necessary to smooth over Ganzel's insult: "He meant that as a compliment, detective.") Before the end of the episode, writers Warren Leight and Julie Martin make sure that Ganzel is punched in the face by a female cop.

Also in Ganzel's entourage, as head of

security, is an ex-cop named Brian Cassidy (Dean Winters) who, it turns out, is an undercover officer spying on Ganzel. It becomes clear that Ganzel bribes police officers and street kids to stage a car theft in an attempt to have Cassidy killed, and then hypocritically declares at the hospital that he will do all he can for the man who "took a bullet" for him. Ganzel is also suspected of being responsible for the governor's murder, and of murdering his own fiancée for whom he has sat shiva!

As the police and prosecutors close in on Ganzel, he tells his lawyer that he is planning to flee to Israel, "my homeland," and the latter says "*Mazal too*" before reminding Ganzel that he would not be allowed to leave the country. The attorney advises Ganzel to turn himself in "quietly." Ganzel retorts, "That advice sucks. I go down, you go down with me."

A district attorney approaches Ganzel's attorney, Barry, and urges him to resign his position and to wear a wire in order to bring Ganzel to justice. Officer Olivia Benson (Mariska Hargitay) warns him that Ganzel is a "liability" and that the attorney is not only in danger of losing his license but of going to prison. They convince the African American – and gay – attorney that his loyalty to Ganzel is misplaced. "Off the record" she plays some recordings of Ganzel about his attorney: "Get that *shvartze* [darkie] down here to mop up this mess. Barry's been with me ten years... [and] has never touched a girl. Talk about an African queen." Ganzel then brags that he got another attorney to set it up so that Barry's signature – and not Ganzel's – is on every incriminating document.

Barry responds poetically, "Oh, the casual racism of the sweaty underclass," and then proceeds to record Ganzel, who confesses to having an "O J moment" when his prostitute fiancée, who had drugged the captain so that Ganzel could take photographs for purposes of blackmail, told Ganzel that she was in love with the undercover cop, Cassidy, who respected her more. Yet Ganzel tried to have Cassidy killed not so much because of his affair with Carissa, as out of fear that Cassidy might testify about what she said in their "pillow talk" about Ganzel. Ganzel still wants to "finish the job" of killing Cassidy.

Yes, the writers created a perfectly obnoxious Jew: sexist, racist, murderous, exploitative, greedy, self-absorbed, knowledgeable enough about Jewish rituals to co-opt them for cover up, aware enough of Israel to abscond there if necessary. If indeed Captain Cragen is intended as a Jewish character, Ganzel is also a Jew who would sacrifice another Jew for his own evil purposes. The writers' perfectly evil Jew gladly accepts the gift of Chinese food, shiva or not.

The *Law and Order* scribal gang was perfectly pleased to inaugurate the season with their perfectly obnoxious and evil Jew and will no doubt claim, with the production gang, that given the percentage of Jews in the New York population and the spectrum of human nature within any given ethnic group, such a perfect villain would be statistically inevitable. I would protest, however, that such an ugly characterization already has some mileage in *Law and Order* episodes going back many years (including the fleeing-to-Israel stuff) and that this year, it was the inauguration of a trend.

Soon after followed the episode, "Acceptable Loss," with a man named Jonas Dworkin, played by Richard Kind, who has a long track record of portraying quirky Jewish characters, from TV series to *A Serious Man*. Writer Ed Zuckerman makes a point of reiterating the name Dworkin, even having it misspelled as "Dorkin" on an airport sign. The visiting smaller town Jew immediately follows the suggestion of a pimping taxi driver that he (Dworkin) hire a young prostitute. Having enough "moral" scruples not to bring her to the hotel in view of his drunken fellow conventioners, he gladly accepts the taxi driver's advice that the rendezvous take place in the cab's back seat.

A subsequent car accident allows the police to converse with the young woman and, during a brief hospital stay, with Dworkin. One might say that this lecherous (married) Jew enables the police and district attorneys to uncover a horrid prostitution ring tied to terrorism, for which innocent young women from all over the world are kidnapped and brutalized. Does that make the Dworkin saga redemptive? Has Richard Kind provided a Jewish hero or antihero?

