

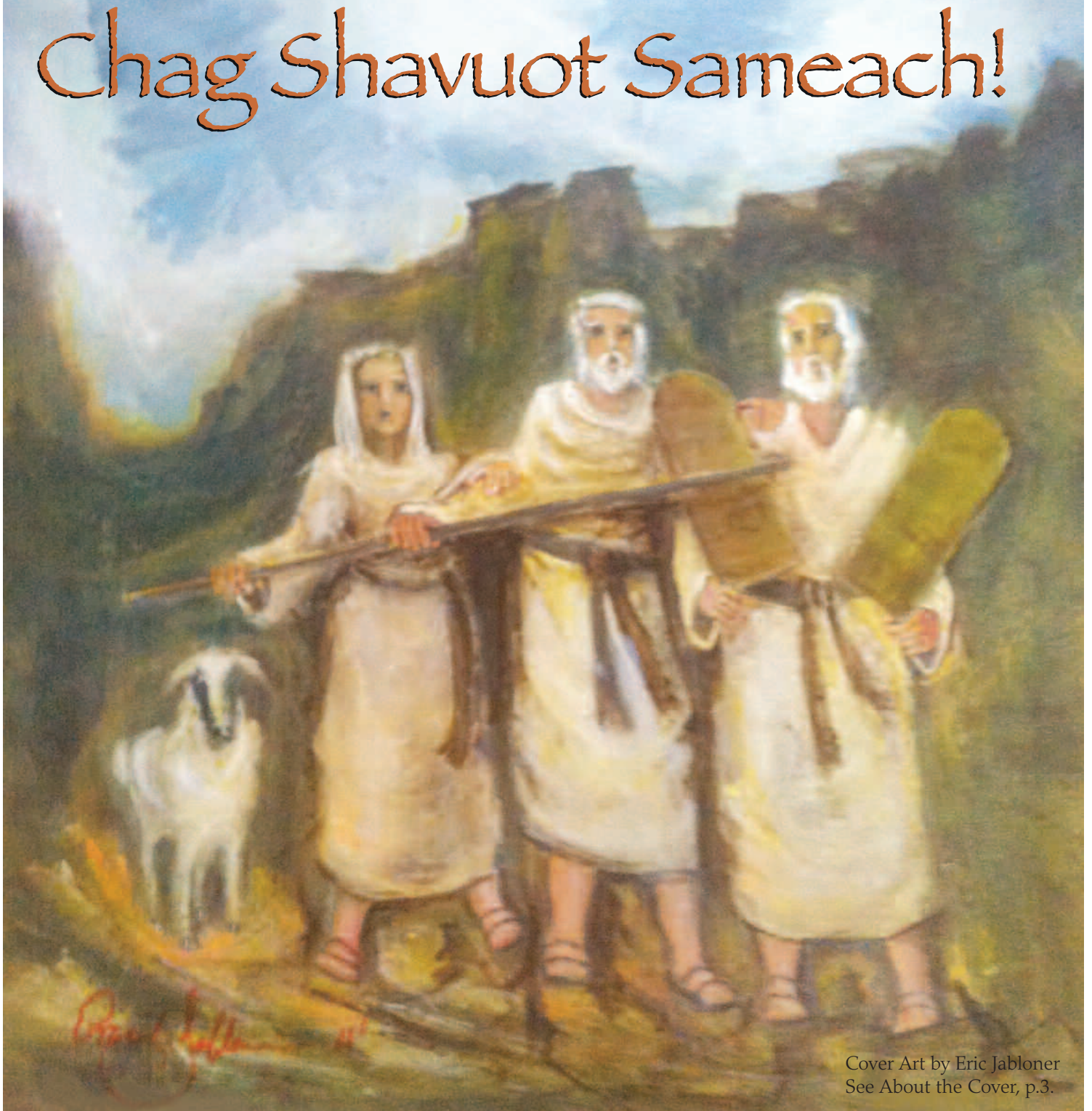
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Chag Shavuot Sameach!



Cover Art by Eric Jabloner
See About the Cover, p.3.

Editorial

In our last issue, I wrote about an article that appeared in the *Indianapolis Star* on the topic of a local Holocaust commemoration. Included with that article were three photos, one depicting a candlelighting. The caption read: "Alex Star lights a candle to remember family members who died. The six candles represent the 6 million Jews who perished." However, in the article to the left of that photo was written: "The six candles that were lit represent the 6 million Jews who are thought to have perished in the Holocaust."

I wrote that the *Star's* choice of such watered-down words as "thought to have perished" is offensive. I asked my readers if a Letter to the Editor was in order. I received 26 responses. All of the messages except three said a letter was needed.

Miriam Zimmerman, who has been writing for this newspaper since 1988, and is a daughter of a survivor and a Holocaust educator, responded: "Yes, definitely send a letter to the editor. The issue is so important that they should know: with the opening of additional archives with the fall of the iron curtain in 1990, new information became available. There is some evidence that *more than* six million were destroyed. There might never be a final audit, but there is scholarly consensus that six million is the appropriate number."

Not long after I had emailed several of those responses to Marcia Goldstone, executive director of our Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), I received a powerful "Letter to Editor" written by Isaiah Kuperstein. It has not appeared in the *Indianapolis Star* but he gave me permission to publish it here (see the top of the next column, this page).

For that same *Yom HaShoah* issue, I had interviewed a Holocaust survivor, Harry Cybulski of Flint, Mich., but because of computer challenges. I did not finish it in time. He and his older sister, Dora Goldberg of South Bend, Ind., are longtime subscribers. It is a fascinating story, but I only have space for a few key points. He has given a much more detailed version to the Shoah Foundation.

Cybulski and his sister were born in Paris, she in 1932 and he in 1937. Their parents, Eli Cybulski and Jenta (Kershenblatt) Cybulski had moved there from Poland in 1931. The Germans first came into Paris in 1940 when Cybulski was three. When his parents were overwrought, he thought it was because of something he had done.

It took the Germans some months to find out who was Jewish, but in 1941 his father along with 1,000 other Jewish

Letter to the Editor of the *Indianapolis Star*

April 24, 2012

As a son of Holocaust survivors who has devoted a lifetime of scholarship to the horrible events of the 1930's and 1940's that annihilated two thirds of all living Jews in Europe, it was startling to read the article that appeared to the left of two photos published in your April 19, 2012 edition. You referred to the six candles being lit at a commemorative ceremony as representing the 6 million Jews "who are thought to have perished in the Holocaust." These benign and thoughtless words suggest that the methodical, well documented, and historically recorded annihilation of Jews may simply reside in some peoples' mind – a mere thought.

Please allow me to inform your readers that the murder of my grandparents, my aunts and uncles and their children (my cousins), and the children of my cousins, is not some "thought." It is a painful reality that resulted from the anti-Semitic venom spewed by Hitler and executed by his Nazi German minions and their collaborators. My family and relatives did not "perish." They were cruelly decimated, killed, and not allowed to exist because of only one reason – they were Jews.

The events relating to the murder of Jews in the 1930's and 1940's are the most documented events of the 20th century. There are still millions of pages of archival documents that have not been examined (see Letter, page 3)



men were sent to Boune La Rolande, a detention camp. On a visit to the camp by his mother, his father gave her his wedding ring. That and a few photos are all that Cybulski has left from his father who was eventually transported to Auschwitz. There were no survivors from that group of men.

His mother took him and his sister to a small farm village 25 miles from Paris. She thought they would have a better chance of blending in because other Polish families lived there.

Out of the goodness of their hearts, a Catholic farmer and his wife with older children risked their lives and allowed the Cybulski's to stay with them. They pretended that he and his sister were their children.

He told me just how risky that was. For example, one day he heard a noise. In the sky Cybulski saw a struggle between a German and a Canadian plane. He could see smoke and then a parachute. The Canadian plane was shot down but the pilot was able to parachute out and land

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safely. A neighboring farmer helped him escape but then the Germans came and killed the farmer.

His mother went back to Paris on occasion to visit her sister who was still living there. Some months later she went and never came back. Cybulski found out years later that she was sent to Drancy Detention Camp and eventually to a concentration camp in

(see Editorial, page 11)

Chassidic Rabbi

By Rabbi Benzion Cohen

B.H. Mazal Tov

Baruch Hashem we have a *mazal tov*, a new grandson, born to my son Motti and his wife Natti. The *bris* was last week. Every *bris* is special, but this one was more so. They named the baby Gavriel Moshe. This is the Hebrew name of our dear father of blessed memory, Gabriel (Gabe) Cohen, who edited and published this *National Jewish Post & Opinion* for 75 years.

My father passed away five years ago. We have other grandchildren named after him: Gavriel Moshe Kalman, Moshe Yisroel Noach, and Moshe Mordechai, and now a nephew Moshe. However, this is our first Gavriel Moshe, named only after our father. I love my father dearly. I was very fortunate to have a warm and loving relationship with him for 57 years. Now I have a new grandson named after him.

The day after the *bris* I had another beautiful experience. Some old memories came back to me. I remembered five years ago getting news that my father had passed away. I got on to the first available flight to America, which landed at Newark.

My son Motti came to meet me at the airport. At the time he was learning in the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in 770, Brooklyn. We travelled together to Indianapolis, and his very presence was a great comfort to me. He was by my side for the funeral and the whole week of mourning. Two years later he married, and now he has named his first son after my father of blessed memory. This is also a great comfort.

Why is this a comfort? There are unfortunately children today who don't care too much about their own parents, and their grandparents mean even less. My son honors his parents and grandparents. In addition, we believe that we have an eternal soul. When a person passes away, his soul goes up to heaven. Often this soul comes back down to this world, and is born again. This is called reincarnation. My new grandson has my father's name, and maybe also his soul.

Life is not always easy, but it can be very meaningful. I feel a strong connection with my past, with my parents and grandparents and our ancestors for the last 3,800 years. They lived a good and beautiful life, a life of Torah. I am trying my best to follow in their footsteps.

Every day I try to help people. I try to bring as much love and holiness as I can to make our world better. I see the world getting better and better. Soon we will reach our final and complete redemption,

About the Cover

....Miriam, Aaron, and Moses....
"A Family Portrait"

By ERIC JABLONER



This was at first a simple idea of what the best known siblings of Israel's exodus would look like if they were together and encountered a vision of G-d. It led to my own encounter with what I envisioned. My hope is that it helps the viewer see and feel what could be an awesome encounter.

The original 16" x 20" painting is sold, but prints are available. The painting is part of a New Haven, Conn., synagogue's art collection.

With 30 years of painting small canvas as fine art or large canvas for a theatrical production, I have had the honor to use my talent for the empowering of Jewish learning and our heritage. As a young designer I worked on projects for the Jewish Museum in New York City, Hartford, Conn., and many other venues. This led to illustrations and paintings for *Hanukkah* cards, Passover *Haggadah*'s, costumes for *Purim* pageants, designing portable *Sukkot*, synagogue donor walls and decor. I currently live in Tucson, Ariz., and share ownership of Christiana's, a working artist gallery and studio. As a preferred vendor for the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (www.uscj.org/Marketplace/ArtArchitecture.aspx), my work can be commissioned with originals and prints available at www.ericjabloner.com. ★



and the world will be completely good.

I am reminded of my past. I grew up in Indianapolis, and lived a rather secular life. The secular have little connection with the past. They view their religious ancestors as primitive and superstitious. The present also means very little. They think that life is just an accident. Many, many years ago a lot of molecules just happened to connect together in a certain order, and life started. If life is just an accident, how much meaning can it have? The future is also very bleak. When people turn 50 they begin to develop wrinkles and grey hair. Their memory sometimes fails. Slowly (we hope), things go downhill. If you don't believe that you have a soul, all you can look forward to is a bitter end, the grave.

How can we find meaning? Think for a minute. Were my grandparents and their ancestors just stupid primitives? And what about 95% of Americans today who believe in Hashem? This includes a lot of smart and modern people, even scientists

LETTER

(continued from 2)

yet by scholars. There are countless photos, diaries, testimonies, official records and recorded names. There is historical film footage. There are thousands of books on the history of these events. And, the Holocaust continues to be studied and pondered in all forms of the arts.

There is no greater eyewitness to the committed atrocities than General Eisenhower, the former Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in World War II and President of the United States. He visited the liberated concentration camp of Ohrdruf in Gotha, Germany, on April 12, 1945, where he personally witnessed the thousands of piled bodies that were shot and burnt beyond recognition. The stench alone was overwhelming. He wrote to his wife Mamie, "I never dreamed that such cruelty, bestiality, and savagery could really exist in this world."

And to General Marshall he wrote, "The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty and bestiality were so overpowering as to leave me a bit sick... I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in a position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to 'propaganda'."

