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Nefesh B'Nefesh and Hesed Bar/Bat Mitzvah Project

Jordan Mussman (L), 13, of Boca Raton, Fla., celebrates when told his Hesed Project was delivered! He was bar mitzvah at B'nai Torah and his Mitzvah/Hesed Project was to collect small, sample size toiletries and personal items for needy children and military personnel in Israel. After asking all of his guests and Kadima friends to bring items, he solicited from others and eventually had 60 pounds of hundreds of items.

The problem was to get the items to Israel. Jordan wanted to take them himself, but his parents surprised him with a summer camp session at Camp Blue Star, in North Carolina, so he turned to his grandparents. First, he asked for a two-day round-trip ticket to take the items himself, either before or after camp. When that did not work, he asked them to take the donation/gift for him.

Luckily, his maternal grandparents, Judy and Frank Kreutzer (photo-R), were going to Israel, escorting a Nefesh B'Nefesh humanitarian flight taking over 250 new *olim* (immigrants) on aliyah to Israel, so they agreed.

The Hesed Bar/Bat Mitzvah Project is an experimental program being developed by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.



Shown accepting a partial bag of the 60 pounds are United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's Rabbi Jerome Epstein (L), chief Israel affairs officer, and Rabbi Jim Lebeau, who is director of United Synagogue's Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center. Judy and Frank Kreutzer (R) are giving the items to the Center. Frank, past international president of United Synagogue, serves as chair of Israel operations and Fuchsberg.



Pictured above at a government reception at the airport for 232 new *olim* arriving on Nefesh B'Nefesh flight from United States are (L to R) Frank and Judy Kreutzer, Rabbi Paul and Nina Freedman and Laura and Jerry Jacobs.

The youngest on the flight was 7 weeks and the oldest was 83. A total of 42 families with 93 children, 7 dogs and 1 cat made aliyah. Additionally, 60 singles made aliyah. Of those making aliyah, 22 would immediately join the IDF doing their military service. This was only one of many flights scheduled during the period prior to the High Holidays.

Frank Kreutzer, former international president of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, and Jerry Jacobs, international secretary of United Synagogue, were invited to fly with and help escort the new *olim* in their departure from the United States and their new citizenship in Israel. Nefesh B'Nefesh, together with the Jewish Agency have partnered in this historic effort to foster aliyah on a worldwide basis.

Rabbi Freedman is the director of the Israel Commission of United Synagogue, living in Israel for many years, having made aliyah with his wife Nina. He coordinates aliyah for the Conservative Movement in Israel, together with other Masorti organizations. ★

JNF and the children of Sderot BY DIRK STIMSON

In the past eight years, literally thousands of rockets have rained down on the Negev desert city of Sderot, Israel populated with over 20,000 Israelis. Due to the constant danger, doctors estimate that over 75% of children between the ages of 4 and 18 suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder.

Responding to this the Jewish National Fund, working on an idea from Stanley Chesley, president of JNF America, has built a 21,000-square-foot indoor playground in Sderot in an abandoned textile factory. The complex is complete with a multipurpose indoor playing field, a café, a rock-climbing wall and playground equipment, a counseling center and health clinic. In addition, there is an aerobics/dance studio at one end and a movie theater and teen disco at the other, both of which serve as shelters for when the sirens go off.

This way, the children and staff can probably get to these shelters in the 15 to 20 seconds of warning they get before the missiles strike.

"We are proud of the part that Central Florida has played in the creation of this safe haven," commented Bruce Gould, Florida president of JNF. "The needs in Sderot are still great. Operational costs for this playground are obviously high. But, here in Orlando, our kids do not have to listen for sirens and scramble to safety in 15 seconds. JNF is proud to have accomplished this in Sderot. You can see that JNF is about more than trees." ★



Editorial

Three years ago at this time, I wrote about a beautiful teaching Sylvia Boorstein had given at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis. She had been the weekend scholar-in-residence about three years prior, and the teaching was about the mezuzah. Boorstein is a practicing Jew and also a Buddhist. If you missed it or would like to read it again, it will be on our web site: www.jewishpostopinion.com.

Before I published that editorial, I called her to make sure that I understood clearly what she had said. At that time she was working on a new book. I mentioned to her another story she had told that weekend that I really enjoyed. I said if that story was not in any of her previous books, would she please consider including it in the new one. And I noticed recently on her web site (www.sylviaoorstein.com/index.html) she has written a new book titled, *Happiness Is an Inside Job*.

As the month of Elul begins and the Days of Awe are approaching, I have been thinking about the story she told. Because it has been more than six years since I heard it, I will tell it differently than she did, and possibly come up with a different message, but hopefully something useful will emerge. This is how I remember her story.

She was teaching a mindfulness meditation class in New York City in a building on a floor that had been recently added or remodeled. The surroundings were very nice. It was a Monday morning, and the rain outside was gently falling.

My understanding is that one of the purposes of mindfulness meditation is to help one become aware of what he or she is thinking by simply paying attention to the thoughts as they trickle through the mind.

As the class was progressing, Boorstein was thinking how wonderful everything was going. The turnout for her class was good. Whoever constructed the building must have done a tremendous job because the room was very quiet and peaceful, just what is needed for this class. Aroma from a tasty, healthy lunch for the break between the morning and afternoon class was filling the air.

During the middle of a meditation, all of a sudden from a room down the hall she could hear different people calling out: "two spades," "three diamonds," "four hearts." Completely distracted from her meditation, she wondered, "How are my students going to meditate with all that racket? Who in their right mind could schedule a Bridge class at the same time as a meditation class when peace and quiet are mandatory? Maybe the construction wasn't as good as I originally thought because the walls are too thin."

After the lunch break, the Bridge game ended, and as some of Bridge players were leaving, they walked by her room and saw leftover food on the table. Without asking, they came in and helped themselves to the food on the table.

Again, she was surprised: "Who do they think they are? They did not pay for this. This food was not prepared for them. I am going to talk to the management."

After the lunch break, things calmed down and became quiet once again. Boorstein returned to a more peaceful place, and her thoughts reflected that. She started sorting through her thoughts about the Bridge game. It was mostly elderly people who would typically have been all alone in their apartments on a dreary Monday morning. Wasn't it nice that instead there was this opportunity for them to get together and enjoy some companionship?

As far as the noisiness, she reasoned that part of being able to meditate is learning to tune out extraneous noise. Most people do not live in a situation where there are no distractions, so listening to the Bridge bids being called out was probably a good experience for the students.

Then her thoughts turned to the food. What harm was it that some food was taken by people who were not signed up for the class. No one in the class was going to go hungry, and if there was too much, the excess food might get thrown out.

She asked herself, "If I was in India and a pregnant woman came up and asked me for food, wouldn't I give her everything I had, and possibly go buy more for her? And if it were hungry children, I would not stop to think how much of my food I would share with them. I would give them whatever I had."

Part of what I got from this story is how quickly one's mind can shift from a lofty spiritual or Godly place where nothing is lacking to the ego where no matter how much one has it is never quite enough. In Kabbalah, the high place is called "big mind" and ego is "small mind."

I have been struggling with that lately. I have been wondering why my mind wants to cling to worry like a dog clenches the bone in its mouth if someone tries to take it away. This makes no sense to me because I feel so much better in "big mind," but in fact it is very challenging to get there and stay there, and it is so easy to fall back to "small mind."

Like the Sabbath, the High Holidays is our time to take a break from all the distractions of everyday living and to examine our thoughts and feelings so that we can become aware of our shortcomings and strive to make the changes that we need to make to become the people that we want to be. Yom Kippur is considered the Sabbath of all Sabbaths so what better time is there to do this?

Jennie Cohen 8-26-09 ★



Shabbat Shalom

By RABBI JON ADLAND

August 21, 2009, Shoftim
(Deuteronomy 16:18-1:9), 1 Elul 5769

Today is the first day of the month Elul, which is the month that precedes Tishrei. One month from tonight, on Sept. 18, Jews around the world will gather to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, beginning the period we call the "Ten days of Repentance or the Days of Awe." As we all know, the ten days culminate with our holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, a day of fasting, self-reflection, and t'shuvah (repentance). What makes today significant is that the process of t'shuvah and reconciliation with our community and God begins with the month of Elul.

The Tanzer Rebbe was once asked, "What do you do before you pray?" The Rebbe replied, "I pray that I may be able to pray." The Rebbe reminds us that one cannot just walk into a synagogue and begin praying. One must prepare himself or herself for prayer before the worship actually begins. On Shabbat we do this by singing a song or two, listening to some transitional words, and greeting those around us. It helps to set the mood for the worship that is going to take place. So, too, is the case for the High Holy Days.

These Days of Awe demand thought and reflection of who we are, what we are doing, where we are going and how we are going to get there. The month of Elul helps prepare us for this. Because these days are filled with so much meaning and potency, they require a special measure of readiness. We are called upon to enter them thoughtfully and to consider what they mean. As the Maharal of Prague said, "All the month of Elul, before eating and sleeping, a person should look into his soul and search his deeds, that he may make confession."

On Yom Kippur the liturgy presents us

with many sins that we may have committed against another person, but we shouldn't wait until Yom Kippur to set things right. Elul gives us the chance to begin that process of healing with those whose lives we touch. It may have been an unkind word spoken inadvertently or a missed opportunity to make a difference in the life of a friend. It may have been a small act done in jest or a larger act done with malice. This world is a complicated place and human beings are complicated creatures and often we are unaware of what we've done or said or missed. We should take every opportunity to repair relationships, strengthen friendships, and bring healing to the broken in our world.

One rabbi writes, "Once we enter the month of Elul, any time a person writes a letter to someone, it is incumbent upon the writer to somehow allude to the fact at the beginning of the letter that he wishes and hopes that the person has a good year. The standard blessing is "K'tiva V'chatima Tova," literally "A good writing and sealing," meaning that the person should be written, so to speak, in the Book of Life, the Book of Good, and be sealed in that book as well."

This week's Torah portion says, "Justice, Justice, you shall pursue." The word in Hebrew is "tzedek," meaning righteousness as well. We can pursue justice and righteousness not only through *tikkun olam* repairing the world, but through healing the relationships in our lives and in our community. Forgiveness is a powerful tool and with the beginning of Elul, we should all be encouraged to seek forgiveness, put our lives right with those around us, and make our lives right before God.

When you light your Shabbat candles this week, light one for the healing power of repentance. Light the other candle as a reminder that we should begin to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Holy Days during this month of Elul.

Rabbi Adland is senior rabbi of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. ★

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238 S. Meridian St., Suite 502, Indianapolis, IN 46225
office: (317) 972-7800 • fax: (317) 972-7807
jpostopinion@gmail.com
Address correspondence to:
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Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

Our sages taught us “If you work hard at learning Torah or doing a mitzvah, you will eventually find success, even more than anticipated.” I work hard on these articles. Here is an encouraging response that I received about my last article.

Benzion, Okay, I see you have reasons for not giving up land. Surely, however, you want your children and grandchildren to live in peace. So what are you willing to do to achieve peace? Love, Miriam

Ultimately, peace is not in our hands. Wealth, poverty, health, peace, life and death are all in the hands of Hashem. Of course we also must work on these things. It's wrong to smoke, drink and eat junk food, and then ask Hashem for miracles. If we want to be healthy, we must first realize that health is a blessing from Hashem. We try to earn this and all other blessings by learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvahs. Then we must be also careful to eat, exercise and rest properly. In most cases, this is a recipe for a long and healthy life, but there are exceptions. Recently a dear friend passed away after a long illness. He had been very careful to watch his health, and also careful to fulfill the mitzvahs. May he rest in peace, and may his memory be a blessing for us. We have to do our part, but ultimately our health, and our very life, is in the hands of Hashem.

These same principles apply to peace. Peace is a blessing from Hashem, and a very important one. Our sages said that one may have health and wealth, but if he doesn't have peace, he has nothing. If he doesn't have peace of mind, he can't enjoy his health and wealth, so what good are they to him?

How do we achieve peace? Like all blessings from Hashem, we achieve peace first and foremost by living a life of Torah and mitzvahs. We have seen this many times, especially here, in the Holy Land. The Jewish people have lived here for over 3,800 years. When we lived a life of Torah, we had peace. When we strayed from the Torah, one or more of our neighbors decided to make war with us. Then eventually we got the message. We returned to Hashem and His Torah and found peace.

This is especially true now. Sixty years ago the modern state of Israel was founded. Many of the founding fathers believed only in communism, socialism and work. Most of the kibbutzim didn't even have a shul. They established hundreds of secular schools that educated millions of children to live secular lives.

Sixty years ago seven neighboring nations declared war against the newly founded state. Baruch Hashem, we won that war, and the next seven wars that followed, but we haven't had any real peace. As soon as our enemies were defeated, they began to prepare themselves for the next round.

Judaism in a suitcase – Rabbinic pair bring Jewish cheer and resources to Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS, IND. – Two young Chabad-Lubavitch rabbis are currently visiting the State of Indiana from Aug. 9 until Aug. 28 as part of their summer-long community outreach training. They are equipped with books, programming ideas and lots of optimistic Jewish cheer to reinforce Jewish pride and enhance Jewish education.

The pair, Rabbis Sholom Shuchat and Menachem Raskin are hauling suitcases of videos, brochures, books, Shabbat candles, mezuzahs (a religious scroll placed on doorways), and kosher food, and will be working closely with local Jewish communities. The pair regularly teach classes, including one on Kabbalah, and host Shabbat dinners in the cities they travel to. Shuchat and Raskin will reach out to unaffiliated Jews to help them rediscover their heritage and will be spending much of their time on house-to-house visitation.

Lafayette is the 1st stop on the young rabbis' 70-stop trip to the State this summer. Other stops include: Ft. Wayne, Kokomo, Columbus, Marion, Portland, Anderson, Alexandria, Muncie, Terre Haute, and Dunkirk. Jews all over the State of Indiana will be studying Torah and exploring their Jewish heritage, many for the first time due to the pair's efforts.

Rabbis Shuchat and Raskin are part of a worldwide program sometimes referred to as “the Lubavitch Summer Peace Corps,” in which some 1,000 young rabbis and senior rabbinical students visit thousands of locations worldwide, including countries like Bolivia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Croatia, Fiji, Guadeloupe, Ireland, Portugal, Sri Lanka and Uruguay.

