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Mi Sheberach
a focus on healing

SOURCE OF HEALING
MY HEART IS BROKEN
I CRY OUT TO YOU:

MY GOD WHO HEALS
THE BROKENHEARTED
AND RESTORES THEIR BODIES

BRING HEALING AND
CONSOLATION TO ME.
DO NOT HIDE YOUR PRESENCE
FROM ME!
MY GOD DO NOT TARRY!
STRENGTHEN MY HEART
AND GIVE COURAGE TO MY SOUL.

SPREAD OVER ME
THE SHELTER OF YOUR PEACE,
THAT I MIGHT RESIDE THERE
THROUGH THIS JOURNEY
OF SADNESS AND PAIN
THAT I MIGHT SOME DAY
FIND THE STRENGTH TO RETURN
TO LIFE AND ITS BLESSINGS

Art by Irene Konig

Editorial

In honor of this 12th healing/wellness issue, I have a story to tell. About 20 years ago, I was taking a class called "Jewish Perspective on Healing and Wholeness" at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav in San Francisco. The teacher was Rabbi Nancy Flam. At the end of the class, she explained that in our Jewish tradition it is not "kosher" to study just for study sake. One has to use the knowledge in some concrete way, to take action with what one learned.

She said she was planning to create a weekly Jewish healing prayer service and she asked if anyone in the class would like to contribute to it. I had been experimenting with affirmations for healing, and I decided to put together a nice one for this new service. With my long list of affirmations it took me days to come up with a combination that was short but also hopefully effective.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "affirm" this way: (1a) validate confirm; (b) to state positively; (2) to assert (as a judgment or decree) as valid or confirmed; (3) to express dedication to. Affirmations can be beneficial if one says them to oneself or out loud with the belief that the words are in the process of coming true.

This is congruent with the belief that our thoughts create our reality, that thoughts are significant and filled with potential. Not that one should feel guilty or overly concerned if one has unkind or unpleasant thoughts, but that they are important even though we cannot see them. I remember reading something such as atoms and molecules of thoughts move faster than the atoms in a chair or other inanimate objects. I am reminded of the saying, "If you can conceive it and you can believe it, you can achieve it."

Even though I had a headache at the time, when I said to myself the following words by Louise Hay, "The overflowing love from my heart surrounds and dissolves any pain in my body," I would feel a little bit better.

My affirmation that made it to the first printing of the healing service was: "I am a precious part of all that exists. There is no separation between God and myself. As I feel this connection, I know I am being filled with diving love and surrounded by infinite perfection. I accept this healing energy as it flows unrestricted through my body bringing strength, vitality, and rejuvenation to every cell. I feel this powerful energy cleansing and healing any unbalanced condition in my body."

Shortly after our first service, a therapist who had driven from an hour north of San Francisco to attend the service told me that the word "freely" would be better to use than "unrestricted" because some people will hear it as "restricted." I agreed with her, so I went home to rewrite it. I changed the one word but came back

About the Cover

"Source of Healing" is a work of art Irene Konig created after she read a prayer written by a man who had suffered the profound loss of a loved one. It was so poignant and spoke so clearly that she wept as well when she read it. This man, David, was crying out to God to help him get through his bitterness, his anguish, and his sadness following this profound loss. Writing just like the Psalmists, he turned to the Source to help him heal. At the end, Konig added some words of her own to complete it. These words add a note of hope that healing would be granted over time. The orchids in the background are beautiful and graceful, and lift their petals upward toward hope and healing.

Konig has created many works with



Irene Konig.

with the following longer version that ended up in subsequent printings.

"I am a precious part of all that exists. I am one with the Power that created me. I feel this connection now, surrounding and protecting me. I am *safe* and *secure*. With every breath, *healing energy* enters my body and flows freely, bringing *strength, vitality* and *rejuvenation* to every cell. As my awareness of this perfect Presence gets strong, I feel it creating *vibrant health* and *harmony* in my body, mind and spirit.

"*Joy* now floods into my life as I experience the *wonders* and *miracles* daily, evening, morning and noon. Every day I feel more *alert, alive* and *enthusiastic* about life. Because of my connection to all of life, as I improve, those around me feel better also. I am *uplifted* and *grateful*. The Creator's infinite LOVE fills me at all times, and my LOVE for myself and others is growing deeper. I am *relaxed, content* and at *peace*."

Then some years later I received a call from Cantor Joyce Ury Dumtschin from Temple Beth Or in Dayton, Ohio. She had seen the original affirmation and wanted my permission to include it on a music tape of Jewish songs, psalms and sayings that she and two colleagues, Barbara Wolfman and Gary Wolfman were composing. The tape – now a CD – is called *Sh'ma T'filati (Hear My Prayer): Jewish Music and Readings for Healing*. One of its purposes was to have a resource available for rabbis and caregivers who are visiting people in hospitals and nursing homes. It gives hope to those who are not able to attend a service.

Put to music, my affirmation sounded beautiful! I was happy because that was one of my first writings published and also because when I was composing it, I wondered if it was going to be effective for anyone but me.

Jennie Cohen, July 14, 2010. ★

Jewish themes, including works with a *tallit* image as a background. The Jewish-themed works range from calligraphy and design prints for weddings to comforting works for those in mourning, as well as presentations of inspirational quotes, excerpts from the Song of Songs, other Psalms, quotations from some of the greats in Jewish history, home and personal blessings, and many, many more.

In addition to this large collection of Jewish inspired art, Konig has also created many other art pieces, which draw on a wide range of feelings, thoughts, and experiences, all heartfelt. All master prints are made by hand, and then prints are made from the master prints. All in all, there are close to 300 different prints, all available in modest prices, all made on request, and all matted and enclosed in a crystal-clear envelope. Categories on the website, www.artoflife.us, serve to help in the search for the perfect piece. Konig will be glad to work with you to find what would be the best print, and gift certificates are available, if needed, in case you can't decide.

Konig likes to use interesting materials and incorporate them into the master print. She has used leaves and berries, ribbons, fabric, flowers of all kinds, jewelry, masks and other assorted objects. Often she puts into calligraphy her own words, expressing a sentiment that she could not find elsewhere as a quotation. Her works adorn many homes in the central Texas area and in other parts of the country. In addition, she has donated some of her artwork to the Jewish Community Center in Havana, Cuba, and to a hospital in Israel, Shaare Zedek.

Konig holds a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the City College of New York, as well as a master's degree in psychology from the New School for Social Research in New York. Just a little over half of her life has been spent in Austin, Texas, where she currently resides. She has two daughters.

Irene Konig may be contacted at pleasure-to-behold@juno.com. ★

Shabbat Shalom

By Rabbi Jon Adland

June 25, 2010, Balak
(Numbers 22:2-25:9), 12 Tammuz 5770

The Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Israel 2010 trip leaves on Sunday. This will be my ninth trip to Israel; the first one took place in 1971. For Sandy, this will be her fifth trip since 1988. Both of my children have traveled and studied there. Israel is a part of who we are as Jews. It is my fervent prayer that others will find a place for Israel in their lives and souls as well.

This trip will include 23 others. Along with Sandy and me are 18 IHC members, a close friend of one couple, and two of my college friends who live in New York. (They are already there and went with our wonderful guide, Doron Bookshtein, to Petra.) For many on the trip, this is their first Israel experience. It is certainly not the same country it was when I traveled there in 1971, but it is still an amazing experience to walk where our ancestors walked and to pray where they prayed as well.

In a week we will be in Jerusalem. We will spend Shabbat there, see the old and new city, and taste the delicious falafel on Ben Yehuda and King George Streets. I know that if I stand in one place on Ben Yehuda Street just long enough someone I know will pass me by. It is inevitable. It is wonderful. It is Israel and Jerusalem.

Let me pause though for a moment in my excitement about our trip to reflect on the fact that today is the fourth anniversary of the kidnapping of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. His return to Israel is a continuing focus of the Israeli government and his captivity a source of pride to the terrorist organization Hamas. He is a political pawn in a
(see Adland, page NAT 3)

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Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

This column is devoted to love. I just spent five days in Bloomington Ind., participating in a family reunion. Some of our family I saw a year and a half ago at the last reunion that I attended, and some of them I hadn't seen for even longer. I am happy to report that there was a lot of love in the air and many other *mitzvahs* too.

On the way to Bloomington I stopped in Brooklyn to see my son Shmuel and his wife Chaya and their three children. I haven't seen them for a year and a half. This was also a special experience. Now I am in Buffalo, N.Y., visiting my son Mendel, his wife Shira, and their two children. *Baruch Hashem* that I delight to see my children and especially my grandchildren.

There are many types of love. Love between husband and wife is a wonderful thing. However, it doesn't come easy, as evidenced by the high divorce rate. Anyone who has been successfully married for ten years or more will tell you what is involved. First, we have to make a big effort to understand the opposite sex and to figure out how we can make them happy. The Torah teaches that men and women are in many ways opposites. (John Gray discusses this at length in his



ADLAND

(continued from page NAT 2)

complicated and deadly game between Israel and Hamas. My prayers go out to his family and friends in Israel on this day. May Gilad be reunited soon with family and feel the embrace of his mother.

I look forward to Shabbat at GUCI tonight. As I've written many times before it is truly a special experience. Hopefully tonight there won't be any electrical storms to end the night a bit early, and we can make our way to the *m'durah*, campfire, for songs and a story. Tomorrow morning we will gather for services, lunch and then Sandy and I will pack up our stuff, move home, do laundry and prepare for our trip to the land of our ancestors and the land of our brothers and sisters. I probably won't write Shabbat Shalom again for awhile, but I promise to share the experiences of this trip upon my return.

When you light your Shabbat candles this evening, light one for Gilad Shalit, add a prayer and keep him in your thoughts. May he return home speedily and in our day. Light the other for my fellow travelers on this journey to Israel. May they experience the feeling of coming home that I have felt on each of my trips. May they find comfort and peace in this remarkable Jewish land.

Rabbi Adland is senior rabbi of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. ★

many books on this subject.) Then we have to work hard to overcome our selfish nature and devote ourselves to making our spouse happy. This may include making money to support the family, taking out the garbage, taking her out to eat, just listening to her when she needs to talk and so forth. When things get rough, we have to pray hard and get wise and experienced counseling. With the help of *Hashem* and a lot of hard work we can have a beautiful marriage.

Another type of love that requires hard work is the love that parents have for their children. To raise children is in general not easy. One of the hardest parts is being a good example. If we want our children to grow up to be good people, we ourselves have to be good people, and that isn't easy. If we want them to try to improve themselves, then we have to always try to improve ourselves. This is in addition to changing diapers, helping them with homework and devoting a lot of time and energy trying to get them the best Torah education possible.

Another type of love is the wonderful love that we share with our dear grandchildren. But compared with the first two types of love, this one seems to come with almost no effort. In general, their parents put in all of the hard work of raising them, and we just enjoy them. When they visit us or we visit them, it's love at first sight. We give them a little love and get back a lot. How do I explain this? Maybe grandchildren are dividends. If we work hard and invest a lot of time and effort in our marriage and children, then our efforts eventually earn us dividends. *Hashem* rewards us and sends us those precious grandchildren.

Now let's discuss the most important love of all, the love that we have for *Hashem*. This is a universal love. Not everyone is married (yet), and not everyone has children and grandchildren (yet), but all of us can love *Hashem*. *Hashem* is our Father, our Creator. He is Infinite, and His love for each and every one of us is infinite. If we are willing to make the effort, we can feel His love and return His love. This has been my personal experience. I found *Hashem* many years ago. Then I found the Torah. Since then I have tried to live my life according to His Torah, and He has blessed me with many good things. Give it a try. It is true that some people don't believe in *Hashem*. *Hashem* has hidden Himself, and it isn't easy to find him. But if you are willing to look, you will find Him. Once you find Him, try to live your life according to His Torah. Soon you will be blessed with many good things. This is how our grandparents lived and how their parents and ancestors lived for the last 3,800 years.

Why has *Hashem* hidden Himself from us? Why does He sometimes give us a hard time? He wants to give us the biggest blessing of all, *Moshiach*. The bigger the blessing, the harder we have to work to earn it. To grow up in today's



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

Volunteering: You get more than you give

The year was 1976: America celebrated its 200th birthday; Alex Haley published *Roots*; the Dow Jones closed at 1004; and I arrived in Tucson with a backpack, a college degree and \$80 in my pocket. My parents were less than thrilled with my post-grad decision to hitchhike across the country to "find myself," and my mother's parting words summed up her anxiety: "When you stick out your thumb to get a ride, my face will be at the end of it." Predictably, I never used my thumb but found a unique way of flagging down cars with a bandana.

Tucson was, and still is, a truly welcoming community, and it didn't take long to feel at home. The mountains and desert air intoxicated me in a way I hadn't felt since my junior year in Israel. Everyone I met offered help and suggestions about places to live, jobs to find and the best places to eat under \$3.

But it didn't take long before my wanderlust turned to wonder-lust. I wondered, long and hard, about what I would actually *do* with a bachelor's degree in psychology and no real skills other than waitressing tables and acquiring a serious tan.

I don't remember much from my 20s (not because I didn't inhale, but because my memory is getting hazy), but one thing stands out: volunteering did more to positively direct and influence my choices than almost anything else. It may be the best kept secret of all time, one which deserves a great big shout out for those of us who struggle to figure out who we want to be "when we grow up," but it's true. If you want to find purpose and meaning in your life, if you want to connect with others who share your values, and if you want to feel that you really count for something – get out and volunteer.

I started with what I knew and felt most comfortable with – food. As I shelved and bagged organic products at the Food Co-op, I met wonderful people and learned more about Tucson than any guidebook could ever tell me. Next I volunteered during the summer at the Second Street School where I heard about another volunteer opportunity working with kids at a counseling center. That position actually led to a paying job when a parent asked me to work



world, and manage somehow to find *Hashem* and live a life of Torah and *mitzvahs* is certainly one of the hardest (see Chassidic Rabbi, page NAT 15)

privately with her disabled daughter. We didn't call it networking in those days, but that's exactly what it was: a pathway to the people, places, and opportunities that would indelibly affect my efforts to define myself and determine a career.

The most significant experience was my volunteer stint as an intake-receiving officer at the Juvenile Court Center. This required extensive training from some of the finest professionals in the juvenile system, and although the hours were long and the demands were heavy, the rewards were great. It was in those offices in the fall of 1976 that I decided to apply to law school so I could better understand the legal system, with the hope that one day I might help those who found themselves tangled up within it.

