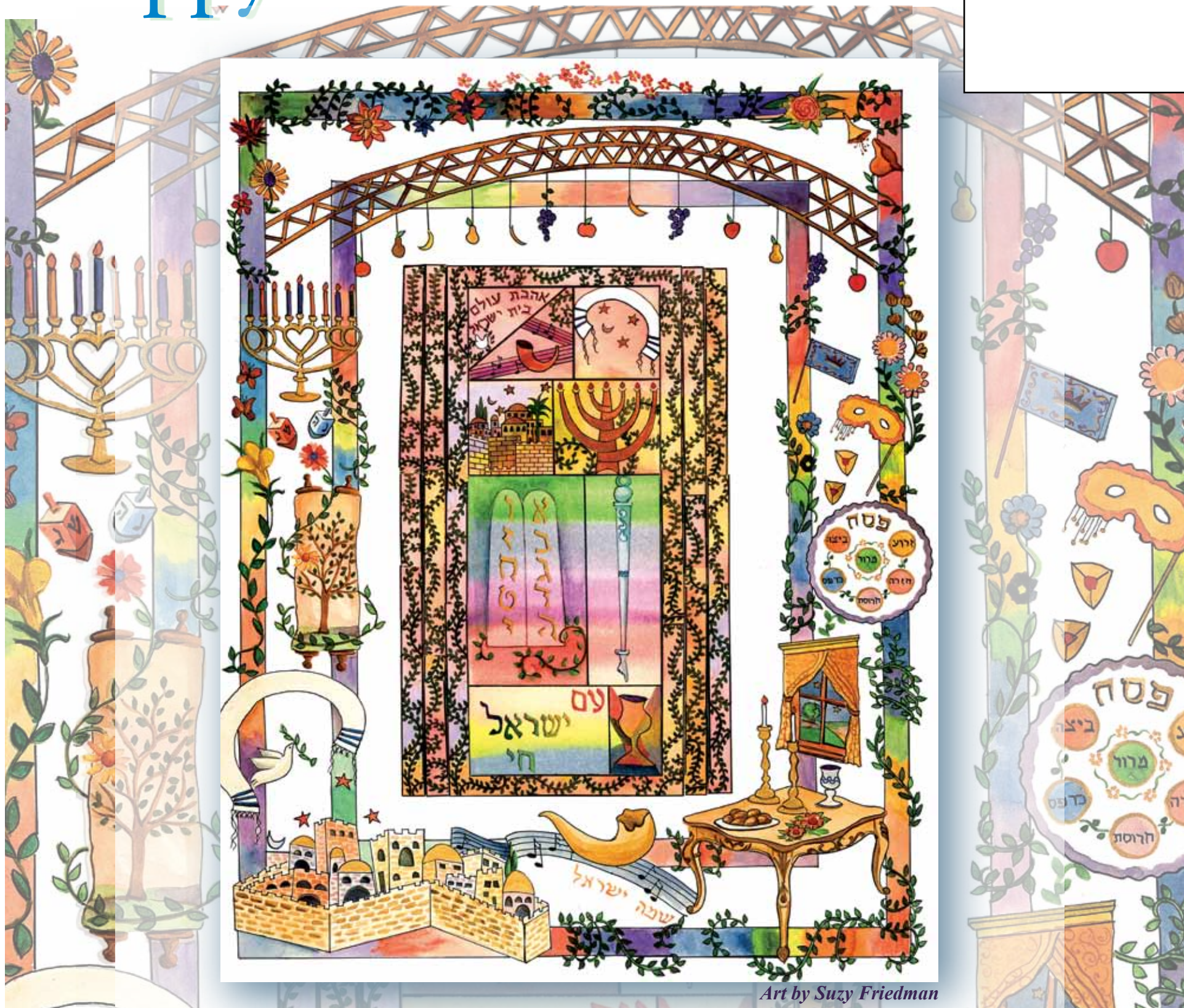


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Happy Rosh Hashanah



Editorial

Two events worth mentioning took place since our last issue. One was a concert and the other was a visit to New Harmony, Ind.

I haven't attended a concert in a long time. Anymore I would rather buy a group's CDs and listen to them peacefully at home rather than pay the high-ticket cost for a concert, fight the traffic and crowds, or wait in line for everything.

A friend of mine who is a big country music fan had purchased tickets to see the duo Brooks & Dunn and asked me if I would be interested in not only going to see them but meeting them backstage before the concert. I had barely heard of them and did not know even one of their songs. I decided to listen and watch their music videos online to see how they sound. After listening to 24 of their songs, I told my friend that I definitely wanted to go.

Recently I have been experiencing health challenges due to stress from moving three times in two years along with other major changes. And after giving my promise to attend, on the day of the concert, I wasn't feeling well and was considering canceling. However, during a short phone conversation with my friend, I was persuaded to go.



This was an outdoor concert, and the temperature was more than 90 degrees. After finding our seats, I looked around and saw not just young people, but all ages. While listening to the warm-up bands, I was thinking, whom in their right mind plops down \$75 a ticket to relish battling this heat for several hours and the aforementioned crowding.

Then Brooks & Dunn took the stage. For the first 30 minutes all 30,000 people in the audience remained standing; some even stood longer.

In the last issue of the paper, my brother wrote about different kinds of love. I saw firsthand another kind that wasn't mentioned. These diehard fans loved every song, every word spoken, and every gesture of this duo. Feeling all kinds of aches and pains before they

took the stage, I had those washed away with this outpouring of love. Well into the next day, I was still healed of pain by all that love.

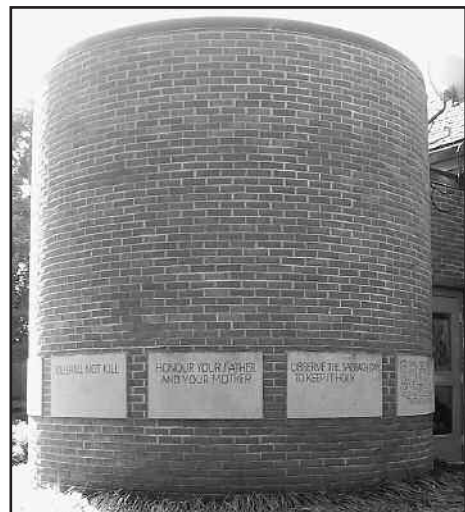
Another friend invited me to drive to New Harmony, Ind., a small town in the southwest corner of the state. I was told it is quiet and peaceful there, lending itself to spiritual renewal. I remembered hearing that it was once an experimental society where the founders had aspired to create a utopia.

When I looked it up online, it said: "New Harmony, Ind., located on the banks of the Wabash River, is an experience like no other. A community that began almost 200 years ahead of its time, New Harmony was first a spiritual sanctuary that later became a haven for international scientists, scholars, and educators who sought equality in communal living."

Our time there was short but what I saw was beautiful. Flowing water fountains and colorful flower gardens abounded. A lake surrounded by tall trees with long branches leaning toward the ground, and leaves dancing in the wind provided needed shade. Two pristine white swans were bathing in the lake, and birds were merrily chirping.

I saw all kinds of different artwork including sculptures, drawings, paintings and statues. The walking paths had poignant quotes by influential authors, such as Thomas Merton.

One of the first interesting pieces of architecture I saw was a round, red-brick building that had the Ten Commandments written on it. One commandment was next to another horizontally, about eye level, so that one could walk around the building and read them in order. After that, the majority of the artwork seemed to be mostly Christian in content. For example, there was the Roofless Church, which was empty when I was in it, but I could imagine how inspiring it could be to participate in a service out in nature.



After seeing more and more artwork like that, I started to feel a little bit left out. I was wondering if there had ever been any Jewish people in this place. Then when I was preparing to return home, I was in the registration building and noticed a small room off to the side. When I walked into it, it felt like a prayer/meditation room. I studied the

artwork all around and just as I was about to leave, I noticed this inspiring prayer on a plaque that was standing in a planter by the door.



A Prayer for the World

Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds held and nurtured over generations. Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.

Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows. Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken. Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly. So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender and skin color.

Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness. So that we can share the joys and feel the sorrows of our neighbors. And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbors.

Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty and let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven. Amen.

Rabbi Harold Kushner

About the Cover

This artwork by artist Suzy Friedman depicts the Jewish holidays we celebrate and observe throughout the year. Friedman painted it with an eye for being decorative as well as meaningful. She finds it enjoyable to move from one image to the other within this piece and remember celebrations with family and friends. She also renders this artwork in 3-d. For further information or to order a print, contact her.