The program was conceived and developed by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, more than 50 years ago and has been responsible for bolstering Jewish communities and individuals worldwide.

In years and locations past the



The good news is that more and more people here and all over the world are getting the message. Communism is pretty much dead. Hundreds of millions who once believed in this false G-d are coming to believe in Hashem. People here and everywhere are waking up. They're asking questions.

“What is the meaning of life? My marriages failed twice. I feel empty. Maybe there is a better alternative to the way that I've been living my life? I desperately need a little peace. Peace of mind. Peace with my wife. Peace with my siblings. Peace with my parents. Peace with

(see Chassidic Rabbi, page NAT 15)



Rabbis Sholom Shuchat (L) and Menachem Raskin (R).

reception has always been warm. “Especially in my community [which is a very] small community, where there is no rabbi to conduct Jewish things, it's unbelievably important for the people that the Lubavitch emissaries come here,” said Nissan Anavian, the community organizer in Kobe, Japan. “They bring light to people sometimes completely in darkness.”

But they don't necessarily travel abroad. They also visit locations closer to their home base of New York, like Montana, Wyoming, and Saskatchewan. While the communities they help are not necessarily lacking in I-pods or microwaves, many are lacking in Jewish activities – both social and religious.

Chosen for their rabbinic proficiency and their people skills, a pair travels to each place to meet with Jewish communal leaders and educators as well as individuals.

Sometimes the only way to locate the Jews is by guesswork in the local telephone book. Despite proficiency in many types of community outreach, “the most meaningful time for me is that spent in personal, one-on-one conversations with families and individuals,” said Raskin. “Many people approach us seeking advice on how to maintain or bolster their Jewish identity, especially where the Jewish infrastructure is small.”

In Stockholm, where emissaries went in the past, this was certainly true. Mr. Adam Rafman, outgoing chairman of religious affairs for his community, said that because of the students' hard work, “the young people become more interested in Jewish life and everything Jewish.”

“We all look forward to their visits because they touch so many lives when they come,” said Tommy Rybar, vice president of the Guatemalan Jewish community. “[Then] they go home, but leave behind a fire that will burn for a long time.”

Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, the educational arm of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, sponsors the outreach program.

To reach rabbis Shuchat and Raskin please email them at RabbiShuchat@gmail.com or call 248-247-4900. To speak with people at the Lubavitch World Headquarters, please email Rabbi Mordechai Seligson at mseligson@chabad.org. ★

Howie Mandel moved by visit to Chabad Treatment Center

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. – Howie Mandel took time out of his production schedule today to visit the Chabad Residential Treatment in Los Angeles and talk with residents who are recovering from addiction to drugs and alcohol.

Mandel is well known to fans as both an extremely popular comedian who performs two hundred nights per year and as the host of the hit show “Deal or No Deal,” for which he received a 2008 Primetime Emmy Award nomination.

During his visit to the Chabad Residential Treatment Center, Howie toured the facility with director Donna Miller. During the tour he took time to speak one-on-one with residents, bringing them inspiration, encouragement and laughs.

Howie later described his feelings about the visit. “I knew about Chabad's work. I knew they do great things. That's why I always participate in the Chabad Telethon.” He was clearly moved as he continued, “But to see the work that's done here makes it all the more real. This reminds me of the first episode of ‘Deal or No Deal.’ I had spent weeks obsessing about how I could make the show interesting and about my performance. Then, when the very first contestant came out, I saw her face and how much this meant to her. I still remember her name. She needed this money. This was a human being in an honest moment – and suddenly I realized that the show isn't about me, it's about the people who come on it. That is what I felt today. It's one thing to hear about people being helped, but it's quite another to see them first hand.”

A mini-documentary of Howie's visit by director Kevin Bright (“Friends”) will air on the upcoming Chabad “To Life” Telethon. The 29th Annual Chabad Telethon will air on Sun., Sept. 13 from 5-11 p.m. (PDT) on KTLA 5 in Los Angeles, WLNY in the Tri-State area, KTSF in San Francisco, and nationwide on DirecTV's JLTV Ch. 366. For more information and to view the telethon streamed live online visit ToLife.com. ★



Rabbi Chaim Cunin (R) putting Tefillin on Howie Mandel (L) during his visit to the Chabad Drug Treatment Center.



Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

Elul Teachings

(August 20th – September 18th)

Imagine that you had only one day or one month to live? This may not be a pleasant thing to consider, we really do not want to confront our mortality, it is too intense, but indulge yourself or pretend for just a moment. What would you do if you had a day or a month to live? How do you feel? Who do you want to be with? How would you relate to others? What would you need to do or say to feel at peace with yourself and accepting of your life?

Reflect on what would make you feel like you had lived a meaningful fulfilled life. This visualization is actually a powerful spiritual practice suggested in the Talmud. Somehow, when we reflect on our mortality we are provided with a sense of urgency to imbue our current lives with meaning, gratitude and love. As we never know when our last day on earth will be, the Talmud recommends that each day we do *teshuva*. Teshuva refers to Jewish spiritual practices that help restore us to living our most authentic selves so we will be better able to receive the deepest revelation of God's light and love. The headquarters for teshuva is the month of Elul.

In Elul, we receive the wake-up call of the shofar that is blown every day in synagogue this month. The call of the shofar asks us to find ourselves and God in a deeper way. The first letters of the Hebrew verse *Ani Ledodi vidodi li*, "I am my beloved and my beloved is mine" spells out Elul. Take a few moments to repeat or even sing these words over and over and allow your heart to open to God's love. We have so many different relationships and experiences of God and other people, but that of lover and beloved is the most exquisite.

It is said that there is a very intimate loving closeness with God and people this month. Through the unique spiritual grace of Elul, it is easier to get in touch with what is pure and constant within us. Even though the heat may still be strong this month, there is a subtle change in the quality of light in Elul, and we sense that fall will soon be upon us. In many places in the world, the days will become shorter, the air cooler, and the leaves will once again turn into beautiful colors before they gracefully fall to the ground. Some of us will greet these changes with joy, others with regret, nevertheless the natural changes will occur. Nature turns inward and so do we.

As Elul is the last day of the Jewish year, Elul is a time of spiritual accounting. Elul is when we try to complete unfinished business as much as we can. Do not be

surprised if you find that you are brought into contact with people you have not seen for a while. You are now given an opportunity to heal and complete the relationship in a way that was not possible before. Historically, Elul is the time period during which Moses returned to Mount Sinai to plead for forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf. Consequently, Elul is the time that we work on forgiveness of ourselves and others that will then allow us to receive a new and deeper revelation during the High Holiday period.

Though forgiveness is a great gift we can give to another, it is primarily an act of compassion toward ourselves. Anger and resentment keep us bound to limiting ideas of who we are – we feel like a victim, we feel stuck, and so on. When we are angry, we are generally disconnected from ourselves and God. Forgiveness and compassion purify, heal and liberate us, we feel free and whole. We become closer to God. Forgiveness is complete when we gain insight into how the challenges and difficulties we have faced in this last year supported our growth.

In Elul, we receive the wake-up call of the shofar that is blown every day in synagogue this month.

The Torah portion *Shoftim* introduces the month of Elul with a command to appoint judges and officers to execute justice objectively with impartiality. The truth is that we are always judging ourselves and others. We are projecting our judgments onto others all the time, but the most important question that we must be mindful of is are we objective and impartial? Do we see ourselves and others clearly? Do we make false assumptions that create separation when we so much desire love and unity? How can we see ourselves and others as we really are so we can live from that place of authenticity and integrity more fully?

In the month of Elul, we look to find the inner witness of the soul. It is very hard to be objective with ourselves and to even trust our objectivity. We cannot know what we do not know. Therefore, calling on a friend, family member or a therapist who is a spiritual guide can help us to see past our blind spots to connect the dots in our lives. The people who are in our intimate lives may have guidance on what we can do to improve and be a better person.

In conclusion, I suggest the following writing meditation.

If you can, take time to journal your stream of consciousness on, "Today was a day when I _____." Just write without thinking too much. What did you do today? As you review your writing for



Focus II

BY RABBI SHEA HECHT

Eating disorders: The secret war

(part 3 of 3)

Many years ago, I had the opportunity to meet with a young woman who struggled with an eating disorder. For a variety of reasons she was searching for a refuge. That refuge turned out to be food. It was not long before her "comfort eating" had her weight spiraling out of control.

She had a keen awareness of the health risks involved, and of the way that it affected her opinion of herself. Nonetheless, both conventional and "fad" diets failed time after time, leaving her feeling broken (further fueling the problem). She was very hard-pressed to control her impulses at all, let alone to actually lose any weight. Yet, almost by accident, she found the means to reinvent herself and find the perspective necessary to deal with her personal issues and beat her chronic overeating. *Avodas Hashem*.

Rather than deal with her issue as a private personal conflict, she instead dealt with it as a religious battle to refine herself and her place in the world – what Chassidic philosophy calls *avodas habirurim*. The pillar of her relationship to the Almighty and her mission as a Jew was *iskafiya* (restraint), and she considered any food that was unnecessary for her health and well-being to be *trayf*. Years later, she looks and behaves like an entirely different person. By all accounts she has beaten her self-destructive relationship with food.

I was reminded of this story because of a teen whom I recently spoke with who is grappling with bulimia nervosa, the "binge and purge" disorder. I am very impressed by the approach she had adopted, which bears some remarkable similarities. This youngster is likewise fully aware of the potential long-term health risks and the damage to her body



the day, reflect on whether you lived today purposefully with intention and open-heartedness. Did you offer kindness to another person today. Were you kind to yourself?

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. ★

that are at stake. But because awareness is not the only side of the coin in this struggle, she searched for and found the inspiration she needed to fight her destructive illness.

She keeps herself from "binging and purging" by changing her point of view about food altogether. The Rambam states that the health of the body is essential for Avodas Hashem. Taking this to heart, she views her daily meals as part of a spiritual medicine that enables her to fulfill her role as a Jewish woman. Her medicine, in this case, is a commitment to routine and modest meals that keep her in good physical health and able to serve Hashem. In other words, her desire to feel spiritually whole helps her to fight physical inclinations. This young woman has a long way to go in her struggle with bulimia, but she does have a new resolve as an invaluable resource to help her in this fight.

Rather than deal with her issue as a private personal conflict, she instead dealt with it as a religious battle to refine herself and her place in the world.

There are very few of our life's battles that can be won without invoking the best of our spirit and determination. If we see ourselves as isolated and without direction, even the simplest test can seem hopeless. But if we understand our troubles in way that challenges us to fulfill our purpose in this world, we can tap into a wealth of energy and inspiration that will help us overcome our challenges.

Without a doubt, victory over an eating disorder comes with the guidance of professionals, the support of loved ones and years of work. No one should presume otherwise. On the other hand, as Jews we have an inheritance of thousands of years of wisdom that has guided us through even the darkest moments. In caring for the material body, we cannot ignore the need for a fulfilling spiritual life. It is through this alone that we can lay a foundation from which we rise to meet our challenges.

Rabbi Hecht serves as chairman of the board at the National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education, where he has continued the tradition of social services management and outreach that began with his father, the late Rabbi Jacob J. Hecht. He is dean of Hadar Hatorah School for College Youth and a lecturer at the Ivy League Torah Study Program. He is a cofounder of the Ari Program, an innovative school for at-risk kids. He can be reached at 718-735-0200 or at rabbishea@aol.com. ★



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

The health insurance debate: muddied waters

The citizens of the United States deserved the right to debate health insurance, universal coverage, and access to medical services. By the very act of adding to the mix, payments to doctors for discussing “end of life” issues, the whole debate has been muddied and distorted. Between the radicals on the left and the reactionaries on the right, the real discussion will never find the place it deserves.

I do not believe that any sizable number of people want to deny anyone healthcare. At present everyone does have some type of access, in emergencies through emergency rooms, and in non-emergencies through the emergency room. We need this debate because too many people are not getting the right kind of service, and the service they are getting is overtaking one part of the system, usually the most expensive part.

What most people wanted was a systematic look at the entire system, and some effort made to determine how best to meet the needs of the population, and what it would cost to do it. The entry in to the fray of the pharmaceutical industry, dressed up like the wolf in *Little-Red-Riding-Hood*, was only the first sign that this whole issue was going to become so complex, that it would be beyond comprehension.

We routinely do not let the parties to the conflict determine the rules, and the pharmaceutical industry is a party to the issue. Into the mix came the “end of life” counseling, which, at least for the moment, so roiled the waters, that progress is stalled, and the hope of some resolve is dimmed.

The right-wing rhetoric explodes against the left-wing feigned innocence. Many of you might not remember that much of the concern that led to the opening of mass abortions came in response to the unfortunate lot of women who were forced to use “back alley” medicine because they felt they had no choices. Women died, and that was regrettable, but the present debate, in part, is argued in front of the image of abortion as a method of birth control.

For those of you who might be interested, the very beginnings of the abortion movement were formed on the basis that abortion would control the births of the lower classes. It was not secret, they said it out loud. The rich always had access to trained doctors who performed medical abortions. It was the poor who had no access. This discussion in today’s environment would be considered openly

racist. Dr. Henry Louis Gates, who is presently concerned with how sincere Abraham Lincoln was about the abolition of slavery, would have a field day with the early feminists and their support of the “right to abortion.”

I am not speaking for any of you, but the idea that a doctor is trained and qualified to help families make “end of life” decisions is unacceptable. Where were they trained to do this? What doctors take course work to determine the cultural differences in the people asking the question?

Medical euthanasia is, in fact, practiced in every state in the United States on a daily basis. It happens in nursing homes where, with the families consent, food and water is withheld. It happens when families agree not to make “heroic efforts.” These are very complicated decisions that deserve more than a “paid medical consultation.” In most states, hospitals, nursing homes and hospices are required to persistently revisit these issues with families. The battle is about making it a “policy.”

**The right-wing rhetoric
explodes against
the left-wing
feigned innocence...
Lord, Lord, give us rest...
We need to declare
a “state of peace.”**

We are faced presently, and will be faced in the future, with the sheer economics of these decisions. President Obama was faced with making these decisions in the recent death of his grandmother, and elected to do everything medically that, against medical odds, would extend her life. Sadly, it did not work. I would have made the same decision.

