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ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal Kallah 2009

To read about it, see pages NAT 2 and NAT 11.
(Photos by Jennie Cohen.)



Editorial

What I liked most about the 2009 ALEPH Kallah was simply being together with like-minded people for six days and nights – learning, praying, singing, dancing, drumming, chanting, eating, studying, schmoozing, and enjoying all kinds of performances such as music, dance, and storytelling.

It seemed like everyone I met had the same goals. They were very interested in the Jewish values, such as tikkun olam (healing/repairing the world) in every possible way including socially, politically, economically, environmentally.

On a personal level, the attendees I met were seeking to improve themselves and their relationships, not only with close loved ones. One of the ways this was done was through communication, striving to understand the differences of others, and to remember that each person is *B'tzelem Elohim* (created in the image of God). This teaches us to look for the divine spark in everyone.

I suppose this learning could take place at many kinds of Jewish conventions and retreats, but here the striving is given a top priority. We know the world is in need of repair and it's not going to become perfect immediately, but we also know that we are taking the steps to move in that direction as best we can. We all desire to live together in peace and harmony.

The Kallah began the first afternoon with a welcome by Debra Kolodny, executive director of ALEPH, inviting everyone to truly live for a week of in the light of G~d – the theme for this year's Kallah. She emphasized the opportunity that awaited the participants with several teachings from the Piaseczner Rebbe. Her talk also included the statistics in the "About the Cover" on this page. Rabbi Steven Silvern, immediate past chair of the Board of ALEPH, also spoke that afternoon. His speech about ALEPH's accomplishments in the past 16 years is on page NAT 11.

That evening a celebration of Jewish Renewal was facilitated by Rabbi Hanna Tiferet Siegel. Stories were told by several current leaders about how they got their start. Speakers included Rabbi Burt Jacobson, Rabbi Jeff Roth, Rabbi Yitzhak Husbands-Hankins, Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Bobbi Breitman, and Rabbi Shefa Gold. That was one of the highlights of the Kallah for me. Perhaps in a future issue we can publish that or at least a link for it on the Internet.

One afternoon at lunch, Bob Leventhal of Dayton was sitting at my table and he asked the question, how does one describe Jewish Renewal? He wasn't sure how to tell his friends about it. It is difficult

to explain if one has not experienced it. I'm not an expert on Jewish Renewal, but my first Kallah was in Berkeley in 1993 so I have some history. I offered one suggestion he could tell his friends.

One major difference between Jewish Renewal and all other Jewish practice is the Torah service. In the former, the rabbi focuses on three themes from the Torah portion of the week. Just before it is time to read those verses from the Torah, he or she describes it and then makes it relevant to what is taking place in the world today. Then the rabbi asks anyone who is currently experiencing that kind of situation to come for this *aliyah*.

For example, think of the Torah portion where Joseph's brothers became jealous of him when he received the coat of many colors (Genesis 37:3-5). Eventually they threw him into a pit. After describing that section in detail, the rabbi will give an example of a similar situation taking place in the world today. Then he or she would ask anyone who is having difficulty getting along with a sibling, or is jealous of a friend, fellow student or coworker to come forward for this reading.

Anyone may go to the *bimah* for that aliyah, and if all three themes relate to what a person is experiencing in his or her life at that time, that person may go up all three times. There may be 30 or more people reciting the blessings together on the bimah before and after the Torah reading. After each aliyah, the rabbi will offer a blessing to those who came up. For example, the rabbi might bless them with the strength to recognize their own goodness and to not compare themselves to others.

There are many ways in which Jewish Renewal is similar to Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Judaism. For example, Jewish Renewal allows women to have every kind of leadership role and welcomes people of every lifestyle, relationship and sexual orientation, and allows drumming and guitars and other musical instruments to be played during religious services.

Also similarities exist with Orthodox and ultra-Orthodoxy. The founder, Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi had been an emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of blessed memory. Therefore one of the hallmarks of Jewish Renewal is the teaching of values through the telling of stories about the Chassidic Rebbes. Another hallmark is the joyous and festive experience of life through observing the holidays and *simchas* with singing, chanting and dancing at every possible opportunity.

In this small space there isn't room to say more, but if you look on page NAT 11, two sidebars offer more information and the ALEPH website is given.

(see Editorial, page NAT 3)

About the Cover

These photos were taken at the 13th biennial ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal Kallah. It was held on the Ohio Wesleyan University campus near Columbus, from June 29 – July 5. To give more people an opportunity to attend, each time the Kallah is held on a different college campus around the country. The next one in 2011 will take place in the Pacific Northwest.

Some statistics on this year's Kallah given in an opening speech by Debra Kolodny, executive director of ALEPH:

Two-thirds of those in attendance were women.

Three communities came as *minyanim* – more than 10 people (Pardes Hannah from Ann Arbor, Mich.; Havurah P'nai Yisrael from Charlottesville, Va.; and Minneapolis, Minn.).

Folks came from Israel, Germany, the Netherlands, Mexico, Canada, and of course all over the United States.

Seven birthdays were celebrated during the Kallah. One-third of the approximately 430 attendees were there for the first time. Four or five in attendance had been to every Kallah since the first one in 1985. ★

Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

Today I'll tell you a story from the neurology ward of our local hospital, which I try to visit every day. I generally go to the same five wards, and the last one on my regular route is neurology. A lot of the patients in the neurology ward are suffering from strokes, and Yaakov was one of them. I greeted him with a smile, wished him a complete and quick recovery and suggested that he put on tefillin. He smiled back and said that he would be happy to put on tefillin, but I would have to help him a little. I smiled and told him that's my job. We quickly became friends.

I helped him put on tefillin every day, and gradually heard his life story. He was born in Transylvania. His family was religious. After WW II the Russians took over, and did their best to stamp out religion, but his family and neighbors continued to practice Judaism underground. His wife was born in Russia, grew up under Communism, and got very little Jewish education. When the iron curtain fell in 1990, they came to Israel, together with another million immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU).

(see Chassidic Rabbi, page NAT 3)

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Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

**July 2, 2009, Chukat-Balak
(Numbers 19:1–25:9), 10 Tammuz 5769**

We, the confirmants of this season, feel that the day would be incomplete if we did not express gratitude to you, the congregation. You have given us the chance to learn the meaning of our faith and to study its great history. You have come to receive us into its fellowship, this morning and we thank you. We should have been very much poorer if we had not had this chance. We are sure that Jews who fail to receive instruction in Judaism or who do not use the opportunities open to them lose the finest possession they might have had.

At the beginning of this week, Sandy and I flew to Chevy Chase, Maryland to help, a little bit, in the organizing of my mom's condo. While my older sister Susan and Sandy folded clothes to be given away, I went into the den to straighten shelves, go through files and clean out the separate desks my mom and dad used. As I worked my way through drawers and slots in the desk I came across an envelope with my mom's name written on the front.

I opened it up and my jaw dropped to the floor as I unfolded an old, typewritten piece of paper. It began with the paragraph above. It was my mom's confirmation speech from around 1935 or 1936 to her Lincoln, Neb., congregation. There were several other pieces of paper in the envelope that must have been her parts in the service. She wrote and read something about the sixth commandment "Thou shalt not kill," though technically it says in Hebrew "Thou shalt not murder." There was a short note that indicated the gift to the congregation of "four dozen hymnals to you in the hope that they will add to your participation in the services." There was a promise of loyalty to live a Jewish life.

Finally, on one last piece of folded paper was the closing prayer. It began, "Heavenly Father, before departing from the Temple we pray that we may never forget those who toiled with us and for us, who have tried to make us worthy and useful. Help us to deserve the affection that is within their hearts."

Though we found a lot of pictures, some very old ones, including one of my great-grandfather taken in Germany in 1860 when he was a year old, I didn't find many documents from my mom's life. Yet, for some reason, she held on to this one envelope with these typewritten words. It

has traveled with her from Lincoln to four different residences in Maryland. I can't tell you the last time the envelope was opened and the words read, but she knew what was in them and that they were important to her.

Her grandparents helped establish and build this small Reform Jewish congregation in Lincoln. She loved telling us about her Jewish roots and the Jewish families of Lincoln. Those names were a part of our lives growing up many miles from Nebraska and now the legacy is ours to hold and cherish. What she wrote for her Confirmation is what I hope would be written by any member of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation's confirmation class today.

I know that it is summer and our minds drift away from Sundays at IHC when our building is filled with the sounds of the next generation, but my hope is that my mom's words will resonate a bit with all of our IHC families especially those with children. Make learning about Judaism a priority. Study the meaning of what it is to live a Jewish life and to be a Jew. Embrace our rich history by learning about the ups and downs and that we have survived, grown, and prospered.

This weekend is our nation's celebration of Independence Day. This date on the calendar is more than just a memory of our 13 colonies Declaration of Independence from British rule, but it is the founding of a nation where we, Jews, could come and live Jewish lives free from the oppressions we faced in so many places throughout the world. This independence allowed for a small group of Jews in Lincoln to organize a Jewish community, build a synagogue and give thanks for the opportunities to learn freely about Jewish life. We should all treasure this gift as we celebrate this weekend.

When you light your Shabbat candles tomorrow evening, light one for freedom that is ours to be Jews openly without the fear of government or religious oppression. Light the other for all the Jews who understood the meaning of this freedom – not taking it for granted – and gave thanks.

Rabbi Adland is senior rabbi of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. ★

EDITORIAL

(continued from page NAT 2)

This was my third Kallah. Another highlight for me was meeting and talking to Eliyahu McLean of Jerusalem Peacemakers. Some of the readers had asked me how he could be Jewish with McLean as a last name. I now have the answer to that and other questions and will include them in a future editorial.

Jennie Cohen, 7/15/09 ★

CHASSIDIC RABBI

(continued from page NAT 2)

Seven years ago their daughter began to seriously search for her Jewish roots. She studied for three years in Machon Alte, a Lubavitcher school for women in Tsfas, Israel. Four years ago she got married and now they live with their three children in Tsfas. Yaakov's children and grandchildren bring them a lot of *nachus*. He told me with great pride how his oldest grandson, who is only three, already knows which blessings to say over all foods.

Baruch Hashem, Yaakov recovered quickly, and after a few days was already walking a little holding on to a walker. One day after he put on tefillin, he said he had a question. Why does Israel have so many enemies? Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas (to name a few)? I sat down next to him. He wasn't the first person to ask me the meaning of the difficulties and threats that we face, so I didn't have to think hard.

I explained to him that everything that happens in the world is part of Hashem's plan. Hashem is good, and everything that happens is really for the good. What good is there in enemies and wars? Many of those who founded the state of Israel were very secular. Some even made a point to work on Shabbos and Yom Kippur, and eat Chametz on Pesach. They believed only in communism, socialism and work. The first time in their life that they prayed was when the bullets started to fly by their head. For many, that first prayer was said from the very depth of their soul. In one instant, they found both Hashem and their soul. Their life would never be the same. We are all brothers, and the fighting in Israel brought many of the Jews of the Diaspora to join them in prayer.

Our purpose in this world is to live a life of Torah and mitzvahs. For one reason or another many of us have forgotten this, or never learned it in the first place. We take life for granted, until it is in danger.

Yaakov looked at me. He said "Maybe that's why I just had this stroke?" I agreed. He and wife decided that from now on he is going to put on tefillin every day, his wife is going to bless Shabbos candles, and they will go to shul on Shabbos.

Recently I was thinking about the new president of the U.S. Why did Hashem make him president? I was reminded of my friend Yaakov, and a discussion of the rabbis in the Talmud. The rabbis were discussing our times, the end of days. Today we are waiting for Moshiach, for our redemption. According to the rabbis, in order for us to be redeemed, we first have to repent, and come back to Hashem.

Obituaries

Dr. Gary Tobin, 59



Dr. Gary Tobin, founder and president of San Francisco-based Institute for Jewish & Community Research (IJCR) passed away on July 6, 2009.

Dr. Tobin was an innovative teacher, writer, researcher, and community builder who worked courageously and passionately to help the Jewish people grow and thrive.

In all his work, Dr. Tobin challenged the status quo of institutions for which he cared deeply yet always believed could be better.

Whether it was the Jewish Federation system, American academia, or the State of Israel, Dr. Tobin was never afraid to challenge and provoke, always expecting better and more. He believed the greatest expressions of affection came not through blind praise but through thoughtful criticism and unlimited optimism for the things that meant the most to him.

Gary Tobin was a wise community leader, loving husband, and father. He devoted his life to his wife and business partner Diane, his children Adam, Amy, Sarah, Aryeh, Mia and Jonah, and his grandson, Josiah.

The Institute for Jewish & Community Research will continue to advance his visionary research. To read more about Dr. Tobin's life and work or to make a donation in his memory to the Institute for Jewish & Community Research, visit www.GaryTobin.org. ★



Rabbi Eliezer said "If the Jewish people repent, they will be redeemed. If not, they won't be redeemed," Rabbi Yehoshua said to him. "If they don't repent they won't be redeemed? Rather, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will put upon them a king whose decrees will be as harsh as those of Haman. Then Israel will repent. He will bring them back to good."

We want Moshiach Now! Now is the time to repent, to start doing more mitzvahs, to bring our redemption. Let's get on the ball. For sure we're going to repent, sooner or later. We are Hashem's children. He wants to redeem us, to take us out of this exile, to bring us home to Him. If we don't wake up today, then tomorrow we might be rudely awakened by even harsher decrees.

Rabbi Cohen lives in K'far Chabad, Israel. He can be reached by email at bzcohen1@neto.bezeqint.net. He and his wife Malka now have 10 children and 26 grandchildren. ★

Letter to the Editor

Freedom of the Press – The Post & Opinion encourages readers to send letters. All letters to the editor should be addressed to The Jewish Post & Opinion, 238 S. Meridian St., Suite 502, Indianapolis, IN 46225, or by e-mail: jpostopinion@gmail.com.

Who Is a Jew?

To the Editor:

Re: Your May 13, 2009 issue and its story “Kinsler’s Bat Is Hot.” I am a big baseball fan. I am a big Ian Kinsler fan. But Ian Kinsler is not Jewish, as Mr. Migdol’s story seems to indicate.

Kinsler’s mother was not Jewish, so he is not Jewish by the Orthodox or Conservative definition. Kinsler has one Jewish parent, but he was not raised in any faith, so he is not Jewish by the Reform definition.

It is true that according to the editor of a Jewish sports newsletter, who contacted Kinsler’s uncle, Kinsler had “no problem being listed as a Jewish athlete in the newsletter.” That is a pretty weak basis for claiming that someone is a Jew.

Does Ian Kinsler have Jewish ancestry? Yes. Is he a Jew? No.

Rabbi Daniel Pernick, Beth Am Temple, Pearl River, N.Y.

Migdol’s response:

The baseball player’s father, but not mother, is Jewish. The distinguished rabbi states Kinsler is not Jewish.

It reminds me of the fabulous Crown Prince of Baseball, Al Schacht, “There is talk that I am Jewish, just because my mother and father are Jewish, I speak Yiddish, and I studied to be a rabbi and cantor. Well, that’s how rumors get started.”

As Rabbi Pernick knows, the Reform movement made a patrilineal descent ruling in 1983. The children of a Jewish father are Jewish. In Reconstructionist Judaism, the view is the same.

Kinsler *quells* in his Jewishness and Jewish heritage. Kinsler autographs yarmulkes. He and opposing players exchange Jewish greetings on and off the field. A Jewish base runner is sliding into second base and grins at Kinsler with a “Good Pesach!” They know the score.

In terms of social consciousness, he praises the admission and feats of Jackie Robinson.

By the way, Kinsler has been in a slump. He recently hit home runs in first two consecutive turns at bat. He’s the leadoff hitter. But his batting average lately has been under .270. Shall we disown him?

Lou Boudreau (St. Louis Cardinals) had a Jewish mother, but his adopted parents raised him in the Christian faith. Is Boudreau more of a Jew because his mother was Jewish?

Rod Carew married a Jewish woman and raised his children Jewish, but never converted.

Go on the Judaism 101 website where it is written: “It is important to note that being a Jew has nothing to do with what you believe or what you do.” Although your synagogue’s union would state Kinsler is Jewish, I respect your view and the view on www.jewfaq.org that he is not part of our tribe.

If you agreed with my point of view that a person is Jewish if he has a Jewish father, you had a lot of company. If you disapproved (i.e., your mother must be Jewish or you go through a suitable conversion process), you also have a lot of company. Many if not most Orthodox and Conservative Jews take the more traditional view.

I barely put down the “Who Is a Jew?” article when I opened a parcel containing *The Second Jewish Book of Why*. Opening it to Chapter 1, the title is “Who Is a Jew?” What a coincidence!

It starts by quoting David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973), the first prime minister of Israel, often referred to as the George Washington of Israel. I was with a Jewish Federation group that met with this prominent Jew at his kibbutz around 1972, shortly before he died.