SUZY FRIEDMAN

Friedman creates distinct special occasion art using Judaic themes. Each piece reflects her love of Judaism and its traditions.

For many years Friedman has been using her artistic talent in media as diverse as mosaics, hand-dyed and painted silk *atarot* for *talitot* and torah covers, cards and invitations, and hand-painted *ketubot*. Her latest interest is in creating three-dimensional Giclee-process *ketubot* and other Judaic themed prints.

Suzy's commissioned artwork can be found in synagogues and homes throughout this country as well as Canada. She has taught art to secular and religious school students.

Her training includes a BA in fine art from Indiana University and a masters in art education from IUPUI at Herron.

To contact Suzy Friedman visit her Website at www.suzyfriedmanarts.com, e-mail her at suzyfriedman@comcast.net, or call 317-501-3107. ☆

After reading this I did not feel like an outsider anymore. Perhaps New Harmony had succeeded in what the founders set out to do. It seemed not to be limited to only one religious experience but promoted the good that is available in them all.

Jennie Cohen, August 11, 2010. ☆

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Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

One of my readers wrote "I don't believe in Hashem. I stopped when I was 13."

I can certainly understand this. I grew up in a family with liberal leanings. Some of us sometimes looked down on religion and on religious people. We were told that religion is the opium of the masses. Some of the people that I knew believed in Hashem, and some didn't. Sometimes I believed in Hashem and sometimes I didn't.

Why is it that some believe in Hashem and some don't? Chassidus explains that Hashem created many worlds, higher and lower, and our world is the lowest. What is so low about our world? Our world has more evil than the higher worlds, and Hashem is more hidden.

If we look for Hashem we can find Him. If we want, we can deny Him. It is our choice.

Why should we look for Hashem? Here are a few reasons. Many people that we know believe in Him. In fact, according to a poll that I found on the Fox News web site, 92% of Americans believed in Hashem in the year 2004, and another 3% weren't sure. Almost all of our grandparents, or great-grandparents, and their ancestors for the last 3,800 years believed in Hashem.

Those who believe in Hashem and keep His commandments have a better life. For example, take married life. Those who live by the Torah have close to a 100% rate of success. Almost all marry in their early 20s and stay happily married for the rest of their lives. Those who live secular lives have a much lower rate of success.

How does belief in Hashem improve marriages? First of all, it affects our outlook on life in general. The Torah teaches us that Hashem created us for a purpose, to do good and give of ourselves to make the world into a better and holy place. By living a life of Torah, we can overcome our selfish nature to a great extent, and devote our life to doing good. When two people get married, each intent on helping and giving to their partner in life and the children that will come, they have a good chance to build a happy and everlasting family. If a couple marries with selfish intentions, each dreaming about what they will get and what their partner will do for them, they are heading for disaster.

In addition, the Torah teaches us the great importance of marriage. When we were born, only half of our soul came down into our body. What happened to the other (better) half? It is in our intended spouse. When we marry the right person, we are no longer half of a soul. We become part of a whole soul. Of course there are many side benefits to being married. You aren't lonely, you

have someone to help pay the mortgage and other expenses. When we realize how important our marriage is, we are much more willing to do whatever is necessary to make it work. And when we hit some rough spots, we won't just decide to throw in the towel.

Belief in Hashem brings meaning to life. We were created and live for a purpose, to do good and make the world holy. Without a Creator, life is just a meaningless accident. According to atheists, we are alive because many years ago a few hundred thousand atoms accidentally happened to stick together in a special order to form the first living creature. Their life without meaning can be empty and painful. When things get hard they ask why? Why am I suffering? Why am I having a hard time? What is this vacuum that I feel inside? There is no answer. Some turn to drugs and alcohol to forget this pain. Some turn to crime. Some may develop delusions that they are better than others, and thus enjoy feeling superior. Some have developed a pseudo-religion: humanism. They may not believe in Hashem, but they do believe in some of Hashem's commandments and do good things. In this way they actually do part of what they were created for, so they bring a little true meaning and fulfillment to their life. Some, who are fortunate, search for meaning. If they are persistent, they eventually find Hashem.

Life is easier and more pleasant when we believe in Hashem. We don't have to carry the whole load of life alone. Hashem is always here to help us.

As the saying goes, you can't argue with success. The Torah has helped us and our ancestors to lead good and happy lives for 3,800 years. There must be a lot going for it. Look for Hashem and study His Torah. You have nothing to lose, and a whole lot to gain. In recent years many millions of people all over the world have found Hashem. I think that almost every one of them will tell you that their life is much better.

How do you find Hashem? Go to the nearest Chabad House. They will help. If there isn't one nearby, call the nearest one, and speak to them on the phone.

But why did Hashem hide himself? He is our Father and wants us to look for Him and find Him and reveal His presence in this, the lowest of worlds. Once we accomplish this, Moshiach will redeem us. This world will no longer hide Hashem. He will be revealed to all, and automatically all evil will disappear forever.

It's up to us. If you haven't found Hashem yet, keep looking. You will find Him. If you believe in Hashem, do what you can to help all of your family and friends discover Him. Every *mitzvah* that we do 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. ★



Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

Aug. 6, 2010, Reeh
(Deuteronomy 11:26–16:17), 26 Av 5770

It seems like such a long time since I've sent you a message, and so much has taken place in my life. Most of it is good and that is what I will focus on. At the end of June, Sandy and I led a trip to Israel that was filled with seeing new sites and exhibits, as well as visiting familiar and special places. Our wonderful guide, Doron, took us on a journey through Israel tying together Jewish history from long ago to the history of modern Israel and present-day realities.

It was wonderful for me to watch the trip's participants see and react to places such as Masada and the Western Wall. It was exciting to see those that went on the trip embrace the holiness and excitement of Jerusalem. It was fun to watch people become experts on hummus, schwarma and falafel. Oh yeah, by the way, it was incredibly hot. Hot was what Indianapolis had in common with Israel. The only difference is that here it also rains. Regardless of the heat, I can't wait to return to Israel. Sandy and I hope to go back some time this winter. We've never been there together without a tour. We want to wake up and leisurely stroll the streets, eat lunch at a neighborhood place, go to the beach, visit northern Israel, and just enjoy the country without waking up to catch an 8 a.m. bus.

Since returning from Israel, I've been blessed to do two things. The last week of July, I took my yearly weeklong class at the Marc Adams School of Woodworking in Franklin, Ind. Marc and Susie, his wife, run the school, but over the years they have become friends with Sandy and me as well. Marc is one of the most optimistic people I have ever met and makes every person who attends the school feel as if they can do anything with their hands and wood. (I am proof that anyone can achieve.) My class this year was on veneering, and I actually learned how to do veneering, which is pretty cool. We will see where it takes me. Mostly my time at Marc Adams is therapeutic. I don't think about anything but the class. I focus on the task at hand and when I come home, I think about tomorrow's project. It is certainly a great way to clear the mind from anything else going on in life.

The week before and the week after the class, I was working at GUCI helping the middle-aged unit, Gezah (entering 7th and 8th graders), build a new, smaller sized *beit tefillah* (chapel) back in the woods. I was thrilled to be working outside every afternoon for a couple of hours in 90+ degree heat. We finished that project on Wednesday, and the unit had a dedication of the *beit tefillah* yesterday. It was nice to see a new,

meditative place come alive at camp. Those youth who worked hard to build this holy space will return to it year after year. Maybe they might just sit down and think about this glorious world they live in and the opportunities to continue to make this world a special place.

Tonight, Shabbat is upon us, and it is time to reflect back on the week(s) that have passed us by. Israel, woodworking, setting posts in concrete, and working with the youth have given me strength of mind and soul. They are about today, and we all live in today, but Shabbat is about tomorrow. Yes, we take time on Shabbat to reflect on the week that was, but we also try and glimpse a better day, which is tomorrow. That better day will come about because of our efforts today in working to making this world a better place, helping to improve the lives of the people in this world, and just as important as everything else, taking care of ourselves through whatever we can do to strengthen our minds and renew our souls. Take time tonight to just say thank you for the blessings in your life. I can't thank my family – Sandy, Josh, and Rachel – enough for all their love and support, and the many friends who have helped me focus not just on today, but tomorrow as well. Along with your blessings, take a moment to think about what you can do this week to make the world a better place for all.

