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# *The Hand of Rachel*



This artwork is by Gigi Marks Felsher. She is a past president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis. She is married to Arthur Felsher, and between them they have three daughters and two grandchildren. Gigi is president of HealthSmart, LLC, and works with families wanting to make their home environment healthier and safer.

Gigi's artwork is a mosaic in the shape of a "hamsa," a Middle Eastern symbol dating back to prehistoric times designed to give protection from the evil eye, bad luck that results from the attention or jealousy of others. The hamsa consists of a hand, usually pointing fingers down with an eye in the middle. The eye is generally blue, a color which is also associated with protection from the evil eye.

The entire symbol is often made of or covered with a material that is somewhat reflective to reflect back the evil. This particular piece is done primarily in iridescent glass, to capture the idea of reflection, and is called "The Hand of Rachel" in honor of her daughter, for whom it was made. It was made in a mosaic class taught by Suzy Friedman of Indianapolis, an artist well-known for her paintings and Judaica.



## Editorial

Thank you, dear readers for all of your financial support, the kind words about my father and the encouragement to me. I am extremely grateful for all of these. Eventually I will be able to thank all of you with a letter or phone call, but for now, please accept this as my thank you until that time.

If one or more of you have been thinking about contributing but didn't get around to it or perhaps your budget didn't allow for it then but now you would like to make a donation to the newspaper, every dollar we receive is important. Our new address is 1111 East 54th St., Suite 119, Indianapolis, IN 46220.

The following story is an example of one of the pleasures that result from my following in my parent's footsteps. A few months ago I received an email from a rabbi in Texas asking my permission to post a couple of columns that had been published in our newspaper. She wrote, "Our organization teaches teens about sexuality in the context of Jewish values." She continued that the articles appeared in the book *The Jewish 1960s*.

I emailed her back and said she must be confusing us with another newspaper because as long as I have been publishing, there haven't been any columns on that subject. I also said I wasn't familiar with *The Jewish 1960s*.

She replied with a thank you. She also wrote that the credits of the two articles in *The Jewish 1960s: An American Sourcebook* (2004, Brandeis) were: "Fun in the Bedroom Is the Jewish View" from April 13, 1973, and "Rabbi Bans Hot Pants, See-Through Blouses" from July 20, 1971. Those articles appeared before my time publishing the newspaper so that is why I did not remember them.

Our old office was downtown and I usually parked on the street as close to the front door as possible. Those parking spaces have meters. Shortly after I received this second email from the rabbi, it was time to put more change in my meter. Unfortunately I had run out of change. But then I remembered that sometimes when I am in sitting in the driver's seat, I get change out for the meter and I accidentally drop coins between the seats and they end up on the floor of the back seat.

It was a cold day so after getting to my car, I opened the door to the back seat, got in and quickly closed the door. I always have extra copies of the newspapers on the seats and the floors because I never know when someone will ask me if I have a copy of a particular issue. I started lifting up the newspapers on the floor of the back seat and found not only change but a book, *The Jewish 1960s*!

We receive a lot of books for review and this one had recently come out in paperback. I must have taken that one to show my two older sisters, Debbie Cohen and Miriam Glickman and forgotten

## Shabbat Shalom

By RABBI JON ADLAND

May 21, 2010, Naso  
(Numbers 4:21-7:89), 8 Sivan 5770

Tonight five women – Lea Coleman, Erin Healey, Diane Healey, Shelly Sachs, and Barbie Stenacker – will fulfill a dream by leading a worship service and reading from the Torah. This 5770 *b'not mitzvah* class has been studying together with me since last fall. They have laughed and cried on this journey toward fulfilling their dream and tonight their dream becomes real. It has been my honor over my years as a rabbi to help many adults and a few teens deepen their Jewish commitment through serious engagement in Jewish study and texts.

The first part of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation's mission statement is Torah (study). I have urged adults at every stop on my Jewish journey to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Judaism through adult Jewish study. I truly believe that to be a leader of the Jewish people one must understand what Judaism is, what it says about living life, commitment, justice, and God, and how to make that knowledge a vital and integral part of one's life. Jewish study isn't only for leadership, but for every Jew. We have a rich and exciting history of knowledge that takes us back to the time of our Exodus from Egypt until today. No one generation of Jews has ever felt possessive of their understanding that it is built on what came before and will be added to what is yet to come. Torah could be understood in a narrow sense as the Five Books of Moses, but in a broader sense Torah is cumulative knowledge from yesterday to today.

One of the names Jews are known by

about it. Both of those sisters were active in the civil rights movement in the 1960s volunteering in the south to help blacks register to vote and so forth.

I carried the book back to my office, opened it and went right to the table of contents. After finding the page numbers for the articles mentioned by the rabbi, I turned right to them and got a nice surprise. One of the articles in that chapter was written by my mother, Helen Cohen, of blessed memory. She penned a weekly column for this newspaper for 27 years from 1946-1973. She did this while raising eight children! On top of this unexpected "visit" from her, the introduction to the chapter included a comment about "the popular columnist" Helen Cohen.

I emailed the rabbi back and thanked her for her inquiry. I never would have seen that article if she had not emailed to request permission. I explained to her what happened and told her she had made my day!

Jennie Cohen, June 16, 2010. ★

is the People of the Book. Outsiders have always seen the Jewish people as literate and thoughtful. Others may not agree with Jewish culture, theology, or practice, but it was always known that we studied, debated, and added to the layers of insights that came before us.

The sad commentary though is that in our day most of the Jewish education going on is for the youth and ends in 10th grade. Jewish adults are just too busy managing their lives to take time once a week to study for its own sake what it means to be Jewish, the richness of Jewish wisdom in the holy texts, or some other aspect of Judaism. Though over the last 30 years more children have gone to summer camp, celebrated a bar or bat mitzvah and attended religious school, there are less and less Jewish adults who rise above a pediatric understanding of Judaism. There is no better time than today and no better today than Shabbat to change this adult perception. It doesn't have to be inundating, but it has to be something. Subscribe to the URJ's Ten Minutes of Torah or any number of websites that offer Jewish learning. Get a Torah commentary and read the weekly *parasha* and a bit of commentary. Subscribe to a Jewish newspaper or magazine. Go to Torah study.

Our five women tonight decided that they wanted to deepen their knowledge and commitment to Judaism. They've studied, debated and prepared for this *b'not mitzvah* evening. I salute them and hope that others will follow in the years to come.

When you light your Shabbat candles this evening, light one for those who've left us answers about Judaism and questions about life for us to ponder and consider. Light the other candle as a torch leading us to the path to deeper understanding of Judaism through the study of Torah.

Rabbi Adland is senior rabbi of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. ★

## A Bit of Wit

Moishe, a Jewish actor, is so down and out he's ready to take any acting gig that he can find. Finally, he gets a lead, a classified ad that says,

"Actor needed to play an ape."

"I could do that," says Moishe.

To his surprise, the employer turns out to be Central Park Zoo in New York.

Owing to recent budget cuts and the great recession, the Zoo cannot afford to import an ape to replace the recently deceased one. So, until they can, they'll put an actor in an ape suit.

Out of desperation, Moishe takes the offer. At first, his conscience keeps nagging him, that he is being dishonest by fooling the zoo-goers. Moishe also feels undignified in the ape suit, stared at by the crowds who watch his every move. But, after a few days on the job, he begins to enjoy all the attention and starts to put on a show for all the zoo-goers. Moishe hangs upside down from the branches by his legs, swinging about on the vines, climbing up the cage walls and roaring with all his might while beating on his chest. Soon, he's drawing a sizable crowd.

One day, when Moishe is swinging on the vines to show off to a group of school kids, his hand slips and he goes flying over the fence into the neighboring cage, the lion's den.

Terrified, Moishe backs up as far from the approaching lion as he can, covers his eyes and prays at the top of his lungs, "Shma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad!"

The lion opens his powerful jaws and roars the response, "Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto! L'olam Va'ed."

From a nearby cage, a panda yells, "Shut up you schmucks, you'll get us all fired!"

Submitted by Jay Perler, Indianapolis. ★



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# Chassidic Rabbi

By RABBI BENZION COHEN

The last day of Pesach has a special connection with Moshiach. Before sunset we gather together for a special festive meal. The Baal Shem Tov called this meal "The meal of Moshiach"

This year at this meal I told a story that happened to me many years ago. I was having a hard time with one of my teenagers. One day I got a brainstorm. "Ah!" I told myself. "This will solve the problem. I'll buy him a one way ticket to anywhere in the world. He'll live his life, and I'll live mine, and peace will reign on all of Israel."

After enjoying this idea for a few minutes, I suddenly caught myself. What had happened to me? I love everyone, everyone but my own son!? You can't be a Lubavitcher if you don't love every Jew, including your own teenagers. Either I love my kid, or I turn in my Lubavitch badge.

I made the smart choice, and decided to love my son. But how? He had been a teenager for three years already, and was really getting on my nerves. Again I made a wise choice. I went and spoke to some wise rabbis about learning to love teenagers.

They explained to me that deep inside us is a very precious and holy soul. I have to love my son because of his essence, his soul. My love for him has to be absolute, unconditional. If he gets on my nerves, that is my problem, not his. Instead of getting upset with his behavior, I should work hard to try to understand why he (and many other teenagers) behaves like this.

I took their words to heart. In addition I studied some of the Chassidic texts that explain the deeper meaning of love. After two weeks and a lot of effort, I began to feel some real love for my son. And lo and behold, his behavior started to improve! Teenagers may seem to be very tough, but they still need lots of love from their parents. (Even adults need love from their parents.)

After the meal, one of the guests approached me. She said that my story had really touched her. She was having a similar problem, and maybe I could give her some advice and try to help her. We sat down, and she told me her story. She is 70 years old. The only close relatives that she has in this world are her daughter and two grandchildren. For the last ten years she hasn't felt any love for her daughter, and she hasn't seen her or her grandchildren in seven years. When she heard my story a glimmer of hope passed through her. Maybe she could also make peace with her daughter and love her again.

I asked her what had caused the rift ten years ago. She told me that her parents had passed away, and she and her daughter had fought over the inheritance.

I explained to her that Hashem put in us two opposing forces, our good side and our bad or evil side. Our good side tells us to see the good in others and love them. Our evil side is referred to as the evil influence. Our evil influence tells us to look for the bad in others, and therefore look down upon them and hate them.

If Hashem wants us to do good, then why did He give us an evil influence? One of the reasons is that He is testing us. He gave us a mind. Will we use our intellect for good or for evil? Are we smart enough to distinguish between good and evil? Our evil influence is very clever, and tries hard to fool us. He uses many disguises. He even sometimes pretends to be very righteous. He says, full of righteous indignation: "Look at the terrible crimes that such and such have done. They deserve to be hated and punished!"

So how can we overcome our evil influence? By ourselves it is almost impossible. We need help and advice from wise rabbis. A rabbi has studied the workings of the evil influence, and has been fighting with his own for many years. I advised this woman to try her best to love her daughter unconditionally, absolutely. And if any bad thoughts came up about her, to remember that this is the evil influence talking. When the evil influence tries to tell us something bad about someone, we have to tell him very firmly to get lost. I gave her some Chassidic texts to read about the deeper meaning of love.

Baruch Hashem, this story had a happy ending. I received an email from this woman telling me that her daughter and granddaughter had come to visit, and it was a lovely surprise.

I am now working on bringing peace to another family, and ask you, all of my readers, for your help in this project. The person involved isn't prepared right now to ask a rabbi for advice, so the only thing that I think will help is prayer. Please pray for the next few weeks for Tuvya Yaakov hacohen, son of Chaya. Ask Hashem to give him and all of us understanding to distinguish between good and evil. Ask Hashem to open his heart, and all of our hearts, to love our family, and all mankind. Ask Hashem to open his eyes, and all of our eyes, to see the good in others. And ask Hashem to bring Moshiach. We have been fighting our evil influence nonstop for 5,770 years, and now it is time for Hashem to take away all evil, forever.

We want Moshiach now!

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



# Obituaries

## Rabbi David Forman, 65

Rabbis for Human Rights founder Rabbi David Forman died in Dallas on May 3, 2010.

He founded the organization in 1988 and served as its chairman from then to 1992, and again in 2002-03. The organization, which calls itself "the rabbinic voice of conscience in Israel, giving voice to the Jewish tradition of human rights," has a membership of rabbis and rabbinic students from all streams of Judaism. It is primarily concerned with the plight of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

Forman, who made *aliyah* in 1972, served as the director of the Israel office of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, where he led the effort for religious pluralism in Israel. Prior to that he was the chairman of Interns for Peace from 1984 to 1986, and the founding chairman of both the Jerusalem Council for Soviet Jewry in 1973 and the Cincinnati Council for Soviet Jewry in 1970.

Forman keynoted the Nobel Institute conference on The Role of Religion in Middle East Peacemaking. In 1994, he was a member of the Israeli delegation to the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony for laureates Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin.

He wrote four books and was a regular contributor to many newspapers and magazines in Israel and in the Anglo-Jewish press.

Forman was ordained in 1972 and received a doctorate in 1997 from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Between 1977 and 1991 he was a deputy commanding officer in the Israeli army, receiving a citation for meritorious service in 1990.

Forman was husband to Judy, and father to Tamar, Liat, Shira and Orly. He was laid to rest in Israel.



## Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bukhari, 61

In a small and ancient family plot attached to his ancestral home in Jerusalem's Old City, regional Sufi leader Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bukhari was laid to rest on Tues., June 1, 2010 at age 61, after a long struggle with heart disease. He was head of the mystical Naqshabandi Holy Land Sufi Order.

A longtime proponent of nonviolence and interfaith unity, Bukhari found his inspiration in Islamic law and tradition, as well as in the writings of Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela.

"The stronger one is the one who can absorb the violence and anger from the other and change it to love and understanding. It is not easy; it is a lot of work. But this is the real jihad," he once told the Globaloneness Project in an interview.

In the late 1990s, Sheikh Bukhari was invited by UNESCO to an interreligious conference in Uzbekistan, where he got to know Eliyahu McLean, an Orthodox Jew living in Jerusalem who had studied Islam. Bukhari and McLean became friends and decided during their trip to launch Jerusalem Peacemakers, a nonprofit partnership of interfaith religious leaders and grassroots activists, from Muslim, Druse, Christian and Jewish communities.

"Sheikh Bukhari was a unique, gentle, but determined voice in Jerusalem, and the Muslim world, for non-violence, love and harmony. He opened many hearts all over the world to the power of love as a way to heal the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and wounded family of Abraham," remarked his friend Eliyahu McLean.



L-R: Sheikh Aziz Bukhari with Ibrahim Ahmad Abu El-Hawa, and Eliyahu McLean.

Bukhari later also got involved in the Interfaith Coordinating Council in Israel, the Interfaith Encounter Association, and the Sulha Peace Project, and in 2007 launched the Jerusalem Hug every June 21, where Israelis, Palestinians and foreigners of all faiths form a human chain of prayer around the Old City.

He also traveled extensively in Europe, to give a Muslim face to a message of unity and tolerance and to show the deep friendship possible between Muslims and Jews.

During Operation Cast Lead, Bukhari initiated a delegation of Arab youth and religious leaders to show solidarity with the students and teachers in Sderot and to share the pain of his own family's experience in Gaza.

Sheikh Bukhari is survived by a wife and six children, whose families are scattered across Jerusalem, Gaza and the U.S. ★

## On this date in Jewish history

On June 16, 1527  
Jews expelled from  
Florence, Italy.

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





## Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

### Tammuz began on Saturday evening, June 12

We rely on weather forecasts when planning our days' activities, stock forecasts or charts to guide or monitor investing. Might it also be helpful to have a kabbalistic forecast for the month that serves as a guide to our spiritual growth?

"Thousands of years ago the Jewish mystical tradition known as Kabbalah revealed a very profound and powerful system for healing and transformation. Though the knowledge remains obscure, it has influenced many current forms of healing. According to Kabbalah, the Jewish calendar as a whole is a road map for personal transformation.

"To the uninitiated, this material may seem mystical or superstitious, but that does not make it less true. Many things exist beyond our powers of conception or reasoning. Just as there are various season and fluctuations in our weather, there are also fluctuations in the spiritual energies available. Those who are attuned to these energies are aware of such changes and know how to use this knowledge for their personal growth and success. Rather than promoting fatalism, this knowledge actually increases our capacity to make meaningful and effective choices for our highest good." (*Kabbalah Month by Month*, introduction)

Welcome the month of Tammuz on Saturday and Sunday, June 12 and 13:

"From a secular perspective, many think of the summer as a carefree time, a time to travel, relax, have fun, but according to Kabbalah, Tammuz is a heavy and challenging month. The heat one experiences is not just physical but also emotional and spiritual. That is why we need to be mindful of the emotional intensity of this month and why it is important to be particularly sensitive to ourselves and others this month. Tammuz is still ultimately a good and wonderful month but only if we know how to use its intense energy constructively. When we do this, we grow through challenges in ways that may not be possible at any other period of the year." (pgs. 247-8)

"The divine permutation for the month is reversed. Tammuz can be a time of reversals. We expect one thing to happen, but something totally different happens. As much as we may like to think we are in control of our lives, we need to realize our limitations, let go and invite God into our lives. This is one of the deep teachings of this month.

"As hard as it may be, we must realize that whatever happens to us can be an

opportunity for growth and healing. We grow the most when confronting our greatest challenges. Tammuz is a month of judgment; we need to accept that nothing is accidental or coincidental. Through we have free will, everything is also divine providence." (pg. 251)

"The astrological sign for Tammuz is Cancer. The Hebrew word for Cancer is *sartan*, which means 'Satan,' a name that reveals the difficulty of the tests of this month. The ruling body of Cancer is the moon. The moon is always changing, making Tammuz an emotional time with many ups and downs. One has to learn to ride the emotional rollercoaster of Tammuz."

