

*The National Jewish*  
**Post & Opinion**

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Artwork by Samuel Bak

## Editorial

In this annual Yom HaShoah issue we have an array of wonderful articles, good book reviews, and a moving poem on the subject. In previous years at this time, I have written stories about the Holocaust. Since I wrote about the Anne Frank Peace Park at The Children's Museum in Indianapolis in our Jan. 13 issue, I am going to depart from that subject this year. You can read that editorial and see related photos at the following link: [www.jewishpostopinion.com/pdf/NAT\\_1-13-10.pdf](http://www.jewishpostopinion.com/pdf/NAT_1-13-10.pdf).

In case you, dear readers don't fully understand the meaning of the Yiddish word *chutzpah*, I have a story that will help explain it.

This week I received a letter from David Kodicek of Delray Beach, Fla. It said: *My Mom is now 100 years old. She was born in New York City on March 15, 1910. Her parents moved to Indiana when she was three years old. As you know she was the Hammond, Ind., correspondent for The Jewish Post & Opinion during the early 1940s. Just to let you know, her brother Harry Feldman turned 99 years old on March 29.*

First of all, Happy Birthday to you, Anne Kodicek, and your brother! If you are not the oldest reader of this newspaper, there is probably no other person who has been subscribing to it for 70 years! But what *chutzpah* you have at age 100 to subscribe not for one, but two more years when many people of your age wouldn't buy green bananas.

Another letter came from Prof. Robert (Bob) Sandler of Miami, Fla. He wrote: *I'm not coming with an article this time. For several years, I have been going to Torah study at Temple Beth Am on Saturday mornings. Last week, they came to tell me that I have been selected for a Talmud Torah Award. How about that! On May 7 there will be a special Friday evening service.*

Enclosed with the letter was the following: "The award is presented to a congregant who has demonstrated superior commitment to adult Jewish education in general, and to the Temple's adult education programming in particular. Recipients should demonstrate both breadth of commitment by participating in a variety of activities and depth of commitment through consistent and thoughtful participation. The recipient receives recognition at a Friday night service in the spring, and then delivers a D'var Torah on the weekly torah portion."

Bob, *Mazel Tov* and *Yasher Koach*!

This coming December marks the 80th anniversary of this newspaper which my father Gabriel Cohen, z"l, started in Dec. 1930 after graduating from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. These letters are two mere examples coming from the thousands of contributors to the newspaper over the past 80 years. You probably have noticed others as we usually have a couple in each issue.

## About the Cover

This 2001 artwork by artist Samuel Bak is titled *Crossing*. It is oil on canvas – 20x16 inches. A permanent exhibition of paintings and drawings by Samuel Bak may be viewed at the Pucker Gallery in Boston: [www.puckergallery.com](http://www.puckergallery.com).

Artist Samuel Bak, a child survivor of the Holocaust, was born in Poland in 1933. After surviving both Soviet and Nazi occupation, Bak wound up in a displaced persons' camp in Germany and then studied painting in Munich. In 1948, Bak emigrated to Israel where he became a student at Jerusalem's Bezalel Art School. After serving in the Israeli army for three years, Bak moved to Paris for further study. He then spent more than 30 years living in Europe, Israel, and New York until 1993 when he settled in Weston, Mass., where he now lives. ★



We are at a crossroads now because of the continuing increases in the cost of the printing and mailing of the newspaper. Many of our longtime subscribers are either no longer able to read or have passed on. Because of the appearance of many new places to get Jewish news and commentary – especially on the Internet – our number of readers has gradually declined.

Unless we can increase our readership of the printed copy of the newspaper we may have to discontinue our print version and go to an online publication only. I would prefer not to do this because I, for one, am on my computer several hours a day and I like to read my newspapers, books and magazine while sitting in a comfortable chair away from my computer screen. Another more important reason is that some of these longtime subscribers do not use a computer and our Jewish readers in prisons who benefit greatly from this newspaper are not allowed to use the Internet. Another possibility would be to continue printing but only once a month instead of biweekly.

For everyone who enjoys reading this newspaper, my request is that you please purchase gift subscriptions for your local synagogues, libraries, relatives and good friends who will appreciate reading it as much as you do. This suggestion goes especially to our writers who will be happy that some new people will have the opportunity to benefit from reading their column.

Another way to support the newspaper is with a donation. If you give \$18 or more, we will send you a free book of your choice from a long list of books on different Jewish topics. We will send that list when we receive your donation. Finally, I am open to hearing your opinions and suggestions of ways to improve the newspaper and to increase our income such as through available grants.

Please email, call or write to me with them: The Jewish Post & Opinion, 238 S. Meridian St., Suite 502, Indianapolis, IN (see Editorial, page NAT 19)

## Shabbat Shalom

By RABBI JON ADLAND

**April 16, 2010, Tazria-Metzora  
(Leviticus 12:1–15:33), 2 Iyar 5770**

I received an email from a dear friend this past week wondering why she didn't get a Shabbat Shalom bemoaning Butler's two-point loss in the NCAA championship game. The reason was that last week our family was at the bar mitzvah of my youngest nephew Elliott in Lancaster, Pa. Instead of writing on Friday, Sandy and I were in the car cautiously driving the Pennsylvania Turnpike, which is one stretch of road I have never liked. As to Butler, they played as hard as they could, made a city very proud, and gave the country an amazing game to watch.

If you aren't aware, Lancaster is the 4th oldest Jewish community in the United States with a cemetery dating back to the first half of the 18th century. I learned that the original settler was also the last member of the original community. He died in 1801. A few decades later German Jewish settlers began to come to Lancaster and a synagogue was founded in 1856, the same year as Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. Some time later Shaarai Shomayim (Gates of Heaven) became affiliated with the Reform movement. The temple building was built at the end of the 19th century. It is a beautiful old building located in downtown Lancaster.

I was honored with delivering the Erev Shabbat sermon, but the weekend belonged to Elliott, his mother (my sister) Beth and her husband Simon. This bar mitzvah brings to an end that stage of Jewish life in our family's journey. Except for Elliott, the other first cousins range in age from 20 to 28. Hopefully, the Adland families will begin to celebrate weddings over the next few

years along with graduations from college and graduate school programs.

I must say that I did miss not having my parents at Elliott's celebration. It was the same hole I felt last July at my niece's wedding from Sandy's side of the family. Sandy and I didn't have grandparents at our wedding nor did my siblings at theirs. It is the cycle of life, but just once I'd like to slow the cycle down. I am sure many of you understand what I mean. Yet, we can't slow down the march of time. In Indianapolis, a long snowy winter has given way to a magnificent spring. The flowers are beautiful. The green on the trees is rich. (For those of us with allergies, the pollen is in the air.) In the not too distant future, spring will give way to the heat of summer and so on.

As Jews, along with the life-cycle events of our children and families, we also mark time with the holy days and holidays. Pesach means spring, Shavuot means the beginning of summer, and, of course, in the fall are the holy days where we think back to those we sat with in services who are no more. The cycle of reading the Torah also helps us measure time. This week's portion marks the halfway point of Leviticus. It may not be exactly the middle of the Torah, but it is pretty close. Thus, we are about halfway through the Jewish year.

It is easy to note all these landmarks of time, but what we do with our time is much more critical. Do we make efforts to help those who are in need? Do we make a difference in the world in which we live? Do we find ways to improve ourselves? Time marches on, and we can't slow it down, but it shouldn't defeat us. Enjoy the celebrations and anticipate what is to come, but don't forget that while living in the present, there is much work we can do.

When you light your Shabbat candles this week, light one for celebrations we encounter on our life's journey. Light the other as a beacon to guide us in (see Adland, page NAT 3)

*The National Jewish*

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# Chassidic Rabbi

By RABBI BENZION COHEN

My wife and I are celebrating Pesach in Belfast, Northern Ireland. How did we get here? This is a beautiful story. For a long time my dear wife has been dreaming about a vacation. She works very hard as a wife, mother, grandmother, rebbetzin (rabbi's wife) and teacher, and she needed a rest. I also work hard, so I sympathised with her. It is true that every week, we have a day of rest, Shabbos. The phone doesn't ring, the computer is off, the banks and the stores are closed. However, we often have a house full of honored guests on Shabbos, so we have a wonderful Shabbos, but don't get too much rest.

Finally my wife came up with a brilliant idea. We'll go away for Pesach. We'll find a Chabad House somewhere in the world desperately in need of some help to prepare the communal seder. They will pay for our tickets. We will work like crazy for a few days making everything kosher for Pesach and cooking tons of food, but afterward we will have a whole week of real rest, something that I can only vaguely remember. We'll see some new parts of the wonderful world that Hashem created, and meet some more of His children.

My wife made some phone calls, but no one was interested. Then she spoke to Rabbi Brackman in Belfast. They would greatly appreciate some help for Pesach. My wife was born in Belfast, but there was no Jewish school there, so her family moved to Canada when she was three years old. The head of the Belfast community is a good friend of my father-in-law, and they agreed to pay most of our plane fare.

However, it didn't really make sense. Today only 100 Jews live in Belfast. Last year 30 of them attended the communal seder. What did they need us for? I reminded myself that everything that happens is part of Hashem's plan. If Hashem sends us to Belfast, it is for good reasons.

We arrived in Belfast five days before the seder, and very soon I understood why they needed us. The rabbi and his wife moved here two years ago, soon after their marriage. With great self-sacrifice, they left their families and communities to help this tiny but beautiful community. Now they have a two-year-old boy who gets into everything, and a one-year-old who is nursing. They were at their wit's end trying to make their home and the shul kosher for Pesach, look after their children and also organize a communal seder.

It was truly amazing. The right couple showed up just at the right time. By now I am a professional Zaidie (grandfather). Shmuly, their two-year-old, and I became best friends right away. Now, Shmuly could run around outside to his hearts content, and indoors his parents

could peacefully get the house ready for Pesach. My wife loves to cook, and she cooked the best seder meal that Belfast ever saw.

The word got around that this year the communal seder was going to be something special, and 45 people showed up. The rabbi did a beautiful job leading the seder. He got everyone to participate. During the meal I made a speech. I told them that today is my birthday, and they all sang "Happy Birthday to You." I spoke about our redemption from Egypt, and about how Moshiach is going to redeem us now. I told them the story of Yaakov, who I met in the hospital (see my column in the previous issue). By the way, this is one advantage of writing a column. If you need to give a speech, you are always prepared.

After my speech, an older lady came up to me and introduced herself. She thanked me warmly for my speech and proceeded to tell me some of her own story. She is not Jewish, but feels very close to the Jewish people and the land of Israel. She told me about a woman she had become friends with. The woman is a survivor of the Holocaust, and had shown her the scars from when they beat her. After this woman moved to Israel, she also went to Israel, to see Israel and visit her friend. She went to the Holocaust museum and was very moved. Every minute she spent in Israel was precious to her, and especially the time in Jerusalem. She told me about an expensive gift she had sent to her friend in Israel. After two weeks she called her friend, but the gift had not arrived. She prayed to Hashem, the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. She had trust that Hashem had heard her prayer, and indeed, after a month the present arrived.

She blessed me and my family with the priestly blessing. She told me that she prays that Hashem will protect Israel and not allow the Palestinians to establish a state in Israel.

I was moved to tears. Here again I had made an effort to inspire others, and had come away greatly inspired myself. I felt a special feeling of security. If there are people like this praying for us, then it is going to be good. I have heard much about righteous gentiles who love and support Israel, but this is the first one I have met.

This is another sign that we are on the threshold of our final redemption. One of the prophecies about Moshiach is that he will bring all of the righteous of the nations to serve Hashem, as in Isaiah 11:10. "It will be on that day, that the root of Yishai [Moshiach], who stands as a banner for the nations, to him the nations will seek."

For sure it is going to be good. Moshiach is coming. However, it is up to all of us to make it happen. We have to learn more Torah and do more Mitzvahs to bring Moshiach Now!

P.S. I heard this beautiful song in Belfast. Sing it to the tune of "I'm Popeye the Sailor Man." *I'm Popeye the sailor mentch. Whenever I eat I bentch (bless).*



## Jewish Scholar

By JACOB NEUSNER

### What happens when you call a professor infallible?

*Benedict XVI after five years*

The best joke I ever made up was when I told someone at the gym where I work out, who had challenged my opinion about the New York Yankees versus the New York Mets baseball teams, "Don't try to argue with me. I'm a professor – I'm always right!" Unfortunately, he didn't laugh, he snapped a towel at me.

When you elect a highly accomplished scholar and intellectual to a position that bestows the status of infallibility, you are buying trouble. A scholar doesn't need to be told he is infallible. He knows. That is what he is paid to be. A scholar's calling values integrity, rationality, and forthrightness.

The first five years of the papacy of Cardinal Ratzinger have revealed these traits along with abundant humility and kindness and love. But the world will take some time to get used to its scholar-pope, who speaks forthrightly about fundamental issues and lets the chips fall where they may.

The Muslims learned that fact in Regensburg, when the Pope in a profound lecture called into question the contribution of Islam to civilization.

The Anglicans learned that fact when the Pope, in a gesture of honesty, invited the Anglican priesthood to join the Church.

The Jews learned that fact when the Pope reverted to a liturgy that called into question the faith of Judaism.

In all three cases, the breach was restored, cooler heads prevailed. So Islam was pacified, the Anglicans and the Jews conciliated. But the scholar pope had told the truth as Catholic Christianity at heart sees it: Islam cannot compete with Christianity for moral insight, the Anglicans will be welcome home, and the Jews would be better off in the Church. Pope Benedict spoke like a scholar and pronounced Christian truth as the infallible Bishop of Rome pronounced it. A scholar could do no less.

The current issue that troubles the peace is Cardinal Ratzinger's prior disposition of the case of a priest guilty of sexually abusing children. Christian charity called for forgiveness of the priest, a broken dying penitent. Justice demanded excommunication. Cardinal

*Tzedakah (charity) I give to help others live. I'm Popeye the sailor mentch!*

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

Ratzinger withheld the rites of humiliation that formed the just penalty. The man died in the bosom of the Church. Benedict VI showed the meaning of repentance and Christian love.

When I met the Pope in Rome last January I asked him what he planned to do when volume two of his *Jesus of Nazareth* was done, in about half a year. With a sad smile, he said "Nothing more, this is my last book. I have other things to do." A scholar who ceases to write books does not long outlive his last title. He did not have to add, "After all, I'm the Pope." But the scholar in me whispered, "At what cost!"

What the world has learned in five years about a scholar-pope is the price that the academy pays for truth-telling and integrity. Infallibility exacts costs. People prefer conciliatory politicians over contentious critics. Those are the lessons taught by the generic scholar-popes.

What I learn from this particular scholar-pope is something more. The world has a heavy stake in the proven integrity of this man and in his power to speak truth to all humanity. So the Muslims, the Anglicans, and we Jews too have to prepare for scholarly debates about reason and shared rationality and meet head on the conflicts that await over who is right and who is wrong, and what Scripture and tradition demand of us all.

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### ADLAND

(continued from page NAT 2)

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*Rabbi Adland is senior rabbi of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. ★*

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## Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

### Iyar began April 14

Iyar is the month of healing. The Hebrew letters for the name of Iyar spell out the initials of the verse "Ani Yud-Yud, Rofecha" (I am God your Healer). Iyar is a time of detoxification, purification, and refinement of one's character traits. As spring begins to emerge more fully during the month of Iyar, we also bring ourselves to a new order, a new alignment. Iyar is the time of letting go of what does not support one's well being, what is toxic, what is false and is a time for opening up to what does support healing.

All healing requires a connection to God. We do not heal on our own. The Talmud reminds us that those who are in prison cannot free themselves.

By our attachment to God who is free and whole, we experience those qualities ourselves. Our consciousness is lifted upward, beyond ordinary modes of thinking and awareness. Through prayer, meditation and doing good deeds, we tap into the part of ourselves that is divine, and we open ourselves to receive divine assistance. As we heal – our body, mind and soul are brought into alignment.

#### Suggestion for Personal healing this month

Healing comes from being connected to what is true and what is real. It is as simple as that. In situations where you feel pained or stressed, ask yourself if what you believe is true. Too often we become needlessly upset about something that is not true.

When you are upset, ask yourself: Am I being objective? Can I be objective? If you are in a blaming or victim mode of thinking, know that you are not in touch with the whole truth. You are not being objective. If you can not be objective, speak to someone who can help you be objective.

Healing requires a deep level of listening to oneself and being with oneself in the most honoring and respectful way. When we have the courage to be with the truth of our being, we contact God and experience peace and healing regardless of what is happening externally. Be particularly mindful this month so you can make choices about where to direct your energy.

Ask yourself: Can I be open and listen to the deep knowing inside myself that is coming from inner stillness, the voice of the soul, or do I listen and react to the chatter and hysteria of the ego mind, that is loud, clamoring for my attention? Breathe deeply and give yourself time to listen, pray and connect with the Holy One.

An excerpt from Kabbalah Month by Month for the month of Iyar. Love and blessings for a month of healing. May the healing work that we do this month help heal the world.



## Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

### Why the Holocaust will never be forgotten

I did not recognize the woman's voice on my answering machine, with its thick European accent and apologetic tone. Nor did I connect the fact that I was too deeply immersed in teaching a course on Holocaust literature to her call. But once I met Gabrielle, I knew it was more than chance that caused her to ask me to help her publish a book she had written about her life.

I'll admit that at first I was reluctant to call her back. I was over my head in work and was leaving for a trip in a few days. But I left her message on my machine and replayed it several times throughout the day. Something about her voice haunted me and for reasons that I still don't understand, I knew that returning her call would change my life. And I was right, because it did.

From the first time I met her, she captured my heart. I stood on her doorstep and watched through the window as Gabrielle, barely five feet tall and burdened by arthritis and numerous aches and pains, struggled to get out of her chair to greet me. We walked into her dining area where the table was set with a plate of cookies, some mineral water, and a box of candies. I sat across from her, her face framed by her artwork on the wall behind her – paintings that expressed the darkest days of her life.