When you light your candles this Shabbat, light one for the opportunities that exist everyday to make our lives full and fulfilled. Light the other for the opportunities we have to bring about a better world tomorrow. May all of you bring your blessings to this world today and for tomorrow.

Rabbi Adland has been leading Reform congregations for more than 25 years in Lexington, Ky., and Indianapolis, Ind. ★

Bit of Wit

In 1936, Morris Rabinowitz fled his native Germany. He sold his assets and made five sets of solid gold teeth with his cash, well above the limit he could bring into the U.S.

When he arrived in New York the customs official was perplexed as to why anybody would have five sets of gold teeth. So Morris explained: "Jews who keep kosher have two separate sets of dishes for meat products and dairy products but, I am so religious I also have separate sets of teeth."

The customs official shook his head and said, "Well that accounts for two sets of teeth. What about the other three?"

"Very religious Jews use separate dishes for Passover, but I am so Orthodox I have separate teeth for Passover meat and for Passover dairy food."

The customs official shook his head and said, "You must be a man of very strong faith to have separate teeth for meat and dairy products and likewise for Passover. That accounts for four sets of teeth. What about the fifth set?"

Morris looked around and spoke softly. "To tell you the truth," he said, "once in a while I like a ham sandwich." ~Submitted by Marvin Migdol, Dallas. ★

The challenge of Yamin Noraim

By RABBI BEN KRAMER

The *Yamim Noraim* (Days of Awe) are a truly a gift from G-d – a *mikrah kodesh*, a holy time, for engaging in holy work – the work of *cheshbon hanefesh* (introspection) and the work of *teshuva* (repentance). The *Yamim Noraim* are not easy. They are both intellectually and spiritually challenging. They reject any attempts to engage them in a merely perfunctory manner. They will defy any effort to keep them from realizing their purpose, to prevent them from penetrating our patinaed armor of nonchalant disaffectedness behind which we shield our vulnerability. The *Yamim Noraim* will break through. Whether we are aware of it or not, they will enter into the deepest chambers of our heart and slowly, slowly work to transform us from the inside out.

This is why we come to synagogue, year after year, because deep down we all want to be challenged, we all want to be forced to confront ourselves, to confront G-d, to stand exposed to the universe and be forced to reckon with our place in it. As human beings it is both our privilege and our fate to know that we are mortal, to know that there is so much that we don't know and can't know; our privilege and our fate to wonder, to question, so search endlessly but hopefully for meaning. We come to synagogue during

the *Yamim Noraim* because we secretly hope we will be compelled to ask ourselves some important questions – to ask them and to search for answers. And there are answers to be found, lessons to be learned, encoded and concretized in the words of the liturgy and rituals these holy days; answers that speak to us of the preciousness of life and the need to live it well, of the importance of our own actions in the eyes of G-d and man, of the potential for change that inheres in each and every one of us.

The *Yamim Noraim* are a time when our tradition encourages us to be tough with ourselves, and with G-d, and also to love ourselves and to love G-d; to focus on the year gone by as well as on the year to come; to acknowledge our shortcomings and celebrate our strengths; to assess our place in the community and the role of G-d in our life; to strive to feel first-hand the power of ritual and the power of prayer; to grow, to improve, to become better human beings, more connected to ourselves, to one another and to G-d. To begin the new year as a different person that we ended it – a little better, a little wiser, a little closer to G-d, and imbued with a greater sense of purpose and meaning.

Shannah tovah!

Rabbi Kramer is the rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel in Munster, Ind., a vibrant synagogue community located just 20 miles outside Chicago. For information about service times, please call their office: 219-922-0101. High Holiday tickets are free to local, first-time attendees. ✨

Shofar and the Truth

By RABBI STANLEY HALPERN

The High Holy Days are a time for introspection, a time to analyze what we have done well and what we need to do better. But for this period of thought to bear meaningful fruit, it must start with a truthful and honest look at our lives. Without pretense and without the mirror of self-flattery, we must look at ourselves, take pride in what we have accomplished, and dedicate ourselves to improve where we must.

And the three different sets of the *shofar's* blast help us to focus in on this truth – the truth of our very being.

The first of the *shofar* calls is *Malchuyot* – Sovereignty. The inner truth that this shofar call leads us to is the realization that we must have both dignity and freedom in our lives. After all, we were created in the Divine image, and there is, in fact, none more powerful. We have been given the power to do what is right – if we only choose that path and have the courage and dedication to see our destiny through. We can; indeed, we are obligated to do better today than we did yesterday – and we are obligated to be smarter, more caring, and more

compassionate tomorrow than we are today. This is the first truth we must realize. No excuses are acceptable.

The second set of *shofar* calls is *Zichronot* – Remembrance. What is it that we must remember? We must not forget, whether we like it or not, we are in a complicated series of relationships – with God, with humanity, within our marriages and families, and with any group we choose to affiliate with. We must remember that we are not in this world, in our lives alone. Remember this story? Two men are fishing in a boat. One decides to drill a hole under his seat. His companion complains, "You are going to sink the boat!" His friend says, "It is my half of the boat, I can do what I want." But we share our homes, our institutions, our cities, our planet.

We are all in this together – so get used to it.

The final set of *shofar* calls in *Shofarot* – Revelation. On Sinai we were offered the Torah and all that it requires of us. That generation expressed its willingness to take on those obligations even before they knew what they were. Since that time, each generation has, to a greater or lesser extent, accepted our heritage. It now falls to us – to alleviate the suffering in the world, to remove from our lives the mean-spiritedness and cruelty that



As I Heard It

By MORTON GOLD

High Holidays – time to teach Judaism 101

Normally I would use the space in this column to review a CD based on some Jewish theme (i.e., Shabbat, Psalms and so forth). There are many areas in which music and religion overlap. For example, the *Kol Nidre* service and the association with the *Kol Nidre* prayer chanted by the *hazzan*. Just like "love and marriage," the two go together. I am a musician and not a rabbi; I want to make that clear at the start. However, I am venturing into territory probably better left to religious leaders.

While I did make reference to an article in *Time* magazine previously, I don't believe that I got to the heart of the matter. In their remarks (sometimes still called sermons), most rabbis, at least in Conservative synagogues, confine their remarks to the Torah portion. The reading of the Torah is the main reason for having a Shabbat service in the first place. However, they miss a teaching opportunity more important than discussing the portion of the week. (I realize that this last sentence puts me beyond the pale.)

They assume that their congregation consists of dedicated as well as knowledgeable Jews. One can make this assumption by the scant number attending the ordinary Shabbat service. They truly are dedicated and more knowledgeable than most. However, and this is a very important however, most Jews who attend *bar/bat mitzvahs* and those who still feel obligated to attend services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are neither dedicated nor knowledgeable. The rabbis ought to use the time they have to teach Judaism 101.

Among the numerous things they ought to teach about is *Kashrut*. They need to explain that *kosher* meat is more expensive than meat purchased at the

hurts others – both those close to us and those we have never met.

It is our prayer that the High Holy Days 5771 will lead us to a sense of empowerment to change the world that is into the world that could be – a world strengthened by our renewed relationship with both the Divine and all of humanity – a world we can look upon with satisfaction.

Carol and I wish our Temple family and the entire community a safe and healthy New Year. B'Shalom.

Rabbi Stanley Halpern is the senior rabbi at Temple Israel in Gary, Ind. ✨

supermarket. *Kosher* butchers require a *mashgiach* (religious supervisor). That is his job and he needs to be paid. The market in sheer numbers for potential customers is limited and, therefore, the product is and has to be more expensive. A Jewish community requires a *kosher* butcher as much as it requires a *mikvah*, and a house of worship. It is not a matter of cleanliness or of hygiene but rather of holiness.

The majority of Jews, especially those in their 20s and 30s do not relate to this. Why, they ask, should they pay three or four times more for a chicken than in the market? The question is a valid one and needs explaining...frequently. Rabbis ought to direct their remarks to the "best and brightest" amongst us, those folks who still attend, if only for a short time on the "holidays."

It is difficult as well as expensive to be Jewish. They need to be told that eating a cheeseburger is in effect an act of idolatry. What? The practice started back in biblical times when our ancestors had sex with priestesses of Ishtar, and following their time together (this is a family newspaper) celebrated by eating meat and dairy together. The sages were so aghast at this (the eating especially) that the line "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk," which appears twice in the Torah, is a euphemism against this practice and really has little to do with the cooking of goats.

