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Wedding dress creation of designer Orli Zedek in Jerusalem. Web site: agass.mitchatnim.co.il.
See p. 20 for Israeli wedding story. Photo by Barry A. Kaplan.

Editorial

In a previous editorial I mentioned that I receive several copies of books from publicists requesting the newspaper carry a review of them. Now I receive fewer books and more email messages promoting a book, and then it says that if I am interested, a review copy will be mailed. Recently I received something a little different by the publicist for Rabbi Rami Shapiro from Nashville, Tenn.

Instead of one book with several big chapters, a new series, *Rabbi Rami Guides: Roadside Assistance for the Spiritual Traveler* is being published. I'm told there will be eight in all, but so far four little books that we received are on these subjects: Psalm 23, God, Parenting, and Forgiveness. We will have a review of those in the next issue.

I also received an excerpt from one of the books not yet published on Gratitude. That can be seen on page 9. Another one coming out this summer is on the subject of Dying, Death & Bereavement.

I will refer here to the book on God and from the chapter "Realizing God Through Mantra." From all of my Jewish studies – Hebrew school, Sunday school, weekly synagogue attendance – in 1976, I had not heard anything about meditation. I had a Jewish friend – now a well known cantor – who was practicing Transcendental Meditation (TM), a mantra meditation, and I had been told about all of its benefits. Rabbi Shapiro describes mantra as "a word or phrase that is repeated consciously and with attention".

I was told that TM is not a religion and I do not need to give up or change my current religious practice in order to do it. I began that year and have continued twice a day every day since. The woman who taught it to me, gave me a mantra that is a Sanskrit word. In English it is not a word but possibly it has an English translation.

In 1985 a book titled *Jewish Meditation* by Aryeh Kaplan was published. I remember reading it, but after doing TM for nine years, I had no desire to change my meditation practice. My brother, Rabbi Benzion Cohen who writes the Chassidic Rabbi column wanted me to change my Sanskrit mantra to something Jewish. I will explain how in reading the chapter of this book by Rabbi Shapiro, I finally felt exonerated for not changing.

Rabbi Shapiro writes "in Hinduism the practice of reciting a mantra is called *japa yoga*, the yoga of repetition. In Judaism it is called *hagah*, cooing like a dove ...Every religion has its own version of mantra repetition."

A Bit of Wit

The essence of chutzpah

Chutzpah is a Yiddish word meaning gall, brazen nerve, effrontery, sheer guts plus arrogance; it's Yiddish and, as Leo Rosten writes, no other word, and no other language, can do it justice.

A little old lady sold pretzels on a street corner for a dollar each. Every day a young man would leave his office building at lunch time and as he passed the pretzel stand he would leave her a dollar, but never take a pretzel.

This offering went on for more than three years. The two of them never spoke. One day as the young man passed the old lady's stand and left his dollar as usual, the pretzel lady spoke to him for the first time in over 3 years. Without blinking an eye she said: "They're a dollar and a quarter now."

Submitted by Jay Perler of Indianapolis. ★



Rabbi Shapiro writes that he loves the poem "Dude'le" by the 18th century Hasidic rabbi, Levi Yitzchak:

Where can I find You –
and where can I not find You?
Above – only You
Below – only You
To the East – only You
To the West – only You
To the South – only You
To the North – only You
If it is good – it is You
If it is not – also You
It is You; It is only You.

Continuing, Rabbi Shapiro writes that when learning more about the poem's author, he "discovered Levi Yitzchak practiced his own version of mantra yoga by reciting the Hebrew *HaRachaman* (The Compassionate One) over and over without ceasing." This became Rabbi Shapiro's root mantra. He also practices other mantras from other religions, a formal practice and an informal one. Without permission from the author, I will not reprint more now, except another short excerpt from the book about the benefits of this type of meditation.

"...The more you do this, the more loving you become...Regardless of the words or phrase you use or the tradition from which they came, there is something about recitation that opens the heart."

I couldn't agree more, and will add that prayer and meditation have been a stable anchor for me. When the world is

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changing so rapidly as it is now, it is good to have as much support as possible. I hope to write more on this subject in another editorial.

Jennie Cohen, February 1, 2012 ★

Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

The field of communication has seen tremendous progress in the last 40 years. Forty years ago I was learning in Israel, and my parents and family lived in America. To make a phone call to America was virtually impossible. I would buy stationary and stamps, write a letter and put it in the mail box. It would take about a week to arrive. It is a very important *mitzvah* to honor your parents, so we kept up a regular correspondence. However, I had very little contact with my siblings, or cousins or uncles and aunts. I lost contact with most of my extended family and friends, and I'm sorry. If any of my old friends and acquaintances read this, please send me an email.

Today, I sit by my computer and type out an email. If I make a spelling mistake, my computer corrects it for me. When the email is ready, it takes about one minute to send it to all of my siblings plus a lot of nieces, nephews and friends. It arrives within a few seconds, to any place in the world. How much does it cost? Nothing!

Recently I received some emails from my siblings about aging and health problems. This is a subject which is close to my heart, as I was born in 1950. Getting old in Kfar Chabad is a positive experience. We learn *Torah* every day, so the older we are, the wiser we become. This greater wisdom makes life better. We believe and trust in *Hashem*, and this makes life much easier and happier. Hashem is our creator and our Father. He is Infinite, and His love for all of us, His children, is Infinite. He is Almighty and Good. He and only He is running the show, so we have nothing to worry about.

If you are anxious or worried about something, read Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters. He revives my soul; He directs me in paths of righteousness for the sake of His name." If even this doesn't help, keep reading. The book of Psalms has 150 wonderful chapters.

What is the worst thing that we can imagine? Death. Now, even death is not something to worry about. *Moshiach* is coming very soon, and once that happens, no one will ever die again. Even those who have passed away will come back to eternal life.

As I mentioned earlier, Hashem is running the show. So why has He made such a revolution in communication? To help bring *Moshiach*! *Moshiach* will bring the world to peace. If we just open our eyes and look around, we can see this happening



Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

Jan. 27, 2012, Bo
Exodus 10:1-13:16, 3 Shevat 5772

My friend Rabbi John Spitzer asked me to go with him to the Warther Museum in Dover to see the carving. The presumption is that since I like to do woodworking I would enjoy this museum. Yes, I like to do woodworking, but I have never carved anything more than a turkey and even that I don't do really well. Regardless, time spent with my friend is always worthwhile and I had a Monday coming up without any other obligations so I said, "Let's do it." So the rabbi guys took a road trip down I-77 to Dover and the Warther Museum.

I had no idea what I was about to see. I didn't look online to preview the museum, nor did I do any research to prepare me for this experience. In many ways this was the right approach. Knowing what I was about to see wouldn't have done justice to what I saw. Ernest "Mooney" Warther was not just a carver, but an artist. He carved



right now. Big and small changes are taking place all over the world. Evil dictators and regimes are disappearing. More and more people are working to make the world a good and peaceful place. The Internet is playing a big role in all of this.

Moshiach is bringing all of mankind to know Hashem and serve Him. Here again, the Internet is playing a major role. All you need is an iPhone, and then you can learn Torah wherever you are, and in most languages. You can use your computer to learn *Chassidus* and *Kabbalah*, the inner secrets of the Torah, and come to know Hashem.

It is really happening right now. We believe that the Rebbe is *Moshiach*, and he is bringing the complete and final redemption. But he can't do this alone. Each of us also has an important part to play in bringing the final redemption. Each of us has to work hard to come to know Hashem and serve Him with all of our heart. Then we must do whatever we can to influence our family, friends, and community in the right direction. And with modern communication we can even reach out and be a good influence on millions (or billions!) of people. Long live *Moshiach*!

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

exact replicas of 19th and 20th century steam engines pressing together the pieces in seamless, exact ways. He included every small detail. And this was just his passion and his hobby. Well worth the trip.

Not all of us are artists like Mr. Warther, but we do have things we are passionate about in our lives, things where every detail is important. For some it may be a cause and for others a place. Some people are passionate about gardening, while others are passionate about reading. There is something that drives us and motivates us to make the world better through our hands or our hearts. But even with all this determination to create or with our drive to improve, there comes a time to rest. For Jews, this is *Shabbat*. It is a day of rest and peace. It is a day to let the energy we expend during the six days of the week take some time off. It is a time to breathe in the beauty of the world and let it strengthen our hands, hearts, and souls.

Shabbat is what encouraged me to start writing this message almost 17 years ago. I wanted people to remember that it is Friday and to mark Friday evening by thinking about Shabbat. We know that, "It is not Israel that has kept the Sabbath, but Sabbath that has kept (and sustained) Israel." Jews share this day. Regardless of which denomination moves one's soul and to what degree one is engaged with the *mitzvot* of lighting candles, saying *Kiddush*, and eating a bite of *challah*, it is something we share. These rituals are not just actions, but filled with meaning though the meaning is not singular.

Lighting candles can be about acknowledging that Shabbat has begun, but it can also be something that links you to your mother's mother's mother who lit candles in a land far away from where you live today. Saying *Kiddush* can be about sanctifying Shabbat, but the joy of that wine can remind you of other days of joy, celebrations in life, and the "*L'Chayim*" of our people's journey from Egypt to Sinai to today. And the *challah*, this twisted egg bread has nourished our bodies and our souls. Whether you tear or cut, salt or butter, or just wait for the next day's French toast, the taste of the Shabbat *challah* is a smile of a thousand years.

My hope is that we will all have the passion to celebrate Shabbat even if it is just lighting the candles and pausing for a moment. When you light your Shabbat candles this evening, light one for the beauty of this day in all of its holiness. Light the other candle so that it may guide us to be passionate about making Shabbat a part of our lives.

Rabbi Adland has been a Reform rabbi for more than 25 years with pulpits in Lexington, Ky., Indianapolis, Ind., and (see Adland, page 7)

Barking up the right tree

By TAMI LEHMAN-WILZIG



Kabbalah of the Month

By MELINDA RIBNER

Rebirth, inspiration, and creativity

Shevat began January 26

There's something about trees. Shel Silverstein's children's book classic *The Giving Tree* proves the point. Trees are sustenance. They provide comfort and love, even shelter. Unconditional love is what they bestow. But do we give back?

As *Tu B'Shevat* is the next holiday on our collective radar, the question is a timely one. The New Year of Trees, *Tu B'Shevat* reminds us that the movement to protect the environment did not begin with the establishment of Earth Day. It began in Talmudic times, when *Tu B'Shevat* was recorded in Tractate *Rosh Hashanah* as one of four important New Years in the Jewish calendar. For the agrarian society that we once were, marking the beginning of when to plant and sow was especially important.

As farmers, we understood the land and its limitations from the very start. Even way before Talmudic times, environmental protection was part of our DNA. Just take a look at Abraham. The consummate wandering Jew, he became a wealthy man. His riches lay in cattle and part of his wisdom lay in herding. When he and Lot returned from Egypt their fight was more than just a family feud. It was about the great number of flocks grazing in one place. As explained in Genesis 13:6 –“But the land could not support them...,” which is why Abraham subsequently says: “Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left” (Genesis 13:9).

And so Abraham inaugurated the concept of sustainable herding, followed later (Exodus 23:10–11) by another lesson in sustainability through the inauguration of the *Shmita* year. Commanding that every seven years the land take a sabbatical from planting, sowing and plowing, the Bible seeded the concept of sustainable agriculture. Ironically, Gaylord Nelson, the founder of Earth Day, reported that he planted the idea with JFK and that it “evolved over a period of seven years starting in 1962.”

Honestly, is there nothing new under the sun? Noah first opened our eyes to biodiversity. Joseph taught us that we have to be prepared for natural disasters. Even Daylight Savings Time can beam its extended rays back to the Bible when Joshua commanded the sun to stand still in order to gain more work hours for his army.

Just like a tree trunk which grows a new coat of wood every year to make the tree

It may still be the heart of the winter in many places, but the month of *Shevat* marks a hidden and mystical time of new beginnings. *Shevat* is a time of rebirth, new inspiration, and creativity. The first part of the month may still feel dark and harsh, but that all changes after the 15th of the month, the full moon, and the holiday of *Tu B'Shevat*.

Be patient. Spring is coming. Something new is going to come forth within you. Prepare yourself for the new revelation of light and blessing that is available during this month of *Shevat*.

During *Shevat*, do not waste time focusing on what you physically see before you, what you have and what you do not have. Much of what we currently experience, we have already birthed previously in our consciousness. The outer world is a reflection of the inner world. Everything has its roots in the spiritual and invisible realms of Being.

Let's not be bound by the past but call out in the month of *Shevat* for new inspiration. Say “Yes” to the newness of life once again. Invite the awesome

more viable and long lasting, so too do the numerous layers lying beneath the Biblical text make the Bible relevant to each new age, turning it into the blueprint for many up-to-date causes. Ecology is just the latest.

Yes, there is something about trees. Judaism proves it. Long before Shel Silverstein penned his story, King Solomon wrote this about the *Torah*: “It is a tree of life to those who hold fast to it, and all its supporters are happy” (Proverbs 3:18). On this *Tu B'Shevat*, let's take stock of our roots, our Jewish environment and its numerous guidelines. Once we do, we will understand that as Jews, we're barking up the right tree.