"The Torah portions reflect what is happening during the month. Korach reveals the struggle within the Jewish people. Two hundred and fifty men, the leaders of the Jewish people were followers of Korach, claimed that Moses had concentrated too much power in the hands of his family and tribe, the Levites who served in the *mishkon*, the holy Tabernacle hosting the Divine Presence. Though they were jealous of Moses and Aaron, they did not express this directly. They couched their argument in idealistic terms, claiming that the entire assembly, all of them are holy." (pg. 260)

### [With its] many ups and downs, one has to learn to ride the emotional rollercoaster of Tammuz.

If we look at what was happening on the external level, it sounds that the accusations might be true. Yet, we learn this month, that what is presented is not always what really is, and we must look beyond the external to perceive what is hidden and real.

As we enter this month, the world arena has many challenges and catastrophic events. The BP oil spill is polluting the oceans, economies in Europe are collapsing, Iran and Hamas are threatening to destroy Israel, the U.S. stock market is plummeting, the recent flotilla incident and so many nations in the world condemning Israel before they knew the facts. You know what is happening in our world as well as I do. This is some of the heat of Tammuz. It is easy to be worried and concerned about what is happening in our world. Additionally, I imagine that there are also challenges in our personal lives, in our relationships and even within ourselves as well. Often what is happening on the macro level is reflected in the micro level.

How do we grow through our challenges and tests? How do we see God amidst all the turmoil? This is the question of the month. According to this month, the area to focus on

## News

### First Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in October in Israel

DALLAS – The world's largest series of 5k runs/fitness walks celebrating breast cancer survivors and supporters comes to Israel for the first time. This historic first Israel Race for the Cure will be held around the walls of Old Jerusalem on Oct. 28 with Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat as host and in partnership with Hadassah and the Women's Zionist Organization of America, to celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month, held every October.

The Race for the Cure started 28 years ago in Dallas, Texas. Today, more than 1.6 million people participate in Races across North America, Europe, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

"Jerusalem is a site of great historic significance to people of all faiths. It will be very meaningful to see people of all religions and nationalities racing as one toward a common goal of ending suffering from breast cancer while also celebrating those who are living with and conquering this disease whether they join us in person or in spirit from anywhere in the world," said Ambassador Nancy G. Brinker, founder and CEO of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

Travel packages and activities are available at [www.komen.org/israel](http://www.komen.org/israel) for those who wish to travel to Israel that week as part of a special delegation. Those who can't travel to Israel can register as a VIP – Virtual Israel Participant. VIPs receive their own Israel Race website page to personalize with photos and stories to raise awareness and funds and to honor a breast cancer survivor. VIPs also can form virtual Race teams, complete with T-shirts and special Race bibs marking this historic event.

"The Race for the Cure is a powerful way for schools, churches, synagogues and local organizations to participate by walking, running and forming Race teams to support breast cancer survivors, their families and friends in Israel, and around the world, in a fun and meaningful way," said Stephanie Siegel, a breast cancer survivor who is co-chair of the Israel delegation trip and board member of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Advocacy Alliance, the c4 sister organization to Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

#### About Susan G. Komen for the Cure

Nancy G. Brinker promised her dying sister, Susan G. Komen, she would do everything in her power to end breast cancer forever. In 1982, that promise became the Susan G. Komen for the Cure and launched the global breast cancer movement. For more information about Susan G. Komen for the Cure, breast health or breast cancer, visit [www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org) or call 1-877 GO KOMEN. ✨

improving is "seeing". What we see reflects our thinking. This month we need to breathe, meditate and be open to see life more clearly and calmly. We need to question our assumptions. We can easily become upset about something that is not true. Take a moment to review your recent responses to events in your life. If you are upset about something or someone, might you be making assumptions that are not true? As my teacher Reb Shlomo (Carlebach) would often say, "What do we really know?"

We can all acknowledge that a response of fear, worry or anger to any challenge will not be helpful. Even though it may sometimes be an automatic response to become frightened and upset by major challenges and changes that occur in our lives, these emotions do not help us to cope or grow through the challenge.

What helps us to grow? Faith and gratitude is what helps us to transform. If we believe in God, if we talk to God, if we connect to God, we can find peace amidst chaos and strife, and we can grow through challenges and become happier and better people. Learning Torah, reading psalms, personal and standard prayer, and meditation are each essential. And sometimes we have to simply let go of our struggle and our

resistance to life as it is and get down on our knees (metaphorically, usually) to call out for divine assistance and faith. Try it sometime. Get down on your knees and open yourself to God. It is one thing to stand before God, and another thing to be on your knees before God. I know that Jews do not usually do that. We Jews used to kneel before Christians adopted this practice and then we stopped doing it so as to distinguish ourselves from them. If you have never gotten on your knees before God, either literally or metaphorically, you may not yet have opened yourself to receive divine love and compassion.

Thankfully, God is very much alive. As we say in our Ahsrei prayer, "God is close to the brokenhearted and those who are crushed in spirit, God saves." It is we who need to call out and open ourselves to receive.

Blessings for a transformational Tammuz.

Melinda Ribner, L.C.S.W. is a spiritual psychotherapist and healer in private practice ([www.kabbalahoftheheart.com](http://www.kabbalahoftheheart.com)). She is a teacher of Jewish meditation and Kabbalah for over 25 years. Author of *Kabbalah Month by Month*, *New Age Judaism*, and *Everyday Kabbalah*, she is also the founder and director of *Beit Miriam* ([www.Beitmiriam.org](http://www.Beitmiriam.org)). She can be reached at [Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com](mailto:Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com). ✨



## Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

### Honor Your Parents – and believe in them as well!

America is big on holidays, especially those that relate to family members. There's a holiday for mothers, a special day for dads and a national grandparents' day that usually includes a pancake breakfast at preschool. But what inspires these holidays is more than a positive-earnings statement from Hallmark Cards. The reason we honor our parents and grandparents is no great mystery: It is because they have given us life.

The Jewish tradition teaches that there are three partners in the creation of a human being: God, the father and the mother. As parents, we are part of a holy relationship with God as our co-parent. This idea can offer great comfort to single parents who need not feel alone in their journey to raise a child. It also implies that the way we treat our parents is a reflection of our relationship with God. Simply put: When we love and honor our parents, we love and honor God.

Judaism is clear about the duties children owe their parents. The fifth Commandment requires that we honor our father and mother and Leviticus 19:3 commands us to revere our mother and father. The positive commandment to honor requires us to provide food, shelter, clothing and the type of support and care that our parents gave us when we were young, especially as they age. The commandment to revere our parents is one of restraint, and it forbids us to disrespect, disgrace or degrade our parents, especially in public.

Jewish wisdom offers an amazing insight about the parent-child relationship. While we are commanded to *love* God, our neighbors and even the stranger among us, nowhere in the Torah are we commanded to love our parents. How could that be?

Some teach that it is because loving a parent is assumed to be so natural that it need not be stated. But for some children, especially those who have suffered from abuse, that is not the case. Because the Torah was given to us to "live by" and the commandments are meant for us to fulfill, it is possible that we are not commanded to love our parents because it might be impossible for everyone to do.

I am incredibly lucky. Both of my parents are still living, and I love them very much. But 16 years ago, when I was in the process of figuring out my life, I unconsciously did something to dishonor them.

At the age of 40, I realized that I wanted to give up the practice of law – to seriously

study Judaism. I had no clue at the time where it would lead me, but my heart told me it was what I needed to do to live a more meaningful life.

I was sure that my parents, especially my father, would have a really hard time understanding this decision. I could hear their questions in my head even before they asked them.

"Why would I give up a lucrative legal career to study Judaism without any guarantee that it would amount to anything? How could I walk away from years of study and all the perks of being a lawyer for something so amorphous? Why couldn't I just get a facelift or buy a new car, like any other self-respecting woman having a mid-life crisis? What would they tell their friends?"

Truth be known, I struggled with some of those questions myself but knew, deep down, that I had to make the change. I avoided telling them about my plans until one night I had a terrible thought.

*Do I have to wait for my parents to die before I can live my life honestly?*

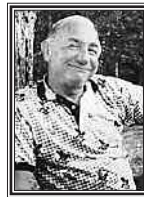
Writing it down now, I hate the question. Worse, I hate that I actually thought it. But worst of all, I hate what it suggested about our relationship: that I gave my parents so little credit and had such little faith and trust in them, that I didn't think they could handle my decision.

The idea that I would have to wait until my parents were gone before I could live my life authentically plagued me. But it also catapulted me into a whole new level of being. I realized that if I didn't believe in my parents, I couldn't expect them to believe in me. If I didn't put my trust in their ability to respect my growth and need to change, I couldn't trust my own judgment when it came to making the change. And if I didn't respect and honor them enough to tell them, I would never respect and honor myself as an individual.

It's true that they had certain concerns about my choice at the time, but it's also true that my father began sending me articles from the *New York Times* about women who changed their careers mid-life and lawyers who were leaving the profession in search of more meaningful work. My relationship with my parents became stronger and more real. My gift came from within: I no longer doubt that their love for me is so fragile or conditional that it can't sustain the truth of who I am or what I may become.

Loving our parents is not commanded in the Torah and neither is believing in them. But when we believe in the capacity of our parents to understand our truths, we honor them as well.

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



## Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

### Heaven, afterlife

I saw my first daffodil in April. First the green shoots exploring a newly bright world. Tentative at first, then a few more. And evidently they decided it beat being buried in the dirt so they celebrated with a golden blossom. Out of nothing burst a green fountain, then a miniature sunburst.

It reminded me of the midrash that says our G-d is one of rejuvenation. Nothing dies – only disappears from our mortal view. I'm willing to bet a pastrami sandwich from the Carnegie Deli that the most frequent and difficult question asked of rabbis is: "Rabbi, do we believe in an afterlife?" Not "is there an afterlife?" That's a tough one, beyond human ken, but is such a belief part of our creed? That's the question to put to our rabbi.

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The Pharisees answered the question positively. But nowhere in the Humash is there a clear declaration of such belief. Notice when his "stiff-necked" partners in the covenant misbehave, their celestial partner never talks of hellish punishment – or denial of heaven – but talks of punishing succeeding generations – as though that's the only way of inflicting pain on them after their earthly departure. And the same with rewards for beneficial behavior: Your descendants shall be blessed – not you, after you have checked out. It is a fact that resurrection of the dead is one of Maimonides 13 principles of faith. But the rational philosopher had his detractors. Let's just say it is not as strong a pillar of faith as in Mohammedism and Christianity.

Of all the uncertainties that plague mankind – numero uno is, Do I get a second, third, or fourth chance to go around again on the Merry-Go-Round? And oddly enough, every religion has a solid no-nonsense, positive answer – except one – Judaism. Christianity and Mohammedism say "absolutely." Hinduism says sure, but maybe as a cow or perhaps a chicken. A cynical reply: Maybe because the world's two major beliefs, Christianity and Mohammedism, originated from Judaism and prized Jewish converts. And alluring statements

of the paradisiacal next world were a great selling point. Who knows?

Christianity, in its formative years, dropped most of those tough rules to encourage recruits. And maybe somebody – Paul-like in his zeal – said we've cut those heavy requirements in this world, but maybe we need to add some bright lights for the next. Look at those daffodils. How exemplary. Every year they die – join the earthy Heartland from whence they came. But lo – here is spring and they live again. I don't mean to be hypercritical; it was not only an illustration in the Christian/Moslem brochure, but a sincere belief. One that many Jews could also believe since it is not denied, but not underlined by Torah. "Dust thou art to dust returneth was not spoken of the soul." So says Longfellow, but he's not known as a Yeshiva student. And Genesis, whose author made both life and Longfellow, says the opposite – thou shall revert to thy original dust due to your disobedience. Remember Adam and Eve? Still, the optimist reflects on that flower that blooms and dies, but lives to bloom again. And pays little heed to me or Longfellow. Ask your rabbi.

Who knows? The daffodil escapes winter by hiding in the ground. But it is not dead.

Mark Twain, a man who was uncomfortable in church, mosque, or synagogue, has a humorous take on the subject. In "Letters from the Earth" the devil, in a reconnoitering visit to earth, writes home:

"You won't believe these people," he tells his Hellish minions. "They can't sing worth a darn and nobody plays the harp – but their heaven – their eternal paradise is full of bellowing harpists. That's all they do." Then he makes a devilish point: "The thing they enjoy most in this world – the earthly joy they're obsessed with, the gratification that has cost them fortunes, empires, reputations (not to mention marriages) is never visualized in their dreams of the world to come."

You know what he means. I must add that in my skimpy knowledge of comparative religion, Islam corrected this oversight with herds of virgins roaming the fleecy cloud meadows.

Like I say, ask your rabbi – not of existence or nonexistence of the world to be. You don't pay him enough for that kind of knowledge. But instead, ask whether it's a formal pillar of our creed – that's the question.

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). ★





## Fun Coach

BY BERNIE DEKOVEN

### Fun sustains us in difficult times

*Dear Mr. Fun Coach,*  
Here's my question: How do we keep such an immense tragedy as the gulf oil spill from taking too great of a toll on our lives? All that damage to life and a way of life. All that outrage.

~ V.A. Zmir

Dear V.A.: Yes, we have every right to be deeply distressed. Yes, we need to raise our voices, to be heard, to insist on compensation and protection and the righting of this great wrong. But we also have every right to come together to celebrate the inalienable joys of daily life. Even now. And if we take a moment, even now, it is clear that those very joys, even the simplest of them, are all that truly sustain us, that bring us meaning, that are the most imperiled.

Fun isn't all we need. But it is something we always need.

There's a lot to be angry about, to be worried about. There's a lot of pain, misery, commiseration. But there are also the children, our children, for whom, basically, fun is life. Like the kids in Haiti who made kites out of the wreckage. Like the kids in Mozambique making a soccer ball out of rags, salvaged pieces of tape and a condom.

Granted, for adults, the world is a different place. For us, especially when our livelihood and or very lives are threatened, choosing to have fun is something like a political act. What will our neighbors think? What will the fisherman whose fishing grounds are in ruin because of an impenetrable network of corporate greed and irresponsibility make of our game? How will the insurance companies interpret our insistence on playing, regardless?

On the other hand, what would it hurt if they played, too?

When there's nothing else to do, nothing that you personally can do, nothing immediate, nothing to keep the oil away, the best thing you can do, for yourself, for your community, is play, too.

Sing. Dance. Make kites and balls. Not all the time. But from time to time. Because when you are playing, you are taking back your life. You are alive again. Laughing. Engaging your mind and body, acting from the core of your indomitable spirit. Not just surviving. Not merely enduring. But celebrating the gifts that are yours to claim.

It's not easy. O, it's easy to play, all right. It's just not easy to let yourself play. Especially not that easy to let yourself be seen playing.

Which is why kids play best in their private places, in vacant lots and alleys, in hidden spaces between. I am suggesting something else, though. I am suggesting that you play where everybody can see you playing. Throw a Frisbee. Jump a rope. Bat a ball. Skip stones. But do it in public. Because as people see you at play, witness the actual fun you are having, they are reminded that despite the profundity and pervasiveness of the tragedy, there is still life to be lived, to be celebrated. If you feel like kicking a ball around (who could blame you), and you discover you don't have a ball to kick, or, for that matter, something to kick it at, make your own. Kick a can. Kick it at another can. Make a whole miniature golf course out of cans – big cans, little cans, coffee cans, tuna fish cans, garbage cans.

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There's a game called "Wicketball" that Bob Zoller sells. He made these industrial strength, giant wickets that you stick in the ground (pound in, as a matter of fact, with a sledge hammer). And a bunch of flags you can use to number each. You make your course. And then hunt around for as many soccer balls as you can find (or make your own). And then you play it like croquet, if you want, or like golf, if you want that more, using your foot as a mallet or golf club. You can play it on anything you can stick a wicket into. On the grass, sand, on hills, in the woods. And the fun, it gets so real you can actually touch it.

Or just take out a checker board and invite someone to play with you. If you want, you can make your own checker board, and your own checkers (milk bottle tops – turned over for the black checkers, turned over again for the red). You can even make up your own checker game. How about the one where, instead of moving your checkers, you flick them or hit them with a stick? There actually is such a game, by the way. It's called Chapay.

There's Give-away Checkers, which, in French, is called something like "who wins loses." Which, it turns out, is a variation that you can use in any of the many other classic variations. For example, there's International Checkers, which is played just like American checkers, except on a 10x10-square checkerboard, which, it turns out, is just

different enough to require some serious re-strategizing.

So, now we have four versions of checkers: American, International, and, on each, Give-away. Then there's Pool Checkers with its "flying kings." Again, just like "regular" checkers. Played on an 8x8 board, etc. Except kings can move, not just one space in any diagonal, but anywhere along the diagonal, as long as there are no other checkers in their paths. This variation again transforms the game, again doubling the number of different games we can call checkers. And these eight games become 16 if you consider playing on the 10x10 board. And then there's the 12x12 board of Canadian Checkers. Which makes for 32 different games. Pyramid Checkers, which can be played on any board with any of the above variations, begins with the checkers set up like a, well, one might say "pyramid." Then there's Turkish Checkers. Pieces are placed on the second and third, sixth and seventh rows, using every square in those rows (black and red). And each of those can be played with the Give-Away variation, or the flying kings. And that's just checkers.

Even if you wind up playing solitaire with an old deck of cards – play it outside, so that other people can actually see you playing. There are hundreds of solitaire games you can play. And some of them you can play with others.

The thing is, as bad as it all is, your not having fun makes it worse. And you're having fun makes it easier for everyone to deal with.

So go. Play. In public. By yourself. With your family, friends, neighbors. Play anything. Even though there's no reason to. Play anyway.

Bernie DeKoven is a Fun Coach. He works with individuals and groups, institutions, organizations, by phone, email, chat, Skype and in person to help them recover the fun of life. Online at <http://deepfun.com>. ★

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## Second-hand blogs

BY ED WEILAND

### Today I have become a man!

Oye! Oye! Oye! Joy, oh joy. I've just turned 13.