In fact the whole idea of separating meat and dairy dishes, utensils, and such stems from this very line. Yes, it is true that milk could ferment in the cracks of dishes, but this incidental health benefit is not the reason for this practice. Rather, again it has to do with holiness. ("You shall be holy because I, the Lord your G-d am holy.") I have already gone on at length on the subject and will call it a day.

The bottom line is that the rabbis, particularly Conservative ones, ought to use the time they have to teach the fundamentals of Judaism. The object of their attention ought to be adults rather than children. Children do what they see their parents doing. Otherwise, we might just as well change the *Magen David* in the Israeli flag to a lobster.

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. ✨

On this date in Jewish history

On August 11, 1635

Marranos who escaped from Spain fall victim to auto-da-fe in Lima.

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

Jews' News

HIAS poster contest now on view at Ellis Island

NEW YORK, NY – For the first time, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society's annual Poster Contest for Immigrant Youth is on display at Ellis Island, part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument. Ellis Island was the nation's premiere federal immigration station and is now a museum of immigration.



Since 1995, HIAS, the international immigration agency of the American Jewish community, has sponsored an annual immigrant art poster contest. Winning posters from the 2009 annual contest will be on display on the main floor of the Ellis Island Museum in the area behind the information desk through Labor Day.

Entries are now being solicited for the 2010 contest, which closes on Oct. 15, 2010. For more information, contact: 212-613-1401 or go to www.HIAS.org.

Funding for the calendar and the Ellis Island exhibit was generously provided by the Estate of Sidney Krum. Downloadable versions of posters from 1995 to the present are available online at HIAS/Sidney Krum Gallery at: www.hias.org/krumgallery/posters/index.html. ★

Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust holds annual conference

The 22nd Annual Conference of "The World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust" will be hosted at the Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center Chicago North Shore in Skokie, Ill. The Conference will begin on Fri., Nov. 5, 2010, and end on Mon., Nov. 8, 2010. The food served at the Conference will be *glatt kosher*. For more information, please contact Ruthie Isaacs-Holzer at 574-231-8028.

This event is only for child Holocaust survivors and their family members. It is not open to the general public at large.

Remember to send your material for the commemorative booklet to Gabriele Silten now. The deadline for materials is Aug. 15. Register before Sept. 15 to take advantage of the early bird pricing for the entire conference.

Lillian Polus Gerstner, director of Special Projects, Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie IL 60077, 847-967-4837. ★

JTA Publisher steps down, editor tapped to lead agency

NEW YORK – Mark J. Joffe, JTA's longtime executive editor and publisher, stepped down as head of the global Jewish news service, effective July 21, 2010. Following Joffe's announcement, the JTA board of directors has tapped Editor in Chief Ami Eden to lead the agency.

Joffe began work at JTA in 1987 as the news agency's editor and was promoted to executive editor and publisher in 1993. He established JTA's website (www.jta.org) in 1997, which quickly became the leading destination for global Jewish news on the Internet, and he helped launch several other digital services. In addition, he also has played a lead role in developing the soon-to-be-launched searchable digital news archive of JTA stories produced over the course of the agency's 93-year history.

An award-winning journalist, Eden has served as the editor of JTA for two years, during which time he oversaw a major expansion of the agency's Web strategy, including the launch of influential politics and philanthropy blogs and the multimedia Wandering Jew project. Prior to arriving at JTA, he served as the executive editor of the *Forward* and the founding editor of the *JewishDailyForward* website. ★

Looking for information on U.S. Zone Displaced Persons Camps in Germany

JULY 23, 2010 – I am writing in the hope that it will bring replies for my research.

My story dates back to the year's 1949–1951 in the post WWII era. I was born in the U.S. Zone DP Camp in Germany. As a toddler of 2 years of age, I was struck with tuberculosis. I was sent by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC) to a children's hospital by the name – IRO TBC Kempton Kinderkrankenhaus, where I was held for one entire year. This hospital was located in the town of Kempton in Allgau, Bavaria, Germany. It was run by the International Refugee Organization (a United Nations) organization and was intended for children with tuberculosis.

As I was told by my parents, who where Holocaust survivors, I was tortured in this hospital in various ways: (1) I was tied down into my crib by my hands and feet 24/7. (2) They used metal clamps on my hands; I still have the marks today.

Finally, my father (o.b.m.) took me out of there before I was completely healed. He kept saying to me repeatedly – in the latter years – just these words... "My son, you should know that I took you out of there, I [wonder] how many more Jewish children were left there forever."

My aim with this article is to find the records of this hospital, where this information could be found. So, I want to ask anyone who knows any information about this hospital and who knows of anything published concerning this Kempton Children's Hospital or the DP camps children with tuberculosis and how they were treated. Please send it to me at this e-mail: levinvoice@warwick.net. Emanuel Brach ★

Hadassah Convention Raises More Than \$10.6 Million for Hadassah Medical Center Innovation

NEW YORK – Nearly all of the 750 delegates present at Hadassah's 95th convention, 360 Degrees of Innovation, contributed to support Hadassah Medical Organization's ongoing innovation and care, raising more than \$10.6 million. This is one of the largest amounts raised at any of the organization's previous 94 national conventions and included a 100 percent giving rate at the annual banquet, which alone raised more than \$100K in grassroots donations.

This year's convention brought together leaders in medicine, industry and activism discussing the innovations of Hadassah's campaigns as well as Hadassah Medical Organization in Israel. The three-day event also showcased a new partnership with Susan G. Komen for the Cure®, which will culminate in the inaugural Israel Race for the Cure in Jerusalem this October. In addition to the 750 attendees, more than 2,000 tuned in to the convention's sessions via live webcast – the first time Hadassah has used this technology to communicate with supporters worldwide.

During the opening plenary session, Dr. Shir Dar of Hadassah Medical Organization's OBGYN Department and David "Dudi" Barashi, Hadassah Medical clown recounted moving stories of the humanitarian work of Hadassah's medical staff after the earthquake in Haiti. During its time there, the Israeli medical team served 1,111 patients, performed 314 operations, oversaw 50 evacuations and 16 baby deliveries, including three C-sections – all from an IDF field hospital erected on a soccer field.

Obituary

Mitch Miller, 99

ROCHESTER, NY – Mitch Miller was born in Rochester, N.Y. on the fourth of July in 1911. He died July 31 at 99.



From 1948 until the early 1960s, he was a major force in the record business. He headed A&R for Columbia Records at the same time he was one of their top recording artists. Miller also hosted his own primetime TV show.

He graduated from the prestigious Eastman School of Music.

Miller was largely responsible for introducing many of the top stars of the past. He signed Frankie Lane, Patti Page and many others. The manager of a young singer called Elvis Presley knocked at his door. But Miller balked at the seemingly large advances and buying out Presley's existing contract with Sun Records. He also turned down Buddy Holly. He did manage to sign Johnny Mathis, the New Christy Minstrels, Simon and Garfunkel, Rosemary Clooney, Jerry Vale, Leslie Uggams, and Doris Day.

Which of his signees lasted the longest in popularity? Tony Bennett.

Miller had a conflict with a singer who refused to record two songs that Miller selected. It wasn't much of a loss – Frank Sinatra.

What was Miller's first big hit? The Israeli folk song, "Tzena, Tzena, Tzena."

Remember "The Yellow Rose of Texas" and the "Colonel Bogey March" from *The Bridge on the River Kwai*? You must be older than I.

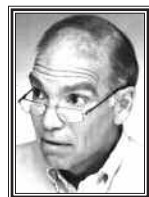
Submitted by Marv Migdol, a Dallas-based writer born in Rochester. ★

Ambassador Nancy Brinker, CEO and founder of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, member of the Knesset Dalia Itzik, and Hadassah National President Nancy Falchuk all gave moving addresses about the connection between Hadassah's members and its ongoing humanitarian work in Israel. Falchuk referred to this work as "practical Zionism."

The speakers encouraged participants to attend the inaugural Race for the Cure in Jerusalem on Oct. 28, 2010 (register at www.hadassah.org/komen) and Hadassah's centennial celebration in Jerusalem in 2012.

Other featured speakers at this year's convention included Dan Senor, co-author of *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*, and Rabbi Shmuel Boteach, author of *Kosher Sex*.