Ben-Gurion claimed that anyone who says he is a Jew, lives a Jewish life, and is interested in the well-being of Jews is a Jew, regardless of his mother’s faith. He reasoned:

“We have been Jews without definition for the last 3,000 years and we shall remain so... By one definition the Jews are a religious community... There is a definition that Jews are a nation... There are Jews without any definition. They are just Jews. I am one of them. I don’t need any definition. I am what I am...”

Prof. Raphael Patai shares a similar view in *The Jewish Mind*. He claims that to be a Jew one has to know or feel that he is a Jew and he must be considered by others to be a Jew. Being born of a Jewish mother is not the only determining factor.

Must one completely observe all of the *mitzvot* (commandments) to be a Jew?

Older readers may recall the Israel law case of Brother Daniel (born Oswald Rufeisen), who requested citizenship under the Law of Return. The monk was born to two Jewish parents in Poland in 1922. He was a Zionist during World War II and saved Jewish lives. In 1942 he became a Christian but still also considered himself Jewish. Pointing to having a Jewish mother, the monk appealed his rejection. Sure, according to *halacha* (Jewish law), Daniel was a Jew. But Israel’s High Court argued: “When so many Jews throughout history have sacrificed their lives for their faith, how could one who turned his back on his faith be considered a Jew?”

Was Brother Daniel more of a Jew than Kinsler because he had a Jewish mother?

In my mind, no.

Marv Migdol at fmmigdol@gmail.com. ★

Tisha B’Av

An excerpt from the book: Jewish History – The Big Picture.

The Fall of Jerusalem

The Romans must have watched in amazement as civil war brought their enemies to the verge of self-destruction... By the spring of 70 CE, Titus and his army had Jerusalem under siege. Famine quickly overwhelmed the city. The surviving factions tried to fight off the Roman invaders, but Roman battering rams cracked the city’s walls.

For the next three weeks the priests fought courageously to keep the Romans out of the Holy Temple. As the fighting raged on the ninth day of Av, a Roman soldier threw a blazing piece of wood into the Temple sanctuary. Flames shot into the air. The Temple burned into the next day, until there was nothing left but cinder and ashes.

Mourning Jerusalem: Tisha B’Av

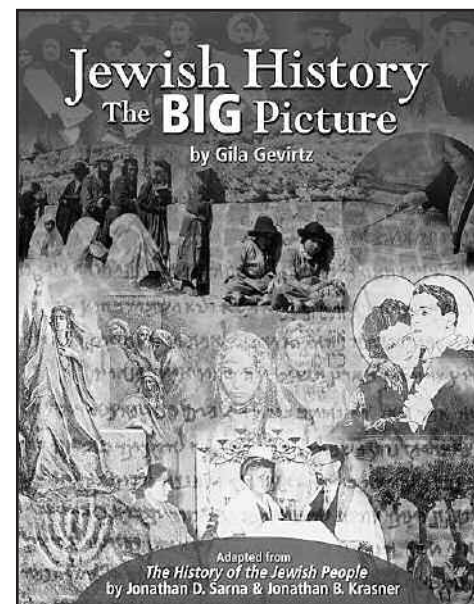
Today, centuries after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, Jews continue to mourn their losses on holy days that commemorate historical events.

Tisha B’Av, the ninth day of Av, which falls in the summer, is a day of mourning on the Jewish calendar. For a full 25 hours, from sundown to nightfall, it is a tradition to fast. It is not a fast of atonement. Rather, it is a fast of grieving. The Book of Lamentations, which was written after the destruction of the First Temple, is chanted mournfully in the synagogue, like an ancient ballad telling a tale of love and loss. For the 25 hours of this holy day, Jews are prohibited from wearing leather, listening to music, and bathing. Those prohibitions, too, are signs of mourning.

Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. The surviving leaders of the Jewish factions were led to Rome in chains. Taken with them were the sacred Temple vessels, captured as spoils of war. Jewish tradition teaches that the underlying cause of Jerusalem’s destruction was not the Roman rulers but rather the disunity among the Jews and their baseless hatred, *sinat hinam*, for one another. Had the Jews been unified, they might have saved the Temple.

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Jewish History – The Big Picture presents the full range of Jewish history, from biblical to contemporary time. This book provides a fast-paced account of Jewish History that is grounded in scholarship and brimming with information on topics as diverse as the development of Christianity beyond its



Jewish roots into a new religion and the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language. The text is filled with colorful anecdotal detail about Jewish communities throughout history and around the world, such as how Passover was celebrated on the Civil War battlefield and the origins of Beta Israel, the Ethiopian-Jewish community. Adult readers will appreciate this epic story of the Jewish people rendered as a concise, accessible, and engaging narrative. ★

Bit of Wit

Three men were sitting around bragging about how they had given their new wives duties.

The first man had married a Catholic woman and bragged that he had told his wife she was to do all the dishes and house cleaning that needed doing at their house. He said it took a couple days, but on the third day he came home to a clean house and the dishes were all washed and put away.

The second man had married a Mormon woman. He bragged that he had given his wife orders that she was to do all the cleaning, the dishes and the cooking. He told them the first day he didn’t see any results, but the next day it was better. By the third day, the house was clean, the dishes were done, and he had a huge dinner on the table.

The third man had married a Jewish girl. He boasted that he told her that her duties were to keep the house clean, dishes washed, lawn mowed, laundry done and hot meals on the table, every day. He said the first day he didn’t see anything, the second day he didn’t see anything, but by the third day most of the swelling had gone down and he could see a little out of his left eye.

Submitted by Marvin Migdol, Dallas. ★



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Teaching tolerance in an intolerant world

We knew a lot about intolerance and prejudice when we were growing up. In Denver there were neighborhoods with covenants that prevented sales to "Coloreds and Jews." There were resorts that were blatant in refusing would-be guests with Jewish sounding names, and restaurants, country clubs, hospitals, colleges and even professions where Jews were not allowed.

What Jews were looking for was tolerance, equity, a level playing field. We were not dreaming of acceptance or celebration. Those were beyond our conceptual range. What we wanted was to be a part of the American dream, and we did everything we could to be like everyone else. We talked in hushed tones, wore fashionable clothes, gave up any semblance of being different, at least publicly, and even in our Synagogues and Temples, we made an attempt to adopt what we believed with accepted values.

Our rabbis reviewed current fiction. They shortened the *mechitza*, which divided men from women, added English prayers, built Temples that looked like churches. But America was not watching and was very slow to change its culture.

We relied on a strong family structure, a devotion to the idea that education would make a difference, and we simply built around the intolerance. We built hospitals where Jewish doctors could practice. Jewish pharmacists opened drug stores, accountants created Jewish CPA firms. Jews built country clubs and city clubs, and whatever we saw, that we liked, we copied. It is no wonder that so many of the original Hollywood producers were Jewish. We were already experts in simulating reality.

But we never accepted intolerance in any form, and when we saw it in our children, we reacted with fervor. It was one characteristic of the general society that we did not want to incorporate. In those days we took pride in the small numbers of drunkards, wife-beaters, drug addicts and criminals in our community. Unfortunately with more freedom came less pride, and we now have every deviance present in the general society. Just having Mezzuzahs was no guarantee of safety.

The effort to teach tolerance in our intolerant society has gone through some interesting changes. Many of the formerly-not-tolerated have gained a foothold. Jews, African Americans, Asians have found some new acceptance. The Gay movement has battled for it. But I would like to draw your interest to a sub-category of intolerance related to fear and crime.

I live in a growing and vibrant Jewish community in a fragile urban setting, and one of our constant efforts is to keep our neighborhood safe. We do this with block clubs, programs with the police department, cooperation with alderman, the mayor and everyone who can be an ally. Our efforts are community efforts with no racial or religious barriers.

The problem is that often the perpetrators are adolescent African American males, and because of the threat of a few, the whole is feared and labeled. Responsible for the safety of our children, our families and our community, we needed to find some way to talk safety without talking about perpetrators, and in a community of White victims and Black perpetrators, that is some slippery slope.

In the end, after lots of consultation, we simply told people to trust their "guts." When they felt unsafe, don't think, move to a safer place. Go up to a house and ask for help, walk into a store. Don't test the situation. The lesson went well, but the underlying message was still clear. Black adolescent males are a threat, but not my neighbor's kids. They are great, polite and helpful, but how do I keep them separated from the perpetrators.

The truth is I can't. The reality is I must continue to work for a better community, better schools, better family life, more jobs, more recreation, but first and foremost, I need to equip our families and children with safe habits and hope that they will modulate their expressions of fear and hate.

And then there was this moment recently in Israel. My young Israeli grandchildren are convinced that "Arab Gonovim (thieves)" come into their houses at night and take their Lego pieces, the ones they can't find. They are frightened of all the Arabs with whom they come into contact, the garbage men, the servers in the restaurants, the passengers on the bus – well you get the idea.

On this last trip, one of my grandsons, Meir Pinsky became 18, and we wanted to do something special. We met at the Kotel, and then I wanted to walk through the shuk (market). Meir was fine with that until he began to understand that I meant the Jerusalem Arab Shuk and not the Old City Jewish Shuk. He agreed to go, reluctantly. He had never been there, didn't want to go there, and was filled with fear for our well-being. Walking through the Shuk didn't change Meir's



Parent Job Description

Position: Mom, Mommy, Mama, Ma, Emma, Dad, Daddy, Dada, Pa, Pop, Abba

Long-term, team players needed for challenging permanent work in an often chaotic environment. Candidates must possess excellent communication and organizational skills and be willing to work variable hours, which will include evenings and weekends and frequent 24-hour shifts on call. Some overnight travel required, including trips to primitive

mind. They were simply sales people who wanted to sell, but secretly wanted all Israelis dead.

Lunch in the new mall, Memilla, just outside the Jaffa Gate turned out to be another adventure. First, we had to find "kosher supervision" that was up to Meir's standard, then when we sat down on the balcony overlooking Yerushalayim, we both realized that we were the only Jews sitting in a cluster of Arabs. I was there to celebrate his birthday, not to desensitize his fear of Arabs.

He wanted to stay, and we did, and we did talk about what had just happened. The restaurant – Arabs were upper-middle class, dressed in the latest styles, but spoke in Arabic. The food was good, and we wanted this time together. And here is the Israeli challenge.

I have many grandchildren in Israel, almost 25 counting the married-mates, and seven great-grandchildren, and so there I was again, thousands of miles from home, dealing with the same exact issues. I grew up suffering because people refused to make a distinction between people and simply made class decisions. I didn't want my American grandchildren to hate and fear all African American adolescent males, nor my Israeli family to hate and fear all Arabs, but that is what I want, and I need to find ways to promote that kind of world, but what about their safety in the world in which they live.

Should I ask them to be less suspicious? Everyone in Israel knows victims and survivors who weren't concerned enough on the street, in the shuk, on the bus and they were killed and maimed. Can I expect them to make distinctions that are sometimes difficult for me? I am better at distinctions during the day, in my neighborhood with one teen-age African American, than I am walking at night and coming across a group. I am more relaxed

(see Karsh, page NAT 8)

camping sites on rainy weekends and endless sports tournaments in far away cities! Travel expenses not reimbursed. Extensive courier duties also required.

Responsibilities:

The rest of your life. Must be willing to be hated, at least temporarily, until someone needs \$5. Must be willing to bite tongue repeatedly. Also, must possess the physical stamina of a pack mule and be able to go from 0 to 60 mph in three seconds flat in case, this time, the screams from the backyard are not someone just crying wolf. Must be willing to face stimulating technical challenges, such as small gadget repair, mysteriously sluggish toilets and stuck zippers. Must screen phone calls, maintain calendars and coordinate production of multiple homework projects. Must have ability to plan and organize social gatherings for clients of all ages and mental outlooks. Must be willing to be indispensable one minute, and an embarrassment the next. Must handle assembly and product safety testing of a half-million cheap, plastic toys, and battery-operated devices. Must always hope for the best but be prepared for the worst. Responsibilities also include floor maintenance and janitorial work throughout the facility.

Possibility for advancement & promotion:

None. Your job is to remain in the same position for years, without complaining, constantly retraining and updating your skills, so that those in your charge can ultimately surpass you.

Previous experience:

None required. On-the-job training offered on a continually exhausting basis.

Wages and compensation:

Get this! You pay them! Offering frequent raises and bonuses. A balloon payment is due when they turn 18 because of the assumption that college will help them become financially independent. When you die, you give them whatever is left. The oddest thing about this reverse-salary scheme is that you actually enjoy it and wish you could only do more.

Benefits:

While no health or dental insurance, no pension, no tuition reimbursement, no paid holidays and no stock options are offered, this job supplies limitless opportunities for personal growth, unconditional love, and free hugs and kisses for life if you play your cards right.

Footnote:

There is no retirement – Ever! But... if you are fortunate enough to live through all this, you will become grandparents. *Maybe!*

This was Rabbi Roy A. Walter's column for the June 9, 2009 bulletin of Congregation Emanu El in Houston. Rabbi Walter has been their senior rabbi for more than 30 years. ★



The Art of Observation

BY RABBI ALLEN H. PODET

Everett Jewish Life Center opens at Chautauqua

The long-awaited opening of the multi-million dollar Everett Jewish Life establishment at Chautauqua brought out, as expected, dignitaries local and national. That the venerable Chautauqua Institution of Chautauqua, New York, should be home to such an establishment is in itself noteworthy.

The Chautauqua Institution is located on Lake Chautauqua, on some of the most beautiful rolling glacial scenery in all of upper New York State. It was founded as the Chautauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly in the late 19th century as a vacation retreat for impecunious ministers and teachers of religion, courses for Sunday school teachers. Methodists according to an informant.

Unable to afford a summer vacation out of town, these clerics and teachers came to a retreat, which inevitably became a self-contained community with a comfortable – but not fanatic or oppressive – religious coloration. The offerings broadened to include art, music, and academics. Fairly simple wooden houses were built in the Victorian style, both because they were relatively inexpensive and because they were not intended to be permanent, year-round residences. By 1880 Chautauqua was becoming a national forum for politics, arts, and science.

From early times, Chautauqua was opened to certain people from other religious persuasions, in keeping with the liberal, humanistic orientation of the founders. A number of Jewish people received the impression that Jews were, for a long time, not welcome.

In the 20th century, Chautauqua, cool in summer and eximious in appearance, attracted the attention of upper-middle class Christians, and eventually became a unique kind of playground for wealthier patrons. At the present time I am informed by a Chautauqua resident – there are a number of full-time year-round residents now – that a purchaser of a home here is likely not very far from a millionaire.

Accordingly, Chautauqua in the summer season provides a wealth of music both symphonic and opera, theater (extra charge), and a range of lecturers and programs that would do credit to a small university. Elie Wiesel will speak

here shortly. They brought to Chautauqua Baroness Julia Neuberger, the progressive rabbi ordained at London's Leo Baeck College when I taught there and who is now a member of the House of Lords; Rabbi Professor Jonathan Magonet, quondam principal of that institution; Bill Clinton; Hillary; Sandra Day O'Connor; Jane Goodall (whom we met and whom Valerie Jill actually touched); Margaret Mead; Balfour Brickner; and other political and cultural stars, the great and the famous.

There is a small Jewish congregation of Chautauquans that, mainly for the summer season, uses the lovely stone Hurlbut Christian Church on the Institution campus.



Chautauqua looks like a Victorian village – which it is – frozen in time from the 1880s. The houses are simple wooden structures, small-townish, immaculate and splendidly maintained, and the gardening and landscaping are professional or as good as. Valerie Jill, asked why the nearby Jamestown, N.Y. congregation does not meet through the summer, said the reason is clearly “God goes to Chautauqua.” Where He dines one presumes with white bread and mayonnaise.

Doors are not locked; auto use is strictly limited; some children are visible, but one is impressed by the seniority of the bulk of the residents.

Many Jews have come to Chautauqua for day visits – for example, to hear Goodall or the Clintons – or in some cases to live. Some of them, like Edith and Henry Everett of New York City, have felt very much at home here with the cultured and elite people that the place attracts and the something like Wasp culture that is in evidence.

But that Edith would endow a 7,700 sq. ft. residential Jewish conference center and program facility in memory of Henry was hardly expected. I led a delegation of congregants from Jamestown's Temple Heshed Abraham to be present at the dedication of the Everett Jewish Life Center on July 5, to listen to two hours of Klezmer music, and to tour the facility.