She was animated one minute, telling me about when she first met Mr. Schneider, her husband of 40 years, and pensive the next, her eyes resting on the photo of her sister Sydonia, whom she held in her lap as she lay dying in Bergen-Belsen. And when she reminisced about her childhood, before the Nazi's destroyed it, there was coyness in the way she held her head and a girlish blush colored her cheeks.

Since our first visit, Gabrielle has drawn me into her world. She is physically limited and can no longer move about easily but that doesn't stop her from getting what she needs. Her strength comes from years of being willful and

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determined against the most impossible of odds. But her generosity of spirit – that is what touches me most. She has lived through years of extreme deprivation, losing so much when she was so young, but she is generous, loving and giving to a fault. I have never left her house without her handing me something special or beautiful as a keepsake.

I look at her wide-open face and a line from *The History of Love* comes back to me: "Show me a Jew that survives and I'll show you a magician." Throughout her 83 years, Gabrielle has worked her magic on those around her. I am convinced that is why she survived and why she couldn't rest until her story was told.

For many years after the war, few people in Israel spoke or wrote about the Nazi atrocities, forcing survivors to cope with their nightmares in silence. One person who understood the significance of survivors telling their stories was David Ben Gurion, who knew that in order for his fledgling country to begin to heal, survivors had to speak out. For this reason, he decided in 1962 to televise the trial of Adolph Eichmann, the first televised trial in history. For four grueling months, hundreds of survivors relived their nightmares while the world watched in horror and disbelief.

Since that time, hundreds of personal stories, memoirs, novels and films have been brought to the world's attention. After filming *Schindler's List*, Steven Spielberg established "Survivors of the Shoah Visual History" to document the stories and experiences of survivors and witnesses to make certain they were never lost. Today over 52,000 testimonies in 32 different languages from people in 56 countries fill these archives. Gabrielle is one of them.

But she has taken it one step further: She has written and self-published a book of stories, together with her paintings, titled *Andor Kept His Promise from the Grave*. It is the testimony of a life lived with courage, humor, inspiration and love told by a woman who has survived humanity's darkest hours but has never stopped believing in the goodness of people.

When Gabrielle first called me about her book, I assumed I would have a few limited conversations with her about the publishing world and that would be it. But I have gained more from our time together than I ever could have imagined. Her stories, struggles and courage have inspired me to reflect on my own life and choices and have given me the perspective I sometimes lack.

And now I understand clearly why Gabrielle had to write her book: She did it in order to make sense of why she survived when so many others did not.

"I had a duty" she told me with tears in her eyes, "because I was the one who survived." And I am so grateful she did.

Amy Hirshberg Lederman ([www.amyhirshberglederman.com](http://www.amyhirshberglederman.com)) is an award-winning, nationally syndicated columnist, author, Jewish educator, public speaker and

## A tidbit from Yom HaShoah

BY ELISSA ZIMMERMAN

So I don't know if you knew or not, but today was Yom HaShoah. Now this day, as I remember growing up, was very different than in Israel. I remember at Solomon Schechter, we would have an assembly, and there would be a moment of silence; but I knew that the only people who were keeping this moment of silence were the ones in the assembly hall with us. In Israel, there is a different feel.

It begins at sundown the day before when everything begins to close. It's strange because on Shabbat the buses don't run, but many places are still open, and things to do. And it's not like on Yom Kippur when you can literally walk in the middle of the highway because the only cars you will see will be police cars or ambulances. Today is different because, the night before everything closes, but transportation remains, the day is a normal work day, but the atmosphere is different. As sundown approaches, the music on the radio changes; it becomes more somber; the programs on TV change, as well, to documentaries, movies, all telling someone's story. We are all meant to remember, to learn, to never forget.

It always amazes me, this day, this day of remembrance, one of the two days throughout the year, where everything actually stops for a minute. Today, being the first, and next week, on Yom Hazikaron. It doesn't matter if you're home in bed, in the middle of a meeting, bicycling on the street, in your car, or on a bus on the highway. At 10:00 a.m., a siren rings throughout the entire country, and for a full minute, everything stops. You get out of bed to stand, you stand up in the middle of your meeting, you get off your bicycle, you step out of your car, and stop in the middle of the highway and stand in the bus to pay respect for one minute. And it's not just for those in an assembly, surrounded by others doing the same, because here, today, whether you see them or not, everyone is doing the same.

There's always so much going on here, it feels like we move at lightspeed, and yet today, for one minute, everything simply stopped.

Elissa Zimmerman is the daughter of columnist Sybil Kaplan. She made aliyah six years ago, went to a kibbutz ulpan, served two years in the Israeli army and completed the preparatory year at Tel Aviv University. She is hoping to attend Tel Aviv University next fall and lives in Tel Aviv. ★

attorney. Her new book *One God, Many Paths: Finding Meaning and Inspiration in Jewish Teachings* won the 2009 Arizona Book Publishing Association's Best Book Award on religion. ★



## Funsmith

BY BERNIE DEKOVEN

### Creating games

In the last issue of this very *Post & Opinion*, our beloved editor, her very self, opined: "As a young child or when one is very old, the desire to be better than the other player(s) becomes paramount. Because of this, when two of similar ages/abilities are playing, they both strive to win. However, if an adult is playing with a child or elderly person, the goal becomes different for the adult. The adult doesn't need to feel better by winning but wants to give the child or elderly person a chance to feel good about his or her ability to play..." And then went on to ask: "how (do we) teach the children to simply do their best, not compare themselves to others, and to look out for the needs of others?"

In games, the opportunity to measure yourself against other players is pretty much the heart of things. Not all games, of course. I mean, in paddy cake, for example, or cats cradle, for another, it's all about being better together. And in Alaska they play that toss-the-person-on-the-blanket game, which nobody really loses (unless the guy gets hurt, in which case everyone loses) and in Myanmar they play a beautiful game called *Chinlone*, where everybody just dances around in a circle, kicking a rattan ball around, trying to see how long they can keep it from hitting the ground. Which is kind of like how most people play Hacky Sack. And then there's just tossing a Frisbee around. But in the rest of games, from *Candyland* to football, being better than the other player or team is really what the whole thing is all about. And any attempt to make it easier, to let the other player win, is considered, in many ways, worse than cheating, as if it violated the very spirit of the game. Which, actually, it kind of does.

The only way I've found to lessen the sting of competition is by inventing new games or new sports, together, with everyone who wants to play. Rather than letting the other player win or handicapping my game for the sake of the weaker player, we change the game itself. So, for example, if we're playing soccer, we try to play it with three teams instead of two. Since there's no official rules for three-team soccer, we invent our own. And, as long as we're in the process of inventing our own game, the question is not so much about who is good enough to play the game as it is about if the game is good enough for us to play together. The game might not actually work. We may not really be able to tell who won or if anyone really lost. But we're having fun together,

which, if you ask me, is exactly what games are for.

If you remember, this is the way we used to play, back, as they say, in the day, when we played something like baseball, only we didn't have a baseball field to play in, or any other kind of field. In fact, we didn't have a baseball bat, either. And, in many cases, not even a baseball. So we played in the street and made bases out of cars and manhole covers, and bats out of sticks, and balls out of wads of aluminum foil or duct tape.

We didn't call them "street games." But that's what they became known as.

### The only way I've found to lessen the sting of competition is by inventing new games or new sports, together, with everyone who wants to play.

Most of the children who play street games find themselves having to change their games in order to meet the various exigencies of play – playing on the sidewalk is different from playing on a carpet or at a table. Playing with people of the same age is different from playing with older kids, or younger kids, or adults, or kids with different physical or mental abilities. Playing in the open, where others can join or where there are other games going on is again different. The rules for hide and seek are different if you're playing in the daytime, or in the dark, in the street, in the house – each variation in the environment in which a game is played or population playing it, leads to variations in the game itself.

The variability of street games and the circumstances in which they are played makes it possible, and often necessary, for the players to change the game they are playing – to choose an established variation or invent a new one. To evoke or create rules that compensate for the environment in which, and the people with whom, they are playing. Like the "do over" rule when a particular play wasn't clear, or the "interference" rule that deals with a car going through the playing area, or a telephone wire that prevents the ball from taking its hoped-for trajectory.

Children have little choice over the composition of the communities in which they find themselves. They may not especially like each other, or where they find themselves able to play, but they can only play with what they are given. Children make up their own games, or just think they are, because it is far easier for them to change the game than it is to change the people they are playing with.

[For a good example of this, read Jennie Cohen's editorial found on page NAT 2 of the following link: [http://www.jewish-postopinion.com/pdf/NAT\\_12-16-09.pdf](http://www.jewish-postopinion.com/pdf/NAT_12-16-09.pdf)].

All of these vicissitudes create the conditions in which players must also be designers. And when the players are the authors of the games they are playing, they are also the authorities who can determine how to make the game better. As veteran game designer Garry Shirts says: "the people who learn most from the game are the ones who get to design it."

I was invited, by a publisher called "Human Kinetics," a publisher of books for physical education, to write a book about games. I decided to take advantage of this opportunity to create a guide that would give kids a chance to make up their own games – because I wanted to provide them with an alternative to competition. Since most physical educators know next to nothing about game invention, and since it's not easy, even for kids, I eventually arrived at a concept I called "Junkyard Sports." Taking from what I understood about the nature of street games, my book contained more than 70 examples of sports played with the "wrong" equipment in the "wrong" environment with the "wrong" people – basketball played by kids and seniors in a hallway with balls made out of socks and baskets made out of grocery bags, soccer played on a set of stairs with ping pong balls and tennis racquets. The objective: to give kids and their teachers the tools and the inspiration that is fundamental to the street game experience.

I found the framing of "junkyard sports" to be an extremely useful tool with adults as well as children. Part of my work, as you saw from the clip of my playing in Israel, involves helping adults explore their own playfulness. Given the success of Junkyard Sports, I designed a team-building game I called "Junkyard Olympics." The challenge – given a collection of whatever junk you might find around you, and a field made up of conference tables, how could you create something closely resembling the Olympics?

Playing Junkyard Olympics with executives and managers, parents and caregivers, I found I could provide them with an opportunity to explore the dynamics of shared creativity, teamwork, and community building central to the street game experience, while arriving at many good reasons for laughing together. It turned out to be a game that was as healing as it was instructive, helping people cross corporate and social boundaries and create communities that could support playful interaction and genuinely creative thinking.

Recently, LEGO has come out with a line of board games that invite invention. The boards are made out of LEGOs. Which means, of course, that you can change the design of the board. Even the faces of the LEGO die can be changed. So, instead of there only being one way to play, there are infinite invitations to having fun together – offering children



## Second-hand blogs

BY ED WEILAND

### In praise of the bagel

This big brown bagel is the pride of my breakfast table, a stable nosh, by gosh, of my diet. It comes plain or whole grain, topped with poppy seeds or sesames, with cream cheese and lots of lox, it will knock you off your socks. With spam or ham, it's damn good. But kosher? *Noshir*, it is not!

Onion, garlic, pumpernickel (with a pickle on the side) or with just a *schmear* and an ice cold glass of beer, it will keep your belly satisfied and gratified.

Bagels are delicious and nutritious. When fully baked, take out your choppers before you bite. A well-baked bagel might break your fake pearly whites.

This roll with a hole looks like a donut but it is not. It could lie heavy in your gut. But that's what it's supposed to do. Gentile or Jew, Arab too, a bagel is the right midnight snack for you.

Ed Weiland of Indianapolis, Ind. lives in MorningSide, a senior living community. After nearly 50 years as a newspaper reporter and editor he retired from daily journalism and became the editor of a Florida magazine for several years until it went bust. Now he has returned full-time to his first love, poetry, and has developed a unique new style of verse, which he calls *Rhyme on Rhyme on Rhyme*. He has written nearly 1,000 verses on a wide range of topics – go to: [wegads.blogspot.com](http://wegads.blogspot.com). This one was written Dec. 8, 2005. ★

the same latitude as they have in street games. Inviting them to be as involved in creating a game as in playing it.

In a book called *The New Games Book* published in the late 1970s, Stewart Brand shares a fairly fundamental insight about all this. "You can't change a game by winning it, losing it or refereeing it or spectating it," he writes. "You change a game by leaving it, going somewhere else, and starting a new game. If it works, it will in time alter or replace the old game."

Bernie DeKoven of Indianapolis, Ind. 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, etc. 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. Which is what he hopes you will conclude from reading more about him on <http://deepfun.com/about.html>. ★

# A letter to Chancellor Renu Khator of the University of Houston

FROM RABBI JACK SEGAL

March 16, 2010

Dear Chancellor Khator,

I am an alumnus of the University of Houston, having received my Ed.D. degree there in 1973. However, this week I was appalled and exasperated, dismayed and disheartened when I read that on University of Houston grounds, there was going to be an anti-Israel campaign entitled “Israel Apartheid Week.”

I could not believe what my eyes read. To me this was incredible and unbelievable. *My Random House Dictionary of the English Language – The Unabridged Edition* defined “apartheid” as “racial segregation and discrimination against Negroes and others of colored descent.”

However, Israel is *not* a nation of segregation or discrimination. Israel is a land full of people of color. One million two hundred thousand of Israel’s 7,000,000 citizens are Arabs. They vote; they hold office; they attend Israeli universities; they become lawyers and doctors and everything else; they are judges, and more. Is this what makes Israel an apartheid state?

So, too, Israel does not discriminate against people of color. When it learned that 100,000 blacks in Ethiopia who claimed to be Jewish were starving and being maltreated in Ethiopia, it did not send them food packages as other nations did. It brought them to Israel. They had been living an 18th-century existence, in the 20th century, but now the children of those immigrants are in the Israeli army and its universities. They have become officers in the army and already one has graduated from medical school and one from law school, and when one achieves that goal, many will follow. Israel has taken them from the 18th century and quickly transported them and transplanted them into the 21st century. It’s not easy, but Israel’s attitude is: It must be done. Is this what makes Israel and apartheid state?

Israel has even set up a Save a Child’s Heart program at the Wolfson Medical Center in Holon, near Tel Aviv. It will provide cardiac treatment for at least 150 Palestinian children, and it will train in postgraduate pediatric care eight Palestinian physicians. In fact, recently the Save a Child’s Heart program operated on a black Haitian 6-year-old boy who was brought to Israel from Haiti by the Israeli rescue team. Is this what makes Israel an apartheid state?

Recently, Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren and Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon attempted to address university students at North American colleges, but they were shouted down by Muslim students so that they could not complete their speeches and exercise our constitutional right of

freedom of speech. The Israeli leaders were attempting to tell their audiences how peace between Israel and the Arab states could be achieved, but the Muslim students did not want American and Canadian students to hear their words. Is this what makes Israel an apartheid state?

So, too, we recently read how the American women’s tennis champion Venus Williams beat the Israeli women’s tennis champion Sahar Peer in the semifinals of the Dubai Championships. However, last year, 2009, Dubai and the United Arab Emirates did not permit Sahar to come to Dubai to compete in the tennis tournament. The only reason she was permitted to play this year, 2010, was because Venus unequivocally and unambiguously, plainly and loudly stated that she would not participate in the Dubai Championships if Sahar was once again denied entrance into Dubai. (Venus is to be highly commended for her courageous act.) But is this why Israel is to be labeled an apartheid state?

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**[One-seventh of Israel’s citizens are Arabs. They vote;...hold office;...attend Israeli universities;...become lawyers and doctors and everything else; they are judges, and more. Is this what makes Israel an apartheid state?**

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By allowing Israel Apartheid Week to be on the U of H campus, the university has allowed the terms “Israel” and “apartheid” to be joined together at the hip – a gigantic lie. This is what Goebels did in the 1930s and 1940s. And the bigger the lie and the more often it is repeated, the more it is believed. By associating Israel with apartheid South Africa, it becomes easy to shout for divestment, boycotts, and sanctions against Israel. Nelson Mandela, however, never associated Israel with the term “apartheid.”

Just think of it, there is a member of the Israeli Knesset named Jamal Zahalka, an Arab Muslim who heads one of two Arab parties in the Israeli parliament. He is presently going to give a lecture in England sponsored by the Oxford University Arab Cultural Society and also another talk at Cambridge. Then he will go to New York, then to Canada to speak at the University of Ottawa and McGill University. And what will be the subjects of his talks? He will be blasting the State of Israel, the country that is paying his salary. And the country pays his salary because he was democratically elected. Is this what makes Israel an apartheid state, paying the salary

of a man who constantly lambastes the country in which he is a citizen?

Yes, we cannot deny that Israel is not batting 1,000 in regard to human rights, but neither are Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., and surely not Libya, even though Libya chaired the UN Human Rights Commission. But there has never been an apartheid week at the U of H in regard to those nations – only in regard to Israel.

Why is it that no Jew may live in Gaza and no one states that Gazans should be labeled “apartheids,” and the same with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the other Arab states, while Israel has a population that is 20% Arab, and Israel is labeled “apartheid”? Why doesn’t the U.S. protest? Would our leadership be equally silent if our Houston leaders would proclaim “No blacks may live in Meyerland and no Hispanics in Memorial?” I doubt it.

However, have you ever asked yourself, “How many Jews live in Saudi Arabia?” Or, “May a Jew live in Saudi Arabia?” Or, “May Rabbi Jack Segal buy a piece of property or a home in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia?” Or, “Why can’t women vote in Saudi Arabia or drive a car by themselves in Saudi Arabia?” However, there has never been a public program at U of H linking Saudi Arabia and apartheid, only one linking Israel with apartheid.

Has anyone ever asked why a Muslim was recently sentenced to death by Jordan for selling a piece of property to a Jew? But it is Israel that is called apartheid.

Only last week, hundreds of Christians were butchered to death by Muslims in Nigeria, but no one states that that should be publicized at the U of H – only that Israel should be linked with apartheid.

In fact only recently, former President Jimmy Carter asked the Jewish community of America to forgive him for referring to Israel as an apartheid state. He even used the technical terminology of the Yom Kippur service – “Ol chet,” “Please forgive me for my sin.” However, the U of H ignores this and allows only one nation, Israel, to publicly be referred to as apartheid on its campus – and for an entire week.

