

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

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## Chag Chanukah Sameach!



See photo  
credits p. 20.



# Editorial

The following was part of my editorial that appeared here Sept. 14, 2005 shortly after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. In the introduction, I wrote that it is important not to get depressed about this huge loss of life and property or any lesser one because that will not solve any problem. I reminded my dear readers that there are still many reasons to be happy. This list was made before the huge influx of computer games, cell phones, and all kinds of technology that we use today.

## Thousands of reasons to be happy

These came to my attention after seeing a poster called, "930 things to be happy about" by Barbara Ann Kipfer. It is "a stream of consciousness list" excerpted from her book titled, *14,000 Things to be Happy About*.

In the beginning of the book the author writes, "Words, and the images they create, can be a great source of pleasure and inspiration. Sometimes on a gray day, I flip through this collection to cheer myself up....As you read through these pages, give yourself time to conjure up your own images – to reminisce, wish, and dream. I hope you will find, as I did, that happiness comes from noticing and enjoying the little things in life."

### Below are 50 of the 930 things from her poster list:

pajamas at breakfast • a baby's first tooth • a baseball game going on extra innings • toddler's vocabulary • eight hours of sleep • dinner with laughter • ghost stories and marshmallows by fire • watching the winning touchdown • weathered docks on tall stilts • a cardinal's brilliance against the snow • third markdowns • bar stools • dreaming on the river bank • western sun downs • when friends drop in • deep dish apple pie • looking irresistible • floats and fireworks • star gazing • a road winding through orchards • learning to play a musical instrument • old fashioned hot fudge sundaes • singing to your favorite music • puppy love • stretching out on the carpet with games and puzzles • an extended vacation • greasing and dusting cake pans • the smell of the sea • dining by the window • wearing real jewelry • collapsing in bed and cuddling • shiny hair • cleaning off your desk • going barefoot on closely cropped grass • complimenting a total stranger • flipping coins into a fountain • the delights of finding the first spring flowers • discount tickets • unplugging

# Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

I try to visit the Hospital near Kfar Chabad 5 times a week. Here is a story from a recent visit. Outside of the outpatient building I met an Israeli soldier. He was handcuffed. I understood that he was serving time in the army prison, and now they had brought him to the hospital for some medical treatment. He was also handcuffed to another soldier. I guessed that the other soldier was a military policeman.

I asked him if he wants to put on *tefillin*, and he said yes. However, the other soldier told me that first I must get permission from the officer in charge of him, who was inside. I went inside, found the officer, and asked permission to put *tefillin* on the soldier. The officer said no. I went back outside and told them. The soldier didn't give up. He went in and spoke to the officer himself, and got permission. I put *tefillin* on him, and he started to pray. I asked the other soldier to join him in prayer, and they read the prayers together.

(see Chassidic Rabbi, page 3)

the phone • blowing the wrapper off the straw • writing a love letter • someone who says you are beautiful • the book that makes the difference • someone fixing something without being asked • self sticking stamps and envelopes • laughing until you cry • ice carvings • a breath of fresh air • buggy rides

### Since this is our Hanukkah issue, here are ten more not mentioned in 2005:

getting out the *menorah*, candles, *dreidles* and decorations • arranging the bright candles in their holders by colors that look good together • the smell of grated potatoes and onions frying in olive oil • eating lots of *latkes* loaded with cinnamon applesauce and sour cream (a few laced with shredded carrots and zucchini) • when lighting the candles forgetting the order of the blessings and having to look that up • the smell of candles burning • watching the candles and seeing the wax dripping onto the sides of the *menorah* as they burn down • dreidles spinning upside down • several small *dreidles* spinning at once • singing "Maoz Tzur (Rock of Ages)," "Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah," "I Have a Little Dreidle," "Light One Candle," "Mi Yimalel (Who Can Retell?)," "Sivivon, sov, sov, sov," and my family's favorite... "On This Night."

Happy Hanukkah, dear readers – no matter which way you spell it!

Jennie Cohen, December 7, 2011 ★

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**Cover Photos, clockwise from the top:**  
1) Largest menorah in Israel taken by Rabbi Reuven Schwartz in Jerusalem; 2) at the entrance to the cemetery in Jerusalem where Golda Meir is buried taken by Morton Shecter of Olympia, Wash.; 3,4) two on the bottom of the page were taken by Rabbi Reuven Schwartz of Jerusalem; and 5) center left taken by Jennie Cohen in Indianapolis. ★

**CHASSIDIC RABBI**  
(continued from 2)

It was beautiful and heartwarming. This you can only see in Israel – a prisoner and his guard, standing handcuffed together, deep in prayer. I pointed them out to those who were passing by. We were all inspired.

When the soldier finished praying, he asked if I would like to hear a story. Of course I agreed. I always need a good story. He told me that yesterday was his trial in a military court. There were a few soldiers there, waiting for their trials. One of the soldiers went around and got the other soldiers to put on *tefillin*. This soldier's turn came. The judge called him, and asked to see his file. No one could find it. They searched all over, but it had just disappeared. After a few minutes, the judge decided to close the case. Also, all of the other soldiers who had put on *tefillin* got off easy.

Now it was clear to me why this soldier wanted so much to put on *tefillin*, and why he said the prayers with so much feeling. He had just seen a few small miracles with his own eyes, all in the merit of putting on *tefillin*, and helping others to put on *tefillin*.

And why did I get to hear this beautiful story? First of all, we all need a lot of inspiration to keep us going. Life is not always easy, especially for Lubavitcher Rabbis. We are on the front lines 7 days a week. There are now 7 billion people out there. Some are waiting for us to inspire them to do more *Mitzvahs*. Some are waiting for someone to help them find *Hashem*. Also, I hope that this story will inspire all of my readers to come closer to *Hashem* and do more *Mitzvahs*, including putting on *tefillin*.

We are now very close to the finish line. It has been a long race, and we are very tired. For 3,800 years we have been working towards our final redemption, and we are almost there. But the sight of the finish line gives us new strength. If we open our eyes and look carefully, we will see a lot of positive changes in the world. Twenty years ago the cold war ended. Communism died a peaceful death, and 200,000,000 people became free to run their lives and believe in *Hashem*.

In recent months cruel dictators have been overthrown in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. More dictators are on the way out. These are all signs of the complete and final redemption. *Moshiach* is bringing peace, freedom and belief in *Hashem* to many millions of people around the world. Soon will be the climax. He will help to gather all of us to the Temple which will be rebuilt in Jerusalem.

It is up to us. We have to prepare ourselves and the world to greet *Moshiach*.



## Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

### A month of faith

*Kislev began Nov. 27*

In the secular calendar, a new month begins in the middle of the moon's cycle. In the Jewish calendar, a new month begins with the new moon. The Hebrew word for month is *chodesh*, which also means *newness*. Each of the twelve months brings new energies and offers unique opportunities to realize one's personal potential and overcome the limitations hindering the true expression of one's essence.

*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 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 there is a God 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 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

This we do by learning Torah, especially what the Torah teaches us about *Moshiach*. Go to your local Chabad House and learn about *Moshiach*. If you don't have a Chabad House nearby, ask the nearest one to send some literature, or learn about *Moshiach* in one of Chabad's websites. We hope to see you very soon in Jerusalem. We want *Moshiach* Now!

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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.

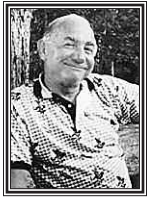
The healing of sleep also means that this is a time when we should wake up from the sleepy dimension that we usually live in. When we sleep, we should sleep deeply. When we are awake, we should not be sleeping.

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.

*This column includes excerpts from my book, Kabbalah Month by Month.*

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## Spoonful of Humor

By TED ROBERTS

### Chanukah and Christmas – A study in ecumenicism

Chanukah and Christmas have many similarities: they both fall in December – they both delight the merchant classes – they're both lighthearted holidays that don't sufficiently emphasize their religious/historical origins, and both festivals love light. Jews light candles. Christians light up evergreen trees. And finally, they're both followed by a flood of bankruptcy filings by Christian and Jewish families who have blown the December budget on munificent gifts to kids who will forget their parents' names, address, and phone number by the time they're 21. ("City Bank writes monthly about their new credit card, but not a word from Marvin," says one of my neglected friends.)

Chanukah used to be a skimpy little holiday – more patriotic than religious. Jewish families feasted on fried potato cakes – *latkes* – a delightful medley of potato, onion, and matzoh meal. De riguer On Chanukah, followed by long periods of togetherness as the family holds hands, suffers from heartburn, and chews Roloids together.

The Jewish family laps up potato cakes while their Christian neighbor dines on a great, golden goose surrounded by festive delicacies. This menu inequality, and perhaps a disagreement over the arrival date of the Messiah, is all that keeps Christians and Jews from some serious cost cutting with a corporate merger.

In Jewish homes, after the prayers, candle lighting, latke feast and anti-acid therapy regimen, a long winded storyteller, like the author, tells the tale of Chanukah: the campaign of liberation waged by the Jews of the 2nd century before Christ.

In the old days, kids enjoyed a frugal Chanukah. They usually received a coin each day of the 8-day celebration. But sometime around the middle of the 20th century, inflamed by their Christian neighbors and their frenzied December generosity, Jews turned Chanukah into an 8-day orgy of gifts. It was a giant step toward economic assimilation and bridge building between the two sister religions. Jews were now ALSO broke in January.



## Shabbat Shalom

By RABBI JON ADLAND

Dec. 2, 2011, Vayeitzei  
Genesis 28:10-32:3, 6 Kislev 5772

Pictures are drawn, songs sung, and stories written about the image we encounter at the beginning of this week's *parashah*. Jacob lays his head down on a rock pillow and dreams a dream. Angels are going up and down a ladder. God speaks promises to Jacob. Then Jacob awakes and says, "Surely God is in this place and I, I did not know it."

This verse has come to be part of my own personal theology. God is a part of my life and I truly believe that God exists everywhere and that a part of God is in everyone. The struggle, like Jacob's, is not in God being present or immanent, but in our recognizing that God is in this place and that God is in us. Often in profound moments we don't always think about God as we are caught up in the moment, but I am sure that those reading this piece can take a moment and reflect on a time when God was present.

Certainly for me, at my installation two weeks ago, when Rabbi Spitzer invited the congregation's president and my wife to join him in placing their hands on my shoulders as he recited the priestly blessing, God was in that place and that moment. At the birth of children, the marriage of relatives, the funerals of parents, in holding the hand of someone in the hospital, in a moment of joy, in the offering or receiving of a blessing, God is in those places. Like Jacob, we must open our eyes and recognize it.

I know that it is easy to get mad or angry at God when things go wrong, terribly wrong. It isn't easy to open our souls to God when our child is ill or a friend has died or a job is lost. When we are shattered it is easier to blame God or reject God because if God is powerful how



Their checks bounced as well as those of their Christian friends. They could even tell better shopping stories due to the 8-day frenzy of exercising their credit cards.

I remember the scene when I was a youthful Chanukah celebrant. My grandmother, enthroned in the softest chair in the living room, handed out holiday coins to a line of grandkids, nephews, and nieces. There was a protocol – like when you were introduced  
(see Roberts, page 5)

could this pain in our hearts and souls even exist.

I don't believe that life is a straight road with promises only of lollipops and sugarcane and chocolate. Life, everyone's life, is filled with twists and turns and forks in the road where we have to make choices and decisions. Sometimes around these turns there are bad things that happen. It is not God planting them there to test us. It is the way of the world. Yet, at these moments God is in these places to give us strength and courage and love to take the next step, to move forward, to continue to live life. If we want to blame God, yell or curse at God, God can handle it, but know that when the yelling and screaming are done, God will still be in this place. God will not walk away just because we are angry nor will God only be present because there is love.

As I write these words, I can see the sun starting to rise, the light outside the window changing colors, and the frost covering the grass. The sky may be gray, but I am blessed to see another beautiful day. My life has been filled with beautiful days and there have been many moments when I opened my eyes to God's presence in my life.

Whether it was a NFTY *Shabbat* filled with singing, a sunrise on the top of Mt. Sinai, standing under the *chuppah* with Sandy, fishing in the middle of a lake surrounded with nothing but nature, planting a seed in a garden, or finishing a wood working project, God is there. God is there in the eyes and voices of friends, the love of family, and the pictures in my heart and soul of my parents. God is there, but it is my responsibility to know that God is there and say thank You and praise You or ask God to just comfort me because today is hard.

Jacob laid down his head and dreamed a dream of a ladder reaching up into the heavens, of angels ascending and descending, and a God who spoke promises to him. When Jacob went to sleep, he thought this was just any place, but when he awoke he realized that God was in this place. I say to you, God is always in this place, we just need to awaken our hearts and minds to this eternal possibility.

