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*May it be your will, O our God,
that we be allowed to stand
in places of astonishing light
and not in dark places*

And may our hearts know no pain

*And may our vision not be so clouded
that we would not see
all the blessings of Life
that you have given us*

*Rabbi Alexandrai's Prayer
Berachot 17a*

Editorial

There is a saying that everything happens for a good reason. These days with all that is going on in the world with natural disasters and man-made ones, such as what is taking place in Egypt, one has to wonder what is good about them. This is especially felt in my area of the country right now where events are being cancelled and offices and schools are being closed because of record-breaking low temperatures, snow and ice.

Looking only at the immediate situation, it seems bleak. While experiencing a huge challenge, it may be very difficult to imagine any good coming out of it, but if one could look from a bigger picture, it might be easier to see.

I remember a story about a man who lived on a farm with his a strong and able-bodied son. One day a beautiful wild horse showed up on his property and no one claimed it. He was overjoyed to have it. Then while trying to tame the horse, his son was thrown and broke both legs. The man was overwrought with sadness.

The next day soldiers were scouting the area to find men to serve in a war that was breaking out. When they saw the man's son with the broken legs, they said he would not qualify. The man was spared the possibility of losing his son in battle. Had the man known about this the day before, his sadness of seeing his healthy son in pain might not have been so difficult to bear.

In October a tree in front of my condo was either hit by lightning or a huge wind broke off about half of it. Either way, before I could even call the property management, they were here cutting it down. I remember being sad about it, not only because it gave privacy to my residence by blocking the parking lot next door, but it also provided shade during the summer, and I had been so looking forward to seeing the leaves that were just beginning to turn beautiful colors. Where there was once a living, growing tree, was now only a stump.

When I moved into this location last spring, it was already warm so I had not used the fireplace. My last residence did not have a working fireplace, so it had been a while since I had used one. However when I saw all that wood being cut into pieces to be hauled away, it occurred to me to ask the workers if I could keep it for firewood. They said yes but to let it cure for six months before using it.

Who would have guessed how nice it would be in this unusually cold winter to have fires in the fireplace. With this type of tree and with the smaller branches, it did not take six months for the wood to be ready. I am able to keep my heating bill down, but also I noticed that firewood is not cheap and this wood cost me nothing. If I had known this the day I saw the tree torn apart from a storm, I would not have been so sad at the time.

About the Cover

Rabbi Alexandrai's prayer

Written so long ago, Rabbi Alexandrai's prayer is good to remind ourselves that despite the challenges we all face, sometimes daily, and some worse than others, we hope to come to a point where we can see the good things and the blessings we still have. We are lucky to have this wisdom that still comes down to us through the ages.

Konig has created many works with Jewish themes, including works that have a tallit image as a background. The Jewish-themed works range from calligraphy and design prints for weddings to comforting works for those in mourning, inspirational quotes, excerpts from the Song of Songs, other Psalms, quotations from some of the greats in Jewish history, home and personal blessings, and many, many more.

In addition to this large collection of Jewish inspired art, Konig has also created many other art pieces, which encompass a wide range of feelings, thoughts, and experiences, all heartfelt. All master prints are made up by hand, and then prints are made from this master print. All in all, there are close to 300 prints, all

(see Cover, page NAT 15)



Irene Konig.

I don't know if this counts as a "first," the kind that Amy Hirshberg Lederman wrote about in her column from the Jan. 12, 2011 issue of this newspaper. She wrote: *Making 2011 the year where each month I try something I've never tried before – for the very first time. Like eating a new food, wearing a new color or style, or reading a book I would never normally choose to read.*

Although I have made fires in fireplaces before, this was the first time I've done so in this place. I enjoyed this first experience in this new location, and it made me feel alive and appreciative for this new opportunity.

Another real "first" that I recently had the joy to experience was ushering at the bar mitzvah for the son of friends at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, the synagogue I attended every Saturday morning when I was growing up. As you dear readers may remember, my father, Gabriel Cohen, z"l, was very adamant about the importance of Jews attending Sabbath services every week. He used to say that it should be a requirement for all the officers and Board members of the congregation.

I think Amy Hirshberg Lederman is on to something with her advice to make 2011 a year of firsts. I have written how thankful I am to learn something new and doing something for the first time gave me that same exhilarating feeling.

Jennie Cohen, February 9, 2011. ✨

Shabbat Shalom

By Rabbi Jon Adland

Feb. 4, 2011, Shabbat Trumah
(Exodus 25:1-27:19) 30 Shevat 5771

This week's Torah portion begins with the words, "God spoke to Moses, saying: 'Tell the Israelite people to bring Me gifts; you shall accept gifts for Me from every person whose heart so moves him.'" I truly believe that every member of the Israelite community could answer this call as they all had gifts. Nothing has changed today. Everyone is endowed with some gift whether it is intellectual, musical, art, athletic, or the qualities of compassion, kindness, caring, loving, or friendship. We all have something we can share with others or with this world.

In the case of this week's portion, God is asking for gifts to be brought to help make the *Mishkan* (tabernacle) that is to be constructed as a dwelling-place for God. So I ask you what gift do you have that could help make a new community or help heal an existing community? Is it leadership that embraces the desire of people? Are you a teacher or someone that can lead children on their life's journey? Are you a planner, a doer, a worker, a helper? Can you sing songs that help others come closer to God? Are you the compassionate one who is always there to hold the hand or the organizing one who makes things happen? We don't always view these as gifts. Being gifted doesn't always mean the smartest, the fastest, the strongest, or the wisest. Being gifted is something each of possesses and we just need to be encouraged to let it rise to the top like cream.

At this critical moment in our journey, God understood the importance of bringing the special gift out of each Israelite. Our ancestors had lived as

slaves to Pharaoh for so long that living life without someone feeding them and telling them what to do seemed impossible. God seized the moment to get each person to look into their heart and soul and mind and say, "What could I bring? What gift do I have?" This small statement of belief and faith by God in these Israelites, our ancestors, showed them that they really didn't need the overseer, the taskmaster, or Pharaoh. God encouraged them to find their gifts and, thus, their potential. Isn't this what a parent tries to do with his child or a teacher with his student? Not everyone is the same and the value of each person's gift may be considered differently, but we need each child to be 100% of who they are and not let them fall short.

What is good for our children should be no less for us. We need to maximize the gifts that are ours. I know that our gifts, if allowed to flourish, will not only make us feel better about ourselves, but will most likely bring this world a step closer to the messianic age of peace, harmony, goodwill, love, and kindness. In essence, we can bring our gifts to God to help make the world a *Mishkan* that all can enter and no one is denied a place. This may be a dream of mine to help bring about the messianic age, but it won't happen unless our gifts are allowed to be present and, as I have said, we all have gifts to contribute to this future day and this future *Mishkan*.

When you light your Shabbat candles this week, light one as a reminder of the gift each of us has in our hearts and hands. Light the other candle to help enlighten these gifts as they contribute to a better world.

Rabbi Adland has been leading Reform congregations for more than 25 years in Lexington, Ky., and Indianapolis, Ind. He can be reached at j.adland@gmail.com *Mishnah Avot 2:19: Rabbi Elazar used to say: "It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task. Yet, you are not free to desist from it."* ✨

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Jews' News

Naming of the School of Sacred Music announced in memory of Debbie Friedman, z"l

Los Angeles, Calif. – At a memorial tribute to Debbie Friedman at Central Synagogue on Jan. 27, 2011, Rabbi David Ellenson, president of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, made the following announcement:

"A beloved member of our faculty since 2007, Debbie Friedman, z"l, inspired our students through her creativity and musical talents, helped guide their spiritual and leadership development, and provided them with innovative strategies to transform congregations into communities of learning and meaning. Our students were blessed by her devotion, and our faculty was enriched by her gifts and talents. Her words and her music will live on and shape the world of prayer in our synagogues and in the larger Jewish community for this and future generations.

"The School of Sacred Music will now bear her name, and will henceforth be called The Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music. We are profoundly grateful for this act of genuine *hesed* (true loving kindness) in memory of our beloved Debbie.

"Since its founding in 1948, the School of Sacred Music has been marked by academic and musical excellence, and the School has educated its students in the total breadth and depth of the cantorial tradition."★

Cohen expands leadership role for Jewish Federations

Indianapolis, Ind. – After rotating off the board of the Jewish Federations of North America for one year, Charles A. (Chuck) Cohen has returned to serve the organization's board of trustees. In addition, Cohen, cofounding partner at the law firm of Cohen Garelick & Glazier, has been appointed the sole chair for the Jewish Federations of North America's Planned Giving and Endowment Committee.

Cohen boasts a long history of leadership with the organization. He has served the board on the executive committee, as a representative for intermediate cities and on the board's budget committee. Cohen's extensive legal background in estate planning is an ideal fit for his volunteer stewardship as chair for planned giving and endowments. Further, his leadership will prove vital

to the organization's financial and operational stability, which in turn allow for continued success toward achieving the Federations' mission.

The Jewish Federations of North America represents and serves 157 Jewish federations and 400 independent Jewish communities, which raise and distribute \$3 billion annually for social welfare, social services and educational needs. The Federation movement, collectively among the top 10 charities on the continent, protects and enhances the well-being of Jews worldwide through the values of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), *tzedakah* (charity and social justice) and *Torah* (Jewish learning).

Cohen practices in business and tax planning, estate planning, healthcare, and employee benefits. He received his J.D. from Indiana University-Bloomington Law School. While in law school, Cohen also successfully completed the CPA exam. Upon law school graduation, Cohen entered the U.S. Army and was awarded the Bronze Star for his service in a combat zone in Vietnam. In 2004, Cohen earned dual community honors. First, he received the Jerusalem Medal from the Israel Bond organization for service to Israel. Second, he was appointed a Sagamore of the Wabash, the highest honor Indiana can bestow on a citizen. ★

Full-tuition scholarships announced for NCSY grads honors Dr. Lander, zt"l and Sarah Rivkah

Touro College, known for its close working relationship with the Orthodox Union, is offering full-tuition scholarships to outstanding NCSY graduates who choose to attend one of Touro's Lander Colleges in New York City. NCSY is the international youth arm of the Orthodox Union. The colleges are Lander College for Men in Queens; the Lander College for Women/The Anna Ruth and Mark Hasten School in Manhattan; and the Lander College of Arts & Sciences in Flatbush.

The scholarships, in memory of Touro's Founding President Dr. Bernard Lander, zt"l, and his wife, Sarah Rivkah, were announced last Sunday by Touro President and CEO Dr. Alan Kadish and Orthodox Union President Dr. Simcha Katz, at the Ben Zakkai Honor Society's (BZHS) Annual Scholarship Reception in Manhattan. The event paid tribute to Dr. Lander, a pioneer in Jewish and general higher education, a leader in the Jewish community in New York City, and a director and officer of the OU since 1938.

Dr. Bernard Lander served as president of Touro for almost 40 years, until his passing on Feb. 8, 2010 at the age of 94. He built Touro from a fledgling institution with only 35 students in 1971 to an educational powerhouse with more than

Chassidic Rabbi

By Rabbi Benzion Cohen

Our youngest daughter, Mushka, left home this week. She is going to spend five months in Eilat. She will be helping out there in the local Chabad House and kindergarten.

On one hand we are happy for her and very proud. She is now 20 years old. Most Lubavitcher young adults do something like this. They go on *shlichus* (a mission). This means leaving home for five months or even a year to help out at one of the Chabad Houses somewhere on our planet. For our young people, it is an exciting opportunity to spread Torah and *mitzvahs*, see the world and learn first hand what it means to run a Chabad House. The Chabad rabbis and their families who host these young people are also very glad to have some assistance. These pure and energetic souls are always a big help.

This is not the first time that one of our children has gone on shlichus. Fifteen years ago our oldest son spent a year in Sydney, Australia. He and a friend were in charge of all of the young Israelis living or visiting in Sydney. Every week they made *Shabbos* services and *Kiddush* for about 100 young Israelis. During the week they gave Torah classes. They made a beautiful Pesach *sefer* for 250 guests from the entire area. Another of our sons spent six months helping in the Chabad House of Venice, Italy. Another daughter went to Moscow for six months. Of course it was hard when our children left home, but we were happy for them, and besides our home was still full with our younger children.

Now our youngest is leaving home, and our nest is empty (for five months). Thankfully we have many comforts to ease the transition. We are very fortunate to have two married children and so far two grandchildren living near us in K'far Chabad. Each is only a five-minute walk from our house. All of our married children except two live here in Israel, within an hours drive. We get to see them often. Besides, our youngest isn't going far away. Eilat is only 220 miles from Kfar Chabad, a five-hour drive. She is planning to come home once a month for shabbos, and we can talk every day on the phone.

Why is she going to Eilat and not overseas? That is a story in itself. A year ago she began making plans where to go. She asked the Lubavitcher Rebbe and received an answer to stay in Israel. At the time we didn't think twice about this, but now we are really grateful to have her close to home.



18,000 undergraduate and graduate students across the United States and in Israel, Germany, France and Russia, (see News, page NAT 16)

How do we ask the Rebbe, when we need advice or a blessing? One way is to open one of the published volumes of the Rebbe's letters. We write our request, open a volume of the Rebbe's letters and put the letter that we wrote inside. Then we read what is written on the pages that we opened to. Many times we find an answer to our request.

Here is an example. Sixteen years ago our oldest daughter was 19 years old. I wrote to the Rebbe and asked if it was time for her to get married, and I asked for a blessing that everything should work out well. I opened a volume of the Rebbe's letters. On one page was a letter written in 1956 to Rabbi Yehuda Leib Slonim of Jerusalem. There was no mention of marriage. I figured that we should wait. However, the next day a matchmaker called with an idea for a match for our daughter. His name was Yehuda, and he lived in Jerusalem.

Was this the Rebbe's answer to our question? We did some investigation. The young man was from a good family that we knew, and his teachers recommended him. We told the matchmaker that we were interested. She in turn spoke to the boy's parents. They investigated our daughter and agreed that they should meet. I sat down with our daughter and told her about the young man. She wasn't interested, but I had a feeling that he would be the one. I said: "You know what? Just sit and talk with him for half an hour, and I'll give you 50 shekels." She agreed. In those days she earned five shekels an hour babysitting.