A special graduation

BY RABBI ARNOLD BIENSTOCK

On June 9, 2009, at the ungodly hour of 7:30 a.m., I attended a very special graduation. Pendleton Correctional Facility held its annual college graduation ceremony in the Family Visitation Room of the prison. The correctional facility has a relationship with Ball State University and Grace College whereby these institutions of higher learning offer classes in the prison. I was very proud of two members of my Shabbat prayer group that received



Rabbi David Saperstein of the Reform Religious Action Center spoke, followed by the eminent rabbi and author Joseph Telushkin who will also be a Chautauqua lecturer at the Hall of Philosophy. A program is laid out for four weeks of almost daily lectures, programs, films, panels, and public performances on Jewish themes, all to be held at the Jewish Life Center, but meant for all Chautauquans. Many of the speakers will be housed at the Center itself, which is very conspicuously located so that when one approaches the main gates of the Chautauqua Institution, it is one of the largest buildings visible from the road.

Edith did not do this alone. The list of contributors includes Edgar and Charles Bronfman and many other Jewish luminaries from near and far. Thus far, although the Center proudly proclaims itself “inclusive” (which may mean that gentiles are welcome to use it and schedule their events here, or that it is meant to be nondenominational) it is strictly kosher and usable by progressives or Orthodox groups. Or others.

Nonetheless, the Chautauqua congregation that meets at Hurlbut Church has not moved toward becoming part of it. In part, that is because Edith wants this Center to be for all interested in Jewish life at Chautauqua, not a captive of any one denomination. Symbolically, the reception featured petit fours and cookies and little fruit sections on toothpicks.

The visible – even conspicuous – Jewish presence at Chautauqua is a blessing for the Institution, and to some of Jamestown's congregants who attended it indicates perhaps a coming of age on both sides. One hopes for great things from this establishment. The Everett Center and the Chautauqua Institution are fortunate to have one another.

Comments? apodet@yahoo.com. ★

their degrees from Ball State University. The two individuals were part of a group of some 25 individuals that received degrees.

The correctional facility allowed one family member to attend per graduate. One of the men I work with said to me, “I have no family in Indiana. Would you come to my graduation?” One of the mothers whom I know left her house at 2 a.m. from Northern Indiana to attend her son's special day. She told me she even had some time to stop at Wal-Mart to get grape juice for Kiddush for the Friday service I conduct. She was upset that the prison authorities would not let in her gefilte fish because it comes in a glass jar.

Just like any other graduation, the music of Elger's “Pomp and Circumstance” filled the visitation room of the prison as the graduates marched down the aisle. The incarcerated men were permitted to wear cap and gown at their ceremony. However, it had to be worn over their prison uniforms. We were in a room with one little fan. The graduates were pretty hot, but overjoyed to be dressed like college graduates elsewhere. Two offenders graduated with academic honors from Ball State University – cum laude and magna cum laude. One of the men I work with was a little upset. He missed graduating cum laude by a six-thousandth of a percent in his GPA.

I was struck by a remark by one of the speakers at the graduation. He quoted Helen Keller who once commented on the oft-repeated phrase, “One door closes, another one opens.” Helen Keller insightfully noted that we are often so fixed upon the closed door, that we never take the opportunity to focus on the door that is open. This comment is particularly apt for incarcerated individuals. They often are so fixed on what might have been in their lives that they fail to look at what choices they can make. Of course, this lesson applies to us all – especially as we age. Many of us focus on the closed doors of our lives that we do not open new ones. Life can be a prison of our own making. Whenever I lead the Shabbat service at the prison, I am particularly struck by the words of the Amidah – “matir asurim.” G-d is the one who releases us from prison. There are many prisons in our lives – both physical and spiritual. It is truly a life of faith and hope that may release us from these prisons.

The day ended on a note of hope. I met a young man who served his time in prison, was released, and is now working full time. He also earned his A.A. degree. Sometimes, if a person works diligently, even a prison door can open. I was truly honored to be at this special graduation.

Rabbi Bienstock is the rabbi of Congregation Shaarey Tefilla in Carmel, Ind. ★



Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Summer on the beach

Summer is here in full blast, and we decided to take off a day and go down to Tel Aviv to the beach. This involves taking a bus to the Central Bus Station, boarding an air-conditioned bus and riding perhaps 45 minutes to Tel Aviv. From the bus depot, we took a local bus to the area of the beach, decided it was now time for lunch and found a lovely health food-type sidewalk cafe in which to enjoy lunch. Finding a place to eat in Tel Aviv amounts to deciding which restaurant on the block out of many to choose.

From there we walked a short distance to the beach below the Sheraton Hotel. We settled down on blue canvas and white plastic chaise lounges with white plastic table, all for \$3 and began to survey the scenery.

Soon a man with a scarf wound around his head and a huge Mexican sombrero on top came by with a bell, carrying a box, selling ice cream; others from a nearby kiosk or restaurant stopped people to show them their menus.

What one can see on the beach: the skimpiest of bikinis on all age women; paddle ball all over; some teenage American boys offering smokes of their Nargila (water pipe) to passing teenage girls; male joggers in shorts and tennis shoes. A few pigeons scampered for food but had trouble for the beach is surprisingly clean of litter. Boys empty the waste baskets often.

A strong wind made the sun feel warm but not hot and besides, we had intentionally arrived after 3 to enjoy the late afternoon sun. The water was pleasant but not cold and the beach was not crowded especially; no children around, just adults. After an hour and a half, we were ready to leave and go visit my daughter and plan where to eat dinner.

The choice was obvious – the restaurant/bar where she works, interestingly titled, MASH (More Alcohol Served Here). It's a real sports bar with only sports on the TV and fast food nicely prepared (and served by my daughter, the bartender/waitress)....

Jerusalem.com

How much would it cost to purchase a domain? The answer was \$75,000, the most expensive domain ever bought in Israel and bought by Mr. Michael Weiss, CEO. The domain? Jerusalem.com.

In 2004, Nir Barkat, now mayor of Jerusalem, established a nonprofit organization called "Start-up Jerusalem." Four years later Jerusalem.com was founded under its auspices. After a year, it was converted into a private company focused on collecting data, market research, and setting up the operation.

A few weeks ago, the website was launched followed by a public launching for the foreign press. There are six different hubs run by hub directors responsible for content, marketing and sales.

The six hubs are:

1. **Holy Jerusalem**, the biggest challenge, offering information for Christians, Jews and Muslims such as vocal prayers where one may record a prayer online and send it to be heard in Jerusalem (7,200 people sent prayers in the first weeks of the launching). One can also choose from 10 to 12 virtual tours of Jerusalem holy places; and one can peruse the calendars of the major religions' holidays.

How much would it cost to purchase a domain? The answer was \$75,000, the most expensive domain ever bought in Israel...

2. **History hub** has an interactive timeline of the seven main periods in Jerusalem's history and a library of books on Jerusalem. Currently, there are 20,000 books on Jerusalem in English.

3. **Tourism** includes an events calendar and a guide to restaurants, night life, attractions, hotels and more.

4. **Connect Jerusalem** is a Jerusalem mailbox, which costs from \$4 to \$7 a month; also offered is the ability to create online diaries.

5. **Real estate** will show neighborhoods and prices of available opportunities and give backgrounds of neighborhoods.

6. **Shop Jerusalem** will promote and encourage Jerusalem artists. What more can one say? Type in Jerusalem.com and enjoy....

Take a Virtual Tour of Israel

From a totally different resource, the Ministry of Tourism is now offering virtual tours of Israel on the website, www.goisrael.com/vt or www.goisrael.com. There are ten 10-day tours including: general interest, Jewish interest, Christian interest, culture and history, nature, food and wine, family, archaeology, active interest and mobility challenged. The site is available in 11 languages and offers updated, comprehensive information on

accommodations, attractions, events, tour packages and more....

Tel Aviv is 100 years old

In April, Tel Aviv launched its centennial celebrations. Learn more www.tlv200.co.il.

Back on the Political Front

We recently attended a press conference on the highly controversial subject of Jewish communities in Judea/Samaria, which, according to Israel Harel, former chairman and CEO of Yesha Council, the council of Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria, has become an issue above and beyond what's going on in Iran.

He chose to put it in proportion by saying he could not understand "why everybody [particularly the world media] is so much concentrated on this issue and why they put it at the top of the agenda."

"My son is a founder of Migron, with 42 families in caravans. Is this going to make a difference in the Palestinian acceptance of Israel as the national home of the Jewish people?" he asked. He added that Migron is authorized from the minister of defense who saw it as a strategic place. Putting it in proportion, he said, we have to ask ourselves what is this issue of "settlements" and isn't the real issue Palestinian recognition of Israel.

"Why did the American administration put it on the top of its agenda? I suggest the settlement issue is not a main issue to resolve the problem of war and peace between Israel and the Arab states including the Palestinians. The issue is Jerusalem. The issue is Tel Aviv. The issue is Haifa. The issue is the education the Palestinians give to their students and their denial of the Holocaust. A generation has been raised with hatred and denial."

Debating Mr. Harel was Mr. Mosi Raz, an activist and former secretary-general of Peace Now.

"I come to the issue of settlement as an Israeli who served in the army and one who pays taxes," he said. To him the issue is, were settlements good for Israel or bad for Israel. The creation of settlements is a question of security and economics because "they have changed reality and changed the borders." He maintains that the government is afraid of moving settlers from their homes but settlers are a danger to the security of Israel. He also maintains, from an economics point of view, that they have been given government subsidies and investments and when they are dismantled, the people are given compensations so they are costing the country.

Mr. Harel added that this phenomena is not just political but that the communities in Judea and Samaria are in the heart of Israel and the vast majority of people living there are secular not religious.

(see Kaplan, page NAT 19)



Funsmith

BY BERNIE DEKOVEN

I can't complain

During a recent conversation with Reb Zalman, I asked him how he was feeling – a perfectly reasonable question, considering what getting older does to people. He said something like: "For a man as old as I am, everything's fine." I knew this was not a good report. And so ensued a dialogue about getting old, about the failing body and the increasingly apparent justification for *kvetching* – Zalman being stolidly anti-kvetch, Bernie, nevertheless, pointing out the actual fun, if not necessity, for a good kvetch.

It can most definitely be fun, don't you know, kvetching: embracing the abject agony of existence – in particular, yours; rejoicing, in your miserable way, at the extent of your daily suffering.

For Zalman, however, it turns out to be a joy best denied. For him, it is better to spend life celebrating life.

Which reminded me – as I apparently needed to be – of why I chose to get so involved in the fun business. Sure, I know the joys of kvetching, believe you me, and how much fun a good group kvetch can be. On the other hand, kvetching isn't something you do with a guy who calls himself a "funsmith." Laughing. Playing. Being silly. Not wallowing in the muck of misery, not delving into the depths of despair – but jumping as high as you can, for joy.

Times being what they are, I need to be constantly reminded. And if you remind me, maybe I'll remember to remind you.

So yes, call me a funsmith, please. And when you ask me how I'm doing when I'm not doing well or feeling well or acting well, I'll probably say something like "I can't complain." Because, see, as a professional funsmith, I can't complain – not as a funsmith, not now, not when there's so much fun to be made.

DeKoven calls himself a "funsmith" because it's the easiest way he can define the last 40-plus years of his career. In brief, he helps people make things more fun: work, school, games (of course), marriage, parenthood, exercise, healing, toys, recovery, retirement, life. He does this by helping people look at things from a fun perspective, which usually turns out to be something people under stress would never think of. And he happens to know a lot about this particular perspective. Which is what he hopes you will conclude from reading more about him on <http://deepfun.com/about.html>. ★



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

Let's not prejudge – but! Chapter three

Review: In my first article (dated Jan. 7, 2009), I indicated a concern regarding the outreach to the Muslim world: "I am concerned about recent statements coming from the president-elect (he was not sworn in yet) indicating a desire and more than that a commitment to establish close ties to the Muslim countries in general and individual Muslims in particular. The bells are ringing in my ears." I indicated that while dialogue is essential for people to understand each other, I was concerned that this would lead to further hatred because truth would not be the message received.

In my second article (dated Feb. 18, 2009), I indicated in more explicit terms the stark facts of the far left wing making every attempt to pacify the extremists in order to feel more secure: "...There is a feeling in the left wing liberal community that we owe an apology to the Muslim world for all the so-called missteps made by America." Where are the apologies from the Muslim world for the attacks on our country? Where is the appreciation for our country coming to the aid of their fellow Muslim countries, such as Kuwait who was cowardly attacked by a fellow Muslim country and practically destroyed its infrastructure?

Recent events seem to bear out my concern: The despicable, indiscriminate shooting at the United States Holocaust Museum, the murder of an American soldier by a Muslim convert, the attempt to bomb synagogues in New York. These are just a few examples of the hate that seems to be permeating our society in more overt ways.

And we have witnessed the president of the United States visiting Muslim countries espousing the same rhetoric of apology and distortion of truth. Nowhere in his speech did we hear about the over 2,000 years of striving for the return to the land belonging to our ancestors. Nowhere in his speech did we hear about the 60 years of attempts to destroy the State of Israel and even today the charters of these terrorist organizations clearly state that the ultimate goal is the annihilation of the Jewish people.

I listened and could not understand the message because it was sprinkled with innuendos and untruths as to the historic aspect of Israel's right to exist. The State of

Israel was not only born out of the ashes of the Holocaust. The State of Israel was always a part of the history of our people and acknowledged by the world going back to World War I. Does no one remember the Balfour Declaration? Declaring that the birth of Israel was directly related to the Holocaust is a perversion of true historical fact. Israel existed before the United States, before there was such a thing called Palestine, before most of the countries now settled in the Middle East. That is not fiction – that is truth.

Now we hear conversations from all corners of the Arab world justifying its comparison to the plight of the Palestinians and equating the suffering of the Jewish People to the misery experienced by Arabs and Muslims used as pawns in the never-ending policy of destroying Israel and the Jewish People. That is not fiction – that is truth.

I listened and could not understand the message because it was sprinkled with innuendos and untruths as to the historic aspect of Israel's right to exist.

On and on our president explained his rationale for this historic trip. But a visit to Israel was not part of the agenda because it is abundantly clear that his interests do not include bringing peace to the table in a fair and equitable manner. His speech did not include the murder of women and children or the Muslim world applauding their own innocent children being sent as human bombs to kill other innocent children. His speech did not include the facts that previous Israeli administrations offered total peace with land exchange that was rebuffed on more than one occasion.

Nowhere in his speech did he mention that Israel is the only true democratic country in the entire region, and the words of encouragement he gave the women of these Muslim countries in no way resembled the truth of their subjugation. Nowhere in his speech, when attempting to show that Islam is a tolerant and peace-loving religion, did he mention that our troops stationed in the region to protect and defend their sovereignty are not allowed to display the symbols of their faith nor practice it in any place but in the confines of their bases of operation. Even our chaplains are not permitted to display the symbols that are part of their

uniforms for fear of antagonizing the Muslim population. He acknowledged that 1,200 Mosques can be found in America, but show me one synagogue or church in Saudi Arabia.

Nowhere in his remarks did he review the history of Jerusalem and its significance to Israel and the Jewish People. Jerusalem was founded by King David as the capital of a united Israel in the year 990 BCE, 1,600 years before the advent of Islam. The Temple, which was erected by Solomon stood on Mt. Moriah and was destroyed by the Babylonians in the year 586 BCE, 1,200 years before the birth of Islam.

The second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, 700 years before Islam became a religion. Jerusalem has always been central to Jewish thought and life. To suggest otherwise is to legitimize the myth that the Jewish People have no claim to the land or its capital.

Nowhere in his pronouncements did he bring up the systematic attempt to destroy the State of Israel economically with boycotts and embargos that include threats to companies and countries who are involved in free trade with Israel.

In my follow-up article, I wrote: "If I were to write a letter to the president of the United States, it would flatly state that the lessons of history are still fresh in our minds. Appeasement is an invitation for disaster. The open hand is an invitation not a declaration. Clenched fists need to be neutralized so that they do not strike a blow that begets another blow. Learn to accept separation as a way of life not a testament to failure."

I continued: "If I were to write a letter to the president of the United States, I would encourage dialogue but with the understanding that talk alone is not the panacea to the completion of a dream. Every country on the face of the Earth has aspirations and not all of them fit neatly into our understanding of life and liberty. You were not elected because you are different but because you shared a vision and that vision gave us hope."

No time in the history of our relationship with Israel has our country shown such contempt and disregard for the ties that bind us together. These ties were supposed to be eternal because we believed in the same principles of eliminating human suffering through strength of purpose. Our American heritage is connected to the conviction that we are under the guidance of a Creator and would be a beacon for the world. This is what made us the inspiration for all to emulate.

Sacrificing our ideals for the expediency of connectiveness with those who hate us and wish to destroy us will only make their efforts stronger because of our perceived weakness. We have seen this happen time and again. "If we don't learn from history,

we are doomed to repeat it." Have we not witnessed this before, in our time? The 20th century contained some of the darkest moments in our history. Are we to experience the same in the 21st century?

The recent events that have brought the horrors of hate to the forefront are symptomatic of the illness of prejudice that is rampant in our society and around the world. We can't eradicate distrust by encouraging the repetition of falsehoods or the distortion of history. We can't bring about peace and harmony by denigrating one people to appease another.