Tami Lehman-Wilzig is an award-winning children's book author of ten published books and one children's book app. Her new book, *Green Bible Stories for Children (Kar-Ben, September, 2011)*, retells eight different Bible stories with environmental themes and provides matching science activities that kids can easily do at home. Visit Tami's website: www.thekidsbooks.com. ★

potential within you to come forth. Believe that you will bear new fruit and you will.

The energy of the month is best represented by the holiday of *Tu B'Shevat*. *Kabbalistically*, it is one of the highest and most joyous days of the year. It is called the New Year for the Trees. Though the trees may still be barren at this time, we are told that the new sap begins to flow on *Tu B'Shevat*. We once again trust in the cycle of life that will produce new leaves, fruits and flowers.

The *Torah* tells us that the human being is likened to a tree. Like the sap of the trees, our creative juices begin flowing on *Tu B'Shevat*, so we too will bear new fruit and flowers in the spring.

How do we bear new fruit in our lives? How do we open to newness? We know that a tree needs firm roots to grow and it needs water. In the month of *Shevat* we refine and strengthen our roots. If we want to change what is happening in our lives, if we want to birth new possibilities for ourselves, we have to change our consciousness, our thoughts, our feelings and our connection to our bodies. Our consciousness holds the roots of what we create in our life. Prayer, meditation, learning *Torah* and therapy are powerful tools to change our consciousness.

Interestingly enough, the area of healing this month is eating. Eating is also a mysterious inner process of renewal. We do not just eat physical food, but we ingest all kinds of food. What we do for recreation, movies, television, books, music, friends, the work we do, everything we take into ourselves is food and has the ability to strengthen or weaken us. This month asks us to become conscious of what we take within us and seek to nurture ourselves on all levels.

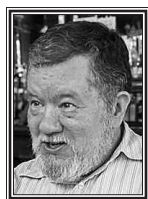
Meditation for the month of Shevat

(Do this meditation as often as you can during this month of *Shevat*.)

Prepare yourself for meditation with slow deep breathing, either sitting or standing. If you like, extend your arms upwards. And imagine yourself as a tree. Your branches are now barren, but your roots are hidden, strong and deep. Go deep inside, open to the new creative energy stirring within you now. Breathe deeply and open and attune yourself to this new flow. Open to a new beginning. Keep breathing deeply as you do this simple opening to the new. Let go of the past limiting beliefs of who you thought you were, or what was possible in your life, and open to simply being present.

Open your heart, open your mind. Say “Yes!” over and over again. Say it silently to yourself, say it out loud, sing it, shout it,

(see Ribner, page 16)



Jewish Spirituality

By RABBI ELI MALLON

The Dead Sea Scrolls in NY

www.discoverytsx.com/exhibitions/dead-sea-scrolls

An exhibit at "Discovery Times Square" is about the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Biblical-archeological finds; some dating back to the First Temple period. An unrelated exhibit on "CSI" in another part of the same building requires a separate admission. Most of the exhibit will be here from until Apr. 15, 2012.

The day I saw it (during a holiday week), the crowds made it impossible to view it comfortably or with much close attention. The website says that the entire program can be seen in about an hour. I was there for 2-1/2 hours and had to leave before finishing my viewing. I was reassured, however, that it's ordinarily much less crowded and more comfortable to view.

Groups of 60 at a time were given entrance to a "waiting area," on the walls of which was Biblical quotations in Hebrew and English. In the air around us we could hear the recorded voice of a young woman chanting a verse from *Torah, B'reishith/Gen. 12:1* – the introductory verse of parshah "*Lech L'cha*" – using Ashkenazic trop. Of course, no cantillation system had been fixed at the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls, let alone even earlier. Nor would a woman's voice have been heard reciting Torah in public – especially using the "trop" system – before the recent few decades. So, in strictly historical terms, this was anachronistic and in contrast with the historical accuracy to which this exhibit otherwise aspires. But it certainly helped create an appropriate "mood" for entering the exhibit.

It also introduced the "chronological" sub-theme of the exhibit, which progresses from earlier archeological evidence of a "Hebrew" presence in the land, through the destruction and first Exile, up through the later time of the Qumran community and its destruction by the Romans around 68 CE. Some very good history is on display here that can be an excellent teaching/learning aid – especially if preceded or accompanied by a printed timeline.

We then entered the actual beginning of the presentation. A young man introduced the exhibit to us with a fine audio-visual display. Afterwards, I privately corrected his pronunciation of a Hebrew word he



used that had appeared on a piece of pottery he was describing. Who knows if he'll remember, or even care? A bit more attention to a simple detail like that only adds to the authenticity of the exhibit. But it's also true that only an infinitesimal number of people would have noticed it.

Much more significant was the fact that the inscription to which he referred, the word "*lamelech*" – "for the king" – inscribed on the handle of an ancient jar, was written in the "Canaanite" Hebrew script that was used during the First Temple period, rather than the "Assyrian" or "square" script with which we're much more familiar, that came into use only during or after the first exile. While unmentioned in the introduction, it appeared on pieces in the exhibit, and was explained on the audio-tour. The Dead Sea Scrolls themselves are written in a form of the later "square" script that would be generally more familiar to those who know Hebrew today.

I've seen photographs of ancient pottery and such many times, but actually being near something that was made and handled by an Israelite "relative" in centuries now hallowed in Scripture, especially with the "Canaanite" Hebrew script on it, echoed in me as part of my own personal history; something I never felt from photos or digital displays. That alone gives this exhibit great educational and cultural value.

Even seeing pottery without any writing on it, or flint "sling balls" used by invading armies against an Israelite fortress, made the history immediate to me; as if everything that ever happened to any of my "family" happened to me, too. I've rarely experienced anything quite like this feeling!

The audio-guide was reasonably priced, easy to carry and use, and very helpful. The overall exhibit nicely combined the objects themselves with written explanations posted near them. Although mostly "visual," there were some "aural" (listening) and "tactile" (touching) elements, too. But there was plenty to maintain interest, just as it was.

A short documentary film explained how the first scrolls were found, and how they were subsequently handled. The original team of scholars were experts in ancient texts, but not in handling ancient parchment. They received the scrolls in the

form of thousands of fragments. (I've heard in other lectures that the antiquities dealers, realizing that they had a "gold mine," would tear the ancient parchments to shreds, and sell the fragments by the bagful. When the price went up, another bag would miraculously appear). The "scholars" are shown scotch-taping the fragments together, happily smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee in cups standing right next to the exposed, 2000 year-old fragments. The good news: more than 50 years later, the fragments are being handled with infinitely greater care.

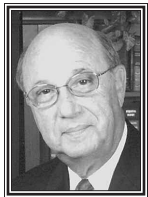
There was a 3000 lb. stone block on display that had fallen from atop the Western retaining wall – presumably during the Roman attack in 70 CE. A replica of a section of the *Kotel* ("Western Wall") had been mounted around it – into the crevasses of which people were putting *kvittlech* on pieces of paper provided by the exhibitor. It seemed strange to me. But I guess it gave the exhibit an extra "interactive" element. A nearby TV screen with a live-feed showed people at the Kotel in real time.

As Jews, we might also be surprised, after so many centuries of hostility and separation, at how much curiosity and interest there is about "Old Testament" Israel and Judaism among Christian churches and individuals. We share a large piece of Scripture, especially the books of "Samuel," "Kings," and "Chronicles," etc. This exhibit certainly provided "common ground".

For example, one display showed a typical house in the First Temple period. Surrounding a small inner courtyard was a 2-story structure, reminiscent of a "carriage-house." People lived on the top floor. Animals lived on the bottom; partly, it was explained, to provide warmth as their body-heat rose. Technology not changing much between the First and Second Temple periods, perhaps this also explains the reference to an "upper room" in Jerusalem mentioned in Luke 22:12-13 and Acts 1:13-14.

I thoroughly recommend seeing this exhibit. Just be careful about when you choose to go!

Rabbi Mallon first came as an adult to Jewish learning, after experience with Transcendental Meditation (TM), yoga, and other growth-producing modalities. He also studied Jewish Science and Visualization at the Society of Jewish Science in New York. Over the years, he has taught people of all ages as a bar/bat mitzvah instructor, Hebrew school teacher, cantor, pastoral counselor and rabbi, in addition to his work in public education. He resides in New City, NY. View the unabridged version of this article along with other works by him at <http://rabbieli.mallon.wordpress.com>. Posted Dec. 30, 2011. ★



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

For the sake of others

Sitting in my study I began reading a book about the life of Albert Einstein. To say that he was an interesting person would be to understate his importance or the impact he had on humanity with his Theory of Relativity – the concept of time and space. To this day scientist are trying to disprove his understanding of the universe and our part in it.

But, how many, I wonder know the other side of him? The side that deals with humaneness is something to marvel at. He writes, *"Strange is our situation here upon earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we know:*

That we are here for the sake of others... Above all, for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy.

Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of my fellow men, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received."

I could not help but think as I read these words how much of an impact we have on the lives of those we come in contact with each and every day. We probably will never truly know to what extent we actually comfort those in need or help those looking for togetherness. Each and every time we gather either for prayer or celebration or sorrowful happenings, we can see the faces and realize the aura of contentment and satisfaction.

And, sometimes, we come in contact with someone who has an impact on us. Someone who by their expressions can make us realize that we are important and therefore needed.

I met such a person. His name is George Galstad. He is an educated man and even contemplated, in his early years, to answer the call that God had given him. Perhaps he turned a deaf ear. It happens occasionally that we hear something that frightens us or is beyond our comprehension. George was no exception.

He reminded me of Moses and his response to the summons given by God. Not only was Moses reluctant to answer the call and even argued with God to find someone more suitable for the daunting task that lie ahead.

His philosophy of life is quite simple: To be the best person you can be without becoming a burden to others. He has definite ideas about politics and yet is amenable to understanding different viewpoints. He is determined and yet flexible; frugal and very generous; amiable and at the same time withdrawn. No, he is not a complex person, just one who has travelled the road of life and, as we so often do, found a bump or two that gave him pause.

I mention my friend George because our theological approaches are so different and yet when we settle on a subject that holds his interest he is willing to learn and teach at the same time. I have learned a great deal from his experiences and I enjoy visiting with him several times a week over a cup of coffee. There are others in our little coffee group and each contributes to the discussions that take place but George seems to put things into proper perspective giving us all the opportunity to think and react.

Surprisingly enough even though we are of different faiths we seem to have much more in common than some would imagine. He has felt estranged and disconnected and then we extended our hands to find that there are other hands and even a smile or comforting nod that awakens in all of us a true feeling of connection.

It is impossible to be all things to all people, but that doesn't mean we should not keep trying. Personalities notwithstanding, we are all linked in a chain of human needs and yearnings that we inherited from generations past. And each of us brings to the table different talents that blend together to form a realization that we cannot do without each other.

Einstein was correct in many things but most of all in his assessment that we are here for the sake of others. Our happiness is dependent on this assumption, and the fulfillment of a meaningful life corresponds to our understanding the connection for which we were created.

We cannot achieve complete happiness if we are not willing to share the experience with others. Of what value is contentment if we have no one to feel the excitement or the euphoria of accomplishment?

We need to give as well as receive. We need to be able to communicate in order to be able to listen. We are nothing without someone else participating in our joys and sorrows. We all need a George Galstad to find truth in expression and leave feeling that we are better for having known him.

I believe that is what Einstein meant when he tried to encourage us to feel good about ourselves while at the same time trying to make others feel good as well.

Rabbi Irwin Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near

Stand up for women everywhere

BY RABBI SANDY EISENBERG SASSO



Referring to a situation as a "woman's issue" has often meant that it is not regarded as especially significant. Unlike other forms of intolerance, society often defines gender roles as a matter of culture, not ethics. But current events throughout the Middle East call that assumption into question.

Recently, the Israeli Ministry of Health awarded a coveted prize to a woman pediatrician. But at the ceremony, a male colleague was required to accept the award because the head of the Ministry, an ultra-Orthodox Jew, ruled that women were not allowed on stage. Women's faces have been blacked out on Jerusalem billboards. In one neighborhood a sign directed men and women use separate sidewalks. Women have been asked to sit in the back of buses in routes through ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods. History has taught us that requiring a group of people to sit at the back of the bus and restricting their visibility and freedom of movement is not a matter of culture but of ethics.

Fortunately, Israel is a secular government. Religious parties wield influence, but religious law is not the law of the land. Women drive, vote and serve in the military. Two women lead major political parties and a woman is President of the Supreme Court. Still the backlash against women by the ultra-Orthodox cannot be left unchecked. Restrictions imposed on women are not quaint traditions that deserve respect and accommodation; they are moral concerns and they are not only "women's issues".

In the rest of the Middle East matters are worse. In Saudi Arabia, despite the fact that women were recently given the right to vote (though not until 2015), they still do not have the right to drive, require male chaperones to travel and are restricted to separate areas in some public places, like restaurants.