I do not know of any thinking senior who is not aware that there is already “medical rationing,” and although there is no formality about it, it has a “language of compassion” for both the living and the dying.

We are now discussing this comprehensive issue in the face of financial crisis. We realize that at some point we cannot solve every problem facing us by printing money, and that we are going to have to decide on some equitable program of what we want and what we are willing to pay for it, including those who “can’t participate in the discussion because they are in the increasing body of the “needy.” And then there is the discussion about Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Rhetoric will not accomplish anything. The president would be well advised to stop making promises that the nation cannot fulfill. It makes the discussion more difficult.

For starters, we have now rediscovered a federal agency that is both helpful and efficient, the Congressional Budget Office, which has demonstrated its ability to accurately determine what the financial figures are. The head of this office is a political appointment of the House of Representative, but there is no reason to believe from its practice, that it takes liberty with its findings. Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, made the appointment, which has not yet been confirmed by the entire House of Representatives. This office has existed since 1974, but until recently, no one seemed to check with them before they made promises.

In all of the recent financial stumbling, we are hearing that members of Congress are making announcements without the benefit of hard substantiated facts. It would be helpful if before we went any further, someone would help us understand what we have already done. We, the American people, now own a large share of GM and Chrysler, both of which went into bankruptcy, permanently laid off thousands of workers, shut distributors, and whose future is in doubt. If we were to throw in the expense of the new “clunker” program, exactly how much did the fall of the two auto giants cost the American people, and what did we get for it.

We lent billions to banks. Many of them have already paid us back, and that is good. But if they made money on the money that we lent them, and they did, why didn’t we get a fair share of the profits? And what about AIG, our largest national commercial asset? What exactly happened to all of that money? And what do we own of what is left?

Do you agree, that under all these “clouds” of government, deeds-already-done, that even without the radical left and the reactionary right sounding righteous, we would have very little clarity, and who shall we trust?

Our young president is in a hurry. He is surrounded by an astounding group of advisors, but they have served him very poorly. Hurrying now means that many of the animals who are no longer on the endangered list and live in the U.S. National Parks will now be confronted with tourists, legally packing guns. Lord, Lord, give us rest.

We have no crystal ball, no economic prophets, no clear philosophy of how to move forward in this economic whirlwind, but racing through hurricane force winds lacks common sense, at a time when common sense is not that common.

What to do? We need to declare a “state of peace.” No new proposals for 90 days. No news conferences. Demand that Wolf Blitzer not work in the “Situation Room.”

No national polls. No coverage of political pundits. No special consultants on CNN, FOX and MSNBC. Let Sarah Palin fish. Let Vice President Biden spend quality time with his family. Make sure that Hillary Clinton gets some time off. We need some time to chill.

P.S. Several alert readers pointed out that Stephen G. Breyer is Jewish and Justice David H. Souter is not. Thank you all. And someone suggested that I tell all of you that Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor is not the first Hispanic Justice on the Court, it was Justice Benjamin Nathan Cardozo, who was appointed by President Herbert Hoover, and served from 1932 to 1938. He followed Jewish Justice Louis Brandeis and was followed by Jewish Justice Felix Frankfurter. Both Justice Breyer and Justice Ginsburg were appointed by President Clinton. Now you know.

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

World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust

The 21st annual conference of the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust will take place in the Boston suburb of Newton, Mass, at the Marriott Hotel. The dates of the conference are Friday (evening), Oct. 30, 2009 – Nov. 2, 2009 (noon). All child survivors, their spouses, and members of the second and third generation are welcome to attend.

The conference will highlight prominent speakers, Holocaust-related seminars, panel discussions, small workshops and films. In addition, there will be dancing, singing and Klezmer music for entertainment. Optional post conference tours are available to visit Jewish Boston, The New England Holocaust Memorial and/or the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Mass. For more information, please contact co-chairwomen Marriane Kronenberg at 1-781-444-6262 and/or Eva Paddock at 1-617-491-4894. ★

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Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

The agony of life

How time flies! It is as if we were standing on this spot at this time just a short time ago. As we get older time seems to pass even quicker. In one instant we were learning to walk and talk and in the next we are finding it difficult to even understand what was, let alone anticipate what will be.

The High Holidays will soon be here and with them thoughts of reconciliation and introspection. At this time we begin to understand the need for us to reevaluate our lives; the deeds and misdeeds of the past year. At this time we begin to understand that fulfillment is achieved by believing that our destiny is determined by our comprehension of the value of life. At this time we begin to understand that loneliness can be overcome with love; that offense is overcome by forgiveness; that the joys we experience should be accompanied by gratitude.

The High Holidays can and should be a time for us to consider that we are not alone in the struggle of life. We have a partner. God is our partner. Sometimes in our despair we think that no one cares, especially God and we question the very existence of our Creator because of our pain. We cry out for answers never truly understanding that God is right here, right by our side, and at times even carrying us in His arms to rest our weary feet from the sad parts of our journey.

Margaret Fishback Powers wrote an essay titled "Footprints." In it she writes of a dream she had. She was walking along the beach with her God. As she walked scenes of her life flashed in front of her. And with each step she took she saw two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to her and the other belonging to God. Then as the last scene of her life flashed, she noticed only one set of footprints. She thought of this as the lowest and saddest time of her life.

She was so troubled and began to question God by reminding Him that He had promised to be with her all the way, all during her journey of life. She continued to question as to whether God had remembered His promise and that during her most troublesome time she noticed only one set of footprints in the sand. Her faith seemed to be shattered and she questioned even more by asking why during her moist difficult time was God not beside her, walking with her.

Then she continues her story by explaining what all of us should know but tend to forget: That there is only one set of footprints because at the time of our suffering, the time of great despair, it is then that God carries us. This is why we may see only one set of footprints.

The High Holidays afford us the opportunity to be thankful while we are reliving what was and contemplating what will be. Now we are at a juncture in the road of our journey that allows us to consider the gratitude we need to speak not only to God but to our family and friends. There are times when we feel that we are alone. There are times when we seem to forget that with an outstretched hand we are able to touch another hand.

So here we are at this time in our lives. A time set aside by design to enable us to reconnoiter, to stop time and remind ourselves that we are part of a sacred undertaking: A pilgrimage in search of completion. Though we cannot fully comprehend the essence of our being we still accept life as a gift from God.

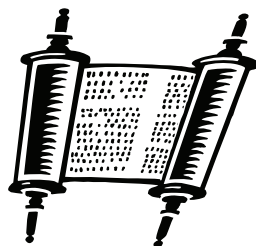
The High Holidays can and should be a time for us to consider that we are not alone in the struggle of life.

Our lives are filled with so many occasions. There is birth, marriage, sickness, health, weakness, strength, victory and defeat. There is death, but there is also eternal life. All these make up what we refer to as the journey of life. We celebrate and we mourn, we laugh and we cry. And through all of these encounters we should still remember to thank God for allowing us the opportunity to make this journey, to experience the agonies and the ecstasies.

Perhaps the true meaning of the High Holiday season can best be summed up by something a friend of mine wrote, one of many of his writings and is a translation from the Book of Proverbs. His name is Danny Siegel. A man of virtue and understanding, of charity and compassion, who I am privileged to know and respect:

If you will always assume the person sitting next to you is the messiah waiting for some human kindness. You will soon learn to weigh your words and watch your hands. And if he so chooses not to reveal himself in your time, it will not matter.

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



Funsmith

BY BERNIE DEKOVEN

Fun of Shabbos

*Dear Funsmith,
So, can we even make Shabbos fun?
Sincerely,
Shabbos Dick*

Dear Mr. or Mrs. Dick, ...wait a minute, this couldn't be a real question? There couldn't really be anyone who calls him- or herself Shabbos Dick and still wants people to take him or her seriously. This has got to be another of the Funsmith's playful ploys, just so he can think about, write about, share with you his personal explorations of the fun/Shabbos relationship.

Because, as we all know so well, you can't make Shabbos itself more fun. Because Shabbos is probably as fun as it gets, ever, especially a Good Shabbos, the kind we really wish each other even before Shabbos starts. Taking time to eat together, slowly, one delicious course after another, to listen to, to love each other, one delicious person after another. Taking time to appreciate the gift of Shabbos, the one day we turn away from the week, the one day we have time to celebrate the gift of life, the gift, the miracle, the deep fun of our, well, Shabbos together.

So we can't make Shabbos more fun. What we can do, however, is make ourselves more, so to speak, shabbosdik. Some of us can do this just by resting, hanging out, staying loose for whole time, all Shabbos. Some also like to get dressed nicely, take an extra shower, get a hair trim, maybe even, before Shabbos. Some of us make the house cleaner, make the dinner bigger, prepare every meal ahead of time, set the tables, wash the kids. Some of us sing more, pray more, dance more, and each thing we do makes us feel more shabbosdik.

So of course we can play more on Shabbos. We have the time. The question is can we play more, to coin a word, shabbosdikly on Shabbos? Can our playing together feel more, well, shabbosdik? Are some games more shabbosdik than others?

Yes. Yes. And again, I say, yes.

We'd probably have the most luck with the games that don't make us fight. Or cry. Or feel bored or stupid or wrong. For some of us, it's too hard to feel or even act shabbosdik when we feel like we're losing. But, knowing us, first thing we'd think of, given the chance, is that we can play almost any game more shabbosdikly. Checkers even. Chinese Checkers even.

So, if it's Shabbos, and everyone wants to play a game, whatever it is, we play it only as long as it is fun for everyone, it's probably shabbosdik. Because as soon as

it isn't, it stops feeling shabbosdik. That's how shabbosdik checkers variations like Susan's Lazy Checkers get invented.

How to play Lazy Susan(Kf) Checkers: So the 5 or 7 or maybe 3 players gather around a checker board. On your turn, you take turns turning, as it were, rotating the board Lazy-Susan-ikly so you who were black are now not, and vice versa, and on and on, each player playing a different color, everyone, ultimately, playing on the same side.

One could easily extend the Lazy-Susan(Kf) line of games to include Chinese Shabbosdik Checkers, so that as few as 2 players could take turns turning, or even turn together, but with many more colors to be and not.

In fact, one might even suppose that one could make many games more shabbosdik were one to apply the Lazy-Susan(Kf) approach to them. Even Gin Rummy or Ping Pong even.

And when board turning and turn turning turn out to be too tiring already, maybe a different kind of game altogether. A physically all-together game exactly like "The Sound and Fury."

So you stand in a circle. Some, randomly assigned body (it might as well be you) makes a gesture (the "fury" part of the game) and a sound (the, um, "sound" part).

Taking time to appreciate the gift of Shabbos, the one day we turn away from the week, the one day we have time to celebrate the gift of... our Shabbos together.

The gesture should be a whole body kind of gesture. And the sound some accompanying oral reflection of the significance (or lack thereof) of the sound. And then everybody, simultaneously, does exactly the same thing.

And then the next player goes. And then everybody repeats the movement-with-sound. And then the next player goes. On and on, for at least several rounds.

It's amusing, at least, to see your gesture repeated in such grand and unanimous manifestation. Taking a few steps forward makes everybody else take a few steps forward. Turning around, snorting and kicking likewise. It's also amusing to create a gesture and noise that will look silly when everybody else does it. As it is amusing for everybody else to see you making the silly gesture and noise. Especially amusing to the young in body and mind.

And so the game goes, on, and actually on, each person taking a turn, everybody simultaneously mirroring back the exact motion and sound. And somehow in the process there's a bridge that gets built (see DeKoven, page NAT 15)

Parsha Perspective



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

Shared responsibility for *teshuvah*

The opening verse of parasha Nitzavim always brings home to us that we're on the verge of High Holy Days. It tells us: "You are standing today, all of you before God, your God – your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, every man [and woman] of Israel" (Deuteronomy 29:9). Moses is addressing himself here to those he imagines may increasingly distance themselves from God, until they become totally estranged by generational increments.

The people are assembled in the wilderness of Moab. They're expectantly awaiting the renewal of the covenant, which they had made on Mount Sinai 40 years earlier. The renewal was required because they had abandoned the first covenant at the incident of the golden calf.

Moses, however, extends the covenant beyond those who are present in the wilderness of Moab. He says: "And not with you alone do I make this covenant and this oath, but with him that is here with us standing before God our God this day, and with him that is not here with us this day" (Deuteronomy 29:13–14). Or Hachayim (Rabbi Chaim ben Attar, 1696–1744) tells us that, "...the whole intention of these verses is to obligate the people present...to commit their offspring to observe the Torah, forever."

The unasked but nonetheless inescapable question: How can unborn generations of Jews be obligated to live by a code that they haven't accepted for themselves?

The Talmud says: "One may act for a person in his absence to his advantage, but one cannot act for a person in his absence to his disadvantage!" (Ketubot 11a). And the next Torah verse offers another, more compelling rationale in answering the question of how it's possible to obligate unborn generations: "For you know how we dwelt in the land of Egypt..." (Deuteronomy 29:15). Moses is saying, you know how bad life was before we received the Torah.

We're reminded in this regard that the essence of what we're to pass on to our children is not obligation and constraint, but the *privilege* of living a godly life according to Torah's vision and path. As Or Hachayim says, "...to avoid the pitfalls of the abominations and detestable idols the Egyptians were captive to. Moses tells the people present that inasmuch as they know all about this, they also know that what is being asked of them is to confer benefits rather than restrictions on their

children and their children's children." And, certainly, the halakhah (rabbinic law) mandates us to do so.

The circumstances that Moses imagined might come to pass were realized in Ezekiel's time. The prophet lived during the Babylonian exile when the people challenged the legitimacy of the Torah's commandments. They regarded themselves as having been sold by God into exile, so they felt themselves no longer bound by God's commandments (Ezekiel 20: 3, 32).

The prophet, not surprisingly, had a far different viewpoint. From his perspective, the bond between God and the Jewish people would always be renewed, thus was eternal. So far, history has not contradicted his prophetic acuity. Moreover, Ezekiel made it clear that severing their covenantal bond would lead to the complete elimination of the "rebels," as the scripture reads: *Uvaroti mikem hamordim* – "And I will purge out from you the rebels..." (Ezekiel 20:38). And our expectation to this day is that those Jews who sever their covenantal bond with God are effectively eliminating themselves from the Jewish people, typically within two generations.

We're reminded in this regard that the essence of what we're to pass on to our children is not obligation and constraint, but the privilege of living a godly life according to Torah's vision and path.