Where is the openness, the honesty, the change in our fight for equality that was promised to us by our president? All I see is arrogance and deceit. All I see is a different kind of disaffection shrouded in the words of a salesman trying to offer us a different kind of utopia that contradicts all that was pledged.

George Washington proclaimed that this land gives no comfort to bigotry. All of our founding fathers had a clear understanding of the value of life, liberty and the conviction to change the course of history, not with lies but with honesty and integrity and a faith in the human spirit as given to us by God.

I don't know about you but I feel betrayed and confused at the same time. I feel betrayed because I had visions of a new chapter in the history of humanity designed to bring us together as never before and not separated with such a vengeance. I am confused because I never thought that I would live to see the beginnings of a new wave of hatred and suspicion.

I believe, as Herman Wouk so eloquently wrote: "As for me, I declare my faith that our history is not meaningless, and that nihilism is a hallucination of sick men. God lives and we are His people, chosen to live by His name, and His law until one day when the Lord will be one and His name one."

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



KARSH

(continued from page NAT 5)

in Israel than they are, because I don't know about as many tragedies.

I hold my children responsible to teach their children to survive, and I am working on how to make the world a better place for them to live.

Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc. His e-mail is howkar@wi.rr.com. ★



Notes from the Antipodes

BY RODNEY GOULTMAN

Behind the rhetoric

Maybe it was because Australia is a minnow in the geopolitics of the Middle East. Perhaps it was the congenial atmosphere of the event. However, Australia's spokespersons at the inaugural *Australia-Israel Leadership Forum* recently held in the Holy Land refused to endorse the historical illiteracy and political myopia that characterized President Obama's Cairo declaration to the Muslim world. Thankfully, the leader of the Australian delegation, Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard, someone touted as likely to be this nation's first female prime minister, refused to follow the Obama line.

Australia has long been a partner of the United States in the Middle East and its adjacent territories. Any study of Australia's voting record at the United Nations will demonstrate this. Her armed forces have been on the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan, even though in the case of the latter, Australia is not a member of NATO. One only needs to remember that in the aftermath of the Egypt/Israel peace accord in 1979, Australia saved the fate of the *Multinational Peacekeeping Force in the Sinai* when she joined it despite strong opposition in the United Nations and at home because it was established by the United States.

Given that political rhetoric is often moulded to suit the interests of the listening audience, Gillard's diplomacy was quite remarkable when she addressed assemblies of Palestinians after the Forum. She only gave gentle backing to Washington's hardline stand over Jewish settlements on the West Bank, which – in its eyes – now also includes East Jerusalem. Perhaps, this American response reflects a certain hypocrisy. She insists that Israel abide by previous peace initiatives without question while herself refusing to be bound by any former agreement with the Jewish State – either formal or tacit – over the settlements. It is a position that would surely worry other friends of America as to whether their mutual understandings sometime in the future might be sacrificed to some momentary immediate interests of the United States.

In the days preceding the Forum, the prime ministers of Australia and Israel had a long chat on the telephone during which they discussed the whole gamut of problems involved in the Israeli/Palestinian confrontation, along with the

nuclear threat posed by militant Iran, and that polity's continued willingness to sponsor terrorism. Whilst Australia's prime minister, Kevin Rudd, fully understands Israel's dilemmas and has general sympathy for the Jewish State, not all relevant sections of his bureaucracy share his view.

Strong anti-Israel attitudes exist both within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, a body akin to the American State Department, and this country's military establishment. Contributions to this hostility include personal animosity to Israel, strategic assessment that Australia's support of the Jewish State serves its national interest in the Middle East poorly, and close friendships with people in the region. These friendships have developed as a consequence of having several diplomatic missions in the Arab states, through close military ties, and the training of servicemen from these states in Australia's military schools.

Strong anti-Israel attitudes exist both within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, a body akin to the American State Department, and this country's military establishment.

Unfortunately, Israel is the only Australian non-Arab posting in the Middle East, and many of its former incumbents are currently exercising influence in the Department of Foreign Affairs, academia, and the media advocating a fervent anti-Israel line.

What is unusual about the warm friendship of Julia Gillard toward Israel is that she comes from the Left faction of the Australian Labour Party, not usually known for this. Given her apparent political apostasy, it could have been expected that she would bear much of the brunt of criticism from the ideological Left, the Palestinian lobby. Of course, her fellow members on the delegation from the Liberal-National coalition Opposition were also not immune from their wrath.

There had been over 700 signatories to a press petition begging the delegation not to go. Among them were the usual bunch of Jews who acknowledge this identity only when serving the anti-
(see Goultman, page NAT 19)

Another View

BY ROBERT SANDLER

Why don't they know?

As to the Palestinian-Israeli land issue, I ask: Why don't more people know that Israelites (Jews) captured and lived on the land that now comprises Jordan, Lebanon and Israel, 3,000 years ago...and that Jews had their own government, engaged in trade, fought wars...won some and lost some? Why don't more people know that during the Middle Ages, Jews were persecuted severely by Christians, Muslims and Romans?

Why don't more people know that throughout the Middle Ages, the Middle East was ruled by various empires: Egyptians, Syrians and others? In later centuries, the Ottoman (Turkish Empire) was the controlling power. Why don't more people know that throughout those centuries, no group, no army, no state ever attempted to establish a country or state on the Land of Israel? That land was tacitly acknowledged, worldwide, as the Land of the Hebrew Bible. The Christian and Muslim Bible came out of that Hebrew Bible. Throughout those centuries, when Jews were forced away from one place to another, small numbers of Jews always came back to the Land of Israel.

In 1784 Moses Montefiore, a Jewish philanthropist in England, bought large tracks of land in the Land of Israel; he financed settlements, schools in Safed, Tiberias and Jaffa. There were 10,000 people there. Later in the century, the affluent Rothschild family financed groups of highly motivated young pioneers, lovers of Zion (Judaism) from Poland and Russia and began the task of reclaiming the land from its historic neglect. The return to the Land of Israel was on its way.

In 1800 there were very few Arabs (Nomads) there: some were attracted to what we pioneers were doing. Result? They were willing to work and earn some money. Why don't more people know that in 1890, when Theodore Herzl, a Jewish Austrian journalist saw the anti-Semitic burst during the Dreyfus case in France, he started to urge Jews around the world to work together to reestablish the Land of Israel. "If you will it," he said, "it can be done." In 1897 in Basel, Switzerland, he convened the first Zionist Congress.

Why don't more people know that during World War I, British forces defeated the army of the Ottoman Empire and gained control of almost all of North Africa, including the area of ancient Israel?

Why don't more people know that the British foreign minister, Arthur Balfour,

aware of the progress that the Jewish pioneers had made, issued the famous "Balfour Declaration," which announced to the world that "His Majesty's government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people?" In 1921 the newly formed League of Nations ratified the Balfour Declaration. Not much later, the Grand Mufti, an Arab-Muslim leader in Amman (now capital of Jordan) complained to the League of Nations that if a Jewish state was to be established, an Arab state should also be created.

Why don't more people know why there has never been an uproar when England and the League of Nations removed 70 percent of the Biblical Israel for the Arab-Muslim state of Trans Jordan (later changed to Jordan)?

Adolf Hitler comes to power in Germany in 1933. A prominent Catholic priest said, in 1960, that from the beginning of Christianity to 1933, Christians killed between seven to ten million Jews, including 125,000 children – the Holocaust.

After World War II, the Palestinians pressured the United Nations to make another state. None of the several Palestinian states were willing to take any more of their own people. As it is, today Jordan is three times the size of Israel.

On November 29 (my birthday) the United Nations passed a Partition Plan providing for a Jewish state and an Arab state (in the 30 percent of Biblical Israel). Neither the Jewish Agency nor the Arab states were satisfied...but the Jewish Agency accepted the Partition. The Arab countries rejected it and began preparing for war.

On May 15, 1948, the armies of Egypt, Trans Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, with units from Iraq and Saudi Arabia attacked Israel from the north, south and east, and announced to the world that they were going to eradicate the Jewish presence, and that they were going to drive the Israelis into the Mediterranean Sea. The fledgling state of Israel held off these attacks until the Arabs settled for a truce. The Palestinians tried two more times to kill all the Jews, but they have not succeeded. That is still their primary objective to this day.

The issue today is not a matter of a few streets or a farm here and there. The primary issue is for the Arabs and Muslims to understand the real history of Jews and the Land of Israel, with justice for Biblical territory, and most of all...the recognition of the existence and legitimacy of the State of Israel.

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Where we've been, where we're going

By RABBI JEROME M. EPSTEIN

After serving as United Synagogue's chief executive officer and executive vice president for 23 years, I retired on June 30. Although I announced my retirement eight years ago, as the moment finally comes for me to transfer my responsibility to new leadership I want to reflect on what we are today and what we can be tomorrow.

For the past few years, the media has been very critical of the Conservative movement. Such criticism – some of it deserved – has had a negative affect on the morale of Conservative Jews. Many who could contribute richly to our strength instead have been prompted by the negativity either to join the bandwagon or to leave the movement. The time has come to balance the criticism by focusing on the bold successes and great achievements that we often take for granted – and which neither the media nor we talk about often enough.

Our teen program, USY, and the movement's Ramah camps transform lives and create Jews committed to passionate Jewish practice. Because they have been part of our program for 60 years, we sometimes take these major endeavors for granted, but they have been and continue to be stellar achievements. Their success is our success.

Koach, which inspires college students on more than 60 campuses to live Conservative Jewish lives, has become the gold standard for denominational living there. Koach helps young Jews to identify with Conservative Judaism at a critical juncture in their lives, and creates a committed cadre for our future. We have a right to feel pride in our efforts to strengthen these students.

Every year, the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem attracts more engaged Jews from 18 to 80 who enrich their lives through intensive Jewish study and practice three weeks to a year and then return to their congregations better able and more willing to help them meet their missions. Their contagious enthusiasm will ensure our future.

The creation of passionate engagement with Israel on the part of Conservative Jews has become a priority. The Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center has already forged bonds between North American Jews and their Homeland that will enrich their lives. By engaging in a personal way, Israel becomes a part of their lives rather than a detached value.

Conservative synagogues continue to be an outstanding catalyst for Jewish growth. By their nature most Conservative Jews do not join a synagogue already committed to observing mitzvot, so we can be proud of the great percentage who grow in their commitment as a result of our nurturing. The United Synagogue's creation of materials and strategies such as "Jewish Living Now" and "The Eight Behavioral Expectations of the Conservative Jew" have stimulated the Jewish growth of our congregants.

Hazak has helped to engage senior adults so that they can find new and renewed meaning in Jewish living. Hazak's innovative programs have given new perspectives on Jewish living to this important group, which might be forgotten without us.

I have no doubt
whatsoever that if
Conservative Judaism
did not exist today,
we would create it.

We have worked hard to promote the viability of day school education in addition to strengthening the effectiveness of synagogue supplementary schools. Synagogue schools educate the majority of our youth from early childhood programs through high schools. United Synagogue's expert consultants continually help make good schools better. At the same time, we want to offer parents an alternative to enrich their children's Jewish education and commitment. Our efforts in guiding our Solomon Schechter day school network creates strategies and stimulates the innovation of vibrant approaches that ensure parents and students that they are receiving the best secular and religious education available.

Synagogue leaders are better able to guide their congregations as a result of a panoply of programs that include Sulam, Imun, and synagogue board training. Without Conservative Judaism, world Jewry would be greatly diminished. The movement has been successful, and we should be very proud of it. I am. What a shame it would be if we let others distort our self-worth to the extent that we do not appreciate our own value.

Still, there are things we must do better. We must make a place in our congregations for people who seek more learning, more passionate services, and more opportunities for meaningful and active roles in those services. Some of them will have been drawn toward higher levels of

practice by the congregation but as they move higher up the sulam, the ramp of Jewish observance, they will want even more than we have been giving them. Others – especially young people – will have been inspired by our movement's programs, camps, schools, and youth groups, and want to continue their Jewish growth. By giving them what they need to continue their quest, we create a momentum that will engage others, even people who have not yet been at all engaged. In order to engage those Conservative Jews who want a richer, fuller Jewish life, we must be willing to allocate financial and human resources.

We must be more effective in creating Jewish community within our congregations. We claim building such communities as a goal, but we don't expend nearly enough resources to transform our congregations of individual people into a truly Jewish community, a place that moves to the rhythms of the Jewish calendar. Making that change will take time and money but it can be done. It must be done.

We must develop a strategy that will build bonds of cooperation within the Conservative movement. Movement institutions must meet the challenge of working more cooperatively. And congregations also have an obligation to practice partnership. They must not only take from the movement but give to it as well. Congregations do support it – but the support often comes when they see an immediate benefit for themselves. If our movement is to thrive, however, the support must be constant even when no immediate benefit is apparent. Our central institutions can grow stronger only when member congregations share a sense of focused commitment and invest themselves as partners.

I have no doubt whatsoever that if Conservative Judaism did not exist today, we would create it. It represents the best of normative Judaism. I remain committed to Conservative Judaism's success and dedicate myself to working with all who share that goal. With your help and commitment, it will enhance our lives and the lives of future generations.

I have now worked at United Synagogue as a professional for half my life and have been honored to serve as CEO for over a third of my life. The work that I have done has been rewarding because it has permitted me to devote my energies to a mission to which I am totally committed. And even more, it has enabled me to interact with professional and lay colleagues of whose dedication, commitment, passion, and energy I stand in awe. I am grateful to all those current and past professionals on the United Synagogue staff who challenged me with their ideas, impressed me with their

creativity, and made a difference in our work because they selflessly contributed the best of themselves in order to achieve our shared goals. Their friendship and collegiality have helped me to view my daily task not as a job but a mission.

God also has blessed me with lay partners who unstintingly volunteered their time and energy so that together we could help make Conservative Judaism the phenomenal success that it is. I fully realize that because they do not earn their living from the United Synagogue, every moment they devote to strengthening our organization must come from other priorities in their lives. I feel privileged that they each made a conscious decision to permit me to work alongside them in the holy task of creating a vibrant Judaism that would not exist without them. They have inspired me with their devotion to the values and ideals for which we stand together.

The United Synagogue enters a new era as my esteemed colleague, Rabbi Steven Wernick, brings his passion, commitment and knowledge to his leadership of the organization. His fresh perspective and the new priorities he will bring will help him preserve the United Synagogue's cherished core values and, at
(see Epstein, page NAT 19)

Bit of Wit

Morty visits Dr. Saul, the veterinarian, and says, "My dog has a problem."

Dr. Saul says, "So, tell me about the dog and the problem."

"It's a Jewish dog. His name is Irving and he can talk," says Morty.

"He can talk?" the doubting doctor asks.

"Watch this!" Morty points to the dog and commands: "Irving, Fetch!"

Irving, the dog, begins to walk toward the door, then turns around and says, "So why are you talking to me like that? You always order me around like I'm nothing. And you only call me when you want something. And then you make me sleep on the floor, with my arthritis. You give me this fahkakhka food with all the salt and fat, and you tell me it's a special diet. It tastes like dreck! *You* should eat it yourself! And do you ever take me for a decent walk? NO, it's out of the house, a short pish, and right back home. Maybe if I could stretch out a little, the sciatica wouldn't kill me so much! I should roll over and play dead for real for all you care!"

Dr. Saul is amazed, "This is remarkable! So, what's the problem?"

Morty says, "He has a hearing problem! I said 'Fetch,' not 'Kvetch.'"

Submitted by Scott Levine, Indianapolis. ★

ALEPH and Jewish Renewal

By Rabbi Steven B. Silvern

The following was Rabbi Silvern's speech, opening night of ALEPH Kallah 2009.

Welcome to ALEPH's flagship event, the Kallah where every two years hundreds gather for a taste of Olam HaBa. Now in its 24th year, the teaching, *davenning*, music, art and culture just keep getting better and better and that's because the world of Jewish Renewal is growing, deepening and maturing.

I'd like to take a few minutes to celebrate where ALEPH, the flagship organization of the Jewish Renewal movement has come in the 16 years since we were officially founded. In 1993 there were fewer than 20 Jewish Renewal communities and the Network of Jewish Renewal Communities (NJRC) – now called ALEPH affiliated communities – was an all-volunteer organization.

Now ALEPH serves 42 thriving affiliates around the USA, as well as in Vancouver British Columbia, England, Brazil, Germany, Switzerland, Australia, Peru and Israel. Communities range from 6 to 370 households, with five Renewal Synagogue buildings, another community on a capital campaign, and 30 with rabbinic support from 1/4 to full time.

In the realm of Spiritual Leadership

Sixteen years ago, no Renewal rabbinic association existed. Now OHALAH has over 180 members from across all of the denominations as well as those with private *smichot* and those from transdenominational seminaries like

ALEPH, AJR and Boston Hebrew.