President Eisenhower well understood how time may damage memory. And, that is why he made sure that as many of his fellow soldiers as possible see for themselves the physical horrors of the Holocaust. Let us do no less than remember the events of the Holocaust as they truly occurred and whose impact many of us still feel a generation later. The pain will never die and the memory of those we lost will live forever.

Isaiah Kuperstein, Former Director of Education, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2201 E. 46th St., Indianapolis, IN 46205. 317-253-3417, ★



and professors. Maybe there is a G-d, after all? How can I know for sure? Spend some time at your local Chabad House. Go to one of their weekly classes. If you seriously look for Hashem, you will find Him. Especially right now. This Sunday is *Shavuot*, the celebration of the giving of the Torah.

We send our blessings to all of our readers and all of Israel to receive and learn the Torah with joy. It should illuminate the inner depths of our heart. This will help to bring *Moshiach* Now!

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



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

Shavuot: A night of study and a life of commitment

The first time I fully experienced the glorious holiday of *Shavuot* was a balmy June night in Jerusalem. Determined to celebrate the ancient ritual of *tikkun liel Shavuot* (staying up all night to study Torah and other sacred Jewish texts), my husband and I made the necessary childcare arrangements and drank cups of coffee with dinner in preparation for what we imagined would be a spiritual marathon. I'll admit I was nervous, both about the sitter we hired (who knew less English than we knew Hebrew) and about the possibility that I might not be able to make it through the night without falling asleep over the texts.

The crowd of people outside the Pardes Institute where we chose to study buzzed with anticipation as we waited for the doors to open. The old timers came prepared with canteens of soda, thermoses of hot coffee and pillows to sit on. I brought a pen and some no-doze, just in case.

We studied from the book of Exodus with great scholars like Dr. Aviva Zornberg and Rabbi Danny Landis. We discussed the Revelation at Mt. Sinai, what it must have been like then and what it means to receive the Torah in our own day. We struggled with the texts, interpreting difficult passages while plates of cookies and fruit were passed around the room. The hours flew by but instead of feeling tired, I was exhilarated by the many views that were shared. The fact that we all didn't necessarily agree with one another was far less important than the act of grappling with the texts together, as Jews have done for thousands of years.

About an hour before sunrise, we ended our study session and headed through the darkened streets towards the Old City. An ethereal dance of silhouettes moved all around us as thousands of people, many dressed in traditional Chasidic black coats and hats, walked with the same goal in mind – to arrive at the Western Wall by sunrise in time to say the morning prayer service.

Originally Shavuot was celebrated as a spring harvest festival, the time when Jews would make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem to offer their first fruits. When

sacrifices could no longer be offered because of the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., the Talmudic rabbis imbued the holiday with spiritual significance by designating it as the day the Israelites received the Torah at Mt. Sinai. They were able to do this because the Torah does not mention any specific date for this momentous event.

In Exodus 19:1 it says that the Israelites arrived at Mt. Sinai "on this day" (*bayom hazeh* in Hebrew). The rabbis interpreted 'on this day' to mean that the giving and receiving of the Torah is a perpetual and continuing process which occurs for each person in every generation. The actual date therefore transcends all limitations of time and place. Through the process of interpreting time markers in Exodus and linking various Biblical verses however, the rabbis were able to affix the date of the giving of the Torah as the 6th of Sivan, 50 days after the first counting of the Omer which begins on the second day of Passover. The 50th day coincides with Shavuot.

The importance of linking Passover with Shavuot is central to the Jewish idea of redemption. The Exodus from Egypt unified the Israelites as a physical nation by uniting them as a people through their liberation from generations of slavery. They achieved freedom together under the leadership of Moses, who spoke to them of the saving power, might and greatness of God. But for what were they freed?

The answer came three months later at the foot of Mt. Sinai when the Hebrew people became a *spiritual* nation, unified in the covenant they entered into with the God that brought them out of Egypt "with a strong hand and an outstretched arm." They were freed for a special purpose and mission – to love God, follow the laws of the Torah and become a holy nation. Redemption and Revelation, physical and spiritual liberation, are intimately linked through Jewish history.

The sun was rising as we reached the *Kotel*, its golden rays spread over the massive stones worn by age and the millions of hands who have clung to it for strength, wisdom and faith. A sea of bodies swayed back and forth and the hum of Hebrew prayers was almost deafening. We stood together in the early morning light – a tapestry of Israeli, American, Canadian, European, South African and Oriental Jews, calling out to history and God in different voices but calling out together, as the Jewish nation did at Sinai several thousand years ago.

As we headed home for breakfast, I understood the significance of staying up all night to study the Torah. The commitment to study reaffirms our relationship to the text, to the Jewish

(see Lederman, page 9)

Eighteen reasons to be Jewish



BY RABBI STEPHEN J. EINSTEIN

The noted theologian Emil Fackenheim has spoken about the 614th commandment, and it is this: "Do not give Hitler a posthumous victory." If Jewish civilization ends because we do not live Jewish lives, we will have done just that...and Hitler would end up victorious.

For some Jews, Dr. Fackenheim's statement is persuasive and motivational. Others seek a more affirmative push, and ask, "Aren't there positive reasons to be Jewish?" Of course there are! I've been thinking about this a bit, and I came up with a list. Here's what I jotted down:

- I love my Judaism, and can't imagine living without it.
- Jewish weddings are *freilach* – we dance and rejoice before the bride and groom.
- We have holidays every month (save one), and a special day each week – *Shabbat*.
- While I learn my Judaism in my synagogue, I live it in my home, and in my everyday life.
- Questioning is encouraged – the questions are more important than the answers because they lead to more questions.
- Rituals give color and flavor to my life, and each one points to a moral lesson.
- Being Jewish gives me a connection to others in a world that is often alienating.
- Virtually wherever I travel, I can find my community.
- Every time the Torah scroll is lifted, I feel the generations which have preceded me.
- Books are sacred, learning is revered, and teachers are respected.
- There is more than one way to be a good Jew.
- Ours is an optimistic outlook on life.
- Judaism is a way of life, informing how I look at things, how I believe, and even how I eat.
- Judaism encourages me to enjoy eating, but not be a glutton...to enjoy drinking, but not be a drunkard.
- Judaism doesn't require me to believe the unbelievable, but encourages me to dream beyond the see-able.
- Judaism gives me the means to express my joy and the hope to overcome my grief.
- Every time I attend a *Bris* or *Bat Mitzvah*, I feel the chain of Jewish tradition on which I am a link.
- Life is a paramount value, as seen in the fact that the number 18 is so special. After all the word is numerically equivalent to 18, and it means life.

(see Einstein, page 9)



The Roads from Babel

BY SETH BEN-MORDECAI

High energy

To emphasize an action or express a strong determination in English, we can raise the voice: "I will see him" becomes "I WILL see him!" We can use adverbs or adverbial phrases or clauses: "I surely will see him" or "Certainly I'll see him" or "It is my strong determination to see him." Or we can use salty language: "I will effen see him!" But in Biblical Hebrew, the easiest means to express emphasis or determination was to attach the suffix -*ennah* to the imperfect tense (i.e., the "future tense" of Modern Hebrew).

Note that the "n" of the suffix -*ennah* is doubled. In English, doubling a consonant is a mere spelling convention. But in Biblical Hebrew, a doubled consonant was pronounced twice as long as an ordinary one. A *dagesh* – a dot – in a consonant can show doubling.

The suffix -*ennah* occurs several times in *Parshat Balak*. At Numbers 23:19, we read:

הוּא אָמַר וְלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה, וְדָבָר לֹא יִקְיֶנָּה

This means, "Does he [G-d] talk and not act? Does he declare and not CREATE?" The verb is *yeqimennah*, which consists of the imperfect *yaqim*, i.e., "he creates" [literally, "he causes to stand"] plus the suffix, -*ennah*. By emphasizing "creates," the speaker shows he is incredulous at the notion that G-d might declare and then not bring his declaration into existence.

Another example at Numbers 23:20. There we read:

הִנֵּה בָרַךְ, לִקְחֹתִי; וּבָרַךְ, וְלֹא אֲשִׁיבָנָה

This means, "I've undertaken to bless. He [G-d] has blessed, and I certainly will not retract [the blessing]." The verb is *ashivennah*, which consists of the *ashiv*, i.e., "I will cause to return," plus, -*ennah*.

When -*ennah* is sandwiched between a verb and an object, it can contract to a mere doubled *nun*. Thus, in Numbers 24:17, we read:

אֶרְאֶנּוּ וְלֹא עֲתָה

This means, "I will certainly see him, but not now." The verb is *er'ennu* consisting of *er'eh*, meaning "I will see" plus, -*ennah*, plus the direct object pronoun -*hu*, meaning "him." Here, the "h" of -*hu* has been dropped as often occurs in rapid speech. On learning of this energetic suffix, one might be discouraged, or one might say, *Elmedennah!* meaning "I certainly will study!"



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

What a difference a day makes

It is *Shavuot*. Exactly 50 days from Passover a little obscure holiday called *Shavuot* occurs. It is a one day holiday unlike its sister pilgrimage holidays of Passover and Sukkot, both of which are commemorated for seven day. You might say that it is the stepchild of holidays.

However, it is a very significant holiday because it celebrates connection, involvement and promise.

Connection

The Israelites have been wandering in the desert for these many days and finally arrive at a place called Sinai. It is there that they will get to understand their purpose and the realization that laws and governance are necessary for civilizations to survive and thrive. They are the recipients of a concept called freedom. After more than 200 years, they walk once more upright and proud void of the master's whip and the degradation that accompanies such cruelty.

The euphoria that permeated the camps, in some instance was more than they had imagined or understood. After all, it is one thing to dream of being free and another of its realization. How does a free person act? How does a free person go anywhere with no purpose?

There is drama because now they had to feed, clothe and shelter themselves. They never knew to plan or make decisions. Who will tell them what to do, how to do it and why? There is emptiness and the feeling of hopelessness because they never had to think for themselves.

Then comes the moment of comprehension, the time to connect the dots and witness the destiny that awaits them. It is called *Shavuot*.

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

Involvement

Amid thunder and lighting, the Torah explains, comes the Revelation that God delivered them. There are standards of life that require commitment by choice not through dictates. There really cannot be any freedom without discipline, lacking that there is chaos and even anarchy. Therein lays the connection between the two holidays. The one leads to the other – freedom and purpose.

Law, which is the very foundation of a civilized people, will now be taught in terms that will make living together possible and enjoyable. In these laws will be the requirement to be holy because holiness leads to Godliness and that in turn leads to completion.

Promise

In the Book of Ruth we learn some valuable lessons: how to treat the poor, love of parents, even parents-in-law, love between a man and a woman with different backgrounds who find common ground in devotion to heritage and tradition.

The most important lesson, in my opinion is in the classic expression Ruth exclaims to Naomi: "Wherever you go, I will go. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God." Not only is it poetic but through this we learn that Judaism accepts people for inclusion without preconditions. Our faith does not determine that converting the world is a mandate but rather welcomes those who would be part of who we are and what we know to be the acknowledgment of the one true God. We understand very well that to reach God can and does necessarily requires us to start the journey. Moreover, we know that the journey does not stop with us and includes all who seek justice, love, and connection to an idea and an ideal.

In every language, in every corner of the world, the teaching is the same: "Love everyone, as we would want them to love us." It is universal in thought but not so easy to achieve. There is so much hatred in the world. Wars are fought and people die needlessly. Not believing as others do is a challenge to civility. The Heavens are overcrowded with souls that cry out for justice because of indifference and intolerance.

Shavuot is a lesson in compassion and mercy. We should learn from *Shavuot* that all humanity is tied to one another with a common thread of birth and life, the same life that was breathed into us at the beginning when God "breathed the breath of life" into Adam.

A little obscure holiday that uniquely illustrates what a difference, a day makes!

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

In seeking a better future, look past people's labels

BY RABBI SANDY EISENBERG SASSO



I am invited to attend a gathering of religious leaders from around the country to formulate a letter on family planning and reproductive rights. I walk into the room on the morning of what is to be a full day of meetings. Having already read the list of participants, I have some expectations and some reservations.

I, a rabbi, will be sitting around the table with the head of a Catholic organization, a Muslim imam, a Muslim woman lawyer and community organizer, a Presbyterian minister who is co-founder of the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good, an Episcopal priest and a Baptist pastor and theologian. I imagine a literalist approach to Scripture, a conservative stance on religious freedom, women's rights and other social issues.

It doesn't take long to find out that I am wrong on every count.

The Catholic leader is an advocate for affordable access to contraception and for women's choice. The Muslim imam is a voice for progressive values guided by the principles he believes are rooted in Islam – social equality, separation of church and state, freedom of speech, women's rights, gay rights and critical analysis and interpretation of sacred texts. The evangelical minister is interested in something I say about the Jewish understanding of sexuality. He agrees with the Jewish stance and wants the religious source so it might help to inform his own faith. The female Episcopal priest is in a loving relationship with another woman and together they have five children.