This past year, Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan replaced the Ministry of Women and Family with a Ministry of Family and Social Policies, signaling an intention to diminish attention to matters of particular concern to women. In Turkey, approximately 42% of women over 15 have experienced physical or sexual violence during their

(see Sasso, page 7)



Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at ravyitz@cox.net. ★



Jewish Educator

By AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

Creating meaningful Jewish rituals – A recipe for well-being

When I was growing up my family didn't observe many Jewish rituals. We didn't light candles on Friday night and my dad's idea of keeping *kosher* was not putting bacon on a cheeseburger. None of us knew which prayers were said for eating, drinking, or celebrating the holidays, unless they were printed on the pages of the Maxwell House *Hagaddah*. As a child it didn't matter much to me but as I grew up, it became a problem. I sheepishly muddled my way through services and holidays feeling more like an outsider than a good Jewish girl.

Then, when I was in college, I read about Rabbi Akiva, one of the most renowned Jewish sages, who began his Jewish studies at the age of 40. This gave me hope and encouragement and the belief that it is never too late to learn how to be Jewish.

Sociologists and anthropologists have long known that rituals function as powerful tools to define family roles and to pass on cultural norms and family values from one generation to the next. Rituals create a sense of identity and belonging; they tie the individual to a group or community. They mark important life-cycle events, commemorate life transitions and permit us to express important emotions such as love, fear, joy and grief. Perhaps most importantly, rituals provide us with a sense of stability, order and regularity. They constitute an anchor in a tumultuous world and act as a compass by which to navigate.

My own definition of ritual is quite simple: It is the creation of sacred time or sacred space in our individual lives, family and home. It can be as simple as the morning ritual of drinking coffee and reading the newspaper or as complex as praying three times a day. But one thing I know for certain: Creating meaningful rituals for yourself or your family is a powerful and effective way to build a sense of safety and well being into daily life.

When our kids were little, we began to experiment with creating Jewish rituals based on what was important to us at the time. We found ways to celebrate *Shabbat* and the holidays using art, music, food and games. On *Rosh Hashanah*, we baked

ADLAND

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currently at Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio. He may be reached at j.adland@gmail.com.

A gift: go to www.israeldailypicture.com to sign up. "Most of the Library of Congress pictures are from photographers from the 'American Colony' in Jerusalem, a group of Christian utopians who lived in Jerusalem between 1881 and the 1940s. They returned to the U.S. and bequeathed their massive collection to the Library of Congress in 1978. The photos were digitalized in recent years." One can go back to see pictures already published or wait for the next link. It comes 3-4 times per week. It is well worth it. ★



a birthday cake for the world's birthday. On Passover, we built a tent on our back porch and sat on pillows and blankets, then walked through the yard "to the Promised Land" for dinner. Over the years, we wrote our own song book using melodies from Dylan and the Beatles.

The rituals we created evolved over time as did our family. Some, like celebrating *Shabbat* on Friday night, have become more significant now that the kids no longer live at home. To this day, we never let a Friday night go by when we don't call them to wish them a "Good *Shabbas*!"

Building a treasure trove of Jewish rituals may seem a daunting task but it doesn't have to be if you decide to take it one step at a time. Start out with just one idea or hope or intention. Perhaps you would like to have one night a week when you all have dinner together. What a perfect night to celebrate *Shabbat*! Can't make a whole big chicken dinner? Buy a *challah* and special cookies for dessert and invite your family to light candles.

It's fun to learn as a family and creating meaningful Jewish rituals can provide a basis for important conversations that differ from the everyday talk of schedules, homework and car pools. Participation in Jewish rituals such as lighting *Shabbat* candles, building a *Sukkah* or saying a blessing over food suddenly becomes a possibility when you don't worry about doing it exactly the way your grandmother did or more importantly, doing it "exactly right". Opening up our hearts and homes to new ways of experiencing Judaism will open our families up to seeing how Judaism can help us understand, honor and celebrate everything from the birth of our children and the purchase of a new home to the way we give to charity or mourn the loss of a loved one.

In the chaotic world that we live in today, it's hard to create a sense of safety, predictability and well-being within our families. Jewish rituals can help us create

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lives. In 2009 Turkey became the first state held in violation of its obligations to protect women from domestic violence by the European Court of Human Rights.

In Egypt, although women demonstrated alongside men to overthrow Mubarak, the revolution has not resulted in greater freedoms for women. The opposite has happened. Women who have demonstrated have been verbally insulted, harassed and told that their demand for rights went against Islam. The Egyptian military has subjected scores of women to a "virginity test". A very public beating and stripping of a traditionally garbed woman has recently elicited outrage. Yet some have excused the military's actions, claiming that women should not be protesting in public in the first place!

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has remarked that the systematic degradation of women dishonors the revolution: "Sometimes they (women) play the role of the canary in the coal mine. They know when communities are fraying and when citizens fear for their safety." When women are beaten, it is not cultural; it is criminal.

An assault on women's rights is an assault on human rights. These concerns are not limited to the Middle East. Honor killings, beatings, forced and early marriages, sex trafficking, poor access to health care are issues faced by women around the globe. The erosion of those rights, whether in the form of physical repression, economic discrimination or the curtailment of reproductive freedom, is not a matter of faith or culture; it is a matter of ethics and justice. The faith I know remembers the first chapter of Genesis, which says that God created man and women in the divine image.

Look carefully at how women are being treated, abroad and at home; consider their economic and physical well being, their educational and political opportunities. This is the barometer of a nation's health. And if you do not like what the barometer reads, then change the atmosphere.

Sasso and her husband Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso have been senior rabbis at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis for 34 years. Reprinted with permission from The Indianapolis Star, Jan. 26, 2012. ★



a more loving, stable and secure home, as well as inspire us to live a more meaningful life, if we choose to let them become a part of our family's traditions.

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

12-21-12 – Endtime or new beginning?

RABBI ALLEN S. MALLER



For Mayans Dec. 21, 2012 will be the year zero: for Jews it will be the year 5773. The Mayan calendar is a system of three calendars used in conjunction. Two of them are cyclical: the *Tzolk'in* calendar of 260 days and the *Haab*, a solar calendar of 365 days. The combined use of these two calendars creates a cycle of 52 Haabs (52 years) and is referred to as the cyclical or round calendar. A third calendar tracking longer periods of historical time is called the Long Count. This calendar tracks dates on a linear scale and utilizes a numeric decimal system to record dates. Thus, the Mayan date for Dec. 21, 2012 C.E. is 13.0.0.0.0. The long count cycle referred to as the "Great Cycle" lasts for 5,125.36 years, and started on August 11, 3,114 B.C.E. It is the second oldest epochal calendar in the world; beginning only six and one half centuries after the Jewish epochal calendar. But the Mayan Long Count is also a cyclical calendar, unlike its elder brother the Jewish calendar.

The second century rabbis who made up the calendar Jews currently use, chose to begin the Jewish calendar with the beginning of recorded human civilization. Everything prior to the Jewish calendar is prehistory. The word Adam in Hebrew means mankind/Homo Sapiens – the species. The exit of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden symbolizes the transition of humanity from a largely nomadic Stone Age society of hunter-gatherers to a more advanced metal working Bronze Age society of farmers and village dwellers. By starting the Jewish calendar with a historical transition that would eventually have a universal impact on all of human society, the second century rabbis followed the lead of the Prophets of Israel who predicted a future Messianic Age transition to a world of universal justice, peace and prosperity; as well as the teaching of the *Torah* that begins not with the beginning of Judaism, but with urban civilization and recorded history. Everything prior to the Jewish calendar is prehistory.

All historical dates that are derived from written records will fit into the Jewish calendar. The earliest writing comes from the Mesopotamian city of Uruk (Genesis 10:10) and dates to about 5,500 years ago, i.e. the third century of the Jewish calendar. The first dynasty in Egypt arose in the 7th century of the Jewish calendar and the first stone pyramid in the 10th century. The famous king Sargon of Akkad (2371–2316 BCE)

lived in the 14th century of the Jewish calendar. Abraham was not born till the 21st century of the Jewish calendar. It is only in the generations after Abraham that Biblical history begins to focus on the religious development of one specific people.

According to the *Popol Vuh*, a compilation of creation accounts from the Maya of the Colonial-era highlands, we are now living in the fourth world. The *Popol Vuh* describes the gods first creating three failed worlds, followed by a successful fourth world in which humanity was placed. In the Maya Long Count calendar, the previous world ended after 13 *b'ak'tuns*, or roughly 5,125 years. The Long Count's "zero date" was set at a point in the past marking the end of the third world and the beginning of the current one, which corresponds to 11 August 3114 BCE (before the Christian calendar). Thus the fourth world will also reach the end of its 13th *b'ak'tun*, the Mayan date 13.0.0.0.0, on Dec. 21, 2012 and a new world epoch will begin.

Mayan inscriptions occasionally mention predicted future events or commemorations that would occur on dates far beyond the completion of the 13th *b'ak'tun*. Most of these are in the form of "distance dates": Long Count dates given together with an additional number, known as a Distance Number, which when added together make a future date. On the west panel of a temple in Palenque, a text projects forward to the 80th 52-year Calendar Round from the coronation of the ruler K'inich Janaab' Pakal. Pakal's accession occurred on July 27, 615 CE (in the Christian calendar). The inscription begins with Pakal's birthdate (March 24, 603 CE) and then adds the Distance Number and arrives at a date of Oct. 21, 4772 CE, more than 4,000 years after Pakal's time and 2760 years from now.

Thus, the world as we know it will not come to an end on 12-21-12. In the months and years following 12-21-12, there will not be a startling worldwide increase in the number and impact of enlightened masters. Nor will earthquakes, floods and other plagues occur in much greater intensity or numbers. But that does not mean that the date is unimportant. After all, not much of worldwide significance happened in the months and years following July 4, 1776; but that date did mark an important development in human history. This example of a positive turning point that takes centuries to develop, is what the prophets of Israel referred to as the Messianic Age. Their predictions are based on their belief; that if there is only one God who is a God of justice as well as mercy, human history must end with a positive outcome.

Of course, they recognized that the birth of a Messianic Age must be preceded by its birth-pangs, but they emphasized

mostly the glories of a world living in peace and prosperity with justice for all. Ancient Jewish and Mayan prophecies both did proclaim that there would be an end to the world as we know it. But they did not prophesy that the world will come to an end. Although the Mayan date is fixed far in advance, the Jewish date cannot be fixed because humans have free will; both mark the beginning of a time of transition from one World Age into another. How we move through this transition, either with resistance or acceptance, will determine whether the transformation will happen through cataclysmic changes or by a gradual religious reform of human society which will lead to a world filled with peace, prosperity and spiritual tranquility.

The Messianic Age is usually seen as the solution to all of humanity's basic problems. This may be true in the long run but the vast changes the transition to the Messianic Age entail will provide challenges to society for many generations to come. For example, the Prophet Isaiah, 2,700 years ago, predicted that someday there would be a radically new world in which Jerusalem would be fulfilled with joy for "no more shall there be in it an infant that lives only a few days." (Isaiah 65:20) Before the mid 19th century the annual death rate for humans fluctuated from year to year but always remained high, between 30 and 50+ deaths per 1,000 individuals. Those elevated, unstable rates were primarily caused by infectious and parasitic diseases. The toll from disease among the young was especially high. Almost 1/3 of the children born in any year died before their first birthday; in some subgroups, half died. Because childbirth was hazardous, mortality among pregnant women was also very high. A century ago, the infant mortality rate in Jerusalem (as in most of the world) was 25–30%. Now it is less than 1%. For thousands of years almost every family in the world suffered the loss of at least one infant; now it happens to less than one out of two hundred.

If this radical improvement had occurred over a few years, it would have greatly impressed people. But since it occurred gradually over several generations, people take it for granted. Also, it seems to be part of human nature that most people focus on complaining about the less than 1% that still die (an individual family tragedy heightened by the fact that it is unexpected because it is so rare) rather than be grateful that the infant mortality rate has been reduced by 97%.

The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy has thus gone un-noticed and uncelebrated. But even when the events are rapid and dramatic, people rarely connect them to

(see Maller, page 9)

Enrich your life by living gratefully!

BY RABBI RAMI SHAPIRO



What are you grateful for? Try not to cough up the usual suspects: sunsets, daisies, puppies, babies, and babies playing with puppies among the daisies at sunset. True, I'm grateful that the earth orbits the sun, and I love dogs and babies, but being grateful for these things is too easy. Being grateful requires more than warm fuzzy feelings; it requires clear seeing and right action.

Not long ago a woman shared with me her experience as a lung transplant recipient. She was grateful to the organ donor, and the doctors and nurses who performed the operation. What about the drunk driver who killed the woman whose lung saved her life, I asked; was she grateful to him as well?

She just stared at me. No one had asked her that before. To her credit, she closed her eyes, took a moment to see what was true for her, and said, yes she was grateful to the man who killed her donor and thus saved her life. Then her eyes filled with tears, and said, "And I hate myself for that."