Do you know what that means? I'm a bar-mitzvah boy. I'm also a man! I've got a date with God; I'll do the Haftorah and a whole lot more. Family and friends will say, "How do you do? So, nu, what's new?"

I'll reply. "Today I am a man, according to God's plan. I'll do all I can. I'll work diligently to fulfill my destiny." "What will you be? A doctor? Lawyer? Ph.D.? A Chief of industry?" "Frankly, Sir, I don't know. But I might be a rabbi. That appeals to me."

"Let me tell you this, my son, your great adventure has just begun.

What you finally become may not to be some big success, to earn ten million, more or less. Do you know what God wants of you?"

"Tell me, sir, what does He want me to be?"

"A kind and loving family man, husband, father better than any child is entitled to, to protect and earn the respect of friend and foe and all you meet and all you know, do not cheat or steal another's wife, be good and true for all your life, earn an honest living, be generous in your giving, but give not what your family needs. Good deeds must start at home and be from the heart."

"God expects a lot from me. But I will try. I will try." "Indeed, you will. But now let's go, have a bite of this and that, hope we don't get too fat. Hmmm. That lox looks good, chopped liver, fish and cheese, bagels, too. All so good!"

"What should I do?" I say. "Eat up my bar-mitzvah boy, Enjoy. Enjoy!"

After nearly 50 years as a newspaper reporter and editor, Weiland retired from daily journalism and became the editor of a Florida magazine. 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. Comments are welcomed, especially from fellow bloggers. To read more, go to: [wegads.blogspot.com](http://wegads.blogspot.com). ★





## Borns Jewish Studies at IU

BY SARAH PELLEGRINO

### Preserving stories of Jewish life during WW II in Ukraine

The library clears out, students pack up their books, and many go home to enjoy summer. What many students don't realize is their professors delve into research during the summer. One such project is the Archives of Historical and Ethnographic Yiddish Memories (AHEYM). A project in its eighth year, two professors and a team of graduate students travel to Ukraine on a quest to find and preserve Eastern European Jewish testimonies of life before, during, and after World War II and the Holocaust.

The project is led by Professors Jeffrey Veidlinger, director of the Borns Jewish Studies Program (BJSP) at Indiana University, and Dov-Ber Kerler, the Dr. Alice Field Cohn Chair in Yiddish Studies. It began in 2002 when the professors were collaborating with Dovid Katz, a linguist researching Yiddish dialects. They decided to extend the research to cover Yiddish-speaking Jews in Eastern Europe, interviewing and taping the tales of 350 survivors of the war.

The interviews cover mostly individuals from the Ukraine but also in Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, and Moldova. Veidlinger, Kerler, and a graduate student will be returning to Ukraine this summer with another graduate student accompanying them for the first time.

"The goal of AHEYM is to on one hand interview people and hear how the Yiddish language is spoken," said Veidlinger. "The second is an oral history goal – to understand how people still

live in the *shtetl* and remember the Jewish experience of the Holocaust, before the war, and after."

Both professors speak Yiddish and Russian but not Ukrainian. At the start of the interviews, the team simply walks around town and into synagogues and soup kitchens searching for those who still speak Yiddish.

One of the poorest areas of Europe, the towns are often stricken with poverty, sporting houses with thatched roofs, a wood floor and no indoor plumbing. Veidlinger said that every family is hospitable and nearly every survivor willing to talk about his or her experience.

A graduate student that traveled with the team last summer, Margot Valles, jumped at the chance to be a part of AHEYM in 2008. She is a doctoral student in the Department of Comparative Literature at IU. Her current role in the project is translating the interviews that Veidlinger and Kerler collected from Yiddish to English.

"Ukraine is a surprisingly beautiful country. One day I was pointing out to Professor Veidlinger how each forest we passed was more gorgeous than the next." Valles wrote in an e-mail. "He reminded me, however, that almost every one contains a mass grave. ...It is something that really sums up the experience; it is beautiful with horrifying undertones."

Veidlinger also recalls a memorable interview of a man from Bershad, Ukraine, who dug a hole into the ground with his family and hid there for months. He went out at night to find food, circling his tracks so others wouldn't find the hiding place. Unfortunately, one day he returned to the dugout to find that his family had been killed.

After the war, many people had to rebuild their lives. For the most part, the elderly survivors are alone because their children have grown up and left.

"They are alone in some respect," said Veidlinger. "Now they must rely upon their neighbors...the same neighbors that

(see Pellegrino, page NAT 19)



Veidlinger and Kerler conduct an interview in Bershad, Ukraine. Photo credit: Courtesy of Indiana University.



## Canadian Teen

BY SAMMY HUDES

### Unacceptable video must translate into support for Shalita

What a surprise! Hamas has found a new way to promote hate, ignore chances at creating peace, and exemplify just how tasteless of an organization it truly is. Over a month ago, Hamas released an animated video, which warns of horrific actions they are willing to take if Israel does not trade thousands of terrorists in exchange for one innocent soldier, Gilad Shalit. Shalit was taken as a prisoner by Hamas on June 25, 2006. His last sign of life came on Sept. 14, 2009 when Hamas released an actual video of him showing his physical capabilities.

In the animation, which can be found on YouTube, a cartoon version of Gilad's father, Noam, is seen walking around holding a photo of his son. First, Noam walks past billboards containing the photos of past and present political leaders; Ehud Olmert, Tzipi Livni and Benjamin Netanyahu. On each billboard, there is a quotation of said political leader, which promises the return of Gilad Shalit to Israel.

Meanwhile, a voice-over of Gilad himself is heard in the background, as he requests from Prime Minister Netanyahu to be returned to Israel. Much of the voice-over is identical to what Shalit said in the video released this past September, however he does add some new material: "I regret that the Israeli government and Israel Defense Forces are not concerned about my cause...I have great faith that my government will pay more attention to me." Shalit was obviously forced to say something so manipulative like that, yet Hamas failed to realize that the Israelis would be able to figure it out. Nice try though!

The disgusting animation continues, as Noam walks toward a garbage can and picks up a newspaper out of it. The front page contains an advertisement offering a \$50 million reward for information about Gilad Shalit. This tactic mocks the \$10 million reward that Israel once offered for information about the long-time missing Ron Arad, who is pictured in a similar advertisement directly beside the one for Gilad Shalit.

After throwing the newspaper back in the garbage, the cartoon figure of Noam Shalit has aged drastically. He now



Gilad Shalit.

walks with a cane, while sporting grey hair and an elderly-looking beard. Noam passes by a building, with a sign that reads, "Ministry of Prisoners and Missing." Many believe that this part of the video hints at Hamas' plans to abduct more Israeli soldiers in the future.

The final part of the video shows the aged Noam Shalit sitting at a bus station at the Erez border, as Israel and Hamas prepare for a prisoner swap. A van pulls up, opens automatically, and Gilad Shalit is let out...in a coffin. As Noam screams for his dear son, he appears to transform back into his younger self sitting on a bench and waking up from a bad dream. Suddenly all that is left on the screen are the words "there is still hope" written in Hebrew.

Using this abomination of a video, Hamas threatens to murder Gilad Shalit if the far-more humane Israeli government takes too long to make a trade for him. This ignores the offer made by Israel in December (with the use of a German mediator), to exchange over a thousand terrorists for Gilad. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rightly referred to the video as "yet another despicable action aimed to help the Hamas leadership avoid making a decision regarding our offer for a prisoner swap deal, which it has not responded to for many months." He also noted that the animation reflected "the true character of Hamas."

Do not worry though. Founding member of Hamas, Mahmoud al-Zahar noted that the childish cartoon "does not express the official position of the Hamas movement...We have not and will not kill captive Israeli soldiers. Our morals and our religion prevent us from doing that." Yet the video contradicts Mr. Zahar, as it clearly threatens that Shalit will suffer the same fate as Ron Arad; likely killed at the hands of Hamas.

I, for one second, refuse to believe the word of Zahar. If Israel does not act fast, Hamas will not be afraid to take the life of the crimeless Gilad Shalit. Hamas knows very well that Israel will trade countless guilty prisoners for dead soldiers, just as they did in the 2008 prisoner swap with Hezbollah, in exchange for Ehud Goldwasser, z"l and Eldad Regev, z"l. As Jews, it is our moral and Halakhic responsibility to free our brothers and sisters from captivity. Just as Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Israeli government need to push relentlessly to return Gilad home to his family, we must all show our support, as well. The cause to restore Gilad to his home in Mitzpe Hila needs to be shown solidarity throughout the world, and not just in Israel. Spread the word of Hamas' recent video. Send letters, emails and petitions to the government. Make other Jews and non-Jews aware of Gilad's situation. Do everything possible. It is time for Gilad Shalit to come back.

Sammy Hudes, 16, is the son of Nelson and Myrna Hudes, and lives in Thornhill, Ontario, Canada. ★



## An Observant Eye

BY RABBI AVI SHAFRAN

### Dirt

With all the hyped-up headlines, the old joke practically insisted on being dusted off.

The one about the group of scientists who inform G-d that His services are no longer needed, that their knowledge of the universe now allows them to run it just fine themselves, thank You.

"Can you create life like I did?" asks the Creator.

"No problem," they reply as they confidently gather some dirt and fiddle with the settings on their shiny biologicocyclotron.

"Excuse Me," interrupts the heavenly voice. "Get your own dirt."

The breathless reports about J. Craig Venter's modestly named J. Craig Venter Institute's recent biochemical feat weren't just tabloid titillation either. The respectable *Christian Science Monitor* heralded the "creation" of the "first synthetic life form." The venerated journal *Science* referred to the crafting of a "synthetic cell." At least *Scientific American* remained sufficiently sober to add a question mark after the phrase "Life From Scratch."

To be sure, the technological feat was impressive, even astounding. Scientists at the Institute constructed an entire genome (the chromosomes that code for the inheritable traits of an organism) of one bacterium from commercially manufactured units of DNA and transplanted it into a cell of a different bacterium that had been emptied of its own genetic material. And the Frankengerm began to function as if it were a full-fledged member of the first microbe's family.

Some, including some who invoked religion, have objected to such biological tinkering. Whether there is any authentically Jewish objection to genetic transfer research, or if Jewish law prohibits Jews from engaging in it, are questions for halachic experts, not me. But, as Biotechnology and Bioengineering Professor Martin Fussenegger of Switzerland notes, "chimeric organisms have long been created through breeding and, more recently, through the transfer of native genomes into denucleated target cells." In other words, mules and tangelos and genetically modified foods are nothing terribly new.

The scale of the recent laboratory success, to be sure, was impressive. An entire genome took up residence and functioned in a host cell. But the host, all said and done (and hyped), was an already-living cell, denuded though it was of its genetic material, not a plastic

bag. So, despite all the headline-hooplah, life was not engendered; it was manipulated.

Or in the words of Caltech geneticist David Baltimore: "[Venter] has not created life, only mimicked it."

There is a miracle here but, to put it starkly, it is being misidentified. The marvel isn't the scientists' feat – which, Professor Fussenegger notes further, represents "a technical advance, not a conceptual one" – but rather life itself, the wonder of a living cell.

The celebrated Jewish thinker Rabbi E. E. Dessler (1892–1953) wrote that there really is no inherent difference between nature and what we call the miraculous. We simply use the word "nature" for the miracles to which we are accustomed, and "miracles" for those we haven't previously experienced. All there is, in the end, is G-d's will.

When a sheep was first successfully cloned 14 years ago, we were all rightly amazed too. But the more perceptive among us realized that the source of the amazement was the coaxing of genetic material to do precisely what it does all the time "naturally": code for traits, replicate and direct protein synthesis. Dolly's production, to be sure, was a major accomplishment; myriad obstacles had to be overcome, and a single set of chromosomes, rather than the usual pair from two parents, had to be convinced to do the job. But it was still, in the end, essentially a miracle that takes place millions of times in hundreds of thousands of species each and every day without capturing most people's attention.

And 40-odd years ago, heart transplants, too, were flabbergasting. But, at least to thoughtful men and women, they were never remotely as amazing as hearts.

So we cheat ourselves if we let the media focus our attention on what humans have accomplished here, impressive though it is. The miracle is Divine, even if its ubiquity usually keeps it under our radars.

Well, actually, there is something wondrous about what the scientists did here too. Because what might be the greatest miracle of Creation is that, above and beyond all other life on earth, we humans have been granted the astonishing ability to think and discover, to analyze and creatively utilize the rest of nature. What a wondrous gift.

Like the dirt.

#### Right of Return

It's always edifying when bigots who have managed to elude full exposure for years suddenly slip and appear in full ingloriousness.

Helen Thomas didn't even need the alcohol that loosened Mel Gibson's tongue and bared his sorry soul a few years back. All it took for her was an unguarded moment and an enterprising blogger. But little doubt was left about her own soul's state by her sneering

suggestion that Jews in Israel go "home" to Poland and Germany. Presumably realizing just how honest she had inadvertently allowed herself to be, she decided to add "and America, and everywhere else," but what seemed to please her was clearly the prospect of Jews returning to places associated with their attempted genocide.

But the idea that Jews are somehow newcomers to the Middle East, that the *shtetl*, not the Judean desert (despite its name), is our natural habitat, is perniciously widespread even among some politicians and pundits who defend Israel uncompromisingly. While those who harbor a bit of Helenism (a new noun, inspired by Ms. Thomas) cast Jews in Jerusalem as criminal interlopers, there are also many untouched by the virus of Jew-resentment who tend to view the Jewish presence in the Holy Land as a new development. They regard it as a sort of consolation prize for having endured the Holocaust.

Mere days before Ms. Thomas' self-revelation was publicly revealed, a similar sentiment to hers was captured on camera on the West Coast. Among the many mass protests against Israel for having dared, in the recent flotilla incident, to actually enforce its embargo of a bad neighbor (which phrase presumably includes one who wishes to drive you into the sea) and against Israeli soldiers who had the chutzpah to shoot at people who were trying to kill them was a demonstration that took place on Memorial Day near the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles. A mob chanted angry, menacing slogans in the cause of peace.

A widely viewed newscast video of the demonstration made the rounds in subsequent days. It focused largely on a Jewish teenager who intrepidly walked alongside the unholy warriors, holding aloft an Israeli flag and calmly, eloquently and pointedly answering questions from a reportorial voice off-camera.

Whether one thinks the one-boy flag battalion foolhardy or fantastic probably depends on whether one is or isn't his parent. But it was hard not to smile at the finger the teen metaphorically poked in the collective eye of the nearby mob.

What I found most telling about the clip, though, were its final seconds, when two decidedly un-angelic Angelenos, part of the anti-Israel protest, appeared on camera to answer questions.

First came a young woman, hatred pouring from her eyes like oil from an out of control gusher. Asked if she supported a "Palestinian state alongside Israel," she rebukes the questioner angrily, wagging her finger and contorting her face into a mask of anger. "No! No! No!" she protests furiously. "The Jews" – speaking the word like it is a disfiguring disease – "can live in a Palestinian state!" she exclaims. "There should not be an Israeli state." Then, imagining her perfect world, she declares emphatically: "An Israeli state does not even exist!"

Although she isn't quite done, the camera pans to her companion, a young man with a vacant expression and a baseball cap on sideways, who offers the interviewer his own sage assessment.

"The only reason Israel is doing this," he explains – though it's not clear if he is referring to the Gaza blockade or to existing – "is because they got kicked out from, uh, the German... uh, whatever happened to them. So they're trying to take out their anger to someone else."

"What about the Bible?" asks the interviewer.

"The Bible?" the young man repeats, uncomprehending.

"You know," explains the interviewer. "Solomon? Uh, the Jewish presence in Israel in Biblical days?"

The response: "I don't know about that."

I'm sure he doesn't. And, unfortunately, it would seem that he's hardly alone. World leaders and editorialists who speak and write as if the Jewish presence in the Holy Land is some modern development, that the justification for Jews to live in Jerusalem emerged ex nihilo from European crematoria, are, if better-intentioned, equally uninformed. And the information they are missing is truly central to the Israel-Palestinian conflict – and should be central to any discussion of the same. What they don't realize, or choose to gloss over, is that "Israel," in the phrase "Land of Israel," refers not to a modern-day country but to an ancient people.

That Jews over the past century haven't come to the Holy Land.

They have come back to it.

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

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## Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

### On changing the system

Most political systems fail after a while. It could be within five years, a decade or even two centuries. But, eventually, because of their own missteps, stupidity or fate, down they come.

The Holy Roman Empire lasted for over a thousand years. But then it never was Holy, completely Roman or an Empire. The Third Reich lasted less than twelve.

British politics just got a rude awakening with the appearance of a third party that shook up a tradition that held for over 200 years. Here in the U.S., we do not have a Bull Moose Party or a Ross Perot, but we do have the Tea Party. Whatever that is.

Israel is an interesting case. The situation has been simmering for years. Overshadowed by international security concerns built around the false premise of a Palestinian People, Israel is finally facing up to an internal problem that could threaten to tear the Jewish State apart from within.

The Third Jewish Commonwealth was born based on the idea that since no nation on Earth seemed to want the Jews as a part of their society, and since they did indeed have a historic homeland, then that homeland should be reborn.

The enduring philosophy at the time identified a Jew based on the perception of others. Were we a people? A religion? A "race"? Who were the Jews? We had a language, but very few of us spoke it in every day conversation. We had a land, but foreign governments held it from the Romans to the Caliphate to the Turks and finally the Brits.

The Jews who came to Palestine in the 1800s were basically socialists from Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, barely co-mingling with the Jews from the Middle East who had been there for millennia. The Holocaust brought the first significant immigration to the land. It was a forced immigration, but it provided the lifeblood that became the State of Israel.

So, Israel in 1948. The socialist elite were secular. Many of the Holocaust survivors came from small shtetls in Europe that were mostly religious communities. Likewise most of the 700,000 Sephardic Jews who came to the land in the 1950s.