When you light your *Shabbat* candles this evening, light one for the opportunity we have to open our eyes and feel God's presence in every place we go and in everything we do. Light the other candle to remind us to say thank you for the blessings in our lives.

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



## Jewish Educator

By AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

### A Hebrew love affair

(From *To Life! Jewish Reflections on Everyday Living* by Amy Hirshberg Lederman, 2005)

I have had a love affair with words ever since I can recall. As a little girl I would whisper words to myself just to hear the sounds of them; magical words like canopy, arithmetic and Ethiopia. As an adult, I have relied upon words as the tools I use to make meaning in my world. In my work, my family, my relationships and my inner life, words accompany me throughout the day, enabling me to bring to life the images, ideas and beliefs that shape who I am.

This is not to say that all words come easily to me. I have never been able to say orangutan without adding a “g” at the end and I still say “head-egg” instead of headache when under stress. And foreign languages really throw me for a loop. My theory in high school Spanish has remained true to this day: if you add an “o” or an “ita” to any English word, the chance is it will sound Spanish enough that you will be understood. For example, “Can you help-o me find-ita the school-o?” will definitely lead you to a school, or at the very least, a building with windows.

So you can imagine the fear I felt when I enrolled in a Hebrew course at the age of 43 at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, ready to conquer the intricacies of a language that had frustrated me since Matt Berman threw eraser tips at me in Hebrew School. I enthusiastically entered the class only to find a room of lethargic college students, most of whom were more interested in rock concerts and bar-hopping than verb conjugation and tenses.

I became obsessed with learning Hebrew, spending every hour of the day – in the classroom, on the streets, at home, even in my sleep – trying to speak the language. I was brazen and I was shameless. I insisted on speaking Hebrew to anyone and everyone who would listen, including a group of Japanese-speaking tourists who wanted directions to the Israel Museum.

Some people never leave home without a credit card; I never left home without my Hebrew-English dictionary. Such determination and diligence, while hastening my comprehension and ability

to speak, came with a price. I became a walking, talking malaprop in Hebrew, the originator of more bloopers than Jerusalem has synagogues.

My family’s first dining experience in Jerusalem began the parade of horrors. I proudly requested the menu in Hebrew and began ordering more food than we could possibly eat in a week. I was quite pleased with myself until my son asked for some ice for his drink.

“No problem,” I said confidently turning to our middle-aged waiter, a man with absolutely no hair and a wide, open smile. “Sir, may I have some ice please?” I asked in my finest Hebrew.

He looked startled, then hurt as he scurried off. My Hebrew radar detector indicated immediate distress. What could I have possibly done to insult this gentle soul?

When a new waiter came to deliver the food, I knew I was in trouble. Slipping away from our table on the pretext of finding the bathroom, I headed straight for the dictionary hidden in my purse. It was on those worn pages that I discovered the error of my ways.

The trouble was that the Hebrew word for *ice* and the Hebrew word for *bald* are almost identical. I had told our unsuspecting waiter that I wanted him – and I wanted him bald! My embarrassment was knee-deep. I was desperate to make amends and returned to the table with renewed faith that I could set things right. I motioned to our hairless waiter and with a smile as big as Montana, asked for a *masrek*. Now he wasn’t wounded but outraged. An Israeli called out, “She means a *masleg*, not a *masrek*! This time I had asked the poor guy for a *comb* instead of a *fork*!

I might have thrown in the Hebrew towel if there hadn’t been a breakthrough one Friday evening at the *shul* we attended. After several months, I still hadn’t noticed much change in my ability to understand the Hebrew prayers I said. Even though I knew them by heart, they were really just words I recited in order to be a part of the synagogue community.

Slowly I felt it, like a soft shiver running through my soul. I realized that for the first time in my life I actually understood the *meaning* of the Hebrew words of *Yedid Nefesh*, the prayer we say to welcome the Sabbath. I heard the passion, understood the poetry, clung to the description of love between man and God which are found within it. No longer were these words mere sounds; they were Hebrew words I understood because I had made them my own.

Hot tears rolled down my cheeks when we began to sing the *Shema* and I understood for the very first time the

words that I had recited by memory my entire life. The *Shema* itself is a commandment to hear, to listen, and to understand. I realized that in my efforts to learn Hebrew I had gained much more than mere knowledge of the *aleph-bet*. In learning Hebrew I had enabled myself to understand the true meaning of Jewish prayer and to give these words personal meaning. In learning Hebrew, I had begun to make traditional Hebrew prayers my own.

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### ROBERTS

(continued from 4)

to the Queen. You held out your hand as grandmother reached into her purse and selected your coin. This was no egalitarian exercise. The coins ranged from quarters to silver dollars. Both behavior and kinship went on the scale. A courteous well cleaned up cousin with clean fingernails could cop a bigger prize than a grandkid who never called grandmother. The ceremony ended with a long slow kiss to grandmother’s cheek. An obligation which smart kids realized affected next year’s disbursement. My cousin, Arlene, as far sighted as the prophet Elijah, was even smart enough to help cut up her Bubbe’s *latkes*. And that was Chanukah in my day.

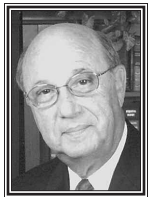
Ted Roberts, a Rockower Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks at Jewish life with rare wit and insight. When he’s not writing, Ted worships at Etz Chayim Synagogue in Huntsville, Ala., where for 25 years he has served as bar mitzvah teacher. His inspiration is his patient wife, Shirley.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

## On this date in Jewish history

On December 7, 1915

Eli Wallach was born.

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



## Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

### To believe or not to believe

It is amazing, at times, to witness a peculiar dynamic when connecting with fellow Jews in discussing the belief in God. There are those who claim to have faith in the existence of God and there are an equal number who will describe their association with their Jewish heritage in a more secular manner void of all reference of God.

I am reminded of something I read in "The racial motif in Renan's attitude to Jews and Judaism" which can be found in *Anti-Semitism Through the Ages*, page 258:

*"A peculiar people, in very truth, and created to present all manners of contrasts! This people have given God to the world, and hardly believe in Him themselves. They have created religion, and they are the least religious of peoples. They have founded the hopes of humanity in a kingdom of heaven, while all its sages keep repeating to us that we must only occupy ourselves with the things of this earth."*

Throughout my career within the framework of the Jewish experience, I certainly have come across evidence of this on more than one occasion. I have witnessed the devout praying constantly, learning incessantly, and preaching forgiveness through Divine acceptance. And yet the necessity to extend that knowledge to the masses is missing which, to me, eliminates any chance for continuity. When knowledge is not shared ignorance results and those who have the understanding withdraw unto themselves which defeats the very purpose of learning and sharing.

There are those who suggest that God is not a necessary ingredient in living a good life or setting an example for others because it is inherent in each of us to do marvelous things. We are endowed with the ability to be God-like without believing in God because, in reality, we are the end-all for all that happens in the world. We create and we destroy. This makes us a god in the minds of those intellectuals who believe in self-determination and self-fulfillment.

And then there are some who believe that the answer to believing lies somewhere in the middle – belief in a Supreme Being enables us to create and destroy because that is the way of the

world and the essence of creation. There can be no good without evil and vice-versa.

Perhaps the late Nobel Prize laureate, Isaac Bashevis Singer summed it up with the following observation:

*In the 1920s, a Jew travels from his small Polish shtetl to Warsaw. When he returns, he tells his friend of the wonders he has seen:*

*"I met a Jew who had grown up in a yeshiva and knew large sections of the Talmud by heart. I met a Jew who was an atheist. I met a Jew who owned a large clothing store with hundreds of employees, and I met a Jew who was an ardent communist."*

*"So what's so strange?" the friend asks. "There must be a million Jews in Warsaw."*

*"You don't understand," the man answers. "It was all the same Jew."*

The beauty of the story, other than being a true microcosm of reality, is that we are unique, particularly because we understand the very nature of choice. All of us have the ability to choose what to believe and what not to believe because we can also reason within ourselves the opportunities for acceptance or rejection of God.

There is, in all of us, the ability to select the times or the events which promote reliance on God as a need for comfort and solace. We also, at times, determine that gratitude for the events in our lives that give us joy is necessary for fulfillment.

We, as a people, do not concentrate on the here-after because we know, only too well, that there can be no tomorrow without the present. Our teachings emphasize the value and importance of living for the moment and the moments that will follow to illustrate the importance of the giving of life and the purpose for which we were created. We were not created to wish for death but rather to hope for sanctity of life. It is this concentration that creates the illusion that we do not believe in God and just believe in ourselves.

One of the most frustrating comments I hear at funerals, for example, is that the person who passed is now in a better place. This says to me that this place we now occupy is bad and we wait for the time when all will be right with us. It negates the reason for our existence and denounces the concept of God's creations. The simple truth is that God did not create to destroy but rather to give us the opportunity to take the life we were given and enhance it with all that is there for us. If this were not the case then we would still be in the "Garden" prancing around with no concern for today or tomorrow.

There is a Midrash which describes a conversation between God and the

(see Wiener, page 9)



## Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

### Is the Jewish world coming to an end?

No, definitely not, but there are days and moments when it seems like it might, and in the moments, you look around at all the things about the Jewish world that seem in disarray, and you think that it might be.

Israel is at the very center of our existence whether you live there or not, whether you have children there or not, and when you hear great leaders demeaning the prime minister of Israel, when they believed it was a private conversation, you might wonder whether Israel and Jews in America have any friends at all.

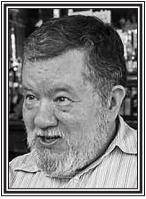
Last week I visited Denver to spend an evening with an aunt and cousins from my mother's side of the family, the Stellers. My grandparents moved to Denver from Patterson, N.J., at the turn of the century. Before Patterson, they lived in Poland. Like thousands of other families, they came to the United States because it offered freedom and opportunity. They lived their lives as committed Jews, participating in the life of the community, raising children and welcoming generations. We were their successors, but our lives and experience as 2nd generation Jews were vastly different, different from my parents, who were both born in Denver shortly after their arrival.

On this particular trip, with this side of the family, I recognized that in every family there was assimilation and intermarriage, and most shocking of all, that they were comfortable with their children and grandchildren just being happy. The parents all identify with the Jewish community, have been leaders in many of the Jewish institutions, but their legacy is in doubt. Their families will survive, but would be unrecognizable to my grandparents. Will these histories mark the end of Jewish history in America? Certainly not, but it will alter all of the beliefs and aspirations of generations that sacrificed for their beliefs.

My wife and I have 5 married children, 47 grandchildren and at last count 19 great-grandchildren, the oldest of which is 6. We are expecting 5 at this moment, and we are still at the beginning

(see Karsh, page 7)





## Jewish Spirituality

By RABBI ELI MALLON

### Torah and Sacred Activism

Recently, Rabbi Roger Ross made me aware of Andrew Harvey's phrase *Sacred Activism*. While I haven't yet read his literature, I had the general impression that he's teaching: social/political activism and personal/spiritual growth need not – should not – be thought of as conflicting directions in our lives.

The challenge is to blend them; to grow spiritually along with and through our activism while conversely not becoming narrow-minded and rejectionist in our own *rightness*.

Torah, too, doesn't teach *tikkun olam* as something separate from spiritual growth. They're intimately related. In fact, two rabbis – unknown to each other; living at more or less the same time, but half a world apart – say emphatically that social activism *without* spiritual ideals and growth (as well as the opposite: concern for individual spiritual progress while disregarding the needs of the world-at-large) is condemned to ultimate failure:

"It is only through love that the salvation of mankind will be attained. It is only when [we] will learn to give full expression to the Divine power of love within [us] that bloodshed will cease and war will be no more...Any project for the maintenance of permanent and universal peace, though [it] be the result of good judgment and lofty intention, must fail...if [it] attempt[s] to impose peace from without. Peace must emanate from within...Universal peace will come about through universal love." [1]

"Every philosophy which renounces the perfection of the physical world and the proper order of society, and floats in the spiritual realm alone, priding itself only in the perfection of souls and their success, is based on a falsehood that has no link with reality.

And every philosophy which is unconcerned with the elevation to eternal ideals, and places its attention only on the mending of material existence, even if it includes ethical programs and efforts toward justice and equity – will, in the end, be corrupted because of its smallness of vision...when it is detached from the basis of eternal life and the aspiration for it." [2]

Becoming higher, holier, more loving people should have its expression in (among other things) the way we conduct business and the society we create by our own actions. Alternately, the way we act, the way we conduct business, should be conducive to our becoming higher, holier, and more loving.

But, to paraphrase Bob Dylan, we must be watchful not to "become our *enemy* in the instant that we preach."