In the subsequent episode, "Manhattan Vigil," the eight-year-old son of a New York real estate developer named David Morris is snatched into a subway car while on the way to a ballpark outing with his dad. The parents are divorced and extremely hostile to one another. The dad is constantly engaged in negotiations on his cell phone and the mom is fed up by years of distraction on her ex-husband's part, both in marriage and in divorce. The episode conveys well the agony of the parents at the kidnapping of their only child. The suspense and concern mount when it becomes apparent that this abduction parallels others through the years.

As it turns out (spoiler alert), unbeknownst to Mr. Morris, the abductor is a pedophile and disaffected former employee of Morris's father and grandfather, who had been hired to set fire to buildings that the family patriarchs wanted to acquire and to gentrify, despite the protests of past owners and tenants. The wife and son live

in one of those gentrified buildings in a neighborhood which had once been troubled. The mother of another abducted boy, who was Hispanic, believes that the police had not tried hard enough to find her son in the old neighborhood, though writer Peter Blauner does suggest that Jewish officer Munch had shown concern.

The writer and producers do not say that the Morris's are Jewish, though, of course, there are Jews by that name. They did hire an actress with an Israeli name to play the mother and, as the father, an actor who has depicted characters with Jewish-sounding names. Then there is the stereotype of Jews burning down their businesses for insurance money – a staple of films and TV dramas since before the talkies.

Some years ago, Rabbi Samuel Dresner, of blessed memory, told me that the *Law and Order* series and other crime shows seemed to be using dark-haired actors to suggest "Jewish types" without calling the characters Jewish. I felt at the time that it was more "fair" to the producers and writers to assume that a character was not Jewish or suggestive of stereotypes of Jews unless he was identified as Jewish. But the combination of ugly depictions of designated Jews with the revival of the themes of horrible stereotypes of old, together with the hiring of Jewish characters to portray *nebishy* and troubled personalities (such as the auxiliary cop in the "Manhattan Vigil" episode), makes me wonder. Rabbi Dresner may have been right about a lot of TV episodes.

As for the "right" of producers and directors to depict Jews as arch scoundrels and villains, given simple percentages in places like New York, I can't help thinking of what the gifted, pioneering TV writer Budd Schulberg said about his novel, *What Makes Sammy Run?* Film producer Samuel Goldwyn had offered Schulman money not to publish the novel, let alone to produce it as a play or film. Goldwyn saw it as a "double crossing [of] the Jews" because of its despicable lead Jewish character. Schulman asserted: "Since Sammy is obviously Jewish, I thought it should be clear that nearly all his victims – Rosalie, Manheim, Blumberg, Fineman, his brother, Israel – were also Jewish, suggesting the wide range of personalities and attitudes under the one ethnic umbrella."

As I see it, the writers and producers of *Law and Order* "double cross the Jews" because their onslaught has been rather consistent and smug. A few Hebrew or Yiddish expressions and some sentimental comments from Munch or an occasional idealistic remark from a Jewish district attorney hardly provide the balance of a "wide range of personalities and attitudes

(see Gertel, page 19)



The Roads from Babel

BY SETH BEN-MORDECAI

Passive Aggressive Crocodiles

Modern Israeli Hebrew pronunciation does not distinguish between a *qamatz* (the T-shaped vowel-mark placed below a consonant) and a *patah* (the " _ " placed below a consonant). Speakers of Israeli Hebrew pronounce both marks like the letter "a" in the word "mirage." But Ashkenazi, Kurdish, Yemenite Hebrew traditions have always distinguished the pronunciations of these marks. And, as a memory aid, it may be useful to pronounce a *qamatz* like the "a" in "father," and to pronounce a *patah* like the "a" in "what." But more importantly, substituting a *qamatz* for a *patah* – or vice versa – can change the meaning of a word. Therefore, noticing whether a word is spelled with one or the other lets the reader understand the meaning the text seeks to convey.