In the evening, two rabbis and two priests walk into a bar...we have a glass of wine together and find ourselves mostly talking about our children.

No one wishes to convert anyone else. No one privileges his or her understanding of Scripture or truth. We are more focused on listening to each other than preaching to one another.

We have a tendency to put people into categories, label them and then presume we know everything there is to know about them. It is what leads us to make ridiculous assumptions like: atheists lack morality; religious individuals are incapable of intellectual engagement; Democrats are for big government; Republicans don't care about the poor; liberals are bleeding hearts and conservatives are hard-hearted.



Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

Pirke Avot 3:8 – Rabbi Jacob said: If a man is walking by the way and is studying and then interrupts his study and says: "How fine is this tree?" or "How fine is this ploughed field?" Scripture regards him as though he was liable for his life.

**May 18, 2012, Behar
Lev. 26:3–27:34, 26 Iyar 5772**

I have to admit that as I placed the above *Mishna* (a single verse) into the *Pirke Avot* position at the top of the page I was perplexed. It says that a person who is studying, presumably Torah, and interrupts his study to see and take note of the beautiful world around him is liable for his life. How could Rabbi Jacob, the *Mishna's* author, not want people to take the time to see the beauty of God's creation or, as we often say, "Stop and smell the flowers."



If we are to have a serious conversation about the future of our country, we will need to recognize the complexity and diversity within any group, religious or secular, and to be cautious of labels that convey unreliable and often inaccurate information.

In the advertising world the wisdom is to formulate a simple narrative and to communicate it powerfully. That might be good advice if you are choosing a restaurant, a pair of running shoes or even a car, but it is dangerous counsel when choosing a religious worldview or the leaders of a country.

As we approach the primary elections and plan for November, let us look beyond the labels. We need to let politicians know that we are citizens, sophisticated enough to engage in honest evaluations of complex issues. We don't want candidates to stereotype and malign other groups in order to promote themselves or their party. We want them to preach less and listen more. We want them to understand that we are not buying an automobile; we are choosing our and our children's future. We need leaders who are not trying to sell us something, but who, in partnership with us, are attempting to create a strong and visionary country that can help move the world to a better and safer time.

Sasso and her husband Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso have been senior rabbis at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis for 34 years. Reprinted with permission from The Indianapolis Star, May 1, 2012. ★

Rashi tried to explain this *Mishna* by saying that it was for the protection of a person who, when traveling, is exposed to the dangers of the wilds and shouldn't stop to do anything at all. Our *Mishna* seems to view nature with a degree of ambivalence, implying that the appreciation of nature interferes with true service to God. From everything I have learned about Judaism and the world around us, this is far from the truth.

We thank God in a number of ways for the beauty of this world and the opportunity to be a part of it. Upon seeing such sights as majestic mountains, deserts and rivers, we recite the blessing: "Blessed are You... who makes the work of creation." Upon partaking of seasonal fruits, when we first enjoy the first fruits of the new year's harvest, we thank God with the blessing, "who has kept us alive, sustained us, and allowed us to reach this time." We express our gratitude that God has preserved us to this time, and has granted us the opportunity to partake of God's wonderful creations. And of course, we bless God – both before and after – for all the food God graces us with. There is a blessing for seeing a rainbow, "Blessed are You...who remembers the covenant, is faithful to the covenant, and keeps his word" (Referring to the covenant God made with Noah with the symbol of a rainbow.)

Today in northeast Ohio it is going to be a glorious day – temperature in the 70's, blue sky, light winds. As I write this, I am listening to the songbirds in the trees behind our house and looking at the sunlight bounce off of all the beautiful plants and flowers on our deck. Tomorrow I am going fishing for the first time in almost two years and look forward to the peace and quiet that comes with being on a lake removed from the everyday sounds we encounter in the city. I've always embraced nature and offer my own blessings to all that God created. Though I am not sure what Rabbi Jacob was really intending with his words, I would love for him to put down his Torah for a moment, close his eyes and just listen. God's words may be in the book, but God's voice is in the wind passing through a tree, a songbird calling out to its mate, or even, if you listen closely, to the flower opening up its bud. Another Jacob understood this when he awoke from a dream and said, "God is in this place and I, I did not know it."

God is all around us. It is easy to see and feel when blessings are flowing through or wrapping themselves around you. It isn't so easy to see and feel when there is pain and loss, but I truly believe that God is there even more so. God is in the words of comfort, the strength of a hug, the presence of a friend. God is in the

(see Adland, page 9)



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Unity coalition in Israel: Here we go!

The Yiddish expression is "Man plans: the Almighty laughs," but it seems we are just about to take off into issues and ideas that have been buried in Parliamentary quibbling since the 1980s. If you were not taken by surprise, you knew more than most Israelis and Jews in the world. *Likud* and *Kadima* have joined together to form a National Party, with a majority of 71-23, and the pyre of potential issues is about to ignite.

Everything is potentially on the table. Compulsory military service, social service subventions, all of the hot domestic and international issues that were suppressed because the sitting government could not be assured of having the votes, even after selling its political soul to simply stay in office.

What might we look for? Certainly a major new initiative in making peace with the Palestinians. While this will be a difficult and terrifying journey, it is one that must be taken. While the Israeli population is divided on how to do it, collectively they know that it must be resolved. The Palestinians, even more isolated than ever, must know that this is an opportunity they must resolve to take.

There will be new assessments and thinking about relationships with Iran. On a day-to-day basis, the situations in Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Tunisia and the entire Middle East need to be assessed, reassessed and acted upon.

The last years have seen even more division between religious and secular Jews. The anger runs deep, and their divisions will likely play out on the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. There are issues of housing, social service, employment and unemployment, and then there is the issue of exemptions for military service, and subvention of every kind.

Up until now all of these have been fought in the political arena, but not now with a national unity government. And small parties, who could previously offer votes for power sharing, will have a smaller say in the decision making.

Of course, this is Israel. These are contentious, stiff necked Jews, of whom we have read about since the beginning of our history, and so the negotiations will be loud and fraught with fervor.



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

A failure to communicate

I'm an ad guy. And a sales guy. I have been taught and practiced the art of getting a story across to willing listeners, skeptical listeners and downright hostile non-listeners. The idea is to present your point of view in a way that will reinforce the willing "prospects" desire to take the action you are requesting; changing the mind of the skeptical one and perhaps even swaying the hostile "prospect" a bit.

You would think after all these years, the State of Israel – with that incredible product called the Jewish State, would have developed a strong story and a compelling narrative to get the story of this only democracy in the Middle East across to a broad audience of all three types of prospects.

Who would have figured that a nation of Jews would be great at farming and fighting and terrible at public relations? As Ambassador Michael Oren points out in his *Wall Street Journal* OP-Ed; back in 1973, *Life Magazine* devoted a cover and 92 pages to the miracle of the State. Admittedly, that presentation may have been a bit over the top – but there was not a single misstatement in it.

In 1968 a show from Israel titled *To Live Another Summer* featuring the Grand Ballet of Israel toured the U.S. Israel was still in the flush of staving off annihilation and celebrating its victory. But, the backlash had already started. The insipient Anti-Semitism around the world began to snipe. Who were these Jews that instead of going to their deaths quietly so that we

There was a time when we believed that differences among us would not break out in civil unrest, but these are different times, and we are not all bound to the same beliefs. When we look around the world to witness how differences are being played out, we can only pray that we will seek the higher road.

And for all of us, the curtain is about to rise.

Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc., and can be reached at hkarsh@gmail.com. He has recently been named as a community columnist for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. This column was submitted on May 10, 2012. ★

could mourn them, dared to survive? So, a song right at the beginning of the show was called "We're Sorry We Won it". It expressed the thought that "A Jew Who is a Winner is To Be Scorned".

Since 1973, the Arab nations, pretty well deciding that they could not destroy Israel by force, have turned to more subtle tactics. They are using the one weapon that they have multiple times more than Israel: money.

The Arab nations of Saudi Arabia, Syria, The Emirates and others have "bought" chairs at numerous universities to "teach" an anti-Israel message to students. Unwitting young minds that have come out of our high schools with little or no knowledge of modern world history are susceptible to a message of the weak against the strong, the hapless against the establishment. But, these insidious purveyors of hate have turned history on its head. The Jew as victim is an image we do not and will not accept. But, to teach that Israel is an "Apartheid" state and the military might of the Middle East, or that they are occupiers is red meat for the gullible young. It must be counteracted.

Israel gave up Gaza. No quid pro quo – just left. Now thousands of missiles have rained down over the years since. A thriving greenhouse and vegetable industry, left for the Arabs to take over and create an economy was stripped of its equipment and cannibalized.

Yet, the propaganda machine churns on. I participated in a forum at Rollins College in Winter Park where a young, bright female Jewish student who had attended a summer program sponsored by "Seeds of Peace" stood and proclaimed that the audience should protest their tax dollars going to "kill Palestinian babies."

Where are our voices? Who proclaims the dozens of Nobel prize winners from Israel? Do your kids know of the thousands of Arab mothers who give birth in Israeli hospitals every year? Can they even imagine what it is like for this tiny land taking up less than 1% of the land of the Middle East to absorb millions of displaced Jews from all over the world? And believe me – these new immigrants when filling out their professions do not write "philanthropist".

Yet, they are absorbed. And the nation somehow continues to flourish. How do we tell the truth to the world? Most of the organizations trying to get the real story out and expose the lying and distortion symbolized by the BBC and literally hundreds of web sites are for the most part, preaching to the choir.

It will take a grass roots, bottom up movement to try and counter this growing tide of anti-Israel rhetoric and actions.

(see Shipley, page 11)

Gather the People



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

On Jewish congregational leadership

There is a widely acknowledged principle of strengthening and unifying organizations that says, "Whatever the problem, whatever the solution, *do leadership development!*" And it's a verity that in our family life, workplace, congregation, community and nation, "leadership" is the sine qua non of human achievement and fulfillment.

But having said that, we are confronted with the problem of defining *what* constitutes leadership. And when we have that worked out, we face the challenge of determining *who* will make good leaders and *how* that will happen.

Another problem in thinking about leadership development is that such thinking almost always puts us in a bind. On the one hand, if we all look to others, beyond ourselves, for leadership, then by definition none of us take the initiatives necessary to assume leadership – so each of us should be considering ourselves as potential leaders. On the other hand, the best leaders potentially are not those individuals who are angling for the preference and prestige of office, but rather those who are drafted because they have the confidence and support of the people.

Thinking about leadership is also often problematic because we confuse leadership with office: *Leadership* entails *action*, doing particular things, which engage followers; while office involves position, exercising authority to cause things to be done. We're in the habit of electing people to office and asking that they exercise authority for us rather than empowering them for leadership and emulating their action.

Part of the reason we're often burdened with leaders who are inadequate or incompetent is that those among us who could do better have abandoned our responsibility. We tend when thinking about leaders to imagine powerful and charismatic individuals, a definition that does not fit the overwhelming majority of us.

Rabbi Bill Lebeau, former Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Jewish Theological

Seminary, commented indirectly on this several years ago when he said: "I'm well aware of our dying as a community. We're awaiting not one giant to lead us but a chorus of courageous leaders who will help us transform the shudder of a dying people [into something new]."

How are we to know if we are personally called to lead?

When God calls out to Moses at the Burning Bush, he answers, "*hinneni*." According to one of our modern commentators, Professor (Rabbi) Nahum M. Sarna (1923–2005), "[The] Hebrew *hinneni* is the standard, spontaneous, unhesitating response to a call." But Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak, 1040–1105) teaches us that it took God seven days to convince Moses to take up the mission to Pharaoh. So we may conclude that while Moses was naturally open to hearing the call of God, he was nonetheless reluctant to take on the mission God would assign to him. (Exodus 3:11)

In effect, that we are reluctant, even resistant, should not disqualify us, but on the contrary, may be a healthy and appropriate first instinct. As to whether we should ignore that instinct, asking ourselves two questions may be helpful in making the decision: (1) Is this "mission" in question for the sake of heaven? (2) Am I willing to struggle with the ways in which I am called to lead?

Generally, we tend to *seek* leadership roles when the purposes and tasks are of our own design and when they promise to elevate us in the eyes of others. We tend to *avoid* leadership responsibility when the purposes and tasks are not of our own making and when they promise hard work without recognition. In the *short term*, becoming a leader in the Jewish tradition is not likely to make us comfortable – seemingly the measure of all goodness in contemporary life – or afford us recognition as public benefactors.

Akeidat Yitzchak (Rabbi Yitzchak ben Moshe Arama, 1420–1494) teaches that, "Moses' accomplishment in restoring God's presence to earth made him the intermediary between God and his people. To be a good intermediary requires that the intermediary himself feel in harmony with the objectives and methods of the one who has made him intermediary. Such rapport can exist either naturally, or in spite of one's natural inclinations."