Times change. Much of the progeny of the religious became more secular. Many of the immigrants, specifically from the U.S. (not counting Brooklyn) were also

less religious. So that now, you have a population of over six million Jews, overwhelmingly not Orthodox in any sense of the word. Yet, a small, powerful minority holds sway over the law of the land and indeed the entire future of Israel.

These Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox hold power because of the political system of the State. You, my Uncle Moishe and me can form a political party in Israel and with a few friends can make a national list. In an election, we might even earn a seat in the Knesset.

The ultra-Orthodox, because they vote as a bloc, based on what the rabbis tell them to do, elect members of the Knesset. Currently, out of 120 seats, they hold just eleven. But, under the Israeli system, that is enough to bring down the government if they so choose.

Their ruling religious party, Shas, cares not one twit or toddle about relations with the U.S. The conditions of the Arab minority or most other things that affect daily life in the greater community affect them not. They want money. They want money so that their minions do not have to work, to serve in the army or make any contribution to the growth of the State.

Their sole mission is to procreate, study Torah and remain in their closed-off communities, dressing and acting like they live in the ghettos of the Middle Ages. Under the present situation, majority rule means nothing. The needs and the desires of the greater population are thwarted. And that dear friends, is what brings empires and nations down.

Israel needs a cleansing of the political system. Matter of fact, so do we. And pretty much for the same reasons. When the incumbents fear for their jobs more than they do for the welfare of the nation, we are in trouble. Israel is in need of change – so are we.

In the case of Israel, it is too easy to get on the ballot. All elections are national. Yes, it is a tiny country, but the needs and desires of the Negev are far different than those of Haifa or Tel Aviv. Most of the money being spent on the religious parties to keep their yeshivas stocked with young, nonproductive men and to get them to go along with the general agenda would be better spent improving education for the Arab minority.

Israel is a sensible nation. The U.S. is not. We want everything, but we do not want to pay for it. As Israel turns more secular and capitalist, the old guard of the ultra-religious and the socialists must give way. It in no way affects the core ideal of a Jewish nation. But a democratic one, not a theocracy.

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



## Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

### A friend to those who need a friend

Going through many books and writings over the years, I am sometimes drawn to articles relating to the life of a rabbi in a congregational setting. It is quite different than being a rabbi in an educational environment or involved in social service efforts such as I have been most of my career.

It takes a certain kind of ability to commit to the daily tasks of caring and sharing that is the hallmark of everyday commitments to a myriad of people with differing views about religion and how these traditions, customs and laws are to be observed, or not. To say that there are times when issues arise that boggle the imagination would not do justice to the actual involvement whether individually or collectively.

There really are no exceptions. In fact, it is even more difficult in a retirement community, given that many come from all walks of life and locations. Living in such a community brings together people with differing understandings of faith and observance. It is the blending of all these factions that make it an interesting exercise to find common ground.

Recently I read an article written by Rabbi Josh Yuter, a traditional colleague who attempted to delineate the different aspects of rabbinic performance. He writes that the greatest challenge a rabbi faces is distinguishing a balance between his professional life and his personal life.

Perhaps that is the most difficult thing to do. We certainly are no different than the average person in that we look forward to the comfort and joy of home life and the ability to separate the professional from the personal. Most of you, I am sure, have attempted to do this in varying ways, but inevitably the two seem to clash. We are hard pressed to consider our work and the release from that tension as we settle in to the life of a husband or father or mentor.

Our instinct is to be friends with everybody, because we want peace and harmony to be the order of the day. Some people become closer friends and some a little distant. That is only natural. We cannot be close friends with everybody. Even in our home environment we are closer to some of our children or grandchildren, not because we love one more than the other, but rather because we gravitate to some more than others. It is the same with friends and neighbors.

Rabbis also find themselves without personal lives because of their dedication. We cannot say to someone who calls in the middle of the night hurting and in

## Freedom and gratitude

If you had read the front page story of the SF Chronicle on Thursday, Dec 14, 2005, you would have read about a female humpback whale who had become entangled in a spider web of crab traps and lines. She was weighted down by hundreds of pounds of traps that caused her to struggle to stay afloat. She also had hundreds of yards of line rope wrapped around her body, her tail, her torso, and a line tugging in her mouth.

A fisherman spotted her just east of the Farallone Islands (outside the Golden Gate) and radioed an environmental group for help. Within a few hours, the rescue team arrived and determined that she was so bad off, the only way to save her was to dive in and untangle her – a very dangerous proposition. One slap of the tail could kill a rescuer. They worked for hours with curved knives and eventually freed her.

When she was free, the divers say she swam in what seemed like joyous circles. She then came back to each and every diver, one at a time and nudged them, pushed them gently around – she thanked them. Some said it was the most incredibly beautiful experience of their lives. The guy who cut the rope out of her mouth says her eye was following him the whole time, and he will never ever be the same.

The person who started sending this news item around attached the following little homily to it as well. It seems appropriate, in view of the story above, and how meaningful it was to those involved, to leave it attached.

May you, and all those you love, be so blessed and fortunate – to be surrounded by people who will help you get untangled from the things that are binding you. And, may you always know the joy of giving and receiving gratitude. ★

need of spiritual guidance: "We are off duty now. Take two aspirins and call us in the morning." Or have our phone answered with a message that says, "If this is an emergency hang-up and dial 911." Sound familiar?

What I am trying to impart is that sometimes people perceive things that don't really exist. Sometimes we rabbis are used for convenience by people in order to promote themselves. Sometimes we need to look deeper than the surface to really understand the rabbi's role and how important it is for him to be available to everyone regardless of his or her station or likes and dislikes.

Rabbis normally do not toot their own horns and, in many cases, are reluctant to even speak for themselves in order to not appear self-serving. That is probably a flaw in the system, but it is there nevertheless. In fact it reminds me of a famous writing in Midrash Rabbah:

"They say to fruit trees: 'Why do you (see Wiener, page NAT 19)





## Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

### Immigrants co-host radio sports show from Jerusalem

Living in Israel brings together people who might never have met, and friendships often begin in some place as conventional as an Ulpan (Hebrew language class). Andy Gershman is 40 years old, married with two kids and from Richmond, Va. Ari Louis is 27 years old, single and from Phoenix, Ariz. They met in Ulpan and discovered a mutual love of sports talk.

Since November 2009, they have co-hosted a talk show on North American Sports with a Jewish/Israeli flavor on RustyMikeRadio.com, the only English-speaking radio station in Israel reached via the internet. The radio station is based in the offices of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel.

Andy was born and raised in Richmond, Va.; finished a B.S. in business administration at Salem State College in Salem, Mass., and post baccalaureate in human resource management at Virginia Commonwealth University. He lived in New England for about 10 years, working as a retail store manager in athletic footwear then at a department store then back in Richmond, as a job transitions coach in a female correctional facility.

He and his wife, Aviva, a Jewish educator, moved to Israel in August 2009 with their two sons, now ages 10 and 7; Aviva is getting a master's degree in Jewish education in conjunction with the Hebrew College in Boston from the Pardes Institute, a postgraduate program of Jewish learning.

While at a new immigrants' fair, he met Adam Mallerman, the owner of the internet radio station.

"At Ulpan, every morning I would sit with a bunch of guys at the bus stop and talk sports. One day my wife suggested I should see how to do something with it. I found Adam's card and listened to his show and realized there was no sports, so I called him and we talked about the idea of doing a sports talk show focused on North American sports," said Andy.

It was the week before the World Series, and Andy went to see Adam, put on the head phones in the studio to listen, and they had a big discussion together. Adam liked the idea and thought Andy should have a co-host.

Andy started talking over the idea with Ari Louis, born and raised in Phoenix, who had come to live in Israel in April 2008, where his mother and brother were already living. To Andy's surprise, Ari had had a television show at the age of 16, a live, call-in sports show in Tucson. He had received a BA in religious studies from Arizona State University in 2003 and had taken classes in broadcasting.

"We had discussed sports before," said Andy; "it was like, let's do this!" And so the show was born in November.

They received a very positive response from the Israel Football League, which became their core audience since the co-hosts have supported their league and their players have supported the show.

"The Israel Football League has helped us get in with Israelis," said Andy. "It's given us an Israeli audience we didn't expect."

The second week they were on the radio, Yuri Foreman, the first Jewish/Israeli to hold the WBA Super-Welterweight world title in boxing, agreed to come on the show. From that point on, the hosts have had a wide variety of guests including Jon Scheyer, captain of the Duke University basketball team; Alan Shlomo Veingrad, Super Bowl champion with the Dallas

The Israel Football League is an amateur league of American-style football with eight teams throughout Israel, Anglos and Israelis, 18 to 40s. Some have played football in high school or college. They have a 10-game season from September to March, and play in the Kraft Stadium, near the Jerusalem Central Bus Station. Bob Kraft, owner of the New England Patriots, is very involved and sponsored the stadium where most of the games take place. This year's championship game was aired on a local TV sports channel, and next year Andy and Ari are hoping to do play by play from the stadium, aired on RustyMikeRadio.com.

Cowboys; Tamar Katz, Israeli figure skater; Roman Zaretsky, Israeli Olympic ice skater, sixth in the world; and Dana Jacobson, anchor for ESPN.

Interviews are live on air by phone. "We usually get them through sending interview requests," said Andy.

Now the program is aired from 8 to 10 p.m., Israel Daylight Time, on Wednesday night, and the co-hosts know their listeners are worldwide because they have heard from people all over the States, Korea, Germany, Russia and other places.

To hear the show, which is seven hours later than Eastern Daylight Time, type in [www.RustyMikeRadio.com](http://www.RustyMikeRadio.com), click on listen live.

In addition to the show, Andy is sales manager of RustyMikeRadio.com; Ari is a master of ceremonies at the Off the Wall Comedy Club in Jerusalem.

"What we do is we've managed to bring true American sports talk to Israel," said Andy. "Our guests are willing to come on our show and talk sports when Israel is not so popular. A lot of them feel this is their way to give something to Israel."

"We have listeners who can call in and ask a question or chat on line and they can also email us questions," adds Ari.

"We know that there are people who think of making aliyah, who have certain little things that block their way," says Ari. "One of these things is sports talk. It was part of our daily lives, so we're taking away another excuse from people not making aliyah!"

#### Meeting Itzhak Perlman

Pastor Al, our friend who is pastor of Jerusalem's Baptist Church, has several Christian music students as congregants and they told him Itzhak Perlman, maestro violinist, was in Jerusalem to conduct concerts, and his rehearsals were open to the public at 20 NIS (\$5.15) each, and would we like to attend.

It didn't take us long to say yes, and we arrived at the YMCA around 6:30 for the 7 p.m. program. Al cited Mr. Perlman in the dining room and said, let's ask him to pose for photographs.

I popped my head in to his table, and he graciously responded, sure.

When he came out of the dining room, I said, you know, we've met before. When you were 12, you were on the Ed Sullivan television show and then Mr. Sullivan sent you and a group of other Israel performers on a nationwide tour. You came to Kansas City, Mo., and Hadassah and Young Judaea sponsored the evening. Mr. Perlman said he remembered.

I continued: Your mom spoke only Yiddish and we found the mother of one of our Young Judaeans, Hanaan Steinzig, spoke Yiddish and she sat next to your mom and made her feel welcome at a special after-concert reception we all attended. He said, he remembered.

We then posed for photographs, and he rode his scooter into the concert hall and up a ramp onto the stage, walked with crutches to the raised platform, moved to a chair, adjusted his microphone and proceeded to direct the rehearsal.



Sybil and Barry Kaplan with Itzhak Perlman.

#### Perlman Music Program in Jerusalem

The program is the fulfillment of a dream of Perlman's wife, Toby, who was a violin student and who is founder and director of the Perlman Music Program in Jerusalem. This has been a collaborative effort for the past 16 years with the Jerusalem Music Center of Mishkenot Sha'ananim. All participants in the program are 18 to 23 years of age; 20 are alumni of the Perlman Music Program based in New York City and Shelter Island, N.Y., and 22 are hand-selected string players from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel Aviv University.

The 28-acre campus of the Perlman Music Program is located on Shelter Island, N.Y., and offers year-round programs including a six-week summer residency music school for youngsters 11 to 18 and 2.5-week workshops. The program also offers a winter 2-week residency in Sarasota, Fla. The Israel spring residency program is currently taking place May 19 to June 6 including concerts.

One of the unique aspects of the performances is that students rotate seats with each movement so that they

(see Kaplan/Israel, page NAT 19)



Ari Louis (front), Andy Gershman (back), in studio of RustyMikeRadio.com in the offices of the Jerusalem Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel. Photo by Barry Kaplan.





## Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

### A perfect fit – Mike Burstyn and the Folksbiene

Think Moliere. Think Dickens. Think Scrooge. Think Robin Hood. Think farce. Think Jewish humor. Think Broadway musicals. We are speaking of the current show of The National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene – appropriately called *The Adventures of Hershele Ostropolyer*. The show is now making its debut at the Folksbiene's new downtown Manhattan home at the Baruch Performing Arts Center.

This little gem of a musical is made to order for its star Mike Burstyn. A perfect fit, as they once said in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Burstyn (playing a roving penniless character who lives by his wits) sings, dances, and performs his way into our hearts. He is backed by a fine cast, particularly notable being I.W. Firestone as the town miser. In fact, every one and everything in the show is a perfect fit – its cast, staging, direction, music, and story.

Top-notch talents have come together to make this happen. Eleanor Reissa (performer, director, and former artistic director of the Folksbiene) has adapted, directed and choreographed the piece (based on a play by Moyshe Gershenson), while the company's artistic director Zalmen Mlotek serves as musical director/vocal arranger. The musical score itself (a compendium of Yiddish theater and folk songs) is compiled by musicologist Chana Mlotek.

The story is indeed familiar to those who have followed classical theater down through the years. A boy and girl long to marry, but they need a certain ring. It was given to the would-be bride by her *bubbe* long ago, but is now held by a rich, greedy miser. They have no money to retrieve the ring. But Hershele Ostropolyer appears on the scene – a



(L-R) Itzy Firestone as the miserly Reb Kalmen and Mike Burstyn as the heroic vagabond title character in *"The Adventures of Hershele Ostropolyer."* Photo by: Michael Priest Photography



Mike Burstyn (center) and the ensemble in a scene from *"The Adventures of Hershele Ostropolyer."* Photo by: Michael Priest Photography.

thing of rags and tatters, one might say. The clever Hershele tricks the miser in a thousand ways – and ultimately all is well, as the miser reforms and the boy and girl are joined in an elaborate wedding.

Along the way, the tale is peppered with haunting old Yiddish tunes, sprightly dances, and an array of characters that one might find in a *shtetl*. Under Reissa's direction, there is never a false note. Roger Hanna's simple set of abstract designs and levels works beautifully, as do Gail Cooper-Hecht's costumes and Kiork Bookman's lighting.

In all, a worthy effort by the Folksbiene. Now in its 95th year, the venerable company still upholds its standards and keeps Yiddish alive for us all.

#### Primo now on film, premieres on HBO television

It all began with Primo Levi's devastatingly brilliant account of his life in Auschwitz. The young Italian Jewish chemist was arrested in 1943, somehow surviving eleven months of hell until the Russian troops chased out the Germans and liberated the camp. Most inmates had already died, either in camp or on the subsequent death march. But Levi, left behind because he was ill and in the infirmary, miraculously lived. Out of 650 Italian Jews in his arriving group, Levi was one of 22 who survived.

On returning to Italy after the War (a journey that took months), Levi began to write a remarkable memoir, which ultimately became *This Is a Man*. One of the most vivid, significant eye-witness accounts to come out of the Holocaust, the book would ultimately reach around the world.

The book inspired the noted British actor Antony Sher to adapt the material, turning it into a one-man show, which he called *Primo*. The solo piece would be acclaimed, first on the London stage and ultimately (in 2005) on Broadway, where it would win the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding One-Person Show.

And now we all have the opportunity, by way of television, to experience Levi's own private Auschwitz. It is a classic, unforgettable piece. Now in documentary form (it is Antony Sher on a bare stage),

the film will premiere June 22 at 9 p.m. on HBO Signature.

Sher/Levi stands before the audience, a quiet man, peering through his eyeglasses. Speaking in a soft cultured voice, he recounts each detail of the horrors. His voice is rarely raised. It need not be. The facts speak for themselves. Step by step, the Germans dehumanize their prisoners – as they strip them of their clothes, personal effects, body hair, and all dignity. They are worked brutally, starved, frozen, and treated to random cruelty and sudden deaths.

But in the quiet, everyday details Levi makes it his story. We learn that long working days in ill-fitting wooden shoes add to their agonies. We learn that Levi bonds with another Jewish Italian chemist – and both gain strength through mutual support. We learn that a civilian worker from Levi's home town (a non-Jewish bricklayer) secretly brings him a daily bowl of soup. These two men, indeed, may have been responsible for Levi's survival – or so he believed.

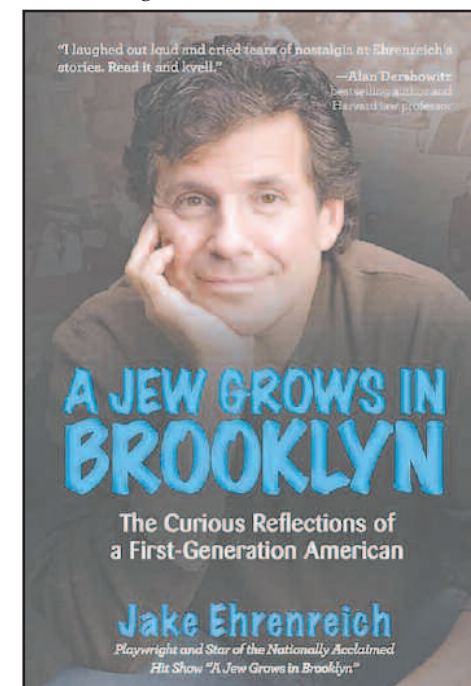
We hardly need go over the details of life and death in Auschwitz, which by now are all too well known. But Levi makes it uniquely his own. And in the hands of a brilliant performer, the story comes to life – first on stage, and now on film.