We become holier than our *enemy* by recognizing the holiness of our *enemy* as well as of ourselves.

Even by bringing our *enemy* to see his or her own holiness and ours, as well.

If we believe that *they* can debase themselves with greed, we should also believe that we can debase ourselves by resentment.

We must learn to deal with opposition lovingly. Some – perhaps most – spiritual teachers would counsel against responding to insults and arguments. There is an *inner* level on which that must be true: we must be hyper-observant about our own negative thoughts and feelings; correcting them as soon as they're recognized.

But I believe that there can – should – be discussion, even when there's no agreement.

It's a good time to read what Ghandi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and others have written about non-violent civil disobedience. But after reading or learning, it must be *strategized*; we must prepare ourselves. We each must plan how we'll react, what we'll say, *before* actually being confronted by insults or arguments. If we wait until the moment comes, we're likely to find ourselves filled with too many spontaneous thoughts and feelings to make a rational choice.

If you don't support *Occupation Wall Street* or the 99%-ers, I still say: Disagree, debate, but without insults, without sarcasm, without name-calling. State your facts, make your case, but without useless generalizations or distortions-of-fact. To every thought of disagreement, join a thought of respect. Such respect need not negate your convictions; nor need your convictions negate the need for respecting those who disagree with you.

We should be as concerned about our own holiness in our debates, as we are in our prayers.

Let us disagree, disobey, oppose – lovingly. Doing so, we become better people and build a better society.

We grow in love by recognizing and respecting the humanity and holiness of our opponents.

We grow in love by loving.

[1] Lichtenstein, Rabbi Morris; *Jewish Science and Health*; © 1925; p. 133

[2] Kook, Rabbi Abraham Isaac; *The Essential Writings of Abraham Isaac Kook*; Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser, trans.; Amity House, Inc., © 1988; p. 195-6.

Rabbi Eli Mallon, M.Ed., LMSW first came as an adult to Jewish learning, after experience with Transcendental Meditation (TM), yoga, and other growth-producing modalities. He also studied Jewish Science and Visualization at the Society of Jewish Science in New York. Over the years, he has taught people of all ages as a bar/bat mitzvah instructor, Hebrew school teacher, cantor, pastoral counselor and rabbi, in addition to his work in public education. He resides in New City, NY. View other works by him at <http://rabbielimallon.wordpress.com>. Posted Nov. 20, 2011. ★



### KARSH

(continued from 6)

of the generation. In pure numbers, we will make up for all the losses, but when my memories are no longer, a proud family will have lost its dreams.

Just this month it appeared we were in a battle to keep the Palestinians out of the United Nations. Membership did not seem to be an issue because we believed that the United States would never allow it. There have been days since, when I am not sure what will happen. And while there is a great deal of rhetoric about never allowing Iran to have nuclear weapons, we see that the decisions that need to be made are in a minefield of international machinations, and we are just a small player in a large game.

On the side of history, we are survivors. In the moment, we find ourselves walking on insecure rope bridges, hoping the moorings will withstand the violent winds. The fact that the Jewish nation is experienced in survival is not enough to make you feel optimistic about the future.

It does not seem to me that men will make the difference. I feel some sense of balance because of the Almighty's promise that we shall survive. But it is not a promise that we will survive intact, and it is a national promise, not an individual one.

Most of us are not in a position to change world history. But even with faith, it is difficult to watch the things you treasure most, diluted and lost. We, who care, are charged with keeping the faith and holding on.

Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc., and can be reached at [hkarsh@gmail.com](mailto:hkarsh@gmail.com). He has recently been named as a community columnist for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. This column was submitted on Nov 15, 2011. ★



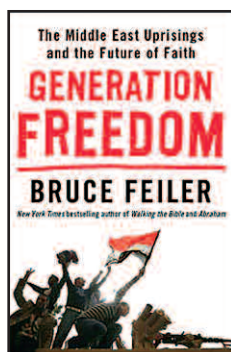
## Book Review

REVIEW BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

### Uniting adherents of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity

*Generation Freedom: The Middle East Uprisings and the Remaking of the Modern World.* By Bruce Feiler. HarperCollins Publishers, 2011. 146 Pages. \$11.99.

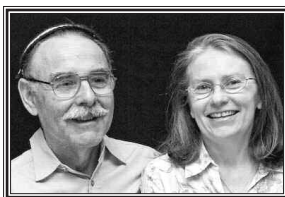
Bruce Feiler, the celebrated author of such best-sellers as *Walking the Bible*, and *Abraham*, has done perhaps more than any other writer to bring closer the adherents of the three monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in wake of the unfathomable attacks of 9/11. He continues in this critical vein with his latest literary gem of *Generation Freedom*, following the unpredicted eruption of Biblical proportions of the *Arab Spring* with its potential to transform the long-overdue Middle-East.



The author draws a directly connecting line between the monumental events of 2001 and 2011. On Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaida's now dead leader Osama bin Ladin and his co-conspirators lashed out against the West in general and United States in particular for promoting Western values and highlighting the weaknesses of the Muslim world given the West's superiority. The recent uprisings of 2011, especially the 18-day Egyptian "Facebook revolution," courageously toppled the 30-year autocratic rule of President Hosni Mubarak with a cost of 850 lives. (It could have been much higher!). These were aimed at changing the Arab world from within to reflect the free democratic societies of the West.

What a revolutionary reversal in Arab attitude that Feiler points at as a promising sign of progressive change yet to come, with already indicated improvement in the treatment by the Egyptian authorities of common folks who were regularly abused. After all, the *Arab Spring* was sparked in Tunisia, when a young fruit vendor finally in desperation set himself afire. However, since the book was published there have been recorded

## Gather the People



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

### Don't put out the light

"Have you ever driven to work and, once you got there, realized that you didn't remember driving there at all?" asks Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf.

It happens to all of us—and not just in the car. And the result is that literally we don't see; we don't experience what's right in front of us. Even Moses had this experience. Rabbi Apisdorf reminded us that Moses was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law and he took the sheep out into the wilderness when, the scripture tells us, "he looked" at a bush that was burning and yet not consumed. And he said to himself, "Let me turn *aside* and see this incredible sight..." (Exodus 3:2-3) From this, our sages say, we learn that there is no place that is devoid of God's presence, not even a thorn bush. God's presence is discernible in all things and all places. Even in something like a bush.

The problem is that we just don't see it. Things only look ordinary to us, however, because we have not yet seen what is truly there. That is, we haven't made a conscious decision to perceive the extraordinary that is right there in front of us. As the Baal Shem Tov (Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer, 1698-1760) said, "The world is full of miracles, but man takes his little hand and covers his eyes, and sees nothing."

So what about the miracle of Chanukah? As we know, for all these eight nights of Chanukah, our rabbis say, these lights are holy. We are not permitted to use them, rather only to look at them. And they also say, in Rabbi Apisdorf's words, that they call out to us to "turn aside from everything else and to *see* what is really there."

But what is it that we actually see? And what is that small flame to us?



violations of human rights by the new Egyptian regime that is run by the old generals who were Mubarak's associates. In addition, the minority Coptic Christian community, making up 10% of Egypt's 85 million people, has faced deadly attacks. The highly significant Egyptian relations with both Israel and the United

(see Zoberman, page 18)

Although a better question might be: *What are we to it?*

For in a way, *fire* is who we are. As Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) teaches us, *aish* (fire) is the power that gives movement, alteration and life to all physical beings. We could think of it as life-energy. It is the dark invisible fire by which the eternal, God-given laws of nature work in all of God's creations. These are the laws that work unconsciously in everything created. And in most creatures, they operate independent of the will of those creatures. But there is one creature for which those laws come for free-willed acceptance. And that creature is us.

By keeping the Torah, we consciously and freely take up the position that all other beings occupy unconsciously and without free will. For us, the *fire* becomes *law*, referred to in the Torah as *aishdat*, the fiery law. As Rabbi Hirsch teaches, we are the fuel for keeping the fires of godliness burning on earth.

So, on each night of Chanukah, when you look at the flame, think of yourself. And ask yourself: For what purpose will I use this God-given fire, this life-energy that is mine to direct.

Bar Kappara (*tanna* who lived in transitional period between *tannaim* and *amoraim*) taught: "God said to man: 'My light is in your hand and your light is in My hand.' 'My light is in your hand': this refers to the Torah; and 'your light is in My hand': this refers to the soul. If you guard My light, I will guard your light, but if you extinguish My light, I will extinguish your light." (Leviticus Rabbah 31:4)

We leave you with a poem. It's called "Don't Put Out the Light:"

For You  
Who made the light  
And blew it into me  
Who gave me my soul  
To be a lantern  
To Your hand,  
Saying,  
Don't put out the light!  
Let me keep pure  
This filament,  
My body.  
Let it be  
According  
To Your will,  
A sheath for light,  
That I may lift  
My lamp  
Into Your hands.

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





## Jewish Counselor

By RABBI STEVEN M. LEAPMAN

### Flannery understood – now it's our turn

Usually I write as a rabbi, a therapist, often as a former Navy chaplain. Why is this day different from others when I've come to my keyboard? Let me return to lessons gained in chaplaincy. The interfaith setting, however it differed from traditional congregational contexts for which my generation of rabbis trained, inherently recognized and welcomed the reality of diversity. Interfaith religious endeavors teach we must not rely on old assumptions. We hearken to how others hear the world, we watch how others see themselves, we try on their language and customs and however rough the fit or harsh the sound, we're blessed to gain another perspective on their faith, indeed, on life in its abundant variation. Nothing is totally what we believe it to be!

Common sense is not necessarily comfortable sense as perceptions always need be prodded, provoked, poked and thus improved. Perhaps this notion, indeed this priority, is difficult to embrace in an era when so much of religious life is about synagogue-as-entertainment-center. Sadly, when shul takes the guise of sedative, not only senses go numb, but so too moral and spiritual imperatives weaken. Interfaith activities remind me I dismiss what I do not observe at my peril; what I choose to overlook or underestimate may well return the favor!

Were I ask to rewrite one passage of the Torah, I would make the golden calf move. I would have the golden calf run or prance. Why? Because a stationary golden calf is too easy to ignore. I grew up in Lancaster County, Pa., I know what bored cows look like! But when our idolatries and falsehoods take action, go on the road, then they are busy, they clamor for our time and devotion, our loyalty and complicity. The seated golden calf is at idle; the compelling force of what we allow to betray and delude us is surely modernity's idol.

So where is this headed Rabbi Leapman? More musings on how organized religion forsakes us or how we forsake and disorganize religion? Actually, this is less about religion than religiosity, for what is religiosity if not about how we attune ourselves to life in general, not only about how we hold a lulav, keep *Shabbat*,

chant Torah, or practice personal prayer, if at all? Religiosity conveys how, not just what label I bring to society's table of ethnic identification. How do my values and convictions play out? Religiosity is about identity, identity-in-motion, identity-in-deed.

Hence, I confess I have been somewhat less than fully self-disclosing. Today, I also write as a native Pennsylvanian residing in a wonderful city, despite media reports we are dying. To that, I say, phooey! Yet, my adopted home town is akin to my home state for both tout dominant football teams. Penn State was not to be ignored nor are The Irish! I was hardly a jock, just ask my high school buddies! Even living in South Bend, I've been to one Notre Dame game; Navy beat Notre Dame and as a Navy veteran I relished it! I'm not blind or insensitive to the fun sports bring. I am no stick-in-the-mud. However, I remember something suggested by the title of a Flannery O'Connor tale, "Everything That Rises Must Converge!" Nothing that occurs, whether in public or in secret evolves in isolation and if we believe, if we seek, to silence facets of our troubles, one day, ultimately, circumstances will force us into greater awareness and grander accountability.

Recent news from home merits concern. I do not point fingers. Pennsylvania has a legal system. Due process must be observed! The safety and sanctity of innocent children is never to be disputed, always to be championed. As I grappled with news from State College, I listened to a newscaster discuss *insularity*. He nailed it! The Reform Holy Days prayerbook of my youth bespoke "the sin of silence," "the sin of indifference," "the secret complicity of the neutral," "...the washing of hands," "...all that was done," "...all that was not done." How does the morally obvious go rejected? How does the ethically apparent remain unheeded? How does the emotionally obtuse go unacknowledged? Ask the golden calves we ride! I'll name one: *insularity*.