The concept of helping others, of giving of our time, resources, talents and money to those in need, is one of the pillars of Judaism, based upon core values like *chesed* (compassion), *tzedeq* (justice) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). The idea that we are partners with God in the continuing creation of the world and therefore have an obligation to repair what is broken, informs much of the work of philanthropic organizations like the United Jewish Federations and Jewish Community Foundations. *Tikkun olam* is the call and our response can, and should, take many forms.

At a time when funding for so many of our community needs – from healthcare and education to employment and housing – is being cut, requiring serious staff and service reductions, it is more important than ever to volunteer. Yet, according to a study by the National Conference on Citizenship, 72 percent of Americans report that over the past year they have reduced the time they spend volunteering, largely as the result of the recession and a need to look out for themselves. The findings amount to what the report's authors called "a civic depression."

The paradox of volunteering is this: The more you give, the more you are given – personally, psychologically and professionally. Helping others who have problems or needs greater than your own can provide a perspective about your own life that contributes to a more positive attitude or sense of self-worth. Informal networking can lead you into new directions and open doors you never knew existed. It is truly a win-win situation as everyone, from the giver to the recipient to those who are inspired by your efforts and decide to volunteer as a result, comes out ahead.

Winston Churchill said it beautifully with these words: "We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give." Today, more than ever before, we should heed his message.

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



Kabbalah of the Month

By MELINDA RIBNER

Av began on July 12

We are in the powerful time period known as the Three Weeks. *Rosh Chodesh Av* is July 12, the Nine Days begins, and *Tisha B'Av* is July 20. The articles that I have written in this column are about loss but also about finding, about being able to see what is true and essential. The month of *Tammuz* is all about seeing clearly. I titled this column "Arousal from Below: The Secret of Holy Tears."

How often do we cry? Do we allow ourselves to cry in front of or with others? Some people do not allow themselves to cry, to feel the depths of their heart and soul even in the privacy of their own home. They can have a huge loss like a death of a spouse or parent and they do not cry or cannot cry. Too many of us feel embarrassed by our tears, our vulnerabilities and sensitivities; we would never think to share them with others. Yet, how would we cry if we knew that our tears were not in vain, but that they make a difference and that our crying opens gates to heal not only ourselves but the entire world?

My Hebrew name is Miriam Shulamit. *Miriam* means bitter water, so I must confess that I do know something about crying. I can cry or hear someone cry and I can distinguish the difference between holy tears, tears that open the gates within oneself and those that leave a person drained, feeling sorry for oneself. I do not mean at all to boast if one could boast about such things, tears actually bring humility, but I may be a master of tears. I can cry before others and I can cry with others, and of course I can be with others when they cry. I cry with clients all the time, and I help them to cry holy tears when they can't even cry at all.

Women until recently were more able to cry openly and more easily and frequently than men. Because women are the gatekeepers of the heart and soul, women were expected to be more in touch with their feelings and did not have to seem strong by repressing their feelings. It occurred to me the other day, that the Jewish people had water in the desert because of the holy tears of Miriam and the women. These tears opened the gates of heaven that were reflected in the well of water that traveled with the Jewish people. May our tears open gates for ourselves and the world.

Arousal from Below: The Secret of Holy Tears: The Art of Spiritual Crying

We each remember exactly where we were physically, emotionally, and spiritually when we became aware of 9/11. I had just gotten off the Internet, and was in my New York apartment when my

brother called to inform me. Immediately I turned on the television, and then within less than an hour, I quickly ran out of the apartment to get money and purchase regular food, water, and comfort food, lots of treats that I normally would not allow myself. When I arrived at the bank, I was not so surprised to find that there was already a long line of people. The health food store where I shopped was also extremely busy.

Growing up with fears of nuclear warfare, ducking under my desk in elementary school for atomic bomb drills, running away from Nazis in my dreams, I was somewhat prepared emotionally for this catastrophe, so I did what I thought I needed to do as quickly as I could. Frightening rumors of nuclear warfare, already circulating shortly after the attack added to the panic that I was able to keep controlled within me as I rushed hurriedly around my neighborhood doing my errands.

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So greatly relieved I was when I saw Mayor Rudy Giuliani on television hour's later walk around the Trade Center without a gas mask. As long as there was no nuclear or biological warfare, I then knew for sure that New York would physically survive this traumatic event and I was very grateful. My heart was broken but open. Glued to the television set, I literally cried for the people who died as if they were loved ones. It was like the veil that gave the illusion of people being separate from each other was lifted. I felt unified with other people. Everything was suddenly very real. There were not even commercials on television, no one trying to sell anything, how could they in the face of such reality.

There was a nauseating stench pervading the city, but also a great feeling of love. New Yorkers have an unspoken bond with each other. Because so many people walk quickly on the New York streets, New Yorkers generally do not make eye contact with people they do not know. After 9/11 for a brief period of time, strangers acknowledged each other with a smile or a look. It was a simple gesture, but it felt like *Gan Eden*.

Right after Sept. 11, a blockade was placed in Manhattan for several days that prevented traffic in and out of the

city. As soon as I could get out of the city, I did. Frightened and emotionally drained, I went to spend *Rosh Hashanah* with friends in the country. I felt like a homeless war refugee. I knew that my life and the world would change, but it was not clear what would happen. I was glad that I had all the Jewish holidays to protect me and strengthen me during that time period.

I am reminded of 9/11 during this time period known as the Three Weeks of *Tammuz*. Entertain this possibility for a moment: What if the destruction of what we Americans experienced on 9/11 would have continued so that everything that we knew, everything that gave meaning to our lives would soon be taken away in just Three Weeks time. And there was nothing that we could do, the outcome was inevitable. We would either be exiled from our home, lose loved ones, we might die ourselves, or we would escape and not know where we were going. How would we ever get over it? Could we ever get over it? How would this event change us if we lived through it?

That is what has happened to the Jewish people numerous times. The trauma of being exiled twice from their homeland, with the Holy Temple, the center of our life twice destroyed, along with so many countless attempts to destroy the Jewish people has been ingrained deeply into our heart and soul.

The Holy Temple was and is integral to the Jewish soul. It was God's special dwelling place, the center of Jewish spiritual and political life. Many even feared that Judaism could not survive without the Temple. Rabbinic Judaism that pervades our Jewish lives offered a way through this crisis for Judaism to survive after the destruction of the Temple. This was a temporary and important solution to keep the Jewish people unified until the Temple would be rebuilt.

We commemorate this loss of the Holy Temple and all the suffering of the Jewish people and the world in the time period known as Three Weeks, The Nine Days, and ultimately finally on the day designated for intense mourning, *Tisha B'Av*. Though this loss of the Holy Temple occurred 2,000 years ago, it is still happening today. There is a *Talmudic* saying something like "Everyday that the Holy Temple is not being rebuilt, it is like it is being destroyed." The Holy Temple is not just a physical structure, but it is the revelation of Godliness and love in this world.

As I wrote in *Kabbalah Month by Month* in the chapter on the month of *Av*, "Our world is filled with needless suffering and hatred. We can blame politicians, but if we are really honest, we will begin to acknowledge our personal responsibility for God's exile and concealment in our lives. Power struggles and game playing between people are rampant on the micro and macro levels. God created a world with

ample resources for everyone, but because of our greed, we do not share with others. God instructs us in the Torah, "*Make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell within you.*" (Exodus 25:8). The verse does not say "in it," but "within or among you." The Hebrew is clear, telling us that the purpose of the Holy Temple is to experience the Shechinah, the presence of God within you and within the world. The purpose of creation was for God to be known. It is not the physical structure that is paramount; it is a vehicle for the interior experience."

How do we yearn for the Holy Temple and mourn its destruction? Do we even have the slightest clue of what the rebuilding of the Temple would mean to us personally, to the Jewish people, and to the world? How can we mourn for something we do not know anything about? If we do not know how precious, how magnificent the Temple would be, how can we mourn its absence? Yet if we do not mourn the Temple, we will not be rewarded by feeling connected and part of its restoration. Though it is not generally known, Jews pray daily for the Temple to be rebuilt. There are even many people who rise in the middle of the night and still cry over its destruction.

We who have lived for so long without the Temple may not even miss it. Furthermore, some people even fear that the Temple would be parochial, a step backward in time rather than forward. Many Jews have a broad universal vision of the world and reject the idea of the Jewish people being chosen and loved uniquely by God with a special mission to purify, heal and transform this world into a dwelling place for Godliness.

When I attended the early morning *minyan* in the tunnels and prayed next to the Holy of Holies by the *Kotel* last year, I was privileged to have a glimpse of the *Shechinah* and the awesomeness and glory of the Holy Temple. It is true that Her walls are now moldy, but She is most beautiful. Her love is eternal and palpable. God is faithful. If God makes a promise, it will happen. God is simply waiting for the right time when people will be able to receive this gift. The rebuilding of the Temple will take place in the future, at the right time. We may see it in our life time, and then again we may not. But it will happen, that is for sure.

The deeper question is when it does happen, will you be a part of it? Will you be invited to attend the Temple's inauguration? If you have not mourned for its destruction, if you have not ever suffered a broken heart, if you have not prayed in your innermost heart for a revelation of God, for peace, love, unity and an end to selfishness, greed and fear, then you may not feel at home when the Temple is built.

Tears may just be our entry ticket to God and the Holy Temple. To cry over the Holy Temple, to weep in prayer, you have to be on a certain level. Ultimately, these kinds of tears are actually a spiritual

(see Ribner, page NAT 10)

Parsha Perspective



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

Which are we, dust or angels?

There once was a rabbi who always kept in each of his two pockets a slip of paper. In the pocket on the left a paper on which appeared the words: *I am but dust and ashes*. And in the pocket on the right a paper on which appeared the words: *a little lower than the angels*.

That is how humankind is described in the weekly Torah reading *parashat Bereshit*. The scripture says: "And God formed us of *afar min ha-adamah* (dust from the ground)." But it then goes on to say, "*vayipach b'apav nishmat chayim* (and God blew into his nostrils the soul of life)." (Genesis 2:7)

The Zohar, the central work in the literature of Kabbalah, says: "...for the Holy One, blessed be He, shapes a form within a form, and finishes it and breathes into it the breath of life and brings it out into the open." And that is what God did for us. God blew into us a little of God's own self, so that our soul is part of God's spirit. In us, God joined the earthly to the Divine.

Our physical needs and urges, our needs to breathe and eat and sleep and make love, and rid our bodies of waste, all let us know that we are of this earth. And yet, there stirs within us the living breath of God.

So which are we? Are we dust or angels?

Our answer comes to us in the Hebrew word *adam* – the word for "humankind." Many commentators have interpreted the word *adam* as having come from the word *adamah*, the word for "ground," from which Adam was taken. But the problem with this understanding is that coming from the ground cannot be said to be a distinguishing feature of humankind, since, according to the scripture, the animals also came from the earth.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888) has interpreted it the other way around. Rabbi Hirsch says that the word for "ground" was actually derived from the word for "man," meaning the ground that is worked by humankind.

But where does the word for human, the word *adam*, come from? It comes, Rabbi Hirsch says, from the meaning *adom*, "red," as the least broken ray of the spectrum, the pure ray of light that is the nearest revelation of the divine on earth, and phonetically related to the root *dalet-mem-hey*, meaning "to be like." For we are created, as the scripture says *b'tzelem elokim*, "in the image of God" –

our distinguishing feature, which means we have the ability to understand and to choose. We are angels when we choose to live in the image of God, when we choose to make our lives a blessing.

But what is required of us to live in the image of God? How do we become a blessing? Our rabbis have said that to live in the image of God means to act as God would act. And how does God act?

In *parashat Bereshit*, after Adam and Eve are removed from *Gan Eden*, comes this little verse: "*vaya'as adoshem elokim l'adam uleishito katnot ohr veyalbisheim* (and God made for Adam and his wife garments of skin, and clothed them)." Our rabbis have interpreted this as the first trace of God's kindness for human beings, *gemilut chasadim*. For it is said that the Torah begins and ends with God's kindness for us, beginning with God clothing Adam and Eve and ending with God burying Moses. These two examples might be seen to span the whole of life from birth, when we come into this world naked, to the time when we leave it. And so, our rabbis say, should life begin and end for us, with kindness.

Rabbi Akiva said: "Loving-kindness is a fundamental principle of the Torah." And Rabbi Hillel then said: "What is hateful to you, do not do to others."

But why is kindness considered to be so important?

In the earliest individual statement of the Talmud, Simeon the Just said: "On three things does the world stand – on Torah, on the Temple service, and on acts of loving kindness."

Now it may be difficult for any of us to think of the continued existence of the world depending on what we do. Maybe we don't like to think of ourselves as pillars holding up the world. But perhaps a better place to begin is by asking ourselves: Have there been times in my life when my existence has depended on the kindness of other people? Of course the answer will be yes.

Every person, without exception, needs the help of others. Even very wealthy people sometimes need to borrow money. When we celebrate a joyous occasion, we need people to rejoice with us. When we are sad, we need people to comfort us. When we have a heavy load, we need people to help us. When we are ill, we need people to visit us. And when we die, we depend on the kindness of others to bury us.

Where does one begin?

One begins by trying to sense the problems of others and to feel their suffering. Our rabbis have argued that even the smallest act of kindness is a *mitzvah*, and that such a *mitzvah* may tip the balance of the world in favor of goodness.

Do we believe it?

In answer to that question, Magidah Khulda offers a poem she wrote for an older friend who she thinks of as a master, or rather a mistress, of small acts of kindness. It's called:



Jews by Choice

BY MARY HOFMANN

From different perspectives

Every now and again I have a major *a-ha!* moment tied inextricably to the fact that, though I've been Jewish for most of my adult life, my formative years were spent trying very hard to be a good little Protestant.

It happened again the other day, when one of my volunteers – I'm president of the local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness – called to report her progress on finding free space to hold support group meetings. I was thinking library or hospital, and she was thinking

All Things Are Made of Smaller Things

What does it take
To bring about
The kingdom of God on earth?
We search
And never know
The kingdom's end.
We strain
To find an order in the skies,
To find our place
And count our part.
The moon, the stars –
Which are we?
Dust.
Small stones
Skipped into a summer sea.
And yet,
The largest things
Are made of smaller things.
Drops divide the waters of the sea,
And drops divide those drops.
And sands of moons
And distant stars
Are also small.
And none is lost.
And so
Are all small acts of kindness
Like drops of water
That can wear away a stone
To its very heart,
Or make a well
Spring up,
Or wash away
A shadow on a soul
And help to bring it
In the light.
Which are we?
And where?
A little lower
Than the angels.