According to Or Hachayim, Moses had a particular objective in mind for this covenant: "It appears that what Moses wanted with this new covenant was to make the Israelites responsible for one another in their mitzvah performance. Each Jew has to see to it that his fellow Jew does not stumble and commit sins...Naturally, the degree to which we have to carry out this responsibility varies with our position in the community."

The opening verse of the parasha refers to *ish Yisrael*, thereby including every man of Israel. Our Sages teach that every man of Israel – and, of course, nowadays we have the same expectations for women – shares responsibility for the sin of every other Israelite (Tanchuma Nitzavim 1). And to the extent that we ignore this responsibility, the Torah says, *V'chashlu ish-b'achiv* – "And they shall stumble one over the other..." (Leviticus 26:37).

Rabbeinu Bachya (Rabbi Bachya ben Asher, 1255–1340) tells us in his commentary on Deuteronomy 29:9: "This teaches the principle of reciprocal

responsibility...If such reciprocal responsibility extends to all Israelites sharing misfortune on account of the sins committed by the few, how much more so will it apply to the reciprocal entitlement to enjoyment...One single individual whose lifestyle is beyond reproach may save all his peers from impending doom." And most of us have had the experience of witnessing the extraordinary effect one individual of great character, courage, and commitment can have on the lives of others.

Akeidat Yitzhak (Rabbi Yitzchak ben Moshe Arama, 1420–1494) teaches us that the message of this *parasha* is that *teshuvah* "...has to begin due to one's feeling afflicted." However, by this commentator's lights, the larger message is that, "...leadership can accomplish for the *nation* what *virtues* accomplish for the individual..." (Original emphasized.) So when estrangement from Torah and congregational life becomes widespread, the need for *teshuvah* applies to the whole community, and more than individual virtue is required – leadership is essential.

Akeidat Yitzhak, in his commentary on Deuteronomy 29:9, also explains that in our verse, "heads" is a reference to the intellectual leaders, "elders" is a reference to those who have mastered their *yetzer hara* (evil inclination), and "officers" is a reference to those who keep their composure even when provoked.

The tradition teaches us that anyone who has the wherewithal to protest wrongdoing committed by another Jew, and who does not, is considered complicit in the commission of that wrongdoing.

The reach of our authority to protest wrongdoing varies – for some it's limited to our homes, for others it extends to the congregation, and for yet others it encompasses the activity of Jews in the larger, non-Jewish community. And so the Talmud cautions us: "Whoever can forbid his household [from wrongdoing] but does not, is seized for [the wrongdoing of] his household; [if he can forbid] his fellow citizens, he is seized for [the wrongdoing of] his fellow citizens; if the whole world, he is seized for the whole world" (Shabbat 54b).

Our tradition teaches that our responsibility for our communal *teshuvah* is necessarily shared: Each of us is responsible for the *teshuvah* of others in the arena where we are able to enforce our will for the sake of maintaining the covenant and the Jewish people's commitment to it.

But ultimately it's up to each of us how we will use our *b'chirah chafshit* – our free choice: We can ignore the tradition's teaching of our shared responsibility for each other's *teshuvah*, or we can learn how to live up to that teaching.

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



The Roads from Babel

BY SETH BEN-MORDECAI

Mountain of God

A generic Hebrew word for "god" is "eloah," whose plural form "gods," is "elohim." Both words can refer to God, although paradoxically, the singular form "eloah" is rare while the plural "elohim" is common.

Despite the plural form "elohim" behaves as a singular noun: The Tanakh's first verse is "bereishit bara elohim ..." meaning "In the beginning, God created [singular]," and not "*bar'u* elohim" meaning "gods created [plural]."

When the Tanakh uses "elohim" in a non-Jewish place name, one cannot tell whether "elohim" means "gods" or "God." Thus, Exodus 3:2 states that while tending sheep, Moses came to "Har Ha'Elohim," which can be translated either as "The Mountain of God" or "The Mountain of the Gods."

Interestingly, a mountain in the southern Israel desert is littered with shrines to pre-Israelite gods. This mountain of gods had been a major place of pilgrimage in the Bronze Age, but had long been abandoned by the time of the Exodus. The mountain lies near a caravan route from the Bitter Lakes at the edge of Goshen in Egypt to Edom. Italian Jewish archaeologist Emmanuel Anati, who has excavated at the site for decades, is convinced that this mountain of gods is the Mountain of God referred to in Exodus. Linguistically, his view is certainly plausible. For more, see www.harkarkom.com. Feel free to send any questions or comments to me!

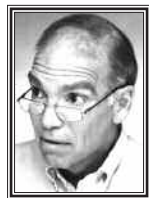
An attorney and Semitic linguist with degrees from Brandeis, Stanford and Univ. of Calif., Seth Watkins (pen name, Ben-Mordecai) merges linguistic analysis with legal sleuthing to uncover lost meanings of ancient texts. His Exodus Haggadah uniquely includes the full story of the Exodus in an accessible format. When not lawyering or writing, he tends his 20-year-old ocicat. Email: Seth@VayomerPublishing.com. ★

On this date in Jewish history

On August 26, 1903

The infamous forgery
*The Protocols of the Elders
of Zion* was published
(serially) for the first time.

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



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

Myths, lies and Nazis

We are living in a time of pressure, fear and uncertainty. It's not the first time and we will get through it – if we don't lose our bearings. At times like these, the desire to find enemies and scapegoats gains momentum. The fear mongers come out and play on these emotions. The attacks are those of words, misinformation and labels. As Jews, we know the danger in this.

The debate over health care in this country dates back to the time of Harry Truman. He recognized that with millions of Americans coming out of military service after WWII, there was a host of problems. Education was one. The GI Bill solved that one. Housing was another. FHA and the veterans' mortgage programs solved that one. These men and women had been totally covered by military health care. It seemed logical and a good time to move that to the civilian arena as well.

Republicans, who had sought to keep the U.S. isolated before Pearl Harbor drew the line at universal health care. They ranted, raved, rallied, used expressions like "Socialism" and "Communism" (a magic word in the late 1940s and 50s) and universal health care went on the ash heap of good ideas.

As Jews, we understand the concept. In its simplest form, it is called *tikkun olam* – to heal the world. It is a tenant of our faith. We care for those who cannot care for themselves. To gather as a community and make sure that everyone has a way to be cared for.

Truman's universal health care plan went in the dumpster of history with little fanfare. In the late 1960s when Lyndon Johnson approached the same problem, he persevered and the result was Medicare and Medicaid. Lyndon knew how to handle a recalcitrant congress.

For everyone else, the under 65 and the slightly better off, there was no solution. Hillary made a stab at it in the 1990s. But she ignored the Congress and paid that price.

This time around, it is more necessary than ever, the debate more heated than ever and less understood than ever. We are in the 24-hour news cycle. We have an electorate that is frightened, exercised and passionate.

Start with this. The two-party system in this nation has prevailed fairly successfully for over two centuries. But now, one of the parties is leaderless. Therefore, as it did in France after the revolution, the rabble takes charge. That is dangerous.

When a self-described "entertainer" becomes the voice of one of the major political parties because he has a syndicated radio program to spew his misinformation

and invective to his self-declared "ditto heads," we've got problems right here in River City.

Rush Limbaugh throws the word Nazi around with a broad red paintbrush. Sorry my friends, that is one of those pejorative terms that is not, repeat *not*, acceptable in any discussion or disagreement.

Supposedly the use of the word started in discussions of the so called death panels. Now let's start with this, there are not, never have been any so called death panels called for in any bill before congress.

There was an amendment proposed by a Republican senator from Georgia, to convene a group of so-called experts to offer advice and counsel on end-of-life decisions. It has been withdrawn. But the crazies still show up at the town hall meetings with signs that show a picture of the President of the U.S. with a Hitler mustache. There are signs showing swastikas. There are crazies showing up at rallies with loaded guns because it is "their right."

Okay, a couple of points: Some years ago, as my mother approached the end of life I needed advice. Living wills, nonresuscitation, no extraordinary attempts to extend life – on all of these things, we needed advice. Advice was available from attorneys, some counselors at Hospice. Most of it cost money out of pocket and was confusing.

Believe me, we would have welcomed the opportunity for informed discussion as a part of medical planning for my mother. But a few wing nuts like Sarah Palin and other "spokespersons" as well as some well-placed web ads and the rabble takes off, frothing at the mouth.

So, they want to talk "Nazi"? Okay, let's talk "Nazi." In the late 1920s, the National Socialist Party of Germany (NAZI) gathered hoodlums and outcasts and, taking advantage of bad economic times, sought to impress themselves on the German political process. They had radio programs spewing filth against Jews. They sent bullyboys to town hall and political meetings to shout and disrupt.

Shortly thereafter, the U.S. had a radio priest by the name of Father Coughlin who had a large syndicated audience listening to his rantings against blacks and Jews. It was the depression.

Any time things get tough, the crazies come out of the corners where they normally hide and become part of the national discourse. They are the last thing we need now.

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



Opinion

BY ARI J. KAUFMAN

Obama first U.S. president not "pro-Israel"

Since the state of Israel's creation, every U.S. president sans Jimmy Carter has been considered "pro-Israel." There are varying definitions of such a term, but most Americans of all political stripes consider our support for Israel to be "bedrock," even in San Francisco, Detroit, or other locales where Zionism is too often treated with hostility.

Many consider George W. Bush to be the most pro-Israel president of our time. Indeed 88% of Israelis felt our 43rd president, even with his endorsement of a "Palestinian State" unequivocally supported the Jewish State. As for the current president, according to a June poll in the *Jerusalem Post*, a paltry 6% of Israelis believe he is pro-Israel. Meanwhile, 86% find President Obama either pro-Palestinian or neutral. Perhaps his associations with Israel's greatest foes, or naive speeches to Muslim audiences drawing moral equivalence of the self-imposed "suffering" of the Palestinians to the Holocaust aid that conviction.

There is no debate that Obama began his term on an unnecessary "world apology tour" in some of the most anti-liberal, rogue nations on Earth. Polls show these quixotic endeavors found little success. When the young president asked us to "renew our respect toward the Muslim world" on Arab TV just after his election, this prompted criticism from Jewish journalists like the *Washington Post's* Charles Krauthammer. In a Jan. 30 editorial, the veteran reporter chronicled America's unending support of the Muslim people, thereby exposing Obama's historical ignorance:

"In these most recent 20 years... America did not just respect Muslims, it bled for them. It engaged in five military campaigns, every one of which involved — and resulted in — the liberation of a Muslim people: Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq."

Even Aluf Benn, editor of the left-leaning Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, recently penned a *NY Times* editorial asking "Why won't Obama talk to Israel?" Included were lines such as "Israelis find themselves increasingly suspicious of Mr. Obama."

Dr. Abe Miller, professor at the Univ. of Cincinnati, wrote in July, "Since the election, Obama's policies toward Israel have been treacherous...and the reaction of the liberal Jewish community can only be described as inconceivable...Obama's unwillingness to do what first-world nation states traditionally do — honor the commitments and obligations of a prior administration — should have generated outrage from the Jewish community."

It did not cause American Jews to wince. In fact, most, being secular/liberal, disagree with Miller wholeheartedly. Mr. Obama is their Messiah, by most accounts garnering over 75% of the Jewish vote, while President Bush, in his dominating 2004 win over John Kerry, received just 25% of the Jewish vote.

Rick Baehr, chief correspondent for the *American Thinker* website, explains that, "No American president has ever been viewed in Israel this way...Israelis understand the new reality in U.S.-Israeli relations: The special friendship between the two countries has ended, at least at the level of the U.S. president and his administration."

Indeed it amazingly took only one speech riddled with platitudes in a Florida synagogue and a photo-op at the Western Wall for American Jews to reconcile voting for Obama and a Democratic party increasingly hostile to Israel.

Even Aluf Benn, editor of... *Haaretz*, recently penned... "Israelis find themselves increasingly suspicious of Mr. Obama."

They ignored his 20-year relationship with the anti-Semitic pastor Jeremiah Wright. They ignored his relationship with the pernicious anti-Zionist Rashid Khalidi. They ignored his statement that "no one has suffered more than the Palestinian people." They ignored anti-Israel policy experts like Samantha Power, Susan Rice and General James Jones, who formulate Obama's Middle East approach. And they ignored his awarding the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Mary Robinson, a woman responsible for the "Durban Conference against Racism" a notorious anti-Israel propaganda forum the U.S. boycotted in 2009.

Seemingly though, only 20% of American Jews are interested in Zionism. The problem, as conservative Jewish commentator Dennis Prager once opined, "is that their religion is rarely Judaism; rather it is every "ism" of the Left. These include liberalism, socialism, feminism, Marxism and environmentalism."

When challenged, most I know demand, I "don't question their support of Israel." There is, however, rarely action behind that rhetoric. I've found it's usually as hard to shake a liberal Jew's belief in the Democrat Party as it is to shake an Atheist's belief in the nonexistence of G-d.

Polling info: <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1245184872947&pageName=JPost/JPArticle/ShowFull>

A former California schoolteacher, Ari Kaufman is a military historian for the Indiana War Memorials Commission. He is also an Associate Fellow at the Sagamore Institute in Indianapolis, and the author of Reclamation: Saving Our Schools Starts from Within, available on Amazon.com. ★



Notes from the Antipodes

By RODNEY GOULTMAN

The malady lingers

Western societies often cope with the human costs of war by translating it into a bunch of antiseptic statistics or masking it by medical language little understood by the public. Moreover, human tragedy tends to be submerged by discussions of the justification for involvement, causes, strategies, tactics, and geopolitical consequences. In this verbal avalanche, it is left to families and the relevant instrumentalities to care for those suffering the inevitable consequences of war – physical, psychological, and emotional trauma, which in many cases is life long if not life threatening.

It is a situation that is certainly known in Australia and the United States as each engages in deadly regional conflicts. Their populations have also had members killed and maimed by terrorism. One country, however, where war threatens at any moment is Israel. And yet, most visitors to the Jewish State, however, tend to be quarantined from this reality. Most official missions from abroad may be addressed by a range of experts, but few are taken to hospitals where soldiers recuperate from their wounds.