As we talked she realized that it wasn't self-hate she was feeling but extreme humility. After all, she neither wished the death of her donor nor did anything to cause it; she simply benefited from this tragedy. But that realization was huge. What if the deceased woman had a family, she mused. What if she had little children who would grow up without a mom? What if she was caring for her parents? A single death can have so many ramifications. How do I live with this, she sobbed.

Your situation may not be this extreme, but the question she asked is your question as well. You are being gifted by people and things all the time. How do you live with this? This is what gratitude is really all about: not feeling grateful, but living gratefully.

Chances are you too have lungs, and don't need a transplant to be grateful for them. But what about the Brazilian rainforest? Are you grateful for that? After all, your lungs are useless without oxygen, yet neither they nor any other organ in your body produces oxygen. Trees and plants in partnership with the sun do that, and the Brazilian rainforest processes 28% of the world's oxygen, so the forest is a vital part of your body as well. If you are grateful to your lungs, you must be grateful to trees and plants as well. How do you express your gratitude? What do you do to help secure clean air for your lungs to breathe?

Despite clichés to the contrary, it isn't the thought that counts; it is the deed that counts. Gratitude that is merely attitude is cheap and meaningless. If you are grateful to your lungs, don't poison them with carcinogens. If you are grateful for oxygen, protect the living system that produces it. Or, if you don't, at least have the courage to stop claiming you are grateful for lungs and oxygen.

I wear Rockport shoes and return them to the company for resoling. The first time I did this the shoes came back in near mint condition accompanied by a hand-written note from the person who restored them. He explained how very disappointed he was that I disrespected the shoes he works so hard to make: the leather was scuffed and unpolished; the shoe backs were broken; and the toe box was misshapen because I didn't keep my shoes on a shoetree. He concluded by asking me to treat his work with more respect.

That was 30 years ago, and I have never treated my shoes the same since. What about you? You would be lost without your shoes. They support your arches, protect your feet from hot pavements and dangerous debris, and (along with your shirt) allow you to eat in restaurants. So how do you show your gratitude? Look at your shoes and see.

What about the rest of your clothes? Do you keep them clean, neatly folded or hanging properly? When you no longer need them, do you toss them out or do you donate them where someone else can benefit from them?

What is true of shoes and clothes is true of everything. It is easy to assess the quality of gratitude in your life by examining how well you treat the people and things in your life. You are being gifted by people and things – seen and unseen, known and unknown – all day, every day. That should make you *feel* grateful, but more importantly it should cause you to *live* gratefully.

Living gratefully means taking nothing and no one for granted. It means treating salespeople, stock clerks, bank tellers, and cashiers kindly. It means not polluting your body with excess sugar, fat, and salt. It means not polluting your community with bigotry, fear, anger, gossip, and ill-will. It means saying thank you to everyone and everything by treating them all with utmost respect.

Be grateful for babies and puppies, just don't stop there. Join with others to offer a scholarship at a local daycare center, adopt or rescue an animal companion, or support a local animal shelter. Gratitude is not a way of feeling, it is a way of doing. If you aren't living gratefully, feeling grateful means nothing at all.

Rabbi Rami Shapiro, PhD teaches religious studies at Middle Tennessee State University

MALLER

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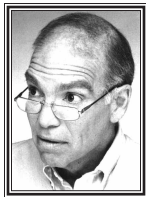
their Messianic significance for very long. The amazing rescue of 14,235 Ethiopian Jews in a 1991 airlift lasting less than 40 hours stirred and inspired people for a few weeks. Subsequently, the difficult problems the newcomers faced (similar to those of the 900,000 recent Soviet immigrants) occupied the Jewish media. Now both are taken for granted. The miracle has become routine. But if you had told the Jews of Ethiopia two generations ago that they would someday all fly to Israel in a giant silver bird, they could only conceive of this as a Messianic miracle. If you had told Soviet Jews a generation ago that the Communist regime would collapse, the Soviet Empire disintegrate and hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews would emigrate to Israel, they would have conceived it only as a Messianic dream. In our own generation therefore we have seen the dramatic fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: "I will bring your offspring from the (Middle) East and gather you from the (European) West. To the North (Russia) I will say 'give them up' and to the South (Ethiopia) 'do not hold them'. Bring my sons from far away, my daughters from the end of the earth." (Isaiah 43:5-6) Isn't it amazing how people adjust to living in a radically new world and forget how bad things were in the past.

Thus, the primary lesson of the belief in a Messianic Age is that we must never stop believing that, with God's help, mankind can solve all the challenges facing us from terrorism to climate change, from overpopulation to warfare. God will not do it for us, but we have God's promise that humans can do it with God's help.

Rabbi Maller was the spiritual leader of Temple Akiba in Culver City, Calif., from 1967–2006. When he began that position, he observed, "Judaism can add a great deal of meaning and security to our existence, but only if we have the ability to identify with, and then live, the values that our faith teaches us." He is a graduate of UCLA and the Hebrew Union College. He has published 100s of articles, original research, a spiritually meaningful High Holy Day Machzor, two books of children's short stories, and a popular account of Jewish Mysticism titled, *God, Sex and Kabbalah*. Read more his work at: sites.google.com/site/rabimaller/home. ★



and is the director of Wisdom House Center for Interfaith Studies in Nashville. He has written over two dozen books and a new series, Rabbi Rami Guides: Roadside Assistance for the Spiritual Traveler, available at Spirituality & Health Books and Amazon.com; see www.rabbirami.com. ★



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

War and peace

For a long time, we were lucky enough to have all four of our kids when they were through with school, the Israeli army and first careers within ten minutes of our home. Then, in one year, they were all gone. It is indeed a mixed blessing.

So, we now have four interesting cities in which to visit the four Shipley children. Tracy is in Israel, remarried with two of her three children. Tom is in Demerest, N.J., across from Manhattan with Pam and their two daughters. Robin is in Los Angeles with husband and six cats. Adam in New Orleans with two hound dogs and has a Jewish mother in Orlando who prays daily for guess what.

This past weekend we visited Adam in the Big Easy. He is in the music business and manages a band called "Soul Rebels". He has a booking agency and is active in the New Orleans music scene. He is well known and doing well. This past Saturday we went with him to the World War II Museum in downtown New Orleans.

It is a massive undertaking and very, very meaningful. For those of us of a certain age, it brings back memories. Many memories. Where were you when Pearl Harbor was attacked? Everyone who was old enough to have a memory at the time knows. Did you listen to the President's speech the next day? Those who did will never forget those measured words: "Yesterday, December 7th, 1941, a date which will live in infamy..."

For Jews in America, the first reaction was as an American. We were at war! First with Japan and four days later with Italy and Germany. There were stories; there were rumors of what was happening to Jews in Germany, in Poland. But they were rumors. Some heard the rhetoric of Hitler's speeches that were translated, but virulent and vocal anti-Semitism was rife in the U.S. as well, so for the most part, uninformed Jews ignored it.

It was only later and for the most part at the very end of the war when the Camps were liberated that the word Holocaust was suddenly part of our lexicon. At the World War II Museum, this story is well told. It is part of the history of that war. It is, to a Jew remembering that four year period, the most significant part.

As you walk the three floors of the museum and see the exhibits, the actual PT Boat, the Higgins landing craft, the

Grumman A-4 attack plane, the uniforms, the filmed history, the stories told by those who were there, you are immersed in this most important and history changing event of the 20th century.

There have been wars since then, of course. Stupid wars that gained little or nothing. But this "Grand Crusade" truly saved civilization as we know it. For Jews it brought about the State of Israel. As you view the pictures and the films of the Camps, most of which you probably have seen many times before, they take on a new meaning in the context of what was happening to the world beyond the attempted extermination of the Jews.

We survived as a people. We have the State of Israel so that it could not happen again – in the same manner. Threats? Oh yes, as you get to the end of the war in the Pacific in the Museum and see the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki you realize that the world is still not a peaceful place.

Those bombs were gigantic at the time, but nothing compared to today's potential. And the world's conflicts today are too often pointed at the Jews and Israel. But, you cannot say nothing has changed. There is Israel. The people pay a heavy price to maintain their military advantage in that dangerous neighborhood. And Jews will never again go to the slaughter.

In World War II, America proved that almost overnight, this depression weakened nation, with the 18th largest army in the world could evolve into a manufacturing giant turning out planes and ships and tanks and men who could fight. Israel lives in that reality every day of every year.

As it says in the Book, "In every generation there are those who would destroy us."

But that war made Israel possible and as long as the world does not forget that World War II killed 65 million people, including a third of the Jewish people, the expression Never Again takes on a greater meaning.

My children, their children and yours should all see the Holocaust memorial in our town. We should visit the Museum in Washington. And we should all take our children and grandchildren to the World War II Museum in New Orleans. We will, scattered as they are. It puts it all in context. And hey, it's a pretty good place to spend a weekend. New Orleans is coming back. Y'all come!

Jim Shipley has had careers in broadcasting, distribution, advertising, and telecommunications. He began his working life in radio in Philadelphia. He has written his JP&O column for more than 20 years and is director of Trading Wise, an international trade and marketing company in Orlando, Fla. See another of his unpublished columns on our website at: www.jewishpostopinion.com/shipleypeak.html. ★



The Roads from Babel

BY SETH BEN-MORDECAI

Ayin Caramba!

For most of the 20th century, Hebrew teachers dutifully taught pupils that the Hebrew alphabet had two "silent letters," *aleph* and *ayin*. While this may be true of Modern Hebrew, both letters were pronounced in Biblical Hebrew. Eastern European Jews continued to pronounce the *ayin* until at least the 1700s. *Ayin* and *aleph* are still pronounced in the Synagogue Hebrew of Sephardic and Middle Eastern Jews.

The sound of an *aleph* is the same as the "catch" between the syllables "uh" and "oh" in the exclamation "uh oh!" Likewise, American teenagers often substitute an *aleph* for a "T" at the end of a word. (If you listen carefully to how your teenager pronounces the words "at home," you may hear an *aleph* substituted for the "T.")

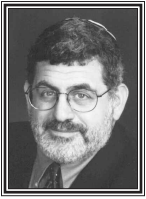
But the *ayin*? Hebrew grammar books dating back to the 1800s claim a person cannot pronounce an *ayin* unless trained to do so from an early age. Nonsense. While *ayin* is not a sound of Standard English, it is a common feature of certain speech defects, where *ayin* is substituted for the sound represented by the letter "L."

When Tom Brokaw anchored NBC news, comedians poked fun of his inability to pronounce "L" properly. His speech impediment was often described as "swallowing his L's." (To this day, mimicking Brokaw saying "Lois Lane loves lizards" puts a smile on our face.) In reality, Brokaw merely substituted the *ayin* sound for a Standard English "L."

With Brokaw's retirement, we are blissfully spared his atrocious diction. But the voice-over artist for Samuel Adams beer commercials on radio and television regularly substitutes an *ayin* for an "L."

So, if you can imitate Brokaw or Samuel Adams commercials, you can pronounce an *ayin*. Who knew it was that simple? As Bart Simpsonstein might say, "Ayin caramba!"

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



Addictions Counselor

BY RABBI STEVEN M. LEAPMAN

Vashti emails her sponsor

Dear Na'amah:

I'm glad you agreed to sponsor me. To have someone listen deeply, acknowledge my experiences as authentic, respect my perceptions as real, this is a blessing. I hope that "blessing" could be a synonym for "affirmation." Still, I'm not crazy because I feel what I feel, nor dangerous for I hold and nurture a truth in my heart which when put into words may rock the proverbial boat or "ark" in your case. We've a great deal in common, two Biblical women with husbands bested by their bottle battles. Hence, our separate-but-much-sought-arrivals on the steps (no pun intended) of Al-Anon.

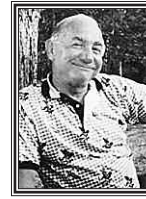
Perhaps I married young and didn't know myself as well as I do now after years spent building soul-muscles to finally lift the shades from my eyes. I know some may belittle my struggles for they unfolded behind hefty palace walls, as if geography and prosperity preserve one from the erosion of self-deception. Don't allow class warfare to become another burden to those wishing to leave addiction behind, pain is as real for those impoverished or Imperial and all realms in between. Those barriers were very thick for all the tapestries that covered them and the travesties they concealed. Read my account and while you'll find privilege you also find peril. It is degrading to realize I too had to have "parties" to parallel my husband's; what you encounter in Chapter One: Esther is not just a man who'd have me "entertain" an intoxicated cabinet and inebriated counselors. You also find a willing partner in her own subterfuge; I became competitive with him to harm him as a totalitarian's trophy wife.

Ahashveros may've been despicable, despotic, capricious as both spouse and potentate, but I permitted myself to play along as I was as enchanted, hence deluded, by "power" as was he. It is too easy to blame the one who hurt me when I refuse to see how often, how hungrily, I enrobed for the role of victim. It isn't my nature to have vanished as quickly as the official version reports, in fact the speediness of my disappearance should raise eyebrows because when you think about it, how well and how regularly do queens just "ghost" as some would say? I did not make

it to a King's side by being submissive. This way of telling my tale is less a comment about my impact on ancient Persia. Rather, given what was awakening within me, I was embracing an awareness of self in a society that could no longer hold such a narrative of femininity and personal integrity. I have a sense this particular story will repeat. One might conjecture I was whisked away as much by a besotted "better-half" as I was by disquieting circumstances that no longer could control or contain my saga. Think of how some need to cast aside a person or group of people whose clamor for individuality cannot be endured. It is that energy that silenced me, not my own assertiveness and self-regard.