They met, and spoke for two hours. The next day the matchmaker called. She had spoken with Yehuda's parents. They told her that their son was impressed with our daughter and would like to meet her again. I sat down with our daughter and asked her if she was interested in another meeting. She smiled and said sure, if I give her another 50 shekels. I smiled and told her that I only pay for the first meeting. They met two more times and decided to get married.

I made a small investment. I took ten minutes to write a letter to the Rebbe. But this has turned into one of the best investments that I have ever made. From this letter I have been blessed so far with a fine son-in-law and seven precious grandchildren, may they be blessed.

Life is complicated and not always easy. All of us need direction and blessings. Do an experiment. Write to the Rebbe. For sure you will find guidance and blessings. If you don't have a volume of the Rebbe's letters at home, you can find one at your local Chabad House. It is also possible to write to the Rebbe at www.igrot.com.

We want *Moshiach* now. When we write to the Rebbe we connect ourselves to Moshiach, and help him to bring redemption to the world.

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

Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation launches "Intervene now!" Campaign

120 Million Euros Capital Campaign to Preserve the Physical Evidence of the World's Most Notorious Nazi Death Camp and Promote Tolerance Around the World

Jan. 27, 2011, Oswiecim, POLAND – On the 66th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in 1945, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation announces its "Intervene Now!" campaign. "Intervene Now!" is an initiative to engage individuals, organizations and governments around the world to protect and preserve the authentic remains of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp and the memory of the victims and survivors of one of the most heinous crimes in our history.

After 66 years, the camp and grounds, along with thousands of invaluable historical objects, face accelerated irreversible deterioration and natural erosion. It is the mission of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation to create a Perpetual Capital Fund to finance long-term conservation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site to safeguard it for future generations.

"The barracks, the barbed wire, and the ruins of the crematoria and gas chambers are the best guardian of memory; through their silent presence they ensure that nobody can ever deny that the worst of the 20th century's crimes actually occurred," said Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, Chairman of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation Council and former prisoner of the camp. "By ensuring the preservation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site and maintaining the testimonies of the past, we are, in fact, taking care of the future."

The Call to Action

"Intervene Now!" is a call for individuals around the world to become members of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation by pledging to preserve the physical evidence of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp and raise awareness of the tragedy in order to prevent future acts of hatred and intolerance. Members are asked to take the "Intervene Now!" pledge in recognition of "what happened, what happens and what could happen again" and pass it along to friends and relatives with a piece of artwork or literature created by victims and survivors of Auschwitz.

The "Intervene Now!" website (www.facebook.com/AuschwitzInterveneNow) will provide art and literature from victims and survivors of the Holocaust, new and archived photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau and educational resources that can be used in schools, community groups, religious organizations, etc.

The Preservation Plan

The long-term preservation plan was prepared by a team of professional conservation science specialists from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. The plan includes high-priority tasks such as

preservation of deteriorated prisoner barracks and guard towers, including reinforcement of foundations and roofs and preservation of architectural landmarks like drawings, inscriptions and wall paintings. The plan also includes conservation of hundreds of thousands of moveable objects and documents that constitute evidence of the crimes committed at Auschwitz-Birkenau, including several thousand photographs and negatives, approximately 6 thousand works of art and hundreds of prayer garments.

The annual cost to develop and implement the long-term preservation plan for these buildings and objects is approximately 4 to 5 million Euros. In order to achieve the required funding, the Foundation has dedicated itself to raising a Perpetual Capital Fund of 120 million Euros, which will be invested to ensure the security and authenticity of the Memorial Site for years to come. To ensure the safe and professional investment of the resources allocated to the Perpetual Capital Fund, the Foundation's Council has appointed a Financial Commission consisting of independent experts which, along with the Foundation's Management Board, is in charge of the investment process.

Initial Support

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation has received strong official support from the Government of the Republic of Poland, the International Auschwitz Council, and the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, along with a number of other countries, organizations and individual donors. Since the establishment of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Austria and the United States have declared that they will make significant donations the Perpetual Capital Fund amounting to more than 78 million Euros.

World Holocaust Remembrance Day

In conjunction with World Holocaust Remembrance Day on Jan. 27, 2011, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum held a ceremony to commemorate the 66th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camps and to honor the victims and survivors living today. The ceremony included a reading of the "Intervene Now!" pledge by a young volunteer from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation.

"At this moment, when the last eyewitnesses are passing away, the preservation of Auschwitz is becoming a truly shared responsibility," said Piotr M.A. Cywinski, Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.



Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

Adar I began Feb. 4, Adar II begins Mar. 6

Our sages have said that "joy is increased in the month of Adar." This month is all about learning how to grow and heal through joy and laughter. Joy is the greatest healer. Reb Nachman said it quite simply, "sickness comes from a lack of joy, and healing comes from joy." God did not create this world for suffering but for joy. The main reason we came into this world is to experience and teach joy. During this month of Adar, give yourself time to play, to sing, to dance, to be in nature, to do what brings you joy. Joy restores faith. The joy of this month is epitomized by the celebration of the holiday of Purim, when we are told to feast, drink to the point of becoming drunk, wear costumes, play and be happy. This year we are blessed with two months of Adar! Purim will be celebrated at the full moon of Adar II.

"This place is necessary for all of us. This is where we can most fully understand the tragedy of a Europe plunged into war and mutual hatred. Here, too, the younger generations can best understand how much we must preserve the site in order for the future to be different."

About the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation was founded in January 2009 by Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, a former prisoner of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. The mission of the Foundation is to secure the conservation and the preservation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site for future generations by implementing a long-term comprehensive preservation plan.

Four separate bodies of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation (the Council, the International Committee, The Management Board, and the Financial Commission) ensure the transparency, efficiency, and accountability of their respective work. The Foundation's Statutes regulate the structural and functional integrity of the process behind the creation and management of the Perpetual Capital Fund. Moreover, the Foundation has established a professional relationship with two renowned companies that advise it on legal matters, accounting and bookkeeping. The Foundation's primary objective is to secure the safety of the Perpetual Capital fund and guarantee transparency with respect to the disposal of funds. ✨

The Gemara says, "Someone who wants a fortune should plant it in Adar." It should be a good time to invest in the stock market. Adar is also a very positive and auspicious month for good things to happen on the material plane. According to Torah and astrology, Adar is the 12th month of the year, and it embodies the fulfillment of the divine intention to create a dwelling place for the Divine in the material world. The joy of this month is derived from the recognition that the spiritual and physical dimensions of life are separate but also unified. Experiencing God in our physical lives is so joyful, we may even laugh.

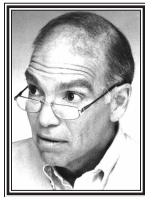
The Torah portion that we read on Rosh Chodesh Adar is "Terumah." It contains a detailed description of the construction and design of the *mishkon*, the tabernacle, that special place that would serve as a "home" for God. "Make me a sanctuary so that I may dwell among you" (Exodus 25:8) is read within that week's Torah portion. As the month of Adar is all about experiencing Godliness in the physical world, and nothing reflects Godliness more than the *mishkon*, it seems appropriate that we read about the *mishkon* during this month.

God is everywhere, God does not need a building, but we may. The *mishkon* was built so we would experience God in our midst. The *mishkon* increased God consciousness and awareness among the people and made the presence of God palpable. The Bible gives only a few lines to describe the creation of the world, but the details around the creation of the *mishkon* are repeated in varying versions seven times. It is natural to ask why and what the relevance is to people today. There is much talk among the commentaries about the spiritual and symbolic significance of all the aspects of the tabernacle and the service that took place there, but it may be much more than symbolic. We may actually need this detailed information in the near future. When we have the Holy Temple, it will all be clear to us why we have been reading about the *mishkon* for a few thousand years.

One of the reasons that I am inspired to offer a spiritual pilgrimage to Israel this year is to help people connect to the spiritual energy of the Holy Temple, the *mishkon* of the nation of Israel in ancient times. I hope that you will consider participating on this very unique tour. This Beit Miriam tour will not only include travel throughout the land of Israel, visiting all the national treasures, museums, nature spots, holy sites, but mostly what makes it unique is that it will provide access to the underground, inner, hidden world in the Old City of Jerusalem.

For thousands of years of exile, Jews learned how to survive as Jews without access to the Holy Temple, but that is beginning to change for many. A new paradigm is emerging and we are called

(see Ribner, page NAT 10)



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

Trying to make the connection

I guess that once it was really pretty easy. We lived in small villages called *Shtetls* or, when the mass of Jews came to America, we settled in Jewish neighborhoods (okay – first came the ghettos of the east side of New York). Can you find a “Jewish neighborhood” today? I guess. I’m not counting the Hassidic enclaves that seek to shut out the rest of the world. Plain old Jewish neighborhoods with two or three synagogues – spreading the denominations around; a Jewish bakery, a deli. I’m sure there are still some in Cleveland, Northern New Jersey and maybe even Los Angeles.

Yeah, there you didn’t need to make a connection. You lived in it. But today? We have so many disconnected Jews – way beyond unaffiliated, totally disconnected. Deep inside every Jew who feels distant from their heritage and their people there beats a need for re-connecting. For finding that spark that will allow them to say “yeah, I get it. This means something to me. I feel it. I want it.”

But how? In my time, we had benchmarks. Pretty solid ones. Holocaust, Israel and their wars, blatant anti-Semitism. God Bless America. We have really assimilated. Jews sit on the boards of major corporations; we are well into the national political scene; and of course there are no more Jewish neighborhoods. So, the kids meet each other at school, at college, clubs, events – there are more non-Jews than Jews so of course the odds are that the son-in-law or daughter-in-law your daughter or son is bringing home could well be a non-Jew, and the religion and the traditions could be swept aside in the name of unity and peace.

There is an organization – although they do not want to be called that – named “Reboot.” It is where young, mostly affluent Jews meet once a year in a retreat located in the mountains of Utah to explore their own roots. According to what I have been able to gather and read, it has had some amazing successes and opened a lot of new routes to satisfying Jewish connections.

And this is as it should be. Some years ago I happened to be in a meeting where one of the participants was a “Futurist,” one of those guys who looks at the world and then makes some predictions and observations on where the world is going and where it might be down the road. They do not pretend to be oracles, mystics or even right. It is in the nature of probability that they deal.

This guy had an interesting approach to his Judaism. He said that the major

religions each had “icons.” For the Christians it was the cross. As he said, taking his hand and chopping down in a straight line “Here!” and then taking the same arm and making a horizontal move “At this Place.” That was Christianity based on a single event at a definitive place. Moslems, he said had a book. It was in that book that all the rules were written. To Moslems, this is the final answer and if you do not accept this, you are an unbeliever, an infidel. Ya know, I’ve met some Christians who feel that way about Jews as well. At any rate, he said “look at us, the Jews. We have a scroll, on which is written our Torah. The scroll is like a video tape...it continues to record and update and modernize without losing its roots.”

Well, I don’t know. I kinda got it then, but as time has traveled by, I think that Reboot is on to something. My grandkids are getting to the time of life where they are forming their own ideas on what they are as Jews. Their parents, our children, have different ideas than we did at their age. And there is nothing wrong with any of that.

The generation that is involved with Reboot is one of mobile communication, constant Twitter and friends they have never met. They of course will approach any question in their lives from a different perspective. Let them. Bless them. At least they are thinking about it.

The Jews of Reboot are forming ideas about Shabbat. They even have a group called “UnPlug” that turns off all devices and “chills” on Shabbat. Hey – so does my Orthodox daughter, whose ideas of Orthodox Judaism stray a bit from that mainstream thinking. Not that there is anything wrong with that! Bless her and her home in Jerusalem.

So, I guess the lesson of all this is that we Jews have lived and thrived far beyond our predicted demise. A philosopher studying Jewish life said once “They should either be the largest religion on Earth or have disappeared long ago.” Well, we did neither. We exist, in many ways we thrive. The Holocaust wiped out a lot. But we have regrouped and moved on and continue to contribute to the world. Israel is a shining light as the “Start-Up Nation” with more high-tech start-ups per capita than any other nation on Earth. We are diverse within ourselves. We prosper because we change. Yes, we have our fundamentalists who are as out of touch as those of other religions. But we have a thriving, vibrant generation that is finding their way.

Bless ‘em. May they find the road home, and may it look as inviting to them as it should. DorV’Dor, right?

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



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

Being a Jew is life-long journey

Aaron was only 9 years old the first time he was attacked for being a Jew. He wasn’t called a “dirty Jew”, “kike,” or “Christ-killer” by a taunting bully or Anti-Semitic neighbor. His assault came from the inside, from a fellow student at the Hebrew Day School he attended.

“You’re hardly Jewish, you know. You don’t eat kosher and you never go to synagogue,” Benny said to him. “You’re hardly even Jewish.”

To even the most assimilated Jew, the accusation of being a “bad Jew” cuts to the core. For while most of us can tolerate a wide variety of character assaults, to be accused of being a bad Jew feels different and much worse.

Why is it that within the Jewish religion, which encompasses a broad spectrum of ideas, rituals, traditions, foods and cultures, we are so quick to judge one another from the standpoint of where we are in our relationship to Judaism? Is it simply human nature to judge others based on our own choices or do we really believe that we are better Jews (and better people) because of the rituals we observe, the synagogues we attend, the committees we volunteer for and the charities we support?

Asked in another way: Does the fact that Stuart keeps kosher make him a better Jew than Eric, who enjoys an occasional cheeseburger but gives regularly to the Jewish Federation? It may make them different Jews, but must we place a value on those differences, distinguishing them as better or worse.

Shouldn’t the focus of our inquiry be whether we are engaged Jews, evolving Jews, questioning Jews and caring Jews rather than whether we are ‘as good as the Goldberg family’ Jews? Shouldn’t we look at ourselves and ask ourselves how the Jewish tradition can provide a framework for meaning and purpose and enrich and inform our lives and communities?

Being a Jew is a life-long process. From the moment a Jewish baby enters the world, he or she does so with a different set of parents, opportunities, expectations, challenges, and responsibilities. Judaism teaches that each one of us is unique. From this we understand that each one of us will encounter and embrace the Torah and its ideals in ways that are unique to us.

What that means for each person will inevitably be different. For some it may mean studying Torah or joining a synagogue. For others it may mean creating a Jewish home by filling it

with Jewish books, music, and traditions. For still others, being Jewish may involve participating in social action programs or working out at the Jewish Community Center.