This aspect was somewhat reversed a few weeks ago when a group of wounded Israeli soldiers visited two Australian cities. In a combined exercise, the South Caulfield Hebrew Congregation in Melbourne and the South Head Synagogue in Sydney hosted ten such Israeli soldiers and their helpers for a stint of R&R. The men were all survivors of Israel's recent fighting in southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip or victims of border terrorism. Most were still receiving medical treatment, and there were a few whose health was so poor that it was doubtful whether they would be able to take the 30 hour long and arduous trip Down-Under.

The venture was only the second of its kind, the first having taken place in the snowy reaches of Aspen, Colo. Given the soldiers' condition, the tour was frenetic. It included visits to famed tourist sites, enjoying quintessentially Australian activities, and attending Shabbatons with the congregations.

Those who met with the soldiers were struck by a self-effacement that belied the usual, the common upfront stereotype of the Israeli. They were humbled by the way each in his own way, and whatever his disability or medication, took care that his fellow soldier enjoyed the new experiences to the full. None of this band of brothers had met each other before the trip. Every one of them was grateful for this opportunity, if only because many other wounded

soldiers remained back home, many of them too ill to journey anywhere.

On their return to Israel, one wrote back, speaking for all of them. He said before leaving that while they knew why they had put their lives on the line, they were not sure that others abroad would. Their impression came from the international press, much of which was intent on lambasting Israel and the IDF no matter the circumstances or effort made to avoid harming civilians. Their journey to the other end of the world showed them that there were people who cared about their country and about them. They felt this message gave them the emotional strength, in some cases previously doubted, that they could now undergo further-needed medical treatment.

Of course we well know about the hostile attitude toward Israel in the culture industry, especially where the secular Left prevails. There, it has become der rigueur to bag the Jewish State as a matter of faith. It is where the movement to boycott all things Israeli is fecund. While this phenomenon is no stranger in Australia, in recent times some visiting Brits have been doing their bit for the anti-Israel cause. Indeed, Great Britain is one home of the boycott movement.

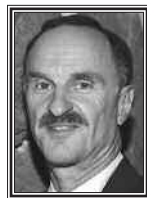
Their journey to the other end of the world showed them that there were people who cared about their country and about them.

The first example was that of film maker Ken Loach, who in a toddler tantrum withdrew his latest production from the annual International Melbourne Film Festival. This well-known pro-Palestinian toiler was greatly irritated by the organizer's refusal to accede to his demand to veto any Israeli financial support for the event. The amount involved was miniscule.

Much to Loach's mortification, the sky didn't fall. His hysterical protest was very soon lost in the shadows of a diplomatic row instigated by the Peoples Republic of China. This was fired by a film showing the life of Rebiya Kadeer, accused of engineering from afar the recent revolt of the Moslem Uighur people in its Xinjiang province.

Loach's anti-Israel behavior alas, was not an alone incident. A few weeks earlier in Melbourne there was the spectacle of internationally acclaimed British Jewish actress of stage film, and television, Miriam Margolyes, barking the Palestinian cause. In her usual aggressive anti-Zionist pose, she declared "Israel is not an honorable state." Whilst in town, she took part in a public play reading of "Seven Jewish Children – A Play for Gaza," which

(see Goultman, page NAT 15)



Financial Reporting

By ALLAN MOSKOWITZ, CFP, AIF

Responsible investing

Civil rights leader Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel observed, "Words create worlds." Confusion over the terminology describing an investment approach that considers environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors obscures the point of the work linking investing and encouraging corporate behavioral change.

There is a battle of semantics going on within the industry to change or shift from socially responsible investing (SRI) to the concept of "sustainability." However, some companies who have poor ESG performance records but tout the mantra of sustainability are using it as a marketing ploy, or what we call "green-washing." So, Amy Domini, of the Domini Social Funds, prefers to continue to use SRI or just responsible investing.

I and other leaders in the field particularly like the concept of restorative investing (RI) or transformative investing (TI), due to my belief in the concept of G'd as being the transformative power of the universe to bring our greatest potential into being. Another concept that I believe is important to include is that of "stewardship," which is also a biblical concept and denotes responsibility in managing resources in a responsible and sustainable way. Whatever you want to call this concept of investing, whether it be SRI, SI, TI, values or mission-based investing – they all equal wisdom and common sense or cents, pun intended, and they are all based in biblical and Talmudic wisdom.

The four pillars of this type of investing, are as follows:

1. Investment Screening

A) *Exclusionary* – to rule out companies, industries, practices, such as tobacco, weapons, gambling, alcohol, labor practices, excessive executive compensation, and such.

B) *Inclusionary* – to support companies in industries such as renewable energy, innovations in health, food, water, conservation, "green" building, and so forth.

2. **Shareholder Advocacy** – Including efforts of dialog with companies to improve their environmental, social, and governance performance, and using proxy voting and other actions to positively influence their corporate citizenship to enhance the long-term well-being of all stakeholders, including the company, customers, employees, vendors, communities, and the natural environment, and stockholders

3. **Community Investment** – To support our communities locally, and particularly to direct capital to people of lower

income who have difficulty accessing it through conventional channels through temporary loans as a hand-up and not a hand-out. Many values-based investors earmark a certain percentage of their portfolios to community development financial institutions (CDFIs) that work to alleviate poverty, create jobs, provide affordable housing, and finance small business development in disadvantaged communities. Examples of CDFIs are Jewish Fund for Justice, the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh that was started by Mohammed Yunus, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in Economics for his work with development of microfinance or micro loans to small business owners, usually women to support their families with better food and education, the Calvert Foundation, which we use as a convenient funding source for these other worthy organizations.

Another concept... is that of "stewardship," which is also a biblical concept and denotes responsibility in managing resources in a responsible and sustainable way.

4. **Charitable Giving** – *Tzedakah* (charity) with *tzedek* (justice) supporting causes that we believe in and love, such as our synagogues, mosques, churches, ashrams, Habitat for Humanity, UNICEF, NAACP, human and animal rights organizations, and numerous other charitable organizations in our communities and abroad.

If all investing incorporated these concepts, I believe that we could have prevented the current financial crisis, and if properly utilized, could be used to get us out of it as well. Plus, SRI could also help prevent the next looming climate change crisis preventing the destruction of our planet and annihilation of many species including our own.

Doesn't it make perfect sense to invest in and support in a world that you want to create, instead of things that you don't really believe in or want to support?

Or let me ask the question this way: What will our children and grandchildren say? "Thank you for acting when you had the chance," or will they instead ask us: "Why didn't you act when you could have prevented all of this?" What kind of world do we want to leave for them and what legacy do we want to create for the following generations?

Many of the concepts such as excessive executive compensation, ethical lapses, (see Moskowitz, page NAT 15)



As I Heard It

REVIEWED BY MORTON GOLD

Jewish nursery rhymes, lullabies and songs

Songs from the Garden of Eden is the unusual name of the CD released by The Secret Mountain (www.thesecretmountain.com). The contents include a compilation of Jewish Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes. On the back cover it is stated that "28 Jewish nursery rhymes, lullabies and songs originating from the Ashkenaze (sic), Sephardic, and Yemenite communities [are] performed in Hebrew, Judeo-Spanish, Yiddish and Arabic."

I want my readers to know that I listened to this disc several times before writing this column. In my view this is an unusual mixture of songs from various sources and traditions.

First some general observations. Not one composer is credited even when they should be well known (e.g. "Dona, Dona" is by Sholom Secunda). The instrumentalists are listed as "musicians." From this should one then assume that the "singers" are not musicians? (Okay, sometimes the shoe does fit!) Also, there is a listing of a diverse variety of instruments (e.g., Pandiro, guimbarde) as if everyone ought to know what these instruments are, look or sound like as opposed to a clarinet or violin.

Reference is made to "notes" by Nathalie Soussana. "Lyrics reproduced in the original alphabet, transcribed into Roman characters and translated into English, with illustrations and additional notes on the origin and cultural context of each song also on the CD as a printable PDF file."

Unfortunately, this material was not included with the CD that I had! The musical arrangements were by Paul Mindy and Jean-Christophe Hoarau. There was a decided difference in approach and treatment between the Yiddish songs and the Sephardic, Hebrew and Arabic songs. While most of the Yiddish songs received tender, loving care, there also appeared some klezmer-style flourishes for the clarinet that I did not think were always appropriate. While many of the Sephardic songs were elegantly arranged, some along with the Hebrew and Arabic were of similar stylistic cloth that evoked an Arabic market place.

While the singers were all identified as the chorus, none of the soloists were listed. The choral group sounded like a group of volunteers (sorry) and the children's voices were unfocused. The children's soloist(s) had a breathy and nasal sound. Yes, I agree that having



children sing is charming and wonderful. But, this is supposed to be a professional CD, not a fundraiser for the sisterhood!

While the female soloists were all good, especially in the Yiddish selections, the male soloist (bass) was... less so. Is it thought that people prefer to hear untrained voices or even recognize the difference between trained and untrained voices? The instrumentalists were all very good, and especially distinguished were Ms. Hoarau's solos on the guitar and mandolin.

Since I was not around, I do not know what songs (if any) were sung in the "Garden of Eden" and thus I am puzzled by the title of *Songs from the Garden of Eden*. There is a decided cultural dichotomy in the music performed and I am not always comfortable with the juxtaposition of the two (or three) cultures represented here. Even so, the tent of Jewish music is a wide and inclusive one, and this CD should fit in it.

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. ★

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The Theater

BY HAROLD JACOBSON

Six Noel Coward works at Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake Ontario

Noel Coward, the preeminent English playwright and musician, has, in a sense, invaded The Shaw Festival, one of Canada's top theaters dedicated to the works of Bernard Shaw. This season Coward, who wrote 50 plays in his 74-year career, has six works on display, and this reviewer has been privileged to see three of them.

Coward, whose alchemy with the English language, delighted theater-goers for half a century, was best known for plays such as *Blithe Spirit*, *Present Laughter*, *Private Lives* and *Hay Fever*. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, however, director Jackie Maxwell has chosen to mount six of Coward's lesser known but equally delightful and provocative works.

The Astonished Heart, the longest of the three plays, pivots on the fortune of a psychiatrist who succumbs, despite his initial apparently cool demeanor, to the seductive wiles of his wife's best friend. Their tryst is a fairly prolonged and passionate one, but the woman, having conquered her prey, decides to end the affair.

The psychiatrist, madly in love with his paramour, cannot so easily terminate this relationship and urges her to continue the liaison. Bitter exchanges and even physical violence ensue, but the psychiatrist, realizing that he has been duped, agrees to end the fling. The dénouement of this play cannot be revealed, but one can say that it is not the heart that is astonished here but the audience in the Court House Theatre. This is a deep psychological portrayal of human nature and the dominion that passion can have over the vulnerable.

Astonishment is also found in *Family Affair*, a delightful parody of mourners who assemble to reconstruct the life of the deceased patriarch of the family. Initially all the thoughts, remarks and gestures are respectful of the late father, whose picture stares down on the brothers and sisters (and in-laws) gathered together for this solemn assembly.

It is not long, however, before wine loosens the tongues, the spirits and bodies of the family, as the members dance, sing and recite truths about the man in the portrait. The eldest daughter, she who stands for propriety in referring to the deceased, becomes especially animated as she reveals long-hidden secrets about her father's sexual peccadilloes and other assorted vices. The atmosphere in the room, once morbidly silent, becomes animated, joyful and celebratory. The role

of the hard hearing butler is especially important in the unraveling of the plot.

In *Ways and Means* the animation comes from the plight of an upper class English couple discussing their financial insolvency as they loll about a bed in a luxurious hotel on the Riviera. Half of their conversation has to do with seeking solutions to their money problems while the other half deals with gossip relating to their friends and relatives. The dialogue is, as we expect from Coward, delicious, spirited and full of wit.

To save them from their odious misfortune (brought about by over-consumption), Coward introduces a deus ex machina – literally god out of a box, that is to say, a solution to their dilemma in the form of a burglar who enters their room demanding jewels and money. How a burglar fits into the salvation scheme is the kind of creative thinking in which Coward specialized. The solution is manufactured, but suspending one's disbelief is necessary to enjoy this little bagatelle Coward offers us.



Noel Coward, the preeminent English playwright and musician.

Travel Note: The streets of flower-bedecked Niagara-on-the-Lake are packed with wall-to-wall patrons this summer and they come from every continent. This reviewer heard ten different languages spoken on those streets within 20 minutes during a pleasant stroll. Reservations for the theater should be made in advance because some shows are sold out early.

Jewish visitors should take note of the fact that synagogues and kosher food are available in Niagara Falls, Ontario, a 20-minute drive from Niagara-on-the-Lake on the Niagara Parkway, arguably the most beautiful highway in Canada. Two synagogues, Beth Tikvah (5328 Ferry St., Phone 905-354-39340) and The Chabad Center (4434 Queen St., Phone 905-356-7200) have services on a regular basis. Kosher food may be obtained from King David Pizza on Center St., in Niagara Falls as well. ★





Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Hasidic man murdered on *Saving Grace*

Who killed several cows, over \$40,000 worth of USDA prime beef? This is the opening question of a recent episode of *Saving Grace*, a series starring Holly Hunter as a police investigator in a small Oklahoma town who has a guiding angel named Earl. The angel, by the way, does not solve murders; he leaves that to Grace and to her colleagues. His role is more that of a wise ancient avatar or guiding spirit, of the New Age variety.

What happened to the cows remains the prime question even after the body of an elderly Hasidic man is found the following morning, a mile down the road. The man had been shot to death, and had a bloody shirt and a broken thumb.

Grace gets to investigate the murder of the man rather than of the cows, and she runs into Dr. Henry, the medical examiner, a Jewish colleague, who starts to tell her, "If he's Hasidic" there are rules for handling the body. "If he's Hasidic," Grace interrupts. "What else could he be?"

Henry speaks of rules regarding the "touching" of the body. It would have been more precise for him to have referred to concerns about immediate burial and limited autopsy, which are mentioned a little later. The doctor is conflicted about performing any procedures on the body, but this is not explained.

Grace asks Henry so many questions about Judaism that he inquires, "Am I the only Jew you know?" She and, later, other colleagues prove to be under the misconception that Hasidic Jews spend all of Friday evening "in temple." (Orthodox Jews generally refer to the synagogue as "shul" rather than "temple," the name traditionally reserved for the Jerusalem Temple and hopes of its messianic restoration.) Grace and the staff do learn about Shabbat dinner at home, following services.