But if our initiatives as leaders are not to be of our own design, then what are they to be?

Another way of thinking about that question is to ask, what were the conditions under which exceptional leaders became recognized in the Jewish tradition? There are several: when there were threats to their well-being or that of their family, community, people, or nation; when there

were shared beliefs that encouraged them to take the lead; and when there were competent and trustworthy leadership models from whom they could observe and learn.

Most crucial for learning about leadership is the presence of competent and trustworthy models – but who are *these* leaders?

Often, whether at home or at work or in our community, there is a dearth of leadership – we are bereft of models. In the Torah reading *Shemot*, however, we encounter a number of leadership models, from Moses and Pharaoh to the midwives Shifra and Puah, and Pharaoh's daughter Batya.

In regard to Moses' personal qualities as a leader, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935) teaches us that the leader "...must have intrinsic purity, feel empathy with the congregation, and be humble. He [or she] must be a visionary, must learn how to delegate tasks and responsibility, and encourage the people to strive for greater heights of their own accord. This is why he involved himself in the quarrel between [two] Jews on the morrow of his having slain the Egyptian thug."

Akeidat Yitzchak notes, "Moses' deed [i.e., slaying the Egyptian] was one of the qualifications that fitted him for a role of leadership amongst his people. The second qualification was his urge to see that social justice should prevail."

Shifra and Puah saved the lives of many male Jewish babies, not only that of Moses. They were not unaffected by Pharaoh's anger and the possibility of retribution, but they showed – forgive the politically incorrect expression – "...manly determination..." according to Rabbeinu Bachya (Rabbi Bachya ben Asher, 1255–1340). They had a greater concern about the consequences of ignoring the Divine Plan than ignoring the will of Pharaoh.

Mature leaders typically recognize that their most important accomplishments are achieved through one-to-one relationships with a wide variety of people. As Rabbi Kook put it, "The ruler of each generation should attempt to understand each and every individual, and through helping every person, he [or she] will elevate the entire status of the congregation."

And mature leaders recognize that although practical goals such as fundraising and hiring qualified staff are important, their achievement requires the accomplishment of less tangible objectives, such as building up the confidence, knowledge, and commitment of the people. As Rabbi Kook said, "His [or her] task is then to bring out their natural abilities and spirituality, to develop

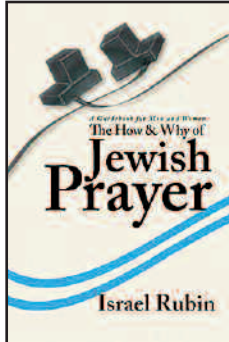
(see Ben Asher/Bat Sarah, page 16)

Kaddish

BY ISRAEL RUBIN



The Kaddish is most commonly known as the Mourner's Kaddish (*Kaddish Yatom*). Sometimes referred to as "Orphan's" Kaddish, it is recited for a period of eleven months less one day after the death of a parent, and at the annual *Yahrzeit* (Commemoration of Death). The term is shortened to thirty days for a deceased sibling, wife, husband, or child. Why a formulation of praise? At a time of bereavement a Jew expresses his acceptance of G-d's judgment. Furthermore, Kaddish recited by a mourner helps to redeem the soul of the deceased.



Its recitation by mourners stirs up a range of emotions, many of whom erroneously imagine it to be a prayer for the dead. While it is true that the

"Mourner's" Kaddish is recited by the heartbroken it is not a prayer for the departed, nor is there any mention of the dead. The Kaddish is a dynamic affirmation of faith in G-d. It is," as Rabbi Maurice Lamm says, "a call to G-d from the depths of catastrophe, exalting His name and praising Him, despite the realization that He has just wrenched a human being from life."

Even in times of grief the Jew exalts his G-d. Somehow, Kaddish, faithfully recited, takes the edge off the anguish and sadness of mourning. Wounded with grief over the loss of a close family member, the Jew is called upon to "praise, glorify and extol" G-d. How very perplexing! "Indeed, the very crucial moment when man's faith is most shaken, when very likely he feels rebellious against G-d for the death that has befallen him, he rises to recite the praises of the Creator." Yet the very repetition of this ancient impenetrable ritual gradually heals the psychological gash to the heart. Day in, day out, over a time span of eleven months, and always in the company of a *minyán* – that invaluable support group – the mourner chants, *Yitgadal, v'Yitkadash*. The congregational response of *Amen, Yehei Shmei Rabba...* and *Berich Hu* penetrates the intense isolation and vulnerability felt by the Mourner.

This solidarity with the mourner, this sense of sharing in his sorrow, is a remarkable system of comforting the bereaved without intruding into his privacy. In establishing

this ritual, our sages tacitly implanted in the very being of the mourner the theme that death is part of the cadence of life. That the same feeling of intense grief which so overwhelms him, has pounded many hearts through the ages.

The purpose of Kaddish recitation (and all other blessings) is to thank and praise God who constantly watches over all his creatures and creations. By means of the Kaddish and other blessings we reiterate and bear in mind that God does not reside only in the lofty heavens. Everything in this world exists because of Him. Every happening that occurs in the world has a spiritual significance and a Godly orientation. Thus, when a person purchases a new garment, or experiences something new that makes him happy, he recites the *She'echiyanu* blessing. And if, God forbid, a tragedy engulfs him, he acknowledges that even this tragedy that befell him was with God's sanction, and he recites the blessing, *Baruch Dayan Ha'emet*.

By means of these blessings faith in God is revealed and unfolds throughout the world. At the same time the one reciting the blessings is himself blessed. The acknowledgment that God controls and directs everything in this world establishes and bestows significance to every happening in life. When a person merits something that makes him happy, his happiness is deeper because of the recognition that Divine Providence brought it about. And when, God forbid, an accident or tragedy befalls him, he has greater strength to endure it when he realizes that there is a meaning to this tragedy. And even if he now does not understand what 'good' will develop from the 'bad' he is fortified in the knowledge that everything that God made in this world, will be for the better. At the end of this heartbreaking experience he will be able to rise from the depth of his pain and rebuild his life. But he who does not have faith in God, undergoes pain and suffering. The sadness pierces his heart, penetrating into its depths without relief or significance.

Entire books and many commentaries have been written about this oft-misunderstood prayer. In essence it is an expression of hope that G-d's Sovereignty will be universally recognized all over the world. Mystery surrounds this composition of the sanctification of G-d's Name. It begins with two words in Hebrew and continues in Aramaic.

The public recitation of the Kaddish elicits an evocative congregational response embodying not only praise and glorification of G-d, but also the hope that G-d's Kingdom on earth will be established soon. In addition to saying *Amen*, the worshippers respond with *Yehei Shmei Rabba Mevorach I'Olam*

LEDERMAN

(continued from 4)

people and to God. Just as we celebrate marriage annually with an anniversary, Shavuot is the time to celebrate the marriage between God and the Jewish people and honor all that has occurred throughout our history to keep Judaism alive and well.

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



EINSTEIN

(continued from 4)

You probably noticed, when I totaled my list, I had...18 items!

Rabbi Stephen J. Einstein has been senior rabbi of Congregation B'nai Tzedek in Fountain Valley, Calif. for 36 years. We wish him a Yasher Koach for the double chai years of service as he retires at the close of this year. This is an excerpt from Rabbi Einstein's Rosh Hashanah sermon, on Rosh Hashanah morning, 5760. ★



ADLAND

(continued from 6)

community and God is in the words of our tradition.

As we enter into this Shabbat, take a moment to look up from all that is going on in your life and find something beautiful – a spouse, a child, a parent, a flower, maybe even a rainbow – and remember to say a blessing of thanks for this presence in your life. Take another moment just to close your eyes and listen.

When you light your Shabbat candles, light one for the beauty that surrounds us and the power of this beauty that can enhance, maybe even change your life. Light the other candle to remind us to take a moment and look up.

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



ul'Olmei Olmai'yah (May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity). The Chazan (or mourner) repeats this response before proceeding further.

The mourners' kaddish is but one of five different types of Kaddish, each serving a different purpose, yet all sanctifying G-d's Name. Often used to indicate transit from one phase to another of the prayer liturgy,

(see Rubin, page 11)



Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

Three new Jewish-themed plays with mixed results

Eavesdropping on Dreams

The New York off-Broadway theater scene offers yet another tale of Holocaust survivors and heirs. *Eavesdropping on Dreams* is now on the boards at the Cherry Lane Studio Theatre, a production of the Barefoot Theatre Company.

To dramatize, once again, the Holocaust legacy is indeed commendable. We are urged, rightly so, to tell the story again and again, enlightening upcoming generations. Awareness is everything in helping a future world avoid another Holocaust.

Playwright Rivka Bekerman-Greenberg has indeed taken on a worthy project. And the play does have the ring of truth, possibly autobiographical truth. Is this her own family history? But its message is weakened by confusion and burdened by repetition. Back to the drawing board, please, Ms. Bekerman-Greenberg.

What is the play's theme? Namely, does one openly acknowledge one's past history? Should one recall and deal with the past – or bury unbearable memories? Can one, in fact, ever truly bury these memories?

The play concentrates on three women – mother Rosa, daughter Renee, and granddaughter Shaina, each of whom



(L-R): Lynn Cohen as Rosa and Aidan Koehler as Shaina in *Eavesdropping on Dreams*. Photo credit: Francisco Solorzano.

deals with her own demons. Rosa lived through the Lodz ghetto (and possibly the death camps), Renee was born in a refugee camp, and Shaina is pure American. While the grandmother and granddaughter strive to deal with the past, Renee (now a respected doctor) will have none of it. Nevertheless Shaina (now a medical student) returns to Poland to visit the site of the former Lodz ghetto. She comes back to share photographs and discoveries with her beloved *Bubbe*, her grandmother.

All three women interact with tension, anger, misunderstanding and love, which makes for good theater. But the story is confusing. Who were the fathers of the various babies? What became of the men? Why (and at whose hands) did one baby die? Though the men (relatives, Nazis and others) are ably played by Mike Shapiro and Christopher Whalen, their appearances leave us asking for further explanation. Furthermore, the playwright's use of dreams, flashbacks, and changing roles also confuses and weakens the total effect.

Nor does the production itself serve the play well, despite the glowing presence of Lynn Cohen (playing Rosa). Though the entire cast of five are skilled players, both Aidan Koehler (Shaina) and Stephanie Roth Haberle (Renee) constantly go over the top, offering little variation in tone. Each, alas, gives a one-note performance. Both are clearly capable of better work and should have had better direction from director Ronald Cohen. Only Lynn Cohen offers a more nuanced, quieter performance, allowing for a build-up to a climax and final resolution.

In all, *Eavesdropping on Dreams* deserves to be a better play, given the importance of the subject matter. Hopefully Bekerman-Greenberg will cut back on repeated information, which does nothing for dramatic effect, and work to clarify the story.

The Lyons

The latest dysfunctional family – a Jewish family, as it happens – is now on the Broadway stage. It is playwright Nicky Silver's newest contribution – *The Lyons* – directed by Mark Brokaw.

We wonder that this particular play is listed as a comedy. Comedic lines surface only occasionally, delivered in rapier-style from the indomitable Linda Lavin. And though the audience laughs, the laughter seems more out of nervousness than a response to humor. The story itself feels sad and pointless. People despair, die, or struggle through the day. Comedy? No.

The plot deals with a family surrounding a father who lies dying in his hospital bed. The mother (Lavin) sits flipping through a



(L-R) Michael Esper (son), Dick Latessa (father), Linda Lavin (mother), and Kate Jennings Grant (daughter) in *The Lyons*. Photo credit: Carol Rosegg.

style magazine and wishing her husband would get on with the business of dying. She is depicted as stylish, self-absorbed, and shallow – a mean-spirited, stereotypical portrayal of the Jewish wife/mother. Then the alcoholic daughter arrives and finally the son, who is gay. Both children are lost souls. Everyone is there at bedside, perhaps out of a sense of what is appropriate, not a sense of closeness. Ultimately the father dies and the mother promptly abandons her children as she announces her plans for a new life. Thus the children are forced to make lemonade out of lemons, timidly reaching out for their own new beginnings.

What's it all about, Alfie? The message, it would seem, is that life works out well for some people, badly for others – the luck of the draw. You make the best of your circumstances, with possibly good returns if you reach out to others. This hardly seems an earth-shaking insight, a new exploration of man's place in the universe. It's been said before – with better dialogue, better characterization, better plot – in any number of earlier dramatizations.

Yet there is one saving grace to *The Lyons*. Its second act – which deals with the gay son and a man he hopes to seduce – is an affecting little play all in itself. Surprises tumble upon surprises, and tension escalates powerfully as the two men spar. Michael Esper (as the son) and Gregory Wooddell (as his target) rise to the challenge, working off each other beautifully. As to the plays' other performers, Dick Latessa gives a solid performance as the dying father, and the highly-touted Linda Lavin comes through as might be expected. She has the unfailing comic touch – lifting her eyebrows, rolling her eyes, and capturing her audience.