The fact that the point of entry differs for everyone matters little as long as the pursuit enhances our awareness and appreciation of what it means to be Jewish. We are lucky to be part of a culture, religion and group of people who embrace a multitude of traditions and teachings that enable us, at their core, to become better human beings.

The Hebrew term for Jewish law is *Halacha*, which means path. We do ourselves and other Jews an injustice if we fail to acknowledge that walking along the Jewish path is an evolving, fluid process, with each new step bringing awareness and understanding that will guide us as we pursue our unique destinies.

Respect and love for one another, not just as human beings but as Jewish human beings is derived from our ability to recognize and value not just the similarities between us but the differences as well.

A favorite saying of the rabbis of Yavneh was:

*“I am a creature of God
and my neighbor is also a creature of God.
I work in the city
and he works in the country.
I rise early for my work
and he rises early for his work.
Just as he cannot excel in my work,
I cannot excel in his work.
Will you say that I do great things
and he does small things?
We have learned that it doesn’t matter
whether a person does much or little, as
long as he directs his heart to heaven.”
~ Babylonian Talmud, Brachot, 17a*

When asked if he put on *tefillin* each morning, the German Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig responded “Not yet.” He knew he was not ready to commit but he didn’t close the door on the possibility that someday he might be. What a powerful message for us today – to envision the potential that remains open to each of us as we journey on our Jewish path.

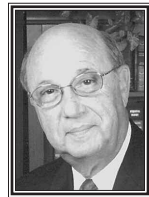
Lederman is an award winning author, Jewish educator, public speaker and attorney who lives in Tucson. Visit her website at amyhirshberglederman.com. ★

On this date in Jewish history

On February 9, 1807

The French Sanhedrin opened its first session.

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



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

Where is God?

A couple had two little boys, ages 8 and 10, who were excessively mischievous. The two were always getting into trouble and their parents could be assured that if any mischief occurred in their town, their two young sons were in some way involved. The parents were at their wits' end as to what to do about their sons' behavior. The mother had heard that a rabbi in town had been successful in disciplining children in the past (not by hitting them on their fingers if they mispronounce their Hebrew lessons), so she asked her husband if he thought they should send the boys to speak with the rabbi.

The husband said, "We might as well. We need to do something before I really lose my temper!"

The rabbi agreed to speak with the boys but asked to see them individually. The 8-year-old went to meet him first. The rabbi sat the boy down and asked him sternly, "Where is God?" The boy made no response, so the rabbi repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "Where is God?" Again the boy made no attempt to answer. So the rabbi raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face, "Where is God?"

At that the boy bolted from the room and ran directly home, slamming himself in the closet. His older brother followed him into the closet and asked what happened. The younger brother replied, "We are in big trouble this time. God is missing, and they think we did it!"

I thought of this story when recounting the many deeds of benevolence performed by so many. Many things happen during our journey of life – happy as well as sad events occur that give us pause. Sometimes we wonder about the existence of God and even question God's participation in our lives. Some even doubt that God is a reality. How could bad things happen to good people? How is it possible for children to suffer? Why is there poverty and hunger?

The questions are, in some instances, mind boggling. But then I look around and see the wonders of God in the works of His creation – you! The men and women who strive to bring meaning to our lives through our religious expressions are the personification of a truth – and that truth is that God works through us to accomplish the impossible. We are a practical people. We do not wait for miracles to happen – we create these miracles that give us strength and purpose and meaning.

(see Wiener, page NAT 7)



The Art of Observation

BY RABBI ALLEN H. PODET

A Gentile Kibbutz in Texas

We gathered at Cindy's house for an Adult Ed on: "A Gentile Kibbutz in Texas." David, Cheri, Cindy, Rocky and Dixie, and Valerie Jill and myself. We enjoyed a lively discussion and ate (too much) great soul food to fortify us against the 4°F (17 below zero Celsius) weather. And here is what we learned.

One could make a case that the Jews invented the kibbutz. Those who have lived on a kibbutz in Israel – and a surprising number of American Jews seem to have done so – know that the socialist principle, best expressed in the teachings of Karl Marx in 1875 (in his Gotha paper), is the ruling policy: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

When I lived on Kibbutz Magal (meaning: "sickle") in northern Israel, I was a smoker. Every so often, I would go to the storehouse and tell the clerk, "I'm out of cigarettes," and he would hand me a fresh carton. No money changed hands. It was a pure socialist society.

The same procedure was followed for a new pair of shoes. Or clothing, or books, or a new TV if the kibbutz could afford it. This is the pure socialist life. Young people who went off campus for a trip to town or a movie had to be taught the value of a shekel, for they had never had occasion to use one.

The Soviet Communists, who were never able to establish a pure socialism, settled in the end for a dictatorship by the Party, which meant in practice a great many broken eggs for a precious few omelets. But they remained forever hostile to the Israelis for succeeding in living the socialist life with the kibbutz movement.

On our recent visit to Texas to see the Sage of Waco, we discovered an American kibbutz in Texas. It is called "Heritage Homestead," and it lives, like Kibbutz Magal, according to the pure socialist policy. We were shown around by two Israeli members who have been part of the commune for over 20 years. It is in fact a Christian fellowship, but not exclusive. Our guide, Shachar (a Biblical name meaning "Dawn"), is quite at home here. The fellowship is Christian, he himself is not.

The idea is to preserve in a living way the best of the ideals of tradition: craftsmanship, integrity, pride in one's work well done, a serious commitment to the common good, a sense of responsibility for one's neighbors, an open-handed generosity such as a kibbutz at its best engenders.

Unlike the Amish, they do not shun electric power or motors. It is basically a

farming cum handicrafts community, and the land is worked by a man and a plow behind two horses. They could, we are told, use a tractor, but the noise and pollution will inevitably distance the plowman from the natural act of working the land. He won't be a plowman any more, he will be a man who runs a machine. His feet will no longer be connected to the good earth in the same way.

Not everyone is cut out for agriculture, even on a communal farm. The woodshop is run by John, a relatively young, slim, blond man who has been there for many years, and who uses all hand tools. We stand amazed as he takes a small coping saw and cuts out a perfect tongue-in-groove joint by eye alone, with no template. When he fits the two pieces of wood together, the joining is perfect. We "ooh" and "aah" in astonishment. John smiles and says bashfully, "Well, it's not the first time I've done that."

Shachar, when he is not showing us around, is a miller. He takes us to the great stone mill, run by a stream of water, and we see how wheat, spelt, and other grains are milled into flour. To be sure, there is another millstone nearby, run by electric power, but Shachar prefers to use this one. It works perfectly well.

There is a respect, an admiration for the best of the old ways. The esteem for craftsmanship is everywhere visible. We see that John, for example, has almost finished making, entirely by hand, a violin, and it is not his first.

He teaches woodworking too. For a certain fee, you can take classes from him all the way from first whittling to making fine, highly technical furniture. People come from distant parts to stay, sometimes long term, at a nearly B-and-B ("Tell them you are here for a Heritage Homestead course and you will get a discount"), and learn pottery, grand-loom weaving, metalworking, tool making, animal husbandry, making woolen garments starting with the sheep, and working the land, raising and preserving your own food.

It is not a large community, I should guess about a thousand or so, so that you know everyone if you are a part of it. Two members of the community are doctors, and if your need is too great for them, I imagine the community will get you whatever care you need. The community takes care of its elderly, just as a kibbutz does. There are no dress codes, except for a sense of modesty founded on Biblical principles. The Bible, for example, holds that women are not to imitate men in dress and vice versa, so females wear dresses, not pants. Valerie Jill, my bride, notes that few men are to be seen in dresses either.

In contrast to Kibbutz Magal, both alcohol and cigarettes are not part of how they see themselves. An attitude of enormous respect and confidence – a firm knowledge that what they do and how they live is right, natural, and blessed by God – is everywhere perceptible. It is easy for me to understand how this life

attracted two relatively young, idealistic Israeli Jewish boys in America.

It attracts my bride as well. "I wonder," she asks one of the horse drivers, "who takes care of the horses?" That would be a big job, more than one person could readily handle, and she is assured that if she were in this crafts village, she might well elect to do that as her work. Not everyone, it seems, has to make pots or learn blacksmithing. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

As a means of expressing the religious element in Homestead's philosophy, Sunday Chapel is mandatory. It is, we are told, a sort of free, nondenominational Christian. I am not sure what the two Israeli Jews do, but I am sure that if we were to show up there, an accommodation could be reached. (Do they need an ecclesiast who specializes in Old Testament?)

This life pays rich dividends in satisfaction, dignity, a sense of integrity and oneness with nature, a pride in self-sufficiency, and close friends. The members live apart from one another, in private dwellings; their children live with the parents as opposed to the classical socialist kibbutz system, where the children are living and sleeping with all the other children, and are with their parents before and after work and, perhaps, at mealtimes. It seems the best of several possible worlds.

But, just as on the kibbutz in Israel, it takes enormous dedication. The doctors, for example, know full well that by leaving the community they could raise their standard of living hugely, but they choose to share the life and living standard of the woodworker and the potter.

Education is a strength of the community. It is like home schooling in that children are not sent off campus to spend the school day in the company of others who are not of the community. They are educated here, through 12th grade.

What if, I wonder, they want to go on to college level? I don't know. I do know that children, including children of visitors, are welcome to attend classes their parents are taking, "if they are well-behaved and respectful of adults," as one brochure states. Well, I should have said not "welcome" but rather "allowed."

The contrast with Israeli kids I have known is blinding. Many of the latter seem to me bright, inventive, inquisitive, very free of "in the box" thinking, eager to try anything, and totally without manners or respect of any kind. In a way that is good, but good or bad, it is not always easy to live with.

Well, could you live that way? You want to take care of the sheep or perhaps of the goats? Perhaps your niche is to repair village equipment and motors? Or to teach visitors – they got circa 100,000 last year – crafts and skills? To show the endless streams of schoolchildren who come on buses something about self-sufficiency and the pride of a craftsman in perfecting the work of his hands?

When I was on a kibbutz in Israel I loved it, every minute of it. But I knew that

(see Podet, page NAT 7)



Spoonful of Humor

By TED ROBERTS

Raytheon and the Rabbi

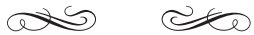
Can you believe it? Here in Huntsville, Ala. – the buckle of the Bible Belt – one of our fanciest, blue ribbon eateries, 801 Franklin, has conducted a *kosher* banquet. Strictly kosher. *Moshgiach* (inspector/monitor) and all. Chabad Rabbi Laibel Berkowitz was in charge.

This is no more surprising than if the pope ordained that all of his worldwide flock top their head with *yarmulkes*. (Interestingly enough, notice that he wears one. Why? An anachronism of the old days?)

The restaurant, 801 Franklin – one of Huntsville's finest – was the site of this feast – provoked by the need for Raytheon to host a group of Israeli service people for a program review. Rather than limit the menu to an apple decorated by lemon slices – a simple solution – the Raytheon folks served a bountiful pareve meal centering on salmon and fancy sides.

There were challenges as kosher-keepers can well imagine. The *pareve* nature of the meal offered some simplification, but challenges galore remained. What to do about pots and pans and dishes? The salmon, of course, couldn't be baked nor broiled in an oven that was used last Tuesday to cook a pig – an animal that chews not his cud or possesses a split hoof. Nor could the observant Israeli guests use the dishes and silverware normally used by the restaurant. And, of course, the food, itself, had to be purchased from kosher sources. Mainly, this turned out to be several fat salmon from Publix and Sam's.

The rabbi koshered two of the kitchen's burners, and pots were brought by the rabbi for vegetables and side dishes. He also brought from home his authentically kosher convection oven. New, unadulterated. Plastic eating utensils and plates were used. The meal



PODET

(continued from page NAT 6)

it was a temporary thing, I would not be there forever. My life was elsewhere. But a good faith commitment to Homestead crafts village, like a real and serious commitment to a kibbutz, means a good faith effort to make a life there.

Even if all the horses of the village were hers to love and to take care of, I am not sure if my bride could make a life there. I don't know. I will have to ask her.

Maybe later.

Comments? apodet@yahoo.com. ★

was as kosher as lunch served in between sacrifices by the Levites of the first Temple. To solve the many kosher problems, 801 Franklin, represented by Jenny Morris, special events coordinator, sought out who else, but our local Chabad rabbi, Laibel Berkowitz.

Consider also that this is a frequently occurring problem when Christians and observant Jews sit down to eat together. Due to the kosher requirement, the Christian host does not slap down a filet mignon with au jus gravy on the Jewish plate. He knows it violates Judaic kosher requirement. So often the Christians have a juicy chunk of meat (followed by ice cream dessert – also prohibited) while his Jewish guest eats something bland, but innocent, like fruit on a new plastic plate. Okay, in the eyes of our bible, so long as the fruit and utensils didn't mingle with treyf (nonkosher) elements in the kitchen – and a Chasid, like Laibel, could check other subtleties. But clumsy; one meal is delicious and glamorous, the other bland and dull – just a stomach filler – sort of humiliating to the Jewish guests.

Sounds simple. Feed five people a meal or two. It's simple if they are from Kansas. Not so simple if they are observant Jews from Israel. Your hospitality is bounded by literally dozens of rules from the five Biblical books (plus Talmudic interpretations) that govern food preparation. Fortunately, Rabbi Laibel Berkowitz knew these edicts like you know that a knife, fork, and plate are required. So, he presided over the meal preparation – even brought his own kosher oven from home and inspected every step of the cooking.

Interesting examples of Biblical governance of food preparation: Leviticus 33:19 and Deuteronomy 14:24 state "Thou shall not boil a lamb in his mother's milk," a common Canaanite delicacy. In the rabbinical interpretation, this is extended to a separation of all meat and milk. Skip the details. You don't have ice cream for dessert without violating the command of the G-d who made lambs and milk.

But Raytheon went all out – with acceptable food sources, kosher meat, and even a *moshgiach* to assure the ritual cleanliness of the meal. A *mitzvah* – a step beyond, as we say in Judaism. If nothing else, a generous gesture. And certainly well timed in the spirit of brotherhood – a few weeks before Christmas.

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

Bits of Wit

One-liner Jewish jokes

From: www.sillymusic.com/jewish_jokes_one_liners.asp

The Harvard School of Medicine did a study of why Jewish women like Chinese food so much. The study revealed that it is due to the fact that Won Ton spelled backwards is Not Now.