Yes, there is “contested” territory upon which Israelis now live. It is “contested,” not “occupied.” Israel claims it and the Arabs claim it. But there is only one way to settle that problem – by discussions, not by Arabs forming groups of suicide bombers to kill countless innocent Israeli men, women, and children, on buses, in schools, in restaurants, in dance halls, at religious services, etc. These territories did not become “contested” when Israel invaded Arab territory. On the contrary, they became “contested” when the Arabs refused to accept the decision of the U.N. in November, 1947, when the U.N. gave birth to a single Jewish state, the state of Israel. The Arabs already had 22 nations.

Five Arab states immediately attempted to make this birth of Israel a stillborn and invaded Israel. The Arabs precipitated wars with Israel in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, and then two Intifadas. The

Arabs lost territory because they attempted to obliterate Israel that the U.N. had created. Israel simply attempted to protect itself and its citizens – and won this territory. The Arabs now should sit down with Israel to discuss this “contested” territory, not send suicide bombers into Israel to kill innocent people.

In fact, from 1948 through 1967 the Egyptians controlled Gaza – and never once was there a desire to make that territory a Palestinian state. So, too, from 1948 to 1967 the Jordanians controlled the West Bank. (These two territories were captured by the Egyptians and Jordanians during the 1948 war.) But the Jordanians also never made mention of creating a Palestinian nation.

It was only after the Six Day War, a war the Arab nations precipitated, that the Arab nations developed the desire to create a Palestinian State – and the purpose was obvious, to rescind and abrogate the birth of the Israeli state that had been initiated by the U.N.

Israel hoped after the 1967 war that the Arab states would enter peace negotiations with Israel, but these hopes were dashed and shattered in August, 1967, when Arab leaders meeting in Khartoum adopted a formula of three no’s:

1. No peace with Israel;
2. No negotiations with Israel;
3. No recognition of Israel.

I ask, the Arab states proclaim three no’s and Israel is labeled apartheid. The logic escapes me.

Yes, it is true that Israel presently is building a fence between itself and the area occupied by Arabs. But that is being done for defensive reasons. Prior to the fence (and in a handful of areas as well), Arab suicide bombers regularly slipped across the border and killed scores and scores of innocent Israeli people. By the building of the fence, that number has precipitously been lowered. It is no longer easy to cross the Israeli border to detonate explosives amongst civilian populations – which also included many innocent Israeli Arabs.

The fence never would have been built if the Palestinian Arabs would have accepted Israel’s offer of peace in 2000. Israel was willing to give the Palestinians 97% of the West Bank, all of Gaza, a 5% exchange of land, East Jerusalem, and compensation for Arab refugees who left their households in 1948. (This was offered even though 800,000 Jews had been expelled from their homes in Arab countries.) But Palestinian leaders refused this offer – and did not even make a counter offer – and what did they do? They initiated the Second Intifada — more killings of innocent Israeli civilians.

Israel had no choice but to build the fence in order to keep these suicide bombers out of Israeli territory, and because of this, the number of civilian fatalities and murders plummeted downward.

Building these fences was like taking the flu vaccine. It was a preventative measure. We get vaccinated in order not

(see Segal, page NAT 12)



## Yom HaShoah

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

### To mourn, to remember, to rejoice

The German Jewish Political Theorist, Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), wrote during the trial of Adolph Eichmann in Israel: “It was as though in those last minutes he (Eichmann) was summing up the lessons that this long course in human wickedness had taught us – the lesson of the fearsome, word-and-thought-defying banality of evil.” Perhaps she actually compacted into one sentence the sum total of what the Holocaust was and remains in most memories until this very moment in time. Will that be the legacy that will be inherited by the future generations of the unconcerned?

Much has been said, written, and depicted about the Holocaust. We continually say that we can never fully describe the death and destruction because to some it was just as Eichmann thought, an incidental happening, something that was not out of the ordinary. It is this kind of evil that trivializes, and even glamorizes murder on such a large scale.

And yet, here we are, commemorating the anniversary of such an atrocity. Human minds can't fully comprehend the mindless torture of people because we want to forget. We mark the day with solemn utterances and, in Israel, the sirens sound and the shrillness of that cadence gives us time to reflect. But then, once the siren has ended its call to remembrance, we continue with everyday living.

That exercise of continuity doesn't diminish the loss but rather enables us to continue with life because that is the essence of their sacrifice. We cannot just die but rather live to not only remember but to inform and remind. This is our solemn obligation and its fulfillment destroys the Eichmann's of the world as they attempt to minimize and even deny the actuality of the horror.

Today we are witnessing a return to the civilized becoming the beasts. The Haman of today sits in a corner of the world that gave birth to civilization as we know it and displays a disdain for the very enlightenment that elevated us from the depths of depravity to the heights of morality. How is this possible?

The answer can be found in one word: Indifference. The world does not want to concentrate on such iniquity. Life is too short to focus on bad things. Therefore people of good will ignore the hurt and settle on ignoring the truth. It is a sad commentary about society and could

even be a motivation for attempting a repeat of such cruelty and dehumanization.

Golda Meir was quoted as saying: “There is no difference between one's killing and making decisions that will send others to kill. It's exactly the same thing, or even worse.” Denying truth and even ignoring it, to me, is tantamount to participating in the deed. Turning a blind eye to tragedy makes us accomplices.

The Holocaust will remain a symbol of man's inhumanity to man for eternity. The remembrance of the Holocaust will ensure that future generations will understand the darkness the enveloped the Earth and the depths to which we are capable of descending. We have met Satan and Satan is us!

How can this chapter ever be closed? There will never be closure because that would desecrate the memory of those who perished, who have no one to remember their existence. We are committed to immortalizing their memories so that their souls will remain bound up in a common bond of weeping that will forever be heard around the world and beyond.

#### Yom Hazikaron/HaAtzmaut

We learn in Pesikta Buber: “He who defends Israel is uplifted by God.”

The sacrifices made by the men and women who serve in the Israel military are doing just that. Make no mistake – the survival of the Jewish People rests with the brave defenders of the land. Each and every Israeli understands that to lose one war is equivalent to losing it all. Each day they are thrust into harm's way because of the dangers that exist is their corner of the world.

I have seen their dedication and devotion. I have seen their willingness to put their lives on the line to continue the dream that was dormant for so many millennia and was realized in our time. They dream and they laugh and they love and at the same time understand that to be able to do all these things requires vigilance and determination.

Their zeal is recognized by their countrymen each year as a time devoted to the memory of those who have fallen in their defense. It is the ultimate gesture of gratitude.

And as Golda Meir also said: “We Jews have a secret weapon in our struggle with the Arabs: We have no place to go.” Each and every man, woman and child understand this and therefore is ready and willing to give their utmost to the country carved out of a barren wasteland and formed into a thriving re-birth of a People.

Immediately following this solemn moment we rejoice in our renewal. The longing of the ages has been fulfilled. We are home. We are in Eretz Yisrael. The land of our deliverance and redemption.

David Ben Gurion was fond of saying the State of Israel will prove itself not by material wealth, not by military might or technical achievement, but by its moral character and human values. Idealism at



## Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

### The Pope, Charles Rangel and Health Reform

The Pope apologizes but seems unrepentant to the people of Ireland, who feel betrayed by the church's hiding of predatory priests. Representative Charles Rangel gives up his post in the House of Representatives but runs free politically. We have a new health bill – it looks wonderful, but why are we so nervous.

As my Bubbie was wont to say, “It looks fine, but it doesn't smell fine.”

Why not? Because we sense that all of the actions taken by the Catholic Church and Jewish schools and organizations have never come to a point of laying everything on the table. It is, apparently, much more that we can imagine. With regard to the Church, it has been widely discussed that predatory pedophilia is only one part of the issue. There are other issues such as predatory priests and women parishioners who came for counseling were subjected to intimacy, widespread homosexuality in the Catholic orders, and child and adult pornography. Carefully scripted requests for forgiveness, don't ring true, because the Catholic masses can feel the lack of honesty.

Jewish schools, camps, youth organizations have hidden, covered up and spared predators from shame and

its best. But the reality is that Israel has done all these things and more.

Israel has shown the world that its determination and fortitude enabled it to grow and flourish and enhance the life of all humanity through its technological achievements and its military prowess. It has helped the world understand that contributions to science and industry have advanced life giving us the ability to reap the rewards of God's benevolence. The People of Israel did and continue to do all that even as it lives through danger from outside forces.

Perhaps the words of Chaim Potok summarize the aspirations of a People who have survived untold tragedies and unimaginable horrors: “My father often spoke in military terms: The Jews were the vanguard of mankind, the reconnaissance troops, and therefore prone to taking the highest casualties. But we would succeed one day in establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth. Of that he had no doubt.”

Rabbi Irwin Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. Send comments to [ravvitz@cox.net](mailto:ravvitz@cox.net). ★

prosecution, but have put other children, women and men at risk.

Mr. Rangel and the recently deceased Congressman Murtha were old-time politicians, who were protected by their colleagues, and never censored in any meaningful way. The Congress is, after all, a club, and clubs have rules.

The president speaks about transparency, but the people around him, less naive than he politically, continue to speak the new language but play by the old rules.

In this highly charged political environment, in an election year, it is not surprising that even those people celebrating and cheering the recent health bill are hoping that their good intentions do not lead us into another debacle.

We have not yet emerged from the slime of the recent mortgage tragedy. We need to remember that in the beginning of the effort to help all Americans buy homes, there were equally good resolves. The public, you and I included, applauded the efforts to help minorities and women own homes. What happened did so because no one was minding the store when greed set in. The “fall from grace” was not caused only by felons and slime balls, but the “suits” in banks and investment companies that were just as greedy, setting up subsidiaries to do the work that they didn't want to have in their offices. They bought packages of mixed mortgages with the full knowledge that they were gambling with all of our futures, and worst of all, the majority of all these perpetrators have escaped, many with the blood money they stole, while the rest of us have seen the values of our homes fall, and our future dreams put in jeopardy.

The hope of health reform can only happen if we enter into a new millennium of honesty, safeguards and safeguarding, and there is no reason for any of us to be confident that it will happen.

Thirty-two million new people being covered is either one of the greatest steps in our time to enable the poor to have access to health services, or one of the largest opportunities in history for public and private fraud.

There is a movement across the country to throw the whole congress out, the babies with the bathwater, and you can understand the enthusiasm. To get this bill passed, there were hundreds if not thousands of private deals, and we have little reason to believe that the present Congress has the will to make sure that this great moment will be spared from the last.

We are not, at present, believers in the ability of government to serve the people.

As we recently celebrated Passover, a moment in history when the Almighty demonstrated his Hand in our lives, we need to pray that He continues to protect us from those who are our enemies, and those who appear to be our friends.

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## Holocaust Educator

By MIRIAM ZIMMERMAN

### Yom HaShoah Haggadah not only for Jews

"If I had been alive in Europe during World War II, I would have saved Jews," student after student from my Holocaust course would proclaim to me privately in my office some 15 years ago. These non-Jewish students proudly proclaimed their righteous indignation and thus demonstrated their moral integrity.

As an inexperienced Holocaust educator at a Catholic university, I would patiently point out that trying to save Jews would put one's entire family in danger. The more I explained about the risks and difficulties of doing so and gave examples, the longer their faces became. It was as if I were puncturing their balloon of moral courage. I missed what we educators call a "teaching moment."

Fortunately, I soon figured out a better response. After briefly explaining the challenges for anyone attempting to harbor Jews, I asked them to think about what might be the moral equivalent today to saving Jews during the Holocaust. I asked them point-blank, "In a world full of injustice, in need of repair and healing, what are you doing today that equates to saving Jews during the Third Reich?" Most do not have an answer.

We brainstorm social justice issues that might be equivalent today, and what they personally, as college students, could do. My goal is to help them create a bridge between moral thought and moral behavior, to translate their pious energy about the past into activism in the present.

We talk about choices and the impact of not making a choice. Is ignoring social injustice a choice? If not already presented in class, I introduce the idea of the bystander. My goal is to create motivation for students to fight social injustice. I might not succeed with everyone. At the very least, I no longer have students leaving my office dejected. At best, I will have facilitated the birth of a social activist.

As this year's Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) approaches, I think of the many ways we can commemorate the Holocaust. One way would be for all of us to become social activists, helping to repair and heal the world one issue at a time. The slogan "Never again!" would refer to all people, everywhere. A remembering population would understand what can happen when good people choose to do nothing.

There are so many ways to remember the Holocaust – from worship services to

museums, to college courses and degrees in the Holocaust, to art and literature about the Holocaust and to holidays devoted to Holocaust memory.

Why is one Holocaust Remembrance Day different from another? Jews can choose between January 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD); or Nisan 27 (April 11, 2010), Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah V'HaGevurah) to commemorate the Holocaust. The United Nations General Assembly established the former in 2005. The Israeli Knesset established the latter in 1951. In my opinion, one should observe both.

However, I remember feeling disappointed at the selection of the January 27 date, the date on which Auschwitz was liberated by Russian soldiers. Associating Holocaust remembrance with Auschwitz emphasizes Jews as victims. Associating Holocaust remembrance with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising emphasizes their resistance. I would like heroism and not victimage to be the organizing principle for any Holocaust remembrance.

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**"Now Yom HaShoah occurs one week away from Yom Ha'atzmaut, and nothing could more profoundly capture the fundamental relationship of Holocaust and Israel than that positioning..."**

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According to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) website, the United States "officially commemorates the Holocaust during Days of Remembrance, which is held each April, marking the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. The USHMM is mandated by the U.S. Congress to lead the nation in commemorating this day." In the United States, resistance and not victimage is emphasized in Holocaust remembrance.

The USHMM has a webpage: [www.ushmm.org/remembrance/dor](http://www.ushmm.org/remembrance/dor), for the 2010 observance. This year's theme is "Stories of Freedom: What You Do Matters." It suggests that lessons of the Holocaust apply to everyday life, consistent with my goal to motivate students to bridge the gap between moral thought and moral courage, as a preface to social activism.

New this year, or at least new to me, was an interactive link on the USHMM website, "Share your thoughts." The Museum invites users of the webpage to talk about their local Holocaust

commemoration and answer the question, "How will you remember?"

You can even join Yom HaShoah 2010 on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall&ref=ts&gid=107414569281643](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall&ref=ts&gid=107414569281643), to publish your responses. There is a movement on Facebook for everyone to change their Facebook pictures to that of a Holocaust victim on April 11, thus visually commemorating the Holocaust in cyberspace.

The USHMM also has a presence on Twitter. To post your Tweets about Holocaust remembrance, go to <http://twitter.com/holocaustmuseum?tr=y&uid=6163026>. Since I am a Twitter-holdout and have not yet joined, I cannot peruse the site to get a sense of what people are Tweeting about. But what impresses me is that the USHMM is using all available electronic media to commemorate the Holocaust.

The Jewish Virtual Library in its article on Yom HaShoah describes the tension between Orthodox Jewish religious leaders who want to relegate Holocaust remembrance to Tisha b'Av, "the day in which Judaism ritualizes its most horrible destructions," and those, like Rabbi Yitzhak Greenberg, who call for a new holiday. The article nicely sums up the history of Yom HaShoah at [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/yomhashoah.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/yomhashoah.html).

The question arises, how best to remember the Holocaust? In my P&O article of March 10, 2010 titled, "Need new ritual and liturgy to commemorate the Shoah," I suggested that "the Holocaust and the subsequent birth of the State of Israel is no less of an event in Jewish history than the Exodus and the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. The Jewish people need to commemorate the Shoah in as emotionally healthy ways as we do the trauma of the Exodus, at yearly Passover *seders*. Judaism needs to develop a similar ritual and liturgy...."

Little did I know that Rabbi Avi Weiss has already accomplished just that with his *Haggadah for the Yom HaShoah Seder*, of which three used copies are available on Amazon.com. I decided to check other bookstores, searching on "Yom HaShoah." Barnes and Noble online offered a book titled, *The Third Seder: A Haggadah for Yom HaShoah* by Irene Lilienheim Angelico and Yehudi Lindeman with a publication date of September 2010. You can preorder it either from Barnes and Noble or from Borders.

Rabbi Weiss, Irene Lilienheim Angelico with Yehudi Lindeman, and this writer, presumably all unconnected, have each come up with the idea of a Yom HaShoah seder. There may be more out there who feel the need for such a ritual. The great psychoanalyst Carl Jung coined a word, "synchronicity," to describe this phenomenon. It is as if we Jews are collectively experiencing the need to mourn, to sanctify, and to remember the Holocaust in new ways.

Rabbi Yitzhak Greenberg, author of the *Broken Covenant* theory – the subject

for another column – would agree. In his article "Setting a Date for Yom HaShoah" available at [www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish\\_Holidays/Modern\\_Holidays/Yom\\_HaShoah/Choosing\\_a\\_Date.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Modern_Holidays/Yom_HaShoah/Choosing_a_Date.shtml), Rabbi Greenberg points out that "...the Holocaust is increasingly revealed as the fundamental watershed in Jewish and human history after which nothing will ever be the same. It is one of those reorienting moments of Jewish history and religion when basic conceptions of God, of humanity, and of Jewish destiny shift."

The prominent rabbi sees Yom HaShoah as a link between Passover and Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day. He concludes his article with these thoughts: "Now Yom HaShoah occurs one week away from Yom Ha'atzmaut, and nothing could more profoundly capture the fundamental relationship of Holocaust and Israel than that positioning. The State of Israel is not a reward or a product or an exchange for the Holocaust; it is a response. The Jewish people responded to the total assault of death by an incredible outpouring of life. The survivors came and rebuilt their lives. Jewish life was made precious again. The great biblical symbol that, according to the prophets, would someday prove that the covenant had endured is the reestablishment and repopulation of the land of Israel."

On Yom HaShoah in Israel, sirens bring the entire nation to a standstill. In the weeks before our local service, sponsored by a consortium of synagogues and Jewish organizations, teenagers interviewed survivors and wrote their stories.