A synonym might be *psychic incest* when fear-of-what-or-who-is-different, challenging, or disquieting is not permitted. Consider insularity's bitter fruits: barbarity transpires around athletic departments as child abuse and sexual assaults are not properly investigated; innuendo is fanned amidst supposedly sacred communities; betrayal arises because "the person before you did it this way!" A pastor I know shared she had been told her conduct was *inappropriate* only to discover upon challenging such a potentially horrific accusation that it meant she did not know the customs of a new congregation and therefore she did not fit in. Insularity warps locality into

sanctity and is idolatrous. Not to admit you see a child being harmed, not to challenge rancid gossip, not to question accepted versions of atrocious incidents, protects patterns that approve, permit, and perpetuate injustice and misconduct, from hideous involvement with a child to degradation of one whose greatest crime is defying local custom. This is not the *Tradition* Tevye trumpets.

How do you do tashlich for a charging bull? Start with building a corral! Set moral barriers and maintain emotional boundaries regardless of cost or consequence.

Recently, I spoke at a local Episcopal church. Father Matthew Cowden did me a great honor. Once I concluded and was taking questions, Father Cowden stopped the discussion and directly queried me, "Is there anything you learned today, is there anything that struck you which you want to share with us?" Was this awkward or rude? No! Father Cowden was extending authentic friendship for he was willing to politely question-the-one-who-came-to-ask-questions; he understood complacency and insularity are not abiding friends of the spirit. This is how we grow. This is our duty! This is our necessity. May the God we all worship be with the innocent souls harmed through the insularity and closed heartedness that we allow to abound, that we permit to proceed, that we must confront in home and heart, at work and in public. Amen!

Rabbi Steven M. Leapman, LMHC, LCAC is licensed as a clinical addictions and mental health counselor in the State of Indiana. He is a former US Navy / USMC chaplain who currently serves a staff therapist at Samaritan Counseling Center in South Bend, Ind. He is interested in pastoral and general counseling, bereavement and loss, interfaith relations, and creative writing. ★



### WIENER

(continued from page 6)

Angels. In this conversation the Angels question as to why God would want to create human beings because they would be unworthy of such a gift. God simply states that there would be no value to what was created if there was no one there to appreciate it.

Perhaps this is an answer to the question as to whether to believe or not believe and can be found in each of us even when we feel the need to deny or remain self-contained. And maybe, just maybe, that is the eternal message of Hanukkah.

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



# From the Rabbi's Study

By RABBI GREGORY S. MARX

## Empathy

Yom Kippur 5772, Oct. 2011

The world is getting smaller and smaller. We are drawn ever more closely together by the Internet and mass communications. We know instantly what is happening on the other side of the world. Our generation is more informed about current global events than ever before.

I remember as a child, going to the library and looking up periodicals to learn what's happening in the world. Now, my children and I have almost instantaneous access to events on the other side of the globe. I can watch tsunamis and typhoons as they happen. We have more access than ever before and the results on our character are not all that pretty. All the disasters, natural and man-made harden us. We know what is happening, but often can't afford to feel anything, for it would completely exhaust us. We see the images, hear the words and tell ourselves that we get it. We know what's happening.

But do we? Do we really understand what motivates a suicide bomber? Do Christians understand Jews? Do Jews understand Muslims? Do Muslims understand Christians and Jews?

Over the summer, I had a powerful moment at a Wissahickon Faith Community Association (WFCA) meeting, when we were planning a symposium for the tenth anniversary of 9/11. As some of you may recall, I spoke about pain, despair, hope and healing. The mostly Christian membership of the committee wanted to have Muslim representation on the panel. I agreed, but only if I knew who the Muslim representative was. I expressed concern that there is a tremendous amount of misinformation and anti-Semitism in the Muslim community and felt that I could not be candid if I did not have a necessary trust with and of my fellow speakers.

Fortunately most understood my position. One Christian minister, Sandra Ellis Killian from St. John's Lutheran Church in Ambler, began to speak on the topic. She began by recalling her recent visit to Israel. She remarked that one afternoon, after shopping in the Jewish section of Jerusalem, she found herself waiting at a bus stop. Suddenly the store merchant where she just made some

purchases came out to where she was waiting and started yelling in a most agitated manner. He was screaming at her in Hebrew and she had no idea what was alarming him so. He pointed to a parcel just beneath her seat and motioned for her to step away quickly. Moments later the police sappers came to remove the package, which thankfully turned out to be harmless.

She paused and then commented, "Israelis live that way everyday. Fear and distrust are part of life in Israel. She paused again and said; "Now I get it. I understand what it must be like to live in a country that is constantly under siege." We then had the most candid conversation about anti-Semitism that I have ever had with Christian Clergy. I told them about Jewish concern about world events as it impacted Israel and world Jewry. I told them about Jewish history and how security and trust can so easily be lost.

We each had an "aha moment." And there was a sense of peace that permeated the meeting that frankly I had never experienced in over 22 years of participation. As I left the meeting, I realized that more information does not lead to more understanding. Empathy does. Knowing is one thing. Caring is completely another.

We know so much. We are adept at building towering institutions with impenetrable walls. Our boundaries define us and help others to understand us. Defining lines around our communities are necessary in a pluralistic world, but not in all circumstances. We also need to build enough doors and windows so that we can understand each other. For, if we can understand where another person, with whom we may have little in common, is coming from, then we can bridge the gaps that often divide us. This is what WFCA is all about. On this Yom Kippur we talk a great deal about forgiveness and that is indeed good and true. Forgiveness is essential for us to find emotional healing, but before we can forgive another, we must first be able to understand them. And the foundation for that understanding is empathy.

One of my favorite Biblical stories is about Sarah, Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael. We learn of Abraham and Sarah who at first are infertile. Sarah suggests that Abraham have a child with Hagar, the Egyptian maidservant. Hagar in Hebrew means *the stranger*. Abraham does and she has a child, Ishmael. Then Sarah gives birth to Isaac and suddenly feels threatened by both Hagar and her first-born son, so she insists that Abraham banish them both to die. Abraham, the dutiful husband, obeys his wife and sends them out into the wilderness with one day's supply of food and water. As Ishmael lay dying, Hagar,

his mother, looks away as she couldn't bear the pain of seeing his death, "Let me not look on as the child dies." God sees this tragedy and opens Hagar's eyes and allows her to see and to feel. As a result, she finds a well of water, where they both drink.

We can't help but be struck by Sarah's cruelty and Abraham's passivity. Where is the empathy, where is the compassion? Hagar is the first stranger in the Torah, who happens to be an Egyptian slave. Sarah seems petty, Abraham passive, and worst of all, no one, except God seems to care about the suffering of this stranger.

So, why is this story in the bible, which has so many lessons about caring for the widow, the orphan and the stranger? It's to teach us that Sarah and Abraham's lack of empathy can have disastrous effects. Hagar, the rejected stranger later travels to Egypt, not to Canaan, to get a wife for Ishmael and there once wed, Ishmael becomes the symbol of Egypt, Israel's ancient adversary. Ishmael later has twelve sons, which serves as a balance to Jacob and his twelve sons. Ishmael becomes the father of the Arab people, while Jacob is our ancestor. Here we find the biblical roots of the conflict between Jew and Arab. It starts with a lack of empathy, a feeling for one another.

The rabbis in the Talmud note this lack of compassion well. Throughout our tradition there are so many rituals designed to teach us to not make Abraham and Sarah's mistake.

At the *Seder* when we drink a cup of wine in celebration of the Exodus, we are told to take ten drops of wine out, so that our joy is diminished because of Egypt's suffering. The goal is to teach us empathy. The rabbis teach a Midrash about the parting of the red sea. When the Israelites made it dry land on the other side of Red Sea, and the Egyptians and their chariots were swallowed by the sea, the angels sang with jubilation. God, according to a Midrash, castigates the angels, "the Egyptians are my people too. How can you rejoice when they are suffering?" Again, as with the Hagar story, God is the empathetic one. The goal is to teach us empathy.

As we eat the *matzah* at the Seder, we proclaim, "*Arami Oved Avi*," "My father was a wandering Aramean," "My father was without a home, was a stranger and we should empathize with those who are homeless. The key is empathy.

Those who can't or won't empathize with the suffering are very often insufferable. Those who cannot feel the pain of others can too easily inflict pain on them.

I spoke last night about the *Kaddish d'rabbanan*, a prayer in appreciation of Jewish scholars. Well there is also a



blessing that traditional Jews recite when they see a non-Jewish scholar. "*Barach atah Adonai eloheinu melech haolam, shnatan mechachmato l'basar v'dam.*" "Blessed are you O lord our God, who gives wisdom to humanity." The goal is to teach us to respect the other for their truth and humanity. All of us are created in the image of God.

I wish to make a confession today. I read and cry over the news like a rabbi. I worry more about Jews and Israel and mourn their losses more than I empathize with the plight of some other communities, with whom I don't identify, but who may suffer just as much. Over the summer, I remember mourning for the family of Leiby Kletzky the Jewish boy from Brooklyn who was brutally murdered. I felt for him and for his family. I saw the family grieve and I connected with them. Over the summer, we said *Kaddish* at services for Leiby. Shortly, thereafter, I read of the Norway massacre. I read about the bombing in Oslo and then the shooting spree on Utoya Island, where youth from Norway's Labor Party were holding a summer camp. I read that 92 people were dead, most of them teenagers. I read that the terrorist was a right-wing extremist who hated Muslims (and apparently a lot of other people). I shook my head, muttered, "How horrible!" and continued on with my day. I chose not to say *Kaddish* for those 92 youths. Looking back, I wish I had.

The Kletzky family received thousands of shiva calls and even more letters and emails of condolences. One in particular caught my attention. It came from an Arab woman in Qatar. It read:

"My deepest condolences to the parents, especially Leiby's mother. As a mother of 2 boys, I know what a long, long journey it is for a mother to bring up her baby to be 9 years old. To carry a baby for 9 months, give birth, struggle with sleepless nights, ailments, aches and pains, the first step, first smile, first fall, going from milestone to milestone, cheering with them, crying with them, worrying with them, wearing your heart on your sleeve every moment of the day. These are precious moments etched in our hearts forever. And then, suddenly, cruelly and horribly, your child is snatched from you, and in one second, your life is completely and utterly destroyed. I pray that God help you find inner strength to cope with this immense tragedy, for the sake of your daughters, your husband and all the others who need you in their lives. I cried for your son, and I cried for your heart that will forever have a piece missing. With deepest sympathy, Carmen Ali from Qatar."

What an amazing letter. Here is a

Muslim woman who clearly has little in common with ultra-Orthodox Jews in New York, yet she could get out of her parochialism and feel for the other. Her response is what I should have felt when I read about Norway or so many other tragedies.

With a chill, I realize that too many people all over the world react to Israel's tragedies from terror, like I did regarding Norway's. While Israelis cry and bury their dead, the world shakes their heads, clicks their tongues, and goes on to the next news item.

Of course, it's a defense mechanism, not to get too upset. How can we function if we empathize with everyone? There is simply too much information, too much loss, far too much pain. At times, it's just too much to bear. But that can't be our excuse for failing to care. It's just not good enough for me.

I resonate with the Zionist narrative. When I read the news, I see it through the eyes of a rabbi who loves the land of Israel. I see Jewish history through the lenses of the Holocaust and the inquisitions. It is for this reason that I support a strong Israel. But what if, I could see the narrative of Israel through a different lens? I once visited a special site in Israel on the border with Jordan. There I learned the story of the hydroelectric power plant built by Pinchas Rotenberg, dubbed "the Old Man from Naharayim." Rotenberg had a vision of the creation of power plant using the waters of the Jordan River to serve the Jewish state in the 1920s. When you visit the old plant, currently a part Kibbutz Gesher in the Jordan Valley, you hear the story of the Jews who worked at this plant and had a joyous life, until 1948.

You see, Israel was not able to hold this land and it was lost to the Jordanians in the war of Independence. Visitors are shown a very touching video of the Jews who lost their homes and their livelihoods. It contains stories about abandoned homes, photo albums left behind, dreams and hopes cut off. I walked out moved about the pioneer's story, but also wondering about similar places of interest in Palestinian communities. I'm sure they have equally moving narratives about lost homes, livelihoods and families. I couldn't help but wonder, "Can we empathize with their plight?"

I also wonder, "Can Palestinian's empathize with the plight of Israelis?" Can they see that we are not colonizers but returning home after 2,000 years of persecution? A terrorist must close his or her heart to empathy before they detonate a bomb or launch a missile into civilian population centers.

I would suggest that peace will only come when we can feel another person's pain

and loss. Peace will come in the Middle East when Palestinians can empathize with Israelis and feel for their loss and pain at the hands of terrorists and do something to change it. And peace will come, when Israeli's can feel the loss of Palestinians and do something to change it.

I deeply respect the transformative message of Nelson Mandela. He was by no means perfect, especially on the topic of Israel, but he taught us a valuable lesson about empathy. He recently celebrated his 93rd birthday. Nelson Mandela valued the power of understanding others, including his enemies. My son Joe visited Robben Island prison this summer, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 18 years.