But the show's good direction and performances seem hardly worth the effort. We had hoped for more, given the track record of this gifted playwright. We are still wondering – what's it all about, Alfie?

My Name is Asher Lev

Jewish theater has finally made its way into the suburbs! *My Name is Asher Lev* has just opened at the renowned Long Wharf Theater in New Haven. It is surprising that this non-sectarian, non-profit theater would take on a Jewish theme, but perhaps not so surprising, since Long Wharf often features black plays and those of other ethnic groups. Perhaps artistic director Gordon Edelstein (who directs the play) thought it was time to give this ethnic group its place in the sun.

In any event, the play proves to be edifying for Jews and non-Jews alike. (Fortunately, program notes include a glossary. Otherwise, the uninitiated would be lost among the liberal sprinkling of Yiddish expressions.) This drama by Aaron Posner, explores the conflict between Orthodox Judaism and personal creativity. *Asher Lev* is based on a 1972 novel by Chaim Potok, who is always interested in the secular/spiritual conflict. How does a practicing Jew make his way in the greater world? What happens when inner creativity clashes with the strong traditions of Judaism? His award-winning novel *The Chosen* (1967) certainly dealt with that theme, as does *Asher Lev*.

Its hero, Asher Lev, is a pious Jew who also happens to be a gifted artist. He is raised by a father committed to spreading the word of Orthodox Judaism, a father who travels constantly throughout Europe, opening Yeshivas and encouraging its participants. But Asher, from earliest years, is driven to express himself as a painter. He makes contact with an art dealer, who steers him to an outstanding teacher. His father, of course, is horrified, particularly when Asher's paintings involve naked women and crucifixes. Written in the first person, the story is indeed autobiographical, mirroring much of Potok's own struggle.

But does this strong novel work in dramatic form? Actually, Posner has turned the story into a reading rather than a drama. The title character stands before the audience and tells his story. Short scenes fraught with conflict do intercept as the story moves forward, but essentially this is a read-aloud biography.

Nevertheless the Long Wharf production is first-rate, thanks to direction and acting. Pacing is impeccable, and three excellent players spell out the tale. Ari Brand in the title role and Melissa Miller as his mother (and other female characters) certainly grab the audience. Above all, Mark Nelson, in several roles as the father, teacher and rabbi, gives towering performances.

Whether *My Name is Asher Lev* is biography, novel, reading, or play, it is worthy of attention. Jews and non-Jews alike will gain from its viewing.

SHIPLEY

(continued from 7)

The main stream Christian denominations who desire to boycott the Jewish State camouflage their historical Anti-Semitism in grand sounding blather about the terrible crimes against the Arab people. Well, just how many suicide bombers did Israel send onto Arab busses? Don't kid yourself – the organized anti-Israel campaign is a campaign against all Jews.

We need a long range, effective campaign to counter-act this travesty. Yes, most of the Evangelicals are our "friends". But they are heavy on biblical history and short on present day actions. Bless their tourism and the dollars they leave behind in Israel – but it is our job, as Jewish parents and teachers and influencers to turn this tide of money being spent against us. Ambassador Oren asks: "What Happened to Israel's Reputation?" It has been torn apart by our enemies while we stood here and watched. Never Again!

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



(L-R): Ari Brand as Asher, Mark Nelson as the father, and Melissa Miller as the mother in *My Name is Asher Lev*. Photo credit: T. Charles Erickson.

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

EDITORIAL

(continued from 2)

a convoy with about 1,000 other women and children. They were sent directly to the gas chambers. Only seven survived.

Cybulski's aunt from Paris, Bela Orensztein and her son Armand came to the farm, helping care for him and his sister. They all stayed for the duration of the war. The children went to school with the other children in the village but were warned not to speak Yiddish or Hebrew or tell anyone who they were.

After the war they returned to Paris and eventually Harry and Dora were sent to the Utica in northern Illinois, where they had another aunt and uncle who took them in. Both children eventually went to college and become educators.

In 1995, Harry and his sister decided to go back to the French farm village where they had lived during the war. They were standing in the area of the farm, but the building had been torn down. Harry noticed some people on a porch across the street and he could tell they were wondering who they were. He and his sister went over to talk to them. His sister spoke better French so she explained they had lived on the farm as children.

As she talked, one man Harry's age points to him and says, "I know you! We called you "Riri." (That was short for "Henri," his name in French.) Harry recognized him as a classmate, and found out he was related to the farmer who saved his life.

After more conversation Harry asks, "Did you know who we were?"

"Yes," the man replies.

Harry and Dora were shocked.

"Did anybody else know we were Jewish?" Harry asks.

"Everyone in the village knew," he responds, "and a few other Jews were also hiding here."

Fifty years later Harry and his sister find out that not only one family, but an entire village had risked their lives to save them. And even though Harry has told this story many times, he still gets choked up talking about it.

Jennie Cohen, May 23, 2012 ★



RUBIN

(continued from 9)

the Kaddish in varying forms marks the conclusion of individual sections of the prayer service and the end of the entire service itself.

Excerpted from The How and Why of Jewish Prayer by Israel Rubin. For a free copy of the chapter on "Kaddish" write to akp@ibrubin.com or to order the book visit: www.arbakanfot.com. ★



Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Launching Tel Aviv's "Art Year"

Tel Aviv radiates creativity from its restaurants, cafes and bars to its art and culture. Three major cultural institutions have just completed major renovations – a new wing in the Tel Aviv Museum, the refurbished Habima National Theatre and a new wing in the Cinematheque.

To mark this high point for Tel Aviv, the mayor of Tel Aviv has declared 2012 as Art Year, launched March 21.

According to Adi Yekutieli, Director of "Art Year," the city will celebrate artists who live in Tel Aviv and make everyone aware of the art scene. The launching included the Tel Aviv Museum open for 24 hours with art tours, panel discussions, dance performances, video-art screenings and more; and tours to artists, studios and galleries around the city.

May 14–19 will be the Fresh Paint Contemporary Art Fair, Israel's largest, most influential art event; and Houses From Within (May 18–19) with free tours to more than 100 homes of special architectural value.

June 1–8, art-related activities will pay tribute to Gay Pride Week, culminating in the June 8 Gay Pride parade.

June 28 will feature White Night, an all-night festival in the historic zone of Tel Aviv, declared as a World Cultural Heritage site by UNESCO. The White City is the world's largest grouping of buildings in the Bauhaus style. Cultural institutions will be open all night and 100 different cultural and artistic happenings will take place.

September 6–8 will be Loving Art Making Art, three days of art activities in galleries, museums, and artists' studios.

To celebrate the year, journalists were treated to visits in the newest area in South Tel Aviv, a district built in the 1960s as an industrial zone which has leaped into the world of art. This an up-and-coming area has between 30 and 100 artists and designer studios, as well as 5–10 galleries. The buildings had been unoccupied and neglected but have large spaces, high ceilings, and offer parking space.

At 3 HaMif'al Street in a loft is the Feinberg Projects Art Space owned by Ori Feinberg who spent four years in New York acquiring a Masters Degree in Contemporary Art Administration;

worked at some art galleries and represented some independent artists. Returning to Israel a year ago, he hired a curator, who had spent six years in New York as a cultural correspondent for an Israeli newspaper. He has launched an exhibition in a stylized space in order to allow the work of artists to present a different view of the gallery.

Feinberg Projects is a multi-faceted arts management and exhibition initiative aimed to render contemporary Israeli and international art accessible to Israeli audiences and beyond, through projects that combine visual art with live music and performances. In addition, Feinberg Projects provides art advisory services to both the private and business sectors.

We were then introduced to street art by two of the approximately 20 Tel Aviv street artists, as we walked to the Rosenfeld Gallery, 1 Shvil HaMif'al, a 3,229 square-foot loft with concrete floors, white-washed walls, fluorescent lights and an exhibition of large paintings. There is also a smaller showroom with various artists. Zaki Rosenfeld, a man in his 50s, explained that with rent prices increasing, artists cannot afford center city housing and "since art tries to be on the edge, real things are happening in this area although after eight at night it becomes a less desirable neighborhood." His father had opened a gallery in Tel Aviv in the 50s, one of the most traditional galleries. Then 12 years ago, Rosenfeld changed to contemporary art; he moved to this district two and a half years ago, and fosters and promote cutting-edge talented artists.

Four artists share a small workshop (approximately 656 square feet for which they pay approximately \$666 rent a month). The four are friends and collaborators and are representative of what this area has become. Meital does costume design, Hadar is a sculptress, Ronnie makes jewelry and Amy is a children's book illustrator.

Two "pioneers" who moved to this area before it was trendy are Yuval Caspi and Ido Shemi. Shemi creates optical illusion works to give a 3-D effect, a technique



Two "pioneers" Yuval Caspi and Ido Shemi. Photo by Barry A. Kaplan/Jerusalem.

developed in Israel with a surrealistic appearance, as well as mosaics. He is considered a shaper of Tel Aviv's alternative art scene. Caspi is a painter and comics illustrator. They are creators of a new independent and multi-cultural movement, *Israbilly*, to "banish darkness" and spotlight unique cultural creations of artists "on the fringe."

The Raw Art Gallery, at 3 Shvil Ha'Meretz Street, one of the older galleries in the area, represents Israeli and international painters, photographers and sculptors and promotes their contemporary art. It has the white-washed walls of other galleries but tile floors instead of concrete and spotlights on the exhibitor's works instead of fluorescent lights.

Leaving this district for another part of Tel Aviv, at 9 Mazeh Street is a social hub for young adults 18–35 (35% of the Tel Aviv population is this age). It aims to provide a platform for the needs of young adults.

Although the house will continue, the art project was only during the month of March and included artists "squatting" in the house, transforming it into a home, inviting colleagues to come and visit and eat and think about the future of this place while creating sculptures and doing performances.

One example of a more conventional gallery is next door to the Mazeh, the Chelouche Gallery for Contemporary Art at 7 Mazeh. This is located in the other half of this historic building, designed and built in the 1920s and planned as homes for two brothers from Berlin who wanted identical residences. The Gallery promotes international and local exhibitions in collaboration with curators and artists from around the world, thus it is considered a leader in the various fields of contemporary art in Israel.

Currently exhibited are metal sculptures of a featured artist and two showrooms with other artists. On the ground floor is a bookstore-café.

The Noga Gallery of Contemporary Art at 60 Achad Ha-am Street currently
(see Kaplan/Israel, page 20)

On this date in Jewish history

On May 23, 1939

In Palestine, on the eve of the *Shavuot* holiday, seven new settlements are established simultaneously. In all, twelve new settlements are established in May.



Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

Blooming and receiving

Sivan began May 22

Welcome to the new and beautiful month of *Sivan*. Just as the trees and flowers begin to blossom during the spring month of *Sivan*, we blossom as well. *Sivan* is the time of gaining clarity of vision, discovering one's life purpose and receiving the guidance and direction for actualizing our goals and purpose.

Sivan is also the month for increased love and intimacy. *Sivan* is an optimal time to deepen our soul connections with others and to effortlessly form profound soul connections with new people. Soul connections are not bound by time and space. In this month of *Sivan*, we meet new people and we feel that we have known them forever. *Sivan* is such a month of love. It is no coincidence that there are many more marriages in the month of *Sivan* than during any other month.

In *Sivan*, we celebrate the beautiful holiday of *Shavuot*, the Giving of the Torah (*Matan Torah*). This holiday is a celebration of a kind of marriage. The Giving of Torah is an expression of the everlasting partnership between the Jewish people and God, between all of humanity and God.

The holiday of each month actually epitomizes the spiritual energy and opportunity of the month. The holiday of *Shavuot*, the celebration of the Giving of Torah could only take place in the loving month of *Sivan* as Torah is ultimately an expression of highest love, deepest dedication, and most profound intimacy available to human beings.

It is said that when the Jewish people received the Torah they were of one heart, so unified they were likened to one being. In the Torah passage that describes Israel's encampment at the foot of Mount Sinai at the time of the new moon of *Sivan*, the word "encamped" is in the singular rather than the plural form. It is this unity that enabled the Israelites to receive the Torah. This kind of unity is possible in *Sivan*.

Because we received the Torah historically in this month, the whole month of *Sivan* is about learning to receive. Many people know how to give, and many more know how to take, but how to receive on all levels of being is an

important spiritual practice that we all need to improve upon. To me, "to receive" means to be open, to be present, to be without a personal agenda, to receive what God wants to give me.