At least I was named in "Holy" Scripture, but how "whole?" You were given a mere "Noah's wife" – later ages would secure your nomenclature. Esther had two names. Her original was "Hadassah." "Esther suggests being "hidden" – what does that imply? And that "hidden" something was not all that was concealed in a tale where alcohol reigns and rains. The Divine Name is never directly invoked. What was going on that God chose to evade? How can immature, rarely sober souls serve a Higher Power? The world of Purim's narrative was a kingdom conquered by a passion for intoxication that could neither tolerate nor include identities of those it needed to oppress to sustain its customs and cultures. And people wonder why some feel excluded and disrespected by the edifice constructed and construed as Tradition. Nostalgia doesn't make for certainty nor guarantee good.

I admit that now I'm straying into what "others" did "to" me. That focus will only teach me to be a victim. What about changing "to" me to "for" me? Now, with that simple turn of phrase, I see liberation is possible when I adjust my thinking, regardless of external conditions or woeful conduct of anyone else; what is my duty to myself? How I react is where this queen is sovereign, whether dwelling in a palace or humble residence of an old friend and supporter. "Anonymity" is much quieter than the pageantry of a world of ego-run-wild. This is about me rebuilding my life, not about Esther being in the harem-sponsored beauty contest to gain my old throne. It is about my willingness, my readiness, and my ability to muster compassion for a girl so controlled by her apparent guardian, that she allowed a supposed protector, Mordechai, to orchestrate her debasement regardless the prize. I cannot control, nor change, nor cure Esther's fate, nor did I cause what Esther chose for herself. And so, for now, I will end this note. I appreciate your time, attention, intention, and honesty.



Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

Say Kaddish over your dead computer

She was getting old. You could tell her passion was waning even though she was only 22 years old. Two out of three times when I clicked on her button she wouldn't turn on. Well, she turned a dusky orange, but not that inviting – "here's your mail" green that I had come to love. My pals – who all hated her – because she was a species – a MAC – different from their PC "helpmeets" (as Genesis expressed it) just giggled at my attempts to turn her on. "She's too old – get a new PC." For some neurotic reason, which is beyond my understanding, they loved to call her a "boat anchor". Not a door stop, not a mantelpiece decoration carving, not an icon in the Museum of Modern Art, but a boat anchor.

Jealousy. That was what it was. Jealousy because they didn't have a 22-year-old antique that no longer pulsed with activity, but still awed the world of electronic art with teal blue and gray voluptuous curves. She stood upright on my desk, but her soul was in Computer Heaven. That, I was sure of.

Now to the computer store for the autopsy. Meaning – could we extract the thousands of stories – tens of thousands of words that when put in artful sequence, compose my life, my soul, my work. Strangely, as soon as I arrived at the MAC store, Miss blue and teal – upon plugging her power cord into the wall – sprung into action. What allure did the MAC Store circuitry have that my office didn't? I lit up like the computer. "It works, it works," as I danced a cadenza between the

(see Roberts, page 12)



Though subtle, these virtues are poignant guideposts on my path away from my past and towards a new phase of life I am coming to believe I richly deserve. ~ Blessings, Vashti!

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. ★

ROBERTS

(continued from page 11)

aisles. The light goes green – my emails fill up the page. I grab the patient ready to take her home. My doctors – there are three at the MAC store – defer. “Why did it start now,” I shriek, “and remain unconscious when I plugged and replugged it per instructions from the three MAC physicians?” It wasn’t unplugged long enough was the explanation. In other words, if I had only waited time enough, I’d be in my comfy office soothing my MAC by brushing her big, blue forehead and no risk of losing my life’s work.

As I was dancing, the computer went black as the cave where Elijah hid on Mt. Carmel. Remember, he was hiding there because Jezebel sent a hit squad of Baalites – worshipers of Baal – out to get him.

I quit dancing. I reminded the store owner that he had already suckered me for two previous computers and why would a name brand computer quit after 22 years. He scowled and gave me a 15-minute lecture on the longevity of computers. I knew in my heart he had some valid points, but managed to squeeze out a few tears. “Only 22 years – so young”. I sobbed and I gave him a 15-minute lecture on *Kaddish* and sitting *shiva* for 22-year-old friends. I could tell he didn’t get it. Then I remember – how could I forget – that over 1400 stories, commentaries had lived in the heart of the deceased. I cry some more.

We finally arrived at a price for a new, friendly computer. And his promise – with his right hand on the victim – that my 1400 stories would be resuscitated. My old friend was toast. The new one, he stressed, was just like my old pal. Just push the button and go through my usual procedure. Nothing, he stressed, had changed (except the price, naturally). *Samo*, *samo*. I, who had believed until a few years ago that storks brought babies, believed this *Bubbameiser*, too.

I took my new friend to the office – went through my usual procedures and got a display that called me and my mother (may she rest in peace) a dirty name and said something else that I can’t repeat in a computer language, mumbling about an alias.

I was on the phone immediately with some instructions I half understood. But it worked – with the aid of an army of *TechDrek* friends. The script for this three-act drama was repetitious. I lay on the floor moaning, “Oy, my 1400 stories”. Their line was equally short, though they didn’t understand the “Oy”. “Teddy, it’ll be okay.” And it was. Thanks to them.

Ted Roberts, a Rockover Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks



Confidentially Yours

BY AVI & ADELE

Getting the milk without buying the cow

Dear Avi and Adele,

My girlfriend and I have been dating for 10 months. I'm not ready to get married to her, but I do love her, feel like I would probably make a long-term commitment to her and want to ask her to move in with me to see how things would go. How can I ask her to move in, without sending her the wrong signals about marriage, at least in the short-term? ~ A Little Commitment Phobic

Dear A Little Commitment Phobic:

It’s impossible to shack up without sending the “serious commitment” message. Consider critically what it is that you’re hoping to happen by living together and what you could possibly discover about your lovely Lilah through living together that would be a deal breaker.

Living together is faux marriage, no matter how you slice it. There’s nothing wrong with living together, in our estimation, and we don’t knock the decision. But we would question your motivation in doing it to “see how things would go” and your concern about “sending the wrong signals about marriage.”

The approach that we’d recommend is to sit down over Shabbat dinner with your potential roommate and let her know that you’d like to live together but you’re struggling with your own issues about commitment. (Oh come on, don’t look so surprised. This is all about you and your baggage.) Tell her that you’re thinking it’s a good idea to live together so that you can save some money, have her help out with the chores you hate doing, and ultimately figure out if her habits are so annoying that you can’t stand dwelling together. Let her know that you expect her to terminate her lease early and lose



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. Blogsite: www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com. His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof can be bought at Amazon.com or lulu.com/content/127641. ★

her deposit, put her favorite things into storage, and increase her commute to your new place. And then be sure to highlight how you might, after 4 or 6 months, decide that she’s just not for you.

No? Doesn’t sound quite right?

You’re struggling with whatever bee is in your relationship bonnet and you need to get good with that before you can put her through the cohabitation wringer. A happy middle ground that we’ve seen many couples enjoy is to exchange keys and start spending most (if not all) nights together. Move a few of your clothes and possessions around. Do the things that married people do: go grocery shopping, make dinner plans with other couples, talk about money management and career dreams. Keep your personal gym, laundry, and housekeeping schedule and encourage her to keep hers.

Then, after a few months of this new situation, revisit the topic. If you’re better with the idea and ready to think about marrying this girl, then go ahead and sign that new lease and start looking for *ketubahs!* (Jewish marriage license).

He’s sharing my secrets with his Mom – Help!

Dear Avi and Adele,

I'm a 39 year-old Jewish woman who just started dating a Jewish guy my age. We've been dating about two months or so and I even met his parents last week for dinner. I'd like to continue spending time with him, however...I feel a little uncomfortable because his mom asked me questions about things I told my new boyfriend in confidence. I know he has a close relationship with his mother, so how can I broach the subject about not telling my big secrets to his mother? ~ Exposed

Dear Exposed:

We’re reminded by your story of the torrid and public love affair of Sarah Silverman and Jimmy Kimmel. Both fantastic stars, both contributors to pop culture, and both crazy relationship blabbermouths. We suppose you can blab when you have the eyes and ears of the world, but it sounds like your *bashert* takes it to a whole different level in his bumbling mommy tell-all.

Sure your guy didn’t go on the *View* to talk about your deep dark secrets or create a parody music video to get your *kosher* goat. What he did was worse: he let slip those private tidbits to someone who, if your relationship works out, will be with you for many years to come.

Broaching the subject may not be easy, but it’s a must. After all, you’re still in the (see Avi& Adele, page 18)



Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

Shlemiel the First resurfaces

Shlemiel the First, the joyous 1994 Klezmer musical, reappeared this past month on the New York stage for, alas, too brief a visit. This revival was the joint production of the National Yiddish Theatre – Folksbiene and the Theatre for a New Audience, staged at New York University's Skirball Center for the Performing Arts. And this time, unusual for the Folksbiene, the show is in English, not Yiddish, calling for no subtitles.

The Robert Brustein adaptation of the Isaac Bashevis Singer story is a wonderful little fairy tale, a story of what once was – or perhaps never was – of life in the 19th century eastern European *shtetls*. It is a heritage many of us look back upon with nostalgia, longing, confusion, re-invention.

In any event, everyone – Jew and non-Jew – walks out of the theater smiling broadly, grateful for that rare feel-good experience. But there is a deeper message here – namely, that one has to step away occasionally to appreciate what one has. It is, in fact, a reaffirmation of life. “*L’chaim*, to life, *l’chaim*.”

The story? It is the town of Chelm, where everything is upsidedown and forward/backward. A perfect fit for Shlemiel, the local beadle and a veritable *shlemiel*

(Yiddish for “fool” or “loser”). “He’s a shlemiel, but he’s my shlemiel,” laments his wife Tryna Ritza.

Chelm is also a perfect fit for the town sages, led by Gronam Ox, who deal with sour cream shortages, burned blintzes, bossy wives. Every one is slightly mad, sane in a crazy way, wise in a stupid way.

The sages decide to send Shlemiel on a journey to spread the wisdom of Gronam Ox “around the world and elsewhere.” And, armed with his *dreydl* and his sweet naiveté, he sets out. But along the way, Shlemiel is robbed, duped, and sent in the wrong direction (in fact, back to Chelm). On arriving, he thinks he is in a new place, a second Chelm, a parallel universe. This is not his wife, that bossy shrew, but a seductive stranger. These are not his annoying children, but adorable tots.

This little Singer tale comes to life beautifully and Klezmatically. A number of top-notch creators have worked together to achieve this magic – not only Singer himself, and that Renaissance man of the theater Robert Brustein (who conceived and adapted the piece), but a myriad of others. It is Arnold Weinstein’s lyrics, with composition and orchestration by Hankus Netsky and additional music and music direction by Zalmen Mlotek. And David Gordon, who directed and choreographed this Folksbiene production, provided editorial supervision as well.

The set itself (courtesy of Robert Israel) is deceptively simple. No rotating stages here. Scenes are restaged by dragging a sheet, loaded with props, to and from the stage. The “bed” in opening and closing scenes is a perpendicular panel, on which the loving couple lies (or, rather, stands). This up-and-down bed sets the mood for



Michael Iannucci as Shlemiel in *Shlemiel the First*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

all to come – for a surreal, comic, fairytale world. It’s all on a highly professional level – from the Klezmer band’s vibrant music, to Jennifer Tipton’s lighting, to Catherine Zuber’s inflated costumes that turn actors into buxom wives.

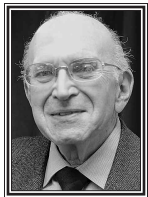
As to the cast, Michael Iannucci (Iannucci? Is that a Jewish name?) captures the Shlemiel role perfectly, never going over the top. In his understated way, he not only conquers the role, but his audience as well. He is sweet, lovable, and irresistible. Amy Warren (Warren? A Jewish name?) as his long-suffering mate, gives a perfectly-nuanced performance underscored by her fine singing voice and strong stage presence. And Jeff Brooks (Brooks? A Jewish name?) as Gronam Ox is a delight. Others in the cast do not, alas, have comparable singing voices and tend to scream through their songs, and the Klezmer music tends to repetitive themes. But these are minor quibbles, forgotten when the sages go through their dance routines with a real-life dummy or turn into the well-padded housewives. It is mostly great fun.

And it is a memorable return to the past – or the past we choose to remember. When will we have another return of this *Shlemiel*? Just as “A Christmas Carol” and “Nutcracker” show up annually, why can’t *Shlemiel* return every Chanukah?

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



L to R: Kristine Zbornik, Dmitri Slepovitch, David Skeist, Amy Warren (as Mrs. Shlemiel) Nick Morrison, and Darryl Winslow in *Shlemiel the First*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.