For video of plenary sessions, photos, and detailed daily reports of convention activities visit www.hadassah.org/site/c.keJNlW0vElH/b.6123117/k.2966/Live_at_Convention_2010.htm. ★



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

Are you a Jew?

Go define it. Are we a peoplehood? A religion? If so, how is that religion practiced? For those of us who can trace our lineage back (at least as far as Ellis Island), it is not a problem. We are definitively Jews. Nobody ever questions this.

The questions we get are more like: "What kind of a Jew are you?" And sometimes those words take on a pejorative note, most specifically when confronted by some overzealous fund raiser of one drive or another; or by a Jew with a different take on how the religion should be followed.

I have to say, no one has ever braced me with the statement "You are not a Jew." Well, that could be about to change. The Knesset is now debating a bill that would allow conversions only by the Rabbinate in Israel. The excuse or perceived purpose of the bill is that conversions in Israel right now can take years as only the rabbis of the Supreme Rabbinate can certify a conversion.

The bill has been put forth by a Knesset member from Yisrael Beiteinu, the party of sometimes Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman. His rationale is that there are some 400,000 or more Russian immigrants whose Jewishness is practically impossible to prove because of the tainted history of the Soviet Union with regard to Judaism and almost all other religions.

Therefore, the bill states, local municipal rabbis will be empowered to convert and/or verify if one is or has just become a Jew. But – and it is a big but – the conversion then goes to the Supreme Rabbinate for approval or disapproval. The problem is that the Supreme Rabbinate is Orthodox. And in the current framework mostly ultra-Orthodox. So, overnight, every non-Jew who married a Jew and converted is called into question.

And since in the U.S., the overwhelming majority of Jews are either Conservative or Reform (or somewhere in between), this immediately becomes a problem. So, who is a Jew? The question seems to keep bubbling to the surface and creating a mess just like a blob of oil in the Gulf.

So far as the State of Israel is concerned, it raises an even more troubling question. Is Israel truly the only true democracy in the Middle East? Or is it a theocracy, like say, Iran or Saudi Arabia?

As a true democracy, but one that is indeed the Jewish homeland, it must keep its Jewish identity to have a reason to exist. But – and here it is again – what is that identity? Is it enough to declare yourself a Jew and then be automatically entitled to citizenship and all the perks that go with that? If that were the case,

the Jewish State would be overrun by Ethiopians, Kenyans and Cubans.

No. If we are a peoplehood, which we were long before God talked to Moses, then it is in our DNA. But we are both a peoplehood and a religion, brought down the mountain for us by Moses. So, to be Jew, we have to accept that there is only one God and he (or she if you so choose) reigns supreme. The holidays that we celebrate follow a different calendar, the language of our people is Hebrew and thus far, there has been no Messiah. Sorry folks, that's the deal.

Beyond that? Knitted *kephah*, black hat, no *kephah*. Your choice. Drive to shul or walk on Shabbat. Your choice. Keep *kosher* in the home, your choice. In my own personal opinion, in Jerusalem no shop should sell trayfe. Not there. But you like shrimp cocktail? Cheeseburgers? Not great for the cholesterol, but you should not be forbidden to eat them or be declared a non-Jew.

What will the Rabbinate do to certify that your conversion is *kosher*? Give you a test as we do for new citizens of the U.S.? Who establishes the rules? Those few guys who will not ordain women? Who throw rocks at cars on the street on Saturday? And, oh yeah, the money. What are the chances that conversion becomes a huge underground industry in Israel?

No friends, this will not be like the local driver's license office. The rabbi who handles or certifies your conversion will need to have the right credentials, the right connections to move you up the ladder to the head dudes. Totally fair? Totally noncorrupt? I guess you don't read the Israeli press.

The party behind this piece of legislation might very well be totally legitimate in their reasoning. They probably would like to streamline the process of citizenship for their constituency, after all that is what will keep them in office and increase their influence in the State of Israel. But the tragedy of unintended consequences will soon outshine their good intentions.

The generations that have followed the Holocaust have a responsibility to repopulate the Jewish people. We could do that like the ultra-Orthodox in Israel (and some right here) by having a dozen or more children. That would stop overnight in Israel if the government took away the subsidies and asked those good people to go to work. Therefore, the intermarriage is good for the Jews. Every Jewish parent wants his or her kids to be raised Jewish. But we don't want to have to go to some self-proclaimed guardian of the faith to tell us that this is the way we must do this.

Prime Minister Netanyahu says passage of this bill could tear the Jewish people apart. You know, we have enough people in this world already ready to do that. We should not do it to ourselves.

Jim Shipley has had careers in broadcasting, distribution, advertising, and telecommunications. He began his working life in radio in Philadelphia. He has written his



An Observant Eye

BY RABBI AVI SHAFRAN

Abuse of power

The Jewish world reportedly has six months before the Rotem Bill (or some facsimile thereof) returns to the Knesset for further consideration. That should allow us all to more leisurely – and hopefully more reasonably – not only assess the bill's strengths and weaknesses but ponder a troubling issue peripheral to the legislation, but which was engendered by it.

The bill's essential aim is to allow non-Jewish Israelis a greater choice of religious courts than presently. The bill, further, formalized the decades-old religious status quo placement of conversion in Israel under the auspices of the country's official Chief Rabbinate.

On cue, the Jewish Federations of America, local Jewish Federations, Reform and Conservative leaders and an assortment of pundits all, as they say, went ballistic at the notion that *halacha*, or Jewish religious law, would determine conversion standards in Israel. That, despite the fact that the Rabbinate has overseen conversion in Israel since the country's founding.

The combusting protesters fantasized that the bill would prevent converts to the Reform or Conservative movements from immigrating to Israel under the Law of Return, that it would have some unidentified but grave impact on American non-Orthodox Jews, and that (here, more a threat than a fantasy) it would alienate such Jews from the Jewish State. They raised the specter of Jews being pulled off the streets in Israel to have their Jewishness revoked, and offered incendiary imagery (like a cartoon showing a shiny water cooler in Israel labeled "Orthodox-Certified Jews" beside an old-fashioned water fountain for "Reform, Conservative and Secular Jews only").

Seldom if ever has so much misinformation and ill will been sown by people ostensibly concerned with truth and Jewish unity.

A sensible if lonely voice in the wilderness was that of Reform Rabbi Mark Golub, the president of Shalom TV, who decried the Reform and Conservative movement for "overstat[ing] the threat the bill posed," and "unnecessarily anger[ing] large numbers of uninformed Jews over a bill which does not actually address them at all." He also took the Anglo-Jewish media to task for "failing to separate fact from hysteria."

JPO column for 20 years and is director of Trading Wise, an international trade and marketing company in Orlando, Fla. ★

Rabbi Golub noted further what he considers "the most disturbing aspect of the campaign" in America against the Rotem bill: "the subtle suggestion that the bill would jeopardize the bond between Diaspora Jewry and the State of Israel and would therefore threaten the security and future of the Jewish State."

It was indeed dismaying to read comments like that of the executive vice president of the Conservative movement's rabbinic group, who contended that the bill's effect on Israel's relationship with Jews in America would be "damaging to Israel's security" – a none-too-veiled "prediction" that if Israel didn't toe the non-Orthodox line (ill-informed though it might be), American Jews might no longer see Israel as worthy of their support.

More dismaying still was the intervention of Jewish members of the United States Senate. It was widely reported in mid-July that a letter about the Rotem bill had been drafted by Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon and circulated among other Jewish members of Congress' upper house for signature. The missive, presumably intended for Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren, reportedly expressed the concern of its signatories concerning the Israeli bill.

A spokesman for one signatory to the letter (the text of which has not been made public), Senator Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey, referred to his boss' judgment that the Israeli bill is "divisive" and to his hope that "the Knesset does not pass" it. Senator Carl Levin of Michigan was quoted as saying he was "troubled by a proposal which I believe would make it more difficult for many people who want to convert to do so."

It is not unheard of for members of Congress to express their feelings about human rights or other fundamental issues to representatives of other countries. But if ever there has been a case of American legislators seeking to influence another government's consideration of an entirely domestic concern – here, conversions performed in the State of Israel – much less one addressing a religious issue, it has remained well hidden (and for good reason).

Ratcheting up the reason for dismay considerably is the unspoken but hardly untelegraphed implication of the Senators' letter: that they themselves, as legislators who vote on matters pertinent to Israel's security, are troubled by the Rotem bill. It would not be unreasonable for Israel to interpret such a message as a warning, one particularly ill conceived, let alone ill timed.