There's big controversy on the Jewish view of when life begins. In Jewish tradition, the fetus is not considered viable until after it graduates from medical school.

Why don't Jewish mothers drink? Alcohol interferes with their suffering.

Have you seen the newest Jewish-American Princess horror movie? It's called, "Debbie Does Dishes."

What's a Jewish American Princess' favorite position? Facing Tiffany's.



WEINER

(continued from page NAT 6)

This is how God works – we are the miracles waiting to occur. Each of us can make life more bearable. Each of us can lift the burdens of despair. Each of us can comfort and offer solace in times of sorrow. This is how God works – we are the legions sent by God.

We, are blessed because many men, women and children, regardless of background and age, display a dedication, not only to our own survival and continuity, but also to the larger community, knowing full well that each of us is responsible for the many – not just a few. Maimonides reminded us of this when he wrote that God wants your heart, because the intention of your heart is the measure of what you do.

As a rabbi I watch in amazement the many miracles performed, mostly unknowingly, in the name of God. We may not think about God when we perform these acts of loving kindness, but believe me, they are the miracles of everyday life. Each day our participation ensures that the many faces of God are revealed and we are reminded of this through our actions.

Where is God? He is sitting in every sanctuary, every pew occupied by all of you. We don't have to worry about God being missing – He will never be missing as long as you are here. And, if by some chance, He is missing, it is only because we permitted Him to slip through our fingers of indifference and disregard for the sanctity of life.

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

When the doctor called Mrs. Liebenbaum to tell her that her check came back, she replied, "So did my arthritis."

A Jewish boy come home from school and tells his mother he's been given a part in the school play. "Wonderful? What part is it?" The boy says, "I play the part of the Jewish husband." The mother scowls and says, "You go back and tell the teacher you want a speaking part."

Where does the Jewish husband hide his money from his wife? Under the vacuum cleaner.

What's the difference between a Rottweiler and a Jewish Mother? Eventually, the Rottweiler lets go."

A Jewish telegram: "Start worrying. Details to follow."

I once wanted to become an atheist but I gave up...they have no holidays.
~ Henny Youngman

Most Texans think Hanukkah is some sort of duck call. ~ Richard Lewis

My father never lived to see his dream come true of an all-Yiddish-speaking Canada. ~ David Steinberg

Look at Jewish history. Unrelieved lamenting would be intolerable. So, for every ten Jews beating their breasts, God designated one to be crazy and amuse the breast beaters. By the time I was five I knew I was that one. ~ Mel Brooks

The time is at hand when the wearing of a prayer shawl and skullcap will not bar a man from the White House, unless, of course, the man is Jewish. ~ Jules Farber

Even if you are Catholic, if you live in New York you're Jewish. If you live in Butte, Montana, you are going to be *gayish* even if you are Jewish. ~ Lenny Bruce

God, I know we are your chosen people, but couldn't you choose somebody else for a change? ~ Shalom Aleichem

The remarkable thing about my mother is that for 30 years she served us nothing but leftovers. The original meal has never been found. ~ Calvin Trillin

Let me tell you the one thing I have against Moses. He took us 40 years into the desert in order to bring us to the one place in the Middle East that has no oil!
~ Golda Meir

Even a secret agent can't lie to a Jewish mother. ~ Peter Malkin

Humility is no substitute for a good personality. ~ Fran Lebowitz

Submitted by Stuart Bagley of Indianapolis, Ind. ★



Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Prime Minister Netanyahu shook my hand

Each year members of the foreign press are invited to a reception and press conference sponsored by the Government Press Office and its sponsor, the Ministry of Public Policy and Diaspora Affairs. After going through rigid security at the David Citadel Hotel, everyone stands around visiting and munching finger food for several hours before being ushered into a large room to hear Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs Minister Yuli Edelstein and awaiting the arrival and speech of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Before relating what he said, one has to know after the prime minister's speech, his bodyguards usually whisk him out a back door. In an unprecedented move last night, he came off the stage and walked through the audience, shaking the hands of the foreign press. As I was standing by the aisle, he stopped and smiled and shook my hand. I was so flabbergasted, I didn't get to say, I represent North American Jewish newspapers!

Back to the serious matters of the evening, the master of ceremonies was the newly appointed director of the GPO, Oren Helman, who was Israel broadcast authority spokesman and was adviser to Prime Minister Netanyahu when he was finance minister. In stressing ways in which the GPO wants to improve its services to "our preferred clients," he said that "Israel is the only democracy in the world that grants tax breaks to members of the foreign press."

Minister Yuli Edelstein emphasized that "one of our tasks is to try to address the problem of the image of our country and part of our image is the conflict. We are trying to spread a different picture, a more realistic picture of this country. We are trying to turn the GPO into something more active."

In his speech, Prime Minister Netanyahu reviewed the main events of last year, citing "the need to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons" and the unmasking of Iran as key issues. Despite the economic pressure and UN Security Council sanctions, the prime minister said Iran is determined to create nuclear weapons and "the only

chance these sanctions will achieve their objectives would be to couple them with an understanding from Iran that if [the sanctions] don't achieve their goal, they would be followed by a credible military option."

The second main event of the year is the peace process, which "should be pursued in its own right," said the prime minister.

"I predict the coming year will expose another truth – who is seriously interested in peace in this region...I don't think there is a people in the world who want peace more than Israelis...No coalition will prevent me from pursuing a peace that I believe in...The Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity...The Palestinians are walking away from peace...I am committed to Israel as a Jewish and democratic state."

When questioned about peace with Syria, he responded, "I'm prepared to enter into negotiations with Syria," but they insist on receiving in advance the Golan Heights, which makes it impossible to achieve negotiations. The other stumbling block is the "strong relationship between Syria and Iran."

In a forceful response on another subject, he told the members of the foreign press that the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, just ten minutes from here, have a decree that if a Palestinian sells land to a Jew, it is punishable by death. He asked the filled room, how many of you have written about this? Three hands went up.

In another response, he told the journalists that "my government has removed any limitations on importation of goods into Gaza (except weapons) and are doing a partial easing on exports from Gaza."

Tourist ministry launches new pilgrimage itinerary: Tell your Christian neighbors and friends!

Ein Karem ("House of the Vineyard") is a little pastoral village of 1,235 acres and 2,000 residents, four miles southwest of Jerusalem, just a short distance below Yad Vashem, the heroes and martyrs museum, and on a road opposite the Hadassah Medical Organization campus. Every part of the village looks picturesque, from the eclectic stone houses to the restaurants. For Christian pilgrims, Ein Karem is a special joy, and for this reason, the Eden-Tamir Music Center was the site of the inauguration of a new pilgrimage itinerary, from the Ministry of Tourism, "In the Footsteps of the Virgin Mary" for the foreign press.



Mary's Spring where Mary and Elizabeth met and Mary drank the water. (B. Kaplan)



Church of the Visitation, home of Mary's cousin, Elizabeth and her husband Zachariah (parents of St. John the Baptist). Photos by Barry A. Kaplan, Jerusalem.

Why was Ein Karem chosen for the inauguration of the brochure? "To connect what is written in the Bible to the places and because many traditions in Ein Karem represent Jesus, the Christian community, the first saints and the Virgin Mary," said Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, custodian of the Holy Land. "The Christian world looks to the Holy Land as an important reference point of faith in their lives." (Also called the International Custodian of the Holy Land, Father Pizzaballa is a Franciscan officer, appointed by the general definitorium of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, with the approval of the Vatican. The custodian, or *custos*, is the head of all Franciscans in the Holy Land. Father Pizzaballa has held this position since May of 2004.)



Mosaic on the facade of the Church of the Visitation showing Mary riding a donkey led by an angel. (B. Kaplan)

Tourism Minister Director-General Noaz Bar-Nir spoke about the concept of pilgrimage and the brochure, which they produced for pilgrimage organizers and which they hope will meet the needs of believers.

What can one find in Ein Karem?

The Tribe of Judah lived in this area 3,300 years ago. Tradition also says Ein Karem is considered to be the place where Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, and her husband, Zachariah resided 2,000 years ago. Mary paid a visit there when Elizabeth was five months pregnant and Mary was three months pregnant. Later, Elizabeth gave birth to John (later

known as John the Baptist). The women met at what is traditionally called Mary's Spring. Further up is the Church of the Visitation, built on the site of the home of Elizabeth and Zachariah. The Church of St. John the Baptist is built on his traditional birthplace. The Convent of Notre Dame de Sion now has one of the guest houses of Ein Karem. (There are 100 rooms in bed and breakfasts or guest houses in Ein Karem today.) Ein Karem is also home to seven monasteries and seven synagogues.

Following the ceremony, Pnina Ein-mor, a tour guide who has lived in Ein Karem for 36 years and offers weekly open tours took members of the foreign press on a walking tour. We started by walking the path Mary walked when she came to visit Elizabeth, looking at the ancient terraces and almond, carob and olive trees. Climbing 101 steps, we reached the Church of the Visitation, where Mary said a prayer to Elizabeth, which is similar to the prayer of Hannah and reproduced on an outside wall in 70 languages.

After the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City (built on the site where some believe Jesus was crucified and buried), the Annunciation Church in Nazareth (near where Jesus and his parents lived), and the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem (where Jesus is believed to have been born), this Church of the Visitation (home of Elizabeth and Zachariah) the is fourth holiest site to Christians.

On the outer wall of the chapel has a mosaic of Mary on a donkey and Elizabeth waiting. One wall here is from the fifth century; the monastery, where a few monks live, is 900 years old; the first floor is from the 19th century, and the upper floor is from the 20th century.

The church was designed by an Italian, using alabaster to resemble marble. Inside the church, dating from 1954, are Renaissance-style paintings of women from the Old Testament. The end wall, (see Kaplan/Israel, page NAT 15)



Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

Jews in the art world

Two notable Jewish figures in the art world, in recent times, were art critic Bernard Berenson and art dealer Joseph Duveen. Each in his own way effected real changes in that world, as costs for paintings of the old masters skyrocketed.

The two were rivals and friends, as they fought to survive in that world. The monumental battle provided ample fodder for British playwright Simon Gray, who named his drama *The Old Masters*. He set the play in pre-war Italy, when Mussolini was in power and Hitler was already rattling his sabers. Since both protagonists were Jews, the Holocaust, as well as their professional problems, threatened them both.

Given the material, the setting, the historic era, *The Old Masters* had the makings of a significant drama. But alas, Gray's piece falls on its face, as we recently discovered. We had the occasion to see the play's U.S. premiere at Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Conn. What went wrong? Its credentials are impeccable. Gray (who died in 2008) was known for his dark, biting comedies, exemplified in *Butley* and *Quartermaine's Terms*. Furthermore, this production, under Michael Rudman's direction, offers a dream cast of actors Sam Waterston, Brian Murray, Shirley Knight.

Why, then, is this play so disappointing? As it turns out, the problem lies with the play itself, not with the performances. The best of playwrights, it seems, can falter on occasion. Though *The Old Masters* deals with intriguing themes – money, greed, the art world, old friendships, old rivalries, old love affairs, and imminent deaths – it does not shape up as a strong drama. The play is a mish-mash, lacking the arc of a

well-shaped, strong story line and a build-up of tension.

More importantly, Gray does not give the Fascistic background – and its threat to these two Jews – the emphasis it deserves. Thus, *The Old Masters* lacks the menace, the substance, the seriousness of purpose. Even though Gray has excerpted a true piece of history, it does not save the play.

In addition, Gray takes too long to get to this core of the play. The first act deals entirely with Berenson's domestic affairs – his romantic entanglements, past and present – and his diminished status as an art critic. But not until Act Two does Gray get to the long-overdue heart of the matter. Duveen, with a chance to sell a painting, wants Berenson's attribution, which he can translate into hard cash. Berenson, in turn, needs money desperately, and Duveen will pay him well for this attribution.

So much for this inept tale. Nevertheless, it is a deep pleasure to watch these fine veteran actors do their thing. Waterson creates a many-layered Berenson, with his array of conflicting emotions – petulance, pride, honor, vulnerability. And Shirley Knight, as his long-suffering wife, milks every one of her lines for its richness and diversity. She is a joy to hear, to watch. But it is, ultimately, Brian Murray, who brings this hobbling play to life. He makes the most of his wild, flamboyant Duveen, from the moment of his comic, exciting entry. And indeed, the play comes to life as he locks horns with Berenson through the length of the second act. Murray manages with every gesture to reveal the heart and soul of this controversial character.

All told, it is thumbs down for *The Old Masters*, thumbs up for its excellent cast – still a worthy reason to attend the Long Wharf show.

Irene Backalenick critiques 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.com or at: jewish-theatre.com. ★



L-R: Sam Waterston as Bernard Berenson and Brian Murray as Joseph Duveen in *The Old Masters* at the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Conn. Photo credit: T. Charles Erickson.

Travel

BY HAROLD JACOBSON AND ROSE KLEINER

The great hotels of Israel

Jerusalem's Mamilla and David Citadel Hotels:

Same parent, different personalities

Jerusalem — They are owned jointly by the same Israeli parent company, The Alrov Group, but they are vastly different in their design, temperament, texture and culture. However, they are united by the creative architectural genius of Moshe Safdie (the man who designed, among other things, the famous terraced Habitat Apartments at Montreal's famous World Expo in 1967).

The David Citadel (rated by Condé Nast as the second best hotel in the Middle East) has been around for a decade, but the Mamilla, just a stone's throw from its sibling, is only two years old. Both provide remarkably stunning views of Jerusalem's venerable Old City walls, the Tower of David and the Jaffa Gate. But the Mamilla has striven to fuse the design skills of Moshe Safdie and Piero Lissoni to create an ultra-modern ambience featuring original space configurations, glass partitioning, computerized light controls and a spectacular transparent-to-opaque liquid crystal lighting technology in its guest rooms.



Guest room at Mamilla Hotel.

Guests arriving at the reception area are occasionally treated to a live jazz ensemble, a congenial multi-lingual staff that will escort them to beautifully appointed rooms, provide information about the Mamilla's sumptuous breakfasts, rooftop recreational area and various dining venues. The hotel is *sui generis* in that it offers Israel's only home grown sommelier, Yiftach, who offers regular lectures and wine tasting exercises featuring Israel's mushrooming kosher wine varieties.