In 1993, 30 rabbis and six rabbinic pastors had been ordained by Reb Zalman. Today, we have over 125 *musmachim* – rabbis, cantors, rabbinic pastors and spiritual directors, with 60 more students in these programs

Sixteen years ago there was no cantorial, hashpa'ah or rabbinic pastor program; today they are all thriving.

Israel

Sixteen years ago ALEPH had no systematic Israel presence. Now we have biennial Birthright trips and adult Renewal Israel tours every other year. We have an Israeli affiliate, Nava Tehila, who we are celebrating at this Kallah, and our Rodef Shalom project is co-led by an Israeli director.

Bet Midrash

In 1993 the ALEPH Bet Midrash was a small collection of the works of Reb Zalman and others, compiled haphazardly. There was no comprehensive collection of Jewish Renewal thought. The ALEPH siddur, *Or Chadash*, was out of print and incomplete.

In the past six years the Bet Midrash has published two major Reb Zalman books, *Integral Halacha and Credo of a Modern Kabbalist*, along with the Kol Koreh siddur in multiple formats. There is a comprehensive body of Reb Zalman's teachings and thought in well-edited publications and high-quality recorded formats, both CD and DVD, as well as other core materials for any Jewish Renewal library.

Tikkun Olam

Sixteen years ago, when The Shalom Center and ALEPH were merged, its tikkun olam work was the entirety of ALEPH's social justice work.

Since The Shalom Center became independent again four years ago, we have partnered on their Green Menorah campaign and the Olive Branch Interfaith Peace Partnership. In addition we partner with Rabbis for Human Rights, Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), Mazon, Hazon, American Jewish World Services, the GLBT National Religious Leadership Roundtable, the Women, Faith and Economic Development Initiative and we pursue our own initiatives such as Sacred Foods and the Rodef Shalom School for Peace.

Projects

In 1993 ALEPH had no projects. Today we are bursting at the seams with innovative two-year programs and other initiatives for those engaged in Jewish Renewal.

In 1999 one person in her 20s attended the Kallah. Today we have over 60 20 and

early 30 somethings performing, teaching, helping run our kids Kallah and playing key volunteer roles in planning this event, not to mention running the Keshet leadership program itself.

The Center for Devotional, Energy and Ecstatic Practice serves those on a devotional path, committed to live from the heart and grow in love daily using ecstatic states to expand their perceptive and creative potential. Retreats have included: A Song of Songs Initiation and the Kol Zimra Chant Leaders training, which began its third cohort in July 2008.

The Sageing Project is a multidisciplinary and multigenerational project designed to serve Jewish elders, their loved ones and people in the caring professions. Its vision of Eldering, its trainings and its source book is based on Reb Zalman's book *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*.

Ruach Ha Aretz has established itself as the premier intermediate-size Jewish Renewal Retreat, taking place in off Kallah years and growing in participation and sophistication as it serves other ALEPH projects in their retreat management.

The Institute for Contemporary Midrash supports the use of contemporary midrashic techniques in the literary, performing, and visual arts to create a vital, living connection with Tanakh through –Training Programs and Immersion Experiences, a Presenters Bureau and Referral Service and the provision of resource materials.

Outreach

Sixteen years ago we had no Caravans, no relationship with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, PBS, *Newsweek*, *Moment Magazine*, not to mention dozens of local Jewish Press. Jewish Renewal was a well-kept "secret" among individuals and isolated communities.

Today Jewish Renewal is not quite a household word, but we are getting there. We have a regular contribution to *Moment*: PBS has done a segment on us in their *Religion and Ethics News Weekly*; a reporter at the Jewish Telegraphic Agency covers us regularly; and *Newsweek* has profiled Reb Zalman.

As I leave the role of chair to the capable hands of Rabbi Lori Klein, I move into a new phase of serving Jewish Renewal as the program director of Isabella Freedman/Elat Chayyim. One of my goals in that role will be to make a closer connection with ALEPH and her projects. I invite you to come visit and learn in my new home that is designed to keep the juices flowing from Kallah to Kallah.

Rabbi Steven B. Silvern, professor emeritus, Auburn University, past chair of the board of ALEPH, program director of Isabella Freedman/Elat Chayyim. Email: silvesb@auburn.edu. ✨

About ALEPH

History

ALEPH grew out of the P'nai Or Religious Fellowship founded by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi in 1962. ALEPH is a core institution in the Jewish Renewal movement, dedicated to the Jewish people's sacred purpose of partnership with the Divine in the inseparable tasks of healing the world and healing our hearts.

Mission

ALEPH supports and grows the worldwide movement for Jewish renewal by organizing and nurturing communities, developing leadership, creating liturgical and scholarly resources, and working for social and environmental justice.

ALEPH has attracted and energized thousands of seekers returning to Judaism, including many whose journey has led them through other spiritual traditions.

ALEPH's affiliated projects include:

- **The Kallah, Jewish Renewal's premier biennial international gathering**, held in the summer of odd-numbered years.
- **Ruach HaAretz**: leadership trainings and a biennial summer retreat, held in even-numbered years.
- **OHALAH**: The Association of Rabbis for Jewish Renewal.
- **Rabbinic Pastors Association**: an offspring of OHALAH, serving Rabbinic Pastors and Chaplains.
- **ALEPH's Ordination Programs**: Rabbinic, Cantorial, Rabbinic Pastor, Spiritual Director.
- **The Bet Midrash**: offering publications, prayer books, CDs, DVDs and TeleCourses.
- **Affiliated Communities**: Jewish Renewal congregations and havurot worldwide.
- **Sage-ing**: empowering elders as mentors and wisdom-keepers.
- **Keshet**: outreach, programs and Israel trips for young leaders in their 20s and early 30s.
- **C-DEEP**: (Center for Devotional, Energy, and Ecstatic Practice) spiritual retreats and chant leader training.
- **Rodef Shalom School for Peace**: empowering peace builders in American Jewish communities.
- **Tikkun Olam**: interfaith and Jewish communitywide efforts to heal the planet, seek peace and work for justice.

For more information visit the ALEPH website at www.aleph.org. ✨

About Jewish Renewal

Jewish renewal is a worldwide, transdenominational movement grounded in Judaism's prophetic and mystical traditions.

Jewish renewal carries forward Judaism's perpetual process of renewal.

Jewish renewal seeks to bring creativity, relevance, joy, and an all-embracing awareness to spiritual practice, as a path to healing our hearts and finding balance and wholeness – *tikkun halev*.

Jewish renewal acts to fully include all Jews and to respect all peoples.

Jewish renewal helps to heal the world by promoting justice, freedom, responsibility, caring for all life and the earth that sustains all life – *tikkun olam*.

For more information visit the ALEPH website at www.aleph.org. ✨



As I Heard It

REVIEWED BY MORTON GOLD

Jury still out on this one

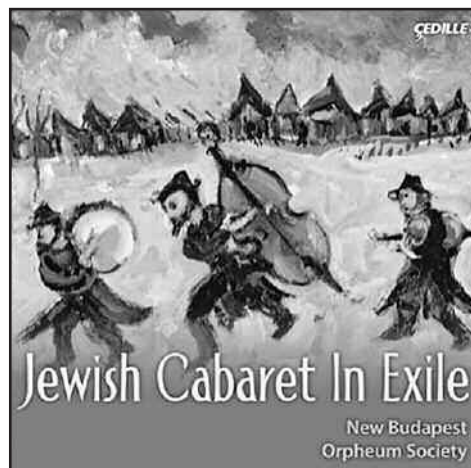
I received a new CD from the New Budapest Orpheum Society on Cedille (pronounced Sadie!) records and frankly the jury is still out on this one. The title of this CD is *The Jewish Cabaret in Exile*. The Cabaret they refer to was located in Germany, judging by the material on the CD. The booklet has much scholarship in it but also much editorializing. On the plus side, aside from the original texts there are also excellent translations of the texts that do much to add to the understanding of the songs.

The time frame of the composers and their songs spans the years from roughly 1900 to 1945. With few exceptions the language of the songs are all in German and deal with sociological matters. If there were any cabarets (nightclubs?) anywhere else they didn't seem to matter if they existed at all since there is no mention of them. Included in the booklet is a large bibliography. There are three Jewish songs that have nothing at all to do with cabarets. All are performed by Stewart Figa.

The first two songs "In Cheder" (In Hebrew School) by Martin Milner and Mordechai Gebirtig's "Avreml der Marvikher" (Abe the Pickpocket) are given excellent and characteristic performances. The third, Abrahams Ellstein's poignant and sentimental ballad "Tif Vie Die Nacht" (Deep As the Night) was arranged in the style of an Argentinian Tango and I felt that this really missed the mark. There are three other songs in the Yiddish language by Viktor Ullman who died in 1944 in a Nazi concentration camp. He was a significant composer whose life was tragically cut short.

Under the heading of Nostalgia and Exile, there is a song by George Kreisler called "Poincing Pigeons." No date is given for this song so I do not know if Tom Lehrer got the idea (and title) from Kreisler or vice-versa. There are non-Jewish composers included in this anthology, which is strange in a CD purporting to deal with Jewish Cabaret in Exile. Despite the passion of the article in the booklet, I do not feel a case was made for any cabaret in Europe to almost exclusively have German texts. Also, why were these German composers thought to be in exile in Germany?

The performers include: Julia Bentley, mezzo soprano (who while singing most musically tends to be a bit screechy in her upper register in some of the songs); Stewart Figa, baritone (and cantor); Iordanka Kisslova, violin; Ilya Levinson, arranger and pianist; Stewart Miller, bassist; Hank Tausend, percussion; and Philip Mohlman, artistic director. With a few exceptions already noted, the performances were quite good.



If the title of the CD indicated a compendium of works by mostly Jewish composers in Germany, especially in the decades from 1920 to about 1940, this would have been more accurate and convincing that the title of "Jewish Cabaret In Exile." Because, frankly, the content as well as the style of the songs suggest Berlin more than any shtetl or even any city located elsewhere than in Germany.

Dr. Gold is a composer, conductor, pianist and retired educator and may be reached at: 6 Webster Street, Springvale, Maine 04083 or by email at drmortongold@yahoo.com. ★

A Thought...

"Meaning, or having a sense that one's life has meaning, involves the conviction that one is fulfilling a unique role and purpose in a life that is a gift; a life that comes with a responsibility to live up to one's full potential as a human being, and, in so doing, being able to achieve a sense of peace, contentment, or even transcendence through connectedness with something greater than one's self."

~ Victor Frankl



An Observant Eye

BY RABBI AVI SHAFRAN

The Novardhok paradox

Despite the economic downturn, I recently made a financial investment that resulted in a fantastic return. It was a CD.

No, not a bank certificate. A compact disk. It cost me \$15 (including postage and handling) and featured Yiddish songs that were sung by the students and faculty of the famed Novardhok Yeshiva in pre-war Eastern Europe.

Founded at the end of the 19th century in what was then the Russian Empire, Novardhok spawned satellite branches in many other cities. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the yeshiva relocated to Poland, although not all the students made it; the Soviets shot or captured and exiled many. At the start of World War II, the yeshiva moved to Vilna and other cities in Lithuania. When the Soviets moved into Lithuania, some students fled, others were killed and a small group of Polish nationals – my dear father, may he be well, among them – were exiled to Siberia.

Some of the songs on the disk were familiar to me from a recording my father made for his children years ago. Others I heard for the first time. I was moved by the music and, especially, the lyrics.

Novardhok had a reputation for a pietistic and morose – to some even morbid – philosophy. It is an ungenerous characterization. The yeshiva was a serious place, to be sure, and its students not only studied Talmud but placed self-criticism and personal improvement prominently on their spiritual agendas. Stories about the lengths to which Novardhok students went to embarrass or discomfort themselves in order to "break the will" and rise above human traits like anger, conceit and indulgence are legend – and many are surely exaggerations.

But while few if any Novardhokers may actually have requested a loaf of bread from a hardware merchant or placed raw peas in their shoes, every Novardhoker spent considerable time daily studying ethical texts, critically analyzing his personal behavior before G-d and man and trying to press his will and actions into line with the highest ideals of Judaism.

Surprisingly, though, what resulted were not broken, depressed, neurotic souls but joyous, determined, soaring ones.

My father, over more than fifty years as a synagogue rabbi, has had a ready smile and a reservoir of encouraging words for all, and continues in semi-retirement to offer the same to the many who value his friendship and counsel.

And I vividly remember Rabbi Yehudah Leib Nekritz, may his memory be a blessing, the religious leader of the Novardhok Siberian exiles, who in the 1950s and 60s would occasionally visit my parents' home in Baltimore. Even when I was still too little to know much about the man with the black hat, white beard and peaceful smile who was so eagerly welcomed into our house, I was mesmerized by his aura of happiness.

On one of his visits, bashful child that I was, I ran to the far end of the house and hid under a table. From my safe distance, I studied his bright, cheery countenance. To this day, five decades later, I remember suddenly bounding across the house – only a few yards, but many little-boy steps – and hurling myself onto the visitor's lap. Everyone was surprised – including me. My feet had received orders directly from my heart. Although Rabbi Nekritz had been through much in his life that was not pleasant, he radiated joy, and it was a powerful magnet.

Years later, when I learned about Novardhok and its approach to life, I thought it paradoxical that Novardhok self-criticism and relentless contemplation of life and its limited span could coexist with the smiling eyes and *joie de vivre* of a Rabbi Nekritz. What I came in time to realize, though, is that it wasn't a matter of co-existence but of cause and effect.

The songs, too, display the apparent paradox. Their lyrics are about things like readiness to be persecuted for one's commitment to Torah, the brevity of human existence, the need to seize every day – every moment – we have; yet the melodies as a rule are spirited, lively, filled with trust and hope and joy.

It might be hard to imagine a chorus like "Now [we're] here; later, there" set to a swing beat. But somehow, strangely, it works.

I think the solution to "How can Novardhok seriousness yield joy?" lies in contemplating a converse-question: How can a society like ours, with all its opportunities for physical pleasure, avenues for escapism and creature comforts, yield the sullenness and depression that is the hallmark of so much of the contemporary world?

What occurs is that embracing distractions to avoid realities – like the fact that even if we are fortunate to become centenarians, our this-world lives are not forever; that we are here for a purpose, one we ignore at our peril; that we have responsibilities (see Shafran, page NAT 19)



Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

The month of Tammuz (June 22–July 22)

Even though the month of Tammuz is known to be a time when life becomes slower, people travel, take a vacation, relax and have fun, this month is not what it appears to be. This is one of the main teachings of the month of Tammuz as well.

According to kabbalah every month has its unique energy and spiritual opportunities. To the uninitiated this material may seem superstitious but that does not mean that it is not true. Many things exist out of our powers of conception or reasoning.

Just as there are various seasons and fluctuations in the weather, there are also fluctuations in the spiritual energies. Those who are attuned to these energies are very aware of these changes and know how to use this knowledge for growth and success. Rather than promoting fatalism, this knowledge actually increases our capacity to make meaningful and effective choices for our highest good. That was my deep intention in the writing of *Kabbalah Month by Month*, which is the source of the information in this article.

Kabbalah divides the months of the year between Esau and Jacob. The first three months (Nissan, Iyar and Sivan) are given to Jacob. The next three months (Tammuz, Av and Elul) are given to Esau. After many battles, Jacob reclaimed part of Av and all of Elul, but Tammuz is still totally in the domain of Esau, making it a time of challenge for people individually and for the Jewish people as a whole. Wars against the Jewish people seem to begin in the month of Tammuz. The 2005 Israeli war with Lebanon began on the 17th of Tammuz, a most vulnerable day for the Jewish people.

Tammuz is still a good month, it is a wonderful month, for it is a kabbalistic secret that the greatest light is buried in the deepest darkness. If we know how to use the particularly intense energy of Tammuz constructively, we will be able to grow through the challenges in ways that may not be possible at any other period of the year.

Summer is fully upon us in Tammuz. The sun is shining brightly and the heat of the summer is strong. The heat of Tammuz is not just physical, but also emotional and spiritual. Tammuz corresponds to the astrological month of Cancer. The name for this month already tells us something about this month. The ruling body of this

month is the moon. The moon is always changing, making Tammuz an emotional time with many ups and downs in moods. One has to learn to ride the roller coaster of Tammuz. What helps us to grow through this month particularly is our willingness to see things clearly. The spiritual opportunity of this month of Tammuz is known as the healing of seeing. Here are a few suggestions from my book, *Kabbalah Month by Month* that are particularly important for this month of Tammuz.

1. Open to see things as they are and not as you want them to be. We too often see our own projections and not what is. Ask yourself often this month, “Am I seeing things as they are, or am I simply projecting my own needs and desires upon a person or situation? Before making a judgment, take a moment to pray that you may be purified to see life as it is.