The writers add a new twist to TV (and big screen) depiction of Jewish beliefs and practices. They limit the comments of their Jewish characters about Judaism. Henry explains these things only a few times at the beginning. (The writers have him explain that a Hasidic rabbi is called "rebbe," but, actually, that is only the term for the chief rabbi of the sect, and would not be true of the rabbi of a small enclave.) Also, Grace asks the deceased's daughter, played by Mayim Bialik, about why there are two stoves and two refrigerators in her home. The daughter cites the biblical injunction against mixing milk and meat, "Do not boil a kid in its mother's milk" (Exodus 34:26).

Generally, however, Grace and her fellow officers discuss Jews and Judaism among themselves, ostensibly because Grace has gotten a book on the subject. They do not get everything right all the time (and this obviously reflects on writers Elle Johnson and Annie Brunner), but the characters (and, I suppose, the writers) try.

Sometimes, there are issues raised gratuitously without being meaningfully addressed. In one segment, a cop turns electric lights on and off and asks, "Is this work?" In another, Grace puts a "yarmulke" on her dog for some reason (to keep the crime in mind?), yet at another point she explains well the significance of the head covering as expressing reverence for God. For frivolous reasons, Grace reenacts Jewish ritual slaughtering on a stuffed animal, and suggests that the meat inspector tastes the blood to decide whether the animal is "kosher." Of course, biblical law prohibits the tasting of any blood out of reverence for life. There is even a circumcision joke linked to the (unexplained) custom of cutting off a child's payos (side-curls), which is unrelated to anything in the plot.

...Grace and her fellow officers discuss Jews and Judaism among themselves... They do not get everything right all the time..., but the characters (and,...the writers) try.

Ritual slaughter and meat inspection enter the picture because the small Hasidic community works mainly for a kosher meat plant nearby. This is, I believe, the first episode of a TV series to deal with recent scandals at a kosher slaughtering plant in Iowa, where it is alleged that workers were exploited and animals abused. We learn that the deceased, Benjamin Weinstein, was the retired meat inspector at the plant, and that he had not been happy with his successor, or with the owner of the plant, one Tovi Edelstein, who prayed at his synagogue.

Since Grace and a colleague suspect that the murderer might be in the synagogue, or at least known to someone there, they dress for "going to shul." When Grace's angel tells her that he hopes she gets something out of it, Grace replies, "Me, too. Like a murderer."

Not everyone in the shul is kosher. Edelstein had once been arrested for drunk driving, but his fingerprints are nowhere to be found. Even the deceased left the synagogue early, barely a quarter of an hour after the hour-long services



Leon Rippey as Earl (L) is Grace's last-chance angel and Holly Hunter as Grace Hanadarko (R) is a police detective in *Saving Grace*.

began. He had the blood of the cows on his shirt, as well as his own blood. The same bullet killed him and the cows. Was it a murder-suicide?

In the end, we learn that Weinstein shot the cows at the time when he knew them to be delivered from a local ranch to the kosher plant, just before sundown. (Orthodox Jews would not allow such a delivery so close to the Sabbath, even to holding pens.) The murderer, who struggled to take away Weinstein's gun and killed him unintentionally, is identified by his prayer book. (Without an eruv, a wired-off enclosure, no Orthodox Jew would carry a prayer book on the Sabbath. Since the writers don't have any of the officers mocking that custom, I assume that they may be unaware of it.)

There is some good theological discussion in this episode between Grace and her angel. Grace questions why God would allow the murder of six million Jews and of a million Africans. The angel responds that God created people so that they would come to Him on their own, that people must choose to pray in order to find God rather than to kill. He reminds her that questioning is no less a prayer than "screaming, cussing, questioning."

It seems that Weinstein was killed by someone seeking to maintain "peace." We never learn why Weinstein shot the cows while singing something with the word "Barukh" ("Blessed is God"). Indeed, the episode comes up with three different explanations for Weinstein's behavior – that he did not like the way the cows were to be slaughtered, that he regarded the meat as substandard, and that he was nuts, or any combination of these reasons. So the writers chose some vague way to pander to Hollywood's animal rights contingent without getting into the question of illegal and exploited workers who may be found in Hollywood, as well.

Certain strange impressions are left by this hour. One of the officers observes that "Hasidims (sic!) don't work with goyim (Gentiles), don't fraternize with goyim, unless they have to," but, of course, there is no rule in any form of Judaism against working with Gentiles. Instead of correcting this comment, the same officer jokes, "Jews follow 613 commandments. I can't even follow 10." It's a cute line, but it serves to preserve the misconception presented in

the previous line.

Also, viewers wonder in the end whether there is a custom that one must be buried with one's prayer book, or whether the murderer was inventing such a custom to cover his tracks, whether the writers concocted the custom or had a character concoct it. Perhaps unintentionally, yet still amusingly and effectively, the writers have the police staff rejoicing over the "best barbecue in the city," even as Grace quips that a lot of Jewish rules "have to do with food."

The episode does suggest that not everyone rejoices in the commandments – at least not all the time. Grace notes a tattoo on the deceased's daughter, and gathers that she felt she had to escape the life for a while. Bialik's character responds that she "left" Judaism from age 18 to age 22, but that now she has a husband and seven children. Grace responds with an "oy."

Not surprisingly, and indeed almost to be expected in television writing over the past 20 years or so, no episode about Jewish religion would let the theme stand without making references to other religions and indeed to all religions. Apparently finding Hasidic customs rather risible, the forensic examiner jokes with Grace that they, two Catholic girls, ought to consider the fun that outsiders make of Catholics, of the pope-mobile, for example. Grace retorts that the very office of the pope may be laughable to many. Yet she does reference Catholic "guilt" for worthy use at the end.

The episode begins with a woman losing her ability to speak English and offering a mysterious prayer in Portuguese. In the end, the angel brings Grace to a Portuguese prayer shrine, where models of body parts inspire prayers for healing. Grace has a vision of all the prayers of the world uttered simultaneously, even by the repentant Hasid in his jail cell. (The latter recites the words of the Kaddish prayer for the friend he has unintentionally killed, a strange sight to knowledgeable Jews who know that the Kaddish is a communal prayer only.)

Is the final message here that although every ritual is laughable to somebody, they are all meaningful because each religion has rituals of some kind with which its adherents identify, that to laugh at one religion is to laugh at them all? But isn't this also a way of saying that all religions are alike and that all prayer serves the same function – and a psychological, rather than theological, function at that? What kind of message is this for an "angel" to bring?

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

Jews in Sports

49ers' Harris Barton and Russia's Irina Slutskaya Elected to Int'l Jewish Sports Hall of Fame

NFL All-Pro offensive lineman Harris Barton and Russian world figure skating champion Irina Slutskaya are among nine athletes and sport figures elected to the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame for 2009.

San Francisco 49ers' Barton anchored the storied offensive line for 49ers' Super Bowl victories in 1989, 1990 and 1995. Slutskaya won gold medals at the 2002 and 2005 World Figure Skating Championships, and an Olympic silver medal in 2002, bronze in 2006.

Elected with Barton and Slutskaya are: American equestrian champion Margie Goldstein-Engle who recorded six World Cup and 20 Nations Cup victories between 1984 and 2005, and Ukraine's Zhanna Pintusevich-Block, the World Track & Field 200-meter champion in 1997, 100-meter gold medalist in 2001, and 60-meter (indoor) champion in 2003.

Also, South African rugby star Joel Stransky, who registered all South Africa's points in the epic 1995 World Cup final victory over New Zealand; and, American Eliot Teltscher, ranked among the tennis world's top ten singles players during the 1980s.

Israeli basketball player-coach icon and women's sports advocate Orna Ostfeld, veteran *New York Post* baseball journalist-author Maury Allen, and author Harold U. Ribalow (*The Jew in American Sports*), are elected to the IJSHOF's Pillar of Achievement.

All honorees were formally inducted in July 2009 at the IJSHOF Museum, on the campus of the Wingate Institute, Israel's National Sport Center, in Netanya.

Since 1979, 337 athletes and sportsmen/women, representing 24 countries, have been elected to the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. For more information visit www.jewishsports.net.

Bios – 2009 IJSHOF Honorees

San Francisco 49ers offensive tackle **Harris Barton** was an NFL All-Pro selection four consecutive years: second team in 1990, and first team in 1991, 1992 and 1993. The 1986 University of North Carolina All-American was the 49ers' #1 draft choice in 1987. During his ten-year pro career, 1987–1996, Barton anchored the storied offensive line that provided the foundation for three 49er Super Bowl victories – 1989, 1990, 1995. He played 138 career NFL games, including 89 consecutive



games. In his first year with the 49ers, Barton was named to the NFL's All-Rookie team by the UPI, *Pro Football Writers of America*, and *Pro Football Weekly*.

Between 1984 and 2005, American show horse champion **Margie Goldstein-Engle** recorded six World Cup and 20 Nations Cup victories. The Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) ranks her #8 all-time with most starts (166).



Her highest FEI ranking reached #6 in 1998. Jumping for the U.S. team at the 2000 Olympics, Goldstein-Engle helped the American equestrian team to a 6th place overall finish. Goldstein-Engle is the American Grand Prix Association's (AGA) only nine-time Rider of the Year – 1989, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1999/2000, 2000/2001, 2003 and 2005. She has set numerous records including: career earnings over \$3 million dollars; most AGA wins with the same horse in the same season (five wins on Saluut II in 1991); most Grand Prix wins in a single season (11); and two Grand Prix wins in two days. She is the first rider to place six horses in ribbons in a single Grand Prix, and the first rider to ever place first through fifth in a single Grand Prix.

Zhanna Pintusevich-Block stunned the sports world at the 1997 World Track and Field Championships when she won the 200-meter gold medal, and silver medal in the 100-meter event. The startled response was prompted by her 200-meter victory (22.32) over USA superstar sprinter Marion Jones, and runner-up photo-finish to Jones in the 100-meter. Four years later, at the 2001 World Championships, Block again faced Jones in the 100-meter. But this time the Ukrainian captured the gold medal (10.82), defeating Jones in a victory considered one of the greatest upsets in international track and field history. Block's triumph marked the first time in four years – and 42 consecutive races – that Jones had lost a 100-meter race. In 2003, Block won the 60-meter World Indoor Championship (7.09). In July 2003, she was ranked the World's #2 in the 100-meter, behind Jones.



Irina Slutskaya won World Figure Skating Championships twice, in 2002 and 2005, following silver medal finishes in 1998, 2000 and 2001. The Moscow-born skater was a silver medalist at the 2002 Winter Olympics and bronze medalist at the 2006 Games. In 1996, Slutskaya became the first Russian woman to win a European title. Ten years later, in 2006, she was the first woman to register seven European Figure Skating Championships. In 2000, Slutskaya was the first woman to land a triple lutz, triple loop combination in competition. In 2001, she was the first



woman to land a triple salchow-triple loop-double toe-loop combination. And, she invented the double Biellman spin with foot change.

Rugby's **Joel Stransky** had 22 caps (international appearances) for South Africa, between July 1993 and August 1996. The Springbok "fly-half" earned a place in rugby immortality for his performance in the epic 1995 World Cup final versus New Zealand, when he scored *all* South Africa's points, including a dramatic drop goal that sealed the victory. In the opening match of that same '95 World Cup versus Australia, Stransky became the first Springbok *in history* to score all four possible ways in one test match: a try, a conversion, a penalty goal, and a drop goal. Stransky joined England's Leicester Tigers in 1997, scoring 100 points by his eighth game. He scored a club record 459 points in 1998, and finished his Leicester career with 896 career points in 73 matches.



Eliot Teltscher ranked among the World's Top 10 tennis players three times between 1980 and 1984, and the World's Top 15 each of those years. He was ranked among the USAs' Top Ten Singles players for seven of eight years between 1980 and 1988 – his top spot No. 8 in 1984. As a professional, Teltscher won ten Grand Prix championships, including the San Francisco, Atlanta, Johannesburg and Japan Open titles. In Doubles, he was U.S. No. 6 in 1979 (with Francisco Gonzalez); No. 4 in 1980 (with Terry Moor); and No. 8 in 1981 (Moor). In 1983, he won the French Open Mixed Doubles (with Barbara Jordan). Teltscher was a UCLA All-American in 1977 and 1978.



Pillar of Achievement

Maury Allen an author, reporter and columnist for 53 years, mostly covered baseball for the *New York Post* (1962–1989), *Sports Illustrated* magazine, and the Gannett Journal News. He authored 40 sport-themed books, including best sellers on Joe DiMaggio (*Where Have You Gone, Joe DiMaggio?*), Casey Stengel and Billy Martin. Allen has written hundreds of magazine articles and made frequent appearances on radio and television as a baseball authority, including ESPN classic programs.



Orna Ostfeld was recipient of the International Olympic Committee's 2005 *European Women and Sport Award*: "As a player, administrator and coach," recognizing her dedication to and advancement of women's sports in Israel. Since 1998, Ostfeld coached the And Ramat Hasharon team to four championships and State Cup basketball



Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Holocaust themed novel

To the Land of the Reeds by Aharon Appelfeld. Kinnert Zmora-Bitan, Dvir-Publishing House. 2009. Pp.222. In Hebrew.

At summer's end of 1939, the gathering storm of World War II and the Shoah is about to erupt with its furious and shattering impact.

Beautiful and emotional Tony, the main protagonist of Appelfeld's totally absorbing and irresistible drama, chose at age 17 to run away from her Jewish parents and born identity with August, a handsome calculated Gentile Austrian and a city engineer. He would soon enough abuse her while pregnant with their son Rudy. Following serial relationships, mostly unsuccessful, she flees to the false security of her parents' existence deep in the countryside, in "the land of the reeds" (The books' title).

Tony uproots her bright 16-year-old son from his high school studies, to finally reconcile with her parents and her tormenting guilt for abandoning them, after they had already lost her promising older sister to illness.

Ironically and tragically, the eventful flight of mother and son back to their Jewish roots to find solace from a fragmented life, though Tony had at last come into money from an elderly lover, leads them to an awaiting trap.