The David Citadel has the same bright and airy atmosphere as its sister hotel but in a more traditional vein and in a somewhat larger version (with 348 spacious rooms and suites replete with amenities galore). Among its most engaging features is the fourth-floor dining area featuring what is probably Israel's most lavish breakfast offering – 38 different and delectable choices from an eye-popping variety of omelettes, fruit, cheeses, coffees and breads. The dining area backs on to a view of the Old City's walls, its parapets, and an agglomeration

of small housing communities.

Safdie has brought his design originality to the hotel's outdoor heated swimming pool, to its spa and gym and to a delightful top-floor Executive Lounge where (for an additional small tariff) daily newspapers are available as well as free Internet, day-long snacks, desserts and beverages. On Shabbat and holidays, David Citadel's synagogue offers a comfortable venue for worshipers – with wine and cake available for Kiddush at the conclusion of services.



David Citadel Hotel.

The Mamilla Hotel and The David Citadel provide easy access to Israel's and probably the Middle East's most beautiful outdoor mall – the Mamilla Arcade, a majestic upscale shopping corridor cum pathway to the Old City's David Citadel and the Damascus Gate. It has become, with its array of fine shops, kosher restaurants and coffee houses, the in place for all Jerusalemites.

The Tel Aviv Hilton

In late November 2010 Israel welcomed its three millionth visitor in a record-breaking tourist year for the country. He was joining scores of thousands of guests from North and South America, Europe and Asia flocking to that gallant land on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean – to immerse themselves in the kind of history, spirituality, religion and culture that only Israel provides – or simply to have a restful vacation.



The Tel Aviv Hilton.

As a result Israel is busy constructing new hotels all over the country. Of particular interest is the emerging "Waldorf Astoria," under construction at the busy intersection of King David and Agron Streets in Jerusalem. The new hotel, being built on the existing shell of the old Palace edifice, will simply be Israel's most munificent hostelry when completed in 2012.

The flagship of Israel's luxury hotels is still however, the 552 room Tel Aviv Hilton, which opened on the vast expanse of the blue Mediterranean's (see Jacobson/Kleiner, page NAT 15)



An Observant Eye

BY RABBI AVI SHAFRAN

The past in the present

Several years ago, I made a quick trip to my home town, Baltimore, to crash a party. It was a celebration hosted by my brother, a *rebbe*, or "Talmud/ethics/philosophy teacher and counselor" in Ner Israel Rabbinical College's high school division. After many years' effort, he was marking his completion of the study of the entire Babylonian Talmud.

A small group of local relatives and esteemed rabbis were present; my brother (whom I taught everything he knows – about hitting a baseball) had purposefully not informed me of his accomplishment or its celebration; he hadn't wanted me to make the 200-plus-mile trip to join him. But I was tipped off by his wife, who thought, correctly, that I wouldn't have wanted to miss so festive an event in honor of so magnificent an accomplishment.

It was a wonderful experience, not only because I was able to participate in the event itself – the meal served in celebration of a *siyum*, or "completion ceremony," is considered religiously significant – but because I was able to break bread with my father, stepmother, brother, sons (students in Ner Israel), sister-in-law and her parents and siblings, to whom I feel very close as well.

I found myself thinking about my father's experiences as a youth in Poland at the outbreak of World War II. Although he rarely spoke about that era to his children when we were younger, I was able to learn much from the videotaped interview he granted Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation in 1998. And, at the siyum, between courses and the words of Torah and congratulation that were delivered, I found myself recalling pieces of my father's testimony.

After my brother expounded on the final words of the Talmudic tractate with which he was completing his course of study, I pictured my father as a 14-year-old, when Germany invaded Poland and he and his family, along with the rest of the residents of his *shtetl*, fled before the advancing Germans.

He experienced some hair-raising moments during that flight, including the murder of his uncle by German soldiers who overcame the refugees, and being packed, along with the rest of the townsfolk, into a synagogue that was then set ablaze. (The people were released at the last moment, through the intercession of a passing German general – who the villagers suspected had been the prophet Elijah in disguise.) Nevertheless, once the refugees reached another town and settled into some abandoned barracks,

the boy who was my father made an announcement to his parents.

"I said ... that I'm going to yeshiva now... to Bialystok yeshiva. I was supposed to go a month ago... They said... the war is not over, it's not settled..."

The war, in fact, had only begun, and it would come to take the lives of my father's parents and most of his siblings, not to mention countless other relatives. But he couldn't have known that then, and he was determined.

At the siyum, my brother recited the special prayer traditionally offered at such celebrations, putting "the Talmud" where the name of a single tractate would normally go. And I remembered, incongruously, how my father at 14, when he said his final goodbye to his parents, had never before been on a train.

"I [had] promised [myself] that I would go to Bialystok and something was telling me – maybe it was because I was stubborn – I said I am going to yeshiva and I'm going to go."

Those gathered at the siyum offered my brother their hearty congratulations and broke into song.

"[It was] a promise to myself, a promise to myself... they thought I was so dead-set to go... so they let me go. My mother, peace be on her, brought me a few apples..."

Several rabbis spoke at the siyum, including my father, who expressed his pride in his son's accomplishment.

Sixty-seven years earlier, carrying his apples, his phylacteries and a prayerbook, he boarded a train to Bialystok – only to be told by a passenger that, due to the war, all the yeshivos in that city had relocated to Vilna. When the train arrived in Bialystok the boy asked how to get to Vilna.

"Someone comes over to me and says... there is a train that goes to Vilna. I said I have no ticket. He said don't worry about a ticket – go! People were hanging from the doors... I'm standing there ... probably crying... something was telling me 'you must get onto the train.' And all of a sudden I see the train moving... so I grabbed the handle of the steps – people were standing on the steps and I couldn't get on the steps... as the train started to move faster and faster, people pushed themselves in and I got between two cars..."

I, too, am proud of my brother's accomplishment. He and his wife – whose own commitment and assistance made his achievement possible – deserve tremendous credit for the thousands of hours of hard work and sacrifice that underlie it. But at the siyum I couldn't help but think a thought that I know they would agree with, a thought that has occurred to me countless times about my own life.

All of us surely play a major role in whatever we may achieve. But in the end we can never really know just how much our achievements are due to our own will and determination, and how much to the merit of the choices, commitment and determination of those who arrived here before us.

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Rabbi Shafran is director of public

RIBNER

(continued from page NAT 4)

upon to claim our Jewish roots in the land of Israel in a new way that is also ancient, but also new.

There are so many miracles that have taken place in our time. We have been blessed with the State of Israel in 1948. In 1967, we regained Jerusalem, the heart of the Land of Israel, and we now can pray by the Western Wall. The Jewish people have been so excited and grateful to pray at the Kotel, the external outer wall around the Temple Mount. In recent years, we have been able to pray in the tunnels under the Temple Mount, which offers us a more concentrated revelation of the Shechinah, the Divine Presence than does the Kotel. When you stand in prayer by the "Cave," you receive a direct glimpse of the Holy Temple and what the mishkon was all about. You have to be there to know it.

I do not like to be political in this column and have even been chastised by some of my readers when I couldn't refrain. I do feel that I however would be remiss not to say a few words about what is happening in Egypt today. It should be increasingly clear to everyone that the criticism of Israel's human rights toward its Moslem citizens is both false and meaningless in comparison to the human rights violations that have taken place openly in the surrounding countries against their own citizens. Yet, there has been little media attention, even in the United States, and no resolutions at the United Nations against the horrific violations that have taken place in these countries.

In the midst of these large countries, ruled by cruel dictators, stands a very small country, so small it is barely visible on the world map, our beautiful homeland, Israel, a mishkon for the world, yet despised by so much of the world. Even without access to the Temple Mount, our holiest place, and even with its access to many other holy sites that have been compromised by Moslem claims and terrorism, Israel is still a radiant beacon of light and is the most beautiful and joyful country in the region, perhaps even in the entire world. In spite of all the tremendous internal and external challenges, Israel has one of the best economies in the world today as well.

It would be truly miraculous and beautiful if the countries of the Moslem world would be democratic and live in peace with Israel. I believe that this will indeed happen in the future, but for now, it would appear that our world increasingly resembles the ancient world in which the miracle of Purim took place. Iran, ancient Persia, has recently extended its reach to include Lebanon, through Hezbollah, Gaza, through Hamas, and now possibly Egypt, through the Moslem Brotherhood.

affairs for Agudath Israel of America.
Email to shafran@agudathisrael.org. ★

Israel is increasingly surrounded by nations that seek her destruction rather than peace with her. Let us not be too frightened or concerned, for we may even see a modern-day Purim miracle of sorts. This is part of our prophecies. May Mordecai and Esther show up soon.

Until then we can do our part by being joyful this month. The month of Adar, the month of joy is also about the destruction of Amalek, the negative energy in the world that is anti-God and seeks the destruction of the Jewish people. "On the Shabbat before Purim, we are told to "erase the memory of Amalek from beneath the heavens...you should not forget" (Deut 25:17-19). We are also told that Amalek will be destroyed in the messianic time. Each year, during the month of Adar, the energy of Amalek is lessened a little more by the joy we have in this month.

What does joy have to do with destroying Amalek externally or internally? We tend to consider joy as something frivolous. We feel good when we feel joyful, but does it make a difference?

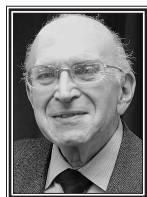
Joy is actually a powerful weapon of consciousness. When we are joyful, we are connected to the Holy One, to life and each other. When we feel joyful we are empowered to do what we really want to do. All sense of separation is lifted in the presence of joy. There is no split between the material and spiritual worlds. God is present in all realms.

How do we become joyful? We have to be very mindful of the voice of Amalek within us, the voice that says "I am not enough," "Nothing will ever change." Do not allow that voice to enter into the Holy of Holies of your being. Sit in meditation and ask yourself what you can do to bring more joy into the world. During this month, try to identify five activities that open you to joy. Make a commitment to be joyful, to be loving, to awaken feelings of unity in people and do this, not just for yourself, even though it will make you feel happier, but do it to reveal the Shechinah in the world.

Let's each make a conscious effort to see the hand of Hashem hidden in our lives this month. Nothing in our lives is an accident. Hashem is communicating with us through everything that is happening in our lives. Listen closely to what is said. Read between the lines. Remember that God does have a sense of humor, and so should we.

In this month of Adar, may we have glimpses of the *Shechinah* and be filled with joy. Please see my book, *Kabbalah Month by Month* for additional teachings on the energies of the month.

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As I Heard It

BY MORTON GOLD

Get Jews singing again

A sage once observed that "Jews are just like everyone else, only more so!" This is especially true in the USofA. Most Americans do not sing, and if they do so, they sing poorly. Admitting that our national anthem is not singable for most folks (the range being too high for low or average voices and too low for high voices) still at athletic events, few even attempt to sing it. (Such anthems as "O Canada" or "Hatikvah" are marvelous exceptions.) Some 50 years ago singers of popular or commercial music had decent voices and sang very well. (The list is a long one for both male and female singers.)

Those male performers who sell gold or platinum CDs (wearing cowboy hats even though they are not cowboys) or rock "artists" all "sing" through their noses and frequently slide from note to note. The fans (*mavenim*) who buy their CDs have no basis for judging. The medium is indeed the message. They wiggle, jump and otherwise cavort whilst they perform.

The ladies are no better. Even if they are sopranos, the average gal uses what is known to musicians as chest voice and does damage to her voice by taking the range beyond where she should or ought not. Our children who see and hear what their older siblings and parents applaud believe that this is how voices should sound.

The results are plain to see and have been for many years. Boys stop singing by the end of the fourth grade and girls, while singing a bit longer, sing in the lowest registers of their voices. When these children are called upon to chant their Haftorah, most have no concept of tonality (i.e., they have tin ears). The acculturation process decrees that boys do not sing (even if they could sing, they wouldn't because then they would be labeled as gay) and that girls try and emulate country or rock personalities. Because the cantors have tried their best, they cannot overcome that which their *talmidim* (students) have been exposed to practically since birth.

The rabbi invariably congratulates them for a "job" well done. Indeed, it was a job or a task that the *bar* or *bat mitzvah* only undertook as a favor to his or her parents knowing that there would be a party with presents and cash afterward as a reward. That their parents do not or cannot sing any better is also true, unhappily. Whatever congregational singing there is, is pitched in a key as low as possible.

Cantors, at least in Orthodox and Conservative congregations were invariably tenors. In many Reform congregations the cantor or "cantorial soloist" was frequently a baritone or even a bass. Today, it is a rare congregation whose cantor is a tenor or soprano. Even where they are, they try to pitch congregational melodies as low as they can manage.

In his tribute to the late Debbie Friedman, Rabbi Eric Yoffie stated that Jews lost their voices. It is not so much that the voices were lost. I would observe that they were merely misplaced. I recall that audiences at Boston Pops concerts, with Arthur Fiedler conducting, would sing various songs with verve and gusto. I recall TV programs such as "Sing Along with Mitch Miller." Americans were a singing people as recently as two generations ago. Indeed one slogan of the Music Educators National Conference was to get "America Singing Again."

I have used this column as a forum to point out the folly of having music in our services that sounds like the commercial music that pollutes our radios and TVs. Such personalities as the late Debbie Friedman wrote many songs that attempted to bridge that gap. Her setting of the *Mi Shebeirach* prayer is a fine example of her work.

Yet, in the scheme of things, what we need in all "streams" of Judaism is to reincarnate or reinvent the role of the *hazzan*. I note with sadness that in many prayer books, on the Hebrew side, the cantor is referred to as the "Hazzan" while on the English side, he or she is referred to simply as the "Reader." While it may be true that any Jew can lead a service, it is also true that not any Jew *should* regardless of the quality of his or her voice. Letting cantors do what they are still capable of doing would go a long way to reverse the situation that exists today.

I note with pride the achievements of such as Cantor Benjamin Meissner (retiring from Holy Blossom Temple) with his youth choirs, adult chorus as well as the performances of many worthwhile compositions by living Jewish composers. Or I could also point with pride to Cantor Jerome Kopmar (recently retired from Cong. Beth Abraham) with his 100-plus member Youth Chorale, who also championed new works of Jewish music. They did, along with many others I could mention, yeomen's work to keep the flame of Jewish music burning ever brightly.

With Jewish music month on the horizon, they could have done the same thing that many others have done and are doing, by simply importing some entertainer(s), promoting some CDs to give a concert at their temple. Events such as these do nothing to get people singing again, by listening to good voices singing music of worth, and knowing the difference between them.