Several examples of transliterated Hebrew verbs in the passive voice illustrate the point. In those examples, the symbol "A" designates a *qamatz*, and the symbol "a" designates a *patah*. Briefly, Hebrew uses different verb patterns to convey nuances of meaning. One pattern, called the "*niph'al binyan*," denotes passive voice, as distinguished from active voice. For those who slept through grammar class, an example of a sentence whose verb is in passive voice is: "The mouse is eaten by the cat." The example is present tense – the mouse is eaten. To change meaning from present tense to past tense, the verb "is" is changed to "was": "The mouse was eaten by the cat."

In Hebrew, verbs in the *niph'al binyan* use a *qamatz* in the final syllable to describe ongoing present action, but use a *patah* to describe action that has already occurred. Thus, *nishmAr* (is guarded or is being guarded), *nikhtAv* (is written or is being written), and *nilmAd* (is learned or is being learned), are spelled with a *qamatz* because the action is ongoing. Contrast those verbs with *nishmar* (was guarded), *nikhtav* (was written), and *nilmad* (was learned), which are spelled with a *patah*, to express that the action was completed.

On the surface, these distinctions may seem unimportant. A reader may be able to surmise a text's intended meaning

(see Ben-Mordecai, page 19)

Chicago selected as U.S. 2012 National Bible City

*National Bible Association
to host non-sectarian gatherings
to encourage reading the Bible*

CHICAGO, Nov. 14, 2012 – The National Bible Association has designated Chicago as this year's National Bible City and the focus of activities celebrate the importance of the Bible in our nation's history and culture during National Bible Week, which coincided with the week of Thanksgiving. National Bible Week is an annual tradition that has been honored by every U.S. President since 1940.

The National Bible Association annually chooses a major U.S. city as the focus of its efforts to encourage all people of a Judeo-Christian heritage to read the Bible. This year, Chicagoans and Illinoisans are invited to commemorate the scripture that many have found to be a source of comfort during difficult and uncertain times.

"Today, in the difficult economic times that many Americans are facing, the Bible can often be a source of hope and encouragement," said Richard Glickstein, president of the National Bible Association. "The National Bible City initiative was created as a way to focus on one city annually with this message and bring attention to our efforts of encouraging Bible reading."

Two meaningful, non-sectarian gatherings were planned to kick off National Bible Week in Chicago, including a concert featuring local Chicago choirs, as well as the National Bible Day public reading of the scripture.

The public reading of the Bible took place on Mon., Nov. 19, at the Chicago Cultural Center, where a range of local religious and business leaders; and public officials will participate by reading a passage of their choosing.

Invited participants include: The Moody Bible Institute; **Rabbi Carl Wolkin, President, Chicago Board of Rabbis**; Senior Pastor Charles Jenkins II, Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church; Rev. James McIlhorne, Archdiocese of Chicago; Dr. Bruce Modahl, Senior Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church; Pat McCaskey, Co-Owner of the Chicago Bears; Vicki Escarra, Chief Executive Officer, Opportunity International; Dr. John M. Templeton, President, The Templeton Foundation; Richard Black, Managing Director, Altair Advisers LLC; and Doris Christopher, Chairman Emeritus, The Pampered Chef; Pedro DeJesus, Executive Vice President, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary, Tampico Beverages, (see National Bible Week, page 18)



Book Review

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

Norman Beim's memoir

A Not So Nice Jewish Boy. By Norman Beim, published by New Concept Press, New York, New York.

Over the years author/playwright Norman Beim has piled up the credits – with numerous novels and plays, both probing and entertaining. His work has often taken as its theme the Jewish history of this past century. A prime example was his wonderful musical *Fritz and Froyim*, staged off-Broadway in 2007, which drew on the post-Holocaust world. And often Beim has found rich material within his own background. It has all been grist for the mill – but material which he fictionalized, dramatized.

But now Beim really gets down to business. He no longer fictionalizes the material, but has written his own memoir. A striking fact of this memoir is the author's honest, forthright style, as he recounts the uncertainties, anxieties, and aspirations he experiences growing up. The story is enhanced by numerous old family photos.

The tale begins even before Beim appears on the scene, taking the reader through several previous Beim generations. His Polish Jewish ancestors (both maternal and paternal) are depicted even before they get to the States. But the emphasis is on the family's arrival in this country and their struggle as first-generation immigrants, as it plays out in Newark,

N.J. (Newark once had a large Jewish immigrant community, and one is reminded that a fellow author – one Philip Roth – also mined that same material with vivid results.)