A major part of Mandela's strategy was to get inside the minds of his captors. To that end, he taught himself to speak and comprehend Afrikaans, and learned the history, culture and values of the Afrikaners. In order to best communicate what he wanted, he needed to truly know where his adversaries were coming from. Or as Mandela put it: "You must understand the mind of the opposing commander...you can't understand him unless you understand his literature and his language." This empathetic comprehension of those who were guarding him and his fellow inmates led to better conditions in an otherwise oppressive jail. When he was released after a total of 27 years of imprisonment, he had ample reason to hate the Afrikaners, but instead, he chose to understand them and then built bridges between the two communities. Today, South Africa is a peaceful state, one that is thriving. And here's the stark truth, it is one of the only African states where Whites and Blacks live together in peace and it's all because Mandela had the courage and will to empathize.

The Israeli organization, "Seeds of Peace," is modeled after Mandela's choices. They seek to put in more windows and doors into the walls that divide us. All across Israel and the West Bank, Israelis and Palestinians learn each other's languages and study each other's culture. And happily this program is spreading to hot spots around the world. Hope is on the horizon.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel sets for all of us a goal. Defining empathy, he offers us a way out of our self-centeredness. "Empathy," he writes, "is the pain a father feels when his child hurts his hand playing ball; the pang a mother knows when her daughter is not invited to the party she had her heart set on; the concern a lover has for the least concern of his or her beloved; the anguish which touches a

(see Marx, page 13)



## Jewish Year Diet

By Rabbi Ben Zion Eliyahu Lehrer

### Chanukah

Interesting to note is that the Hebrew date for Chanukah, the 25th of *Kislev* is also the date for the completion of the Holy *Mishkan*, the Tabernacle which was built in the desert.

Even though the work for the *Mishkan* was completed in *Kislev*, its inauguration was not until the first of *Nissan*. The Midrash tells us that the awesome splendor which came into the world on the day of the inauguration of the *Mishkan* is likened to the intensity of light and joy which was felt on the day in which G-d created the heavens and the earth.

The actual date for Day One of the creation of the heaven and the earth is disputed by two major rabbis who are mentioned in the Talmud. One is Rebbe Eliezer, who holds that day one of creation was on the 25th day of *Elul* which is exactly three months before Chanukah, and the other rabbi is Rebbe Yehoshuah, who tells us that the creation of the heavens and the earth begins on the opposite side of the Jewish Year, the parallel month to *Elul*, the 25th of *Adar*.

According to this latter opinion, it then follows that the sixth day of creation which was the day in which the first man, Adam was created is *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*, the very same day in which the *Mishkan* was inaugurated and began to function. We see then that the creation of the *Mishkan* and the inauguration of the *Mishkan* have something to do with the creation of Adam.

The question then arises, how do we fit in the opinion of Rebbe Eliezer who holds that *Rosh Hashanah/Tishre* the exact parallel month to *Nissan* is the date of the birth of Adam? The answer can be found in the words of our great sage Rabanu Tam in Tos, Tractate *Rosh Hashanah* "that in *Tishre/Rosh Hashanah* it went up on the *thought* of G-d to create Adam though the *actual* creation was not till *Nissan*." By viewing "*Rosh Hashanah*" as being the *thought/conception* of Adam, we can now understand that Chanukah, namely the sixth day/candle of Chanukah marks a full three months from conception.

The Talmud tells us that after three months one can clearly see that a woman is pregnant. For us this means that at Chanukah one can now actually see the light of his or her new soul which is at this time reaching from heaven to earth. The

law for how we are to relate to the Chanukah lights is that we are to only look at and enjoy the lights though we have no permission to use the light. (At least not now, because our new *Mishkan* within us, though complete, is not yet functioning, however, after Chanukah, once we enter The Book of *Shemot* we will then begin the process and preparation which is needed for us to bring this new light, our new selves/ *Mishkan*, to the world.)

This *seeing the light* is not only our gazing at the light but rather a catalyst to help us to become fully conscious that there now exists within our brains a new light of wisdom/intellect. During Chanukah we should be pulling ourselves out of the hum-drum habitual state and into a state of newness with a new zest and excitement for life!

This idea of leaving our *habitual state of mind* is elaborated in a Chassidic understanding of the words of our Talmud which state that the Chanukah lights must have enough oil to stay lit until the regal (walkers) leave the *shuk* (market place). The simple understanding is that this way the lights which represent the miracle of Chanukah will be seen by many. The deeper understanding is that the Hebrew word *regal* is the root for the word *hargel* meaning *habitual*. We therefore learn that our sages are essentially telling us that we must let the lights shine till our own habitual state of mind leaves us.

What is truly mind blowing is that the *parsha* of the week which we are reading during Chanukah, *Miketz*, recalls the story of the ten brothers of Yoseph. Yoseph represents the new light of intellect-wisdom which is now in *Mitzrayim*. *Mitzrayim* denotes ones conscious brain, what one is thinking about. We were enslaved by the children of Cham, the Hebrew letters for the word *Moach*, meaning *our brains*, and unfortunately many of us are indeed enslaved in our brains.

*Mitzrayim* is also the letters *Matzarim* meaning *borders*, that we can, G-d forbid, even become stuck, so to speak, in the borders of what our mind is telling us. *Freedom* is our ability to think beyond our minds to reach a better, truer and higher consciousness.

So exactly when Yoseph saw that his ten brothers did not recognize him, that it was Yoseph right there in front of them in *Mitzrayim*, he yells, "*Meraglim Atem!*" ("You are spies!"). This word *Meraglim* means *spies* because it has in it the word *regel* (walking), and that's what the spies did – (which we read exactly in the parallel month opposite this *parsha* in late *Sivan* – opposite late *Kislev* in *Shlach Licha!*). They walked into the promised

land not realizing that they now have a new ability to take on and win against all those big giants – giant temptations and character problems.

Therefore what Yoseph is telling his brothers is that they are not aware of the new light which is above and not subject to their *Mitzrayim* – their stale and old conscious brains, and therefore they are stuck in their *Hargel*, habitual state of mind."

And Yoseph continues by saying to them that; you will remain in this habitual state – "I will consider you *Meraglim*" until you bring Benjamin down here to *Mitzrayim* so I may place my eyes upon him. Benjamin represents a pure light from heaven which is untouched by this world. Benyamins' land inheritance is the *Kodesh Kodeshim* – where beyond this world connects to this world, and also the *mizbach*, the altar which is/was rededicated at Chanukah time.

From all this we see that at Chanukah time lots of new light is entering our brains and in order to be able to use this new influx of light, our brains need more power to think and this means more blood sugar. We therefore must up our intake of sweets, though this does not mean to eat unhealthy foods like sugar, white-flour *sufganiyotes* (doughnuts) and the sort, but rather this year lets try to get our sugar up by eating organic raisins and dates, date honey and such. We can even make organic, natural *sufganiyotes* using organic stone-ground whole-wheat or spelt flour instead of white flour.

The brain also needs more olive oil at this time. Olive oil has an *opening* and *expansive* effect on our brains – to open us up to receive the new light. So instead of making *latkas* from potatoes which are not indigenous to temperate climates and therefore quite unhealthy for our bodies, we can make *latkas* with organic oatmeal and olive oil. Try it you will like it!

It's also important to eat a lot of protein during this time, because it's good for your brain, and right now our brains need help to contain all the light that is coming down, though as we approach Chanukah stay open by avoiding animal products. Up your tofu intake! Try Tempee for a nice alternative to tofu (you can fry it in organic olive oil, or even better, sesame oil).

*Chanukah Sameach!*

Rabbi Lehrer lives in Tsfat, Israel. As a health practitioner, he has given formal lectures both in Israel and abroad. In addition to counseling about diet, Rabbi Lehrer gives concerts with his twelve-string guitar expressing deep words of Torah. The New York Times wrote about his band: "The

(see Lehrer, page 16)





## Confidentially Yours

BY AVI & ADELE

### When excitement in a marriage wanes

Dear Avi and Adele,

*My wife and I have been married for more than 10 years. We both know we were meant for each other and I adore my wife. The problem is that we seem to be going through the motions and we've lost a lot of the excitement we had in our earlier years – I often spend the weekends on the couch watching sports and she's often out with girlfriends shopping and doing girls' night out stuff. Rabbis Avi & Adele, what does Judaism have to say about lighting a fire in your marriage to make things last?*

~ Going through the motions

Dear Going Through,

We've heard the advice "Have sex every Shabbat" given to many a marrying couple and we can't argue with the logic. And we happen to think that this mantra speaks to more than just bedroom fun; rather, finding a way to regularly connect on an intimate way is the critical path back to feeling married.

In the early days, you likely doted on each other much more. She was happy to keep you company while you folded laundry, while you would merrily accompany her to the grocery store just to watch her bend down to the lower shelves. Somewhere along the way, laundry returned to being just folding the towels and the grocery store stroll lost its luster that one day when you couldn't decide between artichokes and asparagus for that dinner party you were having for her coworkers.

We happen to be big fans of the work of Dr. Harley's work with "Marriage Builders." (Check out the complete ideas at: [www.marriagebuilders.com/graphic/mbi3550\\_summary.html](http://www.marriagebuilders.com/graphic/mbi3550_summary.html)). In a nutshell, he proposes (no pun intended) that a successful marriage must pursue four goals. First, both spouses must make regular deposits in the love bank. Second, each mate must use his or her natural instincts and learned habits to make deposits in the love bank (and correct habits that make withdrawals). Third, you must work towards meeting each others' most important emotional needs. And finally, you must give your spouse 15 hours of undivided attention each week.

That final point is critical in your situation. You probably did it naturally early in your relationship. You don't have to do the same things now, but you do need to invest the time. It's having dinner together. It's unloading the groceries from the car. It's folding laundry or changing the sheets or sweeping the kitchen – together. Maybe for you it's a marathon of *Glee* or training for a 5K or buying that crazy Groupon for co-ed strip tease classes or donating your time at the local seniors' housing bingo tournament. And yes, it's sex. As often as you both can stand it.

There's no magical formula for getting that zing back, but the only way to start on that journey is to spend time together. We recommend not making it a big fuss, not a "We're charting a new direction – land ho!" Rather, text her from work. Mail her a card. Wash the dishes together. Talk to her while she takes a shower.

### Uneven, tough break-ups

Dear Avi and Adele,

*My ex and I broke up a few months ago, and now I've met someone else. I've moved on, but she can't seem to. How do I deal with this situation? ~ Moved on*

Dear Moved On,

Relationships end because one person is done with the situation, typically. It would be a rare occasion that you would both think the relationship should end at exactly the same time. Your ex is going through her own process and it sounds like it's a bumpier road for her.

The only person you can change is yourself. While you've obviously moved on, give some thought to anything that you have done that has made it more difficult for your ex. Sometimes it's possible to do things that, while well-intentioned, actually are more difficult for the ex in this situation. For example, did you express interest or willingness to be "friends?" This is the craziest idea that we have ever heard, yet nearly every dating relationship ends with the soft-shoe back peddling of "We can still be friends." If you weren't truly friends before your dating life, there's no need to have any contact with that person, even if you mean well.

Do you respond at all to her texts, emails, or messages? Even if you think you're doing the polite thing, you're still keeping yourself in her current roster of emotional clutter to go through. Stop responding. Cold turkey. (And if you are feeling cold-hearted about doing that, then prepare a "final message" to her to send when she contacts you. It should be

### MARX

(continued from page 11)

person when someone bears their troubles to him; the tears a child sheds for the limp of his dog or the broken arm of her doll; the sigh a judge heaves when he must pronounce a strong sentence; the care a doctor exerts towards a patient in pain; the dull tug at the heart of a soldier when he sees the destruction he has wrought; the help a business owner extends towards a failing competitor; the forgiveness a person grants towards one who has hurt him; the pleading of Moses when people were to be destroyed because of their Golden Idol; the weeping of Rachel for the exiles who trudged by her grave on the bloody way to Babylon. It is the eternal mercy of God toward the folly and misery of humankind."

Forgiveness is essential to redemption, but before we can forgive, we must understand and care. We must be able to see the tears on someone else's cheek; to hear the sob in someone else's throat; to smell the bitterness of poverty in someone else's home; to taste the acrimony in someone else's life. Redemption lies in caring about another who is not a reflection of ourselves; who has the face of Hagar, the stranger?

I conclude with the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, our great American poet. He wrote, "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough, to disarm all hostility." Empathy is the key to redemption. Our task is not just to be understood, our task is to understand.