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

churches, which gave me pause because of the potential in some churches for my personal discomfort. Which got me thinking about historical prejudices and the difference between history as I perceive it as a Jew and history as I perceived it as a Protestant. This creates a perceptual chasm, I think, when we try to converse with Protestants about anything that has any historical context – which is just about anything.

As a Protestant, history for me involved that which had happened recently and that which was iconic. In other words, I was schooled in history related to the United States and to stories biblical and idealistic. Historic figures – especially biblical ones – were perfect, heroic, and firmly established on pedestals radiating a halo effect. There was a block of "real history," which was U.S. and modern, and then there was "old history," which was mythic.

As a Jew, I read the Torah every year and am immersed in the humanity of the people and my historical link to them. Their lives were messy, their personalities flawed, and our reverence for them is connected to our own messy, flawed lives and the quest for some level of redemption as we live through them. Five thousand years have come alive and been internalized for me, and the result is an entirely different worldview than the one I had before.

I could attribute this difference to my maturity rather than my changing religious culture, but I don't think that's the pivotal factor. I've talked to many Protestants over the years and found the chasm to be present, maturity notwithstanding. In fact, I'm reminded of an old professor (a Methodist, surprisingly), who stated in class that Christianity was a big step backward perceptually from Judaism, certainly insofar as Christians require a physical manifestation of God rather than living with the mental incongruity of an abstract God.

I also remember a discussion I once had with a student rabbi in which we contemplated the tantalizing idea that while the Jewish Bible was written as a history, the Christian Bible (New Testament) was written as a persuasive tool for potential converts. Two distinctly different purposes, two very different reflections of a history and worldview that may appear on the surface (to a Christian, at least) to be continuous and shared, but to a Jew it represents a disjuncture so profound as to fracture any possibility of real understanding.

It is perhaps no surprise that many Jews have been hesitant to welcome converts from Christianity...not only because of the Jewish history of oppression at the hands of Christians, but due to a concern at some level of the Jewish consciousness that a Christian cannot possibly understand the Jewish historical perspective.

Which is, of course, true. A Christian, defined as one who believes that Jesus is
(see Hofmann, page NAT 15)



Spoonful of Humor

By TED ROBERTS

My old man – the club member

He had a heart full of faith. But he read his Chumash as literature, not doctrine. The Talmud – he completely slighted. In excuse, it might be stated that his era did not emphasize it as much as ours – for reasons too lengthy for elaboration in this brief sketch. I'm talking about my old man.

He was what you might call a two-day-a-year Jew – *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*. Or to be more precise, maybe a three-hour Jew, because most of his synagogue time was spent on the steps of the synagogue rather than inside davening. The entreaties of my mother got him dressed and bound for the synagogue – but they couldn't push him down in his seat; focus his eyes on the prayer book.

Spiritually, he was a good Jew. Stud Poker is not prohibited by the Talmud. But ceremonially, he was a flop. He was rarely seen in shul, but if he was, you avoided him. He was a dangerous man to sit next to because the services always inspired a spate of bible stories – told in a voice that easily range over five rows. Embarrassing. But he did know his Chumash – as five rows of worshippers could attest to.

My father liked me. I could tell. He liked my company because he, lacking a formal education, had read all the classics of his day and in his exuberance was driven to tell me of King Arthur and Becky Sharp and David Copperfield and a few hundred other colorful characters, not to mention the events on planet Earth the last few days. He liked to talk and I liked to listen. We were as compatible as Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

"Hey, Ted, wanta go to the drugstore?" He meant Whitaker's in the Jackson/Watkins neighborhood. (Why did they call it a "drugstore"? Strange, as I'll explain a few sentences later.) Of course I wanted to go. For one thing, it was a 20-minute ride so I was sure to get a story, maybe two.

Whitaker's was the source of "funny books" (now comics), milkshakes (do kids still drink milkshakes?), and the pinball machine – only one, not a row of them like in an arcade. And why did they call them "funny books" when they pictured Superman, Batman, Captain Marvel, and Captain America defending Gotham, the U.S., or the entire planet from some malevolent threat? What was funny about that?

The charms of the drugstore and my father's company competed successfully in my eight-year-old heart with the ball

game in the empty lot next door or BB gun wars or boring bike riding.

My father went often to the drugstore (well named because a few decades before pinball and milkshakes, I suppose it was a store where they sold drugs). I still call Walgreens and CVS, drugstores. My wife snickers. I bet her pop never took her to a drugstore. Who'd take a daughter to a drugstore? She wouldn't even know how to play pinball, and she'd probably gag on her milkshake and spill it all over the face of the machine.

But my father's offer wasn't entirely altruistic. With the kid there, you could: (a) legitimize the trip – a father's duty, you know, and (b) stay longer, to a wife's despair.

But as pragmatic behaviorists say in their feeble attempts to understand human nature, "what was in it for him"? Why would a grown man, with no interest in drugs, go to the drugstore three to four times a week?

The charms of the drugstore and my father's company competed successfully in my eight-year-old heart with the ball game in the empty lot next door or boring bike riding.

Well, again that archaic title is misleading. The establishment with comics, pinball, and milkshakes – I haven't had one since 1970 – was more like a gentlemen's club in London, with a Southern "y'all" flavor. A middle-class flavor, you might say that in a dry county wouldn't dare stock Sherry, but saw nothing but profit and conviviality with several brands of Bourbon beneath the counter. And surrounding the counter were your neighborhood pals who religiously believed that milkshakes were for kids and Bourbon was for men. And in an era where cars were scarcer and mobility was limited, it was strictly a neighborhood club. The rare stranger was not approached with hostility, but curiosity. After all, many forms of trivial lawbreaking were going on at Whitaker's.

Besides those beverages served in small, stubby glasses that didn't look like milkshakes, there was a room behind the prescription counter with a large table that could be used for a seminar on local politics or 5-Card Stud Poker. Politics being the arguable topic that it was, the boys usually chose poker – legal violation No. 2. Coming in a weak third were the monetary prizes – like a box of candy or funny books – that made pinball more than a kid's game. All in all, three minor violations of the municipal



Fun Coach

By BERNIE DEKOVEN

New title

Dear Mr. FUNcoach,

Excuse me, but aren't you the very same person who called himself the FUNsmith? So what's with the "coach" all of a sudden, and what happened to the "smith" – if I may be so bold as to inquire.

Wes Tutman

Dear Mr. Tutman,

Thank you for your inquiry. The great smith/coach transition was the result of years of accumulated, but hitherto unacknowledged a-ha's regarding my purpose on this planet. I apparently reached some sort of, as some might say, tipsy point. Or is that tipping point? No, now that I think of it, tipsy is more descriptive.

code that brightened up a town like Memphis that knew nothing of bars and casinos. For the adventurous, it was either the drugstore or bowling.

So, Whitaker's Drugstore was a social center, a men's club you might call it that had a gravitational attraction to my pop. And he shared it with his eight-year-old son who, if he exceeded 500 points on the pinball machine, got two new issues of his favorite comic book.

The front of the drugstore, where they displayed the latest funny books, access to pinball, or several milkshakes, was mine. Pop was usually in the back room with his friends swearing loudly over a missing 6 of diamonds, which would have given him his straight flush, and a pot of a dollar or two.

Usually, the same old gang was in attendance. Just like the analogous gathering in a London men's club. They, too, talked and drank and played adult games with cards. I nursed my milkshake – who could think of ordering a second – and browsed among the funny books. I was proud to notice that none of the other men were accompanied by their sons. I, too, was a club member and I knew that when I grew up, due to my father's influence and popularity, I'd be admitted to the back room. And as I played cards, my son could enjoy the charms of the front section of the drugstore. That's the way it was at Whitaker's over a half a century ago. But I'm afraid it's a lost era.

Ted Roberts, a Rockower Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks at Jewish life with rare wit and insight. Check out his Web site: www.wonderwordworks.com or blogsite: www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com. His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof can be bought at Amazon.com or lulu.com/content/127641. ★

There is something deeply joyful, exhilaratingly so, about finding a way to explain yourself. To others. And, especially to yourself.

Ever since I started playing children's games with adults (39 years ago), I've been moved and motivated by the healing power of fun – especially the kind of deeply loving fun that you experience when you play for no other reason than playing together, enjoying yourself at play with people you enjoy, who are enjoying you, too. It's the fun of what I came to understand as the well-played game. And what I came later to understand as co-liberation.

Through the years, I've explored every possible role I could find that would somehow involve me in making things more fun. I designed games. I taught games. I gave workshops in games and play to congregations, businesses, teachers, physical educators, therapists, game designers, prison guards. And every time I found another audience, my understanding of myself, of my mission, transformed, just a bit.

Funsmith was one way to describe myself. Cute. Enticing, maybe. But not really useful.

Throughout my career, the most rewarding of all the things I learned to do was to help people have more fun. As I grew older, and more informed, I eventually accepted that what people valued most about me was not my games, or my books, my humor, my general cuteness, or even my theories; it was that I helped them have fun again.

I've been a fun coach for decades. I decided it was time to call myself that.

I hope that explains a little more about this column. As Jews, with all our indelible history of suffering and persecution, we tend to forget about fun. My purpose here is to remind you, and when needed, to give you the excuse, the permission, and some helpful hints as to where and why you can find it.

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>. ★

Make your life fun!

Let Bernie DeKoven, "the FUNCoach" help you as he has helped many others.

Connect with Bernie at www.deepfun.com/contact or call him at 317-721-9227 to find out more.

"Bernie...taught me techniques and gave me tools that helped start on the process of going through a major transition and helped me to focus on the fun aspects of life during a time when my life was focused on things that were anything but fun." ~ Rod Kratochwill



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

Three places Jews don't want to live

There was a time when Jews could not live everywhere – not even in the United States. Those of us of a certain age remember when Miami Beach was “restricted” – meaning no Jews. So, we bought the place. Solved that problem.

But today, as a matter of choice, I wonder why Jews would chose to live in certain places around this nation of ours. Start with Kentucky. Look, I understand the Libertarian mind set. Government should defend our borders, issue currency and regulate interstate commerce. Period. Well, it just does not come out that simple in these times.

Everybody should be left pretty much alone. Sounds great. People starve or die of disease because they cannot afford medical care, so be it. But if this was the law of the land, well, we still might be in Miami Beach, but we would not live in places like Shaker Heights, Ohio, which had restrictive covenants up until the late 1940s. Restaurants would not be obliged to serve black people, brown people, Asian people or Jews.

Same for hotels or maybe race tracks, public golf courses and swimming pools. Rand Paul, the Republican senatorial nominee from Kentucky believes that. He might waffle a bit, but deep in his heart – that is what he would like to see. Every business and, by extension, every town should be able to write its own rules of inclusion and exclusion.

So, would you like to live in Kentucky under those circumstances? I think not. Rand Paul is running for the Senate and not the governor's chair, so he will not be able to impact local life in Kentucky – but, if he gets elected – meaning most of the voters in the Blue Grass state agree with him, you can bet your confederate money that one of the next nominees for governor is going to borrow the platform.

Let's now move to the sovereign state of Texas, where the incumbent governor has toyed with the idea of seceding from the Union. Let's think about that. An America without Texas. Not a bad idea now that I think of it.

But, they are still here. And so, when the school board of the state decides that, well, the founders did not really intend to separate church and state, and the state should be run on Christian principles, whatever that means, look out. The new text books in the state are going to reflect theory and theology in place of facts and science. Not a good climate for Jews. Unfortunately those same text books might well be used elsewhere because volume buying makes them a good deal.

Then there is Arizona. They are overwhelmed with illegal immigrants. So they say. But you know what? Crime in the desert is down over the past three years. Considerably down. So, gee, that is not an excuse. The present law is a form of defining “the other.” And we have been that too often to forget. It is in our genes, and we should not agree with any law that says you can get taken off the street simply because of how you look.

In our history we know what it is like to not be welcome. It has happened over and over again in our history. But, you say, not in the U.S.A. Okay, we have not been rounded up and sent to another land since...since when? In the U.S., it is since 1920. Yep, in 1920, the wife of the president, in essence running the country while her husband recovered from a secret stroke, colluded with the attorney general of the United States, one A. Mitchell Palmer to round up people who were suspected of being Communists and ship them back to Europe. Anywhere in Europe. Guess nobody told Palmer that Europe was not a country.

Of those rounded up and shipped off, many were actually American citizens. They were overwhelmingly from the neighborhoods where Jews from Eastern Europe settled when they came here. Palmer is reported to have said, “Not every Communist is a Jew, but every Jew is a Communist.” Oh – and the young Justice Department lawyer in charge of the raids? One J. Edgar Hoover.

Freedom and our way of life hangs by a slender thread at all times. The threats to us and our way of life do not all come from the mountains of Afghanistan or Yemen. They do not all come from fanatics who are co-opted by renegade Mullahs and Imams. There is a threat to us within our political system. Call them the Tea Party, call them school boards who believe in ideology over science, call them any group who believes that our hard earned freedom has gone too far.

Whackos are whackos. Eric Fromm said in his book *True Believers* that the far right and the far left are not that far apart in their theologies. Those who seek to delegitimize Israel are no more fearful than those who would delegitimize any human being.

And no, I was not invited to the retirement party for Helen Thomas.

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. ★

On this date in Jewish history

On July 14, 1904

Isaac Bashevis Singer, Nobel Prize-winning novelist was born

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



Notes from the Antipodes

BY DR. RODNEY GOUTTMAN

Perception breeding reality

In a tasteless but bloodless palace coup, Australia's governing Labor Party government politically executed its prime minister, Kevin Rudd, and installed Julia Gillard, his deputy, as the first woman in the post. All this was driven by the Australian Labor Party's powerbrokers, both outside and inside the national parliament. They feared that the incumbent could not guarantee it a second consecutive victory in the forthcoming federal elections. Gillard has already spoken to President Barak Obama assuring him of her nation's continued support for the American Alliance, particularly in Afghanistan.