Beim recounts in great detail what it was like to grow up in that community. He describes the numerous aunts, uncles and cousins who comprised a large – yet close and supportive – family. But gradually the author finds himself, discovering theater and his own longing to succeed in that world. Will he become a writer, a director, an actor? The memoir takes Beim through college years, into World War II, overseas adventures, and ultimately the return home. Much is made of his experiences with friends, both girls and boys (later men and women), and with his own intellectual and creative growth.

The only disappointment for this reviewer is that Beim ends the story with his return to the States following the War. What happened after that? Who were the important people in his later years? How did his career ultimately evolve? But perhaps the author plans a second volume to continue this memoir. We shall have to wait and see.

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



BLAIN

(continued from page 4)

was held in Warsaw, Poland. Previous conferences were held in Jerusalem, Skokie and Detroit. Possible sites for next year's Conference are Berlin or Florida.

Michael Blain is a Child Holocaust Survivor and Koran War Veteran. He lived in Indianapolis for 40 years where he headed the Israel Bonds office. He and his wife Sylvia now reside in Beachwood, Ohio. ★



SHIPLEY

(continued from page 8)

Many others are not yet ready to do so. They better catch up.

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. ★



Rabbi Carl Wolkin, President, Chicago Board of Rabbis, speaks at National Bible Week.

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Courage under great adversity

Gabby. By Gabrielle Giffords and Mark Kelly. New York: Scribner, 2012. 336 Pages. \$16.

On January 8, 2011, Congresswoman Gabrielle (Gabby) Giffords was just beginning her third term, representing the Tucson, Ariz., district. She was conducting a “Congress on Your Corner” event in which she offered an opportunity for constituents to meet her and to talk with her about their needs. When she arrived at the site, a Safeway parking lot, about 15 people were waiting in line to see her. Also waiting was the assassin, armed with a semi-automatic pistol and 90 bullets. He shot Gabby and fired about 30 more shots. He killed five people, including an eight-year old girl, the 63-year old chief federal judge in Arizona, and Gabe Zimmerman, a 30-year old social worker, who was the Congresswoman’s community outreach director. Thirteen people were injured.

Mark Kelly, Gifford’s husband, was a naval officer, an astronaut, and a pilot who had flown combat missions in Iraq. He was divorced from his first wife with whom he shared custody of their two teen-age daughters. The development of the romance between him and Gabby is set forth. In November, 2007, they were married in a Jewish ceremony. She was the product of a mixed marriage – a Christian Scientist mother and a Jewish father. As a young adult, Gabby decided to be a Jew and was greatly impressed by a trip she took to Israel. A rabbi officiated at the wedding which was held under a *chuppa* and preceded by signing the *katubah*, written by Mark.

At the time that Gabby was shot, Mark was in Houston, preparing to serve as commander of what would be his fourth space mission, scheduled to be NASA’s second to last. He immediately flew to Tucson to be with his wife. Most of the book is devoted to describing her recovery, first in Tucson and then, in Houston at a rehabilitation center. It was a long and painful process, filled with forward and backward steps, involving many people.

The narrative skips around in time

instead of proceeding sequentially. It is not clear why this form of presentation rather than a chronological one was selected. The compelling nature of the story makes this a secondary issue. What comes through clearly is the love these two people have for each other and the courage they showed in the face of great adversity. This is a remarkable story about two accomplished people who have heroically persevered, inspiring readers to admire them and to hope that they could be brave enough to confront hardship with equally resolute stoutheartedness.

Good gift for Jewish sports and baseball fans

Jewish Major Leaguers in Their Own Words. Edited by Peter Ephross with Martin Abramowitz. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2012. 227 Pages. \$35.

Jewish sports fans in general and baseball fans in particular will enjoy and appreciate this book. It was put together several years ago by Peter Ephross who was an editor at the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in 2004 when he was invited to cover a weekend honoring Jewish Major Leaguers at Cooperstown, New York, site of the Baseball Hall of Fame. There he met Martin Abramowitz, founder and president of the Jewish Major Leaguers, an organization devoted to chronicling the ties between Jews and baseball.