2. Do not hesitate to question your assumptions. Trust that what is true, as painful as it may seem to you, will lead you to greater freedom. What is true brings freedom.

During this month we will be tested to see through... illusions.

3. Be flexible. Tammuz is the month of reversals. We expect one thing to happen and something totally different occurs. You are not in control of your life. Invite God into your life. Nothing happens by accident.

4. Be aware of your negative traits. Awareness is the first step toward the realization of your most awesome beautiful self. Tammuz begins the process known as teshuvah (repentance) that culminates during the period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

5. Feel your feelings rather than blame others. Make “I” statements about your feelings rather than accusatory “you” ones.

6. Be calm and trust in Hashem. Everything is for good, especially the challenges that make us grow.

This year, the story of the spies sent to survey the land of Israel is read the Shabbat before this month. Upon seeing the inhabitants of the land, the spies, with the exception of two of them report that “we were like grasshoppers in our eyes and so we were in the eyes of their eyes” (Num 13:33). They only saw their own fear projected. They did not see things as they really were, and most importantly, they forgot that the land had been promised to them by God. They were afraid to enter to the land and ultimately, their fears and desires were fulfilled for they did not enter the land. Only the two spies who

saw that the land was good were alive to enter the land. The incident of the spies is an example of the mistake in “seeing” that is characteristic of this month.

During this month we will be tested to see through appearances and illusions. This may be hard, for what we held as dear and true for us may crumble, right in front of us. What is false may masquerade as true in this month as well, so we will have to be mindful and vigilant to see things clearly. We may think one thing is happening, but in actuality it is the opposite. The divine permutation of the Tetragrammaton is reversed this month.

This Chassidic story reflects a profound teaching regarding the energy of Tammuz. There was much opposition to Chassidism in its formative years. An opponent to Chassidism had heard many amazing claims about the Chernobyl Rebbe and wanted to meet this Rebbe himself to go see if there was any validity to what his followers said about him. He understood that followers see their Rebbe as an angel, but he assumed that was just wishful thinking on the part of simple people.

He traveled to see the Rebbe and had the privilege of even sitting at his table. As he watched the Rebbe eat, he did not see anything extraordinary. He simply saw a man eating. When the food was following out of the Rebbe’s mouth onto his beard, he thought that the Rebbe did not even have the manners of a cultured person. He was ready to dismiss the Rebbe and all the claims he had heard about him, yet he stopped himself.

He excused himself from the table, went into the corner and prayed to God. “Master of the Universe, please let my eyes be open to see the truth of what is. Please let me see the essence of the Rebbe and not just the externalities.” When he returned to the table, he now saw that the Rebbe was shining from one corner of the world to another. The Rebbe was indeed a great light. His eyes had been purified through prayer so he could see the hidden truth.

Before we make quick judgments about ourselves and others this month, may we take a few minutes to clear ourselves and pray that we see things as they truly are. May our eyes be purified this month to see the beauty of who we are, the beauty of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.

Melinda (Mindy) Ribner (Miriam Shulamit), 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 Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com. ★



Spiritual Midwifery

BY RABBI NANCY FLAM

I don’t have a technique to teach.

I won’t ever write a book about instant enlightenment or even about the hard, slow way to get there.

The road I’m traveling on is mine alone.

The truth is I can’t tell you how to live.

But I can listen to you with great care faithfully without tiring over long periods of time. I can attend to your tears the way you clutch your fists

when the real pain starts up, how your face smooths when you breathe more fully again. I can follow your labored metaphors about God and speak in your tongue; you need not birth new life alone. I can live big enough and fearlessly so when you sit before me to speak your life you sense the presence of the vast darkness and light of creation and trust that you, too, can bear it.

Rabbi Nancy Flam, Director of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality (www.ijis-online.org), was a co-founder of the Jewish Healing Center in 1991. She then directed the Jewish Community Healing Program of Ruach Ami: Bay Area Jewish Healing Center in San Francisco. She has served as a consultant for Synagogue 2000 and the National Center for Jewish Healing. Rabbi Flam earned her B.A. in Religion (Phi Beta Kappa, Summa cum Laude) from Dartmouth College in 1982; her M.A. in Hebrew Literature from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1986, and was ordained in 1989. She is the editor for *LifeLights*, a series of informational, inspirational pamphlets on challenges in the emotional and spiritual life. ★

On this date in Jewish history

On July 15, 1834

The Spanish Inquisition is abolished.

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

The Theater

By HAROLD JACOBSON

West Side Story – its Jewish connection

How a story about a Jewish-Gentile version of the Romeo and Juliet saga was transformed into a Puerto Rican-American tale called West Side Story.

In the remarkably informative playbill at the Stratford Ontario Shakespeare Festival, Joel Greenberg notes that in the original version of the celebrated Broadway hit of 1957, *West Side Story*, the original plot pivoted on the passionate love affair between a teenage Jewish and Gentile couple in New York City.

By the time the four collaborators – Jerome Robbins (the choreographer), Leonard Bernstein (the musical director), Arthur Laurents (the author) and Stephen Sondheim (the lyricist) – were putting the final touches on their production, they realized that the demographics of Manhattan had changed so radically that they had to reconfigure the story line to accommodate the Puerto Rican presence in the city and pit it against the white “American” (Irish, Polish, English) population. The Puerto Ricans had their gang, the Sharks, while the American counterpart was the Jets.

The result, *West Side Story*, became one of the most celebrated musicals ever mounted on an American stage and it later mutated into an equally successful film. Now the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Canada’s preeminent theater dedicated to the bard’s works, has decided to produce its own version of *West Side Story* and it is a stunning tribute to the four creators who brought it to life 52 years ago.

The musical score is snappy and provocative; the principals, Maria (Chilina Kennedy) and Tony (Paul Nolan) are formidable and exciting in their depiction of the tensions inherent in intra-community bigotry and violence. But the real triumph of this production is found in the vitality of the 31 male and female dancers and the 49 production people involved in the technical aspects required in creating this brilliantly kinetic staging of *West Side Story*.

For this reviewer the two outstanding segments of the Stratford musical are Chilina Kennedy’s magical rendering of “I Feel Pretty,” and the Jets’ rambunctious parody of “Gee, Officer Krupke.” These two selections, however, are merely parts of a beautiful artistic canvas that, in its entirety, provides endless admiration and enjoyment for the audience.



Chilina Kennedy (r) and Paul Nolan (l) star in the Stratford Ontario production of *West Side Story*. Photo credit: Stratford Shakespear Festival web site.

Stratford’s *Julius Caesar* is another example of an artistic canvas that will thrill theater-goers this season. Three extraordinarily talented actors, Ben Carlson as Brutus, Geraint Wyn Davies as Caesar, and Jonathan Goad as Mark Antony electrified a sold-out performance of a play that is obviously a favorite of Shakespearean devotees. The evidence of this latter observation is the way in which audience members seated around this reviewer anticipated and then whispered many of the famous lines uttered on stage. “Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look; such men are dangerous,” was merely one of these well-known verses.

One of Stratford’s cleverest moves in recent years has been to invite Geraint Wyn Davies to migrate to its stage from the television world. This English actor was regularly featured in a series in which he assumes the role of a good natured and virtuous vampire, who despite his unfortunate infirmity overcomes the latter in order to help others. It has been obvious that Davies was wasting his considerable talent on this métier. His move to Stratford has permitted him in *Julius Caesar* and other plays to demonstrate the wonderful presence he has on stage.

One other actor at Stratford this year who has that indefinable presence dimension is Colm Feore who, like Wyn Davies, inhabits both the television and film world (in the TV series *24*, he plays the husband of the first female president of the United States, and in *Good Cop Bad Cop*, he stars as a detective). In *Macbeth* he demonstrates on the Stratford stage a masterful comprehension and exhibition of a homicidal mind determined to eliminate all possible pretenders to the throne. Feore’s diction, body language, and facial gestures are all perfectly calibrated to reflect the inner turmoil that animates his behavior. Feore will also be featured in Edmond de Rostand’s *Cyrano de Bergerac* this season and this reviewer will report later on his performance in that play. ★



Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

Dov and Ali graces the Off-Broadway stage

Dov and Ali is a sensitive work by Jewish American playwright Anna Ziegler, which hits at the very heart of issues that confront us today. As Jews in a modern multicultural, multiracial, multireligious society, we are beset on all sides by conflicting values. Moreover, we battle with our own inconsistencies. Can we respect our own traditions while making room for opposing viewpoints? Can a Jew be tolerant of invasive ideas while holding fast to long-held practices? Is there room for compromise? And it is not only ideas, but the people who espouse them, which are at stake.

As this spells out in Ziegler’s play, Dov is an Orthodox Jew, who teaches in an inner-city high school (in Detroit). He is challenged by his precocious student Ali, who is a strict (in fact, fanatical) Muslim. As the play opens, the bright, articulate Ali does not hesitate to attack Dov with his father’s anti-Semitic tirades. The Jews should be pushed out of Israel, which they stole, according to Ali’s father. But Dov forces Ali to do his own thinking, not parrot his father. At the same time Ali challenges Dov’s relationship with his shiksa girl friend. In this constant battering, each will have his impact on the other, gradually forcing the other to think differently.

Added to the mix is Dov’s girl friend Sonya and Ali’s sister Sameh, both of whom contribute further complications. Sonya opts for marriage, but Dov cannot go that far, will not introduce her to his parents. (He’s rather like those Jews who



Anitha Gandhi (l), as Sameh, and Utkarsh Ambudkar (r), as Ali, in *The Playwright’s Realm’s* production of Anna Ziegler’s *Dov and Ali*.



Adam Green (l), as Dov, and Utkarsh Ambudkar (r), as Ali.

claim to be kosher, but have no problem mixing meat and dairy dishes at a restaurant.) Sameh, who is breaking with the rigid Muslim rules, has her own battles with her brother Ali.

Ziegler is, in fact, dealing with people, as well as ideas, and her characters – all four – come vividly to life. Others in the story – Dov’s parents, Sameh’s boy friend, Ali’s father – are never on stage, but are present all the same. The four on-stage characters are beautifully rendered by Utkarsh Ambudkar, Heidi Armbruster, Anitha Gandhi, and Adam Green – and one is drawn into each one’s world, feeling each one’s pain.

While Ziegler has written a play that is often pure poetry, it is not ornamental poetry. The action never slows; the issues never dim. Rigid religious views, whether Jewish or Moslem, can be limiting. *Dov and Ali* makes its emotional impact, leaving one to mull the themes long after leaving the theater.

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.* ★

Bit of Wit

No Pressure!

A man is laying on the operating table, about to be operated on by his son, the surgeon.

The father says, “Son, think of it this way... If anything happens to me, your mother is coming to live with you.”



For Young People

By Rabbi Moshe Ben Asher, Ph.D.

Chayat Hashavua: God's wisdom in creating spiders

Do you know the Hebrew name for the spider?



It's *akavish*, but we don't know anything about the root meaning of the word.

Is there anything likeable about spiders?

The rabbis 2,000 years ago thought that a crushed spider was a cure for a scorpion's bite. I'm not sure that the cure wasn't worse than the bite! But Spiders eat harmful insects, like flies and mosquitoes that carry diseases. Although they're not picky eaters, they even eat one another.

What might we *not* like about spiders?

All spiders have fangs and most have poison glands.

Incidentally, do you know what "fangs" are? (They're hollow teeth that can put out poison.) And do you know what "glands" are? (They're cells in the body that can make things like poisons.) In North America, six spiders have bites that are harmful to humans.

It's time for the spider quiz.

1. What is it that spiders spin when they make their webs?
2. Who can teach us where spiders live?
3. How many different kinds of spiders are there in the world?
4. How big is the largest spider?
5. How many bones does a spider have?
6. How many eyes does a spider have?
7. How long can a spider live?

Why do you imagine that God created spiders?

David doubted God's wisdom in creating such apparently useless creatures as spiders. He thought that they do nothing but spin a worthless web. But he became completely convinced that even a spider's web may serve an important purpose.

Once when King Saul was angry at him, David had to hide from him in a cave. Saul and his men were about to go into the cave and find David. But God sent a spider to weave its web across the entrance to the cave, so Saul told his men not to bother searching in the cave, because the spider's web was proof that no one had recently gone into the cave.

More than two thousand years ago, one of our great prophets, Isaiah, said: By telling lies we will be tied up in misery, like with ropes.

But what did Isaiah really mean – and what does it have to do with spiders?

One of our great rabbis, Rashi, who lived almost a thousand years after the prophet Isaiah, said that when we tell lies we get in deeper and deeper, because at first our lies seem little, like the thin threads of a spider web – we can hardly see them.

But Rabbi Assi said that, when we tell lies, at first our lies are like the thin threads of a spider web, but they soon become like thick ropes that tie us up.

There's an old saying, "O what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive (or lie)."

Have you ever had that experience and, if so, how did you get out of the tangle of your lies?

[ANSWERS TO QUIZ: (1) silk; (2) anywhere they can find food – one kind under water and another near the top of Mount Everest; (3) at least 30,000, but probably more like 50,000 to 100,000; (4) a South American tarantula with its legs fully extended can measure up to 10 inches; (5) none – their tough skin serves as a skeleton; (6) two, four, six, or eight; and (7) some female tarantulas live up to 20 year.]

Rabbi Moshe ben Asher is codirector of Gather the People (www.gatherthepeople.org), an Internet-based nonprofit organization that provides resources for congregational community development and organizing. ★



A Thought...

"The purpose of life is not to win. The purpose of life is to grow and to share. When you come to look back on all that you have done in life, you will get more satisfaction from the pleasure you have brought into other people's lives than you will from the times that you outdid and defeated them."

~ Harold Kushner, rabbi and author



Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Novel of Iraq's and its Jewry's unfolding tragic dram

Aida by Sami Michael. Kinneret, Zmora Bitan Press, Dvir-Publishing House. 2008. Pp. 271. (In Hebrew.)

Sami Michael, counted among Israel's most distinguished authors, was born in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1926, escaped to Iran in 1948 and a year later arrived in Israel. Once again he proves his literary genius in a timely and revealing novel of Iraq's as well as its Jewry's unfolding tragic drama.

At the center of the plot with its compelling oriental dimension of suspense and mystery is Zaki Dali, a 70-year-old Iraqi Jew who chooses to remain in his native land following the hasty exodus of expulsion of his fellow Jews in the wake of Israel's victorious 1948 independence. The fleeing Iraqi Jews were forced to leave behind both their material wealth and social status, arriving with European Holocaust survivors in a postwar Israel saddled with multiple urgent and complex concerns.

Zaki aspires to be the last remaining Iraqi Jew, representing the longest existing Jewish community in history for some 2,500 years and once the world center of Jewish life with persisting influence. A quarter of Baghdad's population was Jewish, the highest percentage of Jews in any Muslim capital. Zaki knew from the bitter experience of Baghdad's Armenian refugees the high cost of losing one's native land and tongue. His youthful love to imprisoned cousin Noor who eventually was tortured to death by the Iraqi authorities, was another factor in keeping him behind.

While his parents moved to Israel, his sister settled in England, and his two brothers came to the United States. Zaki's siblings were professionals who prospered, allowing him through general financial support to live lavishly. He even used his material means to form an indulging and promiscuous bond with the secret security head, though keeping a hidden cyanide tablet just in case.

From his dream of becoming a great author, Zaki is forced to settle for the lesser reality of a popular television personality with most people unaware of this Jewish identity. There were those like his cousin Jaliel (Shlomo) who converted to Islam in order to survive, protect one's family and



even thrive in Iraq's society. "Believe me, Zaki, a lie is better and more compassionate than the dammed truth. Listen to me, you can play with a lie, the truth is more stubborn and heavier than a firm stone. In life you need a bit of flexibility" (My translation, p.58).

Zaki longed for the good old times of relative harmony that was enjoyed by the diverse population of a secular Iraq. His Jewish legacy was concretized in safe-guarding the gift of life as "a supreme command" (My translation, p. 122), even surpassing the gift of faith. An intriguing observation is made in comparing Iraqi Jews with their American counterparts. "Iraqi Jewry learned throughout history to enjoy what life offers, to blossom in the land where it resides and contribute from a safe distance to the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael" (My translation, p. 122). Along with the suffering Jews, the author empathizes with the lot of the Shiites under Saddam Hussein's brutal boot. Zaki's life-long neighbors and close friends were Shiites whose extended family was consumed by Sunni hate and suspicion. The Kurds too were equally persecuted without mercy.

A transforming figure to enter Zaki's life was a mysterious Kurdish woman whom he named Aida (the book's title) for the tragic operatic heroin. Zaki nursed her back to life, seeing in her plight his own Jewish one. She ultimately reciprocates, traveling with ailing Zaki to the United States in an airlift arranged by his physician brother Kamal who worked for the United Nations.