A central question for the new prime minister will be her policy with respect to Middle East, such as the Israeli-Palestinian imbroglio. This is especially so, as the perception of late was that the Rudd Administration had not been fully supportive of the Jewish State. With the campaign for the federal poll looming, her supporters in the Jewish community are already spreading the word of Gillard's warm regard for it, and for Israel. Of course, much the same can be said for the leader of the opposition, Tony Abbot.

Kevin Rudd had also claimed such credentials, even if they were tarnished with respect to the Jewish State. This impression was influenced by at least three factors. The first was the most general one that he would be compared to his immediate predecessor, John Howard, whose pro-Israel advocacy was of such high pitch that it was always going to be extremely difficult for his successors to emulate. Secondly, there was Rudd's inclination to fall in behind President Obama's policies that have been willing to risk Israel's security.

However, the third was the most influential. This was Rudd's, personal ambition for Australia to win a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in the very near future. Much effort and many taxpayers' dollars have been invested in this project as Australia seeks to win the favor of many countries who are anti-Israel to their core. In this he had the willing backing of the foreign affairs bureaucracy, which is no a friend of the Jewish State.

Because of the latter endeavour, three events followed. Australia ultimately accepted the vile Goldstone Report in the United Nations. She also belatedly expelled an Israeli diplomat over the use of forged Australian passports associated with the assassination in Dubai of a

high-level Hamas operator with Jewish blood on his hands. Thirdly, there was measured support for organs of the United Nations to investigate Israel's naval interception of the alleged aid flotilla off the coast of Gaza.

Rudd's advisors were worried that their boss was losing favor with the Jewish community, and so a handful of Jewish communal leaders were invited to Canberra to meet with him behind closed doors. With the prospect of a tight election ahead, attention to every constituency is crucial, despite the fact that even if every eligible Jew were to vote for the same party, they could only help to affect the outcome of three of 150 seats in the House of Representatives where government is formed in Australia. On the other hand, the euphemistically called Middle East vote has the potential to affect many more seats.

Now in power, Julia Gillard is yet to be tested by the caprices of the Middle East. Her elevation brings to mind an earlier Labor prime minister, Robert Hawke, who before taking this most senior parliamentary post had an almost flawless pro-Israel record. In office, however, he was forced to modify this stance to mollify internal party and international pressures.

At the moment, we don't know whether the push for a Security Council seat will continue, or if faith in the Goldberg Report will be maintained. The vote of Australian Jews in the next elections will no doubt be affected by a multitude of interests as in the case of their fellow citizens.

The reaction in Australia to the flotilla incident went to script. There was a string of angry demonstrations across the country organized by the usual ideological and theological enemies of Israel. Emotions were fanned by one-sided activist imagery of the incident, by a Lebanese-Australian participant injured in the mêlée, and the reflections of a partisan Fairfax Press journalist embedded in the flotilla. This scribe with personal ties to the Palestinian cause was a major source of information for much comment in the press and electronic media. If my memory is correct, he was someone who had vociferously opposed the embedding of journalists with American troops during the second Iraq War on the grounds that it would compromise them.

Israel was assailed at these manufactured gatherings with de rigueur accusations of nonprovocation, massacre, gross disproportional use of force, and breaches of international law. And of course, all contrary evidence was denounced as tainted and summarily dismissed. For those who believe that the mere existence of a Jewish State is an offence against humanity, it can never be accorded the right to self-defence whatever the circumstance.

All this was expected, and in the generality, not of course in the detail, it (see Gouttman, page NAT 15)



Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

The Ethiopian National Project's 5th Anniversary

The Ethiopian National Project recently celebrated its 5th anniversary in the presence of members of the Jewish Agency's Board of Governors; Minister of Education Gideon Sa'ar; Minister of Social Affairs and Services and member of Knesset Isaac Herzog; and Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky with an appearance from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Over the years, 80 North American Jewish Federations have supported the ENP. (Indianapolis is one of those.)

The ENP began its operations in 2004 as a joint effort between the Israel government, world Jewry and the Ethiopian-Israeli community. It provides educational and social opportunities for Ethiopian Israeli teenagers 13 to 18 through scholastic assistance, youth outreach centers, army preparation programs, school mediators, parent workshops, drug and alcohol prevention programs, leadership development programs and university scholarships.



Ethiopian youngsters who benefit from ENP programs.

The Ethiopian community in Israel numbers 119,300. In 1984, 6,500 Ethiopians came to Israel through Operation Moses and in 1991, another 14,324 were airlifted through Operation Shlomo; others have come as part of the Falasha Mura community who had converted to Christianity in the past.

The Menachem Begin Center was the location of the celebration evening.



Dr. Nigist Mengesha with Sybil Kaplan.



The "No Name" singing group performs at the ENP celebration.

A fitting place, said Minister of Education Sa'ar, because "Prime Minister Menachem Begin started the redemption and salvation of the Jews from Ethiopia," requesting that the head of Ethiopia allow Israel to transport Ethiopian Jews. In fact, between 1977 and 1984, 8,000 were brought to Israel through covert actions.

Mistress of ceremonies was Meskie Shibro, an actress/producer/singer, married to a *sabra* and has two children. Among the speakers and those being honored was Dr. Nigist Mengesha, director-general of the ENP since 2003, who was recently presented with the 2010 Samuel Rothberg Prize for Jewish Education in recognition of her outstanding contributions in the field of education in Israel.

Dr. Mengesha, who immigrated to Israel in 1984, holds a BA in social work from Bar-Ilan University, an MSW from the Hebrew University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Sussex.

"The absorption of Ethiopian immigrants is a duty," she said, "because of the difficult problems and challenges."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Dr. Mengesha the "mother and heart and soul of ENP. This project is part of a great journey, a great dream....In the 1980s the State of Israel decided to bring the Jews of Ethiopia to Israel. They marched for months on end, walking in the direction of the land of Israel, and 4,000 members were buried on the way....This story is the essence of the Zionist story....It is important to integrate the younger generation....I have instructed ministries to help out with the difficulties and eliminate discrimination."

The prime minister also noted that he had appointed an adviser on the Ethiopian community, Aleli Admasu. In between speeches were performances by nine young women from the "No Name" group.

Israel Is Upside Down

There are a lot of examples of how upside down Israel is. I got on the bus this morning with temperatures in the 80s outside, and all the windows were closed, and there was no air conditioning.

So I went to the driver and asked why we have no air conditioning. He yells out for all to hear, do I turn it on for one person?

I returned to where I was standing and said loudly in Hebrew, do I have to take a census of who wants it? He turned it on.

Some seats on buses face the back, but if you don't want to ride backward and if someone offers you a seat, you reply that you don't want to ride – upside down, *afukh*.

When you go into a coffee shop and want cappuccino, steamed milk and coffee, you order, *cafe afukh* – upside down coffee.

I was walking on a Friday through downtown, as I like to do, up Jaffa Road, and all the shoe stores were having sales. I happened to see some low-heeled sandals, the same style, in white and in gold, so I went in to see if they had my size. I tried them on, but they weren't really comfortable so even the low price didn't tempt me. I happened to notice the two left shoes that had been outside were not the same white and gold as the right shoes. So I said to the owner, do you have another pair of each color? The right shoes are a different color.



Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky (l), Dr. Nigist Mengesha (behind PM Netanyahu), Aleli Admasu, advisor on Ethiopian-Israeli Affairs to Prime Minister Netanyahu (in the background); and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (r). Photo credit for all four photos: Barry A. Kaplan.

He looked at me and said, put them in the sun; they'll change to match the others!

The Shuk and Me

For the past six months, I've had a 15-minute spot on the only English-language radio station in Israel, every Monday, at 11:15 a.m. Israel time. Podcasts are available by going to RustyMikeRadio.com.

Type in my name and you can listen. To hear live in Overland Park, get up at 3 a.m., go to RustyMikeRadio.com, and hit "live."

The show is called "Shuk Shopping" and is based on the Jewish produce market, Machaneh Yehudah. I tell what is "hot," what is "not," and talk about something unusual. Sometimes I give hints or a recipe.

The radio studio is in the offices of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel, which also sponsors "Shuk Walks," four times a month, led by – yours truly. I know the shuk and many of the vendors well. The first Thursday in July I was plodding along with filled bags and stopped to adjust them when a woman came up and said, "I know you." It was Jana Fisherowitz, formerly of Overland Park. Soon, along came Sam with a shopping cart. They are in Israel from Colorado to visit their daughters and welcome a new granddaughter.

Being Fashionable

Now that the weather has gotten warmer and people are not wearing coats, it's nice to see some of the fashions of Jerusalem. Skirts and dresses with "slips" showing, giving a layered look, seem to be a preferred style by modern religious women. It has sort of a gypsy appearance, and you see it on teenagers to older women.

Another popular style among the modern religious is a white long-sleeve t-shirt worn under other blouses or tops.

Among the religious, black skirts and dresses and jackets are so much in style, it is surprising if you see a woman wearing a stripe or colored top or even brown instead of black. I read somewhere, they wear black so as not to stand out; personally I think they stand out more. Of course their level of religiousness is also noticed in the black head coverings.

Among nonreligious women, the layered look is also popular.

One thing I don't understand, which seems to be a fashion statement among nonreligious women, is wearing tops that fall off the shoulders, revealing the bra straps. It's very popular, and isn't very attractive.

Long skirts are worn by all segments of the population, from school girls to older women, religious and nonreligious alike.

The pashmina scarves in paisley prints and solid colors so popular all winter are still being worn at night in Jerusalem, because at least the evenings cool off.

I know I'd been away a long time, but two things are really noticeable to me. More women polish their toe nails and (see Kaplan/Israel, page NAT 15)



Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

Dinner with Friends and Danny (Kaye) and Sylvia (Fine)

Donald Margulies continues to build an illustrious career. Interestingly, this American playwright, who happens to be Jewish, reaches far beyond a Jewish audience, well into the mainstream. His Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *Dinner with Friends*, for example, has been translated into multiple languages, including Danish, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish. And the numerous other plays that make up his body of work have traveled worldwide.

Margulies has also enjoyed a strong New York season this past year – with his new piece *Time Stands Still* (on Broadway and currently nominated for a Tony Award), and a successful revival of *Collected Stories* off-Broadway. A quiet man with dignity and an understated style, Margulies is, nevertheless, everywhere.

Which brings us to *Dinner with Friends*, which we saw recently at a Connecticut theater – the Westport Country Playhouse, to be exact. Fortunately for Margulies and his play, this production was right in every sense – in casting, direction, design. For those of us who have seen this 1998 drama many times, this particular production was top of the heap.

Dinner with Friends is a mid-life crisis tale – a tale of two couples who navigate “through the maelstrom” (as Margulies puts it). One couple survives the difficult journey, the other does not. Margulies, brilliant playwright that he is, plunges right into the story. There is no long boring expository first act – nor a single wasted word. Gabe and Karen, two food writers who have just returned from an exciting Italian trip, are extolling their experience, as they heap food on Beth’s plate. As Beth sits quietly through the chatter, she suddenly bursts into tears.



L-R: Jenna Stern as Karen, Steven Skybell as Gabe and David Aaron Baker as Tom in *Dinner with Friends*. Photo by Carol Rosegg.

Tom has left her. Thus the drama gathers steam, as Tom’s departure sends shock waves through the other marriage. Beth and Tom each develop ecstatic new relationships, so they say. But, strangely, Karen and Gabe feel put upon and take these developments as personal affronts.

Though Margulies explores the many nuances and subtleties in human behavior, his pace never falters, and director David Kennedy is equal to the task, with his impeccable cast of four (Mary Bacon, David Aaron Baker, Steven Skybell, and Jenna Stern). Despite a series of short scenes, unfolding in several Connecticut and Martha’s Vineyard locations, the tempo never lets up. Lee Savage’s charming set design allows for quick changes, as each set glides on and off stage.

Why this emphasis on mid-life? Perhaps because Margulies himself (as well as friends) have experienced these years. In these modern times American couples have high expectations of marriage, as they juggle homes, careers, children, relationships. It is a subject that strikes home for us all, a subject well worth exploring, for Jews and non-Jews alike.

Remembering Danny Kaye

There’s a durable little two-character show that’s been playing off-Broadway for a year, a show that’s well worth revisiting. And there is still the opportunity, since the show is in open run.

Danny and Sylvia takes us into the life and mind of Danny Kaye (nee Kaminsky) – and, not surprisingly, his wife Sylvia. (The latter was purported to be the brains and driving force behind Danny Kaye’s stardom. Indeed, Sylvia Fine was a talent in her own right. She did write much of his material, including his signature song, “I’m Anatole of Paris.”) Kaye himself was one of a kind – a talent that conquered stage, screen and television as actor, singer, dancer, and comedian.

The show is housed mid-Manhattan, on the ground floor of St. Luke’s Church. It is a threadbare setting, bereft of set design or theater décor. This is off-Broadway as we’ve known it best – a kind of theater put together with spit and polish and high intentions. Alas, this kind of makeshift theater that once existed and has mostly disappeared from the New York scene, to be replaced by substantially renovated buildings and elegant little-theater complexes.

But the crux of theater is here – the actor, the script, the almost bare stage. *Danny and Sylvia* is in the very capable hands of two gifted performers (Brian Childers as Danny and Kimberly Faye Greenberg as Sylvia). For starters, both have fine voices and solid acting skills. And the chemistry between the two is most convincing. These two battle, love, anguish, rejoice. It is Danny Kaye – and Sylvia – laid bare, the lives behind the legends. (It is well known that theirs was a rocky marriage of peaks and valleys, a marriage that produced one child



View some of the content at: <http://nuritbatyaar-fashionart.blogspot.com/>.

and considerable fame and ultimately estrangement.)

Childers must have put in considerable research studying the actor’s tapes and videos, as he recreates every gesture to perfection. Moreover, Childers has conquered the rat-a-tat rapid-fire style so characteristic of many Kaye songs. It is a joy to watch and hear him render “Tchaikovsky” (the legendary piece in which Kaye/Childers rattles off a series of Russian names in record time). The same is true for his number about army life.

If there is any problem, it is that Childers is just too good-looking – and does not replicate Kaye’s clownish face with its oversized nose. But such failings can be forgiven, and, despite this, Childers gives a memorable and poignant performance – matched, line for line, gesture for gesture, by Greenberg. It is a show well worth seeing.