As I Heard It

REVIEWED BY MORTON GOLD

Kvetching Andy Rooney style

Andy Rooney alas is dead. I used to love to hear him *kvetch*. *Chanukah* and that other holiday have passed when the transliteration *chachamim* (Chelm “wise” men) were at it again. I received a card with the Chanuka(h) blessings (spelled with two k’s no less) and I noticed the Hebrew word *a-tah* spelled with two letter t’s! For more than 100 years it has been spelled with one “t” and no one mispronounced the word. There is an axiom “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!” Why learned rabbis or whoever at the Jewish Theological Seminary thought this up?

Among your or their achievements to date I note the following: In the Machzor (please note the omission of the letter K which is supposed to replace the letter C, thus making this word and every other word with a KH in it unpronounceable for Jews and non-Jews alike). Phrases for *Shabbat* (Shabatt, Shabatt, Shabaht?) in the High Holiday prayer books are indicated in pale violet coloring. This color has the effect of making the text indistinguishable from the other text in lighting other than in bright sunlight.

Then there is the teensy weensy dot placed underneath the letter H to indicate a CH (Kh?) sound. Who can see it? Then there is the translation of the word *Hazzan* (Chas’n?). On the Hebrew side the word *Hazzan* appears. That is as it should be. So, why on earth did you opt to put the word “Reader” instead of *Hazzan* on the English side? You folks ought to be aware that a real *Hazzan* is one thing and a “Reader” is anything but a *Hazzan*! Perhaps you foresaw that one day the office of *Hazzan* would be downgraded to becoming a mere reader!

As a musician and also a composer, I am not a fan of what I knew as Orthodox musical practices. I’ve got to relate that these days I am not a big fan of what goes on musically speaking in the average Conservative temple either. In the 1960’s a noted cantor cautioned against his colleagues using *liedelach* (overly catchy tunes) with a beat.” While such tunes (read congregational melodies) were the exception and even a novelty in the 1960’s, these are the rule today.

A rabbi in the temple I attend informed me that the use of an organ in “not permitted

in Conservative temples.” Really! In the city of Boston alone I recall that Gregor Shelkan (Mishkan Tefila), Gabriel Hochberg (Temple Emanu-el), Leon Gold (Beth Hillel), among others all *davenned* with organ accompaniment, all the time and not only on Friday night. All these temples were bona fide Conservative temples.

I played the organ in Temple Emanu-el in Providence. I succeeded Arthur Einstein who was organist there for 20 plus years and Eli Bohnen was the rabbi. Need I also mention the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York and a host of other temples in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Hartford, and so forth.

I suspect that the decline of the use of an organ had more to do with finances and the availability of organists than with *halacha*. (Would it make you happier if the word was spelled *halakha*? Okay, you folks spell it that way. I am a practicing musician, guys and I guess ladies too, I refuse. It is that simple. Why? It is confusing, it is not helpful and like the other “improvements” mentioned above do not lead to clarity.

Have you noticed that more than 98% of *bar/bat mitzvah* candidates have tin ears? That ain’t the fault of those who try and train them either. At one time composer Sholom Secunda said that the most important qualification for a cantor was the voice. He was correct in my opinion. In most Orthodox *shuls*, it still is. (Voice plus a thorough knowledge of *Nusach*.) In fact, if the cantor has a high pitched voice, or worse a trained one, that is held against him or her!

I recall that only tenors needed to apply for a *shtelle* (position) in Orthodox and most Conservative temples only a generation ago. By comparison, today in most Conservative and Reform temples as well, the cantor often is first either the principal of the Hebrew school or a teacher in one, teacher to adults in some aspect of some area of Judaica such as teaching chanting of the *Torah*, reader of *Torah* at services, teacher of *bar/bat mitzvah* blessings and *haftorahs* often to reluctant, unwilling and untalented kids, and lastly, far down the list, also the *hazzan* at services and preferably with a low and often untrained voice.

For the most part this role involves being the song leader of the congregation, often with the “aid” of a guitar. To be sure, combining five jobs into one may be cost effective, but the musical and aesthetic cost is often just too great. Too great that is for the future of Judaism. I wonder if the “One” is pleased to listen to what we sing in places where the “Name” is caused to dwell.

In addition I’ve noticed too often there is an unhappy disconnect between the text and the music sung to that text. Must every tune be a faux Chassidic-like jig or

Jewish Theater

BY HAROLD JACOBSON AND ROSE KLEINER

Shlomo Carlebach portrayed in premiere musical

FT. LAUDERDALE – Shlomo Carlebach, the man who singlehandedly transformed Jewish music in the 20th century has now been resuscitated by Daniel S. Wise’s libretto and David Schechter’s lyrics in a rousing production, *Soul Doctor*, at Ft. Lauderdale’s Parker Playhouse. Carlebach did this by infusing his music with haunting *Hassidic* vibrations on the guitar, and with his sonorous, soulful voice.

This musical, which is the result of a collaborative effort, by Wise, Schechter and Carlebach’s two daughters, Neshama and Nedara (and a multi-talented cast) is no ersatz construction of the life of a conflicted genius, but a careful and authentic portrait of the travail and triumphs of this extraordinary man.

In an unconscious (or perhaps conscious) tribute to Carlebach’s outreach to all people, director Wise chose two non Jews, Eric Anderson and Erica Ash, to interpret respectively the two principal roles of Carlebach himself and Nina Simone, the black jazz singer who encouraged Carlebach’s early explorations of folk-centered soul music. Erica Ash, as Carlebach’s early tutor is especially impressive in singing her jazz renditions and in her dance routines.

All 19 of Carlebach’s songs are sung with robustness, and yet paradoxically, with great sensitivity – by Eric Anderson who plays Carlebach, and a cast with gymnastic finesse in dancing – which has been honed to near perfection. The stage settings are colorful, dramatic and include something rarely seen: actors removing stage props in time with the music themes being played between set changes!

Soul Doctor is a frank rehearsal of the biography of Carlebach. It reveals little known information about his family’s life in Vienna where his father was a prominent rabbi representing the *mitnaged* (oppositionist) expression of Orthodoxy, (see Jacobson/Kleiner, page 15)



something that Lady Gaga might sing? “Know also before whom you stand.” I do, and that is why I *kvetch*.

Dr. Gold is a composer, conductor, and columnist to the Post & Opinion. He may be reached at: Drmortongold@yahoo.com. ★



Book Review

REVIEWED BY JULIE BLOOM

One man's overflowing love and compassion

This is a Soul: An American Doctor's Remarkable Mission in Ethiopia. By Marilyn Berger. HarperCollins Publishers. New York. April 2010.

To read *This is a Soul* is to be flooded with the important questions: Who is truly human? What encourages the cultivation of empathy? How does altruism develop and is it contagious? What role, if any, does religion play in doing good? Journalist Marilyn Berger's story about Dr. Rick Hodes, a Jewish American doctor who came to Ethiopia 28 years ago to help the victims of the famine, and never left, bids us to consider these questions.

Berger went to Ethiopia to write about Dr. Hodes, not only, as she says, "because he has devoted his life to ministering to some of the poorest people on the planet, but...what had particularly grasped my imagination was the way he lives in this impoverished country. He has taken some 20 poor and sick children into his own home and officially adopted five of them. He cares for them, feeds them, and sends every one of them to private school." These children, suffering from TB of the spine, growth-hormone deficiencies, cancer, and malnutrition are given second chances by this amazing egoless doctor. In a country where there are three medical doctors for every 45,000 people, and where more Ethiopian physicians are living and working in Washington, D.C., than the whole of Ethiopia, what drives Rick Hodes' to leave the comforts offered here in the U.S., for a life of difficult service as well as infrequent successes?

As Berger tells it, Rick Hodes grew up in a relatively non-observant Reform Jewish household in Syosset, Long Island. From adolescence, the bookish student seemed to grow impatient with the conventions of the day, and by the time he was in high school he was taking the Long Island Rail Road to the Henry Street Settlement

House where he tutored underprivileged children. When he wasn't doing this, he was raising money for starving children of Biafra, and then maybe because he knew his heart was pulled to distant lands, he enrolled at Middlebury College in Vermont, where he majored in Geography.

Rick became an "accidental traveler" as Berger puts it, by spending his junior year in Fairbanks, Alaska, and then hiking the entire John Muir Trail in California with a friend where he plotted out his future before coming back to Vermont. Upon graduation, Rick began his first of three trips around the world taking with him a sleeping bag and living on a few dollars a day. He reinforced his desire to become a doctor the more he experienced the poverty, famine, epidemics in India, Africa, Bangladesh. And when he took himself to Kalighat, India, to meet Mother Teresa at the home she ran for dying destitutes, his experience convinced him even more of the path he was to follow.

One wonders whether Rick's "altruistic heart" is a function of his religious conversion to Orthodox Judaism or whether Judaism reinforces his altruism. He readily quotes Jewish texts which support his world view and yet the sense Berger leaves the reader with is that Hodes' generous spirit, his commitment to *tikkun olam* (healing the world) is hard-wired into him. His moral compass informs these words: "I don't think I'm doing anything special or that I'm an unusually good person. I just like to help people. Once you see what the need is, I just don't see how you cannot do this. I'm simply trying to do good work and be a decent person."

Though the focus of Berger's book is this extraordinary doctor, in Berger herself we see a transformation from a journalist getting her story to a woman inspired and deeply altered by her own discovery of love and compassion in Ethiopia as she follows Hodes' example of caring for and thus saving the life of one of Hodes' young patients.

In the *Torah* God performs many miracles. A bush burns unconsumed, a rod morphs into a serpent, the Sea of Reeds parts allowing the Israelites to cross into freedom. Each miracle is a signal to the people that God exists, that God is intimately connected to them, that they are not alone, and that they are capable of doing extraordinary things. *This is a Soul* is a story about modern day miracles where a human being, not God, in his humanity and connectedness to others shows each of us how much love and compassion we are truly capable of.

Julie Bloom is a long-time psychotherapist in Bloomington, Ind., who sometimes

JACOBSON/KLEINER

(continued from page 14)

which was hostile to Hassidic approaches to Jewish law and learning practices. Shlomo and his brother, however, were early attracted to the musicality, spirituality and body language exemplified by the bearded Moisheleh (Jeffrey Kuhn), a Hassid of extraordinary energy.

Mike Burstyn, the preeminent stage actor brings his granitic integrity and persona as Carlebach's father, the distinguished rabbi who decides despite his wife's wishes to remain in Vienna to leave Nazi occupied Austria for the more congenial environment of New York City. There he succeeds in founding a small *yeshiva* while his two sons become entangled with the *Lubavitcher* movement. The older brother eventually returns to the fold, while Shlomo is permanently affected by the Rebbe's powerful influence and his own desire to serve the spiritual needs of all suffering souls.

The tension between Shlomo and his parents, the latter two both stalwart symbols of German-Austrian Orthodoxy is a constant in this production. It is the source of high pathos because the gap between parents and son is irresolvable as Shlomo is on the road to a stunning musical success. He moves beyond the precincts of his father's *yeshiva* to the wider world of recording contracts, appearances at international music festivals (Berkeley), communes in San Francisco's Haight Ashbury district, Israel's Modi'in, and as his health begins to fail, a poignant return to Vienna at the invitation of the city's mayor.

Carlebach's physical embraces of his female followers (in opposition to the prohibition of *negiah* [touching]), his marriage and subsequent divorce in Toronto, his devotion to touring in order to disseminate the message of love, his neglect of matters financial, his occasional distancing of himself from the rigors of Halachic principles – all these are handled with consummate delicacy and respect for the sancta which many expressions of Judaism honor.

And what of Eric Anderson, who plays the adult Shlomo and is on stage for almost two and a half hours of this production? His voice control, his sterling singing ability and magisterial portrayal of Carlebach's dignity, vulnerability and love of humankind are impressive. Much of the success of this Broadway bound powerhouse of a musical is due to Anderson's remarkable performance. ★



considers herself an "accidental traveler" by virtue of the fact that her children and grandchildren have lived all over the place. ★





Media Watch

By RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Jack and Jill and J. Edgar

There's no denying that Adam Sandler has a talent for playing rather awkward and puerile Jewish men who are surprisingly likable, even appealing. Yet when Sandler applies this formula to portraying a Jewish woman, the result is the awkwardness without the appeal and likability factors. This is all too clear all too soon in Sandler's ambitious but grating oeuvre, *Jack and Jill*.

Sandler plays paternal twin brother and sister Jack and Jill Sandelstein. Jack is married to a lovely wife (Katie Holmes) and has two children. Jill is single, looks a lot like Adam Sandler, and had been a caregiver for her mother who has just passed away. The film can be touching at times, if one can suspend both belief and disbelief. But to what end?

Jack reluctantly invites Jill home for Thanksgiving dinner plus a day or two post-holiday visit, at most. But Jill is both hard to take and hard to shake. Her tactlessness and bluntness and, yes, awkwardness, do not endear her to her brother or to others.