Our local observance began with the reading of names of survivors and victims related to those in our community. Observers participated in a stone ceremony by collecting a stone or stones from the foyer and placing them in a basket in the front of the sanctuary. This act symbolizes the rite of placing a pebble on a tombstone in a cemetery, so appropriate because there are no gravestones for victims who were cremated or for those left in mass graves.

The sound of the shofar transitioned everyone from the recital of names to the prayer service. The young people read the bios of the survivors they interviewed as the survivor walked down the center aisle to light one of six candles. Clergy from different congregations, both Jewish and Christian, read selections from survivor testimony.

Our local theme this year was "Separation for Survival: Remembering the Kindertransport." Ralph Samuel, the special guest speaker, described his experience on the Kindertransport to England at the age of 7-1/2. The Kaddish of Remembrance included "the names of concentration camps and ghettos memorializing all those who perished in the Holocaust." One of the cantors chanted "El Maleh Rachamim," the

(see Zimmerman, page NAT 19)

# When the actress became an activist: Stella Adler and the Holocaust

BY DR. RAFAEL MEDOFF

*An interview with Tom Oppenheim, grandson of the famous actress, on Stella's legacy of acting and activism*

What do Robert DeNiro, Marlon Brando, Tova Feldshuh, Salma Hayek, and hundreds of other Hollywood and Broadway stars have in common? They were all trained by Stella Adler, a famed actress in the 1930s and 1940s who became one of America's most renowned acting coaches. But there was another side to Stella Adler, which the public has heard little about: her role in the Bergson Group's activist campaign to rescue Jews from the Holocaust.

Stella's grandson, Tom Oppenheim, is artistic director of the Stella Adler Studio of Acting, in New York City. In recent months, Tom has been working with the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies to unearth this fascinating chapter in the life of his illustrious grandmother.

**Medoff:** *Is it fair to say that Stella had acting in her blood?*

**Oppenheim:** She did, almost literally. The Adler family was known as the "First Family of Yiddish Theater." Her father, Jacob P. Adler, was a major force in the Yiddish theater in Russia – until it was outlawed by the Czar. He fled to London, then to the Lower East Side of New York City, in search of artistic freedom. He understood theater as a means to grow for actor and audience alike, theater as a means to elevate, educate, and civilize humanity.

**Medoff:** *When did Stella begin taking an interest in political activism?*

**Oppenheim:** I trace her activist roots to her work with Harold Clurman's Group Theater, starting in 1931. They focused on what they called the "living problems of our time." They wanted their plays to be "relevant to the audience for which they are presented." In 1934, Stella traveled to Paris to work with the acting coach Constantine Stanislavsky. She brought Stanislavsky's method of acting – infusing the character with heartfelt passion and realism – to American theater.

**Medoff:** *What was it about the Bergson Group that attracted Stella?*

**Oppenheim:** She was deeply impressed by the group's leaders, people such as Peter Bergson and Samuel Merlin – she called them "aristocrats of the mind." But more than the people, it was the cause, the plight of the Jews in Europe and Palestine that captivated her.

Stella joined the Bergson Group in



*Fellow Bergson Group activists Dean Alfange (L) and Alex Rafaeli (R) with Stella Adler, in 1943.*

1942, a year after the Group Theater disbanded, and the same year the Allies confirmed the news of the mass murder of Europe's Jews. As a member of the executive committee of the Bergson Group, she not only lent her powerful name to the cause, but she also gave speeches, hosted meetings at her home, and recruited fellow actors and entertainers, including Bob Hope, Groucho Marx, Paul Robeson, Vincent Price, and Frank Sinatra.

Stella once led a Bergson mission to the Mexican Jewish community, where she delivered the keynote speech at a rally, in Yiddish. One of her colleagues wrote, "She spoke a beautiful Yiddish, a beautiful woman with a beautiful soul. Tall, graceful, proud like a prophetess of old, her words poured out of her soul like a furious fire."

Frankly, I am not surprised by her activism, her bravery, the outrage she must have felt at the Roosevelt administration for its policy of refusing to rescue the Jews of Europe, and the gall she must have felt toward those of her fellow American Jews who were silent. She was conditioned through a lifetime of engagement with theater and the arts, through the example of courage and fortitude of her parents and Harold Clurman, and through her own indomitable spirit, to not remain silent but to fight for humanity.

**Medoff:** *She also contributed her theatrical talent to the Bergson Group's campaign.*

**Oppenheim:** Yes, she performed in a piece for the stage written by a fellow Bergson Group member, the Academy Award-winning screenplay writer Ben Hecht, called, *We Will Never Die*. It was staged at Madison Square Garden in 1943 and helped make the public aware of the Nazi mass murders. She also played a key part in organizing Hecht's play *A Flag Is Born*, which raised awareness of the Displaced Persons, and raised funds for the creation of a Jewish state.

*Flag* was directed by Stella's brother

Luther, who was also active in the Bergson Group. It starred Paul Muni, Stella's half-sister Celia, and a young Marlon Brando, prior to his legendary performance in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Brando was one of Stella's top students, and she recruited him for *Flag*. In the end, not only did *Flag* help promote the Zionist cause, but the Bergson Group and the NAACP also used it to bring down the barriers of racial segregation in Maryland's theaters. It's an amazing episode that almost nobody knows about, and I'm pleased to be working with the Wyman Institute to bring it to greater public attention.

**Medoff:** *How has your awareness of Stella's activism influenced your own work?*

**Oppenheim:** I became artistic director of the Stella Adler Studio of Acting in 1995, three years after my grandmother's passing. I was very young; in fact, many of my faculty members were older than I, with more wisdom and experience. What I did have was a lifetime of experience of the Adler home, family, and memories. I have often asked myself the question, "What might an actor do in the face of atrocity, of injustice?"

We have responded with the Stella Adler Outreach Division, whose dual mission is to bring free actor training to inner-city youth while providing a model of social engagement for full-time students. For me, as guardian of a vital tradition and legacy, the important thing is that the question is asked, that our community is challenged to see the world outside themselves, outside of the theater, in a way that informs the work we do inside the theater. Stella Adler answered the question resoundingly with her whole life: You act, you raise your voice, and you fight for humanity.

*Dr. Medoff is director of The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, [www.WymanInstitute.org](http://www.WymanInstitute.org).* ★



*Prior to a 1943 Bergson rally honoring Sweden and Denmark for rescuing Jews from Hitler, Stella Adler is seen signing a petition to President Roosevelt urging the U.S. to follow those countries' example. Standing next to her is Mrs. Ruth Bryan Own Rhode, former U.S. minister to Denmark and chair of the rally.*

## A child of survivors speaks out



BY RABBI DR. BERNHARD H. ROSENBERG

I personally feel no guilt for having the God-given privilege of being alive. I mourn for my grandparents, uncles, and aunts who perished at the hands of Nazi maniacs; often weeping for not having experienced their love. I cry in anguish when reminded that six million of my brethren, young and old, left this earth via gas chambers and crematoriums. I sense the pain of my family and friends who saw their elders shot before their very eyes and their babies hurled against brick walls and bayoneted. I experienced deep anger when I viewed the numbers branded on the arm of my father, of blessed memory. Yet I thanked God for sparing the lives of my beloved parents.

Yes, I blame humanity for remaining silent while my innocent brethren perished screaming in terror for someone to heed their outcries. Humanity; not God. We are not puppets to be controlled by our Creator. People caused the Holocaust; people remained silent. Leaders of countries refused to intercede on behalf of the defenseless.

Should I then hate humanity? Should I live with anger in my heart, rebelling against the environment, rejecting those of other faiths and cultures? Perhaps I should bend in fear like a blade of grass when the winds of anti-Semitism turn toward me. Perhaps I should walk along the rocky paths of society fearing what the future may bring.

I openly and candidly answer in the negative. No, I will not live in a shell of neurotic chaos, and I will not reject society. I refuse to live in a world which rejects hope, receiving nourishment from the seeds of hatred.

I admire and respect my beloved parents, Jacob and Rachel, of blessed memory, and honor them for their strength and courage. Even Auschwitz could not diminish their faith. They could have rejected humanity; instead they aided others in their daily fight for existence. No, a world of anger and hostility was not their banner.

Now that I am an orphaned adult, I appreciate even more the impact that my parents had upon me. All that I am and all that I ever will be I owe to them. They instilled within me pride and fortitude; their motto became my personal outcry, "Never Again!"

Refuse to discuss the Holocaust? Sweep these memories under the rug? No. This is not our mission to the world and ourselves. Let the truth be known! Let others realize what the world did to an ethical, moral and religious populace. Let them hear the testimony of valiant survivors. Let them see our courage.

(see Rosenberg, page NAT 19)



## Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

### Yom HaShoah

When we lived in Overland Park, Kan., the community held an annual Yom HaShoah ceremony, usually on the Sunday before, at the Jewish Community Center, followed by a special ceremony at the Holocaust memorial in the front of the campus. Six candles would be lit by members of the community – usually a survivor and a survivor's child or grandchild or both. There was a featured speaker, and the ghetto defenders song would be sung in Yiddish. Frequently, during a portion of the program, survivors would be asked to stand, then their children, then their grandchildren. It always seemed to me for a small Jewish community of some 22,000 Jews we had a disproportionately large amount of survivors.

Now I am in Israel and tonight I went to our small Conservative synagogue of just 140 families, where perhaps 50 people of all ages came. But it was the program that was so special and probably not well known outside of Israel.

In 2003 *Megillat HaShoah – the Shoah Scroll* was published: “a milestone in the transformation of Yom HaShoah into a sacred day within the cycle of the Jewish year.”

According to then president of the Rabbinical Assembly in Jerusalem (and member of our congregation), Rabbi Reuven Hammer, this is a book that “tells the story of the Shoah in brief but powerful passages.” Rabbi David Golinkin (a member of our congregation also) and then president of the Schechter Institute wrote that it was hoped this scroll would be accepted by *Klal Yisrael* “as a meaningful way to commemorate the memory of the Holocaust for generations.”

Also in the introduction is an explanation of its origins by Toronto Rabbi Philip S. Schein, expressing the hope that the *Megillat HaShoah* would be read on Yom HaShoah in synagogues and communities.

If your synagogue has not heard of this, contact the Conservative movement before next year. It will be well worth the effort.

Our ceremony included the reading of the *Megillah* interspersed with a choir and ending with *Kaddish* and the singing of *Hatikvah*.

The day was strange, weather-wise. It was cloudy in a sandy way, with strong winds from the desert and things getting into your eyes, like a preparation for the unsettling day to come.

Next day, promptly at 10 the sirens blew. Traffic stops. People stop their cars, get out and stand outside at attention. Only Arab cars and taxis move. It is an emotionally charged 60 seconds.

### Jerusalem Intellitour Provides “Insiders” Approach to News Cycle Issues

The first time I heard Miri Eisin was in January 2003 when, as a member of the National Board of Hadassah, we came for our midwinter board meeting. I was utterly blown away by her knowledge and the presentation.

Today, she is seven years older, a retired colonel from the Israel Defense Forces, mother of children 6, 9 and 11 years old; teacher at the Interdisciplinary College (a private college for undergraduate and graduate degrees, largely taught in English) in Herzliya; teacher of Arab-Israel Conflict for the tour guides course and a licensed tour guide.

She served 20 years in the Israeli intelligence community. She was government spokesperson during the Second Lebanon War; then she became the prime minister's international media advisor. She has worked with Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert and Benjamin Netanyahu.

Today, she guided a group of foreign journalists on a tour focusing on geo-strategies and complexities of life in Jerusalem, the capital.



Jerusalem building facing “no-man’s land” 1948–1967. (Note: Facade is *not* made of Jerusalem stone.)

As we drove through East Jerusalem, she explained the 19-year city line (1948 – 1967) between east and west Jerusalem, which is now known as road #1. This area was based on the perimeter of “no-man’s land” and was full of barbed wire. On our left was Israel proper, with the only apartment buildings not built of Jerusalem stone, because they were on the border. On the right, we passed the Mandelbaum house, which between 1948 and 1967 became the crossing point between Israel and Jordan.

### Looking toward the Northern Ridge

Starting at the northern edge of Jerusalem, we stood on a Biblical hill known as Geva or Tel El Ful lookout point, recorded in the Book of Judges, possibly as the home of Saul. At that site today is the unfinished palace of Jordan's late King Hussein.

The United Nations General Assembly decided in November 1947 in UN decision 181 that Jerusalem would be an international city following the corpus separatum line, which included Bethlehem, Abu Dis, El Azariya, Bet Sahur and Ein Karem. It never came to be, and there has never been another plan.

She then explained the city municipal lines and the Jerusalem lines defined in June 1967 by Moshe Dayan after the Six-Day War, on the northern edge, when



Unfinished palace of the late King Hussein of Jordan. Photo credit: All photos by Barry A. Kaplan.

the government decided Jerusalem would be the unified capital. Because Dayan felt every capital should have an airport, this included the international airport at Atarot and landing strip, which functioned until October 2000.

Beyond that is Ramallah, capital of the Palestinian Authority.

She pointed out the Ramat Shlomo ultra-Orthodox neighborhood on the ridge that fell between the 1947 and 1967 lines as well as the upper-middle-class Arab neighborhood of Shuafat whose inhabitants became part of Israel as residents in 1967.

Below us, in the bottom of the valley, are the Jewish neighborhoods of Nebi Samuel, Pisgat Ze'ev and Givon, outside municipal lines.

Digressing for a moment, Mrs. Eisin explained that in January 1949, after the creation of the State, Israeli Arabs within the perimeter of the State were given full citizenship. In 1967 with the reunification of Jerusalem, Israel offered citizenship to any Arab who renounced Jordanian citizenship and declared allegiance to the State of Israel.

Those who opted for residency receive social and medical benefits, free education, social welfare benefits and can vote in municipal elections. Today, 35% of the Jerusalem constituency is Arabs but they do not hold Israeli passports.

### April 13 – a Special Tribute

We then drove through the blue-collar,



Miri Eisin (left), a retired colonel in the IDF and our guide for the trip, with Sybil Kaplan by The Hadassah Hospital Convoy Memorial in Sheikh Jarrah.

Arab neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, past the Shepherd Hotel, bought by an investor with an agenda; this is opposite the Garden of Kings, a grove of olive trees purchased and waiting for rezoning and around the bend to where sits the British Consulate today.

On April 13, 1947, the largest Hadassah hospital convoy ever assembled prepared to take personnel, visitors, patients and supplies up to Mount Scopus hospital. There were two buses, three trucks, two Haganah escort cars, and two ambulances with over 100 people. At the Nashishibi Bend, a mine detonated and Arabs attacked the convoy. The attack continued all day. Pleas to intercede to the British were ignored.

Today the black marble memorial with 76 names sits at Nashishibi Bend and Miri Eisin and I stood there, both life members of Hadassah and paid a silent tribute.



Map depicting the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem 1967 to present.

Today, “Jerusalem is a mosaic of different neighborhoods,” said Mrs. Eisin. “Israelis agree Jerusalem is the undivided capital. There are issues and the municipality says, let Jerusalemites decide the future of Jerusalem. There are no easy resolutions on Jerusalem,” she concludes.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, book reviewer, food columnist and feature writer who moved from Overland Park, Kan., to Jerusalem in September 2008. ★



## Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

### Mamet strikes again – *Race* on Broadway

David Mamet continues to make his impact on Broadway – with his latest explosive drama, *Race*, now on stage at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre. This time the subject moves even further from his Jewish roots, as the title indicates, and focuses on black/white relations. But it is still Mamet territory, with many of the playwright's familiar techniques. It is all talk, talk, talk as the four characters attack each other – verbally, that is. Typical of Mamet, *Race* is about character, not plot development. The plot deals with what has happened and will happen, not what is momentarily happening on stage. But Mamet's sharp, quick, insightful dialogue, thrust like spears across the footlights, has a jolting effect on listeners and brings his characters to life.

Being Jewish may bring a particular sensitivity to the plight of any minority group. And indeed Mamet's *Race* does a monumental job in exploring minority issues. In taking on black/white relations, he examines the attendant guilt, shame, and pretenses of each group. As characters put up defenses, Mamet moves relentlessly and ever more deeply into his subject matter. As a result, viewers find themselves reexamining their own emotions and thoughts on this subject.

Specifically, *Race* deals with a white man who has been arrested for the rape of a black woman. She has brought the charges, even though they had previously had consensual sex. The drama unfolds in the law offices of Lawson and Brown, where the defendant, one Charles Strickland, is asking that the two lawyers take on his case. The lawyers, the black Henry Brown and the white Jack Lawson, put Strickland through a grilling routine, as they search out the truth. Further complicating the mix with



Pictured L to R: James Spader, David Alan Grier as Henry Brown, and Richard Thomas as Charles Strickland in David Mamet's *Race*. Photo credit: Robert J. Saferstein.

her own agenda is Susan, a nubile young black woman who works in the Brown/Lawson office. Basic to the case is a red sequined dress, a reference with political reverberations and calls to mind the Bill Clinton/Monica Lewinsky incident.

How the case is resolved, of course, will not be revealed here. But resolution matters little to Mamet, and in fact is secondary to his purpose. It is the means, not the end, that fuel this and other Mamet plays.

This excellent production with its cast of four fine players (Richard Thomas, James Spader, David Alan Grier, and Kerry Washington) does full justice to Mamet's work. *Race* does what a play is meant to do. The viewer comes away, not only shaken, but altered by the experience.

#### Rudolf II – Madman, Monster, Mystic or Modern Man

In choosing the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II (1552–1612) as the hero (or anti-hero) of his current piece, playwright Edward Einhorn has taken on an enormous challenge. How to depict this “Rudolf II,” seen by historians as such a controversial figure? In a world more Medieval than Renaissance, this Catholic monarch was tolerant of Jews (and Protestants, too). In fact, he took on a “Converso,” a Jew converted to Catholicism, as his lover. It was a time when anti-Semitism was rampant, but Rudolf rose above the widespread bigotry.