Sir Antony Sher as Primo Levi in the HBO Film *Primo*. Photo credit: HBO / Kerry Brown.

### A Jew Grows in Brooklyn

Memoirs! Memoirs! More and more of us are turning to this genre, feeling the need to relive the past, the value of catharsis. Moreover, we feel the need to share each other's memories – to indulge in both reading and writing – which is why this particular literary form is crowding the book market.



Now one more memoir joins the pack. This time it is an endearing little tale provided by musician/stand-up comic Jake Ehrenreich. In some ways *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn* (published by Health Communications, Inc.) is the typical American tale – and certainly the typical Jewish American tale. The child of immigrants (who were also Holocaust survivors), Ehrenreich recalls his early years in Brooklyn and in the Catskills, his family crises, and his own coming-of-age.

In the early years, most of all, little Jake wanted to fit in. While his playmates bore such American names as Steven, Gary, Joey, he was Yankel (named for his paternal grandfather). When children, playing out in the streets, were called

(see Backalenick, page NAT 19)





## Jewish America

By HOWARD W. KARSH

### The days our bubbles burst

You know that the world is accelerating when it consistently makes yesterday irrelevant. I have been experiencing that lately in my writing about current events. I wanted to try to understand the lessons in the recent "Iceland-Volcano-Travel Meltdown," and before I could finish the column, there was a "glitch" in the stock market, and that "meltdown" seems to pale before what just happened.

In that case, the volcano, thankfully, there were no reported deaths or injuries. We mostly suffered a blow to our concept of our supremacy over nature, and we didn't like it. There were debates all over the world if the price of safety was worth it. Can you imagine how narrowly we have come to view the world? This is not to minimize the disappointment, the inconvenience, and the monies lost, but should we be arguing about what the best science suggested? There were many risk takers who were very unhappy with being conservative with life. All of that discussion was a carefully taken picture of what has happened to all of us in our quest to be in absolute control.

And before I had the chance to assemble all of the facts and the thoughts that went with them, there was this glitch in the market, and in just minutes, lives were changed forever. No one died, but all of the things we thought we knew about the science of investment came falling in on our heads. Along with 9/11 and the John F. Kennedy assassination, all of us with investments will know where we were when the glitch caused the market to plunge.

We have yet to hear what affect it had, if any, on the elections in England, or how many people came to believe that with the turmoil in Greece still growing, that Spain and Portugal were next, and the whole common market seemed to be being tested.

Like many of the readers of this column, I was fixed on my computer for the day-after-opening, looking to see if the whole thing made any sense. And because of the overwhelming event that touches me, rather than the many that surround me, I find myself reacting to an emotional priority list.

I wanted to write about Haiti. Did you know that before the recent earthquake disaster, there were 300,000 orphans in Haiti, and we can only assume that now the numbers have dramatically grown? How can that be? I wanted to look at the population figures in the Dominican

Republic, which shares the same island, but there was no time.

And what about the safety of the coal mines?

And what about the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico?

And what about the floods in Tennessee?

I grew up on the premise of *Future Shock* written by Alvin Toffler in the 1970s, and our feeling that the world was racing out of control. What about now? How can we possibly assimilate all of this information when these events follow each other so rapidly?

*Especially* when we acknowledge that we are not in control of the process. Like those of you who begin each day with the acknowledgement of G-d in our lives, I have to take a series of very deep breaths and reestablish my grounding that I am not in charge of the world, and all of the things that are happening are not the chaotic aftershocks from the "Big Bang."

In the short term, this does not mean that I am immune to loss, either financial or a sense of balance, but I am warmed by that faith, that we will come to understand that there was an order in all of these happenings.

I love to ride roller coasters, even at this advanced age, and it is a wonderful opportunity to bond with my grandchildren who love to be scared. Before the ride begins, I check to see that the bars and buckles are in place, and then sit back to scream with my other riders, and to have a good time.

There is no question that we are on a roller coaster, and the people who are in charge of explaining what is going on and where it is heading are usually giving us their "best guesses," but we need something to hold on to until the ride stops.

I hope there will be time to talk with you about the politics of safety regarding to fuel, underground and in the sea, and the real dilemmas we face to keep the machinery of life going. I hope there will be time to talk about the numbers in Haiti, and how we can help the Haitian people work their way out of suffering. I hope there will be time to talk about the suffering in Tennessee, not only the physical and financial, but the realization that lives have been severely impacted, and that the response that was expected has not materialized as of yet.

In the midst of the season of disasters, it would seem that there is a natural limit to our ability to respond on a timely basis.

#### Doesn't everyone feel the same way? Apparently not!

The latest outcry-uproar in New York City about the proposal to build a \$100 million mosque just blocks from the 9/11 disaster is another example that not everyone shares the same values. And even though the building project has gained the early support of the New York City Planning Board and Mayor Bloomberg, the road ahead will not be an easy one. "Live and Let Live," and "Turn the Other Cheek" are not universally

accepted values. It would be adding disaster to disaster for those people in New York who make these sensitive decisions to not review the location.

This moment gives us the opportunity to talk about what separates Jews from Arabs and Muslims. In the 62 years since the founding of the State of Israel, we have often found ourselves in two different conversations about the same issue, and the likelihood that it will ever be different is punctuated by the clash of ideologies. Jews preach justice, and the Arabs that they live with and argue with are just as dedicated to the concept of honor. Even on those rare occasions when we seem close to understandings, the "oil and water" that had temporarily looked like a single new entity separates, and we are back to square one.

There are Arab Muslims, Arab Christians, and Jews who lived their lives in Arab countries. The "Arab" prefix is more important in terms of ideology than the faith they follow. Jews lived in Arab countries, sometimes peacefully and at other times not, but they remained Jews.

The inability of Jews to take Muslims seriously can be traced, in measure, to our inability to understand their position on justice, and therein their feeling about life itself.

We hold life as being sacred, and yet, we are exposed every day to scenes of Muslims killing Muslims, and we just cannot come to an understanding of how that seems outrageous to us and only regrettable to them.

During the war between Iran and Iraq, both countries, in the name of their faith, were willing to throw everyone into the battle, even if they were untrained children, women, the aged and infirm. Just the pictures and the accounts made us doubt their sanity, and then, as now, the world at large, which is so critical of their treatment by Israel, accepts the fact they murder each other. They attack funerals, weddings, pilgrimages, and all with some kind of impunity. Jews are held to a higher standard, not only by the world, but by ourselves.

When Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated, there was a double mourning, first, by his senseless murder, and then, by the fact that it was at the hand of a Jew. The most difficult history of the formation of Israel was when Jews were fighting, injuring and sometimes killing other Jews for issues of power.

We have already seen that the world has a stratified view of human suffering. We want everyone to have the basic necessities of life, but we can excuse the worst of the suffering if the victims are black and poor. We cannot solve all of the problems of the world, but in ignoring what is obviously human transgression and leaving our conscience to groups like Amnesty International, we do a disservice to our claim to be children of the Almighty, a "Light Unto the Nations," and so forth.

## Letters to the Editor

**Freedom of the Press** – The Post & Opinion encourages readers to send letters. All letters to the editor should be addressed to The Jewish Post & Opinion, 1111 East 54th St., Suite 119, Indianapolis, IN 46220, or by e-mail: [jpostopinion@gmail.com](mailto:jpostopinion@gmail.com).

Dear Editor,

Enclosed is my autobiography *Freeing the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Adventures of an Archaeology Outsider*. Would you please forward this to Morton Teicher? Thanks.

I knew Gabe [Cohen] and loved him. I remember once I hired a limousine to take him from Washington to Baltimore. (This was at a time when I editing *Moment*.) Gabe insisted on sitting in the front seat with the driver.

*Hershel Shanks, Editor of Biblical Archaeology Review.*

Dear Editor,

I would love to agree with Dr. Miriam Zimmerman and I would be thrilled if I am proven wrong. Go into a time machine and come back 75 years from today. The words of the Rav and myself will ring true. The Holocaust will be no more than a date in history and will have become a humanitarian genocide issue. Read my books *Contemplating the Holocaust* and *Theological and Halakhic Reflections on the Holocaust*. This theme is discussed at length.

*Rabbi Dr. Bernhard H. Rosenberg, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth-El in Edison, N.J.*

**Response from Zimmerman:** Send me a copy of your book(s) and I will be happy to read and perhaps write a review of one or both of them.

*Dr. Miriam L. Zimmerman, Professor Emerita, Notre Dame de Namur University. ★*

It is hard for me to understand why the New York Planning Commission and Mayor Bloomberg are so separated from the reality that seems so obvious.

There is still a group of reactionary Christians who show up at Military Funerals blaming the deaths on the nations' attitudes toward homosexuality. They stand across from the cemeteries invading the space of families who are burying their children. They are at the wrong place at the wrong time, and so are the funders of this mosque to promote peace in the world.

It is by any common sense, *the wrong neighborhood at the wrong time*.

No lasting good will come to their work. You cannot bring pain to those who mourn their dead. It is a violation of the place where they died.

*Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc. His e-mail is [howkar@wi.rr.com](mailto:howkar@wi.rr.com). ★*





## Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

### The latest rhetoric in Israel bashing

On May 14 the University of Chicago chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine offered a forum spotlighting Rashid Khalidi and John Mearsheimer to commemorate Nakba ("Disaster") Day, the end of the British Mandate on May 15, 1948. The program had the rather unfelicitous title, "The Nakba and the Future of Palestine." Jews observe the anniversary as *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*, Israel Independence Day, on the Hebrew date of 6 Iyar. In recent years especially, Palestinians observe the English date with Israel-bashing. I felt obligated to attend in order to hear first hand the current anti-Israel rhetoric. Though the event was not greatly publicized, there was a large audience of people of all faiths.

Khalidi opened the program. He brought a somber mood to what he regards as the most somber of days. No one observed that the loosening of the British hold was the only prayer for a Palestinian state as well as for a Jewish State, though Khalidi came close to admitting that an opportunity came to the Palestinians and was forfeited by them. His arguments were a reflection on the tenor of contemporary academic discourse.

He declared that supporters of Israel, mainly Jews, succeeded in suppressing the Palestinian side of things by blackballing and blacklisting all who would tell it as "anti-Semites." He contended that the rightness of the Palestinian cause was subverted by "scientific propaganda," namely, by the public relations industry as founded by clever Jews like Edward Gottlieb. Khalidi observed that it was Gottlieb who funded a young Zionist novelist, Leon Uris, to write a novel, *Exodus*, which romanticized the Zionist cause and led to disregard of Palestinian concerns.

Khalidi insinuated that it was hard to pin such subversion on Gottlieb and that one has to be quite adept at Internet research to find "the memos." Yet one need only to have watched the opening episodes of the AMC television series, *Mad Men*, to have found an account of the young Jewish State's efforts to find a public relations agency for tourism, a major concern for Israel then as now.

The irony, of course, is that most Jews do not think that Israel does a very good job at public relations, and that the media are, in general, not kind to Israel. And how is it *not* anti-Semitic to suggest that the by-product of an entire industry built by Jews a plot to suppress the truth about what happened to the Palestinians? Sure, Khalidi is careful to distinguish

between the "vast majority of the Jewish community" and the "hawkish Likud-dominated pro-settlement" Jews who are "out of step" with the "community." But it is not so simple to set up criteria for "good" and "bad" Jews. Liberal Jews have noted the vehemence with which Palestinians would exclude Jewish enclaves anywhere around them in whatever form. What about the Jewish community's (and the world's, beginning with the Clinton Administration's) growing awareness since 2000 that the Palestinians have preferred to act out with violence rather than develop the infrastructure for at least a start-up state? Khalidi actually concluded his talk by declaring Palestinian violence to be counterproductive.

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---

Khalidi put much blame on the motion picture, *Exodus*, and the late Paul Newman for many of the Palestinians' woes. Indeed, Khalidi objected to any pollster or PR person who wrote up talking points to defend the State of Israel. He did not mention that this has been necessary because of the tremendous choke hold that the Arab oil industry had over many United States politicians and citizens. To Khalidi, Jewish lobbyists, such as AIPAC, are the bullies and the purveyors of the "same canned lies" that "indoctrinate" a "not very knowledgeable" public, along with Israeli tour guides.

Khalidi finds hope in growing recognition by Americans and by Jews worldwide that the Palestinians are a people "entitled to national rights." Yet he admitted that the Palestinians did not consider themselves a people until the early 20th century, but rather as a "construct" of "preexisting elements." Like the Zionists, he said, the Palestinians built an identity that consolidated under "hardship." He was quick to observe, however, that this was "not simply" in response to Zionism, but also in response to Arab and Syrian nationalism. I would add that when the Palestinians were under Egyptian and Jordanian domination before May 15, 1948, any talk of "identity" on their part would have been severely punished by those regimes who considered them "from Damascus."

Khalidi's main thesis is that the Palestinians, not the Israelis, have been the true victims of the conflict. He

condemned European anti-Semitism in no uncertain terms for the evils of the Holocaust and for all that led to the Holocaust, but also for Herzl's Zionism. It was Western guilt over the Holocaust, Khalidi contends, that led to the establishment of the Jewish State on the backs of the Palestinians. He wishes that the United States, the United Kingdom and other Western countries had been willing to provide refuge for the Jews, so that European Jews would not have joined the longstanding Jewish community in Palestine.

To Khalidi, the partition of Palestine in 1948 was a "belated attempt to rectify at the expense of Palestinians what Europe had done in the Holocaust." Yet he conveniently neglected to mention that the Palestinians allied themselves with the Nazis during World War II. If there is a shocking growing literature about the 1930s and 1940s, it is not in the understandable efforts of Zionist to make a public relations case (which largely failed, by the way), but in the extent of collusion between the Palestinians and the Hitler regime. In fact, certain documents reveal that the mufti was one of the first to know about Hitler's death camps, and of the first to refuse to intervene.

The partition was not at the "expense" of the Palestinians. It was an amazingly generous and fair offer to provide for an Arab state alongside a Jewish State (built upon a significant base of continued Jewish life in Palestine, to the extent that Jews were the ones called "Palestinians") despite the efforts of those who were to call themselves *the* Palestinians to undermine the Allies in the Middle East.

These Nazi supporters, whose anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism already rivaled European bigotry, would never have had a chance for a state of their own had it not been for the partition and for the events of May 15. Khalidi did not excuse their failure to establish their state then and there, though he rationalizes that "collusions" between Israelis and Hashemites and between Jordanians and the British exacerbated Arab disunity and "Palestinian errors."

Khalidi finds hope in every Western condemnation of Israel's responses to aggression from Beirut, Gaza and other places, and in books now being published that are highly critical of Israel. He has confidence that "young people," Jewish as well as Gentile, will provide a "sea change" in opinion regarding the relative merits of the Palestinian and Israeli causes. He insists that the Palestinians now realize that "violence does not work against that enemy." (Would violence work against an enemy less demonized?) He declares that "the handwriting is on the wall" against occupation and settlements and against Israel's history of "artifice and cunning." He concluded by saying that it is up to Israelis and Palestinians to dismantle the "unjust structure."

I wondered what he meant by "unjust structure." It seemed to me, by the time

Khalidi had finished, that he was putting the entire State of Israel in the "occupation and settlements" category. And sure enough, the other speaker, John Mearsheimer (one of the authors of the vicious tract, *The Israel Lobby*), stated very clearly that Israel must disappear. The two speakers complemented one another like a tag team.

Any hope of objectivity on Mearsheimer's part was dispelled by his opening comment that it was an honor "to be here to commemorate the tragedy of the nakba, which happened 62 years ago." Mearsheimer played hatchet man to Khalidi's "moderate" reflections.

Mearsheimer believes that "Israelis have few qualms about killing Palestinians," and that the "nakba," which he sees as continuing, is one of the major crimes against humanity. He reinforced Khalidi's "revelation" that the Israelis have been inventing stories since 1948 to cover up their "crimes" and to blame the true victims. He does not mention, of course, that Palestinians have grown in population, education and health under Israeli "occupation" – except to state repeatedly that their growing numbers will spell the end of the Jewish State, while all the while accusing Jews of "ethnic cleansing."

Indeed, I sensed in Mearsheimer's presentation an assertion that the State of Israel was born in a kind of original sin that can only repeat itself. If I heard Mearsheimer correctly, he said that Israel was born as an "apartheid state" because it was sanctioned by partition, and that it can only be an apartheid state until the partition is removed. He "kindly" (disingenuously?) "conceded" that a two-state solution might be the best alternative, but that because the Zionists never allowed for a Palestinian state in the first place, they will never be able to deal with one. He further declared that no United States government could ever pressure Israel to make the necessary sacrifices to have a viable Palestinian state because of the undue influence of the "Israel lobby."

I wondered if it was his purpose to nullify whatever hopeful comments Khalidi made about the future. If Khalidi expressed hope in youth (including Jewish youth and Israeli youth in particular) in dismantling "unjust structures," Mearsheimer concluded by saying that Jewish youth would never accept a state dominated by Palestinians, though "most Palestinians" want a democratic binational state.

So Mearsheimer is now completing Khalidi's arguments by saying that Jews are not entitled to their state because of where it is (in Israel), and that they do not deserve a Palestinian state next to them because they have the state that they have. I would point out that most Jews have been critical of fellow Jews who have suggested that the Palestinians are unready for a state and should not have one, based on (see Gertel, page NAT 19)



## As I Heard It

BY MORTON GOLD

### Prestigious Kavod Award

Normally I would devote this column either to a review of a CD or to let my readers know what I think about one thing or another somehow related to Judaism. This time I simply want to share the warm and fuzzy and often emotional feelings that occurred when I was the recipient of the Kavod Award given to me by the Cantors Assembly (Conservative) of North America at their annual convention in New York City on May 3 this year.