Perhaps at the very top of the "disturbing" column, though, is the question of what brought about the Senatorial stab at an Israeli internal affair in the first place. It is certainly possible that Senator Wyden, despite his full plate of domestic concerns and legislative proposals, somehow just caught wind of the Rotem bill on his own and felt compelled to try to do something about it.

(see Shafran, page NAT 19)



Jews by Choice

BY MARY HOFMANN

On what can we all agree?

The current political situation in the Knesset regarding the potential for changing the Israeli definition of "Who is a Jew?" has so many grisly ramifications that I'm almost afraid to comment. Almost.

Rather than taking it head on, however, at this point I'd rather flip the entire argument on its head and approach it from a different angle. If instead of examining the rabbinically political definition of what constitutes a "real" conversion, how about we try looking at what makes us all Jewish, no matter how we got here. Perhaps we should look at those things on which we all agree, rather than those on which we do not.

For example, it seems to me that as Jews we can all agree that there is one God and that we cannot put limits on that God. If that's true, then it logically follows that we can disagree mightily on our individual perceptions of God without being chucked from the fold. If I envision a power that, though not definable, is greater than is the sum of the world's parts, and you envision God as a father figure who doles out rewards and punishments, it seems we should be able to agree to disagree and still respect the other's perspective as a fellow Jew.

It seems to me we also agree that we all are responsible for our behavior and cannot achieve individual salvation through the sacrifice of another. We diverge here from Christianity...how or whether we achieve salvation at all is less clear cut, but our stance on personal responsibility, on deed over creed, seems fundamental to the Jewish soul.

I think we'd also agree that humankind is not guilty of original sin, and that the idea of being born a sinner is a distinctly Christian concept we reject. We can disagree until the cows come home about why people sin (or, indeed, what constitutes sin), but we all accept that we're not born with it.

I think we could even agree that Judaism has grown and changed over the past thousands of years, adapting to time and place to remain a vibrant, living force in the world. It certainly changed over the course of the Tanakh and took on far more subtle and sophisticated legal definitions when the rabbis developed later writings and Talmud. It seems that the ultra-Orthodox have chosen to freeze that course of change in a period of time, which is certainly their prerogative and I honor that. Those of us who have chosen Reform, Conservative, or other more modern paths and feel that Judaism continues to evolve and



Ethiopian Jews

BY HOWARD LENHOFF

An Afro-Israeli Peace Corps

The recent capital increase for the International Monetary Fund is focused on expanding the fight on poverty worldwide. There appears to be a greater emphasis on strengthening grass roots and market-oriented entrepreneurship – especially in Africa. At the same time, many Western countries, including Israel, are concerned with assimilating large numbers of African immigrants who wish to make better lives for themselves and their families.

As long time activists on behalf of Israel and the Ethiopian Jews, I propose that Israel train and send Ethiopian

change to adapt to changing realities, should receive that same validation.

I think we can all agree on the moral and ethical bases of Jewish law and tradition. We are, for example, to treat each other and all living creatures with respect and to do everything in our power to avoid causing pain to another. For what Milton Steinberg calls "traditional" Jews that means adhering closely to Kashrut; for "modern" Jews, that often translates into a rethinking of more humane methods of animal husbandry or outright vegetarianism.

I think we also agree that we have a visceral connection to Jewish history, Jewish philosophy, Jewish culture, and other Jews. We relive the Exodus every year, even the least religious among us.

I also believe that Israel is a central element to every one of us. Whether that is Israel as a concept, Israel as a messianic dream, Israel as a metaphor, or Israel as a political entity, every one of us has a connection to Israel at our core.

So what happens if Israel – the physical embodiment, right or wrong, of our best and highest dream – chooses to formally reject a sizeable portion of us?

Jews have, historically, been a resilient and determined people, surviving in the face of all kinds of external threats. But internal threats?

It's frightening to consider the possibility that rejection of the majority of Jewish converts (and, by extension, of the Jews who accept them) by a minority of Jews whose vision is tightly limited could become the Law of the Land of Return.

I fear not only a possibly terminal rupture for the future of Israel in this but of Judaism itself.

Mary Hofmann welcomes comments at: P.O. Box 723, Merced, CA 95340; Mhofwriter@aol.com. ★

Jewish Israelis to poverty-stricken African nations to help them develop schools, farms, irrigation systems, and paramedical and communication facilities.

I and Rabbi Irving Greenberg and Nate Shapiro believe that Israel with help from the United States and American Jewry, its allies in rescuing the Jews of Ethiopia, can offer a special model useful for other democracies that also are trying to assimilate large numbers of African immigrants. Rabbi Irving Greenberg is a long-term board member of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews. Nate Shapiro led that organization during Operations Moses, Sheba and Solomon.

Today, in Israel and Africa, there are several exciting programs now operating that show that Israel's Ethiopian Jews can become one of that country's great assets.

Think about it: Out of Africa, educated in Israel, periodically employed by Israel or by the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) to help others still in Africa, and afterward bringing back additional expertise that will prove useful to Israel at home and abroad.

An example called the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village (ASYV) is currently operating in Rwanda. It is being developed by the American JDC on a 143 acre site in the eastern outskirts of Kigali, Rwanda's capital. Presently 250 Rwandan students are enrolled in Agahozo Shalom. The school eventually will be home to 500 orphans of the devastating wars of recent years.

One of the beauties of the Agahozo Shalom program is the unique background of the trainers of the Rwandan teachers there. Some are Ethiopian Jews who were orphaned themselves in the 1980s when their parents died in the Sudanese refugee camps trying to reach Israel.

There is precedent for Israel to conduct Peace Corps-like programs in Africa. Between 1958 and 1973, the Israeli government sent physicians, engineers, and irrigation and agricultural experts to a number of African countries. Israel has been reinstating some of these programs, the difference being that currently the African participants are invited to Israel to attend seminars and observe model programs. In addition Israel has resumed helping some African countries, including a large-project in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea where Israelis are supervising for that government the construction of "the best hospital in Africa."

If Israel were to invest robustly, with help from U.S. Jewry, into training more Ethiopian Jewish volunteers for work abroad, not only would that help African nations, it would benefit as well the larger community of 100,000 Ethiopian Jewish citizens of Israel. Ethiopians with such background contributing to the Israeli workforce would help decrease the group's level of poverty, increase the respect of other Israelis for their fellow Ethiopian citizens, and generate much goodwill for Israel.

As we know from the American Peace Corps program, returning volunteers

employ their skills and experiences beneficially at home. Recruiting Ethiopian Jews for service in Africa can be a powerful motivating factor in improving the educational standards throughout their community in Israel. Today several focused training programs in that community are significantly elevating educational attainment.

There are those who may say that Ethiopians are poorly educated and incapable of handling the training necessary to be effective Peace Corps workers for Israel. Those doubters would be wrong and unaware of the facts.

In the Israeli cities of Ashkelon and in Kiryat Malachi, the Eli Wiesel Foundation has opened centers for over 800 students in grades 1-12. Tests of those students show consistent academic gains, with their scores increasing 15 to 20 percent. Principals and teachers also note that the students have developed a real sense of pride and confidence in themselves. In Kiryat Malachi during the 2008-2009 academic year, 69 percent of the students received a matriculation certificate, as compared to 40 percent of the non-Ethiopian high school students in that community.

Ethiopian Jews in Israel have become rabbis, lawyers, musicians, models, nurses, movie producers, and computer programmers. Consider Ethiopian Jew Avraham Yitzhak. He was admitted to Ben Gurion University's School of Medicine as a special case without having met the school's entrance requirements, then graduated first in his class! I am not concerned about Israel finding sufficient qualified Ethiopian Jews to staff an Afro-Israeli peace corps.

Some readers may ask why this corps should consist primarily of Israeli Ethiopian Jews. Experiences at the Rwanda school and in similar aid programs in Africa show that African people relate especially well with others of African background whose families have shared their trials.

Because Israel is the closest democracy to northeast Africa, increasing numbers of oppressed Africans have been risking their lives to cross the Sinai to seek a better life in Israel. These include refugees from Darfur and other regions of the Sudan, and even from Congo. Perhaps these new African refugees in Israel could also participate in the proposed peace corps program and return to help those they have left impoverished in Africa.