Was he mad, depraved, visionary – or a mix of all three? Was he hopelessly disconnected from the world around him – or ahead of his time? In any event, endowed with the absolute power of office, he followed his own star.

History suggests that he was homosexual or bisexual (he had numerous affairs with both men and women, some of the latter claiming to have been impregnated by him). He was depicted as thoroughly preoccupied with sexual

adventure and experimentation. As to his mental competence, historians have labeled him as bipolar (he suffered from the bouts of “melancholy” so familiar to the Hapsburg line). In later years, retreating from the world to his own quarters, he would grow increasingly eccentric and isolated.

Yet there was another side to Rudolf. He was fascinated with the arts and proved to be a great patron, acquiring masterpieces such as those of Durer and Brueghel and compiling one of the great European art collections. He was also intensely interested in the sciences of the time – alchemy, astrology, astronomy. In those areas, he was not afraid to oppose the prevailing official Catholic view, supporting such astronomers as Tycho Brahe and Kepler.

Thus the raw material for the playwright, with its infinite possibilities. Einhorn handles his story well, but circumstances are against him in this production. Its

venue – the Bohemian National Hall on Manhattan's Upper East Side – is both good news and bad news. Though its Grand Ballroom, which has been turned into the Emperor's bedroom, is indeed regal with its long red carpet and imposing chandeliers, it creates performance problems. Viewers are seated on either side of the long narrow room, with players between. When actors are facing half the audience, their backs to the other half, dialogue is completely lost to those viewers. It is a tricky business for any director to deal with theater-in-the-round, a thrust stage or similar configurations. This time around, director Henry Akona has not solved the problem – if indeed there is a solution.

Yet the cast of nine manage some fine moments. Timothy McCown Reynolds acquires himself well as the hapless Rudolf, Yvonne Roen is particularly human and moving as Rudolf's mistress Katerina, and Shelley Ray gives a chilling performance as the bigoted, conniving poet Elizabeth. Moreover, musicians and chorus add ambience to the scene and the Grand Ballroom itself provides an impressive setting.

Happily, Einhorn concludes his play with a positive view of Rudolf's place in history. Though Rudolf's lack of leadership led to disastrous wars, his tolerant views would usher in new enlightened thinking, a promise for a future age. Yet this production does not do justice to this intriguing historical figure. Rudolf II, mad or not mad, deserves to have his loftier views echo across the centuries.

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



Pictured L to R: James Spader as Jack Lawson and Kerry Washington as Susan. Photo credit: Robert J. Saferstein.



Timothy McCown Reynolds as Rudolf and Yvonne Roen as Rudolf's mistress Katerina. Photo credit: Arthur Cornelius.



## As I Heard It

BY MORTON GOLD

### Losing cantors' beautiful and inspirational voices

The last third of the 20th century has been a difficult one for those who concern themselves with officiating at Jewish services as well as those who create music for the ones that do so. The sacred holiday of Pesach is but one case in point.

In my oratorio "Days of Joy," which I composed in 1981, there is a *Kiddush* for cantor, choir and organ. Writing it was a labor of love for me. It is a good thing that it was, I might add. Why? Simply because the custom these days is for the congregation to "join in" with the cantor and sing said *Kiddush*. (Actually that prayer should be sung at home prior to the Shabbat meal.)

Very few people realize that prior to World War II, the congregation never sang the *Kiddush*, and what singing that may have occurred during that prayer took place only during the phrase *kivanu vacharta*. With the advent of the war, there were many Jewish servicemen who were welcome guests at Friday evening services. In order to make them feel more "at home" gradually the congregation sang the *Kiddush* composed by Rabbi Israel Goldfarb. This version is now (erroneously) described as the "traditional" *Kiddush*.

Another consideration for the obsolescence of my *Kiddush* is that many rabbis want to encourage folks to sing that prayer at home and have eliminated it from the service, thus shortening the service as well as taking a solo away from the cantor! This is a kind of consolation prize for me because the oratorio is labeled as a "Concert Festival Service."

However, when I wrote it I envisioned it performed not in the concert hall but rather in the synagogue. It may be unkind of me to write this (foolish as well), but I believe that if the rabbis could eliminate *Kol Nidre* and *Hinn'ni*, they would do so. Their rationale would be that doing so would save time. Yes, but at the expense of removing what little sanctity and feeling that is left in the service.

My father, z"l, was a cantor and I tend to see things from the standpoint of the *hazzan* as well as a composer. The bugaboo of "saving time" is a false premise. On the contrary, eliminating the performance of music for cantor, or of cantor with choir, actually increases the length of the Shabbat morning service, and I will use this as one example.

In the first place in those congregations that still have a professional cantor have increased his or her responsibilities

while decreasing his or her status at the same time. The cantor often is also either the principal and/or teacher in the Hebrew School reads and/or trains others to read the Torah, prepares children for their bar/bat mitzvah, gives programs for Sisterhood and Men's Club, and does Lord knows whatever else. At one time he visited patients in the hospital with the rabbi and also led memorial services with or in place of the rabbi.

In the Sabbath service itself, there is now little opportunity for the cantor to do what cantors have done over the years and most did ever so well, namely to move the congregation with the beauty and power of their voices. Yes, some would say that this is a performance. Quite so. They were performing for the big you-know-who as representatives of the congregation.

Those same folk, usually the ones who could not participate in the service by praying, wanted to do so in a way that they could. To accomplish this end, we now have services where almost all the music is "congregational" and the bulk of time is given over to...talk. Even if the people cannot sing, or sing well, they still can talk, and do they ever talk. The topic may start out "discussing" the Torah portion of the week but soon stray to you name it. The ten minutes (or so) of the rabbi's remarks (droshe?) can go on to a half hour or more. The result? It is now around noon (the service started at 9:30, and most of the congregation shows up by 10:00, and they are getting restless not to mention hungry!), and there still is *Musaf* to get through.

The solution of the Reconstructionists is to eliminate *Musaf*. This is really unfortunate from a musical perspective, because the bulk of the most significant, and (not to omit the word) beautiful compositions written on texts for the Sabbath morning service occur during that portion of the service.

To conclude, at least for now, I have witnessed the evisceration of the function of the cantor during my lifetime, the takeover of his or her role by the congregation assisted by someone who may or may not have a voice "leading" the service by saying the few lines in various prayers that the people do not sing. Instead of a sense of the sacred, indescribable Jewish feeling evoked by listening to a cantor with a beautiful voice (*kavannah*), we have talking and more talking combined with what the psalmist described as "a joyful noise."

I have seen the results of surveys that show that the Conservative movement has been losing members to the other "streams" of Judaism. Perhaps, just maybe, *efsher* (it is possible), they are doing or not doing what they did very well until the end of the World War II?

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### SEGAL

(continued from page NAT 6)

be afflicted by the flu, and Israel built the fence in order to protect its residents and homeland from suicide bombers.

In fact, right now the U.S. is building a very lengthy fence along the U.S.-Mexican border to prevent illegals from entering, even though the illegals have not declared a desire to kill Americans.

So, too, the U.S. military – the Corps of Engineers – is helping the Egyptian government build a fence between Egypt and Gaza so that Hamas will not be able to build a tunnel under the border and smuggle arms and ammunition into Gaza to fire upon Israel. The U.S. is involved in these measures because it believes in the proverb "A stitch in time saves nine." It is better to be criticized than have your citizens killed and maimed.

I ask you. Chancellor Khator, would you permit David Duke and a group of U of H students to sponsor a one week program called "Black Apartheid Week" in order to prove that African kings were involved in capturing blacks in Africa in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries in order to sell them to Portuguese, English, French, American, Dutch, and Arab merchants so that they might be sold into slavery? How about if the KKK would sponsor a group of U of H students to discuss the same subject at the U of H – and to refer to blacks as supporters of apartheid – would you allow that?

What would the U of H do if the Rev. Pat Robertson would help a group of students put forth a one-week program aimed at Muslims and calling it "Muslim Apartheid Week" in which he would highlight how last week Muslims in Nigeria killed hundreds of Christians, and in the Sudan the same has also taken place? I am quite positive that the leadership of U of H would rightfully oppose these programs. However, against Israel no leader of the U of H seems to oppose "Israel Apartheid Week" in which seeds and plants of hatred and animosity, bitterness and resentment, antipathy and disgust are planted and fertilized against a democracy, Israel.

Yes, the Israeli invasion of Gaza not long ago was a traumatic experience, but the Arabs were warned that they had to stop firing mortar shells and missiles – 8,000 of them – into Israel during the past eight years. But they refused to listen. Therefore Israel invaded – to protect its citizens.

Yes, many more Gazan civilians were killed than Israeli civilians but that was primarily caused by Hamas soldiers not wearing uniforms, hiding behind civilians while firing their guns, and shooting from schools, religious institutions, and even hospitals – but, still, it's Israel that is called apartheid.

In fact, American marines and soldiers similarly protected themselves during WWII on the islands of Okinawa, Iwo Jima, Saipan, Guadalcanal, and other islands when the Japanese military also

hid behind civilians. American troops had to protect themselves.

Recently, Colonel Richard Kemp, one of Britain's top military commanders – a former commander of British forces in Afghanistan – stated that the Israeli Defense Forces went to considerable lengths to protect human life during Operation Cast Lead last winter in the Gaza Strip. He personally stated, "Israeli forces did more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare." And this was not stated by him at a private cocktail party but rather before the UN Human Rights Council. Unfortunately, the media did not consider it newsworthy and, therefore, it was not reported in our newspapers and magazines.

Instead, we now have over 40 Israel Apartheid Week programs at universities in the U.S., Canada, and other countries – and this is proliferating because of so-called hatred of Zionism. I personally feel that we should never forget the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who told a black student who was attacking Zionists, "When people criticize 'Zionists,' they mean 'Jews.' You're talking anti-Semitism."

I would suggest that instead of giving an okay in 2011 to another hateful Israel Apartheid Week that you suggest an Israeli-Arab Peace Week at the University of Houston, my alma mater, in which Jewish and Muslim students will sit down together and attempt to iron out suggestions of peace between the two groups. It is far better to plant seeds of peace and love rather than bushes of hatred and animosity, which the U of H is presently doing. Have a constructive program, not a destructive one.

Remember the words of the prophet Isaiah (11:6-7): "The wolf will live with the sheep and the leopard will lie down with the kid; and a calf, a lion whelp and a fatling [will walk] together, and a young child will lead them. A cow and bear will graze [together] and their young will lie down together; and a lion, like cattle, will eat hay."

I personally do not know if the wolf and sheep will ever become friends, or if the leopard and the kid will ever go frolicking together, or if a lion and a calf will eventually be able to share one cage, or if a cow and a bear will in the future be able to simultaneously graze on one field. I do not think that was Isaiah's message. But I do think he was saying 2,700 years ago that age-old enemies will eventually become friends. (Look at the U.S. and Germany and Japan today.) So, too, let us hope that Israel and the Arab states will eventually become friends rather than enemies, but this will NEVER happen if our universities promote Israel Apartheid Weeks.

I ask you to encourage your subordinates to inspire positive programs rather than negative ones. Let me once again feel proud that the University of Houston is the school I attended from 1965 to 1973

(see Segal, page NAT 19)



## The Art of Observation

BY RABBI ALLEN H. PODET

### Dreams of prophets and strongly worded intensions

In seminary, the messages of Isaiah and Amos seem clear and unambiguous, and well nigh universally recognized and understood. When I told that observation once to the Sage of Waco, he looked at me as if I had just lost my mind. I really thought that, despite occasional slips and weaknesses of the flesh, everyone was aware of and tried to follow those prophetic messages. The prophetic images are compelling: They speak of justice flowing like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream, of the universal goal proclaimed by all nations to join at that mountaintop where peace shall reign and they will not learn war any more, where the love of God will unite us all. In seminary or in the academy it all seems so obvious. One can hardly fathom what is holding it back.

Those who know something about the 1960s and 1970s, a group that naturally and sadly excludes most of today's collegians, will recognize the prophetic hopefulness that characterized the songs, the philosophies, and the expectancies of that long gone period. The wonder is that those feelings and hopes still survive at all today, in the 2010s.

Not that there were no cynics and skeptics in those bygone periods. The nation, after all, had just emerged from the frightful 1050s, the days of Commie hunting were far from over, and the young were wise to keep their heads down and stay, as is the current cliché, under the radar. But the routine and casual assumption of universal and inevitable depravity and self-interest was, even into the 1990s, not nearly as strong as it seems today.

Among many of our college students, there is an assumption that there is something inherently dirty about politics and politicians. It has been pointed out to me several times that, although our president and his secretary of state have ejaculated unceasing assurances to Israel of our undying love for her and our unshakable commitment to her security, no move has been made to translate this talk into action. Mrs. Clinton has floated the suggestion that perhaps extending some formal shield over Israel would partly defuse the Iranian bomb threat, but like a lead balloon, it did not float far.

Consider the possible effect of a statement from the president that, as a matter of policy, we will consider a nuclear attack on Israel, on Saudi Arabia, or on Iran – Iran would thus be robbed of a reason for nuclear armaments for

defense – to be an attack on the United States itself, and we propose to react accordingly. Such a defensive umbrella is, from a propeace point of view, greatly to be desired. But more than one student of mine has raised the question of whether even a president enjoying great current popularity would dare risk that popularity by suggesting that the U.S. might be willing to go to war, or even threaten to go to war, for Jews!

Franklin Delano Roosevelt – even he, the pride of the Dutch Reformed church – could not ignore the voices that insisted his real name was Rosenfeld, and that he was involving us in a Jewish war. What is today seen as Roosevelt's pusillanimity – a splanchnic failure at the very least – was at the time more likely a realistic assessment of the limits of his power and influence. And the attacks on him as a Jew-lover – as opposed, one presumes, to an America-lover – persisted long after Pearl Harbor. Can one reasonably expect Obama to be ignorant of that history?

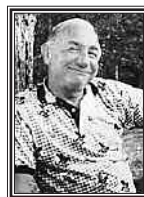
So in the end, Mrs. Clinton's suggestions of a defensive umbrella over Israel, which would, one supposes, reasonably have to include Arabia and Iran too, have little chance of being looked at realistically by the president, even though his popular power is now at a peak.

It would be comforting to him and to those who care about peace if such a move could be accomplished in reality, perhaps coordinated with European support, which would make it appear less a purely American initiative, and this coordination would as well suit the president's style and make him personally less of a target for criticism. But Europe is going through a particularly anti-Semitic phase just now, partly due to Arab-sponsored propaganda, partly due to a rejection of genuine and well-earned guilt over the Holocaust, and partly due to plain residual religious Jew-hate, which is the fruit of 2,000 years of preaching and teaching that, like a cancer deep within the European soul, will not easily disappear.

So the result is that, politics being eminently and definitively the art of the practical, the soothing words of our president and his secretary of state will remain merely the words of politicians, and the Israelis would be well advised to remain hopeful and optimistic, but not reliant.

Practically, the smart money will say that for Iran, using the bomb is a recipe for disaster even without U.S. involvement. Because they can get what they want without using it. The mere fact that they possess – or will possess – the bomb means, first, that Israel, like all the rest of the Middle East, will have to live under the perpetual threat of the Iranian bomb, a fact of life that cannot help but tie Israel's hands with regard to internal and external policy.

Second and more to the point, Iran's mere possession of the bomb means that Iran can dominate Saudi Arabia and virtually dictate elements of Saudi policy.



## Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

### Shavuous – The Jewish Fourth of July

Have you ever noticed that all of the great truth-thundering prophets get a "book" of their own; and even light-weights with little to say like Habakkuk, Malachi, and Nahum share in this privilege of an eponymous book. There is one glaring omission. I speak of Elijah, arguably our greatest – but certainly in the top three. No book. Just scattered through Kings I and II. I asked my rabbi about this, but he said, "No time, gotta meet with the ladies' kugel club."

I consider this oversight every time I think of Shavuous – one of the three special occasions, along with Succot and Pesach, when all Israel flocked to the Temple. With the destruction of the Temple, I think we lost the grandeur of Shavuous.

It should be our number one celebration – the giving of Torah – our handbook, our manual, our charter and our contract with G-d. Yet, the holiday gets little attention from most Jews. Even in Telushkin's book, *Jewish Literacy*, where he tells us ignoramuses about every holiday with its own chapter, Shavuous is slighted – lumped with small potatoes like counting the Omer. Even Lag B'Omer has a chapter. But not Shavuous. I don't get it. To me, it's the Jewish Fourth of July – the day we signed our "constitution" with the Ruler.

Sure, observant Jews realize its importance. On this most sacred of holidays, they study Torah all night. So, I stopped my rabbi in the hall the other day. "Why this injustice?" I questioned. He was through with his kugel counseling ("Never too much sugar") but unfortunately was on his way to the Rabbi's Compensation Committee meeting. Don't wanta be late for that. Another lost opportunity.

Again, I wonder why. Take my uncle Louie, who if you were in a critical mood, might call a wayward Jew – a food Jew – who knows every super deli in

Consequently, Iran will become the world oil controllers, something which is very much not in American interests because at that point they can wield enormous influence over the U.S.

The simple, pure world of the prophets, so clearly and cleanly visible from the seminary, so celebrated in the songs and marches of years past, is still, it seems, a dream.

Comments? [apodet@yahoo.com](mailto:apodet@yahoo.com). ★

Manhattan. Oh sure, he knows about Yom Kippur (and goes to shul, too)! And he probably could tell you about Passover, since he loves matzo balls. But Shavuous? What is it? A salad dressing?

My obvious point is that Shavuous – for all its importance – among the world of Jewry, doesn't get its due. Probably because unlike Pesach, it offers no feasting. Unlike Succot, we build nothing. Unlike Yom Kippur, no repentant breast beating. Unlike Chanukah and Purim, there is no triumphant chauvinism. It has no symbols; only the satisfaction that more than three millennia ago in the darkest of the dark ages we were chosen to receive the hand of G-d in solemn covenant that we would be a light of civilization to the nations. We were given our constitution and told to share it with the barbarous world we live in.