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 and invites you to visit her website: nytheater.scene.com or at: jewish-theatre.com. ★



Brian Childers as Danny Kaye and Kimberly Faye Greenberg as Sylvia Fine in *Danny and Sylvia*. Photo by Carol Rosegg.

Israel Fashion-Art Album 1948-2008

BY DIANA LERNER

TEL AVIV, MAY 18, 2010 – A brilliantly illustrated 450-page art album (shown left) launched here recently is making an important contribution to the history of Israel fashion.

For Nurit Bat-Yaar, the art book’s author, it is the culmination of almost a decade of research after long-time interest, study and close involvement in the subject becoming one of the country’s major fashion reporters. Starting her career as a model for Maskit, the fashion house founded by Ruth Dayan, which caught world attention at the beginning of the State, Bat-Yaar worked for years as fashion editor for Israel’s leading newspaper, *Yediot Acharonot* and other media bringing news of world fashions to the Israel public.



Nurit Bat-Yaar.

Pivoting the Israel creations on a historical-cultural time table in her book, Bat-Yaar demonstrated how such regional icons as the keffia and hood along with the arts, crafts and cultures against which they were conceived served as a bridge between the biblical arts of the Hebrew tribes and current fashions crafted in over 100 Diasporas. Tracing their historical sources and the cultural content in which they were conceived throws light on the development and changing attitudes of designers of fashion.

Finally, the fashion art book embodies in text and vision the gifted Israeli designers Roji Ben Yosef, Fini Leitersdorf and her famous artist husband, Yonatan Simon, Leah Gottlieb (designer of Gottex famous lines), Gideon Oberson and others who along with Riki Ben Ari have contributed to world fashion their talents and background from their Mediterranean origin to contemporary styling. An example is the brilliant success of Israel’s Alber Elbaz now chief designer for the famous Paris fashion house Lanvin who won the distinguished “Time 100” award this year. According to *Vogue* magazine he transformed Lanvin into the fashion world’s most wanted label.

The encyclopedic volume (translated as an *Intoxication of Design*) was published in 2010 by, and is available from, Resling Publishing, 1 Ittamar Ben-Avi St., Tel Aviv 64736 Israel.

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Media Watch

By Rabbi Elliot B. Gertel

Holy Rollers

Holy Rollers is a rather tame titillation movie about *Hasidim* – and other Jews – gone bad. Twenty-year-old *hasid* Shmuel (Sammy), affectingly played by Jesse Eisenberg, anticipating marriage but hoping to make money rather than to pursue a rabbinical career, is recruited by Yoseph (“Yossi”), the older brother of his friend and next door neighbor, Leon (Jason Fuchs), to smuggle in from Europe “medicine for rich people.” It doesn’t take long before savvy Shmuel realizes that the “medicine” peddled by Yoseph (an energetic performance by Justin Bartha) is an illegal drug, “Ecstasy.” But by then, Shmuel enjoys the money and the travel, and soon proves to be a natural at computations, negotiations and further recruitments.

Based on a real-life case of Hasidic youth who participated, some knowingly, some unknowingly, in drug trafficking, this film, the brainchild of director Kevin Asch, writer Antonio Macia and actor/producer Danny A. Abeckaser, can plead reality in its rolling out of the stereotypes of violent Israeli-American criminals and fallen, foul-mouthed Hasidim. The filmmakers obviously try to divert attention from some of their own stereotypes by making sure that the Gentile gangster provokes Jewish ire with comments such as, “I never heard Jews complain so much about making money.”

Despite his foul mouth, spiteful rebelliousness, and violent tendencies, Yoseph or Yossi is good at providing the rationalizations that Shmuel wants to hear: “You know, Jews have been smuggling for thousands of years.” “The pills are harmless. I promise.” “The medicine is untraceable.” Yossi instructs Shmuel: “Relax, mind your business and act Jewish.” Even after learning that he is involved in smuggling Ecstasy into the country, Shmuel, high on the money and on the travel (and once or twice on the drug itself) gives the same advice to the Hasidim whom he recruits. He even puts the “medicine” in the streimel-hats of naïve Hasidim. We learn in the credits at the end of the film that this “small ring” of Hasidim smuggled more than one million Ecstasy pills into the United States!

The filmmakers make a half-hearted effort to provide a voice of traditional Jewish morality in the person of Shmuel’s father, whose son regards him as a pushover in business. Among the first words to come from Papa’s lips is an admonition that the man who immerses himself in a drive for money is always in debt. To their credit, Shmuel’s parents will reject the gift of a new stove that he has delivered into their home. By then,

rumor and the concerns of the rebbe, the sect’s rabbi, have alerted them to their son’s true activities. They do not want their youngest son influenced by Shmuel. Finally, Shmuel’s father confronts him: “You are a liar. You are a criminal. You are not my son. Go away from my house.”

While Shmuel’s father is depicted as a bit of a nebbish and a nebach, as rather ineffectual, morally and otherwise, the rebbe is given respectful forum. At the beginning of the film, we hear him preaching in the synagogue that all men must respond to God’s question of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden: “Where art thou?” He adds that in their actions people move either closer to, or farther away from, God’s presence. (He paraphrases here a saying of the first Lubavitcher rebbe, Shnuer Zalman of Liadi, though the Hasidim here are not depicted as *Chabadniks*.) Later in the film, when Shmuel is deep into selling drugs and ready to experiment with them, we hear the rebbe preach again about the sons of Aaron who offered a “strange fire” before *Hashem* (The Holy Name or God) and “died before *Hashem*.”

Speaking about the Garden of Eden, the film has its temptress, Eve-like character Rachel (Ari Graynor), a blond Jewish woman who is the companion of Yossi’s boss, Israeli American drug dealer Jackie Solomon (producer Abeckaser). She toys with Shmuel, finding pleasure in flirting with him and arousing sexual feelings in him, while withdrawing from him. She uses drugs and alcohol and keeps trying to get Shmuel to do the same. When Shmuel asks her if she is Jewish, she replies: “I dropped out of Hebrew school so I don’t know if it counts.” If there is a snake in Eden, it is Jackie Solomon, but he is a snake who tells Shmuel that Ecstasy “is illegal but therapeutic” in that it “opens emotions.”

After trying the drug, Shmuel speaks of Shabbat as a “state of mind.” Is there a suggestion here that drugs can expand the meaning of rituals in a way that Hasidic teachings can’t? After all, Shmuel’s toxic neighbor, Yoseph (Yossi), begins to lure him on the Sabbath. Shmuel chooses to bring out the garbage on the Sabbath, which might be technically permitted if there is an *eruv* (an enclosing boundary) on his block, but why would someone who found spiritual satisfaction in Shabbat do that?

Also, the Hasidic community is not depicted as being very understanding or supportive. Shmuel is rather cruelly rejected by the family of the young woman whom he wants to wed. Then his best friend, Leon (Jason Fuchs), the brother of the toxic Yoseph, pursues and marries that woman, knowing of Shmuel’s misery and of his addiction to the life style that Leon’s own brother Yoseph has foisted upon Shmuel. Leon makes little effort to extricate Shmuel from Yossi’s “business,” even though he knew enough to extricate himself as soon as he and Shmuel found out what Yoseph was up to.

Though I suppose “reality-based,” the ending of this film is most unsatisfying, morally and even dramatically speaking. Shmuel gets to stay at a rather cushy prison and to discuss science fiction with his visiting Dad, who seems to be long past righteous indignation.

The ending of this film would have been predictable no matter what. There were only three possible endings for Shmuel: getting caught, getting killed, and getting away with it for years before getting caught or getting killed. It was good that in real life no one was killed, though the crime was probably responsible for deaths or at least for ruined lives. Given those possibilities, the staff must have worked very hard to make the film so blasé.

Most fascinating and significant, I suspect, are not the events depicted in this movie but what happened afterward. Was Shmuel able to return to the Hasidic community or even to Judaism? Was there anything redemptive in his life? Did he find a way to “do *teshuvah*” – that is, to “repent”? Could he build on his sense of belonging to the Jewish People?

Most telling, I thought, were scenes in Amsterdam in which Shmuel spoke about wanting to see the Anne Frank House and in which he was momentarily moved by a Hasid seeking to persuade Jews to put on tefillin. How does one build on such yearnings after betraying one’s principles, one’s community, one’s religion? Is there a way to “go home again”? Is the community, the rebbe, capable of welcoming back a confessed sinner? Can the community stay connected with those who no longer want to be Hasidic?

Seeing Shmuel’s story, I thought of another film, *Yiddish: A Love Story*, a touching and inspiring documentary about the efforts of the late Zypora Spaisman to preserve Yiddish theater. Filmmaker Dan Katzir and producer Ravit Marcus allow the young lead actor, Joad Kohn, to reveal that he grew up in an ultra-Orthodox community in Williamsburg, N.Y., and gradually defected into Elvis Presley, John Lennon and Stevie Wonder records and then to tattoo parlors on Saturday mornings. For Kohn, Yiddish theater was a safety net that enabled the Jewish community to hold on to one of his passion, talent and charm. Had Asch, Macia and Abeckaser told a story that sheds light on the struggles of defectors from Hasidic communities, the vast majority of whom do not turn to crime, and had they used actors who were formerly part of the Hasidic community, *Holy Rollers* might have been an authentic and important statement.

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

RIBNER

(continued from page NAT 4)

gift and even a reward for much spiritual inner toil. To cry over your own personal losses is much easier. Yet, when we cry, we must know that all our personal losses are existentially rooted and connected to the lack of revealed Godliness in the world as symbolized by the Holy Temple. In the deepest level, we are always crying for God to be more known in this world. And God wipes the tears of all those who cry for God.

Spiritual crying is an important spiritual practice, especially now. As I wrote in my book *Kabbalah Month by Month*, “When we cry for God, we are healed and we can heal others. We feel our pain, and it hurts, but by feeling our pain, feeling our brokenness, and that of the world, we actually become more whole. There is an expression in Judaism, “There is nothing more complete, more whole, than a broken heart.” It is a paradox, like much of the month of *Tammuz* is. Out of the feeling of brokenness, we receive solace and redemption. Through our tears we see what is essential and true. We gain clarity and vision, we gain compassion. We are more vulnerable, open and accessible to others.” (p. 275).

Give yourself time to cry during this period. Cry to God and cry with others, the psalm reminds us: “Those who sow with tears will reap with joy.” It is said that the Messiah is born on *Tisha B’Av*.

There is a crying that comes from the mind, thinking negative thoughts. This crying leaves one drained, exhausted and sorry for oneself. Spiritual crying is not being depressed. Depression is anger turned inward. Depression is about collapsing around the story about the tears. It is anti-God so there is no joy in it.

Spiritual crying may look like the same as other forms of crying, but it is the opposite. Spiritual crying is the key to opening the heart, arousing God’s compassion, sweetening judgments against oneself and others. “There is a kind of crying that comes from deep in the soul. These are holy tears, and when they flow through us, they purify, heal, and strengthen us. The soul has such deep feelings and too often people are afraid to feel their own depths until they are forced to do so by challenging painful life events. These tears open the gates in heaven and within ourselves.” (p. 273).

Our tears are like a portable *mikva*. May we shed holy tears for God, for love, for the Holy Temple that cleanses the entire world.

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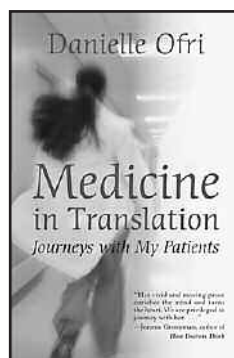
Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Immigrants navigating the American health care system

Medicine in Translation. By Danielle Ofri. Boston: Beacon Press, 2010. 251 Pages. \$24.95.

Wife, mother, author, cellist, editor, and physician, Danielle Ofri richly demonstrates just how versatile an individual she is in *Medicine in Translation*, her third book. Born in New York to an observant father from Israel whose family came from Yemen and a nonreligious mother with roots in Eastern Europe, Danielle is married to



Benjy who works in software development and who grew up in a modern Orthodox family. He attended day school but is less religious as an adult than he was as a youngster, sharing with his wife his attachments to the cultural aspects of Judaism and Israel. They have three children – Naava, Noah, and Ariel.

Ofri received her bachelor's degree at McGill University in Montreal and then spent ten years at New York University and Bellevue Hospital, earning an M.D. as well as a Ph.D. in biochemistry, followed by her residency in internal medicine. She traveled for two years, working as a free-lance doctor in East Hampton and New Mexico, and visiting Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Peru where she learned Spanish.

During this time, she wrote stories about her years as a medical student and resident, eventually publishing them in her first book, *Singular Intimacies: Becoming a Doctor at Bellevue*. In 2005, her second book, *Incidental Findings: Lessons from My Patients in the Art of Medicine*, appeared with descriptions of her experiences as a teacher. Chapters from these books were selected for inclusion in *Best American Essays 2002* and *Best American Essays 2005*.

Now an attending physician at Bellevue Hospital and associate professor at the New York University School of Medicine, Ofri sees patients, teaches medical students and residents, writes, and edits. Cofounder of the *Bellevue Literary Review*, she is interested in the relationship between literature and medicine.

Medicine in Translation focuses on Ofri's immigrant patients, a number of whom are undocumented, thus limiting their eligibility for treatment, especially for transplants. She describes many of

them who are being seen at the Survivors of Torture Clinic. Their stories are often heart-rending, posing tough questions about their limited right to health care and the ethical responsibility of the United States. Ofri confronts these dilemmas forthrightly and with great sensitivity. She also describes the difficulties she faces in dealing with her many Spanish-speaking patients.

To cope with the language problem, she persuaded her husband to spend a year in Costa Rica so that she could become more fluent in Spanish. She eloquently describes the impact of this experience on her family and herself as she gives birth to her third child. Her comfort zone was enlarged when she found an obstetrician who had studied in Haifa and who was fluent in Hebrew. Similarly, when her son had a seed in his nose, her anxiety was eased when she saw a mezuzah on the office door of the ear, nose, and throat specialist to whom the family was referred.

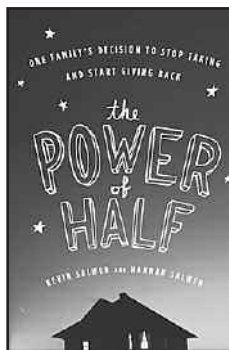
Returning to Bellevue after the year in Costa Rica, Ofri found her Spanish improved, enabling her to communicate more easily with a number of her patients. However, the most poignant stories she tells deals with patients from China, Senegal, Turkey, New Zealand, Tibet, and Bangladesh. Her descriptions are substantially enhanced as she adds her own reactions to the accounts of the patients' ailments. Readers will inevitably be moved by the issues confronted by immigrants as they seek medical care in the United States, which is for them a foreign country with an unfamiliar language. Ofri's sensitivity to these patients inevitably engenders respect for her superb insights and capabilities.