Sandler's Jill is entirely lacking in grace and in most social skills. Strangely and interestingly enough, the test in this movie of anyone's social tact is what they say about, of all things, conversion to Judaism. In referring to Jack's wife, a co-worker asks, "She converted, right? She's so cool. She doesn't look Jewish." Jack scolds his friend gently (after all, this is Sandler's joke) by telling him that "Gentiles can't say that," that from Gentiles it's anti-Semitic. But of course from Jews like Sandler it is the stuff that motion pictures are made of.

Jill, who is, after all, an obnoxious Jewish woman, remarks at the Thanksgiving table that Jack "made" his wife convert or "switch." The comment is meant to be annoying, for the point is made that Jill is an unhappy person whose inappropriate behaviors are worse when she is angry or unhappy.

What ultimately renders Jill happy and more congenial, what tames the shrewish aspects of this Jewish woman, is the Mexican gardener, a kind widower, and his family, and Mexican food. Jill is immediately attracted to the gardener and to some of the food, which, she says,



"looks like knish," though not necessarily in that order. The scenario provides opportunities to lampoon Latinos and their toothless grandmothers, but Sandler gets away with this because he is, after all, the gentler, kinder film purveyor of Don Rickles-like humor.

The problem here is that it is Sandler's image of the Jewish woman – or, at least, of a Jewish woman – that lingers. But at least Jill learns her lesson. At the end she asks her Mexican boyfriend, "Will you convert to Judaism for me?" But she is quick to say, "I'm kidding, I'm kidding." Are we to conclude that the lesson of this film is that there is never conversion as such, only "conversion-for"?

J. Edgar

In *J. Edgar*, Clint Eastwood offers an intelligent and touching, and largely sympathetic portrait of FBI titan Hoover (portrayed in a tour de force performance by Leonardo DiCaprio). The film is engaging, well-researched, well-acted and impressive in its mounting as in its every aspect. It traces Hoover's rise as a capable cataloguer (first tackling the Library of Congress, then the FBI) who wielded the file cabinet as a mighty weapon against crime and against those whom he regarded as political enemies.

The film chronicles Hoover's efforts to introduce new criminological tools to the Congress and to the public alike. According to the film, Hoover had to fight to prod the government to provide weapons for FBI agents, at first making a personal gift of such weapons to his personnel.

The film is a fair and detailed expose of Hoover's strengths and weaknesses, of his triumphs and frustrations, highlighting both his braininess and his dandruff. Though Eastwood makes the point that Hoover became rigidly "establishment," he never forgot what it was like to be an outsider, subject to the whims and graces of those in power. The film is much kinder to Hoover than to the Kennedys, who are depicted as rather flagrant in their carryings on.

Eastwood suggests that a repressed homosexuality may have been a centering

RIBNER

(continued from 4)

whisper it. Breathe deeply. Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes!! You will bring forth beautiful flowers and new fruit this year. Yes, I can! Amen. Amen, Amen. Remember to say Amen to conclude all prayer and blessings. Amen seals the prayer and blessing. Say it slowly from a deep place in your belly.

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



force for Hoover once he achieved unassailable power, but also resulted in conflicts and ambiguities in his sense of manhood which in turn led to contradictions in his public relations as in his private life.

Among those contradictions was Hoover's mania for gathering intimate details coupled with an aversion to destroying privacy. The film makes the point repeatedly that Hoover did set limits to the extent to which government could invade privacy, that, for example, he opposed excessive wire tapping and succeeded, in life and in death, at keeping his secret files on public figures secret. The film suggests that Hoover was not above blackmail when he thought he could prevent a figure, like Martin Luther King, Jr., from wresting public opinion from him, but that if trumped by such figures, Hoover knew when to hold his peace.

There is reference to Jews in this film, and from the very beginning. Hoover finds his calling to the FBI after witnessing anarchists' efforts to kill and to maim public figures and private citizens through vicious bombings. He first develops an (understandable, I think) animus toward Emma Goldman, an early advocate of violence as a means of protest, and successfully has her deported after discovering that she married one fellow, but lived with another. The suggestion is made that there were Jews prominent among the anarchists who set up a bomb factory in Paterson, NJ. A reference is made to a Stanley Levinson who is described as a "Communist lawyer."

But Eastwood's Hoover is no Jew-hater. (see Gertel, page 18)

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Biography by youngest son

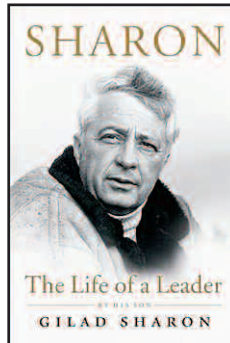
Sharon: The Life of a Leader. By Gilad Sharon. New York: HarperCollins, 2011. 626 Pages. \$29.99.

In 1985, Yael Dayan, Moshe Dayan's daughter, published a loving biography of her father. She not only reviewed Israeli historic events but also discussed her relationship with her father. Following that tradition, Gilad Sharon, youngest son of Ariel Sharon, has written a well-informed biography of his father with emphasis on Israeli leaders and Israeli history. His sympathetic attitudes are clear.

The book opens with a brief reference to the accidental death of Gur Sharon, Gilad's older brother, in 1967 when he was almost eleven years old. At the time, Gilad was eleven months old. He describes the annual reunion on the anniversary of Gur's death that brings family and friends to the cemetery where he is buried. This gives Gilad an opportunity to introduce some of his father's friends who were with him through his long military and political career.

Using many documents, Gilad traces in meticulous detail his father's work on the family farm, his participation in the *Haganah* before the State of Israel was born and his service in the War of Independence. He was wounded in the battle of Latrun and was active in commando and paratrooper units. His achievements as a young officer brought him to the attention of the Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion and he was commended by his commander, Moshe Dayan.

After a year as a student at Hebrew University, Sharon was called back into the army in 1953 to head up a group that responded to terror attacks on Israel. He remained in the army during the Sinai war of 1956 and the Six-Day war of 1967. His disputes with members of the General Staff restricted his advancement. He finally decided to leave the army; bought a farm; and entered politics. He became a member of the Knesset in 1974. He then helped to establish the Likud party under Menachem Begin who became Prime Minister in 1977 and who appointed Sharon Minister of Agriculture. More



responsibilities were assigned to him, especially in regard to negotiations with Anwar Sadat and to the decision to bomb the Iraqi nuclear reactor. In 1981, he became the Minister of Defense which involved his signing the first agreement between the United States and Israel for strategic cooperation. Also, it entailed fighting the PLO and the Syrians in Lebanon which, in 1982, resulted in the massacre at Sabra and Shatila for which Sharon was called a murderer, causing him to leave the Ministry of Defense.

During the next several years, Sharon was in and out of office until 2001 when he was elected Prime Minister. He served until he became ill in 2006. His son claims that his father left the country in far better shape than when he first became Prime Minister and his description of this five-year period generally tends to validate his assertion. However, the clearly and understandably biased book is devoted to painting a positive picture of Sharon and to running down his rivals. The author has fully succeeded in achieving his objective, leaving readers with the obligation to make their own judgment.

100 years of Jewish contribution to American theater

Jews on Broadway. By Stewart F. Lane. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2011. 231 Pages. \$45.

Born in New York in 1951, author Lane earned his bachelor's degree at Boston University before beginning his career as actor, director, playwright, writer, and producer. He is co-owner of New York's Palace Theater and continues to produce shows, most notably, the current hit, *War Horse*, which brought his fifth Tony Award.

His 2007 book is called *Let's Put On a Show*. This new book started as a history of the theater in the 20th century before Lane decided to focus on the Jewish contribution to the American theater, especially Broadway. He intends to follow with similar explorations of the Irish, African-American, and Asian influences.

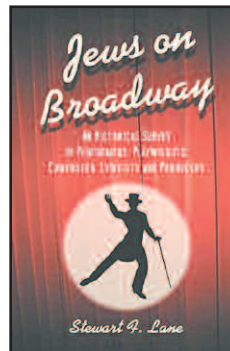
The story begins with the popularity among the Jewish immigrants who settled on New York's lower East Side between 1880 and 1920 of the Yiddish theater that followed them from Eastern Europe. The

leading producers, who also starred in their plays, were Boris Thomashefsky and Jacob Adler. Some of the actors and actresses who started in the Yiddish theater and later made the transition to Broadway and the movies included Edward G. Robinson, Paul Muni, and Molly Picon. The movement was helped by the growing popularity of vaudeville which featured such Jewish performers as Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, Fannie Brice, the Marx Brothers, Jack Benny, George Burns, and George Jessel.

As vaudeville flourished so did the Broadway musical with a number of Jewish composers and lyricists, including Irving Berlin, the Gershwin brothers, Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II, and Moss Hart. Lane discusses each of them before turning to the Jewish playwrights and dramatists who made significant contributions to Broadway, especially during the depression years. Among them were Clifford Odets, Ben Hecht, Sidney Kingsley, Elmer Rice, Lillian Hellman, and Kurt Weill. John Garfield emerged as a leading actor through the 1930s and 1940s. During World War II, among the half-million Jewish servicemen were Mel Brooks, Neil Simon, and Sid Caesar who were subsequently featured on Broadway. Milton Berle, Danny Kaye and Bert Lahr were among the Jews who entertained audiences throughout the war years. In 1945, a musical hit, *On the Town*, involved Betty Comden, Adolph Green, Jerome Robbins and Leonard Bernstein.

The witch hunt of the 1950s entangled a number of Jewish stage luminaries, including Lillian Hellman, Arthur Miller, and Zero Mostel. However, McCarthy and Rankin aimed more at the movies than Broadway. Six of the writers in the Hollywood Ten who were sent to jail were Jews. The decade of the 1950s saw successful Broadway musicals that had considerable Jewish input. These included *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* with music by Jule Styne; *Guys and Dolls* involving George S. Kaufman and Abe Burrows; *The King and I* with Jerome Robbins as choreographer; Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera*; *Damn Yankees* with music and lyrics by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross; and *My Fair Lady*, directed by Moss Hart with music by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe. The star of *Bells Are Ringing* was Judy Holliday, born Judith York. *West Side Story* involved four Jews: Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, Steven Sondheim, and Arthur Laurents. This chapter of the book also features an account of the influence on Broadway of the Catskills.

The book concludes with three chapters on the 1960s and 1970s, including (see Teicher, page 19)





My Kosher Kitchen

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Cookbook by Chicago Hadassah chapter

B'te Avon III, Tasteful Treasures from North Boundary Hadassah; 3-ring binder, \$25 plus \$7 postage and handling. Order from bigchapter.chicago@Hadassah.org or North Boundary Hadassah, 4711 Golf Road, Skokie, IL 60076

For the 40-some years I've been involved with food as a food writer, cookbook author and cookbook reviewer, I have maintained that cookbooks created with contributions by individuals were the best cookbooks. Grass roots contributors were creative, resourceful, original, imaginative and inventive.

Many of these were produced as fundraisers for organizations as is the case with this cookbook by a 40-year-old Chicago Hadassah chapter.

Having served as president of the Hadassah region adjacent to the big chapter of Chicago Hadassah gave me the opportunity to know and work with 10 of these women plus one recent new member from Kansas.

It was a great joy to peruse the pages and make notes of recipes I want to try. The three-ring notebook format is functional and user friendly and the enormous collection makes it an extremely practical book. Each recipe in this *kosher* cookbook has indication whether it is dairy, meat or *pareve*.

Whatever you want is here – 29 appetizers, 4 beverages, 43 soups, 39 salads, 5 salad dressings, 7 casseroles, 21 side dishes, 9 pastas and pizza, 20 rice and potatoes, 10 fruit relishes and molds, 36 vegetables, 26 meat, 47 poultry, 4 meat and poultry toppings/sauces, 28 fish, 18 dairy, 14 breads, 4 rolls and muffins, 23 bars and brownies, 32 cakes, 13 cheesecakes, 7 candy/nuts/seeds, 34 cookies, 10 frozen desserts, 14 pastries, 19 pies, 4 tarts, 23 microwave dishes, 8 slow cooker dishes, 36 holiday recipes, 4 *challot*, and a Passover chapter that is like its own book with 70 recipes.

There is an index of contributors with recipe names and pages and an index of recipes by categories.

Among the many recipes I liked are: Couscous chicken salad; cheesy potato bake; chicken and vegetable tagine; chocolate chip banana bread; orange snowballs; and chocolate chip mandel bread for Passover.

Was there anything I would change? Yes. Many pages had blank space which could have been used for a sentence or two by the contributor giving the recipe's origins, how long he or she had made it and why it was being included. Also the number of servings was missing from some of the recipes.

If you're looking for a special gift, order a copy of this cookbook. It will delight anyone who receives it – a new bride, someone celebrating a birthday or anniversary, a house gift or a holiday present – and buy one for yourself.

Below are some recipes from *B'te Avon III*.



Broccoli Noodle Casserole

Pareve

8 oz. med. noodles, cooked and drained
1 env. onion soup
1 (10 oz) pkg. broccoli, thawed and drained
3 lrg. eggs, beaten
1 cup non-dairy creamer
1/8 lb. *pareve* margarine

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray pan bottom of 8x8 ovenproof dish. Mix all ingredients and place in dish. Bake for 55 minutes.