For the insatiable Nazi beast, even unsuspecting Jews of all social strata in remote corners were a prized catch, and the unstoppable death train will ultimately pick them all up, including Tony and

(see Zoberman, page NAT 15)



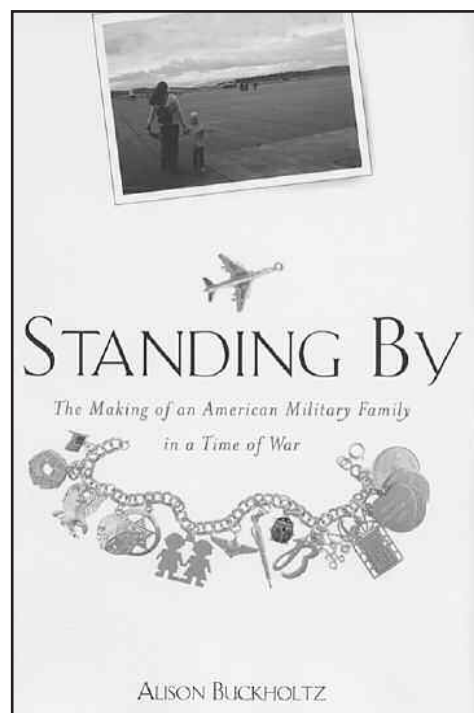
אל ארץ הגומא
אהרן אפלפלד

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Life of a Jewish military wife

Standing By. By Alison Buckholtz. New York: Tarcher/Penguin, 2009. 287 Pages. \$23.95.



As author Alison Buckholtz tells us at the beginning of this remarkable autobiographical memoir, the pattern for American military wives supporting their husbands goes back to Martha Washington. Before her husband, George, became our first president, he was a general and she set the pattern of supportive conduct that has been scrupulously followed by the generations of officers' wives who followed her. A few of these women, listed by Buckholtz in a helpful bibliography, have written books about their experiences. Her contribution to this sparse body of literature may well be the only one written by a Jew.

Buckholtz's parents are federal government civil servants in the Washington, D.C. area where she lived and worked as free-lance journalist, a communications consultant, and a public relations specialist. She studied English literature for her B.A. degree at the University of Massachusetts and her master's degree at the University of Virginia. As an undergraduate, she spent a year at Trinity College, Dublin and, in 1997–98, she lived in Jerusalem on a postgraduate fellowship.

In late 2001, with no knowledge about the military, Buckholtz married Scott, a career naval aviator with 15 years of experience in military service. She refused to heed his warnings about the pitfalls of becoming a navy wife. During the early years of their marriage, Scott was stationed at the Pentagon and in Japan. They had two children, Ethan and Esther, now six

and four. In the Maryland suburbs, where they lived when Scott was in Washington, D.C., they took the children to Jewish activities, replicating Buckholtz's experience as a child in going to synagogue, a Jewish Community Center, and a Jewish camp.

In 2006, the family moved to Anacortes, Wash., when Scott became the commanding officer of a Prowler jet squadron at nearby Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. There is no synagogue in Anacortes and practically no Jews. The chaplain's office referred her to a group of Messianic Jews who maintain a Christian worldview; she succeeded in getting this group removed from the reference list. She and Scott agreed to serve as Jewish lay leaders and she offered Rosh Hashanah dinner and Yom Kippur break-the-fast to "other exiles" but no one came. Moreover, Scott was assigned for training on an off-shore aircraft carrier on Yom Kippur. Eventually, they organized a tiny group of Jewish friends who celebrated the Jewish holidays together. She is determined to foster in her children a sense of their Jewish identification.

A good part of the book is devoted to what happened to the family when Scott was away for six months during the early part of the Iraq war. It was almost a rehearsal for the year of separation they now face while Scott is in Baghdad and Buckholtz is back in Potomac, Md., with their children, close to where her parents live. The problems of being apart and of raising the children without their father are candidly and eloquently described. Also portrayed is the significant support given to each other by navy wives. Buckholtz vividly and frankly writes about the poignant feelings of loneliness and love experienced by a military wife as she struggles to cope with her children and her own sense of the void in her life. She hopes that her account will help military wives to feel less isolated. Mingling her presentation with good humor, she chronicles the special responsibility she has as the C.O.W. – the commanding officer's wife.

Her effective rendition of what it means to be a military wife offers special lessons for the general population who have not known compulsory military service for more than 35 years. Although we are involved in two wars, we rely on volunteers to fill the ranks of the armed forces so that most people know very little about the pains and the plight of our soldiers, sailors, aviators, and their families. This book competently and capably fills that void. It deserves to be widely read.

A Jewish bullfighter from Brooklyn

Double-Edged Sword. By Bart Paul. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. 304 Pages. \$29.95.

This biography of Sidney Franklin describes the unusual life of a Jew from Brooklyn who became a famous bullfighter.



Author Bart Paul has rendered a useful service in reminding readers about a colorful personality who died in 1976 and whose name is no longer familiar to many Americans. Fans of Ernest Hemingway may recognize Franklin since the two men were friends for a time. Hemingway relied heavily on Franklin for informed guidance when he wrote *Death in the Afternoon*. This nonfiction book, published in 1932, pays tribute to Franklin by calling him "one of the most skillful, graceful, and slow manipulators of a cape fighting today."

In 1903, Franklin was born in Brooklyn to Orthodox Jewish parents who came from Russia. His birth name was Sidney Frumpkin. Abram, Sidney's father, was a New York policeman who was "a tyrant and a bully." He oppressed his son especially when Sidney dropped out of school and developed a commercial silk-screen poster business. Abram's harsh treatment intensified when it became apparent that Sidney was a homosexual. After a particularly violent explosion, Sidney left home and headed for Mexico, giving himself a new name, Sidney Franklin. In Mexico City, he set up a successful printing and poster business, emphasizing bullfighting. Challenged by his friends, he took personal instruction in the art of bullfighting and soon established a reputation that led him to Spain where he continued to demonstrate his skills.

Starting in 1929, Franklin began to distinguish himself as an American who could compete as a competent bullfighter. Ernest Hemingway sought him out and the two quickly became fast friends. In 1931, Sidney almost died when a bull's horn stabbed him through the rectum. He had nine operations to repair the damage during the next 15 years. However, he returned to the bull ring after a few months and then moved back to Mexico where he resumed his career.

In 1936, Franklin accepted Hemingway's invitation to join him in Spain to write

about Franco's revolt against the elected government. This put Franklin right in the middle of Hemingway's affair with Martha Gelhorn during the murderous Spanish civil war. Franklin's association with Pauline, Hemingway's wife, complicated his relationships with her, Gelhorn, and Hemingway. Issues arising from these entanglements are confusedly described.

The action skips ahead to July 1945, when Franklin participated in the milestone ceremony known as the *alternativa*, which took him from the status of apprentice to that of full-fledged matador. Unfortunately, by this time, Franklin "was forced by age and circumstance to accept the role of elder statesman."

The story meanders on with somewhat disjointed accounts about making movies, Franklin's school for would-be matadors, issues in the relationship between Hemingway and Franklin, and new friend Barnaby Conrad. Finally, the narrative arrives at April 1976, when Franklin died after seven years in a New York nursing home.

This life history is marred by the author's frequent use of untranslated Spanish words and his overwhelming inability to omit any fact he unearthed in the course of his research. For example, he devotes most of a dull chapter to a detailed history of bullfighting back to prehistoric times. Similarly, Paul's lengthy description of Hemingway's complicated female entanglements only confuses the story. A good illustration of Paul's predilection for useless trivia is his telling us that Wallace Neff was the architect of the house in which Fredric March and Florence Eldridge raised money for the Spanish Loyalists.

Despite these failings, Bart Paul, a writer of documentaries and an anthologized author of short fiction, has brought to life an interesting celebrity whose star has faded too soon.

Novel about Jews and the Civil War

All Other Nights. By Dara Horn. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009. 383 Pages. \$24.95.

Historical characters and events are neatly blended with fiction in this exciting novel about Jews and the Civil War. Judah Benjamin, the Confederacy's secretary of state, plays a key role. More significant is the infamous General Order #11 in which General Ulysses S. Grant expelled Jews from the area under his command as war profiteers who violated "every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department." President Abraham Lincoln revoked the order three weeks after it was issued.

The protagonist in the story is Jacob Rappaport, son of a wealthy Jewish import-export merchant in New York. In 1861, Jacob's father is making an advantageous business deal with David Jonas that is conditioned on Jacob, who is 18, marrying

(see Teicher, page NAT 15)



Kosher Kuisine

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Sangria for summer parties

The most popular drink I serve when I entertain in the summer is sangria, Spanish for “bloody” and originating in Spain and Portugal.

Classic Sangria (8 servings)

- 1 thinly sliced lemon
- 1 thinly sliced nectarine or peach
- 2 cups sliced strawberries or cherries
- 3 1/4 cups dry red wine
- 3 cups orange juice
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 cups club soda
- 1/4 cup brandy (optional)

Place lemon, nectarine or peach, strawberries or cherries in a bowl. In a pitcher, add wine, orange juice, and sugar. Add fruit and refrigerate for several hours. Before serving, add club soda and brandy. Add ice cubes to each glass. Spoon some fruit into each glass also.

Peach Sangria (12 servings)

- 8 cups dry white wine
- 1/2 cup peach brandy
- peel of 2 oranges
- 4 cups club soda
- 3 sliced peaches

Place wine and brandy in a pitcher. Add orange peel and refrigerate for several hours. To serve, add ice cubes and club soda. Spoon some orange peel and peaches into each glass. Pour sangria into glasses.

White Sangria (6–8 servings)

- 1 1/2 cups brandy
- 1 can frozen lemonade concentrate
- 1 thinly sliced lemon
- 2 cups ice cubes
- 2 cups dry white wine
- 2 cups club soda
- 1 cup sliced strawberries
- mint sprigs

Combine brandy and lemonade with lemon slices in a pitcher and refrigerate 4 hours. Add ice cubes, wine, club soda and strawberries. Stir then pour into glasses. Garnish glasses with mint sprigs.

Lemon-Lime Sangria (4 servings)

- 1 bottle red or white fruit flavored wine
- 1/2 cup lemon-lime soda
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 sliced orange: 1 sliced lemon; ice cubes

In a pitcher, combine wine wit lemon-lime soda and lemon juice. Add orange and lemon. To serve, place ice cubes in glasses and pour sangria.

Sybil Kaplan lives in Jerusalem. ★



Musings

BY BATYA MEDAD

Contrasting images

I’m always surprised by what I see when wandering about. The other day, I had to go through downtown Jerusalem to get a ride to a wedding. I walked up Ben Yehuda Street and was amazed at the carnival atmosphere.



That’s right. I didn’t have time to stop and record the music, but I think the picture says it all.

A bissel (little) culture

Last night was “motzei Shabbat Nachamu,” a traditional time to attend musical events, after the first Shabbat after the Three Weeks. So I didn’t blog and I skipped seeing C.S.I. I went off with some young neighbors for a cultural adventure.

First stop was the nearby city of Ariel, the Moscow of the Shomron. How could I resist the chance to hear the “Beatles” so close to my home town Shiloh? Okay, “Beatles music,” but even that was stretching it.



Unfortunately, I have a very good audial memory, and the Israeli band’s version of the Beatles was far from the sounds and arrangements permanently burned in my brain. It wasn’t even the lead singer’s atrocious Hebrew accent that totally damaged the lyrics. The drummer’s drum set was inadequate to even give him a chance to reproduce Ringo Starr. Probably the most blame could be humped on the guy controlling the sound. The mix was totally out of whack

and proportion. We couldn’t hear one of the singers. It may have helped if he had lowered his mic so his mouth rather than eyes would reach. The guitars – at least one – was much too loud.

For someone of my generation, who remembers vividly when those songs were new, when they were released, it was especially difficult to call this performance acceptable.

We heard lots of Russian around us and some Hebrew. Ages were mixed. I think that I was the only one of my age and background, so maybe others enjoyed it more than I did.

One thing for sure is that the park in Ariel, where the concert took place, is gorgeous. Mayor Ron Nachman certainly knows how to build.

Next we went off to Tapuach, which advertises Saturday Night Concerts and promised a spectacular one for last night. Apparently the plan was to “concert” all night, and according to Yekutiel Ben Ya’akov drive out first thing in the morning to Har HaBayit, the Temple Mount.

We left after midnight, during the performance of their first “star.” I’m not sure of his name, but he was more professional than the faux Beatles. There wasn’t much of a crowd, at least in the “Women’s Section.” Things seemed to be livelier on the men’s side.

I got a peek at the rebuilt synagogue in the hilltop neighborhood of Tapuach where it took place.

It seemed like most people were prepared to stay much later than we were.

There were books, t-shirts and *nosherei* for sale, too.

I know that I sound terribly critical, but I did have a good time away from the computer. If one doesn’t experience life, what’s there to blog about?

Local Bar Mitzvah

A local family celebrated their son’s bar mitzvah here in Shiloh last night and this morning. There’s really no need to travel when we live in such a beautiful, spiritual and historic place.

Think about it. No doubt that Shmuel HaNavi, Samuel the Prophet must have had his bar mitzvah here, too. His family and friends may have eaten the seudat mitzvah, the special “command meal” in the very same spot, not far from the Mishkan, the Holy Tabernacle.

Here in modern Shiloh, we have a synagogue modeled, designed according to the Biblical description of the Mishkan.

We Jews are here, because this is our Land, based on our long and well-documented history.



As an Israeli mother

There are Jews all over the world who rationalize, excuse their not moving to Israel, because they’re worried about their children, especially their sons. They’re afraid of army service in the IDF, Tzahal, the Israeli Defense Forces.

My sons served in combat units, front-line of course, in the army. I was proud and scared, but I’ve also been afraid of other dangers. There are dangers our kids face, no matter where they’re living. As hard as we try, we can’t protect our children from illnesses, accidents or their own foolishness.

When my sons were growing up, I was no stranger to the emergency room. I even had to take my daughters there on occasion. The most seriously ill was my youngest at the age of two weeks. That was one of those “nobody’s fault” life-threatening situations that could happen any place to anyone. My Shiloh neighbors helped enormously for the six weeks we were in Shaare Tzedek Hospital. I can’t imagine any community any place in the world doing more for a young family with four other kids.

Then a few years later, my other son was hit by a small truck when on his bike, and we had four weeks total in Hadassah Ein Kerem and Alyn Children’s Orthopedic Hospital. Until my son was back on two feet sans crutches a few months later, my neighbors were great. Those things can happen any place to anybody. According to statistics, most accidents happen at home or nearby.