Implementing an Afro-Israeli Peace Corps will require money and political leverage. How can American Jews make this happen? In the 70s and 80s, before the Internet and cell phones, we built the rescue movement for Ethiopian Jews by encouraging supporters to write their congressmen, Jewish Federations, and Israeli diplomats. In this digital age, we have many additional tools to grow this win-win activism for a better world: Emails, Skype, web pages, blogs, (see Lenhoff, page NAT 19)



Fun Coach

BY BERNIE DEKOVEN

Pretend you are safe

Dear Fun Coach,

So, here's my question: You help people bring fun back into their lives. Okay, that's not a question. The question is, how can you do that for people who live in places like Sderot, or East L.A., or Kabul – places where people have very concrete reasons for being afraid almost all the time?

Yours, really,
Lib N. Shpeelin

Dear Lib,

Your question is not an easy one for me to answer. First of all, I'm not saying I can help people find fun when there are other, more pressing things they need to find first – like a bomb shelter. Second of all, here's what you might call an answer. It's a little complicated, so I wrote it in three parts:

1. Choosing Fun

Fun is something we definitely like to have. And we're definitely not the only ones. Just about every social species has a whole vocabulary of signs and signals, a body language that can be unmistakably interpreted: Fun is what is being had. We laugh, guffaw, chuckle, get on the floor, wag our tails, roll over. Inviting play.

And when it's fun enough, even if someone looks so angry, so menacing, even if someone bites, we can keep it fun, just about as long as we want to.

We have to feel like having fun to have fun. That's the whole thing about fun that makes it so trustworthy, so genuine. If we don't feel like having fun, nobody can really make us. And nothing anybody can give us can make us have fun: no promise, no politics, no prize.

If we don't feel like having fun, if we really don't want to have fun, well, then fun is definitely something we won't be having. Even if you try to trick or tickle us.

This keen observation raises at least one question: Why wouldn't we feel like having fun?

Really. If fun is something we could have, something readily, perhaps, available, why would anybody ever not feel like having it?

Is this a good question? Or what?

Not to imply guilt or madness, because all of us conscious beings, even the young, from time to time, simply don't feel like fun is something to have.

Even puppies with all their nippish play-fighting, from time to time will actually choose something other than fun to have.

There are times that are universally just not fun. Times when, of all the emotions and behaviors available to us, playfulness and enjoyment are nowhere

to be found: when somebody nips too hard, or somebody won't leave somebody alone, or somebody hides and never gets found, or somebody plays dead too long.

2. Safety

When we don't feel safe, we generally don't feel like having fun. Safety, or the lack thereof, is one of the big reasons we decide not to have fun.

How safe do you feel? Physically? Socially? Environmentally? Professionally? Financially?

Not "how safe are you?" Because G-d only knows how safe you really are. But, how safe do you feel? Right now?

How safe do you feel with the people with whom you work? With whom you live? Next to whom you sit?

Not "how safe are you" because you know you really aren't ever anything more than relatively. This is being grown up, knowing this.

And in case you have any momentary doubts, it's in the news. It's on television. It's the subject of best-sellers: You are not safe. No one is really safe. Homemakers no more than prime ministers.

So, how safe do you feel?

Chances are, if you're an adult of just about any species, you don't feel very safe. Not really safe enough to play.

3. Health

Another thing that keeps us from choosing fun is health. When we don't feel healthy – physically, emotionally, socially, ecologically – we usually don't feel like having fun.

Health, when it's good enough, is a good enough reason for anyone to want to have fun. Just because you feel good, you kick up your heels, jump for joy, leap for leaping's sake.

And when you don't feel good, even if you're a kid, you drag your feet, hang your head, just don't feel like playing, and sometimes even bite.

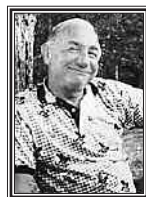
This is true in any culture, in any species where there is anything like play. Kids play. Unless sick or threatened, what kids do is play. Kids play almost all the time. Dog kids and cat kids, goat kids and human kids. Especially the healthy kids.

Safe shmafe. Sure, we do what we can to keep ourselves and each other safe. We have safe places and safe zones and, if somebody really gets hurt, we even stop the game. But, when we are truly at play, we don't think about safety. We think about the game, the challenge, the fun of it all. Even when we are really not that safe. Even when we're climbing a rock, a thousand feet up, with nothing between us and death but a handhold.

So the question can't be "how safe are you," but rather "how safe do you feel?" or "how safe are you allowing yourself to believe you are?" Physically? Socially? Environmentally? Professionally? Financially?

Actually.

And if you don't actually feel like playing,



Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

Repentance is not enough

There are as many variations on the meaning of the High Holidays as there are recipes for kugel – noodle pudding, as the Brits call it. If you interviewed a hundred Jews who hurried through the intersection of 8th Avenue and 57th Street, you'd get a hundred different attitudes. Yes, they'd all agree with the basics of the holidays; repentance. Easy, you confess your misdeeds. Subsequently, your fate for the coming year is engraved in the Book of Life as indelible as the Hebrew carved in the granite of the Ten Commandments.

But it's not that simple, says this simple teller of tales who never got his yeshiva diploma. First of all, two – not one – assessments are taking place. First, the Judge, the Magistrate of the universe is judging you and making up a score card. And the G-d of our Chumash is merciful, all right, but He is not namby pamby. He also loves justice, though He tempers it with mercy because He knows you're imperfect. He punishes and He rewards as He clearly states in His book. "I kill and I make alive. I wound and I heal."

So, you consider this as you perform your self-evaluation, much more leniently, of course.

Thirdly, it's a busy ten-day period for those of us who are not angelic because our victims must be appeased – so says the Talmud. It's this appeasement that is often ignored. In a word, what's required is retribution. You oughta be terribly busy; now where is that lady in the grocery I was rude to? I wonder whose car I dented in the parking lot? I think it was a blue Nissan. How am I gonna tell

maybe it's actually because you don't actually feel safe enough to play. And if you don't feel safe enough to play, you're just not going to really want to play, unless you really want to play. In that case, you just have to pretend you're safer than you really are. Really. You just have to pretend.

And the best way to pretend you're safer than you really are is with someone else.

Someone you can pretend to be safe with.

Someone who can play, even though. 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>. ★

the boss that I inflated the sales figures for August? Then there's your trusting wife. How do I explain the warm friendships I made every Wednesday night in the bar on 56th Street? ("Our weekly sales meeting, Dear.") Yep, you're gonna be busy.

And everybody knows that for sins against your fellow humans, you must ask their forgiveness. Not nearly as easy as the confession of your Catholic friends who pour out their hearts to an uninvolved third party. You didn't bash his bumper and run. He's not mad. You didn't tell the boss his expense account was inflated. He's as permissive as some of your Wednesday night friends.

These are the themes that should be on your mind those fateful ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur because dependent on which sage you believe, those ten days can seal your fate. Maybe, just maybe, no matter how you misbehaved, repentance and correction can avert the "stern decree" to paraphrase the prayer. And G-d will put your name in the Book of Life for the coming year. Of course, if you burned down your neighbor's house while he was in it, you're out of luck. He's too far away in another world to forgive you. You've had it. You may as well indulge yourself for ten days.

But one element of the Rosh Hoshanah/Yom Kippur doctrine has always disturbed me. That prayer – *Kol Neidrei*. If I were the head rabbi of Alabama, I'd abolish it. It's devious, deceptive, disingenuous, plus any other adjective you can think of that means sneaky, tricky, unworthy of the Holiday's accent on goodness. "All vows, obligations, oaths, I...may they be absolved, forgiven, annulled and void." There's more.

It basically says I hereby disavow any promises I make in the year to come. "So, friends, relatives, co-workers, I'll be lying to you for the coming year. I hereby warn you." Many pages of scholarly rabbinic words have tried to sweeten the words. And anti-Semites have grabbed it as witness to the duplicity of Jews. I know it's well intended, but it still makes me uncomfortable. I'm not in love with the tune either. Okay, call me a heretic.

But I'm awfully kind to my fellow men and women during those ten days of awe. And it's a great time to ask a fellow Jew for a loan. (Why not a gift?) Everybody's on their best behavior – listen, ten days out of 365 is not so tough.

Ted Roberts, a Rockower Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks at Jewish life with rare wit and insight. When he's not writing, Ted worships at Etz Chayim Synagogue in Huntsville, Ala., where for 25 years he has served as bar mitzvah teacher. His inspiration is his patient wife, Shirley. Check out his Web site: www.wonderwordworks.com 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. ★



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

Keeping Kosher: A Food Fetish or Pathway to Holiness?