It is a popular New Age concept that what we have in our life is an expression of what we have the consciousness to receive. We may agree or disagree with these ideas, but nevertheless, from a Jewish perspective, we need to recognize that the life circumstances in which we find ourselves are not accidental. Because there is a God in this world, life is not random. We may make choices in our lives, choices that reflect who we are in our consciousness at the time we make the choice, yet whatever happens to us is divine providence. This is especially true when we feel that we really had no choice to do anything other than what we did. Therein lies the headquarters for our deepest transformation and healing, no matter how difficult it may appear to us.

Because of God's involvement in our lives, there is goodness and a depth of light to be extracted from everything that happens in life, from both our challenges as well as our blessings. All life circumstances offer us an opportunity to grow in wisdom and closeness to God. There is a new Torah to learn this month that offers us a deeper revelation of God.

There is such a heavenly influx of spiritual light and love available during this month. Life is so abundant this month, so let us not waste any more time in our life on what we do not want, or on blaming ourselves or others for what we have or do not have in our lives, but let us focus on what we do want and what we truly desire. We are happy when we receive and allow what we want in our lives. The month of *Sivan* is a time of joy.

How do we become the proper vessels to receive what we truly want in our lives? How do we receive Torah and God in our lives? Are we ready to receive what God wants to give us, what our souls truly want, rather than what our little ego self wants? Do we feel that we deserve such a revelation? These are deep questions to be meditated upon and explored with your spiritual buddy or guide.

The month of *Sivan* is the time to receive a new depth of Torah. Torah is not only what is written, but Torah is God's revelation to you. Torah is the spiritual wisdom that is transmitted directly to you. That is why *Sivan* is such an auspicious time for prayer and meditation.

A person can learn what is written on a page in a book of wisdom, but the Torah is what you actually receive. It is

(see Ribner, page 15)



Jerusalem Peacemaker

BY ELIYAHU MCLEAN

Real peace is peace between opposites

In our increasingly polarized world, traditional Jewish teachings about peace can offer us wisdom that we can apply in our current predicament. The word *shalom* in Hebrew means peace.

From the same root in Hebrew comes the word *shalem*, or wholeness. The great Hassidic philosopher Rebbe Nachman taught that the highest, or absolute, peace is the peace between opposites.

That is, it is our task to seek the unity in the opposites, to seek to bring wholeness within ourselves and to our families, communities and nations.

The real significance of peace is to join opposites. We shouldn't be troubled when we come across someone who is our exact opposite and whose thoughts are contrary to our own. Neither should we conclude that we will never be able to live together harmoniously. The laws of physics dictate that opposites attract. Absolute peace is achieved through the effort to make peace between opposites, just as *Hashem* – Hebrew for 'The Name', or God – makes peace in His High Places between fire and water, which are also opposing forces.

In our work in the Holy Land, we have brought together Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Druze religious leaders, in a group called 'The Abrahamic Reunion'. We jointly issued 'A Call for Reconciliation' after the Lebanon war to show cooperation among the faiths by example, and that our destiny is to live together as one family.

In this and many other gatherings for prayer and dialogue, we have succeeded in bringing together many Palestinians and Israelis who otherwise would have seen each other as enemies.

The atmosphere of both safety and unity at our gatherings helps to rebuild trust between opposing national and religious communities. In this process we come to re-humanize 'the other' and to take down the walls of fear that separate us.

The ancient Jewish sage Hillel taught us in the *Pirkei Avot*, or 'Ethics of the Fathers', to be like the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace. If we define peace, *shalom*, as *shalem* – seeking wholeness – then wherever we live, we should seek to become a bridge between

(see McLean, page 16)



Media Watch

By RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Bashing Jewish Teenagers

ABC's longtime money cow, *Desperate Housewives*, began its final season by bashing Jewish teenagers, and CBS's new *2 Broke Girls* started its first season by doing the same, and has just now "graduated" to bashing Orthodox Jewish teens and their parents.

In a *Desperate Housewives* episode about one man's impotency and one woman's mania to get arrested, career-woman-turned-stay-at-home mom Lynette (Felicity Huffman) is competing with her estranged husband Tom over who can be more indulgent with the children in order to discredit the other's parenting skills. It is, of course, a dangerous game, especially, writer Matt Barry suggests, when there are Jewish kids in the neighborhood.



Desperate Housewives characters (center) Tom (Doug Savant) and Lynette (Felicity Huffman) and their children. (©2012 ABC Television, RON TOM. All Rights Reserved.)

Young Parker tells his mother: "There's a party at Rich Cohen's. I was hoping to go."

Lynette: "Don't hope too hard.... Remember when Rich turned thirteen? It was the only *bar mitzvah* ever shut down by the police. I don't trust his parents." (Why trust people who bear the name of the priestly tribe, kohen?)

Parker: "Well, if it makes you feel better, they'll be out of town." (So the parents with the priestly name are as irresponsible in their absence as in their presence?)

When Lynette tells Tom that Parker wants to go to a party at the Cohen's, his gut reaction is to ask whether something happened at the bar mizvah. Lynette replies that lots of things happened – drinking, pot smoking, and "the Whittiker girl got pregnant."

Yes, the episode does show how rowdy things get at the Cohen house, with a slapstick role for Lynette. It is, all in all, a

rather ugly and gratuitous depiction of a Jewish household with two parents and at least one teenager, and all without showing them.

Something similar happened on *2 Broke Girls*. This new hit CBS series tells the story of Max (Kat Dennings), a sharp-tongued brunette waitress in Brooklyn diner, who takes in Caroline Channing (Beth Behrs), the new waitress on the block, the daughter of an incarcerated Pyramid scheme sociopath, who has lost her fortune and her social standing.

The only possession that the latter was able to (inconspicuously?) take from the family mansion is her affectionate horse, which grazed for a while in the courtyard behind Max's apartment. The show is amusing; it has its moments, some with big laughs and some with genuine pathos. But it is very much on the crude side.

In one episode the girls return to Caroline's sealed off family mansion to retrieve a few objects. Reminiscing on past efforts to circumvent security, Caroline recalls that at age 15 she bribed her parents' security staff not to wire the skylight so that she could sneak out to attend Iliana Shapiro's Sweet Sixteen party – in Greece. Is writer Michelle Nader telling us that those rich Jewish teenagers have the most outlandish parties that tempt others to violate parental trust?

While Nader's spiel was bad enough, it was clearly only a matter of time before the series would get uglier in its depiction of Jewish teenagers. Writer Liz Feldman was encouraged to come up with the most vulgar bar mitzvah episode in TV history, a fairly simple achievement given the lack of taste and thoughtfulness in TV depictions of bar or *bat mitzvah* kids. It targets Orthodox Jewish boys, suggesting, as the series does as a whole, that no family or tradition or discipline can live up to any ideal or sanctity.

Max and Caroline find themselves in a pharmacy in an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood. Writer Feldman makes a point of pausing to mock Jewish beards and Jewish names. Caroline feels warmth and nostalgia for Jews. "I love the Jewish People," she effuses. "Whenever I felt sick I'd just pop over to the townhouse next door and visit Dr. Klein. Actually, the Kleins and I were very close. I was invited to many a Passover in their home. In fact, they called me their 'honorary Jew.'"

Caroline adds, with fondness, that Mrs. Klein brought her chicken soup when she had the flu. There is a nice Yiddish lesson connected with this memory. Indeed, Feldman shows a few times that she can give some Yiddish lessons that add to dialogue and characterization. But the writer is more positive about Yiddish than about Jews.



Max Black (Kat Dennings), right and Caroline Channing (Beth Behrs), left, are taken aback by the behavior of the Bar Mitzvah boy and his friend, on *2 BROKE GIRLS*. David (Jake Elliott), second from right, and Shmuley (River Alexander), second from left, also shown. Photo: Adam Rose/Warner Bros. (©2012 Warner Bros. Television. All Rights Reserved.)

When Max asks why Caroline has not called Dr. Klein now, Caroline responds that she called him three times and received no response. She speculates: "I guess he doesn't want to have anything to do with me anymore because of my father's financial scandal. All those years I thought we were family. Guess not."

Max is the voice of the cynicism which is the overriding theme of the show: "Ignoring your needs and pretending you don't exist sounds like family to me." The implication is that Jews are like everybody else in turning their backs on the family of neighbors, and on family in general, who have proved to be an embarrassment. Also, note that writer Feldman does not allow Caroline to say anything nice about any children that the Kleins may have. This foreshadows how the bar mitzvah boy will be depicted here.

The bar mitzvah theme emerges from the two broke girls' conversation with the woman behind the counter, Esther Rochel (Mary Testa, who could have shone in such a role). Caroline believes that she can run interference between tactless Max and the Orthodox Jewish world. "Let me do the talking. I learned a lot of Hebrew from Mrs. Klein. These are my people."

But the lady behind the counter, who criticizes their immodest attire, connects with Max. Esther Rochel is less taken with the two girls' efforts to dress more appropriately than with Max's "big breasts" and "gorgeous hair." This Orthodox Jewish woman waxes nostalgic, ostensibly for the days before she became Orthodox: "It's like looking in the mirror," Esther Rochel boasts. "How else do you think I landed a handsome doctor like my Anshil." She identifies with Max: "It's been a few years, but, trust me, under this wig and smock: splitting image of you."

(see Gertel, page 19)



As I Heard It

REVIEWED BY MORTON GOLD

High praise for DVD on Yiddish theater

I have just listened to and watched the DVD called, *The Thomashefskys: Music and Memories of a Life in the Yiddish Theater*. The DVD is entertaining while also informative which is no mean feat. The majority of our teens as well as their parents may think that musical megahits, Broadway shows and "hit" motion pictures are the result of something new and original. This is not the case at all. With the exception of a few phrases from Yiddish (that have found their way into English usage, i.e. *maven*, *shlep*, and so forth) few American Jews speak or understand Yiddish.



That there once were significant and thriving theaters (mostly in New York) that presented dramatic plays, musical plays all in the Yiddish language should come as news to many. It is ironic and sad that the combination of the murder of Yiddish speaking European Jewry and the establishment of the resurgent Hebrew speaking establishment of the State of Israel in the decade of the 1940's as well as the near elimination of Yiddish speaking immigrants to this country would spell the near extinction of the Yiddish theater.

I was saddened (even shocked) to see that the National Theater referred to in this DVD – on Houston and Second Avenue (pronounced HOWston as opposed to HEWston) – was torn down. The Second Avenue Theatre once the venue of Mollie Picon and Menasha Skulnick musicals is also no more. The thriving and culturally active Jewish community that lived on the Lower East Side departed from that area more than 50 years ago.

This DVD while it chronicles the lives and contributions of Boris and Bessie Thomashefsky is also a cultural eye and ear opener to all American Jews. The host and driving force of this DVD is Michael Tilson Thomas, the grandson of this illustrious pair and the conductor of

the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. While his dramatic flair may be an inheritance from his grandpa, I would suggest that his charm and wit is an inheritance from his grandma.

Michael never knew his grandpa but Bessie played an important part in his youth. The studio bosses she confided once sold potatoes in the lobby of their shows, but while one even arranged for a screen test for her, she did not get the part because she did not act "Jewish enough"! One might suggest that there is a direct line from Barbra Streisand back to Fanny Brice back to Bessie. As for Boris, he was an outrageous original.

Michael related that before his voice changed he substituted for a soprano whom some of the more established German Jewish community bribed to miss the show on a moment's notice while the orchestra repeated the overture. He presented plays not only of a comedic nature but also tried to make works of the classics understandable and acceptable to the immigrant masses in the two decades prior to World War I. It was no simple matter simply locating many of the tunes used in this DVD.

The musical numbers were all arranged by Mr. Thomas and orchestrated by him, Bruce Coughlin and Peter Laurence Gordin. The orchestra used to play these musical works was the New World Symphony, a multi talented group whose virtuosic playing was a credit to the players as well as to Mr. Thomas. The four principals who portrayed the Thomashefskys were Shuler Hensley and Judy Blazer and Ronit Widmann-Levy and Eugene Bransoveanu. They all gave super performances that I believe would be regarded by most as being memorable.

One feature (among many) was the singing and acting of Mr. Thomas performing the song "Who Do You Suppose Married My Sister" by Nora Bayes and Jack Norworth. (She is the one who made the song "Shine On, Shine On Harvest Moon" popular.) Mr. Thomas has an infectious charm in all that he does musically. Who knew that he could give Danny Kaye a run for his money!

Most of the songs used were composed by Joseph Rumshinsky. Many years ago I related the episode where the now aged and portly composer visited my father Leon then in Boston and inquired what I was going to study. He pointed a finger at me and stammered "Let him better study music" in Yiddish. (And the rest is history.) Several songs by the team of Perlmutter and Wohl including the venerable "Pintele Yid" and "Leben Zol Columbus" added much to the authenticity of the program.