Abramowitz was collecting oral histories of Jewish baseball players for a proposed book and he asked Ephross to serve as editor. Twenty-five interviews were already recorded; more were added from a project of the American Jewish Committee to interview well-known American Jews. Ephross conducted one interview and collected some from other journalists. One interview was included based on the published autobiography of Ron Blomberg. Ephross changed the format of the interviews from questions and answers to first-person narratives, attempting to keep the voices of the interviewees intact in their own words.

According to editor Ephross, 165 American Jews played in the Big Leagues from the 1870s to the end of the 2010 season. They are listed in a useful appendix. The book’s 23 interviews begin with Bob Berman who played with the Washington Senators in 1918 and end

with Adam Greenberg who was hit in the head during his first (and only) at-bat with the Chicago Cubs in 2005, thus setting some kind of dubious record for serving as a Big Leaguer.

Readers may quarrel with the omission of their favorite Jewish Big Leaguer. For example, leaving out Moe Berg will surely raise some eyebrows. Berg had a degree in foreign languages from Princeton and a law degree from Columbia. He served as a spy for the United States during World War II and these accomplishments mark him as a most unusual Jewish Big Leaguer. Also omitted is Sandy Koufax who is called “famously reclusive.” On the other hand, interviews are included with Hank Greenberg, Andy Cohen, Al Rosen, Cal Abrams, and Ron Blomberg, among others. A rather special interviewee is Elliott Maddox who was a major leaguer from 1970 to 1980, playing on six different teams, including the Yankees and the Mets. He was a Black man who converted to Judaism.

Stories told in the interviews include the decision about playing on the High Holidays; encountering anti-Semitism; sympathizing with Black players as they faced prejudice; and interacting with local Jewish communities through the course of traveling.

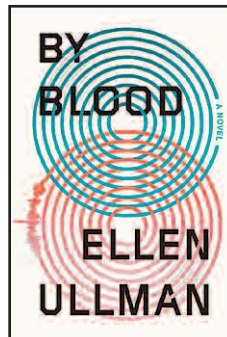
Ephross includes some over-all statistics that show the Jewish players compared favorably with other Big Leaguers. All in all, his presentation is engaging and stimulating. It will be a source of pride to Jewish baseball fans.

Gripping novel with fascinating characters

By Blood. By Ellen Ullman. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2012, 378 Pages. \$27.

There are novels about the Holocaust; there are novels about adopted children seeking their birth parents; there are novels about therapeutic relationships between analyst and patient. *By Blood* is a novel that masterfully combines all these subjects in one gripping presentation.

The anonymous first person narrator of the story is a 50-year-old academic who has been placed on leave by his unnamed university while it investigates some undefined charges that involve a boy and “charged feelings between mentor and apprentice.” It is the summer of 1974 and he has moved to San Francisco while



(see Teicher, page 19)



My Kosher Kitchen

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Chic recipes with little prep time and Chanukah recipes

Chic Made Simple. By Esther Deutsch. Feldheim. 384 pp. January 2013. \$35.99 hardcover.

"Chic" is defined as elegantly and stylishly fashionable, however Esther Deutsch, a New York-based food stylist, columnist and recipe developer, takes it to a different level. In the introduction to her cookbook, she writes that she thrives "on creating fabulously chic recipes that require barely any prep time but look elaborate and taste amazing."

And I might add, not only is each one more tantalizing than the one before, but they are truly gourmet, elegant and *kosher*. Yes, every recipe is really kosher and there are 185 of her favorite dishes.

Many recipes sit on the left-hand page with measurements and title in blue, ingredients and numbered directions in black, and an informative, blue-framed box with information related to that page's recipe. On the right-hand page is a mouth-watering color photograph. The same format is used when a recipe is on a page alone with smaller accompanying photographs. Thus we have a highly readable, user-friendly layout.

There are 35 appetizers and sides including: scallion quinoa patties with lemon garlic paprika aioli, Mexican chicken-filled crepes with shallot sauce, skirt steak spring rolls with corn off the cob, minced garlic and rosemary pita crisps, and roasted eggplant and red pepper dip.