Senior Rabbi Marx has been spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Or in Maple Glen, Pa., since 1989. ★

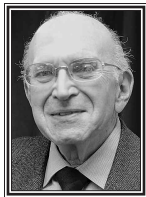


along the lines of: It didn't work out between us and it's best if we not be in contact. It's healthiest for us to end communications now."

If your ex is doing those lovely psychotic things that former loves seem to love to do (like keying your car, sending you hate mail, stalking you on Facebook, and generally talking trash about you) then you likely have to stick it out a little longer. But stick it out in silence, as this yappy dog thrives on attention. And of course, if any of her behaviors threaten your safety or seem to be escalating, contact the police right away.

Livin' and Lovin', Avi and Adele

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



## As I Heard It

REVIEW BY MORTON GOLD

### Traditional Jewish music in an inspired manner

Every now and then one is confronted with a fact that either changes your preconceptions or at the very least offers one exception to preconceived ideas. Such a fact is the CD *Shehecheyanu: The Music of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim (Volume 1) of Montreal, Canada*. It features the magnificent voice and musicianship of its cantor, Gideon Zelermyer, and its superb all male Jewish choir which is admirably led by Stephen Glass.

If this CD is an exception, it is a marvelous exception, and one which can only offer challenges as well as inspiration to other Orthodox Jewish congregations. The "fact" simply put is that assembling a really fine all male choir, especially a Jewish all male choir with trained voices is difficult. The practice in most Orthodox *shuls* is that the choir usually is employed to supply a fixed harmony for a time while the cantor embellishes a particular word, and/or repeating the last phrase while the cantor gets some air. This procedure may be more the rule than the exception in most places, but this "exception" is not the rule in this *shul* and in this CD.

While it is true that an organ can do most of what a choir in an Orthodox *shul* normally does, and often does it better, it is also true that the lack of any instrumental voice can and does have musical as well as devotional advantages. If choirs (and cantors) of most Orthodox *shuls* such as are found in *Shaar Hashomayim* were the rule and not the exception, I could be persuaded to abandon or at least mitigate my Conservative dispositions in musical matters at any rate.

Where to begin? Gideon Zelermyer has a beautiful, trained lyric tenor. The range and timbre is sweet from low to high. His singing is elegant as it is moving. He can move in and out of falsetto in the upper register effortlessly. Stephen Glass is much more than a choir leader. Most of what the choir sings are his arrangements. These arrangements are musically

significant as they are sensitive. I cannot praise his choir enough. Even with a fine *hazzan* and choir director, without the superb vocal accomplishment of this choir, the beauty and *kavonnes* of the music would be for naught. Where he found and trained these singers would make for interesting reading.

Good cantors, even ones with great voices while not commonplace are not rare. Good singers, especially good Jewish male singers are. They sing for every *Shabbat* as well as for holiday services. I would keep them well guarded and under lock and key at all times. (Like what was done to the Cohen Gadol before Yom Kippur!)

There are eighteen selections on this disc. My observations on each follow.

1) "*Shehecheyanu*" by Ralph Schlossberg. This has an otherworldly sound. It is traditional in approach. The cantor sings the words, the choir provides harmonic background. It is very sweet (perhaps too sweet). (2) "*L'dor Vador*" by Meir Finkelstein. This now familiar *t'filah* is given a very sensitive rendition here. There is a beautiful increase and decrease of choral sound and the upper register of the cantor is put to good use. (3) "*Birkat Hachodesh*" also by Finkelstein. There are examples of imaginative harmonies in the choir, moving phrases by the cantor. I really liked the ending. Very well done.

4) "*Etz Chayim Hi*" by Tanchum Portnoy. This familiar melody used in many synagogues is given a sophisticated harmonic treatment here. I will aver that I composed a melody similar to but different from the one by Portnoy that I used in my oratorio "Songs of Triumph."

5) "*Uvnecho Yomar*" by Louis Lewandowsky. This 19th century piece sounds strangely up to date. Beautiful singing by one and all. In point of fact, this phrase applies not only to this selection but to each selection on this CD. (6) "*Sh'ma/Hu Eloheinu*" by Geoffrey Shisler. Here the influence of Orthodox cantors Leib Glantz and Pincus Pinchik is evident. If the previous selections could be performed elsewhere, this *t'filah* definitely places one in an Orthodox *shul* (and this is surely not a put down at all.)

Another setting of the same text (7) by Zadel Rovner. This is as delightful as it is charming. My compliments to Mr. Glass for this superb arrangement. (The man knows his craft.) I am running out of complimentary terms. Ditto for numbers 8 and 9, respectively "*Uvyom Hashabbat*" by Zvi Talman and "*Yism'chu*" by Yaakov Talmud where the Chassidic influence is delightfully apparent. (10) "*Sim Shalom*" by Samuel Alman. On paper this may not appear to be significant but in performance it is a truly moving and expressive work.

11) "*Pitchu Li*" by Shlomo Carlebach arr. by R. Goldstein and S. Glass. This arrangement makes what is often a trite tune, look and sound like much more than it is. In performance this sounds like an inspired religious piece. (12) "*Eil Melech Yosheiv*" from the Siroto collection. Please note and delight in the lovely falsetto upper register of Zelermyer. (13) "*Tzaddik Adonoy*" by Sholom Secunda, arr. by Lionel Rosenfeld and S. Glass. While this has only one composer, the music does not suffer from having two arrangers! The genius of Secunda with its cantorial flights of musical fancy delighting the ear is given its due by Hazzan Zelermyer. This work really needs to be performed by a good *hazzan*. It is.

14) "*Rachamana*" by G. Shissler and arranged by Glass. It is a reflective and expressive work. (15) "*El Malei Rachaim*" by Findelstein. This is a different as well as an imaginative, expressive and original setting of this text. (16) "*Avot for Yamim Nora'im*" by Naumbourg, Sulzer, Glass and Zelermyer. It works very well in spite of or even because of the several composers.

(17) "*Untaneh Tokef*" by Jacob Rosemarin and Alman, arranged by Glass. This is a marvelous confluence of the talents of truly feeling, religious individuals. (18) "*Kaddish Shaleim*" by Jacob Gottlieb. (Also attributed to Rosenblatt and Koussevitsky) This is a very musical setting of a tune that is too often sounds (pick one) trite, vulgar or both. It is presented here in angelic garb. In summary: This is a very fine CD. It has beautiful voices singing traditional Jewish music in an inspired manner. I cannot recommend it too highly.

Dr. Gold is a composer, conductor and a music and drama critic. He can be reached at: [drmortongold@yahoo.com](mailto:drmortongold@yahoo.com). ★



## Why Faith Matters

From his Facebook posts.

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

After seeing the musical *Wicked* again last night and preparing for this morning's Torah class on Joseph, I realized: from Bible to Broadway, stories recall Leon Wieseltier's words from his remarkable book *Kaddish*: "But goodness and badness are almost never unmixed, since the heart is hungry and the will is free." Dark and gold threads interwoven; hungry hearts, free will, passion, vision and the urge to grow. So, small steps to a brighter soul. ~ 12-1-11

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





## Media Watch

By RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

### Have a Little Faith

Hoping to increase ratings, the "Hallmark Hall of Fame" has moved to the ABC network, starting off with a well-intentioned interfaith meditation, *Have a Little Faith*, based on Mitch Albom's book. This creditable film will also be shown on the Hallmark Channel in December.

In the book, Albom reported on the request of his childhood rabbi, Albert Lewis, a leader of Conservative Judaism, to "do the eulogy" at Lewis's funeral when the time came. Thankfully, the New Jersey rabbi would live eight years after that request, and retain his mental faculties until the end.

Albom wrote the script for this television version of his book. In both film and book, Albom recalls having been in awe of Rabbi Lewis and of his power with words, even hiding from him, as a child. He does not speculate too much about why Rabbi Lewis asked him to write the eulogy. But Albom does say in the eulogy what he, and we, suspect: "Eight years later, I sometimes wonder if the whole thing wasn't some clever rabbi trick to lure me into an adult education course."

Did Lewis want to plant in Albom's heart and mind the notion of writing about a Jew committed to both tradition and modernity, as opposed to *Tuesday With Morrie's* Jewish protagonist whom Albom depicted as eclectic in his spiritual proclivities? Was Lewis hoping that their meetings would draw Albom into utilizing his talents for the explication of Judaism and for offering a positive portrayal of American Jewish life?

Albom is certainly uneasy, at least at first. In the film he protests to his wife, "I married a Christian." She responds, encouragingly, that the rabbi "has always been great to me." She is the one who introduces the concept of faith, "You've got to have a little faith in yourself." She encourages Mitch's relationship with the rabbi, and knows how to recognize a Talmudic quote. Mitch does mention to the rabbi that his wife is very comfortable with prayer.

This film dialogue between husband and wife about the rabbi and about being Jewish might have developed into insightful TV fare. The last time such interfaith dialogue occurred on television was in the *Thirtysomething* series of the early 1990s. But that was whiny from the start. The

discussions here had promise. Instead, most of the *dialogue* was a *kibitzing* between Albom and male friends (to whom he had given only five lines in the book) in the sports reporting business.

But the book and film are not only about Albom and the rabbi. Albom becomes interested in a dilapidated church near his office in downtown Detroit, which appears to be a haven for the homeless and the lost. He meets the pastor, Henry Covington, and learns that this large, charismatic African American man had once been a drug dealer and had spent time in prison for a murder he did not commit and for other crimes of which he was guilty, and that his only visit to a synagogue was while burglarizing it!

Like the book, the film dwells at length on the pastor's troubled childhood (his mother incarcerated for trying to shoot his philandering father to death), his brushes with religion, his marriage, his lucrative months as a drug dealer which ended when he became a drug user, his vow to turn around his life if spared certain assassination by a drug king pin whom he was foolish and desperate enough to have robbed at gun point; the loss of a child when his wife, Annette, miscarried close to full term, and the humiliation of not being able to afford a proper grave. But now the pastor is truly ministering to the needs of a destitute community in a church with such a large roof leak that the congregation must build a tent indoors to avoid baptism by water-boarding.

The film clearly intimates that Albom has been influenced by Rabbi Lewis to try to do some good, for he knows the rabbi to be a good man. The film relates that Lewis challenged Mitch to "do for others" with the question, "What's your glory?" The seasoned sports writer decides to write a story about a homeless shelter. When Albom tells the rabbi that he does not belong to a synagogue on his own, but attends his parents' congregation on the holidays, Lewis admonishes, "Everyone belongs somewhere." Though he doesn't rush to join a synagogue, he does apply these words to the plight of those in the homeless shelters.

The film utilizes flashbacks effectively; it makes these transitions better than the book does, though the book does this with some success. The acting is excellent. Bradley Whitfield, of *West Wing* fame, is most affecting as Mitch, and brings fine comedic expression when appropriate. Laurence Fishburne and Anika Nomi Rose bring pathos and strength to their depictions of Pastor Henry and Annette Covington. Martin Landau does a fine job of depicting the rabbi who built a congregation and won respect for Judaism in suburbia.

Rabbi Lewis is a good spokesman for faith, often with effective one-liners. Mitch asks him point blank if he believes in God. Without blinking, Lewis responds, "Yes, I believe in God. It's an occupational hazard." He tells of the pain of losing a young daughter and of the comfort of having a God with Whom to be angry and before Whom to cry. When Mitch protests at one point that he is not a "man of God," Rabbi Lewis reminds him: "Everyone is." These touching and faith-inspiring scenes are found in both the film and the book.

The film and book are about the faith in God on the parts of two clergy people. But they are also about their faith in human beings. Upon learning of Covington's prison background, Mitch's inclination is to suspect him. But the film, especially, makes the point that both Rabbi Lewis and Mitch's wife push for belief that a person can change. As Rev. Covington puts it in a sermon, "When you see people only through their past you're missing what God can do with them. You are not your past."

There are notable differences between the film and the book. For whatever reason the film version does not mention Covington's children, except for the child that died. I'm sure that Albom did not intend to suggest that the blessing of children was forfeited by Henry and Annette because of drug dealing and robberies in the distant past. But that suggestion does seem to linger for viewers of the movie who did not read the book.

On the Jewish side, Albom does not mention any of the congregants or even his parents in the film, though he did refer to his parents and grandparents in the book. In the book he recalled only one congregant at his childhood synagogue, a Holocaust survivor who was insulted by a priest at a church right near the synagogue building. The incident is related to show that Rabbi Lewis was able to make a friend of a hostile clergyman.

It seems, therefore, from both book and film that Albom's connection to Judaism was not with a community as much as with the rabbi. Albom acknowledges this in one scene in the film. At the rabbi's funeral, however, there is the suggestion that he may have always felt part of that congregation, and that that's why he kept returning there. Also, the film suggests, as I suppose the book does as well, that Albom avoided people with stories connected to places of religion until the rabbi and then the pastor and then a deacon moved him with their stories.