I found a vaudeville medley of tunes by Rumshinsky melodies to be as lively and

RIBNER

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my experience that I can learn something from a book, it is profound, it is interesting, I may understand it and I may not, but until I really receive it in my being, until it is revealed to me directly, it is only intellectual learning and it does not really make a difference in my life. What I have received directly, what has been transmitted to me is what I truly know and this is what truly feeds my soul and provides a foundation that I can stand upon and live from. That is why I have emphasized prayer and meditation so much. It is through this experience that one can open and truly receive.

In this month of Sivan, may we be open to the highest transmission of Torah. May we not only know what we want, may we be open to receive and allow what we truly want. Within each of us, is a deep desire to love and be loved. May we allow ourselves to love and be loved this month.

This column is reprinted from our May 27, 2009 issue.

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



entertaining today as in the time that they were composed. Mr. Thomashefsky founded the Hebrew Actors Union at a time when such an idea was radical. Mr. Rumshinsky wrote music for the Yiddish theater for more than 50 years. Such composers as Kern, Gershwin and Rodgers among others owed a real debt to him as well as to his colleagues Secunda, Olshenetsky, Ellstein and Trilling who wrote a variety of beautiful songs that are unknown today. The ISBN number is: 1-4229-1853-X and may be found on www.thomashefsky.org.

I cannot praise this DVD enough. The product is professional and we are all the beneficiaries of the multi talented Boris Thomashefsky as well as his wife and colleague Bessie. The Broadway Theater, the Hollywood film industry and television personalities are all in his debt.

Dr. Gold is a composer/conductor as well as arts reviewer and can be reached at: drmortongold@yahoo.com. ✨



Book Review

By RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

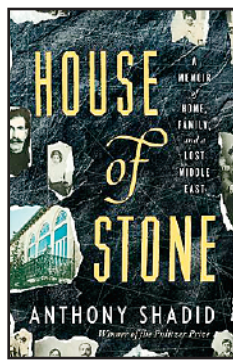
Not-to-be-missed memoir of Middle East

House of Stone: A Memoir of Home, Family, and a Lost Middle East. By Anthony Shadid. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 311 Pages. \$26.00.

After watching the author's wife, Nada speak on *Good Morning America*, I acquired this book. Nada spoke about her husband's tragic death while attempting to cross the difficult trek leading from Syria back to safety in Turkey where she and their two-year-old son, Malik were anxiously awaited his return. He succumbed though to a fatal asthma attack due to the accompanying horses' smell, and he was only 43 years old. What a loss!

Author Anthony Shadid, distinguished winner of two Pulitzer Prizes, was shot in Ramallah, the West Bank in 2002, and was one of four *New York Times* reporters captured and roughed up in Libya in 2011. His four-year marriage to his first wife, a physician, collapsed in large measure because of Shadid's long absences and his deadly risks as a war correspondent. Though Shadid was born in Oklahoma City and his grandparents emigrated from Lebanon to the United States while still single and young, he was irresistibly drawn toward his family roots in Marjayoun in southern Lebanon. His focus was particularly on the abandoned, once stately house that his great-grandfather had built making his money the hard way.

During his three-year coverage of Iraq for *The Washington Post*, Shadid took a year off (2007–2008) to immerse himself in rebuilding his ancestral house despite being advised by local friends of its futility. His labor of love remains an inspiring testimony to his tenacity and a mighty familial bond transcending time and place. Tile by tile and stone by stone with his own enthused participation in spite of the lax attitude of the Arab craftsmen,



McLEAN
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different worlds. We can bring awareness to people and situations that may seem to oppose each other on one (political, social, religious) level, yet resonate together on a deeper, perhaps hidden level.

My teacher Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, always taught that we should wear our *Moshiach*, or Messiah, glasses at all times, that is, to see the world through the eyes of the Messiah, not just to see the world as it is, broken, but how it has the potential to be mended...to see the potential for healing, transformation, and wholeness in every situation.

Eliyahu McLean, director of Jerusalem Peacemakers, www.jerusalempeacemakers.org. Originally published in The Art of Living. ★

Shadid also symbolically rebuilds his own shattered family life while admiring the family values of those who lived there long ago.

I am reminded of my own mother's attachment to her Ukraine childhood house, from which she fled to never return following the Nazi assault.

Masterfully alternating between present and past, the author meticulously reflects on his family roots and Lebanon, a land so violently impacted by the forces of history. Shadid bemoans the loss of a different kind, more tolerant and pluralistic Middle East under the Ottoman Empire's rule, sans the imposed national borders following World War I. Back then the Lebanese town of Marjayoun was an important travel and trade crossroads connecting it with Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and beyond.

This over-romanticized nostalgic perspective neglects to recall the Turks' suppression of national movements, as well as the dilemmas of the Jews, and later the State of Israel while being sympathetic to the Palestinian plight.

Upset about Shadid's *Washington Post* article in which he expressed doubt about the town's future, the people of Marjayoun suspected Shadid of being an American spy. In fact, from a population of 3,752 in 1912, it has been reduced to 800 in Lebanon's murky reality, with Diasporas of ex-patriots in the United States, Brazil and elsewhere.

We read of conflicting views in Marjayoun concerning the 17-year Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon ending in 2000. Some miss the now-gone economic prosperity, if not the Israeli presence, and there is chagrin over the increased conflicts within Lebanon and the potential of continued fighting with Israel.

BEN ASHER/BAT SARAH
(continued from 8)

them so that they can come as close as possible to God."

The Torah vision for our approach to leadership development is the relationship of Moses and Adonai. This model redefines the role of a leader. Because if Moses is no longer to comply with Adonai's charge to carry the people (Numbers 11:14), what is his mission as a leader?

The answer is revealed in Moses' response to the prophesying of Eldad and Medad in the camp. To the report of their unauthorized prophesying, Joshua says to Moses, "Forbid them." (Numbers 11:28) But Moses responds, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29)

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888) comments on the preceding verse: "...Moses' answer to Joshua remains for all teachers and leaders as the brilliant example they should keep before their eyes...to make themselves superfluous, that the people of all classes and ranks reach such a spiritual level that they no longer require teachers and leaders. And indeed the successors of these 'elders' have well inherited the spirit of their Moses, have recognized their highest mission to be...to make the knowledge of the Torah the broadest foundation of life in the people, and have proclaimed... ('establish many learners') ...as the first maxim for all spiritual leaders of their people. With his... 'are you jealous for me?' our Moses has broken down the dividing wall between 'intellectuals' and the 'lower classes,' between clergy and laity, for ever in Israel."

A leader, then, more than anything else, must be one who mentors and develops other leaders.

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

Intriguingly Shadid predicts that, although he so lovingly and sacrificially restored his ancestral house, he was not destined to live in it. Will his wish for his children, Laila and Malik, be fulfilled?

This book should not be missed by all Middle East observers and lovers of humanity and letters.

Dr. Israel Zoberman is the founding rabbi of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach. He grew up in Haifa, Israel. ★

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

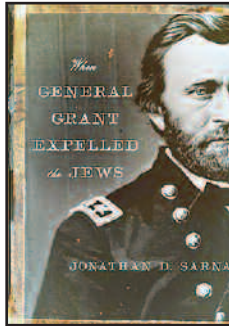
Worthy addition to "Jewish Encounters"

When General Grant Expelled the Jews. By Jonathan D. Sarna. New York: Schocken Books, 2012. 226 Pages. \$24.95.

This is the 20th book in "Jewish Encounters" series, published jointly by Schocken Books and Nextbook under the editorship of Jonathan Rosen. Author Sarna is an eminent American Jewish historian who offers here a well-written account of a rather shameful episode in the experience of Jews in the United States.

On Dec. 17, 1862, during the Civil War, Major General Ulysses S. Grant, commander of the area that included parts of Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky, issued "General Orders, No. 11," expelling Jews from this territory. They were accused of profiteering through black-market activities. One Jewish merchant, affected by this ban, Cesar Kaskel, immediately went to Washington where he managed to see President Lincoln and persuaded him to revoke the order. Sarna describes the horrified reactions of Jews to this incident and its life-long impact on Grant. He was roundly condemned by both Jews and non-Jews but he remained silent.

Grant went on to become a national hero, eventually accepting Lee's surrender at the Appomattox Court House. In 1868, he ran for president and his opponents revived the story of what happened during the Civil War, accusing him of anti-Semitism. The charges fell flat and Grant went on to serve two terms in the White House. He worked hard to achieve reconciliation with the Jewish community by demonstrating sensitivity to their concerns and by appointing more Jews to governmental offices than any previous president. He tried to persuade Joseph Seligman to become secretary of the Treasury which would have made him the first Jew in a Cabinet position but Seligman's family convinced him to remain in the family business. A far more successful outcome developed from Grant's selection of Albert A. Michelson for appointment to Annapolis. Michelson went on to become the first American to win the Nobel Prize in physics.



Grant was only 55 years old when he left office. He traveled extensively, including a visit to the Holy Land, the first president ever to do so. Grant met with many Jews during the course of his trips, reinforcing friendships and signaling continuing atonement for what happened during the Civil War. Also, during his post-presidency years, he referred warmly to the Jews he knew. He spoke out in protest about the poor treatment Jews were receiving in Russia and Romania.

Although Grant was originally not rated very high as a president, a 2008 poll of political pundits elevated him to number 18. While Sarna is somewhat measured in his appraisal of Grant, he has provided readers with a fair review which clearly suggests that the more recent evaluation is accurate. In any case, Sarna has made a worthy addition to the "Jewish Encounters" series.

Historical fiction at its best

The House at Tyneford. By Natasha Solomons. New York: Plume, 2012. 359 Pages. \$15.00.

In March, 1938, Hitler forcibly took over Austria in what became known as the "Anschluss," the compelled union of Germany and Austria. The Jews of Austria tried to flee but for many of them, it was too late. This novel focuses on one well-to-do Jewish family in Vienna – the Landaus – and describes what happened to them. Emphasis is placed on Elise, the 19-year old daughter, who succeeded in obtaining a position as a parlor maid at Tyneford House in England. The plan was for her parents, Anna and Julian; her married sister, Margot; and her brother-in-law, Robert, to go to the United States where Elise would eventually join them. As the story unfolds, we sadly learn how and why the plan did not come to fruition. These dire developments and the unhappy fate of Austrian Jews receive somewhat less emphasis than Elise's experiences after she left Vienna.

Tyneford House is an elegant manor, close to the sea, with a large staff of servants who look after the estate and its aristocratic master, Christopher Rivers. He is a widower with one son, Kit, who is away from home, studying at Cambridge. Elise's involvements with these two men occupy most of the book. She also makes

friends with some of the local people and she is exposed to the military – both male and female – who train in the vicinity of Tyneford.

A crucial World War II event was the arduous evacuation of British soldiers from Dunkirk. Skillfully blending fact and fiction, author Solomons describes this experience emphasizing the involvement of English seacoast residents, including those at Tyneford and its environs. The consequences of what happened at Dunkirk haunt the rest of the story.

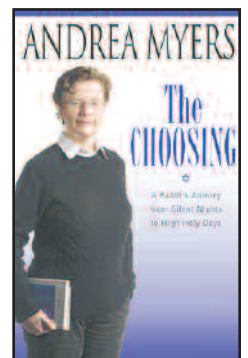
Another reality element in the narrative is the home of Tyneford House in the village of Tyneford which is based on the ghost village of Tyneham on the Dorset coast. Requisitioned by the government during World War II, it is now a decayed ruin. The fate of this location; its significance for the story; and the catastrophe that befell Austria's Jews impressively combine to represent Solomons' success in blending fiction and history. She has captured the spirit of a past era, introducing believable characters who participate in and are affected by historical events.

There are, of course, many novels that deal with the Holocaust. And, there are many non-fictional accounts of this great tragedy. Solomons has given us a truthful picture of the era she describes, using history as the backdrop for romantic experiences. The characters she has so skillfully created provide penetrating insights into the impact of historical events on the people who lived through them. Her book is not only a praiseworthy addition to Holocaust literature; it is a fine example of historical fiction at its very best.

Subject needs an in-depth exploration

The Choosing. By Andrea Myers. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011. 186 Pages. \$19.95.

The author of this memoir, Andrea Myers, is a convert to Judaism, a rabbi, a lesbian, a vegetarian, and a mother. Any one of these identities warrants far more extended treatment than the once-over lightly discussion that is presented here. We are given a cursory consideration of each subject, resulting in a relatively superficial presentation. Readers will come away feeling that they have a



(see Teicher, page 18)



My Kosher Kitchen

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Recipes from Slobod's Delicatessen in Philly

How To Cook Like a Jewish Grandmother. By Marla Brooks. Pelican Publishing. 184 Pages. \$15.95, paperback.

Marla Brooks is an entertainment writer living in Los Angeles whose grandparents and cousins ran Slobod's Delicatessen in Philadelphia in the 1930s and 1940s.