The soup chapter has nine soups such as: vegetable dumpling soup, roasted chestnut pumpkin soup and creamy broccoli asparagus soup.

In the salad chapter, the 19 salads include: Asian slaw with chow mein noodle and sesame dressing, smoked turkey and chicken salad with creamy avocado dressing, crispy beef salad with warm peppers and Thai sweet-chili vinaigrette, and tropical kani salad with sriracha lime dressing.



Fourteen poultry recipes include: savory chicken with papaya salsa, chicken fire poppers, Tuscan chicken with spaghetti and caramelized baked sticky sesame chicken.

Although there are meat recipes in other chapters, the actual meat chapter has 15 recipes including: Creole veal burgers with remoulade sauce, rack of lamb with orange mustard rosemary sauce, and Tamari French roast or brisket.

Among the 14 recipes for fish are: sixty-second Cajun salmon with dill, sushi gefilte fish and Aburi sesame tuna with wasabi garlic cream.

Mini cheese *babkas*, linguine with wine cream sauce and mushrooms and Heirloom caprese salad on rosemary skewers are just a few of the 25 dairy recipes.

The amazing dessert chapter with 53 recipes includes: pomegranate strawberry mocktail with sorbet, truffles, *pareve* cheese mousse with white Viennese crunch, sea salt caramel bundt cake, tangerine glazed apple apricot strudel, and tiramisu with chocolate liquor.

Although one might consider this a look at, coffee table book, the recipes are definitely easy to make, impressive, creative, imaginative and even some will definitely look like works of art. This is a great gift book for any kosher cook. Below are some different recipes to make this Chanukah "chic."



Spiced Mocha Mousse with Viennese Crunch.

Pastrami Potato Kugellettes

(Serves 8–12)

5 potatoes, peeled and grated

5 eggs, beaten

1/2 small onion, grated

1 tsp. sugar

1 scant Tbsp. kosher salt

fresh black pepper

1/4 cup oil

1/2 lb. deli pastrami, cut into thin strips

Preheat the oven to 350°F. In a bowl, combine the grated potatoes, beaten eggs, grated onion, sugar, salt and black pepper. Add the oil and pastrami strips and mix until well combined. Pour into twelve

NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

(continued from page 16)

Inc.; and Illinois Senator Kirk Dillard.

The Concert of Praise was held on Sun., Nov. 18, at the historic Moody Church in downtown Chicago. Choirs from a range of religious organizations and denominations performed.

About the National Bible Association

The National Bible Association was established in 1940 as a Judeo-Christian organization in response to a difficult and uncertain time for Americans during World War II. By engaging in ongoing activities and the annual public Bible reading, the National Bible Association strives to encourage Bible reading. For more information, please visit www.biblecity.us or www.nationalbible.org. ★



6-oz. greased ramekins or a greased 9-inch round Pyrex dish. Bake until the tops are crispy and golden, about 1.5 to 2 hours. Cool for several minutes before removing from the ramekins. Serve warm.

If you're tired of *sufganiyot*, try this fried dessert for Chanukah.

Powdered Chocolate Wontons with Caramel Sauce (Serves 8)

Sauce

1-1/4 cups sugar

8 oz. non-dairy whip topping

1 tsp. lemon juice

1/4 tsp. vanilla extract

1/4–1/2 cup coconut milk

Wontons

16 wonton wrappers

16 squares chocolate

peanut oil

confectioners' sugar

In a small saucepan, combine the sugar, whip topping, lemon juice and vanilla. Bring to a boil over medium high heat, stirring constantly until the sugar has dissolved then occasionally until the bubbles become bigger and the sauce turns a rich amber color. Stir in coconut milk (1/4 cup for rich and gooey sauce, 1/2 cup for thinner sauce). Pour warm water into a small bowl. Place wonton wrappers on a clean, dry surface. Place 1 chocolate square in the center. Brush the edges with water. Bring each corner to the center, allowing them to overlap slightly and press to seal. Heat oil in a frying pan over medium heat until hot. Fry wontons until golden brown, 1–2 minutes per side. Remove from pan and drain on a paper towel. Dust with powdered sugar and serve warm with caramel sauce.