Rabbi Israel Zoberman, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Va., is the son of Polish Holocaust survivors. He grew up in Haifa, Israel. ★

Book Review



REVIEWED BY
REBECCA
GOODMAN &
MIRIAM
ZIMMERMAN

A new illustrated children's bible

"From all who would teach me, have I gained understanding" (Psalms 119:99). You may know me better as "my daughter, Rebecca, the Reform Jewish Educator" sometimes depicted in this space by a doting mother. You read about my wedding two years ago, some of my trips to Israel, and I am sure you have read that my mother, Miriam Zimmerman, and I share an interest in Holocaust education. We also share a love of books.

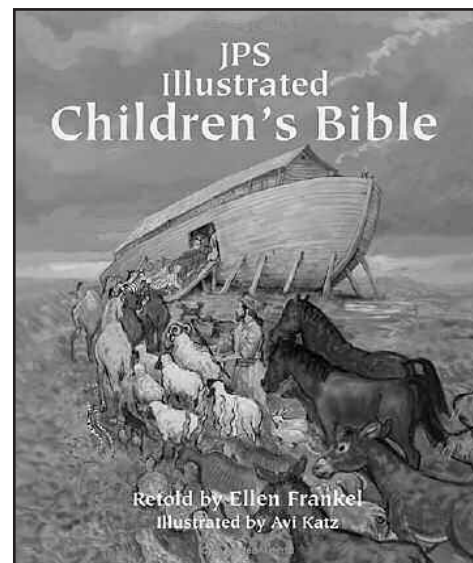
It is my privilege to write in collaboration with my mother, as we tell you about a new addition for the "People of the Book." The Jewish Publication Society is introducing a new volume in late July titled *JPS Illustrated Children's Bible*.

I love books! [Her mother's observation: All those years of reading to her as a child paid off. Young parents, take note of the importance of reading to your child.] I have always identified with the metaphor, "People of the Book." I moved 23 boxes of them out of my former office and into another this summer. My husband constantly asks, "Do we really need all these books in the living room?"

Of course we do. The books on my shelves dedicated to Torah; Tanach, the acronym for Torah, Neviim, Ketuvim (Torah, Prophets and Writings) that make up the Hebrew Bible; and commentary are numerous. Why then was I in search of yet one more Jewish Bible? There are not many Children's Bibles available from Jewish publishing houses. The alternative, Christian publications, often infuse into their books Christian theology that is not in keeping with Jewish tradition and interpretation of the Bible. One of my colleagues tells me that she is still reading the "Golden Book" bible to her kids for lack of finding anything better. This void will be filled when the *JPS Illustrated Children's Bible* becomes available in late July. The Bible stories in this volume are retold by acclaimed storyteller and Jewish scholar Ellen Frankel and illustrated by award-winning artist Avi Katz.

Frankel succeeded in her mission to remain true to the original text, while maintaining accessibility for readers five years and up. [Her mom's observation:

If your offspring is as precocious as Rebecca, you might read these stories to a child as young as three.] I envision this book on a child's nightstand, reading a chapter (or two) each night. I also envision this book on adults' nightstands where we may read a chapter (or more) each night. These short stories will remind adults of the depth and breadth of our sacred teachings.



I want JPS to create a series of posters for each of the beautiful illustrations by Avi Katz. His work provides beautiful color with just enough detail for the viewer to appreciate the story while leaving room for additional individual interpretation. I would hang these illustrations in my own home and in the classrooms of my school.

The *JPS Illustrated Children's Bible* begins as all such good books begin, with Bereshit, "In the beginning," and the creation of the world. I love these initial stories from Genesis for their simplicity in the retelling and for the conciseness of each chapter. Original nuance from the Hebrew is not lost. For example, when God speaks to our ancestors, they often answer, "Hineni, here I am." This repetition exists in each example throughout the Bible. When Hebrew phrases repeat from one generation to the next, the English also repeated so that the reader may make the connections our rabbis made and begin to interpret these repetitions on their own. I can see these stories being used in my kindergarten classroom as children are just beginning to explore the Bible as well as with our teens as they search for "reminder" versions of the Bible stories.

Unlike many children's Bibles that conclude with the story of Moses, *nach* (Prophets and Writings) is not left out of this Tanach. I was not at all surprised to find my family's biblical namesakes included in the book. Yours truly, Rebecca; my sister Leah; my father's Hebrew namesake, Reuben; my mother, Miriam (all from the first two books of the Torah);

and Joshua, my brother, named for one of our prophets, were all there. I was also reminded that some popular modern children's names are found in the Bible, like my best friend's daughter, Abigail. These Biblical role models provide their modern namesakes with inspiration as their stories are read and reread.

The depth of material is great and the variety of the stories diverse, including the magic of God creating the earth, animals and humans; flooding the earth to blot out sin and God's compassion when people ask for forgiveness. Relationships between parents and children, competition between brothers, deceit and betrayal of friends, murder and war are not ignored. These stories are eternal, thus relevant today. Conversations between parents and children will undoubtedly lead to better understanding of Jewish teaching by both. "As you teach, you learn" (Midrash Tehillim 11).

As the book proceeds to later chapters of the Bible, the stories become longer. Parents and older children can discuss the meaning of the behavior of people in the stories. The morals and ethics, although sometimes questionable, provide roadmaps for our own lives and how we treat others. I want my young children to welcome strangers and be compassionate, like Abraham and Sarah. I want my older children to understand the culture and lifestyle of desert living and nomadic peoples. I want my children to avoid the jealousy that drove Cain to murder Abel.

This Bible belongs on a living room coffee table to be enjoyed aesthetically as well as spiritually.

For example, parents could have a conversation with older children about the differences and similarities between Biblical times and today. What is the modern metaphorical equivalent to the Biblical "washing someone's feet?" A guest today is fed, primarily, with store-bought goodies. Cheese and crackers can be picked up at any local market. A child may understand there were no markets for Sarah and Abraham. But do they understand the process Sarah completed before offering her guests food and refreshment? Sarah must have been involved in the process of gathering grain; threshing, which is the loosening of the edible part of cereal grain from the scaly, inedible chaff that surrounds it; winnowing, which separates the loosened chaff from the grain; not to mention grinding the flour, kneading the dough, and baking the bread.



JPS Illustrated Children's Bible author Ellen Frankel (l), and illustrator, Avi Katz (r).

Modern children, including this writer, who had to look up the intricacies of threshing versus winnowing for this article, are not familiar with these processes. Through these stories and the conversations that follow, children can acquire greater understanding of ancient times, with parents guiding the discussion. This beautiful text cries out for a parent's manual or teacher's guide to accompany it.

I am thankful to find the oft-omitted stories of Deborah and Yael, Gideon, Elijah and Elisha. Authors often overlook these prophets and focus instead on the more familiar stories of Samuel, David and Solomon in their children's bibles. The writings of Ruth, Esther and Daniel are also included in this volume. Shavuot and the reading of Megillat Ruth, the book of Ruth, need not be inaccessible to children any longer. In this volume, the story of Esther, our Purim heroine, will be available for children throughout the year, not only when we don masks and attend the local Purim carnival or Megillah reading.

After reading every page of this 240-page volume, my advice is to purchase one for yourself and one for a friend, even if you do not have children or grandchildren. The beauty of the artwork will appeal to adults as well. This Bible belongs on a living room coffee table to be enjoyed aesthetically as well as spiritually. The compelling stories will persuade adults to read them after first attracted by the art.

In keeping with my being part of the People of the Book, my living room will see the addition of the *JPS Illustrated Children's Bible* in the coming month. May your library also continue to grow *l'dor vador*, from generation to generation.

Rebecca Goodman, has an MA in Jewish education and in Jewish communal service. [Miriam's postscript: Dear Readers, please allow this columnist to shep naches from her daughter. I am so grateful for Rebecca's expertise in Judaism. Her willingness to proof my columns and offer suggestions over the years has grounded my writing in Jewish tradition in a way impossible without her help. "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy parents...." Paraphrased from Deuteronomy 6:7.]

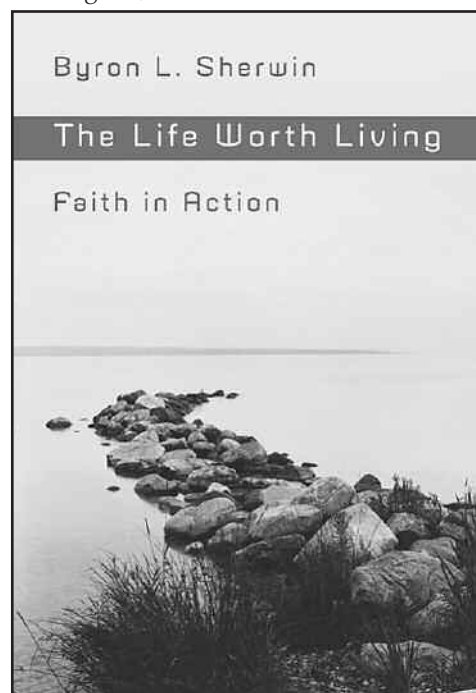
Dr. Miriam L. Zimmerman is professor emerita at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, Calif. She can be reached by email at mzimmerman@ndnu.edu. ★

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Answering the hard questions with religion and more

The Life Worth Living. By Byron L. Sherwin. Grand Rapids, Michigan: 2009. 175 Pages. \$18.



Throughout history and throughout the world, people ask the same questions: Why am I here? Where do I come from? Where am I going? Their answers are usually codified into what we call "religion." Byron L. Sherwin has organized a set of responses to these questions, based primarily on Jewish tradition but also involving Christian beliefs as well as the contributions of philosophers and poets. The result of his efforts is presented in this well-written and readily understandable book.

Sherwin is a Jewish theologian and scholar who is a professor at the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies in Chicago. Supplementing his clear identification as a Jewish man of letters, Sherwin has drawn on Christian and nondenominational sources to augment his down-to-earth presentation. Although religiously identified readers will find Sherwin's approach to be readily compatible with their beliefs, others will also find considerable value in his attempts to cope with the hard questions confronted by all people regardless of the degree of their religiosity.

Beginning with the initial biblical question, "where are you?" Sherwin asserts that, on the continuum of health, success is not

necessarily guaranteed by achievement. He points out that the usual benchmarks: wealth, fame, power, and recognition do not guarantee happiness. A chapter is devoted to the meaning of life and Sherwin draws on analysts Viktor Frankl and Erich Fromm as well as Leo Tolstoy for attempts to wrestle with this complicated enigma.

Sherwin explores creativity and human uniqueness, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling our potentialities. This requires hard work; a study of how our forbears used their wisdom and experience; and imagination to visualize what and who we can become. He adds three other elements: the need to make choices; to focus on what matters most; and to meet meaningful goals. For each of these six items, he fleshes out his own views with numerous helpful sources from the Talmud and from philosophers.

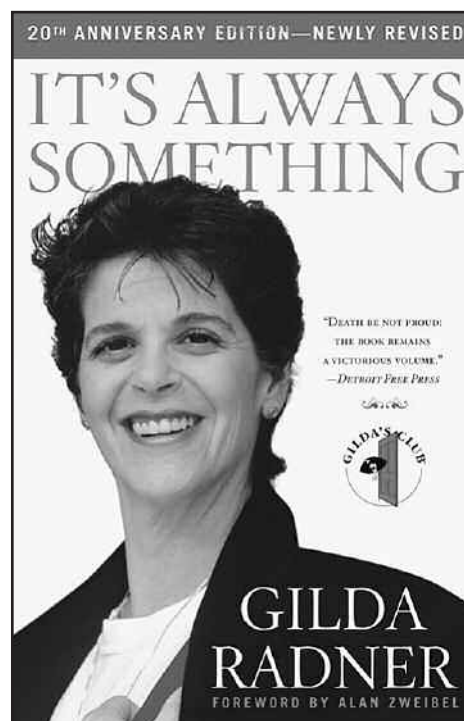
Similarly, a discussion of seeking wisdom relies on Scripture, the Talmud, poets and psychologists. Also, demonstrating his ecumenical approach, Sherwin includes a quotation from the New Testament. One of the most interesting chapters in the book is titled "The Gift of Love." Freud's views are criticized while comments by St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Plato are favorably cited. A broad-based approach includes love between adults, friendship, and parental love. For people of faith, love of God is crucial. In support of this view, Sherwin quotes from Deuteronomy – "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might."

The two final chapters of the book deal with "Ups and Downs" and "Exquisite Living." For the inevitable "treasures and traumas" of life, Sherwin turns to faith-based "spiritual rehabilitation," including "return and renewal" as well as atonement. His reliance on theological explanations will appeal to his more devout readers while others may be somewhat skeptical. The last chapter, on happiness, includes the recommendation that one should write an ethical will. To assist in this process, Sherwin helpfully lists the topics to be addressed in such a document. Some readers will find this to be particularly useful.

Regardless of one's degree of faith and religious observance, all readers will be rewarded by careful study of this worthwhile attempt to cope with the vital questions raised by all people all over the world.

Memoir's new edition includes resource guide for cancer patients

It's Always Something. By Gilda Radner. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009. 286 Pages. \$14.



Originally published in 1989, Gilda Radner's autobiographical account of living and dying with ovarian cancer has been reprinted with a new introduction by Alan Zweibel, her collaborator in writing *Saturday Night Live*. Also added to this 20th anniversary edition is a resource guide for cancer patients and their families.

The book is basically a frank, blow-by-blow description of Radner's treatment from the time of her diagnosis in 1986 until she died in 1989. Some of the material is inspiring; some is harrowing. Woven into the story are details of Radner's life. The two biographical elements that stand out are her marriage to actor Gene Wilder and her success as a television star.

Radner grew up in Detroit but spent the winter months in Miami Beach. Her chopped-up school attendance stopped when she entered a private school in Detroit where she completed high school before enrolling in the University of Michigan. She spent time as an acting student but failed to graduate after six years. In 1969, caught up in the antiwar movement and involved with a Canadian sculptor, she moved to Toronto. The romance broke up but Radner remained in Toronto where she became a professional actress, establishing herself as a comedienne. Her success led her to New York, originally with the *National Lampoon Show*, then with the *Not Ready For Prime Time Players*, and, eventually, with *Saturday Night Live*.

After a failed marriage with a musician, Radner was divorced and wed Gene Wilder in 1984. She poignantly describes his devotion to her through the tribulations of her illness. Others involved with her – doctors, nurses, therapists – also suffered

with her as she experienced the rigors of her treatment.

Not until the fourth chapter of her book does Radner identify herself as a Jew. Shortly thereafter, she uses the Yiddish word "tchotchkes" and then goes on to identify her father as "very active in Jewish affairs" and listed in "Who's Who in American Jewry." One of the pictures she includes shows her attending her brother's bar mitzvah. Later, Radner says she "was brought up Jewish, went to Sunday school, learned Hebrew." However, Radner makes no reference to Judaism or Jewish sources as she copes with the dire consequences of her cancer diagnosis.

Instead of any religious influence on her capacity to deal with cancer, Radner turned to both esoteric and standardized approaches, including macrobiotics, surgery, and new drugs. In painful detail, she describes her chemotherapy, including the before and after procedures as well as her reactions. She also sets forth the burdens of her illness and her treatment on her family and friends. The sense of humor that characterized her performances on stage and TV never deserts her, making it possible for readers to follow what is essentially a tragic story.

An important source of emotional support for Radner was The Wellness Community in which cancer patients shared their stories with each other. Her experiences led her to organize Gilda's Club where people with cancer as well as their families meet to encourage and sustain each other. This has become a national network of meeting places that help patients to live with cancer. The development of this program and the principles that guide its functioning are explained in a useful appendix to this new edition of *It's Always Something*, along with a Resource Guide that lists organizations and readings for people with cancer.

These two additions to Radner's original book are extremely valuable, providing additional justification for reprinting Radner's memoir. A new generation of cancer patients and their relatives who benefit from treatments discovered since her death 20 years ago will find inspiration in this courageous account of coping with cancer.

Hair-raising series of electrifying adventures

The Defector. By Daniel Silva. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2009. 469 Pages. \$26.95.

Since 2000 when Daniel Silva published *The Kill Artist*, his fourth novel but the first to feature Gabriel Allon, he has released one book each year starring Allon. (see Teicher, page NAT 19)



Kosher Kuisine

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

A legacy from other places

Fruit soup, warm or cold, is good when summer fruits are readily available. Berry and stone fruit soups are common in the Scandinavian countries and Eastern Europe, sometimes with wine, cream or sour cream added. Mango, berries, bananas, cherries, peaches, strawberries, watermelon, cantaloupes and pineapple can all be used for fruit soup.

A specialty of the Scandinavian countries, Russia and Hungary was sour cherry soup. The Polish made apricot soup. Danes made orange soup.