While the book emphasizes cross-cultural issues in medical care, describing the problems confronted by immigrants in navigating the American health care system, it also highlights the skills and sensitivities of one exceedingly able doctor in that system.

Inspiring story of chesed and tzedakah

The Power of Half. By Kevin Salwen and Hannah Salwen. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010. 242 Pages. \$24.

The Salwens are a relatively affluent family living in Atlanta, Ga. Kevin, the father, grew up as a Jew in Brooklyn. His father and mother fought a good deal until they eventually split up. Determined to get away from his parents, he decided to leave New York and enrolled in Northwestern University, outside of Chicago, where he met Joan King, a



Protestant from a family of Iowa farmers. They were married in 1987 and began flourishing careers. Kevin became a journalist, working for the *Wall Street Journal* before starting his own magazine company. Joan was a thriving businesswoman, serving as a consultant in a large firm. After 20 years, she decided to become a school teacher, resigning from her well-paying job to earn a master's degree and then beginning to teach English in the Atlanta Girls School.

The Salwen's first child, Hannah, was born in 1992 and Joseph was born two years later. They lived in their "Dream House," a three story historic home that was "the perfect place to hold big parties and host events." It was a \$2 million mansion. The children went to an elite private school; the family took expensive vacations; and "consumerism" characterized their lives.

Their charitable giving amounted to about 3% of their income and included Northwestern University, Joan's church, the children's school, and Atlanta Habitat. They volunteered in the United Way; tutored young readers; served senior citizens; and worked on Habitat for Humanity houses, trying as much as possible to involve the children in these activities. Kevin discusses these activities by struggling to differentiate between the Jewish concepts of *tzedakah*, which he calls "financial charity," and *chesed*, which he sees as "good deeds done without cause," somewhat limited and idiosyncratic definitions of these important ideas.

In 2006, when Hannah was 14, she simultaneously saw a homeless man and another man driving a Mercedes. She said that if the Mercedes driver had a less expensive car, then the homeless man could have a meal. This led to family discussions and, eventually, to a decision that changed their lives. They decided to sell their house; move into a smaller one; and give the excess money "to do something to help others."

Despite the difficulty in finding a buyer for their house, the Salwens bought a far less expensive one and began to explore where to put the money they expected to obtain once their big house was sold. With research, they narrowed their choice to four organizations working in Africa on problems of hunger. Eventually, they chose the Hunger Project that tries to move villages from poverty to self-reliance. They agreed to finance a program in Ghana and flew there to observe the work of the Hunger Project. An interesting description is provided about what they saw and experienced in Ghana, although their perception of this community development effort is somewhat limited. Impressed by the self-help emphasis of the Hunger Project, the family decided to make an initial contribution by drawing on Hannah and Joseph's college fund since their house had not yet sold. Eventually, they found a buyer at substantially less than the asking price.

The saga of the Salwen family, well presented in this interesting narrative, is designed to inspire others to emulate their exemplary behavior. The likelihood of success in achieving this objective is probably limited, but the picture of family democracy that is so well presented may indeed be a model that stimulates others.

San Francisco Jewish community

Cosmopolitans. By Fred Rosenbaum. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. 480 Pages. \$39.95.

Every American Jewish community is like all other American Jewish communities in some respects. Every American Jewish community is like several other American Jewish communities in some respects. And every American Jewish community is like no other American Jewish community in some respects.

San Francisco shares with other American Jewish communities the progression of some of its members from peddler to merchant, but few achieved the prominence of Isaac Magnin, Solomon Gump, and Raphael Weill (White House). Levi Strauss moved from selling goods to manufacturing them, producing riveted pants that are sold all over the world. Others made wool, boots, shoes, cigars, boxes, and paper. Some San Francisco Jews went in to banking, providing the basis for Lazard Freres, Anglo-California Bank of London, and Wells Fargo. Jews were prominent in real estate, the stock market, the Alaska fur trade, wheat farming, sugar mills in the Philippines, mining, fruit-growing, and wine-making.

The discovery of gold in 1848 attracted many people, including Jews, so that San Francisco was swiftly transformed from a settlement to an ethnically diverse city with a highly disproportionate number of Jews, mostly from the German-speaking countries of central Europe. They established a cemetery, a benevolent society, and synagogues. There were disputes about synagogue ritual, leading to two synagogues with one becoming Reform while the other remained Orthodox. The development of these and other synagogues including their buildings, their financial difficulties, their leadership, and their rabbis is thoroughly described.

In 1906, a deadly earthquake and fire struck San Francisco with devastating impact. Along with other members of the community, Jews were severely impacted by this disaster. The book goes on to describe the recovery from this catastrophe and then proceeds chronologically to set forth the

(see Teicher, page NAT 15)





As I Heard It

BY MORTON GOLD

Enjoyable and educational

The ninth CD in the Spirit Series (a joint project of the Cantors Assembly and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism) has recently been released. The title of this CD is *The Spirit of Jewish World Music*. There are 23 selections performed by the same number of male and female *hazzanim*. Along with the CD, there is an excellent booklet that contains not only the Hebrew text but the translation and transliteration as well as informative commentary about each selection. The selections are taken from various CDs that featured the selections which the cantors performed.

The items chosen for this CD illustrate the different national influences on the music used, hence the use of the phrase "Spirit of Jewish World Music" in the title of the CD. Reflecting on the contents of the CD, I can honestly find fault only with No. 6 because the words and the music do not seem to be a match made in heaven. While I did like some selections more than others, I would observe that as a group the music could be described as cantorial music *light* with the sole and marvelous exception of No. 23.

The music here is bona fide Jewish art music; the performance is superb and the orchestration is excellent as well. It stands out in every way and contrasts with all the other pieces. The other works, even though for the most part they use various psalms as texts, and though performed very well are all encores by comparison. Having made this observation, the CD is a worthwhile contribution to the corpus of Jewish music and is both entertaining as well as educational. What follows is a brief commentary on each. Unless indicated otherwise, the soloists are all cantors.

1. "The Old Accordion." Yes, it does sound as Russian as it is, but it could just as easily be an early Zionist melody. The music is by Effie Netzer and is charmingly sung by Hazzan Vadim Yucht who emigrated to Israel with his family in the 1990s.

2. "Tsur Mishelo" is a Greek folk song. It is sung superbly by Alberto Mizrahi. The 7/8 time is infectious. "Singing and thinking, let us praise our G-d." Right on.

3. "Yah Ribon Olam" was composed by Meir Finklestein and is performed by David Propis. This lively composition is given a spirited rendition. The music echoes the phrase "I compose prayers morning and evening for you."

4. "Cuando El Rey Nimrod." The music as well as the performance is by Maria



Barugel. The lyrics are from a Ladino folk song, and the arrangement is by Eitan Kantor. The lyric soprano of Ms. Barugel is well suited to the spirit of this melody.

5. "Hodu La'Adonai Ki Tov." The music is by Ira Bigelson and Howard Ffeifer. This calypso style setting of Ps. 118: 1-4 is ably performed by Judy Aronoff and I. Bigelstein.

6. "Al Naharot Bavel." The music is listed as "traditional, but I must confess, it does not sound like any tradition that I associate with this text ("By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept..."). The performers are Ayelet and Anatolya Piatigorsky. The repetitive and (annoying) percussion does not convey any sense of pathos. The "credit" here must go to Misha Piatigorsky who was the arranger. I would suggest that if one deleted the drum part, the sweetness of the two solo voices, a cappella, would be very effective and lead one to a far different evaluation of this composition.

7. "Zol Sohn Kumen Di Ge'uleh. (We want Salvation now: The Messiah will come soon.) The music in this very catchy tune is by Abraham Kook. The Yiddish lyrics are by Shmerke Kaczerginski and the English version is based on Mordechai Sheikman. The soloist is Itzhak Zhibker. With his sweet lyric tenor and clear Yiddish diction, he gives a marvelous performance of this familiar melody.

8. "Der Rebbe Elimeylach." The music and lyrics are by Moishe Nadir, and the arranger is Leonid Sontz. I have a weakness for Yiddish folk songs, and this fine rendition by soprano Larisco Averbakh is about as good as it can get. She sings it musically as opposed to a "bump and grind" rendition it receives too often. Mr. Sontz's arrangement contributes much to the effectiveness of this selection.

9. "Shish Reizeh Khelghat." The music is based on a Persian-Jewish folk song. The arrangement and performance is by Howard Dardashti. While I may have had some issues with this cantor with respect to some other performances, I can find nothing to criticize with either the singing or the arrangement of this unusually accented melody. In point of fact everything here sounds authentic and is well done.

10. "Adio Querido." This music is from an opera ("borrowed" from) G. Verdi. The lyrics are from a Ladino Folk song, and it is well sung by Jack Kessler. While the song is lovely, I wonder what the text of the song between two parting lovers has to do with Jewish World Music.

11. "Al Tira Avdi Ya'akov." This is a traditional Moroccan tune, and it is given a commercial style arrangement by Yaron Gershavsky. The performance is by Aaron Bensoussan. Expressing a personal opinion, I suspect that a different arrangement would go a long way to expressing the meaning of the text while still being true to the melody of its Moroccan roots.

12. "V'shamru" is based on a South African folk song. The music was arranged by Wolfgang Kalter and Harold Price. The soloist is Baruch Shemesh, who performs it in an appropriate engaging manner.

13. "Rabeinu Tam," with music by Helen Rubin, is charmingly rendered by Julie Jacobs.

14. "Tsadik Katamar" is based on an Argentinean dance and is sung by Gaston Bogmolini. My feeling is that one might like it more if one hailed from Argentina.

15. "Zip" is based on a Moldavian song and is rendered by Hazzan Ken Richmond and Rabbi Shira Shazeer. Sorry, based on this performance, I would suggest that cantors should sing, and rabbis should speak.

16. "Yihyu L'ratzon" was written and performed by Raphael Frieder. His warm bass does full justice to this spiritual setting.

17. "Eil Adon" is based on a Yiddish folk song (Alle Brieder) and is given a marvelous performance by Shoshana Brown. With her hearty Yiddish and clear soprano, this rendition is a delight.

18. "Zamru La'Adonai" with music by Suki Berry is performed by Elias Rosenberg from the CD *Shabbat at Temple Emanuel*. The temple is located in New York, the music in Argentina. Just the same, it would be welcome anywhere.

19. "Di Naye Hora" is a melody by the late cantor/actor Moishe Oyshe. The rendition by Hershel Fox pays homage to this fine artist and is a joy to hear.

20. "Hoshi'einu" is a composition by Jacob Lefkowitz, joyfully performed by David Lefkowitz. While the electronic accompaniment put me off initially, it seems just right on repeated hearings.

21. "Hija Mia" is taken from a Turkish folk song and is sung by David Lipp. While I would not claim to be a *maven* on Turkish music, the performance by Lipp seems to be authentic as well as enjoyable.

22. "D'ror Yikra" is a case of two styles that are joined at the hip. It is based on an Eastern Sephardic as well as a West Indian folk song and performed by Amy and Barry Kanarek. What was that line about wool and cotton in the same garment again?

23. "A Dudele" by the distinguished composer Leo Low is here given a

(see Gold, page NAT 15)



The Art of Observation

BY RABBI ALLEN H. PODET

Family feuds

The bitterest, costliest, and most lethal war ever fought by this country, the one that took the most American lives, the one that my bride is referring to any time either of us uses the expression "The War" is...the War Between the States, called by half the country the War of Northern Aggression.

Germans refer to such a conflict as a Bürgerkrieg, although Bruderkrieg would have been more accurate. We, with unconscious irony, call it a Civil War, although there is nothing civil about our bloodbath of 1861-1865. It seems the closer one is to another, the greater the potential for conflict, hatred, and killing. Cain and Abel were, after all, brothers. Isaac and Ishmael are still alive and well in today's Near East.

Jews, with a tradition of nonviolence, have been brought up on "Seek peace and pursue it," "Be of the disciples of Aaron," "May He who makes peace in His high places," and a thousand stories like the one of the rabbi who caused himself to be publicly insulted in order to make peace between a man and his wife, some of these stories we have passed on to Christianity and to Islam.

In America, where, thanks be to God, Jews do not have, and never did have, independent military power, it is hard to imagine the rancor, bitterness, and absolute hate that passed between Litvaks and Galizianers, old line German Jews and late-arriving East Europeans, Reformers and Orthodox. And, if we speak of family feuds, what of Jews and Christians.

Today, after a third of world Jewry has been removed and after religion altogether has become an attenuated force in the lives of many Americans and Westerners in general, these rivalries are celebrated in jokes and colorful stories for the most part.

Not the last one mentioned: Anti-Semitism is not hard to find, even in America, and certainly not in Europe.

Often it wears masks, but they are not very hard to see through. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., keenly aware of racism in any form, warned his people to be wary of anti-Zionism, because it was only a cheap disguise for anti-Semitism. Was then and remains so today, most boldly in liberal, progressive European circles and to a slightly lesser extent in academia.

Some Black leaders correctly perceived that anti-Israelism and even outright anti-Semitism were part of the cultural ethos of the ruling classes, and therefore to be adopted. To be sure, there were also other causes for the counterintuitive

betrayal of the historic Black-Jewish bond, an alliance whose unpredictable and unpredicted betrayal has been insufficiently studied. There are many a Ph.D. dissertation lurking in that research area.

Apart from the Chabadniks, who claim to accept all Jews with open arms regardless of philosophy or level of practice, the Orthodox-Reform opposition is still apparent.

A young student of mine, intelligent, quite attractive, and blessed with a positively sparkling personality, completed a passage into Judaism that involved among many other things two years of intensive study, *mikveh*, a mastery of Hebrew to an intermediate level, a bat mitzvah cum Torah reading, extensive service within the congregation, and a public avowal and celebration that drew in nearly the entire congregation. She is pursuing a career in the United States Air Force, where she was recently informed by an Orthodox Rabbi that becoming a Jew in a Reform congregation like ours was an overnight procedure that mainly involved writing a check.