It is reasonable to ask why I hadn't written about this event any sooner, and my reply would be that it simply was too soon. Prior to the award, a concert of my music was given (The Best of Morton Gold) by a chorus comprised of Hazzanim, conducted by Hazzan Sheldon Levin (New Jersey) accompanied by Ms. Joyce Rosensweig (NY City). The chair of the concert was Hazzan Chaim Najman (Southfield, Mich.) who said so many nice things about me that I quipped that this was the nicest funeral service that one could wish for!

One could hardly quarrel about the merits of the compositions selected for the concert. There were many other works that I would have liked to have been included, but I was keenly aware of the limitations both of performance time as well as rehearsal time. As a critic, as well as the composer, I was truly fortunate that the performances were as good as they were.

The credit for this must go chiefly to the conductor Hazzan Levin and also to the astute and sensitive accompaniment



Dr. and Mrs. Morton Gold with Kavod award.

of Ms. Rosensweig. The experience as well as the musicality of the hazzanim in the choral ensemble, in the last analysis, made it all possible.

The program consisted of the following: Psalm 100 (1979), a chorus from the oratorio "Songs of Praise"; Psalm 23 (1978) with Hazzan Rebecca Carmi, soloist; Psalm 150, a chorus from "Songs of Praise"; Amar Rabbi Elazar, a solo from "Havdalah" (1976) performed by Hazzan Benjamin Maissner (Toronto, Canada); "Jerusalem," a chorus from the oratorio "Not So Wild a Dream" (1986) with Cantor Marina Shemesh as soloist; "Mighty God" a chorus from the oratorio "Haggadah" (1973) with Hazzan Murray Simon (Princeton, NJ) as soloist; "David Melekh Yisrael" a chorus from the oratorio "Havdalah" (1976) with Hazzan Raphael Frieder (Long Island, NY) as soloist; and "Oseh Shalom" (1999) a work for Chorus with Hazzan Arianne Brown (Los Angeles, Calif.) as soloist.

I could not help but be deeply moved by the ovation given me by an audience of Hazzanim. The best, however was yet to come. Cantor Najman went to the microphone, asked me to join him and read from the award scroll the following:

"In recognition of his prolific career as a composer of both secular and sacred music.... The Cantors Assembly, assembled on the occasion of its Sixty-Third Annual Convention presents its most prestigious Kavod Award to Dr. Morton Gold. We wish Dr. and Mrs. Gold, their children and grandchildren, continued joy and good health in a world at peace." As if all this were not enough, the entire audience then sang "L'Shanah Haba'ah" from my Haggadah. Friends, it could not have been any better than this. And as it appears in my "Oseh Shalom," let us say Amen.

#### CD of quality and musical excellence

I just had the *fargenign* (great joy) of listening to the CD *Cantor David Lefkowitz: Legacy*. This recording has been proudly produced in honor of Cantor David Lefkowitz' 33 years of commitment to excellence in cantorial music at Park Avenue Synagogue (NY). Hazzan Lefkowitz has been blessed with a beautiful lyric tenor voice, which he has used with superb musicianship and unerring accuracy.

I count myself fortunate that he was the soloist in my oratorio "Days of Joy," which was commissioned and performed by the Youth Chorale of Dayton, Ohio, under the direction of another celebrated cantor, Jerome Kopmar.



Cantor David Lefkowitz

In this CD, Lefkowitz has selected excerpts from CDs recorded from 1976 to 2004. One would be hard pressed to tell which was recorded earlier and which later just by listening to the tracks.

The range of composers, styles and genres is incredible running the gamut from Sulzer to Kurt Weill, from Novakowsky to the cantor's father, Jacob who was also a distinguished hazzan. Lefkowitz (and the rest of us) were fortunate that he had other gifted artists associated with him over the years, namely Neil Robinson, organist and Abraham Kaplan who frequently conducted the superb mixed choir at Park Avenue Synagogue. I wish to digress only to stress that his was and remains a Conservative synagogue.

The use of an organist and mixed choir was and should be considered a normal and usual part of the musical apparatus in a Conservative synagogue. Since we now live in religiously regressive times (in my opinion), there are many who do not agree with this state of affairs. It is my belief that these (perhaps) well-meaning folk are musically unsophisticated and unknowledgeable. If they are unhappy with the beauty and religiosity of this music, that is their problem. My problem is that they have as much sympathy and empathy with music as the mullahs in Baghdad who have outlawed outright the teaching of music.

(see Gold, page NAT 19)



## The Roads from Babel

BY SETH BEN-MORDECAI

### Say what?

My last column noted that people tend to pronounce a vowel *longer* if it occurs in an "open syllable" (a syllable that ends in a vowel) and shorter if the vowel occurs in a "closed syllable" (a syllable that ends in a consonant). In English, this tendency has many confusing exceptions. But in Biblical Hebrew, this tendency was a firm rule with exceptions that are sensible and predictable. A later column will discuss what the exceptions teach us about the development of Hebrew.

My last column also noted that a *qamatz* (a T-shaped mark beneath a letter) denotes an "ah" sound in an open syllable, and a *patach* (a dash beneath a letter) denotes an "ah" sound in a closed syllable. Because a *qamatz* occurs in open syllables, we know that "יָלָדָה" must be pronounced "ya-le-DA" (she gave birth). And because *patach* occurs in closed syllables, we know that "יָלָדָה" must be "yal-DA" (a girl).

In addition to the difference in the length of *qamatz* and *patach*, the two also differ in sound quality. Essentially, *qamatz* is the sound "a" as in "father," while *patach* is the sound "a" as in "what." Disregarding the spelling, the "ah" sound of *patach* is identical to the vowel sound in "what," "shut" and "but" and is different from the vowel sound in "father." The difference between the vowel sounds of "father" and "what" results from the fact that the jaw and tongue are in a lower position for "a" in "father" and a higher position for "a" in "what." Returning to the example above, "she gave birth" would be pronounced "ya-le-DA," while "a girl" would be pronounced "yul-DA."

Using this distinction eliminates the long slack-jawed "a" sound common to American Hebrew accents. Knowing the distinction also eliminates confusion between pairs of words whose only distinction is that one uses a *qamatz* and the other a *patach*, as shown in the earlier example.

An example of words that are nearly identical except for *qamatz/patach* is "גָּנַב" (thief) and "גִּנָּב" (he stole). The first word in the pair has a *dagesh* – a dot – in the letter *nun*. As noted in an earlier column, the *dagesh* tells us that the *nun* should be pronounced as two nuns, back to back (e.g., "unnamed" versus "unaimed"). Thus, in the Hebrew word for "thief," the first syllable is closed, spelled with a *patach*, and pronounced "gun." In other words, "gun-NAV" means "a thief." By contrast, in the Hebrew word for "he stole," the first syllable is

(see Ben-Mordecai, page NAT 19)



Concert of Dr. Morton Gold's music for Kavod award performed by a chorus comprised of Hazzanim, conducted by Hazzan Sheldon Levin (New Jersey) accompanied by Ms. Joyce Rosensweig (NY City). Photo credit: Tsvi Gold, Morton's son.





## Book Review

REVIEWED BY ARNOLD AGES

### One of the most important religious figures of the 20th century

*The Rebbe: The Life and Afterlife of Menachem Mendel Schneerson.* By Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman. Princeton University Press. 343 Pages.

It was the French scholar Ernst Renan who once said that the best person to write about religion is the individual who "once believed and no longer does." For Renan that was the only kind of person who could bring the requisite objectivity to the subject matter.

Renan's dictum requires some fine tuning in the face of the extraordinary biography of the Lubavitcher Rebbe executed by Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman, two sociologists who have cooperated in an exacting study of one of the most important religious figures of the 20th century. (Having read other works by Heilman this reviewer surmises that while the co-authors divided the research chores, Heilman's writing skills are clearly visible in the finished work.)

Be that as it may, both have brought to this volume an amalgam of scholarly discipline, encyclopaedic knowledge and a respect for the sancta of Judaism as they have been incorporated into the special élan of the Lubavitch movement and its most recent leader Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Renan's view must give way to a more nuanced interpretation in the case of this work because Heilman-Friedman are believers who are nonetheless able to mount a critical objectivity in their appraisal both of the movement and its late leader.

They deploy this approach in a narrative that is extraordinarily smooth in its literary style and transform what could have been a dry and jargon-ridden sociological foray into a highly readable and occasionally even gripping exploration of the inner workings and theological complications that have animated the Lubavitcher "empire" in the recent past.

The word "empire" being used here is a tribute to the accomplishments of the seventh Rebbe, Menachem Mendel, whose religious genius transformed

what had been an interesting but marginal group in Judaism's wide denominational spectrum, into a driving and dynamic international presence. That genius, the authors explain, was expressed in various practical ethical modalities – the mitzvah mobiles, the kindness campaigns, the distribution of dollar bills for charity and the revolutionary use of videos.

The authors suggest that even the innovative administrative structures as seen in the explosion of the corps of *shluchim* (emissaries) dispatched by the Rebbe all over the world was part of that brilliant strategy, even though it might have piggy backed on the idea of the peace corps that President Kennedy inaugurated in the early 1960s. But perhaps the Rebbe's most potent instrument in revitalizing the Lubavitch movement on his ascension to leadership in 1950 was his determination to make his habitat in Brooklyn a Mecca from which he would not move, no matter what the reason.

The astounding success of Menachem Mendel Schneerson is all the more stunning when one takes into consideration the fact that although he was a lineal descendant of a former Rebbe, he was merely the son-in-law of the incumbent sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe and – that there was another strong contender for the position when Rabbi Joseph Yitzhak passed away at the mid point of the 20th century.

As Heilman-Friedman tell it, the claimant had never gone to a Lubavitcher Yeshiva and had spent his early years in Russia, Berlin and Paris pursuing his studies in mathematics and engineering and even in those disciplines had compiled only an average academic profile. Moreover, much of his time in Europe had been spent in trying to establish citizenship in Germany and France, and bona fide academic credentials, which inevitably, because of political developments, were beyond his grasp.

One of the remarkable feats exhibited by the authors is that they actually obtained the transcripts of the Rebbe's academic work in Paris and reveal them in the book, detailing his frequent absences from class and rather undistinguished marks in certain courses. Given the political turmoil in the early 1940s with Nazism about to explode, it is not surprising that this might have affected both his attendance and his academic progress.

It is the authors' contention that both in Europe and New York, where he finally found respite from a Europe being overrun by the Nazis, the Rebbe-to-be intended to spend his life as a professional engineer and in fact did some work at the Brooklyn naval yards in the pursuit of this endeavour. The question then is why within five years of war's end and the death of the sixth Rebbe, Menachem Schneerson suddenly turns from a search for a livelihood in the professions and concentrates his

gaze on becoming the titular head of the Lubavitcher movement?

The answers to this question are perhaps the only architectural fault in this otherwise brilliant study. Although Heilman-Friedman concede that the Rebbe continued his learning exercises in Torah, Talmud, Kabala and virtually all the other disciplines attached to Hassidic lore while he was in Europe and America, his main goal was to obtain a professional position in his chosen field as an engineer.

However, according to the authors, his rudimentary knowledge of English and the challenges of an entirely new environment in the united States made him realize that the engineering profession was not going to be his calling and that his "default" position, if one might characterize it as such, was to go after the mantle of the Lubavitch movement.

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**[The authors] suggest that the incredible successes that the Rebbe achieved...in so many domains were factored...into his belief that he had been favored by the divine to be the Messiah.**

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Whether that interpretation is legitimate is contestable, but the authors' description of the way in which Menachem Mendel Schneerson began to lobby for the coveted Rebbe's role after the death of his predecessor is magisterial and leavened with attention to what Flaubert once called the "little significant detail." People outside the Lubavitcher jurisdictions will be surprised to learn that that in 1950, another candidate was favored to win the cherished crown. The deceased Rebbe had two sons-in-law, and most observers were certain that Shmaryahu Gourary, a long time confidant of Joseph Yitzhak, would win out in any competition.

The competition in question began subtly during the shiva for the deceased Rebbe when Menachem and Shmaryahu engaged in subtle rivalries as they delivered *divrei Torah* and *sichot* (conversations on pious themes). The crucial "informal" examination occurred when Menachem Mendel was urged, during one of his *sichot*, to present "Hassidus," that is to say, a presentation that goes beyond conventional pieties to explore cabbalistic themes. Those present were apparently stunned by Schneerson's erudition and mastery of the sources in addition to his wonderful competence in delivery skills.

It did not take long for Schneerson to displace his rival and to become

the official successor to the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe. But Schneerson was astute enough to understand that it was going to be necessary to win over everyone, and to this end, he honed his diplomatic skills by paying tribute to his predecessor in public and visiting his gravesite on a regular basis to "consult" with him.

Within a few years the new Rebbe had basically consolidated his hold on the position, and he had only one real opponent – the wife of the last Rebbe – who expressed her disfavour by refusing to hand over her husband's iconic streimel to Schneerson. Instead of confronting the revered wife of his predecessor, Schneerson merely decreed that henceforth the black fedora was to be the formal headgear of the Lubavitcher, thereby disarming and defusing any potential strife.

In this detailed account of the Rebbe's rise and his powerful direction to his followers in the fields of education, outreach, public policy, attitudes toward the State of Israel, the authors cover all the bases with intimidating thoroughness. By the end of his life, his influence had become so strong that Israeli officials would often make pilgrimages to his headquarters to consult with the Rebbe (who single-handedly reversed Chabad's previous anti-Zionism) and receive advice from him.

The most delicate part of the Heilman-Friedman essay pivots on the Rebbe's messianic aspirations, and the authors perform yeoman's work in exploring every aspect of this issue. Rather than cursorily dismiss this aspect of the Rebbe's career, the authors deal with it very carefully. One of the avenues they explore is very fruitful.

They suggest that the incredible successes that the Rebbe achieved (and those successes are numbered in extravagant detail) in so many domains were factored, perhaps misguidedly but sincerely into his belief that he had been favored by the divine to be the Messiah. He and a coterie of close followers interpreted his miraculous recovery from a massive heart attack as evidence of his selection. Even the massive stroke, which ended his life at age 92, did not diminish the fervor of belief among his disciples.

The Rebbe passed away in 1994, but 16 years later his legacy lives on. The lustre has somewhat dissipated, and Heilman-Friedman conclude their study by asking some penetrating questions about whether the momentum can be sustained. Their intellectual labor stands, however, as a monument of solid research and writing about another monument whose influence still resounds in the 21st century.

Arnold Ages is distinguished emeritus professor of French language and literature, University of Waterloo, and scholar-in-residence at Beth Tzedec Synagogue in Toronto, Ontario. ★

# Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

## Inspiring evidence that people can confront calamity

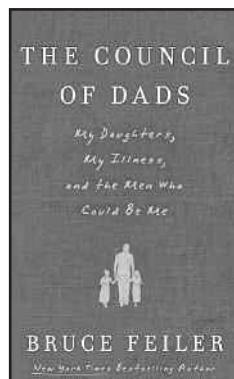
*The Council of Dads.* By Bruce Feiler. New York: William Morrow, 2010. 241 Pages. \$22.99.

Outstanding achievers in their separate endeavors, Bruce Feiler and his wife, Linda Rottenberg, were enjoying their successes and their three-year-old twin daughters when their lives were greatly upset. He unexpectedly learned that he had a rare form of cancer in his left leg. At the time, Bruce was a best-selling author, one of whose books, *Walking the Bible*, had become a highly rated TV miniseries. Born in Savannah in 1964 to a family of German Jews who had been in the United States for several generations, he is a graduate of Yale and Cambridge. The year he spent teaching English in Japan and the year he worked as a circus clown both resulted in well-received books.

Linda comes from a Boston suburb where her parents are active in the Jewish community. She earned her bachelor's degree with honors at Harvard and her law degree from Yale. She is widely recognized as the co-founder of Endeavor, a nonprofit organization that fosters entrepreneurship and economic development in the emerging world. Bruce, Linda, and the twins live in Brooklyn.

Painfully aware of the impact on his daughters if they had to grow up without a father, Bruce hit upon the idea of asking six of his friends to serve as substitute dads. He called the group "The Council of Dads," charged with fathering his "potentially fatherless daughters."

The book carefully describes each of these men and the roles that Bruce asked them to fill. He sets forth his relationship to them and his expectation that the group will enable his daughters to "know the world" and "know me." The strength he manifests and the tragedy he bravely contemplates inevitably brings tears to the eyes of his readers. It would have been an arduous task to read the chapters devoted to each friend had they followed one after the other. Fortunately, they are separated by seven letters to family and friends, which Bruce wrote and are here called "Chronicles of the Lost Year." In these letters, Bruce describes his treatments, his progress,



and his setbacks. He discusses the physicians who treated him, especially Dr. John Healey, head of orthopedic surgery at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital in New York, who was the chief doctor. He expressed the view that "this is a war, and I intend to win it."

In addition to the letters and the descriptions of each member of The Council of Dads, the book includes chapters that deal with the ongoing interactions of Bruce, Linda, and their daughters. These poignant accounts of Bruce's ups and downs and their impact on his wife and the twins bring to life the pain – and the humor – of the "lost year." They conclude with a triumphant story of how the family walked across the Brooklyn Bridge. Finally, the book ends with an especially touching letter from Bruce to the twins, which he hopes they won't read "for a long, long time," in which he tells about his illness and about The Council of Dads. Also, he asks the girls to "be awash in love every day" and he says, "whatever else happens, always comfort your sister."

This book is inspiring evidence that people can confront calamity and catastrophe. Thomas Wolfe said it best – "Man was born to live, to suffer, and to die, and what befalls him is a tragic lot. There is no denying this in the final end. But we must deny it all along the way."