Oh, Nuts!

Pareve

1 egg
1 Tbsp. water
1 (1-lb) bag pecans
1 cup sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 300°F. Froth the egg and water. Coat the pecans in this mixture. Mix the sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Toss the coated pecans in this mixture. Spread into a greased 9x11 ovenproof pan. Bake for 40 minutes. Stir every 10 minutes. Spread onto a cookie sheet to cool. Store in a sealable bag or covered container.

Grilled Chinese Chicken Burgers

1 lb. ground chicken or turkey
1 (8 oz.) can water chestnuts, drained and finely chopped
1/2 cup cilantro, chopped fine
1 green onion, minced
1 tsp. five-spice powder
1/4 cup bread crumbs, ground fine
1/3 cup hoisin sauce

AVI&ADELE

(continued from page 12)

"nip it in the bud" period of a relationship and you only have a number of clippers to use before your silence indicates that it's okay.

What's a girl to do? Let him know that his mom said this, that, and the other over her divine brisket and *kugel* the other night. Then point out that you were surprised to learn that she had such an intimate knowledge of your relationship (or your personal past). Keep it short, keep it sweet, but make it clear: any further parental faux pas of this nature will not be tolerated. Keep your chin up, and don't budge with this mama's boy's blunders.

Livin' and Lovin', Avi and Adele

To submit questions to *Confidentially Yours: Avi and Adele*, please email aa@letmypeoplegrow.org. For additional Jewish content, please go to www.letmypeoplegrow.org. ★

GERTEL

(continued from page 16)

He distrusts anyone loyal to foreign, anti-American ideologies, but not Jews or others who are loyal Americans. After all, the proprietors and staff of a famous D.C. store, Julius Garfinkle and Company, are credited in this movie with trusting Hoover's credit (after some fraud on the part of someone else with the same last name) and with providing the opportunity and impetus for Hoover to become known as "J. Edgar."

Are we to derive the lesson that Jewish individuals contributed in different ways, both positive and negative, to the making of "J. Edgar," the man and the icon?

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. ★

In a large bowl, place chicken, water chestnuts, cilantro, onion, five-spice powder, bread crumbs, and 2 Tablespoons hoisin sauce. Mix until just combined. Form into 4 patties of equal size. Grill until done and brush with hoisin sauce.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food and feature writer, and author of nine kosher cookbooks. She leads "Shuk Walks" in Jerusalem produce market, Machaneh Yehudah. ★



Book Review

By RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Penetrating Holocaust poetry by second generation survivor

In The Shadow of The Shoah. Selected Poems by Frieda W. Landau. Poetica Publishing Company. 2011. Pp. 79. \$15.

This inspiring and deeply penetrating first harvest of poetry by Frieda W. Landau, who has resided in Virginia Beach since 1998, is a most welcome addition to the literary expression as well as therapeutic sharing of the Second Generation of Holocaust Survivors, demonstrating the Shoah's lingering impact and hovering shadow upon the survivors' children.

Landau, who has contributed as writer and photographer on military affairs to such well-known publications as *Newsweek*, *US News and World Report*, co-authored with her late husband, Alan Landau, *Airborne Rangers* (Motor Books Publishing, 1992). She came into the world in 1946 during the traumatic experience of a pogrom in Lodz, Poland.

In her poem "Birthday" Landau connects her birth, an event fraught with natural risks, with the extraordinary harrowing circumstances of such an anti-Semitic attack. "I was born in Poland. In Lodz. In June/In the middle of a post-war pogrom./I came into the world kicking and screaming/ While those outside screamed hatred of my kind./They did more than scream: they kicked and beat and killed/The pitiful remnant who survived the/murders by the "master" race, aided/By the mob outside the hospital./My mother could hear them as I emerged/My birth and act of love and defiance" (P.5)

Like mine, Landau's mother is from the Ukraine, and her parents met and married in Uzbekistan while mine in Siberia, and I was born a year later in 1947 in Kazakhstan. Landau's family and my own were fortunate to make it out of Poland before the Iron Curtain was closed, making escape nearly impossible. The Landaus, like my family, found shelter in

Displaced Persons Camps in Austria and Germany where Frieda's sister Beverly was born in Munich and my sister Esther in Wetzlar.

The Landaus arrived in the United States in 1951, in time to celebrate Frieda's 5th birthday. Settling in Brooklyn, Landau vividly recalls the Holocaust survivors who became close friends of the family, substituting in a way for murdered relatives. The friends were unaware that the little girl understood their terrifying reminiscing. "I sit in the corner, listening wide-eyed/As the grownups talk about the time/The ovens worked overtime and/All roads led to Auschwitz./They're speaking in German,/Thinking I won't understand./They forget that German was my first language,/Not the "hoch" German of the north, but the softer/Bayrisch, the dialect of Bavaria" (P. 1).

Landau picked up the German language from her German nanny though as Landau recounts in the poem "Mamaloshen," her Yiddish means much to her as she bemoans the danger of losing it, "But in my dreams, I still speak the mother tongue" (P. 26). Yiddish is also my first language, before Hebrew took over, following my family's arrival in Israel in 1949 when I was three and a half years old.

Painful is the loss of close relatives along with a double loss of growing up without having them around. In "The Grandmother I Never Knew," the poet ponders pointedly, painfully and powerfully, "You who gave me my face and my name/Did you know what was coming/Did you know how soon/Did you know how hard/the darkness would fall on your world/Is that what clouds your face/Or are you only squinting into the sun" (P.4).

Landau recalls being honored in New York's PS 139 to greet then Vice-President Richard Nixon on Flag Day, but has also not forgotten her teacher's bigoted comment she managed to overhear, "Lamenting the choice of a dirty/Refugee kid instead of a real American/On such a momentous occasion" (P.9).

In the book's Introduction, the poet wisely highlights the ongoing role of the past, in shaping both present and future, individually and collectively, as she thoughtfully engages us in the trying issues, the uneven human journey that the Shoah provided her. "The past is always there, barely glimpsed/Through the corner of your eye,/A presence felt more than seen/Tugging at your mind,/Catching you unawares,/Casting a long shadow/ Subsuming the future.

On the book's back cover, in "Remember," Landau pleads with us through her losses and ours, to tightly hold

TEICHER

(continued from 17)

Fiddler on the Roof; playwrights such as Tony Kushner and Wendy Wasserstein; and newcomers. This material rounds out this well-informed account of *Jews on Broadway*. Two errors deserve mention – Lane refers to Robert Moses as a mayor of New York. He never was. And – he writes "Long Island, New Rochelle" although New Rochelle is in Westchester County, not Long Island.

The roster of Jews in the theater is extensive and Lane's own experience plus his research have enabled him to do a fine job of identifying their significant contributions.

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



KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page 20)

performed original Israeli compositions while The Animation Project presented animation films. Deputy Ayalon expressed the hope that the orchestra and animation project would be booked by the various diplomats for performances. The evening closed with Deputy Ayalon's staff surprising him with a birthday cake.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, cookbook author and feature writer. ★

On this date in Jewish history

On February 1, 1860

Rabbi Morris Raphall became the first rabbi to give the invocation at a session of the U.S. Congress.

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

onto the precious yet precarious link of memory, that we may preserve and save from oblivion's fate and Holocaust deniers those who should never be forgotten." Gone, all gone, names, faces, lives/ Last year's leaves raked, bagged and tossed/Trees falling in the forest of the deaf/When there is no one left to remember/Did they ever exist?"

Dr. Israel Zoberman, founding rabbi of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach is the son of Polish Holocaust survivors from Zamosc, Sarnay and Pinsk. ★



Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Our first Israeli wedding

We had been in Israel one week short of three years, and although we have attended many *simchot*, heard about weddings from friends (and from my daughter who has gone to many weddings), when our friend called to ask if we would like to attend the wedding of his daughter, we were thrilled. And when the invitation arrived, that was exciting.

Barry wore a nice white long sleeve dress shirt and nice dress pants and a blazer. I wore a long black linen dress and sandal heels. We met at Jerusalem's Inbal Hotel where the Egged Tours bus arrived just before 6 p.m. As 44 of us boarded the bus, one gentleman called it the geriatric bus!

There were young and old, religious and secular. The Americans were dressed for a wedding – nice dresses, long dresses, long skirts for women; white shirts and nice slacks for men. Most of the Israelis looked like they were going to a sports event including men wearing khakis and jeans and women in everyday slacks.

The bus left at 6; drove past Tel Aviv at 7 and continued past Herzlia and Pituach to Rishpon, a small village. Originally founded as an area of small farmers in 1936, it now has a population of about 1,000 with lovely, single-family houses and a shopping outlet mall.

We drove through a gate, across railroad tracks and down a tree-lined country road then a single-lane road to a parking lot, arriving a little after 7:30. After making our way by foot down an unpaved road, we arrived at Tapuach Rishpon, a wedding location. We walked on a wooden walkway with lanterns overhead to a desk where we received our place cards and table assignment. A bin was there to leave gifts and a barrel, like the ones used in lotteries, plus a group of blank envelopes on the desk were there to drop checks.

My daughter recently mentioned how expensive it was to go to weddings of her friends because everyone gives a check, and then it is more costly if you go to the bachelorette party. We brought a gift and noticed there were many others in the bin.

We walked around the manicured, grassy outdoor garden (a bit of a challenge for women in heels) where three stations were set up with hot hors d'oeuvres. Waiters and waitresses passed

others; one bar offered a wide variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages; another area offered any kind of coffee one would want. Tables and bar stools were scattered around the lawn for eating each holding a container of gummy bear candies on skewers.

A friend, also at the wedding, said she once worked for a synagogue administrator and the rabbi had a rule – no eating before the *chuppah*, otherwise, it was like “sandwiching the ceremony between two eating gorgings.”

The disc jockey sat on one part of the dance floor playing music loudly. The bride and groom mingled among the 350 guests who were a wide variety of ages and in a wide variety of clothes ranging from sporty to evening clothes.

Shortly before 9, people moved to an area which looked like a lush forest where the chuppah had been set up on a platform. Five little girls in white strapless dresses played there. A white sheet led to the steps.

Finally the rabbi arrived, checked out the wine and announced the groom would walk down to the chuppah. Wearing a dark suit and white shirt and tie, he walked down the white path with his parents as loud music and cheers erupted like at a sports event.

The five little girls scattered rose petals and the bride wearing a white wedding gown, her shoulders now covered with a lace jacket and a veil, walked down with her parents with loud music and cheers from the crowd, also like at a sports event. She stopped part of the way down and the groom came to cover her face with the veil.

The ceremony lasted about 25 minutes. After the groom broke the traditional glass, the crowd cheered “*Mazal Tov!*” and it looked like their close friends and family ascended to the chuppah platform to congratulate them.

Meantime, everyone else adjourned to the main entry area where 35 tables had been set up on wooden platforms and where food stations had been set up for the buffet dinner. Four hot entrees were offered as well as side dishes and salads. The disc jockey continued playing during dinner and for dancing, but there was no slow music which we would have liked in order to dance.

The Jerusalem bus group gathered by the bus in the parking lot at 11, and the bus driver returned soon after to take the weary group the one and a half hours back to Jerusalem.

Ambassadors, Diplomats and Animation

It isn't often that one gets invited to a social evening at the Foreign Ministry so



Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Danny Ayalon; Director General, Israel Office, The Jewish Federations of North America, Rebecca Caspi; and your reporter, Sybil Kaplan. Photo by Barry A. Kaplan/Jerusalem.

when we, as members of the international media, received an invitation from the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Danny Ayalon, and the Deputy Director General for Cultural and Scientific Affairs, Mr. Raphael Gamzou, we were eager to attend.

After passing security, we crossed a courtyard and entered the atrium where buffet tables offered beverages; sandwiches, cold cuts, finger hors d'oeuvres, veggies, fruit and desserts while waiters and waitresses passed around the room with Israeli specialties – *kubeh* (a fried dumpling with meat inside); *burekas* (a baked, filled pastry from phyllo dough), stuffed grape leaves, and *schnitzel* (boned and fried chicken).

We walked around asking people, “who are you?” We met: the Ambassador to Sri Lanka, in Israel two years; the Ambassador to Honduras, in Israel one and a half years and with whom we shared that my daughter had been to Honduras, learned to scuba dive there and loved it; a diplomat from Kenya, in Israel three years; a diplomat and his wife from Argentina, in Israel one month; the Cultural attaché from the Philippines, in Israel three months; and the Cultural Attachés from Mexico and China. The Assistant Cultural Attaché from Moscow was an especially personable young man who had learned Hebrew and Israel culture before arriving.

After a while, the assembled group was invited to go downstairs to an auditorium. Deputy Director Danny Ayalon explained that “culture is what binds us all, a basic way of human communication.... Culture is the greatest bridge to overcome political divisions,” he said. “If politics divides, culture unites.”

Deputy Director Gamzou then introduced the Revolution Orchestra, an Israeli avant-garde ensemble, which
(see Kaplan/Israel, page 19)