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

BEN ASHER/BAT SARAH

(continued from page 7)

simple, then. Undoubtedly we want to lessen the distance. But of course, we're often resistant to self-revelation that confirms our weakness or error. Self-revelation of weakness or error is a form of confession, which demands courage and integrity that we rarely show to anyone else or ourselves.

Obviously, however, such self-revelation is essential to achieve forgiveness and reconciliation. And we may be encouraged by the thought that those from whom we are estranged won't be surprised by what we confess to them. With rare exceptions they will be grateful and moved by our risk-taking for the sake of renewing our relationships with them.

As Jacob sent his sons back to Egypt, this time with his beloved Benjamin, he said to them: "and God almighty give you mercy before the man..." (Genesis 43:14)

As we say on Yom Kippur, the gates remain open. We can still choose to turn our lives. The Midrash understands the words *vayehi mikitiz*, the opening words of this parasha, to indicate an end to darkness. (Genesis Rabbah 89:1) We can still draw together with those we have loved and who have loved us, ending a long night of darkness between us.

A humorous story about the rabbi of Chelm teaches about the consequences of our resistance to reconciling with those we love:

The rabbi hadn't had a case to judge for quite some time, so he was desperately in need of the fees usually paid for his services.

One day, standing at his front window, he sees two members of his congregation, a middle-aged married couple, coming down the street, obviously engaged in a fierce argument.

He opens the window and calls out to them, "Come in, I'll help you settle your argument."

"Argument, who's arguing?" answers one of them. And the other one helpfully adds, "It was just a friendly discussion."

"Fine," says the quick thinking rabbi, "Step right in the house and for a small charge I'll make out a certificate that says you have nothing against each other."

The moral of the story is that when we don't settle our differences, we remain burdened while others benefit from our estrangement.

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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). ★

GERTEL

(continued from 15)

under the one ethnic umbrella." In my opinion, Schulberg and Goldwyn were more responsible and classy than any of the principals of the *Law and Order* machine.

Rabbi Gertel has been spiritual leader of Conservative Congregation Rodfei Zedek in Chicago since 1988. He is the author of two books, What Jews Know About Salvation and Over the Top Judaism: Precedents and Trends in the Depiction of Jewish Beliefs and Observances in Film and Television. He has been media critic for The National Jewish Post & Opinion since 1979. ★

**BEN-MORDECAI**

(continued from page 15)

from context. But context is not always infallible. For example, does "The deer cut across the lawn into the woods" mean that on a single occasion in the past, one animal crossed the lawn? Or does the sentence mean that several animals regularly cross the lawn nowadays?

Moreover, knowing how a qamatz and a patah are used can add useful emotional meaning to a sentence. *Hakelev ne'ekhal 'al yedei tannin* – the dog was eaten by the crocodile – depicts past aggression but does not convey any hopefulness that the outcome can be changed. By contrast, the sentence *hakelev ne'ekhal 'al yedei tannin* – the dog is being eaten by the crocodile – depicts ongoing aggression, present urgency, and may convey hope that a bad outcome can still be averted.

Subsequent columns will discuss other situations in which knowing the distinction between a qamatz and a patah can aid in understanding of a Hebrew text.

An attorney and Semitic linguist with degrees from Brandeis, Stanford and Univ. of Calif., Seth Watkins (pen name, Ben-Mordecai) merges linguistic analysis with legal sleuthing to uncover lost meanings of ancient texts. His Exodus Haggadah uniquely includes the full story of the Exodus in an accessible format. When not lawyering or writing, he enjoys feeding "his" raccoon Ranger, and Ranger's two cubs. Email: Seth@VayomerPublishing.com. ★

**On this date in
Jewish history**

On December 5, 1496

Jews were ordered to leave Portugal.

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

TEICHER

(continued from 17)

awaiting the decision regarding his future relationship, if any, to the university. He rents a "dismal house by the beach" and a small office in a run-down building in the business district. His intent is to write a series of lectures about one of Aeschylus's plays but his plans are disrupted when he discovers that he can listen into the discussions of his neighbor. She is an analyst, Dr. Dora Schussler, and one of her patients is a lesbian. Intrigued by what he hears, the narrator, having had substantial experience with therapists himself, finds himself drawn increasingly and critically into what is going on in the next-door office.