## Powerful WWII survivor testimonies

*No More Tears Left Behind.* By Arthur and Ursula Rathburn. Dane, Wis.: Fort Dane Books, 2010. \$16. 267 Pages.

Although it is a truism that all memoirs by Holocaust survivors have a good deal in common, it is equally accurate to say that each one is unique. Accordingly, although we are rapidly reaching the point when there will no longer be any more first-hand accounts of what it meant to live through one of history's most brutal assaults on human dignity and human survival, it is important to value each record of what transpired during those darkest days. This autobiography is more than worthy of being treasured for its portrayal of the determination to exist despite all odds against enduring through barbarous oppression and the fierce determination to eliminate all Jews.

Eva Deutschkron, now 91 years old, told her remarkable story of hiding in Berlin throughout World War II to Arthur and Ursula Rathburn. She had heard Arthur Rathburn speak about one of his books, *The American Japanese*, in which he described how an American of Japanese ancestry fought valiantly in the



American army although his wife was confined in a California "relocation camp." Arthur had married Ursula, his German-born wife, and they eventually settled in Dane, Wis., where they operate the publishing company, Fort Dane Books. Eva was not only attracted by the story that Arthur told but also recognized Ursula's German accent. This led her to ask them to write about her experiences, which they agreed to do and this book is the result. In order to bring the story to life, the Rathburns decided to present it in the first person even though they are the authors, using Eva's recollections, supplemented by their own research.

The result of this combined effort is a gripping narrative that forcefully describes how Eva and her husband, Martin, took off their Jewish stars and, against great odds with constant peril, hid their identity and lived through the entire war. Eva was born in German-occupied Poland the day after World War I ended on Armistice Day, Nov. 11, 1918. A month earlier, her father had died in the flu pandemic. He and Eva's mother had operated a small department store, but when the area came under Polish rule, she sold the store and moved with Eva and Eva's five-year-old brother to Berlin. There, she opened a women's apparel shop and remarried.

Until she was 14, Eva lived a relatively normal life and had many non-Jewish friends. This ended abruptly in 1933 when Hitler came to power. Banned from higher education, Eva studied to become a seamstress, and her brother was sent to America to study there. As conditions became worse and worse for Jews, Eva met and married Martin, a tailor. They and their families tried in vain to leave Germany but, eventually, their families were sent to concentration camps. Eva and Martin removed the Jewish stars from their clothing and began a risky life, never staying in one place for long, trusting nobody, and occasionally trading their sewing skills for meager food rations. They were in constant fear and had harrowing experiences that continued for more than two years even after the Russians entered Germany. Life continued to be difficult especially for women who were often brutalized and raped by drunken Russian soldiers. Once again, Eva and Martin's tailoring skills came in handy as they made alterations and repairs for the Russians.

Eventually, with the help of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, CARE packages, and Eva's brother, a soldier in the American army, they survived and finally sailed to America early in 1947. After brief stays in New York and Chicago, Eva and Martin finally settled in Madison, Wis., where Eva's brother had lived. Martin successfully ran men's clothing stores there until he died in 1985.

Eva concludes by expressing appreciation for the few Germans who helped her and Martin to escape from the Nazis, and she asserts that we must

never forget what happened so as to prevent such "a cruel time" from recurring. This book is a monument to her tenacity and that of other Holocaust survivors. We dare not tire of reading these powerful testimonies!

## Mixes hilarity and tragedy in equal proportions

*Peep Show.* By Joshua Braff. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Press, 2010. 272 Pages. 13.95.

Joshua Braff's debut novel in 2004, *The Unthinkable Thoughts of Jacob Green*, was well received. Returning to the topic of the dysfunctional family, which was featured in his first book, Braff has now written another account of a family in trouble, successfully mixing hilarity and tragedy in equal proportions. The new book promises to win additional enthusiasts for Braff's work.

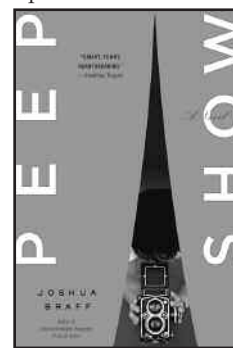
The story of what happens to the Arbus family is told in the first person by David Arbus, the 17-year-old son of Martin and Miriam Arbus. The name "Arbus" was selected because David is interested in photography, and Braff is an admirer of the work of the photographer, Diane Arbus.

David's younger sister was originally called Debra, just as their mother was once called Mickey. Martin and Miriam have been separated five times and now are being divorced. Miriam has become an adherent of a Hasidic sect, not only changing her name and life style but also insisting on renaming her daughter from Debra to Dena. Both David and his sister attend a Jewish day school (as did Braff).

Martin Arbus, supposedly in real estate, actually operates a pornographic burlesque theater in the Times Square area. His continuing attachment to his son and daughter leads to several escapades, one of which results in David coming to live with his father and becoming involved in his sordid business. The contest between the parents for the loyalty of their children takes on serious and comic aspects.

Braff does an excellent job of portraying the two distinctive worlds in which Martin and Miriam live. He is an equal opportunity satirizer, decrying the tawdry entertainment of Times Square in the 1970s as well as the rigid observances of the Hasidim. The characters he skillfully introduces include strippers, sex film actors and producers, and sellers of sexual toys as well as rigidly observant and extraordinary Hasidim. As Braff shifts back and forth between the two communities, vile and obscene language (that some readers will find offensive)

(see Teicher, page NAT 17)







## Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

### Poems and short stories by children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors

*Mizmor L'David Anthology (Volume I: The Shoah)*. Edited by Michal Mahgerefteh with assistance from Pete Freas, Michelle Langenberg and Jack Callan. Poetica Publishing Company. 2010. Pp. 91. \$15.00.

We are once more beholden within a brief span of time to Michal Mahgerefteh – poet, artist, editor and publisher – Tidewater's own woman of valor of Jewish letters whose indefatigable initiative and creativity is exemplary testimony to what one person can accomplish to enrich the Jewish world.

She offers a stage on Jewish themes to poets and authors, along with establishing a fruitful literary bond and bridge between the North American and European Diaspora and Israel. Michal, whose first collection of poetry (*In My Bussan*) appeared in 2009 through her Poetica Publishing Company, is enchanting us again with the present collection of poems and short stories by children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, representing diverse and rich histories of background and accomplishments.

The book's artistic front cover of intriguing figures resembling emaciated inmates is by Israeli born artist and kibbutz member Miri Lavee whose surviving parents are from Yugoslavia. The back cover bears a stirring stanza from a poem by Rochelle Mass, a Canadian who lives in Israel. "Avi, now six / pulls at his grandfather's arm / places a small hand over the numbers / Doesn't hurt Sabah [grandfather]? Right? / Not any more, says Shmuel / bending to kiss the boy's head. / Not any more."

In the book's Introduction author Sandra Hurtes who teaches at John Jay College, shares instructively and challengingly. "Many contribute to the largest body of work on the Holocaust, each voice, each experience, unique yet utterly and uncannily similar. But, while we carry these stories, we owe it to our parents and their very survival to move forward rather than stay wedded to their past. We owe it to ourselves to not carry on their suffering... It is Michal's hope

that the sharing of experience will create a collective consciousness so that anyone can be an educator. In this way, we transform the burden of memory into a flame that lights the world."

A literary anthology such as this one on the complex Shoah theme presupposes a variety of perspectives and responses. Surprises, even disturbing ones – after all the Shoah is so very disturbing – might be in store depending upon one's background, experience and inclination as in the following explosive verse by professor Bronislava Volkova from Indiana University. "Who but God could, however, / stand to watch such misery and cruelty being inflicted even on the guilty / much less so on the innocent!" Vancouver's poet Christy Hill reveals her inner conflict which touches core issues, "I do not want to remember. I do not want to forget."

The late Yehuda Amichai, Israel's poet laureate and a native of Germany, captures the Jewish life-affirming spirit of "Amen" in the midst of untold historical brokenness of stones and lives culminating in the Shoah. He bids us to turn "The Jewish time bomb of pain and rage into "an amen and love stone."

Norman Gordon who taught physics is charging that already in 1942 German civilians, the U.S. State Department and American Jews knew of European Jewry's fate, yet they all failed to intervene. He accusingly laments, "What will you tell the Mashiach / on the night of transcendence / when all the living and dead climbing the ropes and ladders / between heaven and Earth are judged?"

Arizona writer Linda Pressman's short story with its arousing title, "Holocaust Vacation," takes us on a family trip with her parents-survivors from Illinois to Toronto to visit a relative, a survivor too. She ponders with dark humor concerning her parents' vacation target, "where can they go to find the most tragedy?"

Though Michal Mahgerefteh's Sephardic family was not directly touched by the Holocaust, she gives voice with others, including myself, whose lives resonate with the lingering impact of an epic event in a uniquely educational volume connecting us across a threatening abyss to the victims' own voices of song and supplication, meaning and doubt, silenced by life-negating forces. The literary quest to engage a critical and complex past will surely endure, even as we'll do well to harken to the implicit present warning in the offered quote sealing this searing anthology, by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"No one yet knows what awaits the Jews in the 21st century, but we must make every effort to ensure that is it better than what befell them in the 20th, the century of the Holocaust." The book may be ordered at poeticapub@aol.com.

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. ★

## Theater

BY HAROLD JACOBSON

### Ontario's Shaw Festival opens to rave reviews

*German-Jewish Composer, Kurt Weil, featured*

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ONTARIO – Although it is dedicated to George Bernard Shaw, The Shaw Festival, situated in arguably one of Canada's most beautiful towns. Niagara-On-The Lake, each year presents an eclectic choice of plays, musicals and comedies drawn from a wide variety of theatrical productions.

This reviewer was especially pleased in early summer to see a revival of Kurt Weil's *One Touch of Venus*, a fanciful tale loosely inspired by *Pygmalion*, which was also the source for Shaw's brilliant story about the flower girl who was tutored in the finer point of English pronunciation and who was reincarnated in Broadway's *My Fair Lady*.

Kurt Weil, the composer of the hauntingly catchy music in a *Touch of Venus*, hailed originally from Dessau in Germany and was the son of a cantor. A prodigious talent, he acquired a strong following for his slightly dissonant musical harmonies and was well on his way to becoming a major figure in the German musical scene when Hitler came to power in 1933.

Weil soon became the target of Nazi propaganda, and seeing the writing on the wall, he soon left his homeland and ended up first in Paris and then finally in the United States. He is, of course, best known for his *Three Penny Opera* and "Mack the Knife," one of the major songs in that operetta, has become the standard bearer of his music.

*One Touch of Venus* was a collaborative work with lyrics by the American humorists Ogden Nash and S. J. Perelman and was based on the novella *The Tinted Venus* by Thomas Guthrie. The Shaw version is a fluffy spoof of American mores circa 1944 and especially the idea of female physical beauty and the vanity attached to it. When those elements are featured in a statue that comes to life and the resuscitated Venus interacts with a shy protagonist, a musical comedy is born! The dialogues among the various characters are witty, vivid and zany. The songs are belted out with spontaneity and bravado.

But the highlight is Kurt Weil's uncanny transformation from German musical master to Broadway impresario. As you



Kurt Weil, c. 1928.

listen to the tunes he has embedded in the songs and dance numbers, the lilt of *The Three Penny Opera* is there but magically adapted to a different and more felicitous environment – that of the American experience in the fourth decade of the 20th century.

The same time slot saw the appearance of Mary Chase's *Harvey*, a play about a man who chooses a six-foot rabbit as an invisible companion. Having seen the film version with James Stewart many years ago, this reviewer had some doubts about the ability of the Shaw Festival cast to a credible job with this delectable piece of theatre.

From the first moments of the production, however, all anxieties were assuaged as Peter Krantz as Elwood Dowd and his companions breathed new life into a vehicle that challenges the artificial divisions that society places between reality and delusion and suggests that just perhaps the latter deserves a niche in our lives.

The Shaw Festival's *Harvey* is fortunate in having a supporting cast that meshes perfectly as a theatrical precision instrument. One actor, in addition to Peter Krantz's Elwood, must be noted – Gray Powell, who as psychiatrist Dr. Sanderson, raises the level of dramaturgy, through the smoothness of his performance, to unprecedented heights. ★

### TEICHER

(continued from page NAT 16)

alternates with staid and proper English, demonstrating the author's ability to comprehend and to depict both worlds.

Braff, who now lives in California, grew up in a New Jersey observant family, enabling him to provide authenticity to David's suburban environment in New Jersey. Similarly, his depiction of the Times Square smut scene is based on his living in that area when he was a student at New York University. Further maintenance of autobiographical elements in his novel is demonstrated by the fact that his own parents were divorced, just as are Marian and Martin Arbus. Braff's relatively sympathetic portrait of these two characters is partly attributable to his own current comfort with being a Jew who celebrates Passover and Hanukkah at home but who is not formally associated with the Jewish community.

The truth of Thomas Wolfe's observation that all novels are autobiographical is fully borne out by this fine novel as well as by Braff's first book.

Incidentally, Braff's brother, Zach Braff, starred in the TV comedy, *Scrubs*, for eight seasons and is scheduled to play the lead in an off-Broadway play, *Trust*, this summer.

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



# Kosher Kuisine

By SYBIL KAPLAN

## Time to barbeque

Unfortunately, although we brought a portable, collapsible barbecue with us, our balcony is glassed in, and we haven't yet decided whether to take the barbecue to the front or side yard or to close the doors to the living room and test whether barbecuing would smell up the entire apartment!

I still make my own barbecue sauces and here are some to try on meat, chicken or turkey.

### Garlic Barbecue Sauce (1 cup)

2 crushed garlic cloves  
1/2 tsp. chili powder  
1/2 tsp. liquid smoke  
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
1/2 cup white wine  
1/2 cup catsup

Combine ingredients in a bowl and blend. Brush over meat, chicken or turkey.

Since I was born and grew up in Kansas City, Mo., and lived across the state line in Kansas, I thought I should include what is known as a Kansas City-style barbecue sauce.

### Kansas City-Style Barbecue Sauce (1 cup)

1/8 cup olive oil  
1/2 tsp. minced garlic  
1/2 minced onion  
1/2 cup catsup  
2 Tbsp. honey or molasses  
1/2 tsp. chili powder  
1 Tbsp. lemon juice  
1/2 tsp. liquid smoke  
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce  
2 Tbsp. brown sugar  
1 1/12 tsp. cider vinegar  
1 Tbsp. mustard

Place oil in a frying pan and sauté garlic and onion until soft, about 10 minutes. Add catsup, honey or molasses, chili powder, lemon juice, liquid smoke, Worcestershire sauce, brown sugar, vinegar and mustard. Spoon over food to be barbecued or simmer slowly first for 25 minutes.

### Mom's Barbecue Sauce

2 Tbsp. liquid smoke  
1 cup catsup  
1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce  
1 cup water  
juice of half a lemon  
1 tsp. chili powder  
1 tsp. celery salt

Preheat oven to 450°F. Spoon liquid smoke over meat or poultry. Bake for 30 minutes. Combine catsup, Worcestershire sauce, water, lemon juice, chili powder and celery salt. Reduce oven to 350°F. Pour sauce on meat or poultry and bake one hour longer.

*Here's an interview with one of the chef's I interview each month for the Jerusalem Post, along with one of his recipes.*

### Sports Bar Chef Extraordinaire

When you think of sports bar fare, you think of a cook frying up fast food. This is not the case with The Lion's Den, HaGov Bar and Grill and co-owners, 26-year-old Gani Meidad, and 37-year-old Yona Mishaan.

Gani and Yona had a dream to open a sports bar in Jerusalem. Yona is coach of the women's national flag football team, and Gani plays with the Big Blue Lions football team.

After Shiloh-born-and-raised Gani returned from living in the States for three years, working and saving money, he and Yona researched locations for over a year. Then they found a more-than-120-year old building in Nachlat Shiva, which had been a bar for five and a half years. The owner wanted to sell, so they bought it, fixed it up and opened Feb. 21, 2010.

Deciding they wanted special food and a chef, Gani and Yona asked a friend to recommend someone. They interviewed Shai Kapuya, a 30-year-old Jerusalem-born chef and hired him.

Shai grew up in Jerusalem, son of a mother from Morocco and a father from Turkey. After serving in Golani, he worked as a security guard. Then he decided he wanted to make a change.

"I fell in love with cooking and cooking for myself. People told me I had a talent," Shai said.

He enrolled in the culinary course at Hadassah College in 2006 and graduated in 2007. "It was the best experience I ever had!"

While in school and after, he worked at Ha Chatzer, a Mediterranean restaurant on Bethlehem Rd., in an old Jerusalem rail compound specializing in meat, casseroles and fish. Then in 2008, he went to work at the upscale, high-design Scala Restaurant in the David Citadel Hotel, in charge of entrees. In 2009, he moved to Angelica, a kosher fine dining restaurant on Shatz St.

Before The Lions Den, Hagov Bar and Grill opened, Yona and Gani worked with Shai. "He helped us build the menu, and we worked together to do American dishes," says Gani.

"These were not my specialty," said Shai, "but I made research."

After several months cooking American style, Shai says he likes it even more. "I think in Israel we have a stigma about American food, because we just don't do it right. We think American food is just McDonald's and I thought like that too. Now when I got to this place



*Chef Shai Kapuya prepares a dish at The Lion's Den. Photo by Barry A. Kaplan.*

and started to know the food, I make it other ways."

Shai says the people taste the burgers, for example, and can believe that they're better.

"Buffalo wings, club sandwich – now people say they're great and they love them!"

What makes this sports bar unique is definitely the food.

"In terms of fresh food, I am trying to do preparations more like the restaurants where I worked and not like bar food," explains Shai. "For example, we buy fresh meat for the hamburgers and grind it ourselves. I do all the dressings from scratch, not canned or processed. We also think these are the only real Buffalo wings in Jerusalem!" exclaims Shai.