One may be sure that the line was delivered with a smile, so as to indicate that it was only a joke, but of course it was not.

One can cite the Rabbinic dictum that humiliating someone – and this rabbi's remark was clearly meant to humiliate – is a mild step akin to murder. (Av. Z. 58b, cf. Ber. 43b, Sot. 10b. There are many similar citations, such as Mishnah: Ethics of the Fathers 3:11. It is a tonitrous rather than an obscure ruling.)

The great Resh Lakish, publicly reminded in a Talmudic debate that he had once been a gentile (and a brigand at that), stomped out of the Sanhedrin in a proper fury. Many rabbis have ceased to name converts "Aben Avraham Avinu," because it is, alas, all too often an invitation to Jewish bigots to discommodate the convert. And my erstwhile student has concluded that her previous religious condition is no longer a subject for public delectation. She does not care to be placed on display.

That such things should happen among Jews is reprehensible but not uncommon. Jews, like many other groups, generate their own enemies.

In this case, one can imagine perfectly reasonable causes for such insensitive, and possibly immoral, conduct. Some Jews, raised on a diet of historic Jewish suffering and persecution, cannot fathom why any reasonable person would wish to ally himself or herself with such a group of targets. And if God is everywhere, presumably He can be found, according to Jewish law, in the nearest church as well. And if we are to judge religions by the sorts of people they produce, who is to say that the Jews are the only ones who produce *tzaddikim*, or even *menschen*?

So it is perfectly reasonable, is it not, to be curious, especially if one's own contact with Judaism has been a philosophical starvation diet liberally



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Finding the truth within the headline

Within the last few weeks, we first learned that there was an embedded group of Russian spies, infiltrating the PTA and other nontraditional venues for spying. But before we could ingest the meaning, the Russians and the United States had dramatically performed an exchange, and based on "limited news life," we may have heard the end of it.

Living in this highly complex society, we are often called upon to try to understand phenomena, without all of the important details. But it does lead you toward trying out creative interpretations. What if the whole thing was really part of a cost/benefit analysis done by the FBI. They had known and been watching this group for over 10 years, and it was difficult to understand how anything that was going on was really a threat. But there was this auditor, who may have pointed out that it was costing the FBI \$5 million a year for no real benefit to the country. Well, what were they to do now? You simply can't let foreign spies run around unabated, even if they are not very effective. So why not, a creative analyst suggested, arrest them all, embarrass the Russians, but only a little, and quickly make it all go away by exchanging the ten for four jailed Russians who were charged for working with the other side.

It could happen. And that leads us to wonder about the meeting between President Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu this last week. Can you imagine that after the door was closed, and they were alone, they smiled and hugged each other, hoping they were in a better place? President Obama suggesting that Netanyahu could have

larded (sorry) with oppression and suffering, and lean of glory, beauty, wisdom, kindness, joy, and truth?

It is a perfectly reasonable curiosity, like that of the stranger in the grocery store who comes up and pats the belly of a pregnant woman and smilingly asks when the baby is due. If it happens once it is an oddity, a crude if unintended boeotianism. If it happens 10 times, it becomes at the least an insensitive and presumptuous liberty.

Perhaps one reason for the bitterness of family feuds is that we feel entitled to take liberties with family that we would know to be thoroughly unacceptable with other people. At least, that is a charitable way to look at it.

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been a little bit more careful with his domestic policy, and then both of them agreeing that their energy would be better spent on this new annoying PAC called J Street.

The latter's most well-placed politician is the senior senator from Wisconsin, Herbert Kohl. The head of J Street is the senator's nephew, Dan Kohl, and we might just speculate that the senator is still trying to be a good uncle and find Dan something worthwhile to do. Dan has tried other parts of the senator's holdings without good luck.

I'm sure that both the prime minister and the president bemoaned the death of the blockade participants, even while being assured that dying is part of a risk they are willing to take for their "cause." In the real world, death is not taken as seriously as we would like. The casualties in Iran and Iraq while tragic, pale in comparison to the deaths in Korea and Vietnam. In Korea, the U.S. Army was willing to risk thousands of lives in a single action to gain a hill that had only temporary importance. Thankfully, the new methods of war, even if they don't solve issues, preserve more lives.

Every day, they might have pointed out, Muslim terrorists are killing far more Muslims than Americans, and the world and the Muslim world seem to just let it pass. If they care, they don't express their caring publicly. It may be that life is just cheaper for some.

And about that settlement that the prime minister was expanding on the "West Bank": It's hard to think about Ramat Shlomo as a settlement, rather than a neighborhood of 40,000 people abutting Jerusalem. One of our sons and his family live in Ramat Shlomo, a family with 12 children. We visit them yearly. We go everywhere on the public bus, 12 minutes to Jaffa Street. This neighborhood is built next to Shuafat, an Arab "settlement." On one of our many visits, we rented an apartment on the highest level. When you looked out of our back windows, there were Arab children playing just 100 yards away, with no fence and no hostility.

Recently, the Turkish government was publicly irate about the refusal of Israel to allow a ship registered in Turkey to break the blockade. They said nothing about the invitation of the Israeli government to dock at Haifa and unload all of their aid. And amid all the screaming and the temporary refusal to allow their air space to be used, it is business as usual between the two countries that have a vibrant economic trade.

And somehow British Petroleum is going to be able to stop the flow of oil and begin the clean-up on the day before their annual meeting, and just as suddenly the U.S. government is going to allow companies with the ability to make a difference in the clean-up the right to help. Some things are just astounding.

So why, you might ask, bother to make sense out of the unintelligible? It simply

is our lot. And even if there are groups of men all over the world who know what is really happening behind the scenes, would it make any difference if we knew?

In closing we should applaud the work of that perhaps-cost/benefit auditor at the FBI and the people who figured out how to stop the whole debacle. We should be happy that our president and the prime minister of Israel are not aggravating each other. Momentarily, we should wait and see how the easing of the blockade works, but at the same time, we suspect that there will be more rockets into Israel. We should be more tolerant of J Street, even if we believe that they are naive and deluded for believing that there is someone to make peace within Israel.

And we should applaud the efforts of BP to clean up their mess, and allow Anderson Cooper and James Carville to return to other causes, like the continuing suffering in Haiti, joblessness in the United States and a stagnant economy, which is stealing the faith of progress in the American Dream.

On that last issue, have you ever read any books by Bill Bryson? If not, you are missing a wonderful read and some wonderful insights in to U.S. history. In his humorous memoir, *The Life and Times of the THUNDERBOLT KID*, he describes the year of his birth, in the America of 1951.

"By 1951, when I came sliding down the chute, almost 90 percent of American families had refrigerators, and nearly three-quarters had washing machines, telephones, vacuum cleaners, and gas or electric stoves – things that the rest of the world still only fantasized about. American owned 80 percent of the world's electrical goods, controlled two-thirds of the world's productive capacity, produced more than 40 percent of its electricity, 60 percent of its oil and 66 percent of its steel. The 5 percent of the people on Earth who were Americans had more wealth than the other 95 percent combined."

It is not clear how we define happiness and values, but it is clear that life was rich in Des Moines, Iowa, the home of Bill Bryson and his family. This was not a time of naiveté, it was only six years after World War II, and the Jewish world was still reeling from the understanding of our personal losses. We had hoped then that that war would be the last, that those who died would not have died in vain.

For many people, that history is as old as the Peloponnesian War, but there is a sense, in looking back to then, that we were living in an age that held more promise than today, and that we wonder, on some days, whether all the technology and modernity has really been with it.

It seems to be our lot to live and read and listen and try to understand how to make that sense of promise a reality in our lifetime.

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

Travel

By HAROLD JACOBSON AND ROSE KLEINER

The Breakers: Florida's hotel extraordinaire

In late January 2010, an unusual group of people were gathered around an elevator alcove at The Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, Fla. Their conversations pivoted not on the plentiful facilities and amenities featured at this, the aristocrat of the American hotel hierarchy, but on the urgent need to organize aid for the stricken victims of Haiti's earthquake catastrophe. With the imprimatur of the hotel, the group was discussing the quickest way to implement the dispatch of aid to the troubled island.

This was not an unusual scene in the history of the 112-year-old Palm Beach institution, the brain child of Henry Flagler, the oil magnate and entrepreneur par excellence who more than a century ago turned to Florida and became a railroad builder, town developer and resort impresario. His hotel construction led, after several early incarnations, to The Breakers. One of the few large hotels (540 rooms) in North America that is still privately owned, The Breakers is sui generis in its Italianate architecture and sumptuous public and private rooms. It also displays in its luxurious surroundings a social conscience that is reflected in its management style, in its readiness to serve as a foyer for charitable activities and, latterly, in its concern for ecological sound environmental factors.

Several years ago one of Florida's devastating hurricanes severely damaged parts of The Breakers. The hotel was forced to close temporarily for repairs. Instead of furloughing the employees, The Breakers, in the tradition of noblesse oblige, reassigned them to alternate duties until the facility was able to reopen. Staff at the hotel is numerous (a 3 to 1 ratio of staff to guests) and enjoys generous insurance and medical benefits.

Service at all levels – from the multilingual people at the reception desk, through the various dining facilities and sports venues, to the spa – is gracious, efficient and low key. Those employees since 2007 are now also able to take advantage of The Breakers Green Market, a bounteous collection of organically grown fruits, vegetables, flowers, bottled juices and honey all locally grown and produced. The hotel sees this facility as an instrument to promote healthy eating and personal well-being.

Another aspect of The Breakers societal obligations is its receptivity to time-honored charity events, a tradition that dates back to the hotel's early years. During the winter months especially, the hotel's ball rooms are filled almost every

night with gala fund raising events by such organizations as Boys Town, the American Jewish Committee, The Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County, Israel Cancer Association, the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association and numerous other medical charities. James Ponce, a knowledgeable guide to the history of The Breakers, once remarked that there are "so many charity balls at The Breakers that they almost run out of diseases." The hotel is so adept in hosting these worthy events that there is a special cachet attached to the Palm Beachers and their guests who look forward to seeing and being seen at these events, which collect millions of dollars annually in charity funds.

The Breakers is also a pioneer in the hospitality industry in implementing far-seeing ecologically friendly practices. This move started a decade ago, well before the trend became accentuated and is expressed in the emphasis on fresh, local produce, cooperation with the south Florida farming community and the cultivation on the hotel grounds of edible aromatic plants in an herb and vegetable garden just footsteps south of The Breakers driveway entrance. The focus on green has admirable by-products-chemical-free vegetables and fruits, the stabilizing of farmlands that might otherwise be used for development, a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gases (no long-distance trucking of produce) and direct benefit to local farmers.

Coffee *mavens* also note that The Breakers is the first hotel in the world to serve Rainforest Alliance coffee, a brew that conforms to exacting conservation standards, worker protection and education for growers' children. The coffee in question has a robust, velvety texture, is strong but not aggressive and has already won praise from the Coffee Association of America. It is served in all nine restaurants, at banquets and room service at the hotel.

In keeping with its eco-healthy philosophy, The Breakers avoids pesticides in its gardens, provides shelter for birds and butterflies through its preference for native plants. As a water-saving strategy the hotel began in 2000 to pump water out of a deep well on its grounds and is now producing 500,000 gallons of water each day for irrigation purposes, thus conserving 95 million gallons of drinking water per year. An entire team at The Breakers meets regularly to discuss the best way to reduce its carbon footprint.

Preoccupation with environmental health is a bonus; it does not impinge, in any way, on The Breakers chief mission – to permit its guests to enjoy five-star luxury in its spacious rooms and suites, to partake in a Sunday brunch lavish beyond imagination, and to participate in myriad sports and entertainment activities. The latter includes swimming or relaxing beside an Oceanside pool where absolute quiet reigns. No radios or cell phone chatter can be heard there. Two others pools are available for



Kosher Kuisine

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Rice and grape recipes

Except for rice pudding and, once in a while, Spanish rice, I don't serve rice very often, although I realized many hostesses do serve it as a company dish. That led me to do a little research and learn because it contains starch and fiber, [brown] rice is a complex carbohydrate that digests slowly, making it nutritionally efficient. The sodium content is low, it is low in fat, has some potassium and B vitamins, thiamin and niacin. A serving of rice has 11 percent of the average daily requirement of protein, a trace of fat and no cholesterol; it is gluten free and has about 350 calories for 100 grams. Rice generally triples in volume when cooked so 1 cup raw equals 3 cups cooked. Here are some recipes, not just for company.

Baked Rice (4 servings)

- 1 1/4 Tbsp. salted pareve margarine
- 2 Tbsp. minced onion
- 1/2 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 cup rice
- 1 1/2 cups chicken soup
- 3 chopped parsley sprigs
- 14 tsp. dry thyme
- 1 1/4 Tbsp. salted pareve margarine

Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a casserole. In a saucepan, melt 1 1/4 Tbsp. margarine. Sauté onion and garlic until onion is translucent. Add rice, stir then add chicken soup, parsley and thyme. Spoon into greased casserole. Cover and bake in preheated 400°F. oven 15 minutes. Stir in remaining margarine.

French Soubise (4 servings)

Soubise is a classic French sauce based on béchamel with lots of onions. There was also an 18th-century Prince de Soubise. This is a less saucy version.

- water
- 1/2 cup rice
- 5 Tbsp. butter or margarine
- 6 1/2 cups sliced onions



bathers to frolic as they wish.

For an extra tariff, guests may choose to be accommodated on the Flagler concierge level, a top floor exclusive lounge with a spectacular 180-degree patio view of Palm Beach. The attendants there provide all manner of services for guests as well continental breakfast daily, all-day snacks and evening hors d'oeuvres with a wide selection of apéritifs and other drinks. The rooms in (see Jacobson/Kleiner, page NAT 15)

- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup grated Swiss cheese
- 1 Tbsp. butter or margarine
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

Preheat oven to 300°F. Grease a casserole. Heat water in a saucepan to boiling, add rice and cook 5 minutes. Drain. Melt margarine in a saucepan. Add onion and rice, salt and pepper. Spoon into greased casserole, cover and bake in preheated 300°F. oven for 1 hour. Blend in cheese and 1 Tbsp. butter or margarine. Garnish with parsley before serving.