For two years simultaneously (of the three years each), my two sons were both serving in the army. I can’t say that I didn’t worry, because I always worry. I worry about them crossing the street. I worried the most when my elder son took a post-army trek to South America. Then I was worried sick. And now, a young man from Maale Levona is missing in India. Search parties have been sent from Israel. Please pray for the safe return of Amichai ben Dvora.

And accidents are a serious danger, too. There was one the other day in Shiloh to a young teen. Please pray for a *refuah shleimah*, complete recovery for Yisrael Or ben Tova. Thank you!

Batya Medad is a American olah, immigrant in Israel since 1970. Besides her articles and photographs, 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. You can contact her at shilohmuse@yahoo.com. ★

CHASSIDIC RABBI

(continued from page NAT 3)

my children. Peace with our neighbors. I know I'm not perfect. Maybe I'm doing something wrong?"

This is the first step of the journey back to Hashem. Baruch Hashem, millions are making this journey, here and everywhere in the world. They are finding Hashem. They are finding His Torah. They are finding eternal truth. They then show their family and friends a good example of how life can be so much better. Very soon the entire world will be blessed with eternal peace. It's up to us. Each of us has to make this journey. To come closer to Hashem, and bring Moshiach by doing more mitzvahs. We want Moshiach now!

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 13 children and 26 grandchildren. ★

DEKOVEN

(continued from page NAT 6)

between each of us and Shabbos itself, and we laugh together and become shabbosdik.

In truth, now that we think about it, so many are the games and so many the ways to make them, and us, more shabbosdik, and so impossible would it be for me to think up enough of them by myself that I find myself having said enough already.

(Kf) – fun that's certified Kosher.

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>. ★

GOUTTMAN

(continued from page NAT 9)

previously aroused controversy when staged in both London and New York. Its purpose was to raise funds and promote the anti-Zionist messages of its sponsors, "Australians for Palestine" and "Women for Palestine." Not unexpectedly, it won applause from the more radical of the Jewish Left.

In a moment of reflection, a little space might be commandeered to contemplate a Jewish future should the Jewish State no longer exist. For this is the nightmare that some Jews, let alone others, are calling for.

Dr. Goultman 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 can be reached at rmgout@melbpc.org.au. ★

MOSKOWITZ

(continued from page NAT 9)

fraud, deceit, lack of full disclosure, discrimination, predatory lending, abusive labor practices, gender and racial inequality, are all issues the SRI world has been dealing with for decades and are now on everyone's radar screen.

Is our economic system truly sustainable or do we need to change it now, strike while the iron is hot and before it's too late? Let's use this crisis as an opportunity to bring about the change we believe in and not just use it as a campaign slogan. We need to be "responsible" and hold our leaders to a higher standard that benefits everyone, not just the few; Democracy for the common good. Isn't this what G-d and our higher selves really wants for us to do? Your money and your investments have power for meaningful and positive change if you make the choice. Be part of the solution!

Allan Moskowitz, is a certified financial planner (CFP), licensee. He specializes in fee-based responsible investment for individuals and organizations that want to align their investments with their values. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area and can be contacted at amoskowitz@protectedinvestors.com. Advisory services and investments offered through Protected Investors of America, an independent broker-dealer and federally registered investment advisor with the SEC. ★

SPORTS

(continued from page NAT 12)

titles (in seven years). As a player for Israel's Ramat Khen, she once scored a record 108 points, and is listed in the Guinness Book of Records for most points scored in a single game. In 2004, Ostfeld's passionate advocacy for increased funding and meaningful media coverage of women's sports resulted in Israel's High Court of Justice order that funding of women's sports associations be a rate of 1.5 times the sum allowed to equivalent men's sport associations. Ostfeld is one of the founders of the Ramat Hasharon Sports Association.

A sports columnist for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and the *National Jewish Post* during the 1940s thru early 1950s, **Harold U. Ribalow** authored three books that sparked awareness of the subject of Jews in sports following World War II. His *The Jew In American Sports*, first published in 1948, was accorded six editions through 1985, including four printings between 1948 and 1952. Ribalow also penned *Jewish Baseball Stars* (1984) and *Great Jewish Chess Champions* (1986),



co-written with his son, Meir. He was also a contributing writer on the subject of Jews in sports to the Encyclopaedia Judaica. The elder Ribalow was an internationally influential literary anthologist of Jewish literature, and authored, in addition to his volumes on sports, 15 other books on various Jewish subjects. Hadassah's annual literary award is named The Harold U. Ribalow Prize. ★

ZOBERMAN

(continued from page NAT 12)

Rudy, in a colossal conspiracy of deception and destruction. Following a traumatic separation from his mother while on the demanding as well as transforming journey home, Rudy discovers his Jewish connection through the supportive and nourishing love of Erma, who too was seeking her lost mother. They were all destined to be reunited through shared Jewish faith and fate, though all so cruelly victimized.

Even with the world collapsing around them and on top of them, the Jews are portrayed, particularly the assimilated urban ones, to already have lost their inner Jewish core to the point of self-hate. Consequently, they would become far too weak to face the physical onslaught. The envious and frustrated Gentiles look down upon the relatively well-off Jews for lacking the solid faith of their ancestors, replaced by attachment to Communism's enticing ideals and financial craving.

We are once more beholden to the genius of Appelfeld, the most prolific Holocaust author and survivor, for so artfully weaving this great tale of madness and magic, with his own autobiographical golden threads of powerful yet subtle rendition. How faithful is his commitment to remain connected to dear ones in face of the threatening forgetfulness of time's inevitable passage.

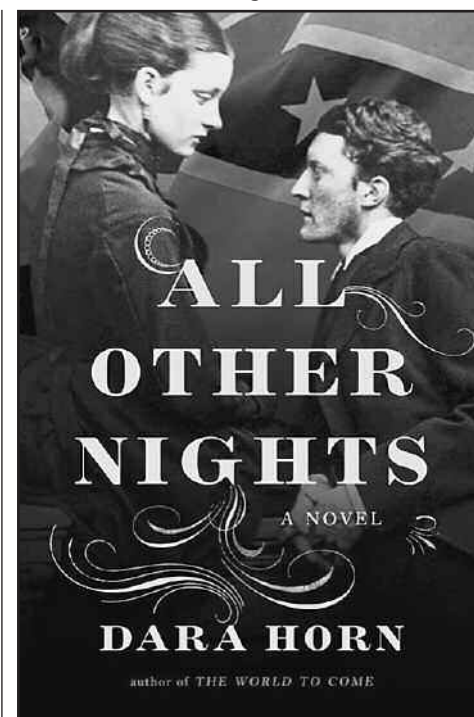
Rabbi Israel Zoberman, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Va., is the son of Polish Holocaust survivors. He grew up in Haifa, Israel. ★

TEICHER

(continued from page NAT 13)

Jonas's daughter, an "utterly homely" 17-year-old who "suffered from some sort of mental deficiency." On the night before the wedding, Jacob flees and joins the Union army.

Jacob does well as a soldier and is given a special assignment to disguise himself as a Confederate. He is to go to New Orleans where he is expected to assassinate his uncle who is plotting to kill President Lincoln. Although conflicted by issues of family loyalty, Jacob carries out this mission successfully. He is then ordered to go to New Babylon, Va., home of the Levy family. Philip Levy had been a business partner of Jacob's father. He and his four daughters are suspected of being Confederate spies. Jacob's task is to marry Jeannie, one of the girls, in order to



determine the accuracy of the suspicions. Again, regardless of conflicts of conscience, Jacob fulfills his orders. After a harrowing series of adventures, he eventually returns to the Union army where he is congratulated for having broken up the spy ring. However, any satisfaction he might have felt disappears when he learns that Jeannie, whom he has come to love, was taken prisoner and supposedly died in jail.

Promoted to sergeant for his achievements, Jacob is transferred to the Department of Tennessee where Grant is conducting the Western Campaign. He meets and falls in love with Abigail Solomon before he is severely wounded in battle. Heart-rending events pile up in rapid sequence furthering Jacob's maturation. Judah Benjamin plays an important role in what ensues, contributing to Jacob's awareness of his individuality. The richness of the background painted so ably by Dara Horn makes what is a coming-of-age saga a compelling account of one man's development through the horrors of the Civil War.

This spy novel cuts deeply into complicated issues of family faithfulness, particularly affecting Jews who were on both sides during the Civil War. Dara Horn's skill as a writer and depth of comprehension is fully realized in this remarkable novel. Her third book, *All Other Nights* provides indisputable evidence of why she was selected by Granta magazine as one of the Best Young American Novelists. Her two previous books, *In the Image* and *The World to Come*, both received National Jewish Book Awards. A Harvard Ph.D. in comparative literature, Horn has taught at Harvard and at Sarah Lawrence College and has lectured at universities throughout the United States and Canada. We eagerly await her fourth novel.

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. ★



Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Binyamina Winery

Midway between Netanya and Haifa, inland off the coastal highway sits Binyamina. It has a large visitors' center, sales room and restaurant with wood tables, wicker and wood chairs. The menu offers classic food – salads with a special bread, chicken, steaks, fish, baked potatoes, vegetables, and desserts.

Laurie, our guide lives in Zichron, which she calls the "sardine box," but she works here at the winery in Binyamina, "the match box," for the past year.

She explains that in 1922 the first settlers came to the Rothschild vineyards and to work in the Carmel Mizrahi winery. They built houses and grew grapes but didn't have enough to do.

The land was similar to the Rothschild chateau land, and they had a preference for flowers. So they started growing jasmine and built a building for a perfumery. From 1922 to 1925 they created "jasmine from Palestine" perfume.



Yekev Binyamina winery facility.

They realized they didn't have enough people, so they decided to bring a community from Georgia, Russia, because families there had many children. The first settlers had built houses on the east side of town and the Georgians built on the west side; they never mingled socially.

The perfumery lasted only 12 years. They had a large building, and it couldn't stand empty.

The Haganah (Israel's army before the State) used the cellar as a hiding place for weapons because there were three surrounding British camps. (The hiding place was not found until 1948.)

In 1951 Yosef Zeltzer, a vintner from Hungary, bought land here and the Eliaz winery began. But he needed grapes, so they made what was called "yayin patishim," hammer wine, which was bought by the army.

In 1980 the winery was shut down.

In the 1990s, two Israelis who owned a film company decided to buy the winery and bring Eliaz wines to Binyamina. They put in equipment from California but decided to buy grapes rather than grow them.

The grapes they bought were high-quality grapes, and today Binyamina is



Garden area with grapes and flowers. The flowers are more susceptible to disease, therefore they are able to protect the grapes.

the fourth largest wine maker after Carmel, Barkan, and Golan Heights, bottling three million bottles a year. They export about 25% to Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the Far East and the U.S.

Now Binyamina is expanding. Until a year ago, they had a staff of less than 40; today they have a staff of 100.

Because of the many tours that visit, they created a small vineyard with five rows to show how grapes grow. These will be ready in three to four weeks to show to visitors.

Grapes for eating are seedless and large, but the winery does not care how wine grapes look; they need flavor with seeds and hard skin because they have more sugar than eating grapes. The vines are almost never watered and the sun provides the sugar. Nearby are rose bushes, which are detectors for insects and diseases that may attack the vines.

Grapes come the end of July to mid-October from all over the country and are processed inside the plant at night, from the reception pit to the elevator and separator. They then go through pipes, to prevent fermentation, to the fermentation tanks. The color of the wine comes from the skins. Red wine is fermented with skins; white wine is without skins of green grapes.

After this, they go through fermentation in stainless steel tanks so one can control the temperature. Wine fermentation takes 5 – 22 days at 15 – 20 degrees C for white and 2 – -25 degrees C for red wine. Dry wine takes full fermentation; sweet wine takes five days fermentation.



Holding Vats contain 20,000 – 40,000 liters of wine or grape juice.

It stays several months to clarify then the wine goes to bottling.

The seeds are made into grape seed oil; the skins go to pharmaceuticals for creams, shampoos and beauty products.



Making the desert bloom

Rabbi/Dr. Zvi Leshem (right) is planting an olive tree together with his farmer son Zion (left), while his grandson Yehuda Gur-Aryeh "supervises."

Zion had just planted ten dunams of organic olive trees on his own land in Chalutza where residents from his temporary settlement are starting to move. His current home in Yevul includes many who were expelled from the Gush Katif area.

Yevul and Chalutza are located just below the southern tip of the Gaza strip, at the corner of Israel, Egypt and Gaza. "In the midst of total desert, nothing but sand, several new towns are being built, and the desert is, once again, being made to bloom by pioneers of great faith and self-sacrifice," reports Rabbi Leshem. "It is very emotional and inspiring," he adds.

Zvi Leshem is the son of Sylvia and Michael Blain of Indianapolis, Ind. ✨



The aging barrels. All four photos by Barry A. Kaplan.

There is a wine cellar but visitors are not allowed to go there without the *mashgiach* (religious supervisor) because all the wines are kosher. In fact, Binyamina is one of the few places in the world that makes kosher brandy.

In the wine cellar, the filled oak wood barrels are from France and California. All the workers are Jewish and although the vintners are not religious, only the *mashgiach* is allowed to touch the wine.

Barrels remain in the cellar from three months to three years. Wine is then taken through pipes to the bottling plant.

The two vintners taste the wines, but one learned the French way and one learned the California way. They know when to bottle or how long to leave wine in the bottles before selling.

Binyamina produces 29 wines, which range from 20 NIS (\$5.26) to 135 NIS (\$35.52), as well as brandy and six liqueurs.

We sampled a dry white Jasper; a combined Chardonnay and Sauvignon blanc, aged in oak, dark yellow, almost vinegar; a semi-dry Gewurtztraminer, eight years grown in Israel, almost perfumed; Yogev, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon; a Muscat dessert wine with brandy overtones; and grape juice.

As Daniel Rogov, Israel's most influential and preeminent wine critic reports in his 2009 *Rogov's Guide to Israel Wines*, Binyamina is a solid and reliable producer with at least some good wines. He grades 55 wines: six recommended without enthusiasm; 42 are very good to excellent and highly recommended; and seven are exceptional in every way.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, book reviewer, food columnist and feature writer who moved from Overland Park, Kan., to Jerusalem. ✨