Shai is very proud of what he's doing. "This time it's my kitchen. I'm in the center of the stage. I choose the menu and I choose the ingredients."

The kosher restaurant is certified by the rabbinate. "A mashgiach comes every day, and we really like him," says Gani.

What's on the menu? The first thing you notice is the Lion hamburger (350-grams) for 65 NIS (\$17.24) and the Lioness (250 grams) for 50 NIS (\$13.26). These are served on a sesame seed bun with a choice of sweet potato fries, French fries, hash browns or onion rings, tastefully presented with lettuce, slices of tomato, red onion and dill pickle slices.

But then you read: steak, real American Buffalo wings, roast beef, salads, soups, appetizers, daily specials, soft drinks and alcoholic beverages – all currently on the menu, which will be changed from time to time. One also sees Lebo's hot dog, named for Steve Leibowitz, chief editor of Israel Televisions IBA News in English and founder and president of American Football in Israel.

The front room of The Lion's Den, HaGov, whose original stone walls and arches add to the warm atmosphere, has dark wood tables and chairs that seat 16 and a bar with nine places; there is also a back room with the original stone walls, which cannot be changed, and an open garden.

The origin of the name comes from Gani who was on *miluim* (yearly military reserve duty) in November when in the middle of doing guard duty, Yona called

with an idea for a name. Gani didn't think it was right, but then he got the idea to call it The Lion's Den since he is part of the football league and the team is the Lions. "It felt nice to have that name. And we added 'ha gov,' which is Hebrew for the Lion's Den."

As the season goes on, Gani, Yona and Shai would like to be open for lunches; during the NFL season, they plan to do all day breakfast.

Shai would like The Lion's Den to be a place where people come, "especially for the food and they like it and come again. I would also like to open earlier and to work more and sell more food. I want to see the kitchen grow also so it won't be a one-man kitchen."

The Lion's Den, HaGov Bar and Grill is located at the foot of Shammai St., on Solomon St. It is open Sunday through Thursday, 7 p.m. to the last customer; Saturday evening from two hours after Shabbat ends until the last customer and closed on Friday. For reservations or more information, phone 052 870 9993. When Shabbat begins later, in the summer, they would like to open their back yard with a special Friday luncheon menu.

One of the most special items on the menu is the original Shai's Salad, a beautiful blend of Romaine lettuce, green apples and sugared crushed pistachio nuts in a unique vinaigrette. Another is Buffalo wings.

### Buffalo Wings

24 chicken wings, cleaned; cut in half  
3/8 cup (100 grams) flour  
oil

### Sauce

2 Tbsp. vegetable oil  
1 chopped onion  
2 chopped garlic cloves  
2 tsp. smoked paprika  
1 1/2 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. black pepper  
1/3 cup cider vinegar  
10 drops Tabasco sauce  
(add more if you want it hotter)  
400 grams (1 cup) tomato paste  
2 tsp. sugar  
3 1/2 Tbsp. (50 grams) pareve butter-flavored margarine  
oil

Put flour on a plate or in a plastic bag. Add wings and shake. Remove from bag and shake to remove excess flour. Heat oil in a pot. Saute onions 4-5 minutes. Add garlic and smoked paprika and saute 2 minutes more. Add salt, pepper, vinegar, Tabasco sauce, tomato paste and sugar. Stir until it comes to a boil. Add margarine to melt, and cook until it boils. Strain sauce to remove onion and garlic. Set aside. Heat oil in a pot. Add wings so they are submerged. Fry 4-5 minutes. If you want them crisper, fry longer. Drain on paper towels. Place on a deep plate. Pour sauce on top.

*Sybil Kaplan lives in Jerusalem. ★*



**PELEGRINO**

(continued from page NAT 7)

would have had them killed back during the war. It's a lesson in reconciliation."

Once the project is completed, the research will be available to the general public, including a search engine to identify survivors. It will also be used to assist in other research, and be a tool for teachers of the Yiddish language. Virtual tours of each town will also exist to lay out what the town may have looked like during the war. A documentary will also be produced as well as a book written by Veidlinger.

Much of the funding for the project comes from two grants by the National Endowment for humanity. Other funds come from the Jewish studies department, particularly from Dov-Ber Kerler's chair position, the Dr. Alice Field Cohn Chair in Yiddish Studies, and Veidlinger's chair position, the Alvin H. Rosenfeld Chair in Jewish Studies.

With over 700 hours of interviews and numerous trips to Ukraine, the project works to preserve piece of Jewish history. Some might say it is a worthy summer activity.

For more information about the AHEYM program, go to [www.eviada.org/collection.cfm?mc=7&ctID=69](http://www.eviada.org/collection.cfm?mc=7&ctID=69). For more information about the Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program at Indiana University, go to [www.iub.edu/~jsp/](http://www.iub.edu/~jsp/).

*Sarah Pellegrino is a junior at Indiana University, majoring in journalism and Jewish studies. She has interned for the Jewish News of Greater Phoenix and is currently across the country, conquering Washington, D.C. as she interns for The Washington Jewish Week in Rockville. She is also a member of Sigma Delta Tau National Sorority. ★*

**WIENER**

(continued from page NAT 9)

not make any noise.' The trees reply: 'Our fruit is sufficient publicity for us.'"

A rabbi is a friend to those who have no friends and certainly a friend to those who want to be friends. Because he knows, as a Hasidic folk saying goes: "If you are looking for a friend who has no faults, you will have no friends."

Something to think about!

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

**KAPLAN/ISRAEL**

(continued from page NAT 10)

have different perspectives and so there is no competition.

**A look at Yitzhak Perlman**

Wearing a plaid shirt and jeans, with short, curly grey hair, Mr. Perlman demonstrates his vitality and knowledge during rehearsal, stopping frequently,

correcting and dissecting and, above all, exhibiting a wonderful sense of humor all the time with these young people.

*Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, lecturer, and food columnist; she leads walks in Machaneh Yehudah, the Jewish market, and has a weekly spot on RustyMikeRadio talking about shopping in the market. She lives in Jerusalem. ★*

**BACKALENICK**

(continued from page NAT 11)

home for dinner, the American names would ring out. But he would cringe, as his mother, with her heavily accented English, would echo down the street – "Yohnkeee!"

But in many ways, Ehrenreich's tale is not typical – except in the sense that all families struggle with problems. His was certainly an overwhelming burden to bear. Both his mother and his two sisters would become victims of early-onset Alzheimer's disease, and he would be witness to their painful deterioration. While his love of music and his years as a musician would be his saving grace, that world would also take its toll, as Ehrenreich descended into heavy drug abuse.

But he would eventually find his way, abetted by a solid marriage, a satisfying profession, and a deep sense of Jewish tradition. Beginning with a passion for drums, he would find his way into the professional music world. And always, even in dark moments, he would find the healing power of laughter, thus developing his skills as a stand-up comic. And finally, discovering the woman he was destined to marry, he would enter a responsible world – as husband and father.

Certainly the material that Ehrenreich offers to his reading public is affecting and undoubtedly honest. And he offers it in an informal chatty style. But the book itself could do with strong editing – and the jokes, which may work on stage, are less intriguing in print.

But, whatever the drawbacks of style, *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn* is a story worth telling. Readers will find much that is heart-rending, but also much that will resonate in their own lives.

*Irene Backalenick critiques theater for national and regional publications. She has a Ph.D. in theater criticism from City University Graduate Center. She welcomes comments at [IreneBack@sbcglobal.net](mailto:IreneBack@sbcglobal.net) and invites you to visit her website: [nytheater.scene.com](http://nytheater.scene.com) or at: [jewish-theatre.com](http://jewish-theatre.com). ★*

**GERTEL**

(continued from page NAT 13)

the self-destructive and aggressive behavior of certain Palestinian factions in recent years. Yet Mearsheimer, if I heard him correctly, argued that the very establishment of the Jewish State determined its moral failure and

condemned it to dismantlement, with the help of the increasing demographics of the "ethnically cleansed." Such was the tag team argument on May 14.

Interestingly, Mearsheimer echoed Khalidi's call for nonviolent resistance in order to bring about a democratic binational state. He cited Gandhi as the example and byword of resistance. Yet I could not help thinking that his very call for nonviolence was a justification of violence that has been perpetrated against Israel. He constantly spoke of the Zionists' murderous, or at least violent, designs to use any excuse to expel Palestinian Arabs, and of their anticipation of Arab attack for such a nefarious purpose. Like Khalidi, he does not think that violence works against "that enemy." But it would seem that he – perhaps, both of them – might justify it if it had been working.

For two fellows who complain about what they regard as a constant campaign of vilification of Palestinians on the part of the Jewish State and its lobbyists, they certainly engaged in nonstop vilification of their own. The entire purpose of Mearsheimer's presentation appeared to be fomentation of distrust of the Jewish State and its supporters.

All the usual questions raised at a "Nakba" gathering – the extent to which Palestinians were expelled for "ethnic cleansing" or out of self-defense or whether they left on their own for various reasons, the degree to which Israelis have wanted to kill them or to spare them, not to mention the extent and intent of Palestinian violence – will be debated for many years to come, and will ultimately find some objective resolution in the sorting of archive materials and of oral history corroborated by such material. Khalidi began his talk by saying, "I'm not a historian and I'm not a political scientist." We should take him at his word.

Yet this gathering at the University of Chicago was significant in that it reveals the rhetoric and the mindset of the Palestinians and their supporters. They have no interest in a two-state solution. They have effectively nullified the "peace process" and all its previous incarnations and goals. They believe that the Jewish State will run its course. Yet ironically, their rhetoric is not without contradiction, which itself points to the State of Israel as a blessing to the Palestinians as well as to the Jews.

To Khalidi and Mearsheimer, the Zionists were consummate conspirators (with public relations firms, even with Arab leaders), but they also failed to think through their relations with the Arabs. Were they manipulators or bumblerers? The answer is that they had a dream of Jewish self-determination and a historical mandate, in the face of unspeakable evil (in which Europeans and Arabs were all complicit), to do whatever they could, right away. They had a sense of peoplehood and a historic connection to the land, and they were regarded as a people by others, including

their mostly hostile Arab neighbors, who even resorted to Nazi (and then Soviet) connections in order to create a united front of Western and Eastern anti-Semitism. Later, the Palestinians were to export asymmetrical warfare, the terrorist option. They never even thought to suggest asymmetrical statehood – namely, two peoples living in proximity, without borders, but with different governments.

A one-state solution is an anti-Jewish State solution. Only when Palestinians can consider other alternatives can the possibility of a two-state solution help bring blessing and redemption to all. But they have refused to do this since 1948. Khalidi and Mearsheimer showed themselves to be part of *that* refusal which can never lead to nonviolence in theory or in practice.

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**GOLD**

(continued from page NAT 14)

Some believe that all good things must come to an end sooner or later. However, we can enjoy the gifted artist-hazzan David Lefkowitz in all of his vocal splendor just by listening to this CD. In the event you haven't caught my drift by this point, this CD is very highly recommended. I am not at all difficult to please. All I need or want is a CD of quality and musical excellence. This CD is has both attributes in abundance.

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**BEN-MORDECAI**

(continued from page NAT 14)

open, is spelled with a *qamatz*, and is pronounced "ga." In other words, "ga-NUV" means "he stole."

If you have noticed that the "thief/he stole" example contains an exception to the rule of where *qamatz* and *patach* are used, you are entitled to a gold star!

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## Musings from Shiloh

BY BATYA MEDAD

### They were worth the calories!

Last night my husband and I, along with my cousin and hers, went to our favorite restaurant, yes, HaGov, the kosher sports bar & grill, to celebrate 40 years of marriage. We got married in the same week, so we're all married 40 years. And in all those 40 years I don't remember ever going out together before to celebrate an anniversary. When we were dating, we used to double date, and we do try to get together when we can with the kids and lots of mutual friends. This was a treat in more ways than one.

HaGov's management knew that we were going to be there for a special occasion and treated us royally. We shared one of the chef's specialties – a tomato soup, which was fantastic. We all loved it, so if it's on the menu when you go, have some.

We shared salad, and I had the Italian steak with mushrooms, absolutely delicious. My cousin had the Double-D chicken breasts, and the men ate hamburgers. We also shared a bottle of wine. The chef kept coming out to check and accept very well-deserved compliments. They surprised us with desserts, full of calories but worth eating them just the same.



Every once in a while even the most dedicated dieter must go off and have something spectacular, and that's what I did last night.



#### More than mashed potatoes

For many people, it's not a "meal"

without potatoes. I've been on a modified low-carbohydrate diet for over a year and a half, but I still cook starches for the family. Here are a couple of side dishes, very easy to prepare and a little different from your standard fare.

At first glance, if you were to guess what's here, you'd say mashed potatoes. Okay, yes, most of it is simply made from mashed potatoes. The easiest way is to boil some already peeled potatoes, cut into small pieces in a minimum of water when they're soft, add some oil, salt, pepper to taste and mash.



But this isn't just that. Along with the potatoes I boiled pieces of celery root. The root of very strong celery leaves (good for soups, stews and such) looks like potatoes, but celeriac has more flavor and taste so you need much less salt. Here's some more information:

#### Celeriac

Raw Nutritional value per 100g (3.5 oz)  
Energy 176 kJ (42 kcal)  
Carbohydrates 9.2 g  
Sugars 1.6 g  
Dietary fiber 1.8 g

#### Compare this to an ordinary white potato:

Energy 321 kJ (77 kcal)  
Carbohydrates 19 g  
Starch 15 g  
Dietary fiber 2.2 g



Adding some celery root to your mashed potatoes can significantly lower carbohydrates and reduce salt. That's good for many of us.

#### Reducing calories and saving money

Isn't that what we're aiming to do? Throw off our excess weight and spend less?

I did manage to reduce my weight enough to graduate from obese to ordinary overweight. I can now buy clothes in regular shops, in the middle of the size range, rather than with all those Xs.

But with my father living with us, I haven't been able to earn money.

We have to stop wasting. Recycling is important, and we can't throw out food. Yes, I mean celeriac, the celery roots I mashed with the potatoes.

No, not from the long pale stalks of celery used in salads. The celery stalks that grow out of these are much darker, shorter and stronger flavored. They're great for soup, but my husband, who cooks the weekly chicken soup, doesn't use the root.

I'm now searching for ideas on how to cook these. Besides mashing them with potatoes, I've already shredded them in the food processor with carrots and onions for a vegetable soup. I also sauteed them with the same vegetables and then added cooked rice. Does anyone have any other ideas?

#### Sweet Rice & Apple Kugel

This little "pie," or *kugel*, is extremely easy to prepare and was very popular with my family and guests.



The main ingredient is rice, cooked rice, *aka: left-over rice*. Personally, I would never bother cooking rice just to use for a kugel like this, unless I was making a few to freeze. Rice keeps well in the refrigerator, so when I cook some, I cook extra. If there's a cup or more left by the end of the week, it's recycled into something like this. You can use either white or any of the various types. Remember that basmati rice is lowest in carbohydrates than other strains of rice.

This is a no-sugar recipe, but it does have apple juice concentrate. You can use a dietetic juice concentrate, but I used a regular one. I added apple juice concentrate, a couple of eggs, diced apples, cinnamon and would have added ginger and nutmeg if I had some. Mix and bake medium heat until inside is dry like a cake. That's it.

#### Late night call

I quasi-panicked when I saw that it was a call from handsome bachelor #1 that I had missed as I fumbled getting my phone out of the bag. It was late at night, past my bedtime, but since I had been at a wedding, I was still up.

What could he want? Could something be wrong?

The panic simmered, since I couldn't get through to him. *Call-waiting*. So I continued with my going to bed routine and called a few more times. Finally he called back.

"What's happening?"

"I got a new washing machine and don't understand one of the buttons."

"Isn't there an instruction book?"

"Well, it's not that new a machine..."

Apparently, it's very old, but a classic from "Crystal," an excellent company, and I once had the deluxe of that model. Nu, what do you think "drip" means? After he read me everything on every dial I guess that it means that the water doesn't go out, so it'll "drip" dry.

I gave him basic instructions as to which cycles for what type of clothes, for which he thanked me. It's nice to know that I'm considered an expert at something, even something as simple as washing clothes. And I was very impressed at how well he now reads English. He has some sort of dyslexia, so even learning to read Hebrew was a challenge, but like many with a mild learning disability, they can learn to read and do. It just takes a little longer and different teaching methods. Unfortunately school is "one size fits all," but we're not all the same size.

#### One of those "Made to Blog" Siyata D'Shmaya stories

Even though I've always gone to *very-nice-as-people* dentists, going for dental treatment is not among my favorite events. In some ways I even dread it more than a mammogram. So, I must admit that I was rather happy to hear that my husband had some important plans the day of my dental appointment and couldn't stay with my father. I figured that would give me another few weeks before the dreaded one-hour appointment could be rescheduled.

My stress levels were down when I called the secretary a couple of days before to postpone it. I was taken by surprise, yes, rather shocked, when she offered me an appointment at the same time of the day for the very next day, even sooner than my original appointment. And, yes, my husband would be available to stay home with my father.

"How do you have an hour free? Usually, it takes a few weeks for such a long treatment."

"Just two minutes before you called, we got a cancellation call, and I was just going through the lists trying to figure out whom to call and offer the slot."

"How often does something like this happen?"

"Not often, certainly not such a perfect match."

"Well, I guess G-d planned it, so I have no choice other than to accept it."

Of course it wasn't as awful as I had feared, just more expensive. And I got all the errands done in Jerusalem. Thank G-d!

Batya Medad is a veteran American olah, immigrant in Israel since 1970. Besides her articles and photographs we've been featuring in this publication for a number of years, Batya has two active blogs, <http://shilohmusings.blog.spot.com> and <http://me-and-er.blogspot.com>. You can contact her at [shilohmuse@yahoo.com](mailto:shilohmuse@yahoo.com). ✨