This column is more than of sufficient length and I believe the reader under-



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Unrest in Egypt: Is it good for the Jews?

MILWAUKEE, WISC., MON., JAN. 31, 2011 — The situation in Egypt and in the Middle East is changing from moment to moment. It is not the stuff that columnists who write monthly should tackle. It is more the province of CNN and FOX News, but we, you and I, are Jews, and we are mindful of Jewish history, and so safety has never been one of our tools in living.

Egypt is many thousands of miles from Milwaukee, but like many of you, equally distant from the action in the streets, I am riveted to the news. Our local papers and local television stations are occupied with the Super Bowl, and even though I am a devotee of the Green Bay Packers, I can wait until the game plays out. What is playing out in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen is going to change the face of the Middle East. However this matter is resolved, Egypt will never be the same. And when you look at any map of the Middle East, without Egypt, the position of Israel in that world is even more astounding.

Israel has been on the sidelines, issuing no appraisals, but it is the elephant in room. While the future of Israel will always be in its own hands, and while this peace with Egypt has never been what it might have been, the peace has been held.

It was not clear when Anwar Sadat was assassinated whether any future leader of Egypt could keep the peace with Israel secure, but Hosni Mubarak did secure the peace, and even if he did not become the ally of Israel, he was not their ravenous enemy. He could not bring himself to the point of allowing Israel's experience and know-how to create a better life for his people, but he secured a very long border, and withstood the anger of Arabs who opposed him.

The Obama Administration, represented by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has been forced to tap dance against a background of smoke and mirrors,

stands my point of view. Also, authorities should realize that not every Jew is a basso profundo or contralto. While we should sing to the Lord a new song, let it be pitched in a key that most folks can sing it. While I am at it I would ban any guitar from being used at any service.

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unable to take a public stand, and fearing that new forces could disrupt everything that has been built. It, again, was not a perfect union, but it was the best we had, and prevented the Middle East from being Iraq or Afghanistan. Like the Shah of Iran, Mubarak waited too long to hear the groaning of his own people, and now that the window of opportunity has opened, it will not be easily suppressed. It would seem that his administration is on life support, awaiting a change in government, and because he has vigilantly suppressed anyone or any party capable of coming into power, the Egyptian military and world leaders have been dealt a very difficult hand.

Every revolution is unique, and what we are seeing is the struggle of the Egyptian people for a better life. The struggle includes frustration, anger, and yet, at heart, Egyptian Nationalists, do not want their country demolished from within. The scenes of the populace embracing the military, and the declaration of the military, at least now, that they will use no force, demonstrates the complexity of life in Egypt. Thousands are marching, others are volunteering to clean the streets and trying to protect their neighborhoods from looters.

Even though there are many nations with high stakes in the outcome, the decision will be the Egyptians' if they avoid chaos. Because they have Universal Military Service, as exists in Israel, the young men on the tanks are often their sons or their son's friends. The enemy is seen as the government enforcers allowed to beat and torture and kill.

And in the State of Israel, while there is watchful waiting, there is by necessity, 24-hour watches and endless plans on how to react. There are, most likely, constant calls to Washington, exchanging information and plans. With the moment-to-moment documentation through television and every kind of media, the moving drama is being seen by the entire world.

At 82, it is difficult to construct an end in which Mubarak, or Mubarak's political party, or the son that he has groomed for succession can maintain their positions. It is difficult to imagine what Egypt will look like next week, next month or next year. But one thing is sure, the people in Syria, Saudi Arabia and every other country in the Middle East are watching these events, and the wave that is being felt in Egypt is gaining strength and will be felt also.

Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc., and can be reached at hkarsh@gmail.com. ★





Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Barney's Version and Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps

Barney's Version is a wise and knowing portrait of a flawed Jewish man who shuts down emotionally when he knows that he has been used, but who has capacity for love and friendship. Barney Panofsky (affectingly and disaffectingly played by Paul Giamatti) cannot control himself from lashing out against those whom he believes have wronged or misrepresented him, but circumstances always seem to prevent him from doing irreparable violence. Though, at certain points in his life, his use and abuse of alcohol or drugs result in loss that he can neither accept nor recognize. He is, in many ways, a *schlemiel* on a grand scale, whose sins of commission and of omission cause severe damage in his life and in those of his family.

This is a surprisingly touching tale from the pen of a script by Michael Konyves, based on the final novel of the same name by Mordecai Richler, whose portraits of his native Montreal Jewish community have been rather vulgar and unflattering. Yet there is a remarkable dignity to this motion picture, and even to Barney. Sure, Richler, through screenwriter Konyves, does get in his digs at Jewish fundraising and at wealthy Jews.

In the early 1970s, Barney, the son of a scrappy, retired Jewish cop (Dustin Hoffman), is educated and intellectually curious enough to spend his post-college years in Italy to indulge in literary and cultural discussions, drugs and free sex. He marries a girl whom he believes he has gotten pregnant and whom he regards as a bona fide *shiksa* (as the woman herself puts it). As it turns out, the baby is still-born and is of a different race. Feeling used, Barney turns his heels and walks out, and the woman who has lied to him (Rachelle Lefevre) arranges for him to find her after suicide. Only after he was visited by her father, a bearded Orthodox Jew, does he learn that she was Jewish. The father's attempt to comfort Barney by disparaging the deceased only intensifies Barney's guilt and his scorn for at least one religious Jew.

Upon returning to Canada to work with his uncle in television production (and, for a short while, in Jewish fundraising), Barney is introduced by that uncle to the pampered daughter of wealthy Jewish parents, who keeps bragging about her masters degree from McGill. Her parents regard Barney's father as coarse, which he in fact is. (Barney's dad will ultimately pass away

at a brothel.) But she finds Barney attractive precisely because of his father's unusual profession for Jews of the time. "Was your dad really a cop? That's why you're not square like all the Jewish boys I know." It is interesting that she is disparaging of Jewish men, even as she is depicted as being annoying under every circumstance.

They have an elaborate Jewish wedding, during which Barney sights the love of his life, a guest named Miriam (Rosamund Pike), a McGill classmate of his bride's from New York. He falls so head over heels in love that he pursues Miriam to the train station on his wedding night, by foot, for the streets are jammed with celebrations of a Canadian's hockey victory.



L-R: Paul Giamatti, as Barney, and Dustin Hoffman, as his father in *Barney's Version*.

Yet Miriam (a Gentile Miriam in the film?) is no homewrecker, and this movie is not *The Heartbreak Kid*. She sends him home. His wife, and his life, become increasingly insufferable. His father had given him a gun as a wedding present, which Barney takes to the beach house for self-protection. The film generates some suspense when it seems that Barney might want to do away with his increasingly annoying and suspicious wife. Yet this expensively bred Jewish woman is no paragon of virtue, and has sexual relations with Barney's drug-addicted best friend, aspiring novelist Boogie Mscovitch (Scott Speedman).

Though Boogie suspects that Barney may have planned the whole scenario to engineer a divorce, Barney feels betrayed, yet is relieved that he now has grounds to detach himself from that woman. His sense of betrayal escalates, however, when Boogie states that he is not so sure that he owes Barney his testimony at a divorce case. The gun gets into Barney's hand and Boogie does disappear, but neither the audience nor Barney know, until the end of the film, whether or not he is responsible for a death, whether Barney discharged the gun into Boogie's torso or was simply guilty of being too inebriated himself to prevent his even more inebriated friend from heading toward the lake in snorkeling gear.

The film does defend some of its characters. When, at their first dinner together in the "mansion on a hill," Barney's in-laws refer to his father as a detective, dad protests, "I was just a beat cop. Jews don't get promoted in this town." Yet Barney's smug father-in-law-

to-be assumes from some of the retired policeman's stories about being left to his devices with vicious suspects by anti-Semitic colleagues, that he was not considered for promotion because of mistreatment of felons.

It is clear, however, that Detective O'Hearne (Mark Addy), the cop who wants to pin a murder on Barney, has no qualms about manhandling him, until Barney's dad arrives, and about making a crack, reflective of anti-Semitism, to the effect that Barney might as well confess because he can get himself a "smart Jewish lawyer and be out in no time." In the heart of French Canada Barney has found his own Dickensian Officer Javert (a la *Les Miserables*) who continues to challenge him many years later to "Be a *mensh*, like your people might say." As it turns out, Barney achieves this in some ways, but such achievement proves difficult for some of his dear ones to believe.

Detective O'Hearne remembers Barney in an obsessive and self-promoting way. Yet Barney himself is a person who remembers. His remembrances – a painting, a placement card – are sentimental but recall the loves of his life and his flaws, and may help to redeem those flaws. He does not forget friends and loved ones and expects that they will remember him. He helps people in sweet and quiet ways. Yet in a justice slightly poetic though cruelly neurologic, Barney ends up with Alzheimer's disease and his pitiable condition moves others to forget his flaws and to recognize his achievements and even the basic innocence and naivete that made him incapable of calculated cruelty and perhaps limited his capacity for graciousness. Was Barney's insensitivity exacerbated in some ways by the insensitivity shown to him?

In *Barney's Version*, Jewish traditions do give some comfort to Barney and his dad. They like to visit Barney's mother at the cemetery and to put stones on her grave. While not complimentary of Jewish women, this film does pay respect to Jewish mothers and features a sensitive and dutiful daughter (who may or may not be considered Jewish). It also features a reliable Jewish doctor, Morty, who has menorah motifs in his office and can recognize symptoms of Alzheimer's and of Barney's character flaws.

There is New Age stuff in this movie (like Barney's third wedding), but not the suggestion that such stuff is in any way redemptive of Barney. A friend observes that "the Universe works in strange and mysterious ways." Yet the film forgets to ask whether more substantive Jewish memories and sensitivities on Barney's part might have made him more sensitive.

Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps

There was a time when film and television would idealize the Jewish elderly as either gruff or indulgent morally-grounded mentors. Curiously, Oliver Stone's *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*, trots out ostensibly Jewish elders

who are shadowy figures, whether helpless cowards or menacing survivors, rather than worthy mentors.

Young Jake Moore (Shia LeBeouf) wins the affection and monetary gift of aging Wall Street mogul Louis Zabel (Frank Langella). But Zabel knows that his Wall Street firm is crumbling due to the machinations of his vicious rivals. His solution is to head for work one morning, take affectionate leave of his wife, indulge in a bag of potato chips, and then thrust himself, Anna Karenina-like, in front of a subway train.

For whatever reason, Jake (who is not depicted as being Jewish) feels he must devote his life to avenging his mentor, even though there is no indication that the latter did much for him besides turning him loose on the trading floor which has become nothing more than Las Vegas on Wall Street. Jake finds out that the villain is one Bretton James (Josh Brolin), boss of a mafia-like corporation called Churchill Schwartz (representing Goldman-Sachs?), who has destroyed competitor Zabel by planting rumors, a "strategy" that Jake will adopt, as only the internet generation can, to turn the tables on James and Company.



L-R: Shia LeBeouf, as Jake Moore, Josh Brolin, as Bretton James, and Michael Douglas, as Gordon Gekko, in *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*.

At first, Bretton James is protected, even emboldened, by old Wall Street presence Julie Steinhardt, played by 94-year-old Eli Wallach, ostensibly another kind of Jewish elder. Steinhardt offers no moral guidance whatsoever. His role is to ensure the downfall of those doomed to fail by their own weakness, indecision or lack of artifice; to facilitate the bailouts of those clever enough to arrange them; and to cut off those whose hubris crosses the line enough to reflect badly on "the industry." With strange clicking noises he is a one-man, long-lived personification of the furies in ancient Greek plays. By sheer longevity, he is the Wall Street version of an enforcer. He brings no Jewish wisdom or ethics to his ministrations. His only authority each time he clicks and struts is that he has survived the Great Depression and everything since.

The closest elder figure to these old Jews is Wall Street hustler, Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas), a devious and charismatic manipulator recently released from prison, a Rip Van Winkle (see Gertel, page NAT 15)

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Character and career in a turbulent era

Hank Greenberg: The Hero Who Didn't Want to Be One (Jewish Lives). By Mark Kurlansky. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011. 224 Pages. \$25.

This book is the third of a new series on Jewish Lives, inaugurated by the Yale University Press in collaboration with the Leon D. Black Foundation. If this fine biography is a sample of those previously published and those still to come, these publications will make a stellar contribution to our understanding of notable Jews.

Mark Kurlansky, author, editor, or contributor to some 20 books, offers an excellent, well-written analysis of the life and times of Hank Greenberg, one of America's leading Jewish sports heroes. Greenberg was famous as a home run hitter – he came within two runs of equaling Babe Ruth's record. But he was also famous for at least two other accomplishments: he refused to play in a crucial game because it fell on Yom Kippur and he was a model of how to respond with restraint to bigoted remarks by other players and by many fans. This latter achievement became a model for Jackie Robinson, the first Black major leaguer. He received far more taunts than Greenberg. Robinson who was encouraged by Greenberg, said: "Class tells. It sticks out all over Mr. Greenberg."

As for Greenberg's handling of the anti-Semitism he experienced, it should be noted that he played in a different era from Robinson. Greenberg's first year in the major leagues was 1933 which, as Kurlansky notes, "was a particularly bad year for the Jewish people." Hitler came to power and so did Franklin D. Roosevelt whose enemies alleged that he was really a Jew and spoke of the "Jew Deal." Anti-Semitism was rife; the 1930s were the days of Father Coughlin's rabid ranting against Jews and Henry Ford's vicious *Dearborn Independent* as well as Charles Lindbergh's embrace of Nazism. No wonder that Greenberg experienced fanatic slurs and warped jingoism! Oddly enough, these attacks came to a man who was a secular, non-observant Jew and who "saw himself as an assimilated Jew, a baseball player who happened to be Jewish."

In 1934, Greenberg's second year with the Detroit Tigers, he played on Rosh

Hashanah but he received so much pressure that he sat out the game on Yom Kippur, partly out of respect for his observant parents. Later in life, Greenberg provided no Jewish education for his three children, two of whom married non-Jews and raised their children as non-Jews. Greenberg's second wife, after he divorced Carol Gimbel, was not Jewish. He regarded being Jewish as "an accident of birth." Nevertheless, as he neared the end of his life, Greenberg said that he wanted to be remembered as a great Jewish ballplayer, recognizing that his experience had meant a great deal to Jewish youngsters of the 1930s.