In the film, the expression, "What's your glory?" is central. We learn that this is the title of one of Rabbi Lewis's books. It is a question once asked him by a man "in the Islands." The rabbi tells Mitch:

(see Gertel, page 19)



## Book Review

REVIEW BY ARNOLD AGES

### Revolutionary shift in accentuation of spoken Hebrew

*A New Sound in Hebrew Poetry: Poetics, Politics, Accent.* By Miryam Segal. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, Indiana, 2010. 206 Pages.

Among the many anomalies in the Hebrew language is that technically speaking, you have to know the intricacies of Hebrew grammar in order to be able to really speak it properly. But that is just part of the problem. If you were raised in a traditional Ashkenazi household or if you received your education in a *yeshiva* – even if you understood the complexities of the Hebrew vowel systems and the exoticism of the *bege'd kafat* pointing of initial consonants, your pronunciation of Hebrew would reflect a middle European Yiddish twang.

Despite these eccentricities Ashkenazi Hebrew was the dominant strain during that period in the 19th and early 20th century when the Hebrew language and literature emerged from its somnolent stage and began to enjoy a renaissance due to a number of diverse factors – the east European geography in which Jews lived, the *Haskalah*, or Jewish Enlightenment, the rise of both cultural and political Zionism and the resettling of Eretz Israel during the several *aliyot* or ascensions to the Jewish State-in-the-making.

However, anyone who has visited Israel and certainly the vast majority of the inhabitants of the State, know that modern spoken Hebrew represents a modified form of the traditional Sephardic pronunciation in which the stress on an individual word is on the last syllable rather than on the second last or penultimate one. The only people who use Ashkenazi accentuation in speech are the deeply pious and they do so by habituation and ideological purity.

Miryam Seal, a wonderful linguist, literary scholar and historian who teaches at Queens College, New York City,

introduces us to the revolutionary shift in the accentuation of spoken Hebrew in the introduction to her ground-breaking study by citing an interview with an unlikely source for information about language transformation. It is Gene Simmons, the man who “epitomized the rock and role demon in the pioneering glam-metal band KISS.” The interviewer noted that Gene Simmons’ real name was Chaim Witz, that he was born in Israel, and that he was a mama’s boy.

Simmons snapped back, “I stand guilty as charged and proud to say that I am a mama’s boy. However, point one is that you mispronounced my Hebrew name. It’s not *Hayim*, which is the sort of snivelling please-don’t-beat-me-up Ashkenazi way...It’s *Hayim*, emphasis on the second vowel, like the Israelis do.” Professor Segal goes on to observe that Simmons was being hypercorrect, that while the stress on the last vowel of a word is consistent with modern Hebrew and is occasionally used in the purified speech of radio announcers, the rule does not apply with names and that it is perfectly acceptable in modern Hebrew even today to put the stress on the first vowel on the name *Hayim*.

But the point that Simmons was making is factored into Segal’s fascinating historical reconstruction of the way in which an accent shift became a major development in the writing of Hebrew poetry. This, in the 19th and early 20th centuries was the property of a handful of very talented poets who addressed their muse in Poland and Russia by employing the rhythmic structures of Ashkenazi Hebrew. The two greatest practitioners of this art were Chaim Nachman Bialik and Shaul Tchernichofsky.

Segal presents a highly original explication de texte of Bialik’s classic poem *El Hatzipor* (To The Bird), written according to the rules of Ashkenazi prosody. She offers a penetrating analysis of how the bird, coming presumably from the sunnier climes of Israel, represents the aspirations, hopes and dreams of the Diaspora Jew, stuck in the Galut netherlands. Then in a dazzling display of technical virtuosity Segal shows what happens if you try to declaim the poem in Israeli accented Hebrew. The whole rhythmic scaffolding collapses and this brilliant evocative song loses its *élan vital*.

What is remarkable, however, is that despite its Ashkenazi pronunciation Bialik’s poetry made him the national poet of the Jewish people. (Incidentally, S.Y. Agnon, Israel’s Nobel prize winner in literature and a consummate genius in the Hebrew language, spoke with a thick Ashkenazi accent. This reviewer noted such during a meeting with Agnon

in 1959.) Segal observes that Bialik knew that inevitably the new accent Hebrew would gain ascendancy in Israel but he distanced himself from it and treated it with benign neglect.

Shaul Tchernichofsky, a giant of Hebrew poetry, recognized early the threat of new accent Hebrew and fought it but realized soon that it would prevail and had the good sense to reconstruct his poetry DNA and began to write new poems with the tonic accent in the correct place.

The best part of Segal’s book pivots on the author’s excavations of the poetry of those writers who talent became the fulcrum for the expansion and efflorescence of new accent Hebrew poetry. This collided historically with the consciousness among high school teachers in pre-State Israel in need of inculcating into their students the importance of poetry in general and new accent Hebrew poetry in particular. This movement erupted in the 1920s and was emblematic of the new Jewish-Hebrew world that was emerging in the *Yishuv*.

Segal is thorough to a fault in her studies of the female poets such as Rahel Bluvstein and the role she and her colleagues played in reorienting Hebrew poetry. The technical analysis of this school and that of Avraham Shlonsky might overwhelm those unfamiliar with the jargon of poetic dissection, but Segal’s in depth investigation of the originality of Shlonsky’s poem *Harakevet* (The Train), is worth the time and effort invested in perusing it. This is because the poem itself marks a transformative moment in the history of Hebrew and explains how one man’s genius could affect the whole pronunciation patterns of a civilization.

As a retired professor of literature myself I note that Miryam Segal is an assistant professor. This book should move her up the ranks very quickly.

Arnold Ages is “Distinguished Emeritus Professor,” University of Waterloo, Ontario Canada. ★



#### LEHRER

(continued from page 12)

*Returning Light* is “Jerusalem’s hottest Jewish rock band.” His CD called *Come Home* can be purchased on his website. He also has a health guesthouse where a Macrobiotic health counselor and cook are available to provide meals. Other services include healing massage, cooking classes, consultation and courses for those who want to become health counselors. His websites are: [www.returninglight.com](http://www.returninglight.com) or [www.jewishyeardiet.com](http://www.jewishyeardiet.com). To set up a diet counseling session and/or purchase his CD, email him at [benzion@jewishyeardiet.com](mailto:benzion@jewishyeardiet.com). ★



# Book Reviews

REVIEW BY MORTON I. TEICHER

## Holocaust survivor had sterling reputation in social work

*The Life and Thought of Louis Lowy.* By Lorrie Greenhouse Gardella. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011. 240 Pages. \$24.95.

In the interest of full disclosure, let me state that I was slightly acquainted with the subject of this biography, Louis Lowy. We were fellow social work educators who met occasionally at professional meetings. I once tried unsuccessfully to recruit him for my faculty at Yeshiva University.

A well-recognized gerontologist, social work leader, and international social work educator, Lowy fully merits the publication of his biography. During much of his career, Lowy was a professor at the Boston University School of Social Work. While there, he earned a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

Born in Munich in 1920, Lowy's mother was a Catholic who converted to Judaism when she married his Jewish father and he was raised as a Jew. The family moved back and forth between Munich and Prague until 1933 when Hitler came to power. Lowy then had his *bar mitzvah* and was sent to England to be out of harm's way. After two and a half years, during which he learned English and came to appreciate democratic institutions, he returned home to Germany where the situation of Jews had deteriorated. His father was quite ill and, although he was only 15, Lowy took responsibility for moving the family back to Prague, hoping that anti-Semitism would be less severe. He continued his schooling and, in 1938, entered Charles University where he studied history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Simultaneously, he earned a diploma as an elementary school teacher.

When Germany took over Czechoslovakia, Lowy was briefly imprisoned by the Nazis. He was released but persecution of Jews became worse and, in December, 1941, the Lowy family was sent to Terezin, from where Jews were deported to the death camps.

Lowy became a youth leader; one member of his group was Edith, his future wife. In September, 1944, Lowy was transported to Auschwitz where he was a slave laborer, managing to survive until January, 1944 when the Soviet army liberated Auschwitz. He fled with a small group of comrades, hoping to find a way to Palestine. Instead, as the war ground to a close, they wound up in a displaced persons camp in the American zone of Germany where Lowy was re-united with Edith and married her. In the camp's self-government system, he became a leader.

Eventually, Lowy and Edith left for the United States, arriving in May, 1946. They went to Boston where she had relatives and where Lowy completed requirements for his bachelor's degree at Boston University before entering its School of Social Work from which he graduated in 1951. He worked in Jewish Community Centers in Bridgeport and Boston until he joined the faculty of the Boston University School of Social Work in 1957, becoming professor emeritus in 1985. From 1964 to 1984, Lowy went to Germany every summer as a visiting professor, helping to restore social work and social work education, demonstrating his respect for the capacity of people to learn and to grow. He acquired a sterling reputation in international social work before he died in 1991.

Author Gardella, professor of social work at Saint Joseph College, West Hartford, Conn., interviewed people who knew Lowy, including Edith and two Holocaust survivors who were his comrades. She had access to Lowy's papers as well as to an oral narrative about his experiences that Lowy recorded shortly before he died. She has done a fine job of bringing this material together in her excellent book.

## Biography distinguishes artist from husband Jackson Pollock

*Lee Krasner.* By Gail Levin. New York: William Morrow, 2011. 546 Pages. \$30.

In 1971, when author Gail Levin was a 22-year old graduate student in art history at Rutgers University, she arranged to interview 62-year old Lee Krasner in order to discuss the influence of Wassily Kandinsky

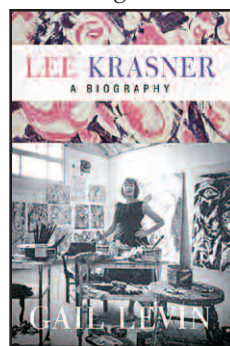
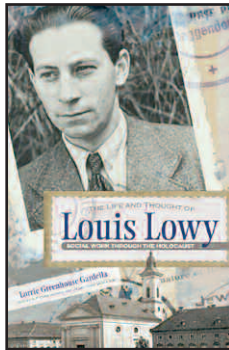
on the work of Krasner's late husband, Jackson Pollock. Despite their age gap, the two women hit it off, initiating a friendship that lasted until Krasner died in 1984. They both had Yiddish grandmothers and they often discussed anti-Semitism which they each experienced as youngsters. Krasner became a mentor to Levin who went on to become a professor of art history at Baruch College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She has published 12 books, including biographies of Edward Hopper, Wassily Kandinsky, and Judy Chicago. Her extensive knowledge about abstract expressionism is clearly apparent in this excellent biography.

Previously identified primarily as the wife of Jackson Pollock, Krasner is ably presented here by Levin as a distinguished artist in her own right. Triumphant supporting her perception, Levin mentions in her introduction that a painting by Krasner sold in 2008 for more than \$3 million. Krasner and Pollock were married in 1945 three years after their relationship began. He was three years younger than she and they remained together until he was killed in an auto accident in 1956. Their relationship was troubled by his alcoholism and depression but she was determined to nurture his artistic ability and to promote his work. Although she was an artist in her own right, she felt it was important to establish his primacy. Even after he died and she began to receive recognition, she persisted in promoting his reputation. Her success in doing so is demonstrated by the fact that Jackson Pollock is widely seen as one of America's leading artists of the 20th century.

Levin concentrates on the trajectory of Krasner's career, beginning with her birth in 1908 and her early schooling in Brooklyn. Although initially following the Orthodox practices of her family, Krasner soon discovered a talent for copying fashion ads and this led her to the library where she looked at art in books. By the time she was 13, she knew that she wanted to be a painter. She applied twice to Washington Irving High School before being accepted, persisting because it was the only high school in New York where girls could study *Industrial art*. She continued her studies at Cooper Union, the Arts Students League, and the National Academy of Design where she met a fellow student, Igor Pantuhoff. Their liaison lasted until shortly before Krasner began to live with Pollock.

During the Depression, Krasner was a WPA artist and became involved in some

(see Teicher, page 19)





# My Kosher Kitchen

REVIEW BY SYBIL KAPLAN

## Shabbat observance with recipes

*Angels at the Table.* By Yvette Alt Miller, Continuum Press. 394 Pages. Hardcover \$34.95.

Yvette Miller is an Orthodox woman in Chicago who grew to become observant over the years, and made *Shabbat* observance a serious and significant part of her life. She is married with four children, ages 2 to 9, teaches Sunday school, and contributes to Jewish websites.

*Angels at the Table* is a basic book for the person who has no knowledge about *Shabbat* and how to observe it or for someone who wants a reference work to any aspect of the 25 hours of *Shabbat* observance.