The sessions are described in detail, revealing more and more about both Dr. Schussler and her patient. A crucial topic for them has to do with the patient's adoption and her decision to find her birth parents even though their identity is supposed to be permanently hidden. Reluctantly, her foster mother reveals that despite her using a Catholic adoption agency, the patient was a Jew, born in a displaced persons camp just after World War II ended. This information has a profound impact on Dr. Schussler whose father had been a Nazi officer involved in the murder of Jews.

These entanglements become even thicker and more intricate when the patient is unsuccessful in tracking down her birth mother and the eavesdropping narrator decides to intervene by helping her anonymously. His efforts lead eventually to the patient meeting her birth mother in Israel with unhappy results.

This strange and engrossing story grips the reader's attention as it reveals the complexities of three perplexing and esoteric characters. Author Ellen Ullman vividly demonstrates here in her third book that she is no longer dependent on her profession for literary content. For more than 20 years, she was a computer programmer in Silicon Valley. Her first book, *Close to the Machine*, was a memoir that impressively described her experience. In her second book, a novel titled *The Bug*, Ullman moved into the realm of fiction but still drew on her practical knowledge since the theme of the book involved a programmer struggling with a computer virus. With this new book, Ullman establishes herself as a first-rate writer who can skillfully and credibly create fascinating characters as they encounter complex aspects of the human experience.

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. ★



Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Our trip to the United States

Excuse me for being a bit lazy with my Israel Scene column this month. Barry and I just returned from a wonderful three-week trip to the "old country." After an extra six-hour London stopover, due to Hurricane Sandy, we were able to fly on the first open flight to Washington, D.C., where we saw friends for a few days. We then flew to Florida to see more friends and where my "personal shopper"-friend, Laura, and I covered every clearance rack in her part of Florida. I bought a note pad later in the trip which read – I came, I saw, I bought – which epitomized this trip.

We saw the campus of where the daughter of our good friends Pastor Al and Billie's daughter goes to college; had dinner with Jerusalem friends, Jeff and Anne; visited with Laura and Dave; and did sightseeing in Palm Beach and Boca Raton. In Atlanta, we were with Barry's sons, daughter-in-law, daughter and grandsons. We saw 6-year-old Jordan's karate class and, the focus of our whole U.S. trip, we saw 12-year-old Ben's ceremony as he received his first degree black belt. In Overland Park, Kansas, we visited with neighbors, friends and family, saw old familiar shopping and eating haunts, saw my newspaper editor and our former synagogue staff.

We had a few days rest in D.C. before flying home via London during the end of the war. The pilot held up the plane 20 minutes so he could arrive in Tel Aviv on the one open runway during the precise time it was open each day for landing.

Other than the presence of a lot more people in uniform on the streets, there were no more sirens nor did we have to go to the shelter and the war soon ended. We continued our daily life catching up on food shopping; celebrating Thanksgiving on the Friday after with turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes and pumpkin dessert; speaking with friends; and getting back to work – me with my writing and Barry with his new tour operating business to bring Christian and Jewish groups to Israel (baktourstoisrael@gmail.com).

I've already bought a box of lovely multicolor Chanukah candles in Super-Deal; I am bringing up my Chanukah decorations, serving pieces, towels and

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Rabbi Reuven Schwartz took these photos recently in the Shuk Machaneh Yehudah, downtown Jerusalem. He writes: "Donuts (right) are the national food from Succoth until the 10th of Teves. Then hamantashen move in until Pesach. They are selling every type of Menorah (above) and all the necessities for lighting. The new specialty is boxes of 44 vials with olive oil and wicks all ready to light."



pot holders from the storage room after Shabbat ends, and I shocked a bakery clerk by buying my first *sufganiya* (Chanukah doughnut – right) and asking for it with no jelly or filling inside and no powdered sugar on top! The multitude of appropriate and inappropriate fillings used by the bakeries would shock people.

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