Greenberg died in 1986 at the age of 75. He had a Jewish funeral, conducted by a Reform rabbi who had been his tennis partner, and he is buried in a Jewish cemetery. His tombstone has a menorah carved on it.

Brief as it is, this account of Greenberg's life is thorough, insightful and well-written. It achieves distinction by describing his character and career, setting them against the background of a turbulent era in Jewish history.

Eloquent autobiography Bellow never wrote

Saul Bellow: Letters. Edited by Benjamin Taylor. New York: Viking, 2010. 607 pages. \$35.

In these days of electronic communication by computer, this giant collection of Saul Bellow's letters is a dinosaur. Unfortunately, publications such as these now join the ranks of relics along with the epistolary novel, popular in the 17th and 18th centuries, in which the narrative was presented through letters written by one or more of the characters. This literary genre has largely disappeared just as collections of letters are doomed to extinction. The simple truth is that people rarely write letters these days and the deplorable extent of our loss is fully demonstrated by the wit and wisdom contained in Bellow's remarkable letters. We are keenly indebted to editor Benjamin Taylor, a prize-winning author in his own right, who spent a great deal of time with Bellow before he died in 2005 and who diligently located, selected, and edited the letters. Taylor tells us that his book contains about 40% of Bellow's known letters. Taylor's significant contribution constitutes the eloquent autobiography that Bellow never wrote.

Along with Philip Roth and Bernard Malamud, Bellow was a crucial member of

the great trio of American Jewish writers, of whom only Roth is still alive. The book contains many letters from Bellow to Roth and Malamud, expressing his esteem for them. There are also letters in which Bellow recommends Malamud for a Guggenheim Fellowship and Roth for the Nobel Prize, both of which Bellow had been awarded. He was the sixth Jewish Nobel Laureate in literature. Bellow also won the Pulitzer Prize and three National Book Awards.

The book opens with a fine introduction by Taylor and with a 19-page chronology that is extremely helpful in providing context for the letters. In addition, the book contains 16 pages of useful photos. The presentation begins with one letter written in 1932 and then jumps to 1937, continuing by year to the last letter in 2004. Bellow's incessant traveling is reflected throughout the book in the datelines of the letters. The difficulties he had with getting his early work into print is shown through letters to his literary agent, publishers, and editors. There are also letters to other writers, a group to whom he wrote throughout his life, commenting brilliantly on their work and expressing gratitude for their appreciation of his publications. Some of these letters usefully analyze the books he wrote. Other sets of people to whom Bellow wrote were friends from his youth, members of his family, academic colleagues at the numerous universities where he taught, lovers and wives.

The lovers and wives were especially important since Bellow married five times and while many love letters are included in the collection, there are also numerous letters complaining bitterly about demands for alimony and about arguments over custody of his children. In 1977, he was sentenced to ten days in jail for failure to pay alimony and child support but the sentence was overturned.

Bellow made several trips to Israel and, in 1976, he published a memoir, *To Jerusalem and Back*. He became friendly with Teddy Kollek, mayor of Jerusalem, and there are numerous letters to Kollek, one of which expressed appreciation for Kollek's warm comments about *To Jerusalem and Back*. Writing to another author, Bellow characterizes Kollek as "rude...bumptious...and candid." In an additional letter, Bellow writes that Kollek is a "phenomenal personality...a schemer, finagler, and arranger." In 1986, Bellow wrote a laudatory letter to the Norwegian Nobel Committee recommending Kollek for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Readers will revel in this tribute to Bellow's lasting legacy and should rue the sad truth that letters as a literary form are rapidly disappearing.

American public school desegregation

My Los Angeles in Black & (Almost) White. By Andrew Furman. Syracuse,

NY: Syracuse University Press, 2010. 248 Pages. \$24.95.

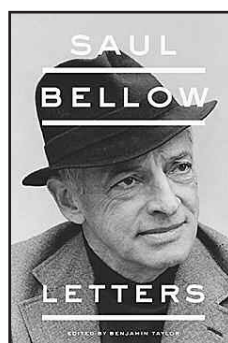
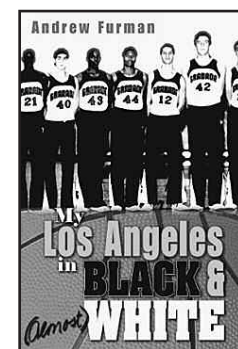
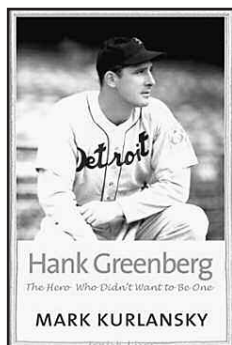
An old canard has it that "those who can do and those who can't teach." This excellent publication effectively gives the lie to that fallacious fabrication. The book is well-written by Andrew Furman, a professor of English at Florida Atlantic University where, among other subjects, he teaches creative writing. He previously published a novel and two works of literary criticism, dealing with contemporary Jewish writers, demonstrating his skills as an author. This new book is further evidence that Furman can do and that he can teach, judging by his writing and by the recognition he has received from his university which promoted him to full professor and assigned administrative tasks to him.

Furman combines an autobiographical memoir with an insightful analysis of the efforts to desegregate America's public schools. He personally experienced these attempts in the 1970s and 1980s after his family moved from New Jersey to the increasingly Jewish San Fernando Valley, his father having been transferred to Los Angeles by the accounting firm that employed him and provided a relocation expert who steered the family to this site.

In his early years, Furman's classmates were almost all white and mostly Jews. By the time he reached fourth grade in 1978, through a well-described laborious process, the courts had ordered mandatory busing to desegregate the public schools. Rather than permitting their son to be bussed into an inner-city, largely Mexican-American school, Furman's parents transferred him to a private school. Later, after a referendum was approved by California voters that resulted in resegregation of the public schools, Furman attended a public high school. He carefully reviews the heated arguments and the court decisions that resulted in these controversial decisions.

In high school, Furman was an ardent basketball player on a team that included a few Black students who were voluntarily bussed into his school. His recollection of these events is stimulated by an invitation he received in 2006 to participate in the 20th reunion of his high school graduation, including an annual game in which the alumni are matched against the current varsity team. Furman decides to attend, motivated by complex reasons which he explores at some length. He resolves to use the occasion to see some of his former classmates and neighbors, his Black basketball teammates, and his coaches. His rich descriptions of these experiences and these meetings are warmly presented, augmented by penetrating explorations of his own reactions.

(see Teicher, page NAT 15)





My Kosher Kitchen

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Joan Nathan's new cookbook Couscous and noodle kugel recipes

Quiches, Kugels and Couscous. By Joan Nathan, Alfred A. Knopf, \$39.95 hardcover, 400 pp., October 2010.

This is a cookbook to read – and it took me a week! If Joan Nathan were only someone I knew when we both lived in Israel, I would have read it. If I only liked to read kosher cookbooks, I would have read it. To know that Joan spent her junior year abroad in France and has a master's degree in French literature would also have motivated me to read this book. But besides all of this, as an adult I learned that my maternal grandfather's ancestors had come from France, so I was particularly excited to read and learn. And read and learn I did!

Besides 49 fascinating essays – most about people – there are 146 illustrations and 210 recipes, plus French-Jewish menus, a glossary, a source guide and bibliography.

Quiches, kugels and couscous are only a very small part of this well-researched work, which is also a personal history plus the culinary history of the Jews in France from 39 CE to today. That's what makes this such an exciting read!

Nathan's introduction explains her trip to France in the 1950s, her junior year at the Sorbonne, and subsequent and often visits to her family there. In writing this cookbook, she explains that she felt "a sense of urgency in trying to recapture [the traditional recipes of the older generation that is dying out] as the people who cooked them, remember them, and to explore their origins."

There are 15 appetizers ranging from a 13th-century *haroset* to a leek terrine from Alsace, and the history of foie gras with several chopped liver recipes. Tempting soups of Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian origins are part of the 18 soup recipes including beet soup mentioned in the Talmud, and the universally popular Jewish chicken soup and matza balls with a French twist. Nineteen hot and cold salads are included, as well as classics like French potato salad and those with beets, fennel, celery root and artichokes. In the breads chapter, among the 13 recipes, are a number for Shabbat, the famous Parisian

pletzl (bially) and other varied breads. In the fish chapter, 15 fish recipes include French gefilte fish and salmon, carp, fish sauerkraut and more plus preserved lemons and a horseradish sauce.

In the exciting chicken, duck and goose chapter, incorporated among the 15 recipes are several *tagines* (the Moroccan dish named after the clay pot in which it is cooked), and *cassoulets* (overnight Sabbath stews). In the beef, veal and lamb chapter are several Sabbath stews among the 17 recipes. Twelve enticing quiches, kugels, omelets, and savory soufflés comprise a chapter; there are 10 recipes for grains, pulses, couscous and rice.

The vegetable chapter overflows with 26 recipes from ratatouille to gratins (dish with crust of bread crumbs or grated cheese on top), and *tians* (hot or cold dish made of layered ingredients) and the well-known fried artichokes Jewish style, and potato latkes.

In the desserts chapter are 34 tantalizing recipes with cakes, gateaus (French cakes), tortes (cake using ground nuts instead of flour), tarts (filling over a pastry base with open top), cookies, macaroons, candies and more.

This is a classic book for Jewish cookbook collectors, Jewish cooks, cooks of eclectic kosher and Jewish cooking and anyone who wants to add French-kosher recipes to their repertoire.

Providence, Rhode Island-born Joan Nathan spent three years in Israel in the 1970s working for the late Mayor Teddy Kollek, followed by working for New York Mayor Beame. She contributes often to the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*; has written ten cookbooks; and hosted a syndicated PBS Television series, "Jewish Cooking in America." She and her lawyer-husband, Allan Gerson, live in Washington, D.C. and are the parents of three grown children.

The following are recipes from the book.

Sweet Couscous (6–8 servings)

4 pounds onions, peeled and thinly sliced in rings
4 Tbsp. vegetable oil or butter
1 Tbsp. sugar
pinch of saffron
1/4 cup raisins
1/2 cup almonds, sliced or roughly chopped
1 pound (about 2 cups) couscous
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a frying pan, sauté the onions in the oil or butter over medium heat until transparent. Add the sugar and saffron and continue to cook until caramelized and jamlike. Add the raisins and almonds, cooking until the almonds are golden. Prepare the couscous according to the package directions, seasoning it with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Mound the couscous in the middle of a plate and surround with the onions, raisins and almonds.



Book Review

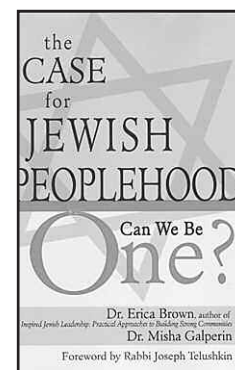
BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Jewish unity

The Case for Jewish Peoplehood: Can We Be One? By Dr. Erica Brown and Dr. Misha Galperin. Forward by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin. Jewish Lights Publishing. 2009. Pp.189. \$21.99.

The creative collaboration for the sake of tackling an essential theme, a critical one for the very future and survival of the Jewish people, by two distinguished communal leaders, is a must read for anyone, hopefully many, who wish to explore the most current challenges and responses to elusive yet sacred Jewish oneness and unity. This is quite a demanding agenda in the context of indispensable Jewish pluralism, which by its nature accentuates differences and highlights unfulfilled goals.

Co-author Dr. Erica Brown is director of adult education for the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning as well as scholar-in-residence at the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. Her collaborator, Dr. Misha Galperin, is a clinical psychologist by training, who at the time of the book's publication was the CEO of the same major Federation and the first Russian Jew to occupy such



Nudel Schaleth (4–6 servings)

(Noodle Kugel with Apples)
4 Tbsp. melted butter or vegetable oil
8 ounces egg noodles
salt to taste
4 large eggs, separated
1/4 cup sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 cup raisins or currants
1/4 cup rum
3 large apples, peeled, cored and cut into 1-inch pieces (about 3 cups)

Preheat oven to 375°F. and grease a 6-cup soufflé dish or equivalent baking dish with butter or oil. Cook the noodles in boiling salted water until al dente, slightly less than recommended by the instructions. Drain in a colander. Put the egg whites in the bowl of an electric mixer and beat until stiff but not dry. Put the egg yolks in another bowl and whisk in the sugar, 1/2 tsp. salt, the vanilla, raisins, rum, apples and melted butter or oil. Gently fold in the noodles and then the beaten egg whites. Spoon the

(see Kaplan/Recipes, page NAT 15)

a high position. He is now working in a senior capacity for the Jewish Agency in Global Jewish Affairs, utilizing his expertise, which is reflected in this significant study toward the shifting emphasis of the Jewish Agency from Aliyah to "Peoplehood Issues." Both authors share a Holocaust family connection that impacted their lives and chosen vocations.

While Jewish identity has always consisted of the twin, mutually nourishing dimensions of religion and peoplehood, and surely the state of Israel is the most concrete expression of Jewish Peoplehood, the Diaspora has experienced in recent decades the alarming weakening of these two pillars, which seriously threatens Jewish life worldwide. Obviously this reality bodes ill for the potential American Jewish support that the state of Israel has come to rely upon and expect. Moreover, there are also internal challenges to Jewish unity by virtue of the historical divides of the religious versus the secular, denominational and organizational competition, and the Ashkenazi-Sephardic equation. In addition, large numbers, perhaps the majority of the American Jewry is Jewishly challenged and uninvolved, with only a marginal connection to their Jewish roots.

This arousing book is a treasure trove of quoted insights from a variety of well-known Jewish scholars and personalities who have shaped Jewish life and thought.

Included at each chapter are "Questions for Conversation," which aid in making the tome a handy and recommended tool for adult study. I must dissent though from the authors' too-broad assertion that the needs of the state of Israel and the challenge of anti-Semitism have substantially subsided. In fact, the ongoing sinister and relentless campaign to delegitimize the Jewish state and isolate it politically, economically and culturally ought not be overlooked and is no less lethal than the earlier means of fighting Israel and traditional anti-Semitism.

That said, surely the authors are correct in seeking creative responses to the postmodern crises of Jewish identity, which also includes alienation from Israel by Jewish youth on college campuses, where liberal values collide with a complex predicament regarding the Palestinian dilemma. There is much food for thought and action in this impressive volume to merit the attention of Jewish professionals and the nonprofessionals alike, and all who care about ensuring a thriving community.

Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, was born in 1945 in Chu, Kazakhstan, to Polish survivors from Zamosc, Sarnay and Pinsk. From 1947 to 1949 he lived with his family at the Wetzlar Displaced Persons Camp in Germany. He grew up in Haifa, Israel, and came to Chicago in 1966. ★

COVER

(continued from page NAT 2)

available in modest prices, all made on request, and all matted for gifting, or for the individual, and enclosed in a crystal-clear envelope. Categories on the website, www.artoflife.us, serve to help in the search for the perfect piece. König will be glad to work with you to find what would be the best print, and gift certificates are available, if needed, in case you can't decide.

König likes to use interesting materials and incorporate them into the master print. She has used leaves and berries, ribbons, fabric, flowers of all kinds, jewelry, masks and other assorted objects. Often she puts into calligraphy her own words, expressing a sentiment that she could not find elsewhere as a quotation. Her works adorn many homes in the central Texas area and in other parts of the country. In addition, she has donated some of her artwork to the Jewish Community Center in Havana, Cuba, and to a hospital in Israel, Shaare Zedek.

König holds a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the City College of New York, as well as a master's degree in psychology from the New School for Social Research in New York. Just a little over half of her life has been spent in Austin, Texas, where she currently resides. Her other years were spent in New York. She is the mother of two young adult daughters.

Irene König may be contacted at pleasure-to-behold@juno.com or at 512-835-2165. ★

KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page NAT 8)

depicting a modern version of Mary holding Jesus, was painted in 2000.

Down the 101 steps, past the Sisters of Rosary convent and we are at Mary's Spring, a natural spring where Mary washed her face and drank the water. Pilgrims take water home in bottles, and prior to Passover, ultra-Orthodox Jews come to take water for baking of *shmura matzah*. Moslems built a mosque over the spring.

We conclude the Ein Karem tour with a bit of local interest. Off Ma'ayan Street, past a number of the restaurants, is a one-third mile path where once was a fertile, cultivated area, which local residents began renovating the past seven years. Eventually they hope to have the area open for people to enter from either end.

In 2010, as many as 3.45 million tourists visited Israel of whom 69% were Christians. Christians who want to learn more about the itinerary, "In the Footsteps of the Virgin Mary" can download an abridged version of the booklet in English at www.holyland-pilgrimage.org.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, book reviewer, food columnist, and feature writer who lives in Jerusalem. ★

JACOBSON/KLEINER

(continued from page NAT 9)

shoreline in 1965 on the site of a former Israeli air force base, in a ceremony attended by one of Israel's most engaging prime ministers, Levi Eshkol.

The hotel's attractive décor, emphasizing the airy ambience and the surrounding seascapes, was designed by Shraga Weil and Menashe Kadishman. Guest rooms are spacious and outfitted with all modern amenities. The reception areas of the Hilton are, exceptionally comfortable and welcoming, as are the restaurants (with the fabulous Israeli breakfasts), the outdoor salt water swimming pool, the tastefully decorated synagogue and the public meeting rooms.

The Hilton backs on to the Tel Aviv seashore promenade, a boon for joggers, walkers, amateur fishermen, cyclists, exercise enthusiasts – and those interested in the city's huge marina with its colorful sail boats, its mammoth public swimming and recreation park currently under construction as well as its collection of diverse stores.

The pièce de résistance at the Hilton (available to guests for a modest extra tariff) is the hotel's executive lounge on the 17th floor – a facility which provides a sumptuous breakfast and snacks all day long and which accords guests a panoramic 180 degree view of Tel Aviv's shoreline and the spectacular "white city" vistas of the Bauhaus and other architectural marvels of the cityscape. At night while guests avail themselves of complementary food and drink, Tel Aviv's beautiful shimmering night life comes alive through the lounge's wrap-around windows. ★

KAPLAN/RECIPES

(continued from page NAT 14)

mixture into the prepared soufflé pan and bake for 50 minutes.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, compiler and editor of nine kosher cookbooks, and feature writer. She leads walks in Jerusalem's Machaneh Yehudah Jewish produce market and has a weekly spot on Rustymikeradio.com, Israel's only English-language radio station available on the computer. ★

GERTEL

(continued from page NAT 12)

scammer and survivor who quickly and sneakily recoups his power. Michael Douglas reprises his role from Stone's first *Wall Street* film (1987), and an impressive reprisal this is.

Jake goes to hear Gekko, who has published a book, *Is Greed Good?* and is lecturing to adoring fans at Fordham University. Partly because he is seeking another mentor, partly because he is engaged to Gekko's estranged daughter Winnie (Carey Mulligan), partly because

he wants an informed ally in his campaign to avenge Zabel's ruin and suicide, Jake seeks Gekko out and finds himself falling more and more into deceit. This could pass as a commentary on the biblical Jacob, who brought similar traits (and earnestness) to similar circumstances.

In face of Gekko's trickery, Jake convinces himself that he must indulge in deceit in order to carry out his plans. He falls into Gekko's hands, and risks losing Winnie forever, when he provides Gekko with a photo of Winnie in exchange for information on Zabel's destroyer. Jake believes that Winnie should give her dad the benefit of a doubt (even though her brother committed suicide in the absence of his imprisoned, ruthless father). Not that Gekko needs Jake to manipulate Winnie. He gets her attention and waxes convincingly eloquent on his own: "You know, Winn, you've got to give human beings a break. We're all mixed bags."

Jake willingly provides opportunity for Gekko's ruses. Jake and Gekko are alike. They convince themselves that little bits of deceit now will result in enough security, both financial and social, later on to do good or at least to make good. Gekko, for his part, plays up to Jake's loyalty to Zabel's memory, praising the latter's "balls to commit suicide" (and maybe glorifying that suicide, as this film tends to do?). Yet he describes relationships as "bubbles."

The parent figures in this beautifully-mounted film have made bad decisions. Gekko risks his family ties for a quick-fix shortcut back to power. Jake's mom (Susan Sarandon) has given up an idealistic nursing career for a stake in a bursting real estate bubble. The only character who has remained true to her ideals is Winnie, who runs a non-profit web site that crusades, however haphazardly, for social justice. Yet even she will allow her web site to be used, for idealistic purposes of course, as an outlet for Jake's revenge on a corporation, even after Winnie feels betrayed by Jake and by her father.

Strangely, *Wall Street, Money Never Sleeps* operates in an environment made by Jewish grandfathers who are either too kind and weak, or too stern and unfeeling. It is a rejection of the Jewish grandfather for a (non-Jewish) father figure who remains consistent if not constant and true to form if not honest. The film advocates dealing with the parent generation rather than with the grandparent generation. Is it saying that the nonsense and mischief of a closer generation are somehow more transparent and less to be glorified? Is the best mentoring relationship one like Jake's and Gekko's, where a one-generation difference helps them to keep one another in check? After all, Gekko aspires to be a "mixed bag" while Jake wants to be both rich and good and Earth-friendly.

Rabbi Gertel has been spiritual leader of 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 written for The National Jewish Post & Opinion since 1979. ★

TEICHER

(continued from page NAT 13)

Furman's honest self-examination is combined with an incisive review of the struggles over school desegregation that began with the landmark 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. He reviews his revealing conversations with two public figures who were crucial in California's handling of the issue. One was Bobbi Fiedler, a Jewish parent from the San Fernando Valley who led the fight against mandatory bussing and, based on the prominence she achieved, was elected three times to the United States Congress. The other was Judge Paul Egly of the California Supreme Court whose 1978 ruling led to a desegregation plan that included forced bussing.

Furman concludes with the fervent hope that we "look clear-eyed upon the racial problems that persist so that we might repair them." His articulate and forceful book is an eloquent and expressive step in that critical and urgent direction. We keenly join in his aspiration!

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

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NEWS

(continued from page NAT 3)



Dr. Bernard Lander, zt"l, with his wife, Sarah Rivkah.

making Touro the largest not-for-profit independent institution of higher and professional education under Jewish auspices. Touro and its affiliates offer superior yeshiva and other Torah educational opportunities, along with myriad of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs for the general population.

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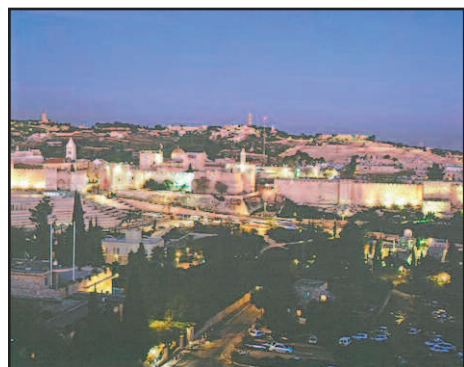
First-ever Jerusalem International Marathon

New York – Jan. 27, 2011: Athletes and travelers from around the world will travel to Israel to compete in the first-ever Jerusalem International Marathon, March 25.



The race will begin at the Knesset building and bring runners through the rich and vast Jerusalem landscape, offering participants the choice between 6.2-, 13.1- and 26-mile courses, ending at the finish line in Sacher Park.

The marathon route will include the Sultan's Pool, Jaffa Gate and Zion's Gate, the Jerusalem Theater, the President's Residence, the German Colony in the Emek Refaim district, the Sherover Promenade and, for participants in the full marathon, Ammunition Hill, Mount Scopus and Augustus Victoria.



The race will also provide cash prizes to the top five marathon runners, and feature a pre-event health and sports exhibition at the International Convention Center in Jerusalem, March 22–24.

For more information, visit: www.jerusalem-marathon.com. For more information about travel to Israel, visit: www.goisrael.com. ★

Hadassah nominates Marcie Natan incoming national president

Marcie Natan, chair of Hadassah College Jerusalem, will serve as Hadassah's next president.

Natan, former national treasurer of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, and current national chair of Hadassah College Jerusalem, was officially nominated as incoming national president of Hadassah. The National Board nominated Natan, of New York, N.Y., and Lancaster, Penn., its next national president at its 2011 Midwinter Board meeting, being held in Jersey City, N.J. Natan will be formally elected by the delegates to Hadassah's Annual Meeting in July, when current National President Nancy Falchuk will pass on the organization's highest level volunteer leadership role to Natan.

In addition to serving on Hadassah's National Board and Executive Committee, Natan is a former member of the Hadassah Foundation Board, which seeks to augment the work of Hadassah by improving the status, health and well-being of women and girls in the United States and Israel. As national treasurer from 2006–2010, she led the initiative to create Hadassah's single consolidated budget, which has helped to streamline financial planning. A member of Hadassah for more than 40 years, Natan also has served as national vice president, national secretary, chair of planned giving and estates, chair of major gifts, chair of unit assessment, national organization department chair and national president's training chair. She was president of the Eastern Pennsylvania Region from 1989–1992. ★

Hadassah Tower Campaign exceeds '10

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, raised \$20 million in 2010 toward completion of its new Sarah Wetsman Davidson Hospital Tower in Jerusalem, National President Nancy Falchuk announced. The year-end total far exceeds the \$12.6 million goal announced at the beginning of 2010.

The total cost of the 14-story tower being built on Hadassah Medical Center's Ein Kerem campus will be \$363 million. Hadassah anticipates that it will begin treating patients in the tower in March of next year. The tower

will be officially dedicated at a ceremony in October 2012, as part of Hadassah's Centennial Convention, which will be held in Jerusalem.

Upon completion, the Sarah Wetsman Davidson Tower will be a state-of-the-art medical facility and the anchor of the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. It is Hadassah's biggest building project in the past 50 years and one of the largest infrastructure projects currently underway in Israel. ★

Hadassah Foundation elects new board

Former WNBA President, Donna Orender, elected to her third two-year term.

The Hadassah Foundation, which seeks to augment the work of Hadassah by improving the status, health and well-being of women and girls in the United States and Israel, elected new members to its board of directors and reelected current members, announced Nancy Falchuk, national president of Hadassah, and Carol M. Joseph, Foundation Board chair. Board members were elected to serve two-year terms that began Jan. 1 and will end on Dec. 31, 2012.

The Hadassah Foundation Board of Directors is comprised of 18 women, including members of the National Board of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, members of Hadassah and representatives from the Jewish community at large. Newly elected members are: Sara Adler of Miami Beach, who is the Florida director of the New Israel Fund; Kim Morris Heiman of Cincinnati, who is president of SK Textile, Inc., a decorative products manufacturer; Rabbi Suzanne Offit of Newton, Mass., rabbi and staff chaplain at Hebrew SeniorLife, an integrated system of housing, healthcare and medical research serving the elderly in the Boston area; Lonye Rasch of Short Hills, N.J., communications chair for Hadassah International and a member of Hadassah's national board; and Susan Wilkof of Canton, Ohio, who chaired the

100th anniversary celebration for Young Judea and is a member of Hadassah's national board.

For more information, visit www.hadassah.org. ★

Dr. Simcha Katz starts term as new president of the Orthodox Union

Dr. Simcha Katz, of Teaneck, N.J., began his two-year term as the new president of the Orthodox Union Jan. 16. He succeeded Stephen J. Savitsky of Hewlett, Long Island, N.Y., who served three acclaimed two-year terms. Dr. Katz will be the 13th OU president in a line dating back to 1898.



Dr. Katz graduated from Yeshiva University where he was a pre-med student, but then went on to YU's RIETS seminary where he received rabbinical *semicha* (ordination) – although he has never practiced as a rabbi. He earned an MA in engineering and an MBA from New York University; and a PhD from the Stern School of Business in Statistics and Finance. He founded a technology company, where he remained for 15 years as its senior executive, retiring from it five years ago. He learns from Jewish sacred texts for three hours every morning, most of the time with two of his sons. Then he's ready for his day.

He is currently a professor of finance at the Zicklin Business School of the City University of New York. In his home community of Teaneck, where he has lived since 1973, Dr. Katz has been involved in his synagogue, Bnai Yeshurun, was the founding president of the local *mikveh* and among the founders of the Yeshiva of North Jersey and of Congregation Keter Torah, among other local Jewish institutions. He and his wife, Pesh, have four married children and 16 grandchildren. ★



The text in yellow on this Egged bus (left) in Israel reads in Hebrew Moadim L'Simcha (Happy Holidays) alternating with the route destination to the Western Wall to mark the holidays. The one on the right reads Chanukkah Sameach (Happy Chanukkah). Photo credit: Rabbi Reuven Schwartz, Jerusalem.