The 15 chapters of useful advice provide step by step instructions and include: an overview of *Shabbat*, the rules and laws, *Shabbat* evening, *Shabbat* dinner table blessings, *Shabbat* dinner and after, *Shabbat* early morning, *Shabbat* morning services, *Shabbat* lunch, *Shabbat* afternoon, Saturday evening, Torah questions for the *Shabbat* table, songs for *Shabbat*, activities on *Shabbat* and 69 traditional recipes.

While the recipes are really good, the style of presenting them leaves something to be desired. Recipes go from page to page; instructions are not numbered and are sometimes simplistic (e.g., zest the lemon – grate the lemon's shiny yellow surface). She neglects to tell readers to preheat oven and sometimes when cooking on a burner, forgets to mention into what kind of pan to put ingredients.

The book concludes with the blessings after a meal and an appendix.

The details are infinitesimal. For example in the "*Shabbat* early morning" chapter, she discusses awakening prayers, the mindset, breakfast, dressing (including *kippah* and *tzitzit*), women's hats, modesty, makeup and hair on *Shabbat*, and the unchanging aspects of Jewish dress and behavior.

Her style is very chatty and personal without being preachy, and that is one aspect of the book which makes it

enjoyable to read, even if you know the rules and laws and customs. There is history, there are anecdotes, and the reader really comes to know Mrs. Miller.

This would be a great gift for someone embarking on conversion or considering becoming observant whose knowledge of *Shabbat* is rudimentary or to a newly married couple or a family with young children exploring how they want to relate to *Shabbat* observance. Here are some typical *Shabbat* recipes from the book.

### Easiest Roast Chicken (Serves 6)

- 1 whole raw chicken
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- Large dash salt
- Large dash pepper
- Large dash garlic powder
- 1-2 sliced onions
- 4-5 sliced garlic cloves (optional)
- 1/4 cup fresh herbs – sage, rosemary, tarragon (optional)

#### Optional rib:

- 1 lemon zest and juice
- 2 Tbsp. virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. cumin
- Large dash salt
- Large dash pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place chicken in a roasting pan, feet side down. Sprinkle with oil, then salt, pepper and garlic powder. Scatter onion slices around the chicken; place a few onion slices in cavity and under skin. (As an option, place garlic and/or herbs under skin too.) Lightly cover chicken with foil, leaving an opening between the foil and pan. Place in oven and bake at 400°F. for 1-2 hours until skin is crisp and golden brown and juices run clear when you prick the chicken above the thigh. To make rub, grate the shiny skin of the lemon and combine with juice, oil, paprika, cumin, salt and pepper. Spread on chicken skin before roasting.

### Sara's amazing no-mix noodle kugel (16 servings)

- 6 3/4 cups water
- 4 Tbsp. oil
- 4 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup applesauce
- 1 tsp. salt
- dash of pepper
- 3 eggs
- 24 ounces fine egg noodles

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine water, oil, brown sugar, white sugar, applesauce, salt and pepper in a pan and bring to a boil. Add eggs and noodles, mix and turn

## ZOBERMAN

(continued from page 8)

States have been adversely affected, with government-sponsored violence still raging in Syria. The response of the United States and NATO has been a selective one.

The author contends that the Muslim extremists failed to attract to their radical cause the Arab youth who served as the backbone of the unprecedented and heroic attempt to overcome centuries of colonial and post-colonial neglect and exploitation, with societies offering no opportunities to millions of rising educated young men and women who constitute demographic majorities. As Feiler himself alludes to in his interviews with both important and ordinary figures, there is no guarantee that fundamentalist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood that tend to be well organized, would be blocked from dominating the political landscape.

There is a light touch when the author, who candidly shares his struggle with bone cancer, tries to scale a pyramid with a rebuilt leg. He masterfully draws us with his conversational style into his eventful and risky journey into an Egypt still reeling from an unexpected revolution whose final verdict is still out. Feiler meticulously connects the dots of a drama that befits the great land that produces Pharaohs, old and new, with impact near and far. This slim volume promises to become another Feiler classic with much food for thought. With his keen interest in the sacred ancient texts of three religions linked to Father Abraham, the author succeeds in connecting the past with the present pointing toward a hopefully shared future of Shalom's blessings.

*"I heard the prayers of a suffering people calling out to a higher authority to help overthrow an oppressor. I heard the promise of an earthly paradise where the children of the prophets finally claim their God-given liberty. I heard the echo of the oldest stories ever told."*

Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, and President of the Hampton Roads Board of Rabbis and Cantors. ★



off heat. Allow to stand for 10 minutes. Do not drain water. Pour mixture into a greased deep 9 by 13-inch baking dish. Bake for 1 hour.

### Sweet carrot salad (4-6 servings)

- 5 peeled and grated carrots
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup orange juice

(see Kaplan/Recipes, page 19)



**GERTEL**

(continued from page 15)

"My glory is teaching our traditions, our commandments." But the film misses good opportunities to highlight Jewish rituals. When Mitch comes upon the rabbi finishing his morning devotions, the latter is wearing a *tallit*, but not the *tefillin* that would usually be donned in the morning. A word about tefillin would have been appropriate in depicting a man dedicated to fostering ritual observances.

As in Albom's book, the film also misses the opportunity to discuss *zedakah*, righteous sharing of wealth and other sources with the less fortunate. The Hebrew word is never used in either the book or the film. This is strange, given Albom's reputed wealth as a result of the success of his earlier book, *Tuesdays With Morrie*, an all-time best seller. Did Albom ever discuss with Rabbi Lewis to what extent Albom himself was obligated to assume some financial responsibility for the church? The suggestion here is that he and his wife established a fund. But there are also suggestions that he managed a fund of monies donated in response to his newspaper columns. In the book Albom says of his initial encounters with Pastor Covington: "I was noncommittal about the charity help that day. To be honest, the prison thing [Covington's past incarcerations] was a red flag." Did Albom consider a contribution to the day school he attended and to Lewis's synagogue, both of which played important roles in shaping his character?

*Zedakah* – how to give, what to give, why one must encourage others to give – is such a major facet of Jewish life, particularly when a worthwhile cause presents itself, that it is hard to fathom why the word was not used. A related religious concern in Judaism is that of simplicity and equality in funerals. The casket here was a tad elaborate.

The film has a lot more warmth than the book, due largely to Whitfield's performance. But Albom also provides more warm scenes here between himself and the two clergymen. In the film Mitch tells the rabbi, "I came because you needed something. I kept coming because I needed something." When Covington apologizes to Mitch for being suspicious of "why a Jewish person would help us," Mitch apologizes for having judged Covington. Did Albom write about what he said or about what he wanted to say to each man now that a couple of years have passed since the book was written?

The film comes across as more affirming of a connection with Judaism on Albom's part than does the book. But does Albom fall back into a pattern, begun with

*Tuesdays With Morrie*, of praising Jews for regarding Judaism as a tool rather than a way of life? Of Morrie, Albom wrote: "He was a religious mutt, which made him even more open to the students he taught over the years." Yet Morrie himself told interviewer Ted Koppel: "I'm a Jewish man. I talk with my hands. I have Jewish inflections sometimes. I like to use Yiddish words. That will all be gone."

Albom has Rabbi Lewis, who knew poverty as a child, reassure him, "Keep trying to help poor souls in Detroit. That's your glory." But is Albom emphasizing this for the same *universalist* reasons for which he stressed Morrie's nod to Buddhism? Did he not see at first that both men were Jewish men who hoped that there would always be Jews. In the film Rabbi Lewis admonishes Mitch, in the synagogue library, "All the tradition in this room connects you, and it will after I'm gone." Yet Mitch persists in closing both book and film with the affirmation, "I am in love with hope." What about "Love the Lord your God" and "Love your neighbor as yourself" as enduring mandates?

When Rev. Covington consolingly says, "Your rabbi passed, uh," Mitch replies, "You would have loved him" and shows him an obituary with a picture. It is then, for an instant, that the suggestion (not found in the book) is made that Rabbi Lewis may have been a robbery victim who would not condemn Covington many years before. Is this a brief nod to theologies of Divine Providence or to New Age notions of synchronicity by *the universe*?

To his credit, Albom seems to check himself, and does not give away the store of Jewish (or Christian) tradition to New Age spirituality. He leaves open the possibility that the man who spared Covington was someone who looked like the rabbi, perhaps another Jew exercising the compassion mandated by his tradition.

I have faith that we see in *Have a Little Faith* the stirrings of a Jewish response to New Age spirituality which suggests that the world is better off, both spiritually and materially, when there are Jews who practice authentic Judaism and preserve it in a *kehillah kedoshah*, a congregation hallowed by Jewish study and ritual observance, a Hebrew term that is used in the book and in the film.

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

**TEICHER**

(continued from page 17)

radical movements without joining the Communist Party. She continued to study art, becoming an abstract painter. Her subsequent career and the influences upon it are set forth in considerable detail before reaching the period of her marriage to Pollock. Krasner quickly returned to her art after he died and her career flourished. She left a sizeable estate, establishing a foundation to support "needy and worthy" artists.

This fine book brilliantly disentangles Lee Krasner's reputation as an artist from that of her husband, a significant achievement for which we are greatly indebted to Gail Levin.

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. His late wife, Mickey Teicher, was an art historian who taught him to appreciate the work of Lee Krasner, Jackson Pollock and other artists. ★

**KAPLAN/RECIPES**

(continued from 18)

Combine carrots, raisins and orange juice in a bowl. Mix well.

**Easiest, Quickest, Best Brownies**  
(12 brownies)

1 cup oil  
2 cups sugar  
3 eggs  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. salt  
1 cup cocoa powder  
1 cup flour

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a mixing bowl, mix oil and sugar until well blended. Add eggs, vanilla extract, baking soda, salt, cocoa powder and flour. Beat until smooth.

Grease a 9-inch square baking pan. Spread batter in pan and bake in oven for 40 minutes. Allow to cool before cutting.

Optional: Before baking, scatter some multicolored ice cream sprinkles on top of the brownies. It is quicker and easier than icing them and makes the brownies look fun and festive.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food and feature writer, Jerusalem Post columnist and author of nine kosher cookbooks. She leads "Shuk Walks" in Jerusalem produce market, Machaneh Yehudah, and has a weekly radio spot, "Shuk Shopping" on the internet radio station, RustyMikeRadio.com. ★



## Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

## The Jewish Post & Opinion

1427 W. 86th St. #228  
Indianapolis, IN 46260

### Reconstructing 64 years ago

Throughout all my years of Zionist involvements in Young Judaea, Student Zionist Organization, Junior Hadassah and Hadassah, one momentous occasion has been the old films showing Israelis surrounding radios, listening to the country by country vote at the United Nations on Nov. 29, 1947 and the subsequent jubilation when the State of Israel was created. What must it have been like to have been there?

The World Zionist Organization decided to stage a first for Israel's history – a reconstruction of that day, Nov. 29, 1947, at 1 p.m., in the plaza where the Jewish Agency, Jewish National Fund, and Keren Hayesod sit on King George St.

An actress, who looked and acted nothing like Golda Meir except for the hairstyle and shoes, walked among the crowd and then later read a speech Meir had made from the balcony of the Jewish Agency building. Two actors, dressed as the chief rabbis of the time, rode to the plaza in 1947 Citroen limousines and later made their speeches from the balcony.

A cardboard replica of a 1947 radio broadcast the final vote and youth groups, some in dance costumes, performed dances in the plaza while a news boy distributed a newspaper showing photographs of that time of the crowds on the same balcony, newspaper articles and the dancing crowds. Large cardboard figures of pioneers adorned



"Golda" actress (center) making speech from 1947. (Natan Sharansky on "Golda's" left.)

the gardens. A multitude of television cameramen and journalists moved among the crowd, interviewing and filming. A declaration was read that from this year, this day will be celebrated each year.

Background note: On Nov. 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly voted on a partition plan and adopted Resolution 181 recognizing that the Jewish people deserved the Jewish state in their historic

homeland; the resolution called for a Jewish state *and* an Arab state; the Arab population refused to accept the resolution indicating they did not wish to establish their own state if it meant allowing a Jewish state. ✪



Youth group dancers.



Cardboard figures of pioneers from 1947 adorn the gardens. Photos by Sybil Kaplan, Israel.

Did you live in Israel in the 1970s? Is your copy of *Wonders of a Wonder Pot* in need of replacing? I have a few original first editions available, autographed, for \$25 including air mail postage and a few second printings, also from the 1970s, autographed for \$20 including air mail postage. If interested, send check to S. Kaplan, POB 635, Main Post Office, 23 Jaffa Road, Jerusalem 91006 Israel and I will mail a copy next day.