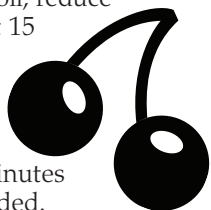
A quick look into ten recent kosher cookbooks shows five had no such recipes; *The World of Jewish Entertaining* by Gil Marks had chilled fruit and raspberry wine soups; *Kosher Delicious* by Diana Kastembaum and Penny Brenner has chilled celery pear, iced honeydew pear and spiced peach soups; the Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy cookbook, *The Kosher Palette*, has strawberry wine wild berry soups; Gil Marks' *Olive Trees and Honey* has Hungarian wine soup; and Congregation Agudat Achim's *Divine Kosher Cuisine* has apple wine, apple rutabaga, chilled cherry and six fruit soups.

Marlena Spieler's *Jewish Cooking*, which I consider very Israeli in recipes, has fruit soup and Hungarian cherry soup. Looking into four Israeli cookbooks, only Joan Nathan's *The Foods of Israel* lists Palestinian fruit and melon soups. Try these for yourselves.

My Israeli Fruit Soup (6 servings)

3 cups chopped fruit such as apricots, peaches or plums
1/3 cup sugar
6 cups water
1 Tbsp. cornstarch diluted in
1/3 cup water
2 Tbsp. lemon juice

Combine in a saucepan the fruit, sugar and water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer about 15 minutes. Puree in a blender. Add cornstarch and water and lemon juice, return to heat and cook a few minutes until cornstarch is blended.



Cherry and Wine Soup (6 servings)

4 cups sweet black cherries
2 cups water
1/4 cup sugar
1/2 thinly sliced lemon
1 cinnamon stick
1 Tbsp. cornstarch
1/4 cup water
1 cup dry red wine
whipped cream

In a saucepan, place cherries, water, sugar, lemon and cinnamon stick. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes. Make a paste of the cornstarch and water. Add to soup. Cook 10 minutes. Remove cinnamon stick. Add wine. Chill. Serve with whipped cream.

Plum Soup (6 servings)

1/3 cup water
3/4 cup apple juice
2 pounds pitted plums
1 cinnamon stick
1 whole clove
1/4 cup sugar
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
whipped cream
cinnamon

In a saucepan, combine water, apple juice, plums, cinnamon stick, clove, sugar and lemon juice. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes or until plums are soft. Remove clove and cinnamon stick. Puree fruit in blender or fruit processor. Pour into bowl, cover and chill. Serve with whipped cream and cinnamon sprinkled on top.

Sybil Kaplan lives in Jerusalem. ★

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Hebrew Linguist

BY SETH BEN-MORDECAI

The roads from Babel

Dagesh. In Biblical, Yemenite, and Kurdish Hebrew, the dagesh – a dot in the center of a letter – has two functions: “Doubling” and “hardening.” A doubled consonant is pronounced twice its normal duration: In English, we hear this in “unnamed” as contrasted with “un-aimed.” Like English, modern Hebrew usually ignores doubling in speech, pronouncing gannav < גַּנָּב > (a thief) the same as ganav < גָּנָב > (he stole).

The second function of dagesh, hardening, designates a consonant’s “hard” form rather than its “soft” form. A “hard” or “stop” consonant entails a complete brief stoppage of the breath. A “soft” or “fricative” consonant requires only a partial obstruction of breath. Biblical and Yemenite Hebrew have six dual-form consonants: b/v < בּ/ב >, k < כּ/כ >, p < פּ/פ >, g/gh < גּ/ג >, d/dh < דּ/ד >, and t/th < טּ/ט >. These are the *begeḏ kefet* letters.

In modern Hebrew, the hard and soft forms can interchange without changing a word’s meaning. Although *lišbor* < לִשְׁבֹּר > (to break) is correct, *lišvor* < לִשְׁבוֹר > will also be understood. (By contrast, < שֵׁ > (š) and < שׁ > (s) cannot be substituted for each other: *šar* < שָׁר > means “he sings,” but *sar* < שָׂר > means “president.”)

In archaic Hebrew, only the “hard” forms existed. Very late in the development of Hebrew, speakers began allowing some breath to pass through the vocal tract when a *begeḏ kefet* consonant followed a vowel, unless the consonant was doubled. Thus, *gabav* (collected) became *gavah*, but *gabbah* (eyebrow), with its doubled b, did not change.

Hebrew speakers probably never perceived the distinctions between hard and soft forms. Indeed, certain Hebrew poetic texts match “khaf” < כּ > with “quf” < ק >. Similarly, few English speakers notice that the captain of the guard in the *Wizard of Oz* “softens” the “k” to a “khaf” when he says, “The wicked witch is dead.”) But the scribes who developed Hebrew punctuation were so meticulous that they recorded minute differences that Hebrew speakers made but only a student of language would perceive.

An attorney and Semitic linguist with degrees from Brandeis, Stanford and Univ. of Calif., Seth Watkins (pen name, Ben-

MEDAD

(continued from page NAT 20)

In the early years, we were among the very few blatantly (in the uniform of kippah for him and hair-covering for her) Orthodox Jewish attendees. Most years there was a “kosher table,” but this year it seemed even more kosher than usual. This year there wasn’t just a little food with a sign, there were people “guarding” the food. That’s a *Halachik* requirement. The food was dairy and parve, which meant that those who wanted the Ben & Jerry’s ice cream could have the ice cream for dessert. In previous years, they had Hagen Daz.

I didn’t grimace because of my diet. It wasn’t all the *traif*; it was the Israeli loony Left and Arabs that bothered me.

I didn’t like the message of the outgoing U.S. Counsel General Jake Wallis. He made it very clear that he and the American government would do everything in their power to create a *[sic]* “Palestinian” State. He went on and on and yapped and yapped and said other nonsense like that the United States was founded for freedom. Historically that isn’t true. Did you ever hear about the Boston Tea Party? “No taxation without representation.” The American Revolution was all about money, not freedom. The liberty and freedom stuff came later.

If a high-ranking American State Department official can’t get American History straight, do you really think he (and they) know anything about the needs, history, and security of another country? Another part of the world? I was politely silent when attending their event, but now I can open my mouth and send my words out to be read.

Batya Medad is a veteran American olah, immigrant in Israel. She and her husband made aliyah in 1970 and have been in Shiloh since 1981. She’s a wife, mother, grandmother, EFL Teacher, writer and photographer. Besides her articles and photographs we’ve been featuring in this publication for a number of years, Batya is very involved in the international cyber community as a Jewish blogger. She has two active blogs, <http://shilohmusings.blogspot.com> and <http://me-ander.blogspot.com>, besides having established the Kosher Cooking Carnival; details on me-ander. You can contact her at shilohmuse@yahoo.com. ★



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 tends his 20-year-old ocicat. Email: Seth@VayomerPublishing.com. ★

KAPLAN

(continued from page NAT 7)

Mr. Raz commented that Israel remaining a Jewish state is important but perhaps it isn't that important for a peace agreement. He then remarked that "we" have to give up and make compromises [making no comments what the Palestinians have to give up or what they must compromise]. He also referred to the Judea/Samaria areas as "occupied," in contrast to Mr. Harel who said he preferred using the term "disputed."

Mr. Harel also said that he supported the Palestinian state that exists – Jordan – where 70% of the Jordanians are Palestinians. His closing remarks were that, for the past 15 years, the Palestinians have not wanted a solution; they could have had a state with the Oslo Accords and Barak's offer and Annapolis, but they always backed down. "They don't want a state, they want Israel. If they don't recognize our right to have a state, we don't do business with them."

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

EPSTEIN

(continued from page NAT 10)

the same time, respond to new needs and conditions. I am confident that as Rabbi Wernick assumes his responsibility as CEO, he will use his proven wisdom and acquired skills to help advance our important work.

May the United Synagogue forever be blessed with lay and professional leaders who will work together so that the Conservative Judaism of our dreams will become the Conservative Judaism of our reality. ★

SHAFRAN

(continued from page NAT 12)

and cannot afford to waste time – yields not happiness but the heavy gloom of meaninglessness.

And, turning back to the Novardhokers, facing the realities of human existence – squarely, head-on, with open eyes – infuses people with joy, born of the immense good fortune of having been charged with a divine mission and granted meaningful lives.

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Rabbi Shafraan is director of public affairs for Agudath Israel of America. ★

GOUTTMAN

(continued from page NAT 9)

Zionist cause. They would certainly agree with the representative of *Women for Palestine (Australia)* who delivered an anti-Israel diatribe at the June meeting of the "United Nations Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" in Jakarta, Indonesia. She accused Israel of practicing the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, international apartheid, racist ideology, and colonialism. The antidote she posed was to hurt Israel both politically and economically through boycotts and economic disinvestment.

On the other hand, the Zionist rejection front has had a setback in the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), the roof body of organized labor in this country. It amended its previous policy of concern that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict affected Palestinian workers only to one which now also recognizes its impact on their Israeli counterpart. In so doing the ACTU has held the line against the growing tendency of international labor to support the economic boycott of Israel, its people, and its institutions.

However, the question still remains that, if in its desperate desire to seek favor with the Islamic world, the Obama Administration should further harden its attitude toward Israel, would Canberra feel duty bound to follow?

Dr. Gouttman is a former senior academic at the University of South Australia, current senior political analyst with the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission (Australia's ADL), and associate of the School of Historical Studies at Monash University. He is one of the founders of the Australian Jewish Studies Association. He is married and has a daughter who lives in Jerusalem. He can be reached at rmgout@melbpc.org.au. ★

A Thought...

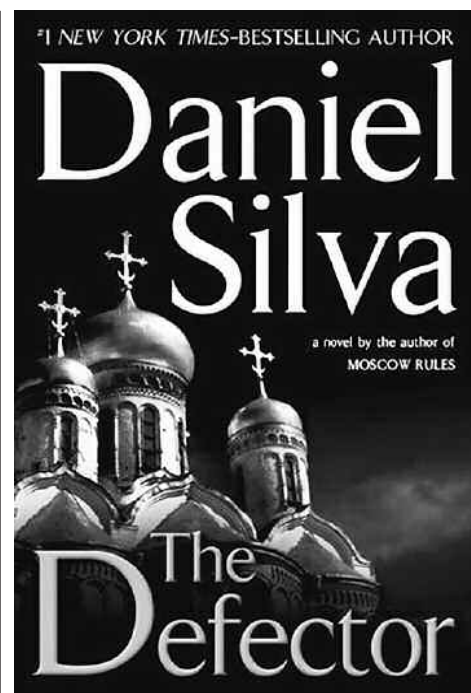
May you live to see your world fulfilled.

May your hope encompass all the generations yet to be.

May your heart conceive with understanding.

May your mouth speak wisdom and your tongue be stirred with sounds of joy.

~ Talmud Berahot



TEICHER

(continued from page NAT 17)

Accordingly, *The Defector* is the ninth in the Allon series and it is a rousing sequel to *Moscow Rules*, which appeared in 2008. The risky exploits of *The Defector* begin just six months after the end of *Moscow Rules*.

Allon is a James Bond-like secret agent who started his career with the Mossad, Israel's intelligence service as a young man recruited to help track down and kill the Arabs involved in the 1972 murder of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games. He is a skilled art restorer who lives in Italy where he is often called upon by the Vatican to restore a painting or an altar piece. He is highly esteemed by the Catholic hierarchy, having once blocked an attempt to assassinate the Pope. From time to time, the Mossad gives him an assignment.

Moscow Rules, recounted Allon's series of perilous adventures in Russia where he blocked Ivan Kharkov, former KGB officer, from selling weapons to al-Qaeda. Kharkov was a rich businessman and a secret arms dealer, protected and supported by the highest officials in the Russian government. He remained alive at the end of the book. As *The Defector* opens, Allon suspects that Kharkov is behind the disappearance of Grigori, a former Russian intelligence officer who helped Allon in Russia and subsequently defected. He was living in London when he suddenly vanished.

Allon's strenuous efforts to find Grigori take him back to Russia at considerable risk. Also involved in his exciting endeavors are several strong women including his new wife, Chiara; Kharkov's wife, Elena; Grigori's ex-wife, Irina; Russian journalist, Olga Sukhova; and CIA agent, Sarah

Bancroft. These unusual individuals play critical roles as Allon's duel with Kharkov reaches a crescendo of hazardous and lethal danger.

As is always the case with Silva's novels, the real world provides a menacing background for his story. For example, in 2006, Alexander Litvinenko, a former Russian intelligence operative who defected to the west, was killed on a London street. The Russian government, seeking to regain its superpower status, tries to quash criticism by the large number of Russian émigrés who live in England and Israel. There are rich Russians, protected by the state and there are clandestine arms dealers. These ingredients come alive in Silva's stirring story that hurtles from place to place in a hair-raising series of electrifying adventures.

This book demonstrates once again that Silva is a gifted master of the espionage story. He carefully selects its elements, giving them a beginning, a middle, and an ending while using the material to develop and portray the character of those who people the pages of the book. They all come to life for the reader, showing how Silva possesses the primary attributes of a fine writer. His many fans will be properly enthusiastic about this latest addition to the outstanding Gabriel Allon series.

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. ★

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Musings

By BATYA MEDAD

Tel Shiloh, Rosh Chodesh Tammuz

Every month when my friends and I go to Tel Shiloh for our Women's Rosh Chodesh Prayers, we take the same route, but it never looks exactly the same.



Israel is dry during the spring and summer months, so the flora gets paler and yellow, eventually brown and brittle as the summer burns on.

And every month, I'm awed by its beauty. Tammuz is the first of the solely summer months on the Jewish calendar.



It's hard to be one's own photographer

On Friday, my kids made me a lovely 60th birthday at Tel Shiloh. I tried to take my own pictures, but it was hard to double-time as guest of honor and chief photographer, so I gave up. Luckily, my cousin's husband took some great photos.



But two days after my party, my friend Debbie Klaff Dan, whom I've known since we were 17 and elected to the National Board of NCSY, had her 60th birthday party. Debbie lives in nearby Beit El and is a geriatric social worker. Her late mother had moved to Beit El to be with her and her family, so Debbie established Beit El's Golden Age Club.

That was the location of Debbie's party, and all of the present members were invited along with her other friends. Being "only 60," we were the younger celebrants.

The club meets a few times a week and has a very full program of music, lectures, exercise and so forth. It's conducted bilingual in English and Hebrew. Beit El's Rabbi Shlomo Aviner spoke at the party.

If you'd like to know how to donate to the Moadon Gil HaZahav, contact saftadeb@yahoo.com.

Still sixty!

Turning 60 is a life-changing event. It has special significance in Judaism. Most important, after the age of 60, one is no longer eligible for the serious *Halachik*, Jewish Law, punishment of *Karet*, being banished from the Jewish People.

The age of 60 is half the number in the blessing, *אָד מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים* (*ad me'ah v'esrim*), until 120. So, one of the replies by the celebrant is to say: "I hear that the second half is shorter."



I've been celebrating a lot. My movie club friends made me a surprise party about a month ago, and I shared a festive neighborhood Shabbat meal with a neighbor who turned 60 a couple of days after me.

On Friday, family and friends made it to Shiloh for a big party, which included a tour of Tel Shiloh. Well-known baker, Herbie,

prepared me a special cookie. His wife Debbie is one of the friends I've known the longest. We were on the NCSY National Board when we were high school seniors.



As part of the festivities, my husband led a tour of Tel Shiloh.

The Tel has been the location for weddings, bar and bat mitzvah celebrations and other events. I think that my party was the first to celebrate turning 60!

Enlarging the Shiloh Elementary School

The Shiloh Elementary School opened its doors for the first time in modern days, on Sept. 1, 1981. It had three grades, first through third. There were 18 students in total. A few more moved to Shiloh within the first couple of months, expanding the student body by three more. Then one family left before the year was over, reducing it by two.



It was located in the upper (my) neighborhood that first year and used three small buildings. The following year, it moved all the way to the bottom, near Tel Shiloh. The classrooms were various caravans, mobile homes and other prefab structures.

Then a "proper" school building was built in the middle of Shiloh. It has since been expanded a few times. Since my youngest graduated over 10 years ago, I've lost track. And now it's being enlarged again.

Healthy Nosh, Snack

Here in Shiloh the most popular snacks are the colorful ones, fruits and vegetables. In the winter you'll see more fresh cut vegetables, and now that it's summer, who can resist the fruit?

I've even seen young kids hoarding colorful peppers and berries while ignoring cookies. And there's always water to drink, too.



That bridge

Yes, that bridge again!

As you can see, walking it is nothing to sneeze at! Jerusalem's String Bridge has made some people rich, but it's also a photographer's dream.



All I Did Was Grimace and Mutter

Here's my husband's report.

We were at the United States Jerusalem Consulate's July 4th celebration. We've been invited for quite a few years, at least 15, if I'm not mistaken.

(see Medad, page NAT 18)