In her introduction, she writes about the main element of grandmothers' cooking – love. Having been raised by her grandmother, she relates her grandmother's background, the history of the deli in Philadelphia and later in California. Over the years, she wrote down the recipes then began to collect the recipes of other family members.

"How To Cook Like a Jewish Grandmother is a book of recipes for those brave folks who want to defy fate and truly enjoy a good old-fashioned meal."

Every recipe has a comment which makes for a very enjoyable read. The 34 black and white photographs are all captioned and in the back is a glossary of terms plus thumbnail photos and identification of the 13 family and friends who contributed as well as 80 celebrity contributors. I counted 215 recipes of which 201 were kosher and 14 are either not kosher or could be made kosher.

Personally, I prefer directions to be numbered because it's easier to keep your place. These are paragraphed. One obvious difficulty in looking up a recipe in the index is her use of contributor's names alphabetically rather than names of recipes. So if you want the recipe for baked chicken, you would have to look it up under the deli name Slobod.

Other than that small correction, this is a lovely, nostalgic cookbook to give to anyone or yourself – if deli brisket, stuffed cabbage, mashed sardine spread, deli dill pickles, kasha with bow tie noodles, summer cherry soup, baked rice pudding, deli cole slaw, and corned beef or pastrami

on rye are in your mind to prepare. Below are three recipes from the book.

Melt-in-Your-Mouth Short Ribs (4 servings)

Yes, short ribs are a bit of an indulgence and sometimes a little fatty, but once in a while, everyone needs to splurge.

3 pounds short ribs
1/4 cup honey
1 cup beef broth
1 cup ketchup
dash Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper to taste
2 onions, thinly sliced
2 large carrots, sliced

Broil ribs in broiler for 5 to 10 minutes, or until brown. While ribs are browning, mix honey, broth, ketchup, and Worcestershire together and set aside. Saute vegetables until soft and place in roasting pan. When ribs are done, place on top of veggies. Pour sauce over ribs. Cover and bake at 350° for about 2 hours, turning ribs once or twice during baking.

Baked apples (4 servings)

4 Granny Smith, Rome Beauty, and/or Golden Delicious (or any other firm variety)
4 Tbsp. brown sugar or honey
Raisins to taste
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
Water for bottom of baking dish

Cut about 1/2-inch off top of apple and set aside. Core apples and fill each with about a teaspoon brown sugar or honey, and 1/4 cup raisins, depending on taste. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Place top of apple back on and bake in a baking dish with about 1/4-inch of water in the bottom of the dish at 350°F (175°C) until apples are soft and tender when pierced with a fork.

Slobod's Deli Hot Cabbage Borscht (8 servings)

2 pounds short ribs
1-1/2 quarts water
1 onion, diced
2 cups canned tomatoes
1 small head cabbage, shredded
Juice of 2 lemons
1/4 cup brown sugar
2 tsp. salt
Pepper to taste

Bring meat to a rapid boil in water. Skim off scum, add the onion and tomatoes. Bring again to boil, lower the heat and



Why Faith Matters

By RABBI DAVID WOLPE

Although we assume religion involves mountaintops and sunsets, true religion also takes place in committees and restaurants and dentist's offices. Religion is seeing godliness in the world in everyday encounters and not only in extraordinary moments. ~ 5-17-12

We seek God's guidance to help us understand who we are. Intertwined and equally urgent is praying to understand who we need to become. ~ 5-2-12

I saw a parent take a child's hand as they crossed the street. There were no cars and the child could walk as easily across the street as on the sidewalk. The point wasn't direction but the warmth of presence. Don't rush to advise your troubled friend; just take her or his hand. ~ 4-27-12

I daydream. My mind wanders. I catch myself not paying attention. I miss things and sometimes overlook others. So this week let's explore the theme of mindfulness, of being present. Begin with the words of the Kotzker Rebbe: After his teacher died he was asked, "What was the most important thing to your teacher?" He answered, "Whatever he was doing at the moment." ~ 4-23-12

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



simmer about 2 hours. Add the cabbage to the borscht, cover, and simmer another 30 minutes. Add the lemon juice, brown sugar, salt and pepper. Simmer about 10 minutes more, taste and adjust seasonings.

The amounts of lemon juice and brown sugar in this sweet-and-sour soup will vary according to taste. Some prefer it sweeter and others like it more on the tart side. Start with the amounts listed above and add more of one or the other to suit your taste.

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

Originally this book was published in the spring of 2005, but it was released just as Katrina devastated New Orleans and no one was there to ship or promote the book. The publisher hopes that the interest generated now will bring this delightful book the attention it deserved but which was overshadowed by a time of disaster. ★

GERTEL

(continued from page 14)

One gets the impression that writer Feldman is praising Esther Rochel by making her an Orthodox Jewish counterpart to Max's sarcastic and saucy personality. But why do the writers and producers of this series persist in trying to render sympathetic Max's cynical and anti-family outlook? And why do they persist in depicting Caroline as naïve and even foolish whenever she defends family values even after being betrayed by her own father and by the Jewish family next door? They seem unaware of the Yiddish expression hanging in their set's kitchen: "He who thinks well (worthily) finds well-being." Max soon repeats Esther Rochel's mantra, "It's like looking in the mirror," when she tries to one-up Esther Rochel in bargaining, before the latter abruptly closes the pharmacy in the girls' faces due to "sundown" (on Shabbat eve).

Before the scene in the pharmacy ends, Max, hearing that Esther Rochel, mother of a boy about to become bar mitzvah, is left without cupcakes by a friend (or family member?), offers to make them. (No one discusses *kosher* dairy and *kosher parve* here, but then again, no truly Orthodox household would trust an unknown baker, anyway. Also, Feldman disseminates the common misinformation that Judaism has no concept of Hell.) Yet it is Caroline who takes the assignment and Jewish traditions seriously, who understands that Jews are supposed to be "kosher" in every aspect of their lives. Max has no intention of making kosher cupcakes. "You want God to smite us?" Caroline asks out of desperation. But Max is cynical about God as well: "What's He going to do? Take away all my good luck and your fortune?"

Max can't get past concerns in the media that "low fat" products misrepresent themselves. But Caroline remains idealistic. She insists that "kosher" is not a sales gimmick. "It's thousands of years of tradition." Feldman could have found a better way to explain the Jewish dietary laws, but the purpose of this dialogue is to get Max to give voice to her own rather damaged soul (though the series seems oblivious to the extent of the damage): "I don't respect any tradition."

Caroline's genuine feeling for Jews and Judaism comes through in Feldman's writing, but all sentiments and anything sacred is trashed here in the end. We do feel for Caroline, who suffers unfair discrimination at the hands of Esther Rochel and her mother. They embrace Max, want to believe she is Jewish, because she looks and talks like them.

Esther Rochel's conspicuously be-wigged mother calls Caroline a "*shiksa*," suggesting that Caroline's looks define her as "the other" who is hard to love and to embrace. Esther Rochel wants to mother Max and to shun Caroline.

As if this were not bad enough, the depiction of the bar mitzvah boy and his buddy is particularly ugly. When out of parental view, they morph into foul-mouthed misogynist rappers who hit on Max and Caroline, referring to them as bitches and offering to pay for sex. Feldman may have meant to show that teenagers from the best of families have their challenges, but what she ends up suggesting is that Orthodox Jewish life is unrealistic given the pull of popular culture. Even more ugly is her suggestion that the boys are actually perpetuating the "sins of the mothers" in their contempt for Gentile women. The dead giveaway that all Feldman's Jews are unredeemable is the suggestion (embodied in Max's "good" advice) that Caroline's correct impulse to inform the parents about this bad behavior is pointless.

Should we give Feldman the benefit of the doubt and regard this episode as a critique of disturbing attitudes toward Gentile women by some Orthodox Jewish women and their children? I think not, for she refuses to make her gratuitously Jewish characters redeemable. They are incapable of achieving self-awareness by virtue of their Orthodox Judaism, which is depicted as entirely without virtue here, as incapable of holding any generation. After all, having bitten into a non-kosher cupcake in error and being informed of the error, the "pious" grandmother or *bubbe* continues to *nosh*.

Should we find comfort in that fact that *2 Broke Girls* does not discriminate against Orthodox Jews, but simply dismisses any kind of virtue or even common sense as unrealistic? The only time that the girls show any horse sense or virtue is when they are with the horse which is the last vestige of Caroline's once privileged life. Does the series therefore suggest that virtue cannot be found except in some residue of conspicuous consumption? Either virtue is trash or this TV series is.

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

TEICHER

(continued from page 17)

perfunctory, lightweight acquaintance with the author in her many roles and wishing that they could know more about her.

The book is organized into 13 chapters, each one starting with a brief description of a Jewish holiday. Myers sparingly tells us about her family of origin which included a Sicilian Catholic mother and a German Lutheran father. When she was a student at Brandeis, Myers decided to become a Jew. She provides a scant explanation of this decision along with minimal information about the process of her conversion and the people involved in it.

She glosses lightly over her decision to become a rabbi and the education she received to achieve this goal. She was ordained at the Academy for Jewish Religion in New York which was founded in 1956 as a non-denominational seminary to educate rabbis for the entire Jewish community. Later, she became a Reform rabbi although she maintains a close link with the Academy for Jewish Religion. Her identification with the Reform movement involved a trip to Cincinnati to see the original menu for the 1883 banquet at Hebrew Union College which celebrated the first ordination of American rabbis at an American seminary. The non-kosher food that was featured stirred considerable controversy. Strangely, Myers writes somewhat approvingly about this occasion even though, today, it is a source of embarrassment to most Reform Jewish leaders. Other peripheral comment about foods – Myers lets us know that she doesn't like gefilte fish and that she has an aversion to pork that preceded her becoming a Jew.

The book contains descriptions of how Myers's family celebrated the holidays, differentiating these experiences from her observance of Jewish holidays. She writes somewhat briskly about her studies in Jerusalem, calling it "a beautiful place," and she offers minimal comments about today's situation in Israel. In keeping with the book's accent on brevity, Myers tells us a bit about her partner, Lisa, who is also a rabbi, their wedding, and their children.

It is a tribute to Myers's interesting and complicated life that readers will put this book down wishing to know more about her and her experiences. She is a fine writer and one finishes the book wishing that she will use her skills to give us an in-depth exploration of her various identities.

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

KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from 12)

has two curators from London and an exhibition of four artists. The gallery, known for provocative and often amusing works mostly by Israeli artists, is a narrow two-story building on a palm-lined side street.

Our final stop on an exhausting day is the new wing of the Tel Aviv Museum, 27 Shaul Hamelech Street, where we were shown the design and architecture gallery, the photography gallery and the three galleries of Israeli artists. The three floors of the Herta and Paul Amir Building (215,275 square feet) house the world's largest collection of Israeli artists.



Street Art. Photos by Barry A. Kaplan/Jerusalem.



Art project at 9 Mazah Street, A social hub for young adults

The opening weekend is a 24-hour non-stop group of activities including: "8-Cubic Meters," a showing of 15 artists whose works had never been exhibited at the museum but which fit within eight cubic meters (282 cubic feet); Contemporary Israel video art by 19 Israeli artists has been edited into a 90-minute piece; there were lessons in gaga, a dance style developed by the artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company; and Indie City showed video clips of Tel Aviv bands.

Anyone planning a trip to Israel during 2012 should plan to visit some of these art programs and contact the Global city administration, global_city@mail.tel-aviv.gov.il for the Art Year guide book or [Google artyear.co.il](http://Google.artyear.co.il).

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist who writes features on a wide variety of subjects in Israel. ★

The Jewish Post & Opinion

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Photo by Rob Schrama.

Jerusalem Hug 2012

The aim of the Jerusalem Hug is to promote a peaceful experience, a life of freedom and joy to all people. The Jerusalem Hug will focus on love, respect and unity between all people. With this attitude, the participants will spread out around the walls of the Old City holding hands, singing and praying for peace and respect for all humankind.

The Jerusalem Hug has already taken place each year since 2007. The events were joined by more than 4,000 participants; residents of Jerusalem, Palestinians and Israeli, as well as peace activists from Israel and from all over the world.

The Jerusalem Hug is a symbol for another way to achieve peace. Everywhere the belief in a political solution of the Middle East conflict has gone down to point zero. There ought to be another way,

and that is the way of the heart. We believe that when we find peace in ourselves and when we are able to forgive, world peace will come closer. Change begins at the basis.

The Jerusalem Hug gives expression to this wish for change as a concrete statement. Jerusalem stands as a symbol for peace and forgiveness in the world. Let Jerusalem be a city of connection, the heart of the world where unity and peace will be a fact. Each year, Jerusalem Hug will grow in size to become a larger and larger event with more participants.

The Jerusalem Hug is intended to evolve into an all encompassing apotheosis for peace, where Palestinians and Israelis will hopefully be united in peace for all times to come. ★