Italian Parmesan Rice (4 servings)

- 2 Tbsp. salted pareve margarine
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 cup rice
- 1 1/2 cups chicken soup
- 1 Tbsp. margarine
- 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese

Melt 2 Tbsp. margarine in saucepan. Sauté onion and garlic for 5–10 minutes. Stir in rice then chicken soup. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes. Stir in 1 Tbsp. margarine and Parmesan cheese.

Spiced Grapes

- 2 cups grapes
- 5 whole cloves
- 5 whole allspice
- 2 inches stick cinnamon
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 cup white vinegar

Snip grapes into clusters. Pack in a pint jar. Add cloves, allspice, and cinnamon. In a saucepan, heat sugar and vinegar. Bring to a boil and cook 5 minutes. Pour over grapes. Cover and refrigerate 1 to 2 days.

Grape Dessert

- 3 cups seedless grapes
- 2 cups sour cream
- juice of 2 lemons
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp. ginger
- lemon wedges

Mix in a bowl grapes, sour cream, lemon juice, brown sugar and ginger. Chill. Serve in chilled dishes with lemon wedges for each.

Grape Jam

- 3 cups grapes
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 apple

Place grapes in a saucepan with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 5 minutes. Measure into a larger saucepan. Add sugar, bring to a boil and boil one minute, stirring constantly. Skim off foam, return to heat and cook 5 minutes. Ladle into jars.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, book reviewer, lecturer, food writer and author of nine kosher cookbooks. She lives in Jerusalem. ★

CHASSIDIC RABBI

(continued from page NAT 3)

tests that mankind has ever faced.

It's all in our hands. We have to do whatever we can to bring ourselves and all of mankind to live a life of Torah and *mitzvahs*. Each and every *mitzvah* is helping to bring Moshiach now!

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

HOFMANN

(continued from page NAT 5)

the son of God and died for our sins, could not possibly understand the Jewish historical perspective. Which is probably why "converts" to Judaism so frequently state that they don't feel like they converted at all, but instead realize they had a Jewish soul all along. Most of us never did fit in as Christians, no matter how we tried.

In my first column for this paper, back in 1970-something, I said that coming to Judaism was akin to sliding into a comfortable old slipper. It was where I had always belonged. I may have spent more time with the New Testament as a young person, but when I began reading the Jewish Bible as a Jew, I knew it was my history as well.

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GOUTTMAN

(continued from page NAT 7)

should have been prepared for. After all, with the flotilla on the water, Israel was in a no-win situation no matter how it was dealt with. The Australian Zionist leadership, however, was bereft both strategically and tactically. It clearly lacked the immediate capacity to respond. Indeed, more in Melbourne than Sydney, it arrogantly refused to contemplate the idea of a public counter rally, which would have attracted media attention and, hence, a much wider audience.

Perceptions tend to create their own reality. They caused the government of Australia to dump one leader in favor of another. The failure to publicly rally at a time of crisis for Israel was just not a misjudgement born of arrogance, but it indicates that the political acuity of the present Zionist leadership in Australia is lamentably weak.

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

KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page NAT 8)

more women are wearing wedding rings and engagement rings on the left hand. Some even wear them on the left hand and right hand. For many years, Israeli women wore their wedding rings only on the fourth finger of the right hand.

Back to shoes, by far the most popular style of sandal worn here are backless slip-ons in all styles and colors. Flip-flops by the younger generation are also still favored. Personally, I can't wear either style on the street and wonder how they manage to keep them on when running for and getting on buses!

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, book reviewer, lecturer, food writer and author of nine kosher cookbooks. She lives in Jerusalem. ★

TEICHER

(continued from page NAT 11)

continued development of the Jewish community, including the advent of East European Jews. Support by Jews for labor leader, Tom Mooney, falsely accused of a bombing in 1916 that killed ten people, is detailed. In addition to the prominent San Francisco Jews previously mentioned, these include a civic leader, Adolph Sutro, musical prodigies Yehudi Menuhin and Isaac Stern, Gertrude Stein, newspaper columnist Herb Caen, many artists and writers, two lesser known individuals who figured importantly in the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge, political leaders such as Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein, and Tom Lantos, and generous philanthropists responsible for the Fleishacker Pool and Zoo, Steinhart Aquarium, Sigmund Stern Grove, and deYoung Museum.

Other aspects of the Jewish community that are discussed include the high rate of intermarriage, the low level of synagogue affiliation and Jewish education, as well as anti-Zionist attitudes that led to the country's largest chapter of the American Council for Judaism. By contrast, the San Francisco Jewish community today is deeply involved with Israel, generously supporting the Jewish state. The New Israel Fund, which aims to strengthen civil society in Israel, was born in San Francisco and its present executive director lives there.

One small quibble – in describing the controversy over a mural by a radical Jewish artist in the Coit Tower, a San Francisco landmark, the author mentions a similar argument in New York over Diego Rivera's inclusion of Lenin's portrait in his mural for New York City's Chrysler Building. Actually, Rivera worked in the RCA Building of Rockefeller Center.

The excellent and thorough narrative is supplemented by numerous photos that add to the reader's appreciation for the singular quality of the San Francisco Jewish community.

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. ★

GOLD

(continued from page NAT 12)

masterful interpretation by Benjamin Maissner. I have heard many performances of this superb composition, but none were any better than this one. The orchestra arrangement by Mordechai Sobol was excellent.

In conclusion, as in any CD, some tracks may be better than others. In this case there is ever so much more that is good than otherwise. It is an enjoyable and even an educational CD, and one that I can readily endorse and recommend to my readers.

Dr. Gold is a composer, conductor and music critic for the Post & Opinion. He is the 2010 recipient of the Kavod Award given to him by the Cantors Assembly of North America at their recent convention. He can be reached at: drmortongold@yahoo.com. ★

JACOBSON/KLEINER

(continued from page NAT 14)

the Flagler section come, wonder of wonders, with television technology embedded in bathroom mirrors.

In addition to its revolutionary ecological changes The Breakers has also innovated in other areas as well. It was among the first to hire a sommelière, that is to say a female wine consultant, Virginia Philip, and she has proved her mettle by winning a major award for her knowledge of viniculture. The Breakers anticipates many of its guests' questions by producing a glossy magazine, *Traditions*, which highlights stories about its history, anniversaries, sports venues and personnel, including a 2010 sketch about Lloyd Singleton, the hotel's landscape manager.

He is no doubt responsible for the quarter-mile flower-bedecked driveway (perfect for the walker and jogger) that leads to the magnificent main building with its huge Florentine Fountain, inspired by the Boboli Gardens in Florence, Italy. The interior reception area with its high ceilings displaying sculptured cartouches of Italian Renaissance themes is quite breath taking as are the profusion of portraits, charts and other memorabilia of the past.

Jewish visitors to the Palm Beach area will find three Orthodox and one synagogue. One of the Orthodox ones is within easy walking distance from The Breakers on 120 Old County Rd. It is currently being refurbished but will be ready for services shortly. Kosher food is available at the Palm Beach Jewish Center, 205 Royal Palm Way, Morels Pub 1649 Forum Place, West Palm Beach and David's East Side Deli 4850 PGA Blvd. #509. ★

MEDAD

(continued from page NAT 16)

I was offered water. This family keeps strictly according to *Ashkenaz* (European) custom of not serving visitors. *Sephardi* (Mediterranean and North African) Jews serve all sorts of foods to hear *brachot*, blessings. Some ethnic groups serve a festive meal to honor the dead every night of the *shiva*.

In Shiloh it's common for even the most *Ashkenaz* families to serve water, soft drinks, cookies and such for two reasons. One is that visitors have traveled a distance and it's considered important for them to have something. Another is the influence of the neighbors. The *Sephardi* neighbors want to make blessings in honor of the dead. We're a very international, multicultural and multi-ethnic community.

Many families are Jewish ethnic mixtures. Sometimes that can cause confusion. A few years ago, neighbors were sitting *shiva* over Purim. An announcement went out that the widower, being *Ashkenaz* could not accept *Mishloach Manot* (the Purim food gift), but his daughter, married to a Yemenite, could.

And if you're wondering what to bring, it's best to bring some food the mourners can eat. Try to find out who is organizing things for the mourners, so you'll bring something they need. Just in case they have too much, it should be something that won't spoil or can be frozen. Or if you're not sure, bring a nice fruit basket.

Have a good month.

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-ander.blogspot.com>. You can contact her at shilohmuse@yahoo.com. ★

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Musings from Shiloh

BY BATYA MEDAD

Harping on Jerusalem

The strings in the Jerusalem skyline remind me of a harp. Wherever you look, there are strings in the sky playing beautiful music. Is all this building in preparation for the *Moshiach*?



I don't let the world's *kvetches* get to me. They're just jealous! Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Jewish nation. It has been for thousands of years. The relationship is eternal!

Only in Israel!

Do people choose their bars according to their politics?



In Jerusalem's downtown center, just off of Zion Square, in the old neighborhood of Nachalat Shiva, I noticed three neighboring businesses (above), probably bars or pubs. Each is named after an important historic figure: Golda Meir, Menachem Begin, Theodor Herzl. Does this happen anywhere else in the world?



Another Great Reason to Live in Shiloh!

This (above) was obviously taken before the pool was filled and before the tarp was hung to bring privacy to the Shiloh swimming pool. The pool administration

and maintenance staff have been busy for weeks repairing the pool and refreshing the landscaping. There's also a shallow children's wading pool, which can't be seen from this angle.

Our swimming hours are strictly segregated, male and female hours. The early hours and the last before closing are adults only, no kids. That's when I go. It's much more pleasant. "Icing on the cake" is the location, an easy and short walk from my house.



Zion Square, Jerusalem (above) — Spiritual and Material

Ancient and modern, and everything in between, too.

Don't think of it as contradictions, think of *shleimut*, being complete, whole. Judaism is a balance of the spirit and physical. Yes, like the Jewish calendar combines the lunar and solar calendars to make the most accurate calendar of all. Here at Zion Square, a big performance stage dominates, and next to it *Breslov Chassidim* (followers) try to interest passersby.



Better Mincha (Afternoon Prayers) Than No Tel at All

Long afternoon shadows.

For a few years already, I've made every effort to walk down the two kilometers to Tel Shiloh on *Rosh Chodesh*, the first of the Jewish month. *Rosh Chodesh* is considered a "women's holiday," and Biblical Shiloh is the location where Chana prayed for a son who would lead the Jewish People. The basic laws for Jewish prayer are derived from how she prayed. *Nu*, what site could be better for our prayers?

This morning I couldn't leave the house, because I take care of my elderly father. So, I prayed the *Rosh Chodesh* morning prayers at home. Then close to six, someone came over to visit my father. She said she had enough time. So, I went down to Tel Shiloh to pray.

Answering Questions About Helping Jewish Mourners "Sit Shiva"

Leora is working on a series about

Rabbinical students embark on summer tour of duty

And Honor 250-year Yahrzeit of Baal Shem Tov

Four hundred rabbinical students will begin a summer tour of duty that will take them to 2,500 cities and over 10,000 communities, where they will reach out to Jewish communities worldwide. Paired in groups of two with individualized itineraries, the students travel with a library of Jewish books, tapes, videos and even torah scrolls wherever necessary.

The students will visit small, isolated communities in places as varied as Vietnam, Ireland, Peru, and many others where only a handful of Jews make up the existing Jewish population.

Now in its 65th year, Merkos Shlichus, as the Jewish community enrichment program is officially known, challenges Chabad-Lubavitch rabbinical students to apply their training in the field while



Merkos Shlichus Group (June 2010) Photo credit: B. Lifshitz via lubavitch.com.

Jewish mourning, and she'll have a post interviewing me on how to help mourners. She sent some questions, and I've just spent quite a bit of time answering them and giving other info. She'll have to compose questions to match.

Bli eyin haraa (not to tempt the "evil eye"). I'm quite an expert on shiva for one who has never sat. I'm one of the oldest, probably the oldest now, in my shul who has to leave during *Yizkor*. I have neighbors who were even older before they sat *shiva* for the first time.

The basic Jewish laws of mourning really take into account what a mourner needs emotionally and psychologically. It's very upsetting to hear that, especially abroad, outside of Israel mourners are making their *shivots* more like wakes, having it catered like big social occasions. Most Jews aren't members of synagogues, so just when they need help, they're all alone. There's no traditional rabbi to guide them, nor a "*chesed* committee" to help with the logistics.

Mourners' needs are to be catered to. They're not supposed to bring catering for "guests."

Different Shiva, Jewish Mourning Customs

Yesterday, when I was on my way to Jerusalem I got a call from my husband that an old friend's brother had passed away, and he was sitting shiva for two days in Jerusalem. So I added that to my itinerary for the day.

providing a vital service in locations where often no Jewish community infrastructure exists.

This summer the program is intensified in honor of the 250th passing of the Baal Shem Tov, who began the tradition as an itinerant teacher. In an intensive 3-6 week stint, the students will become acquainted with their assigned communities, meet with its members and leaders, and evaluate their immediate needs.

The students will come prepared to teach intensive courses in Jewish tradition, *talmud*, *kabbalah* and the Jewish life cycle, adapting the program to the specific needs and interests of each respective community.

Throughout the ensuing year, students will maintain close contact with communities and individuals, often visiting during the holiday seasons, sending shipments of Jewish literature and other Judaica, or answering questions long distance, all in an effort to make traditional Judaism a viable reality for all Jews, everywhere. ✨

I got to the Israel Museum to see my daughter and the new "Windows" exhibition (a post and pictures will follow, G-d willing). Then I tried on that dress, picked up some aluminum baking pans in town, bought a take-out salad, was surprised by son #1 and met a friend to eat out. We sat in the shade near the big *HaMashbir* department store in downtown Jerusalem, each with a tuna salad. She told me, quite rightly, that I should really prepare one at home, like she does. I ought to, G-d willing, next time.

After that I took a bus to the *shiva* home. I didn't have any details, such as when he died or had he been ill. I did expect a mob of people. A teenage boy got off the bus with me and also stopped to look at the death announcement poster by the building. I read it, because I wanted to find out which apartment, but when I asked the boy, he said that he is a grandson, so for him it meant something else.

I followed him in. The apartment door was open, which is the custom. Very few people were there, just family mostly. The dead had been buried less than 24 hours and there's a custom that only family and very close friends visit the first day or two. But I had no real choice. I can't go to Jerusalem often and our friend was only going to be there a couple of days. He lives abroad and will finish mourning in his own home.

(see Medad, page NAT 15)