They shouldn't have named it Shavuous – weeks. Weeks – 7 weeks after Pesach comes along Shavuous. Like in our wedding ceremony – the seven times the bride, Israel, circles the groom – our Creator. Signifying our covenant. The seven years the land must lie fallow. Even today – from the sublime to the ridiculous – the seven that wins for the dice shooter and excites the roar of the winners. Seven, that ancient poetic number that still glows with luck.

But seven or three or eight weeks after Pesach. "Weeks" doesn't do it justice. They should have called it Yom Torah or something more descriptive of the stature of the event. If I was a member of the holiday naming committee, I'd call it our "Independence Day."

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

## Holy Candle Too

My great-grandmother Dena, would freely offer the grateful poor in her Polish town of Zamosc, candles for Shabbat light from her family factory.

In the Belzec extermination camp she only had the candle of her life to give, extinguished by those who darkness chose.

*Rabbi Israel Zoberman  
Congregation Beth Chaverim  
Virginia Beach, Virginia ★*



## Notes from the Antipodes

BY DR. RODNEY GOUTTMAN

### Mateship

"He is coming to speak to a mate" is how the American ambassador to Australia described the now-postponed visit of his president to Australia. The word "mate" was undoubtedly chosen for its specific cultural resonance Down-Under. Here, it denotes friendship, but also a willingness to go to the aid of the other when threatened by overwhelming events. Translated into diplomatic-speak, it refers to "a special relationship," a phrase often used by political leaders to describe the bond between Australia and the United States.

The trouble is, however, that traditionally this evocative term has also been a short-hand depiction of American-Israel ties but is no longer so, under the presidential reign of Barak Hussein Obama. Anti-Israel tirades from him and his team have signaled that the situation has changed greatly. And the heavying of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu was not softened by the president's attendance at the White House Pesach seder, which was for domestic political purposes only. Given the nature of this celebration of Jewish people's escape from servitude, his presence this year was particularly ironic, if not a tad hypocritical even to some of his fans outside the United States. His anti-Netanyahu stance has given reason to the Palestinian leadership to hang even tougher against Israel and concede nothing.

The worst aspect of this ongoing spat is that the American Administration has now given Jewish/Zionist conspiracy theory a good name. Though later the assertions followed that the words were taken out of context or never said, the claims that Israel is making the life of American troops more difficult in Afghanistan was definitely expressed by U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and not rejected by his political boss. It is this particular calumny that will be appropriated by anti-Zionist zealots everywhere and will be given eternal life by the Internet.

Obama's irritation with Netanyahu has been criticized by Greg Sheridan, arguably the doyen of foreign affairs journalists in Australia, as an "anti-Israel Jihad." This commentator is usually a fulsome advocate of the Australia-American alliance and the central role of the United States in world affairs. Nonetheless, in the newspaper *The Australian*, he told his nationwide audience that Washington's hostility toward Israel was principally the work of President Obama and his "Chicago mafia" who have fundamentally accepted

the fact of a nuclear-armed Iran. What worries them is that Israel might decide to do something about it.

Sheridan correctly cites the reason driving the Obama clique's rhetoric, apart from a personal dislike for Netanyahu and his politics: Solving the Israel-Palestinian conflict would provide it with the only hope of a foreign policy success. Sniffing America's current economic and political weakness, authoritarian states like Iran, North Korea, Russia, even China feel they will not suffer pain by rebuffing its overtures.

It is true that the words "Israel" and "diplomacy" too often seem contradictory as shown during the visit of Vice-President Joe Biden to the Jewish State. However, had the announcement of further Jewish building in east Jerusalem been made soon after his departure, Netanyahu would still have been excoriated by the White House for not doing its bidding.

In recent days, another "old mate," Great Britain, has contacted Canberra. British Foreign Secretary David Milliband wanted it to follow London's example of expelling an Israeli diplomat because of the alleged use by Mossad of false passports in the assassination of Hamas terrorist Mahmood al Mabhouh in Dubai. In that exercise, four of the passports were of Australian origin, and I personally know two persons whose passports had been involved.

Great Britain today has been acknowledged as a major hub of Islamic extremism in Europe, and her long hostility toward Israel is well documented. However, this latest episode is the outcome of at least two other influences. The first comes from Arab pressure. The murder made public something that previously had been kept hush-hush – that Dubai is a place where dirty deals between Middle East terror groups and countries like Iran take place. The second is that an election in Great Britain is pending, and the Labor Government of Gordon Brown is far from popular. It will rely on the help of the substantial British Moslem vote to be returned to power.

In Australia, the Brits have a fraternal Labor Party government, which is also due to face an election later this year. However, if current public opinion polls are to be believed, Kevin Rudd's priministership appears safe. That doesn't mean, of course, that he would not want to garner the significant Middle East vote in a number of Sydney and Melbourne electorates to help achieve this outcome.

Presently, the Rudd Cabinet is divided on the question of the diplomatic expulsion and has said it will not make a decision until its own investigations of the events in Dubai are concluded. In the meantime, the Liberal/National Opposition has opposed any intemperate reaction, and senior members of the Cabinet have reaffirmed the friendship between Australia and Israel. Canberra has just concluded a multimillion dollar



## Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

### Law and Order

The theme of one of *Law and Order's* most moving episodes is the bombing of a synagogue in Washington Heights. But we don't hear much from or about Jews. Instead, this episode, "Great Satan," written by Luke Schelhaas and Ed Zuckerman, focused on a Syrian-born immigrant, Sameer Ahmed (Ben Youssef). Ahmed agrees to gather evidence on other Muslim men, including an Egyptian American and African American (prison) converts to Islam, who are conspiring to bomb the Jewish house of worship.

Just as the police foil a bombing attempt with Sameer's help, the synagogue explodes. Did Sameer tip off the would-be terrorists so that they divided into two cells? Or was there another, independent plot to commit this hate crime?

It seems that another Islamic hate group conspired to blow up the synagogue while hoping to graduate to shooting down an airplane. Sameer is in a position to send members of both groups to jail, and agrees to testify. But then he changes his story on the stand. He lies.

Angry and dismayed, the prosecutors question his loyalty to America. Feeling guilty and like a traitor, Sameer confesses that he committed a burglary crime in America before he became a citizen, and that those against whom he was to testify

contract with an Israeli firm to supply its army and air force with state-of-the-art command and control systems. On the deficit side of the ledger as far as Israel is concerned, it has also agreed to sell uranium ore to porous Russia. The fear is that some of the load could find its way to Iran, which threatens to nuke the Jewish State.

Mateship doesn't mean agreement on all matters. However, it also doesn't involve dumping on your partner when his security is at great risk. That is why some commentators in Australia have suggested that the severe downgrade of the "special relationship" between the United States and Israel might serve as a warning should the current warmth of the Australia-American alliance turn cold.

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

were blackmailing him. Should that crime be revealed, he would likely lose his American citizenship and be deported back to Syria, a "terrible place," where he would, he says, face arrest and then "torture, prison, no future, no life." Sameer insists that he loves America and regards this country as "paradise." He insists, "I lied because I want to stay here."

The series has never had a more moving scene than when Sameer explains his lie on the witness stand. "When I became a citizen," he says, "I took an oath." Raising his hand as if taking that oath, he repeats his vow to support and to defend the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic. "And that's what I'm doing now," he declares, "even if it means I will stop being a citizen and be sent away, and America will go on without me."

The series has never featured more sobering testimony than Sameer's warning about his cohorts: "They wanted to blow up buildings, hurt Americans. If they had found someone else [to accompany them], you would be picking body parts out of the gutter, and they would be celebrating."

We do not meet any Jews in this episode. We see the synagogue building, but not the explosion. The police refer to a nondenominational shelter for abused women hosted in the synagogue. We are told that some of these women sleep there, but no one says that anyone was hurt. When Sameer wants to provoke the other Muslim men to incriminate themselves on tape, he seeks to incite them by accusing an imam of being too busy attending "interfaith blessings with rabbis" to resist selling out to Jews and Christians.

The hour trots out Jew-hatred and destruction of a synagogue without giving Jews a voice. Why mention them or their synagogue at all? While it is meritorious to profile a Muslim-American patriot who is willing to sacrifice everything for his country, why refer to Jews without saying something about their contribution to American life beyond being bait for haters and destroyers?

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

## On this date in Jewish history

On April 21, 1933

Shehitah prohibited in Germany.

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

## Parsha Perspective



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

### A woman bearing a child becomes impure!

In *parashat hashavua* (weekly Torah portion) Tazria, we find a verse that begins, *Isha ki tazria v'yaldah...* – “When a woman has conceived and borne a child....” And the verse goes on to say that she becomes “impure” (Leviticus 12:2). (We are indebted to Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808–1888) for much of our understanding of this verse and those on the same subject that follow it.)

But how can this be? How is it possible that the most wonderful experience of giving birth could make someone impure? Or to put it another way, why would we want to *believe* such a thing?

In thinking about this, the first thing to remember is that the kind of impurity we're talking about is *ritual*. The word for it in the Torah is *tamei*. And its opposite is *tahor*, which means “pure.” The root of *tahor* is *tet-hei-reish*. It's related to the root *tzade-hei-reish*, which in Chaldean means transparent – that is, that which allows rays of light to pass through it.

You may remember that the window in the ark was called *zohar* (Genesis 6:16). So that *tahor*, which is related to *zohar*, means *receptive*. When we are *tahor*, we allow God's rays of light to pass through us. When we are pure, we are receptive to the spiritual, the Divine. When we are pure, our minds, our feelings, and our bodies are penetrated with the godly.

So our receptivity depends on, among other things, our bodies, our basar, our flesh. It's interesting to note that the root for the word *basar* and the root for the word “herald” or “messenger” are related. Which is why our rabbis say: The body is the messenger of the soul. Our bodies are, after all, the only medium of expression that we have in this world. Our spirit can only express itself through the medium of our body. We can only think thoughts, however sublime and lofty, and only have feelings, however tender, through our brains, and nerves.

The opposite state to *tahor* is *tamei* – impure, from the root *tet-mem-aleph*, meaning closed up and nonreceptive. And as the Talmud tells us, *av tumaah*, the father or basic source of that nonreceptivity or impurity, and the basis for understanding the concept of impurity, is a dead human body.

Why is that? Is there something magical and evil that emanates from a dead body?

No! It's because when we come into contact with the dead body of a human being, it presents us with the picture of ourselves lying powerless under the forces of nature. Such an experience can make us think that we're mere puppets in the hands of nature. And this way of thinking undermines the foundation of the whole Torah, because it makes us doubt our free will and our ability to live up to the Torah.

The Torah assumes that we do have the ability to live up to its demands. To assume otherwise is to say that we are born to sin, or that we can't avoid sinning! The Torah teaches us instead that the goal of the whole development of humankind is the stage beyond this present state in which we have to fight constantly against our lower selves. It teaches us that there will come a time, and that in fact we are responsible to help create that time, when the holiness of God's Torah will have so penetrated life that the difference between *chol* and *kodesh*, between the ordinary and the holy, will have disappeared.

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trated with the godly.

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At that time, the dwelling of the *Shechinah*, God's presence on Earth, will reach everywhere, far beyond the walls of the Temple into all the everyday places where men and women live and work. And for the purpose of preparing us to create that world, the Torah warns us: Do not be depressed. Do not let the fact of the death of physical life rob you of, or make you doubt, your moral abilities, or doubt the freedom of your god-like spiritual self, which does not come under the force and power of death.

And so, *ki tazria v'yaldah* – a woman who has conceived and borne a child – becomes ritually impure. The word used here for conceived, *tazria* – literally seeded – is the same word that is used for plants. That's because here, the mother's role in producing offspring is looked at purely from a physical point of view. The new mother is influenced by the recent experience of having had to submit physically, passively and painfully, to the forces of the physical laws of nature. And now she needs to establish again the consciousness of her own free will. Only after her consciousness of lacking freedom of will has completely passed away can she reenter the whole spiritual height of her calling.

And how does the reentry happen?

With water...and time. Water with its elementary character – water gathered in a hollow in the ground is a realm that impurity cannot reach. So much so, that when we immerse the whole of ourselves completely and directly in water of that nature, we step out of all connection with the realm of impurity. We leave the stage of humankind and for the moment we return to the sphere of the world of elements, to begin a new life. It is symbolic of a new birth. And also, with the passage of time, the day too is reborn for us – we pass into a fresh pure day.

In the Torah, the consecration of the morally free nature of human beings is spread over everything that the hand touches or does. All work and craft stand in service of this calling of humankind to be morally free and near to God. Whatever our work, we can feel ourselves spiritually elevated by the consciousness that is brought into our work – that with our work we are accomplishing a moral need for a moral purpose, and thus we are making our contribution to carry out the morally free mission of humankind in the service of the Torah of God.

So it is that we find quite early in our history, the spiritual elite of our nation submitting their whole lives under the regime of the laws of ritual purity. They lived their whole lives, even the life of their senses, as if in the presence of the Sanctuary. In later times they were called by the name *chaveirim*. They formed a free open-to-all society whose members took, as the mission of their lives, the keeping of the Torah with intelligence and knowledge.

The very first stage of their mission has remained as a regular habit of life for the whole of the Jewish people, and it is still the mark of the observant Jew. And that habit is *netilat yadayim*, the washing of the hands before ordinary meals. In the Talmud, Bechorot 30b, this ritual is equated with receiving wings. For *netilat yadayim* is literally “a raising of the hands upward.”

In Chaldean the root *natal* is equivalent to *nasah*. *Netilat yadayim* is to be a reminder to us: to rise up, to elevate ourselves and our doings, out of the realm of merely giving satisfaction to our physical senses, into the character of a moral spiritual action.

Thus, on the heels of her death-defying experience of bearing a child, immersion in the *mikvah* waters and the passage of time help the new mother banish the belief that the forces of nature can overpower her free will, and they work to reinvigorate the moral spiritual force she needs to sustain her day-to-day striving upward to God.

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

## Sports

BY ARI J. KAUFMAN

### A team for all to cheer

In sports, winning is generally all that matters. But few teams have ever had less reason to be lugubrious than the Butler University men's basketball team, which fell in the final seconds of the NCAA title game, 61–59, to powerhouse Duke University, April 5 in Indianapolis.

I ponied up and was in attendance. Walking out of Lucas Oil Stadium at midnight following the heartbreaking defeat was surreal: It was balmy, windy and eerily quiet. With 71,000 fans, primarily supporting the hometown Bulldogs, the atmosphere was raucous inside for two hours, yet the air was suddenly dead quiet.

Duke fans, to their credit, were not jumping around the streets afterward, taunting, or exhibiting obnoxious behavior. In fact, they blended right in with the others walking past the downtown bars and hotels that have been packed for the past week.

Driving home through the foggy back roads around 2 a.m., my dad, who'd hardly heard of little Butler until the past fortnight, called and said, “They're short on talent, so it's incredible they can stay within 20 points of Duke. But they have heart, are well-coached, and their intensity is the best I've seen in 55 years watching basketball.”

However, unlike the other five opponents Butler faced in the tournament, the Blue Devils didn't flinch when the Bulldogs pounced. That was the difference. That Gordon Hayward's final desperation shot missed was immaterial, as those celebrating Butler around the city agreed no one “lost” this title fight.

Elyse Handel, a junior, attended the final game: “It was fun being at the game watching thousands of people cheer on guys like Gordon Hayward and Ronald Nored, because in my eyes, they're just normal college students on campus,” she told me.

These Bulldogs showed kids young enough to be chasing their basketball dreams that you really can live those by practicing hard, playing hard, and having a passion for the game.

“This experience was inspirational, said Butler sophomore Dana Smoler, who happens to hail from Northbrook, Ill., the same town as Duke's Jewish star player, Jon Scheyer. “It showed that smaller schools are equal to the challenge.”

As *Indianapolis Star* columnist Bob Kravitz (who is Jewish) explained after the game: “This is about a joyride that absolutely captured the heart of this community and this country. This is about the smallest school in the 64-team  
(see Kaufman, page NAT 19)

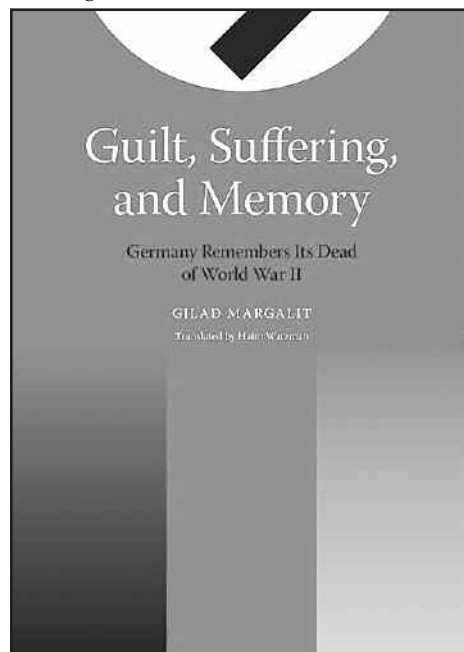


## Book Review

REVIEWED BY ARNOLD AGES

### Best book of the year

*Guilt, Suffering, and Memory: Germany Remembers Its Dead of World War II.* By Gilad Margalit. Indiana University Press (Bloomington, 2010) 387 Pages.



In 1985 Elie Wiesel was featured on a television event during which he tried, unsuccessfully as it happened, to persuade President Ronald Reagan not to visit the cemetery at Bitburg, Germany, because SS soldiers were also buried there along with members of the Whermacht. "The words die on my lips," said Wiesel, in his impassioned plea, "your place is not there."

Gilad Margalit, a senior lecturer at Haifa University, reminds us in an essay, which I recommend unequivocally as the best book of the year, that President Reagan's dilemma began not in 1985 but 40 years before that in 1945 at the end of World War II. The author has reached this conclusion by a thorough study of German reactions to their loss as they were reflected over six decades to this day in the words of political leaders, memoirists, novelists, clergymen, government spokesmen, propagandists and just plain folk.

The author notes that in the immediate aftermath of defeat Germans experienced a culture of guilt, which they readily exhibited when the full story of the concentration camps, the murder of civilians, the annihilation of six million Jews and the atrocities visited upon 20 million Russians became known. It did not take long, however, before feelings of culpability gave way to a more subtle response. In this the Germans were surprisingly assisted by people like

the Protestant divine Niemoller and politicians Konrad Adenauer and Willy Brandt who, while admitting quite openly the record of Nazi barbarism, advised that it was not appropriate to stigmatize the whole German nation for the criminal activities of those who had led Germany into the disastrous war.

This perception was also reinforced by the knowledge that the five million German soldiers and civilians, who had perished during the war, had bravely served their country, whether or not they were ideologically driven, and deserved to be integrated into the equation of memory. Margalit's narrative, which comes through a brilliant translation by Haim Watzman, includes the reports of American army specialists who interviewed German civilians shortly after the war and discovered among many of them a reluctance to acknowledge fully the scope of German guilt in supporting the Nazi war effort.

The revisionist defence of Germany's role was aided by two factors. The Cold War with the Communists in the East so preoccupied the allied powers that they tended to relinquish their de-Nazification activities. The result was that Germans, at least in the West, had the luxury of reconfiguring their attitudes toward the war. In this they were helped by both the Catholic and Protestant constituencies whose spokesmen, with rare exception, so generalized the suffering of all human beings during the war that it was not proper to concentrate on an alleged German guilt. The East German Communists, Margalit observes, were originally ferocious in their condemnation of Nazi crimes and the guilt deriving from it, but soon the party line changed, in the light of East-West tension, and soon it was only Nazi criminality toward Communists that was condemned.

A major portion of Margalit's book focuses on the suffering that Germans experienced during the war, a suffering that was deemed to be a kind of exchange equivalence for the suffering of Jews and others. In this context the author devotes considerable space to the allied bombings of Dresden and Hamburg and the way in which German publicists, novelists (Heinrich Boll, among others) and "patriots" pointed to the barbarism of the British and their allies who sent planes to bomb the nonmilitary targets in the two cities in question. The term "war atrocity" figures prominently in the written materials, which the author surveys in his analysis of Dresden and Hamburg. Margalit does not permit himself much editorializing in his study, leaving the record to speak for itself, but here and there he does let go with remarks accentuating the inability of those who support the equivalency doctrine to understand the difference between German atrocities and the response to them by their victims.

(see Ages, page NAT 19)

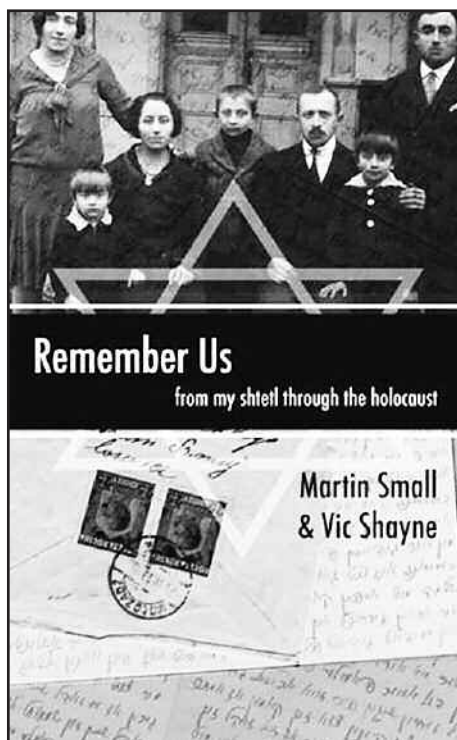


## Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

### What a life and legacy

*Remember Us (My Journey from the Shtetl through the Holocaust)* by Martin Small and Vic Shayne. New York: Skyhorse Publishing. Pp. 328. 2009. \$24.95.



As the "greatest Generation" of Holocaust survivors and liberators, both of heroic stature is sadly fast diminishing in numbers, it is a high mitzvah to record their mix of painful and precious memories to be saved from oblivion's fate, a fate that Holocaust deniers would welcome. Such a remarkable account, and each testimony is unique, is preserved for posterity sake in the pages of *Remember Us*. It is deeply moving, shaking and uplifting us with its unforeseen twists and turns in a cycle of despair and hope.

We are fortunate that Martin Small, once known as Mordechai Shmulevitz, turned to Vic Shayne, a professional writer of note specializing in the Holocaust, who transmits clearly and breathtakingly a legendary life's drama of tragedy and triumph second to none. The four years of Shayne's labor of love painstakingly recording with Small an incredible journey, was completed just prior to Small's death in 2008 at age 91.

Small's very foundation that nourished and sustained him throughout a tumultuous life was his loving Jewish upbringing steeped in tradition yet progressive enough to expose him to general culture, thus becoming appreciative of both worlds. The extraordinary home environment also served as an inviting inn to outside guests in the little town of Maichet that was Russian prior to WWI when

Grandpa Abraham Shmulevitz was its mayor. On the Holocaust's eve, Shmulevitz provided travel documents to Jewish refugees, saving lives. While a definite divide existed in town between Jew and Gentile exacerbated by the Catholic Church's preached anti-Semitism, there was also cooperation as when Jews were attacked by invading Cossacks.

With the German occupation in spring 1941, a radical shift occurred. The Polish neighbors viciously turned on the Jews through killings, rapes, beatings and lootings. Even the priest of the Greek Orthodox church across the street from the Small's house, a friend of the Smalls, was murdered with his wife and two children for being "Jew lovers." However, young Tamara Ulashik and the Glatki family saved Jewish lives, and through Small's recommendation would be honored as "Righteous Gentiles" by Yad Vashem. In July 1942 the 3,600 Jews of Maichet, including Smalls' family and refugees, were murdered and buried in a forest's pit with some still alive. Small was led with young and able-bodied fellow Jews, including Rabbi Chonyeh Goldstein, on foot for miles with a cutting rope on their necks to the Baranowicz ghetto. Assigned with his friend Shmulek Bachrach to work in the home of Nazi officer, Dr. Wichtmann, they would escape with the aid of a maid, possibly Jewish. Finding temporary shelter with the Glatkis, they were on the run again in the forest with Small badly shot in the arm.

Eventually Bachrach got lost, and Small found himself on a train with Hungarian Jews headed to the Mauthausen concentration camp of category III, the worst kind, with its infamous 186 "steps of death." Emaciated inmates were forced to carry heavy granite rocks to the top, with some toppling to their death. Most of the imprisoned 200,000 representing a variety of groups perished through gassings, executions, starvation and disease. Upon arrival Small witnessed a German shooting an eight-year-old girl who asked him for her mom, as he pointed toward the rising smoke. Small, a learned Jew, was acknowledged by fellow inmates as "the Rabbi," prayerfully responding to their agony.

In July 2002 I visited the site with my wife, Jennifer, and we'll ever remember the stark contrast between the pastoral surroundings and the camp's past. In 1947 my family and I, age 2, were escaped refugees from Poland. We spent a short while in Linz near Mauthausen where Small recuperated following liberation in spring 1945 by the 65th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. Small, barely alive, was carried out in the arms of a soldier, Jim Curry. Following arrival in the U.S. in 1950, Small befriended a police officer in New York's Central Park. In time they both learned that Curry was Small's saving Moshiah.

In Salzburg, Austria, Small was approached by three women – a grand- (see Zoberman, page NAT 19)

# Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

## Bargaining for goods for Hungarian Jews

*Rezso Kasztner.* By Ladislaus Lob. Chicago: Trafalgar Square Publishing, 2009. 338 Pages. \$22.95.



One of the most enigmatic episodes of the Holocaust was the bargaining between the Nazis and Jewish representatives to trade money and goods for Hungarian Jews. Among the Germans who participated in these discussions were Adolf Eichmann and Kurt Becher with Heinrich Himmler overseeing the deliberations from Berlin. On the Jewish side, Joel Brand was the initial representative. Later, Rezso Kasztner, who is the subject of this book, took a leading role.

One of the 1,670 Jews that Kasztner saved was author Ladislaus Lob. He was nine years old when his mother died of tuberculosis. Two years later, in 1944, he and his father were locked into the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. After five months, they were both free in Switzerland as a result of the deal that Kasztner had made with Eichmann and Becher. After the war ended, some Jews condemned Kasztner, claiming that he had conspired with the Nazis. Others saw him as a hero who stood up to the Nazis and saved many lives. This controversy burgeoned in Israel and got caught up in Israeli politics. Kasztner moved to what was still Palestine in December, 1947, having spent three years following the end of the war in Geneva and Nuremberg, helping with the trials of Nazi war criminals.

Kasztner was welcomed by Ben Gurion and his Mapai party. He was given government posts in the Mapai administration and was included in their list for election to the Knesset but

missed being elected because he was too far down on the list. His identification with Mapai earned him the enmity of those who felt that the Jewish Agency, led by Mapai had not done enough to save the Jews of Europe. These feelings were mingled with guilt about surviving when so many had died. These conflicting emotions were exploited for political purposes.

One Hungarian Jew, Malkiel Gruenwald, active in the Orthodox Mizrahi movement, had settled in Palestine two years before the war. He wrote pamphlets and "letters" condemning public figures, especially those in Mapai. Kasztner was singled out by Gruenwald as a "careerist who grew fat on Hitler's lootings." Gruenwald was charged with "criminal defamation" and his trial opened in 1954. The prosecutor was inexperienced while the defense counsel was a "brilliant advocate."

During the trial, Kasztner did poorly, especially under "relentless cross-examination." He gave a confusing picture of his actions at Nuremberg in favor of Kurt Becher who was released from prison, cleared by the denazification court, became a wealthy businessman, and lived until 1995. The defense counsel, identified with the Herut party, portrayed Kasztner as collaborating with the Nazis just as Ben Gurion and his Mapai party collaborated with the British in failing to take action to save the Jews of Europe. In his verdict, the judge condemned Kasztner, fining Gruenwald one pound for libel. On appeal, the court cleared Kasztner of collaboration, gave Gruenwald a one-year suspended sentence and fined him 500 pounds. Unfortunately, by the time this verdict was rendered, Kasztner was dead, having been assassinated in 1957 as a consequence of all the emotions and tumult stirred up by the trial. While three men were found guilty of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment, they were released six years later. According to the author, "the true circumstances of the assassination have never been cleared up."

The author clearly identifies with Kasztner to whom he owes his life. The sympathetic portrait he paints acknowledges Kasztner's failings but concludes that "he deserved better than a miscarriage of justice and an assassin's bullet." His book eloquently and persuasively supports this conclusion while evenhandedly providing enough facts to enable readers to form their own judgment. This remarkable achievement is a tribute to Lob's honesty and skill.

## Nazis received help from East European accomplices

*The Bugs Are Burning.* By Dr. Sheldon Hersh and Dr. Robert Wolf. New York: Devora Publishing, 2009. 147 Pages. \$21.95.

Despite the fatuous claims of Holocaust



deniers, the responsibility of the Nazis for killing six million Jews in the Holocaust has been well documented. A vast body of literature mournfully attests to this evil action. Somewhat less known is the eager and enthusiastic help the Nazis received from their East European accomplices. This book was written to recount the often zealous participation of eight East European countries and their non-Jewish residents in the barbarous attempt to annihilate the Jews of Europe.

One author of this cry from the heart, Sheldon Hersh, is a New York physician who was born in a displaced persons camp in Germany. His parents managed to survive the Lodz Ghetto and several concentration camps before making their way to the United States. While Hersh's mother found it difficult to talk about her wartime experiences, his father described how his Polish neighbors were willing partners with the Nazis. He was particularly bitter since he had served in the Polish army, fighting to safeguard the Poles who then turned on him and his fellow Jews. It was one of these Poles who gave the book its title by commenting that "the bugs are burning" as he watched the fiery destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto.

Co-author Robert Wolf is a good friend of Sheldon Hersh. He practices psychotherapy in New York and he helped to guide the project of writing this book to its successful conclusion.

After a brief review of the high degree to which anti-Semitism was endemic in Eastern Europe, the authors turn to a country-by-country review that covers Lithuania, Latvia, The Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia, and Poland. In each instance, the collaboration of local people with the Nazis is documented. In some instances, the German armies stood aside as pogroms were carried out by the residents of these countries. In others, cooperation was provided to the Nazis so that they could achieve their nefarious intent. Convincing evidence and photographs are provided. Some of the statistical information is overwhelming.

For example, when World War II began on Sept. 1, 1939, Poland had 3,474,000 Jews. By the end of 1945, there were fewer than 60,000 survivors. The numbers for the other countries are also mind-boggling.

As the Nazis hunted for Jews in Eastern Europe, they were assisted by unscrupulous villagers and farmers who led the Germans to hiding places, motivated in part by their hatred for Jews and in part by their desire to seize Jewish possessions. These betrayers were rewarded by the Nazis with money, with Jewish residences, and with Jewish household goods.

Even after the war was over, the killing of Jews by East Europeans did not stop. In Poland especially, there were more killings of the scattered remnants of the Jewish survivors. One Polish city, Kielce, is described as a killing ground for Jews in July, 1946, almost a year after World War II in Europe ended. This pogrom led Poland's few remaining Jews to leave.

The book concludes with two tables. One makes a devastating comparison between the estimated Jewish population of Eastern European countries in 1941 and 1945. The second lists dates from January 21, 1941 to January 14, 1945 on each of which Jews were killed by the Nazis and their East European collaborators.

A useful service has been rendered by authors Hersh and Wolf in bringing to light an aspect of the Holocaust that has received insufficient attention. Moreover, they alert us to be on guard against anti-Semitism wherever and whenever it appears.

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

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## Jerusalem Kitchen

By SYBIL KAPLAN

### Lag b'Omer and grilling

What holiday is not mentioned in the Torah or anywhere until the 13th century and has no particular foods associated with it?

The answer is *Lag b'Omer*. The Torah does command us to begin on the second night of Passover and Count the Omer. Omer, which means sheaf, was a measure of grain from the new barley harvest cutting, brought to the Temple on the 16th of Nisan.

The barley was processed into flour; some of it was burned, and the rest was eaten by the priests. Fifty days later is *Shavuot*. Thus the Counting of the Omer provides a bridge between the Israelites being freed and receiving the laws. The seven-week period is a period of mourning when observant Jews do not shave or get haircuts, and when there are no marriages or public festivities.

The respite is Lag b'Omer. *Lag* is a combination of the Hebrew letters *lamed*, which stands for the number 30, and *gimmel* which stands for the number three. The 33rd day of Counting the Omer commemorates the time when students of the second century Rabbi Akiva (who supported Bar-Kochba's rebellion against the Romans) were struck with a plague. On this day it stopped.

According to Janna Gur in her latest book, *The Book of New Israel Food*, grill restaurants where meat was served on metal skewers (shee-pood) became very popular in Israel in the 1960s. Shishkebab is ground meat wrapped around a skewer before grilling; *shashlik* are the pieces of meat and vegetables threaded on a skewer. Barbeque stands then cropped up and offered grilled meat in pita. These often became restaurants in gas stations. In the 1970s restaurants offering salads and skewered meats became a popular reasonably priced meal.

Today, whenever occasions arise, Israelis like to make their own *mangal* or *al ha'esh* (on the fire), and small portable grills are widely available for taking to parks or using on a terrace. Chicken wings, chicken pieces, lamb and beef are the popular items to grill.

From *The Book of New Israeli Food* by Janna Gur:

#### Chicken Wings in Baharat (4–6 servings)

25 chicken wings  
2 Tbsp. allspice  
1/2 tsp. nutmeg  
1/2 tsp. cardamom  
1/2 tsp. cinnamon

pinch of ground cloves  
1/2 cup olive oil  
salt and pepper to taste

Mix allspice, nutmeg, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, olive oil, salt and pepper. Soak the wings in marinade for at least 4 hours. Skewer wings and grill over hot charcoal grill or under a broiler.

From *Taste of Israel* by Avi Ganor and Rob Maiberg:

#### Shashlik – Lamb on Skewers (8 skewers)

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice  
1/4 cup dry red wine  
1 1/2 Tbsp. fresh rosemary or  
1 1/2 tsp. dry rosemary  
1 1/2 tsp. finely chopped garlic  
1/2 tsp. dry hot red pepper flakes  
3/4 tsp. salt  
3/8 tsp. freshly ground black pepper  
3/8 cup olive oil  
2 pounds 2-inch cubes lamb  
2 zucchini cut into 1 1/2 inch pieces  
2 small onions cut into 4 pieces  
2 yellow bell peppers cut into bite size pieces  
1/2 lb. cherry tomatoes

Mix together lemon juice, wine, rosemary, garlic, red pepper flakes, salt, pepper and oil in a bowl. Add lamb cubes, cover and refrigerate at least 6 hours or overnight. Place zucchini in boiling water and cook until just tender. Blanch onions in boiling water. Thread meat, onions, zucchini peppers and tomatoes on skewers. Brush with marinade. Grill 5–6 inches above coals, basting frequently with marinade. For medium rare, 15–18 minutes. If you use an indoor preheated broiler, medium well done will take 12–16 minutes.

#### My Moroccan Kofta (6 servings)

1 1/2 lbs. ground beef  
1 small grated onion  
3 Tbsp. chopped parsley  
2 Tbsp. chopped cilantro  
4 pinches fresh mint or  
1/4 tsp. dry mint  
1/4 tsp. marjoram  
salt and pepper to taste  
1/2 tsp. cumin

Combine beef, onion, parsley, cilantro, mint, marjoram, salt, pepper and cumin in a bowl and knead. Let sit 1 hour. With wet hands, pack the meat in sausage shapes around 12 skewers with two sausages on each skewer. Grill 2–3 inches from hot coals until done to taste. Serve with pita and salads.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, and compiler/editor of nine kosher cookbooks including *The Wonders of a Wonder Pot*, *Israeli Cooking on a Budget*, *Kosher Kettle* and *What's Cooking at Hadassah College Jerusalem*. She lives in Jerusalem. ★

## Entertainment

By ROSE KLEINER

### Toronto “springs” forward with the arts

With the days getting longer, and sunnier, Toronto's arts scene comes into a radiance all its own. Great theater, film and other festivals begin in the spring, not to speak of the myriad concerts, exhibits, and other exciting attractions.

Beginning in the spring, and running into fall, two world-class theater festivals (The Stratford Shakespeare Festival and the Shaw Festival) draw large crowds not just from Toronto and different parts of Canada but from many major U.S. centers, such as Chicago, Michigan, New York, and Ohio.

Stratford's spring offerings include such a diverse list as *Kiss Me Kate*, *As You Like It*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Evita*, *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*, and *Peter Pan*. The Shaw Festival's list of plays this spring includes *An Ideal Husband*, *Harvey*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Women*, *One Touch of Venus*, *John Bull's Other Island*, and *The Doctor's Dilemma*. Besides the plays, both festivals have all sorts of other attractions and programs, such as seminars and workshops, as well as discounts on tickets, and theater and hotel packages.

Jake Ehrenreich's *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn*, direct from the heart of Broadway, opens its Canadian premiere on April 28. Presented by David Mirvish, the play will run at the Panasonic Theatre. An Evening of Laughter, with Elon Gold, who has been featured on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno, will be held on June 9 at the Six Degrees Club under the sponsorship of Chabad. The popular *Jersey Boys*, at the Toronto Centre for the Arts, runs until June 30. For youngsters ages 10 and up, the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People brings *Hanna's Suitcase* from April 18 to May 21.

*The Soul of Gershwin: The Musical Journey of an American Klezmer* will be at the Winter Garden Theatre on May 4 as part of the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company's 2010 series. *Broadway From the Bimah*, on May 27, presents Marvin Hamlisch and Cantor Alex Stein with a 45-piece symphony orchestra, at Toronto's Adath Israel Congregation.

*Shen Yun*, a colorful performance of classical Chinese dance and music, which terms itself “the world's most stunning stage production,” with live orchestra will be at the Canon Theatre, May 7–9. A concert by Simon and Garfunkel is scheduled at the Air Canada Centre for May 12.

The Canadian Opera Company presents *The Flying Dutchman*, April 24–May 20. Mozart's Idomeneo is featured May 9 to

29. A special performance on May 21, offers all tickets at \$20 or \$50. Donizetti's Maria Stuarda runs May 1–31. Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*, presented by the Toronto Operetta Theatre at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, runs April 27 to May 2. A program called *Mothers, Daughters and Sons* on May 8 features stars of opera and musical theater, bringing songs “that sing the trials and tribulations of motherhood.”

For exhibits, the Gardiner Museum is featuring Contemporary Ceramics in Israel, From the Melting Pot Into the Fire, until May 9. On display are the works of 42 contemporary artists with a “revealing perspective on issues of their home and identity.” Children under 12 always get in free at this museum. Canada's design center and museum, The Design Exchange, is showing From Mediterranean Traditional to Israeli Contemporary Design, with 60 works on display, until June 20. Visitors to the exhibit are eligible to win a trip for two to Israel.

The Toronto Jewish Film Society has scheduled two films for this spring – *Two Lovers* (Sun., May 16) and *Sixty Six with Sidney Turtlebaum* (Sun., June 6). The films are shown at the Al Green Theatre in the Miles Nadal JCC.

Those wishing to experience a Jewish community event in Toronto can join the Walk With Israel event on May 30. It will have its kick-off party at 9 a.m. at Coronation Park. The walk begins at 10 a.m. and is sponsored by United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto.

Another event of note is the fifth annual Keep Toronto Reading Festival, April 1 to 30. It is presented by the Toronto Public Library at its many branches and is called a “celebration of all the books we love.” The festival features meetings with the authors events, listening to poetry, and for kids hands-on activities will be provided by the city's top museums. Among the authors one can meet at this festival, on April 28, 7 p.m. is Merle Nudelman. Her first book, *Borrowed Light*, won the Canadian Jewish Book Award for poetry. The book follows the lives of her parents, Holocaust survivors and their profoundly transformative experiences.

For kosher dining, this city continues to provide all sorts of interesting kosher meals either in restaurants or as take-out. Most of these establishments are either on Bathurst St. or a short distance from this major thoroughfare of the Jewish community. For take-out, The Umami Sushi Bar invites its customers to “experience the 5th element of taste,” with its diverse dishes. Sushi as well as pizza and falafel are available at King David. Golden Chopsticks advertises that it offers “Toronto's best kosher Chinese food.”

One of the newer restaurants in town is Hamizrach, calling itself a “Middle Eastern Grill House.” This establishment has a “National Bukharian Cuisine” section on its menu, with such dishes as Lagman Soup, Manti, and Plove, all of which are quite tasty. ★

**ZIMMERMAN**

(continued from page NAT 8)

traditional lament for the souls of the departed. The singing of Hatikvah (The Hope), Israel's national anthem, concluded the service, calling to mind Rabbi Greenberg's proclamation that the creation of the State of Israel was the Jewish People's response to the Holocaust, life made precious once again despite the depths to which humanity had sunk.

The extended wail of the shofar gradually faded into silence, providing an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of Holocaust memory. I thought of my students, wanting to help Jews during the Third Reich. I had just observed my friend, the Reverend Kristi Denham of the Congregational Church of Belmont, reading an excerpt from *Ten Thousand Children*, stories told by the children on the Kindertransport.

To me, Yom HaShoah is incomplete when only Jews participate. The Holocaust was a human tragedy, not just a Jewish tragedy. It proved the depths to which humanity can sink when good people do nothing. I try to teach my Holocaust students not to be bystanders. We need to involve our neighbors in remembering, so that no one becomes a bystander in current events.

Holocaust remembrance demands that we Jews look at ourselves not as an insular people, but as a people with a biblical mandate: to be a light unto the nations. To be anything less is to miss the mark.

We are part of a whole. What should our relationship with other nations be like? Is the current impasse with Palestinians relevant? Can't both peoples be doing more to promote peace? Each person, each family, each community has the obligation to heal ourselves first and then help repair a world full of injustice and hate, desperate for healing.

The Jewish religion has devised prayers and rituals that have sustained our people for 5,000 years. There is room for individual prayer, family prayer, and communal prayer.

Now, we need to learn to pray with other communities that are different from ourselves. A Yom HaShoah Haggadah in which all can participate can do much to repair a wounded world. To do anything less is to miss the mark.

Dr. Miriam L. Zimmerman is professor emerita at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, Calif. She can be reached at [mzimmerman@ndnu.edu](mailto:mzimmerman@ndnu.edu). ★

**SEGAL**

(continued from page NAT 12)

and from which I received a doctorate. Let us be leaders and not followers. Thank you very much.

Sincerely, Rabbi Jack Segal

Rabbi Jack Segal D.H.L., ED. D. is rabbi emeritus Congregation Beth Yeshurun, Houston. He can be reached at [rabbsegal@aol.com](mailto:rabbsegal@aol.com). ★

**ROSENBERG**

(continued from page NAT 9)

Feel guilt for surviving, for speaking on behalf of children who were silenced – never!

I became a rabbi to aid the living, to ensure our survival; to rekindle the Jewish flame. I am proud; proud of my heritage, proud of our strength, and proud of my beloved parents.

Contrary to what we are told, the passage of time does not ease our pain, nor does it diminish the scope of the horror that was the Holocaust.

Oh yes, there are those, few in number, who feel that it is psychologically healthier to avoid reminders that keep painful and unpleasant events alive. Why subject our young to the brutal story of Nazi bestiality toward the Jewish people? What purpose will it serve? It would be wiser not to talk about it so that it can disappear.

Never! We must never stop telling this story. Tell it we must, in every gory detail! We must do this because it is our sacred duty to alert them to the evils of men, so that they will never be lulled into a false sense of safety and security. We must alert them so that our children will be vigilant and will never be caught unaware as were the Jews who perished in the Holocaust. This is the message I emphasize to my beloved children, Ilana, Ayelet, Yaakov and Ari.

Although we are cognizant that our children will be adversely affected, that they will feel great pain upon learning the true facts of the Holocaust, we know that this is something we must do.

I urgently beg of you, my fellow children of Holocaust survivors, keep alive the memory of the courage and will to live possessed by your parents. Time is growing short. Soon, like my parents of blessed memory, they will have left this world. Speak with them now. Learn all you can about their Holocaust experiences and about your grandparents and great-grandparents. Communicate with them before it is too late! This is our mission. This we must vow to do. Join me, my fellow Holocaust brothers and sisters, in this holy mission. Let us join hands and loudly acclaim, "We will keep the memory of the Holocaust alive".

Rabbi Dr. Bernhard H. Rosenberg is spiritual leader of Congregation Beth-El in Edison, N. J., and president – Metuchen Edison Interfaith Clergy Association. ★

**AGES**

(continued from page NAT 16)

In this marvellous book Margalit provides numerous photographs of various monuments commemorating German losses in World War II. But he does more than that; he explains the genesis, controversies and arguments that surrounded these mute testimonies, and judging from the monuments themselves, those testimonies are ambivalent, confusing and in some

cases simply incomprehensible.

The conclusion of this finely calibrated study is as carefully drawn as its fulsome narrative. Margalit suggests that the revisionism over German guilt may simply be a temporary, transient phenomenon. Yet in the final paragraph of the book, there is an ominous reference to the equivalency doctrine now being exported everywhere, including Israel, where a television personality recently joined Hiroshima to the Holocaust!

Arnold Ages is distinguished emeritus professor of French language and literature, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. ★

**KAUFMAN**

(continued from page NAT 15)

era taking us all to a place that seemed unreachable and unimaginable."

As someone who followed this story since November, I can't argue with those sentiments. Thankfully, few analogies have been elided during this journey; the story's been told thoroughly: The little school lost the battle, but won the war for our memories.

"The atmosphere really united the campus as Butler students were cheering on their friends," Smoler added. "There was not a day that people didn't wear Butler gear. We were all Dawgs, it didn't matter what breed."

Kaufman is a military historian with the Indiana War Memorials Commission in Indianapolis. Also an Associate Fellow at the Sagamore Institute, Kaufman is the author of the new book, *Marble City*. The book can be found through Amazon or [universe.com](http://universe.com). ★

**ZOBERMAN**

(continued from page NAT 16)

mother, a daughter and granddaughter who feared for retribution since the daughter's husband was an S.S. officer at Mauthausen and was killed by the Americans. They offered Small a sack of valuables belonging to Jews. He refused it, and seeing in their plight his own murdered family's helplessness, he got them on a train to Italy to start a new life. Small himself traveled to Modena, Italy, with returning Italian soldiers from Russian captivity. There, in a military compound, he was exposed to the "Matilda" tank that proved critical later on.

In Turino, Italy, Small got acquainted with Jewish Brigade soldiers and became instrumental in a major smuggling operation of left-over weapons, from Rome to Palestine. He also accompanied Jewish refugees to Cyprus and Palestine, till his own disembarking in the land that has always been the focus of his dreams. On the eve of Israel's 1948 Declaration of Independence and the ensuing war, Small found himself in the south's kibbutz Negba heroically repelling with fellow defenders the assault of Egyptian troops. He even

drove an abandoned Matilda tank. Yearning for family, he returned to Italy to await a U.S. visa long delayed. Luckily, his colorful Uncle Harry Berman, an influential New York accountant, flew to Italy and intervened for him.

In New York, Sam married Doris who along with her sister Ida were German survivors journeying on the Kindertransport to England. Sam's relative, Professor David Silberklang, is editor-in-chief of Yad Vashem Studies at Jerusalem's Hebrew University. For a while Small had a successful business of women's hats. Upon retirement the Smalls moved to Colorado to be with their extended family with Martin remaining active in his passions – Holocaust education and woodcarving. What a life and what a legacy poignantly reflecting how much was lost in the Shoah!

Rabbi Israel Zoberman, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Va., is the son of Polish Holocaust survivors from Zamosc Sarnay and Pinsk. ★

**MEDAD**

(continued from page NAT 20)

**Israelis, no need to travel to watch the games**

Downtown Jerusalem has a world class sports bar. No need to pay \$500 for a good seat.

The Lion's Den, HaGov, 5 Yoel Solomon Street, Jerusalem, Sports Bar & Grill, Kosher, Shomer Shabbat, Sun. – Thurs. 7 p.m. – 5 a.m.



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

**EDITORIAL**

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Thank you for reading and supporting *The Jewish Post & Opinion*.

Jennie Cohen 4-21-10. ★



## Musings from Shiloh

By BATYA MEDAD

### Signs of The Moshiach (Messiah) all one family

Living in Shiloh for almost 30 years, we've become part of a very Jewish community. Diaspora-based ethnic distinctions are getting more and more blurred. Every year after switching the kitchen back to its normal *chametz* mode, we reward ourselves by celebrating the Moroccan Maimona, a Jewish holiday we knew nothing about growing up in Ashkenaz (Eastern European) New York Jewish families.

Like most of our neighbors with married children, we have grandchildren of "mixed ethnic" Jewish identities. Everyone is 100% Jewish, but it's common for Yemenite grandmothers to have Ashkenaz grandchildren. Or, like us, our Tunisian progeny eat their rice, forbidden by our ethnic custom, at our Passover table. Menus, like families, are very mixed.

After thousands of years of exile, we Jews have become comfortable, too comfortable in many of our temporary homes and cultures. We've adopted and adapted foods, menus and cooking styles, clothing, art and music from our hosts frequently forgetting that those locations were supposed to be temporary punishments.

Recent polls have shown a new wonderful tolerance and acceptance of this phenomenon. This is very different from the early days of the State of Israel when the European Zionists unabashedly discriminated against North African and Indian Jews.

We're in the midst of a process, preparing ourselves as a People to accept Moshiach Ben David, when he shows himself, speedily in our days, G-d willing.

#### Shiloh, our heritage

The Israeli government is no expert in history, especially Jewish History. Shiloh is a very important city, and thousands of Israelis young and old came here during Passover. So, it's not on the official "Heritage Trail." Shiloh is in the Bible, very central in the development of Jewish History.



The *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was in Shiloh for 369 years, from Joshua to Samuel. Shiloh was the official site for Jewish worship and the administrative capital before King David established Jerusalem, and before King Solomon built the Holy Temple. And in recent years it's a very popular tourist spot, especially for the festival activities we've been offering during Passover and Succot. Here are a few pictures from this year's Passover Festival.



Tel Shiloh is open to tourists, for parties and events all year long. For more information contact [telshilo@gmail.com](mailto:telshilo@gmail.com).



#### Refusenik movie, now on the small screen

A couple of years ago, we were privileged to be in the audience at the premiere screening of the documentary *Refuseniks*. It was a very thrilling evening being in the same room with so many legends.



This week, last night and tonight, the movie is being broadcast on Israel's Channel One. For my generation, the Save Soviet Jewry protest movement and being an active and dedicated member

of Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) held great importance. For some it was a form of "revenge" against the Nazis, a chance for children of Holocaust survivors to make up for their parents' suffering and the lack of world Jewish protest during Nazi rule.

Others, I among them, had no family Holocaust history. For us it was the opportunity to fight for justice and human rights for Jews during the popular struggle for Civil Rights for Black (then called Negro) Americans. We felt it important to find a Jewish issue to demonstrate for.



It was during the time I became more and more involved in the Soviet Jewry movement protesting the closing of synagogues and lack of religious rights in the USSR that I became religiously observant. I guess I had internalized the message I had once seen on a Jewish television show called *The Eternal Light*. The episode I remember best was broadcast after the publication of the Anne Frank Diary, possibly around Chanukah. As I remember it, there was a discussion among two people about Nazi restrictions on Jewish celebrations and hidden Jews like the Frank family.

"If I found myself living in a country that forbade Judaism, for instance lighting a Chanukah menorah, I would risk everything to keep Jewish traditions."

"Today, it's not forbidden. Why don't you observe/celebrate Jewish Laws and holidays?"

I heard this over 50 years ago. That message burned into my soul. No doubt that it had great influence over my life. That's why I dedicated my youthful energies and activism to save Soviet Jewry, became a Torah observant Jew and moved to Israel, specifically to Shiloh, which was liberated in the Six Days War, the single greatest and most significant historic event in my adolescence.

G-d has been good to me. I'm happy to say that I was on the Absorption Committee here in Shiloh during the large *aliyah* to Israel from the former Soviet Union, and was able to facilitate the acceptance of those new immigrants to Shiloh. The *Refusenik* movie brings back many memories.

#### Something new in Shiloh

First of all, I *almost* always have my camera strapped to me when I go out of the house. It's not that I always take pictures, but there's a feeling of "what if...?" Last night as I was ready to go out, my neighbor asked: "Would you really

feel *naked* without it?" I ignored her comment, best as I could...

From a distance, this metal enclosure looked like some sort of animal cage. When my friend and I were walking (more like shuffling for me) around the neighborhood last night, we spied something new. She tried reading the Hebrew first. I was too busy getting my *hah!* I *knew* I should have brought it camera out of the case.

"What does this mean? It looks like it's to collect plastic bottles and bags, but it says, 'לא למחזר' *Don't recycle*.' That doesn't make sense. What do they mean by *זה מטורף* *Zeh metoraff*?"



I finally looked at the sign. Yes, it was clear that this new structure was for collecting plastic for recycling. What could that sign mean?

**זה מטורף לא למחזר**

*Zeh metoraff lo l'machazor*

The actual translation is:

**It's insane not to recycle**

Yes, Shiloh has joined the international recycling community.

#### How Green

Here are some pre-Passover pictures, taken about three weeks ago. You can see how our grape vines are starting to get nice and green. We generally don't get grapes worth harvesting until well into the summer. That's in a good year. Last year there wasn't a grape to eat, though the year before was record-breaking delicious, bountiful.



One of the local kids has made quite a business for himself. I must give him a call. When I spoke to him, he was too busy to do my yard, though he did the neighbor's. Or maybe I should get some goat owners to bring their goats...

(see Medad, page NAT 19)