In an age when no self-respecting American would be caught without a dietary restriction, from low-fat and high-protein to vegan or gluten free, Jews have the proud distinction of being the first group to claim an official food fixation. Since biblical times, the Jewish relationship to food has been more than an awareness of its necessity for human sustenance. It has been a way of relating to and honoring God.

The concept of "prohibited foods" was first introduced in Genesis when God gave Adam only fruits, vegetables and plants to eat. It wasn't until after the flood that humans were permitted to eat meat. Much later, while wandering in the desert, the Israelites were given a long list of forbidden foods. Animals that didn't chew their cud *and* have split hooves (camels, pigs, horses, and rodents), birds of prey (vultures, eagles, hawks and ravens) and all shellfish and fish without fins and scales were removed from the Jewish menu. Added to these restrictions was the mandate in Exodus: "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk."

The Jewish concern extends beyond what we eat – to how the food we eat is slaughtered, prepared and served. For an animal to be *kosher*, or fit for consumption, it must be killed in a prescribed way. The laws of ritual slaughter (*shechitah* in Hebrew) provide the swiftest, most painless and humane death for an animal. If an animal is killed otherwise, it can't be eaten. The Hebrew word for "torn apart" is *terefah*, which has been shortened to *teref*, the generic word for anything that is not deemed *kosher*.

Many reasons have been advanced to justify the reasons for *Kashrut*. Some say it was to help develop compassion toward animals; others suggest it was because foods like pork and shellfish contaminate easily and therefore should be avoided as unhealthy. Scholars note that boiling meat in milk was a pagan form of hospitality and worship, and posit that Jews were attempting to differentiate themselves from their neighbors. But the Torah makes no attempt to provide a rationale. The real reason is simple and straightforward: We keep *kosher* because God commanded us to.

The evolution of Jewish dietary laws offers a window into the world and minds of the Talmudic rabbis who developed the basic principle of not boiling a kid in its mother's milk and

created an entire gastronomic system around it. Since it was impossible to identify which baby goat was related to which mother's milk, the prohibition was extended to disallow cooking any kind of meat with any type of dairy. That law was then amplified to forbid eating meat and dairy together at the same meal. This led to the prohibition of preparing milk and meat in the same pot, serving it on the same plate, as well as the tradition of waiting a significant amount of time between eating meat and dairy. The time between eating the two depends upon the customs of the religious community in which you live. Today, some Jews wait six hours; others wait three and some, just one.

As society developed, so did Jewish law. Today keeping *kosher* often includes using separate ovens, dishwashers, refrigerators, sinks, blenders and microwaves.

A contemporary practice called Eco-Kashrut was introduced in the 1970s by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, a founder of the Jewish Renewal movement. Eco-Kashrut attempts to sanctify restrictions on human consumption of food, clothing, goods and resources, based on environmental considerations. It is an attempt to add an ecological and environmental dimension to the determination of what is *kosher* or fit for use.

A recent response to the abuses that have occurred in the *kosher* meat industry emerged from the Conservative movement, which is working to implement a new form of *kosher* certification called *hechsher tzedek* (Hebrew for "seal of justice"). This is based on the idea that social justice (i.e., how we treat the people who work in factories) should also be an element of kashrut certification. *Hechsher tzedek* will supplement, not replace, traditional *kosher* certification.

Keeping *kosher* transforms the everyday act of eating into something special and holy. It can be a wonderful way to teach Jewish identity within the home as well as develop a sense of family pride. By learning to say no to pepperoni pizza or shrimp cocktail, some families report the cultivation of an inner discipline that can help children in later years when they face temptations like drugs and alcohol.

But keeping *kosher* is not a "one size fits all" proposition as no two families observe it exactly the same. Nor does it need to be an all-or-nothing deal. The evolution over hundreds of years of rabbinic law offers us this insight: for those who are not ready to fully commit, it is better to begin with smaller efforts than not to begin at all. Step by step, meal by meal, year by year, our commitment can evolve over time. But if we do begin, one thing is certain: Keeping *kosher* will bring new awareness, discipline and a sense of Jewish identity into our kitchens and our lives.

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



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Oliver Stone, Helen Thomas, Mel Gibson and Abe Foxman

The recent news that Oliver Stone "let out" some of his anti-Jewish feelings is serious but probably not a fatal blow to Jewish life in America. In the last years, the Jewish community has had its share of hostility and shame, and with G-d's grace, we have endured. Mr. Madoff was careful and greedy in not only cheating the masses of investors but his friends. He made no allowance for friends or "members of the tribe." The fact that Elie Wiesel and Yeshiva University were among the victims was sad for the institutions but "better for the Jews."

And now we have Oliver Stone, who at first defended his defamatory remarks but then thought better and retracted them. Jews have learned not to trust retractions. The most interesting part of all of these "public-sinners" is their looking for forgiveness from Abe Foxman, the head of the Anti-Defamation League. In some sense, Mr. Foxman and the Reverend Jesse Jackson fill some national void. Both are self-elected to this important role.

The problem with Mr. Foxman acting in this "public confessional" is that he has no authority to speak for anyone beyond himself. None of us, members, donors, or just Jews, have given him that part of the franchise, and it is not helpful. Ms. Thomas, Mr. Gibson and Mr. Stone need to remain important signs that just because hatred is submerged, it can still be tapped.

Worse yet, are those individuals, including Mr. Foxman who have also forgiven the Catholic Church for its complicity in the deaths of 6 million Jews in World War II, and more, its direct responsibility for the murder of hundreds of thousands in the inquisition and throughout its sordid history. Thankfully, there is a new reason and a new time in the Catholic Church, but it is not we that the Church should be addressing in its quest for redemption.

On another sensitive note, there is the question of how the marriage of Chelsea Clinton to Marc Mezvinsky was viewed by the Jewish public. It is fair to say that the young couple should not be responsible for the baggage of their parents. Both sets had a great deal. And they had no reason, I suppose, to spare that parental baggage from being reviewed by simply getting married without the \$3-5 million spectacle.

Some, I suppose, might have thought that sensitivity to President Clinton's efforts in Haiti, might have been better served by something less regal. I might have to agree that it was a matter of right and taste.

I am still offended at celebrating mixed marriages. And while the groom wore a kephah and a tallis, it was still a Jew marrying a Baptist and having to find a way of sanctifying their vows that were not offensive to the families involved.

You can certainly find ways of celebrating every holiday, but the basic goal of ensuring the future of our faith is weakened. They have the right. They can invoke "patriarchal legacy" for their children, ensuring that they can come to some conclusion about who they are, but, in fact, the process drives a wedge among the Jewish Peoplehood. We already need to walk through life with family trees that define how we fit in to what we call Jews.

We need to thank Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for his recent decision not to open a new debate on "Who is a Jew?" Even though the issue is real, this is a discussion that threatens whatever bonds still exist between all Jews. The prime minister got it right. Until there is some way we find from the Highest Authority, we should agree not to make this our contemporary agenda. We simply do not have the tools.

These are fractious times. Our discussions are emotional. Our political ideas are diverse and cutting edge. We are about to enter the most intense time in the coming election. There is already enough verbal venom to kill us all.

We need to elect a Congress that will join together to put the United States back together. People need jobs, a decent place to live, schools that teach, access to health services. None of this seems radical. We need to build a coalition of politicians – Republicans and Democrats that will pledge to put the agenda of the people in front of the agenda of their parties, until we have the time to heal and recover, and then, then we can return to the political drama of our times.

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Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Jerusalem Lone Soldiers Have Weekend of Activities

There are more than 5,000 "lone soldiers" in Israel from France, England, the United States, South Africa, Argentina, Mexico, Australia, Russia, Brazil and other countries. There are 500 in Jerusalem. A lone soldier is one who does not have family in Israel while he or she is serving in the Israel Defense Forces.

In Jerusalem, there is the Michael Levin Memorial Center for Lone Soldiers, located for the next couple of months in a large mall called Binyan Clal, near Jerusalem's Machaneh Yehudah. This is the first and only organization totally dedicated to taking care of these young people. The center, which has branches in Tel Aviv and Haifa, offers educational seminars for new immigrant soldiers and other volunteers; Shabbat dinners; guidance and mentoring; holiday and culture events; furniture for their apartments; advocacy work; and post army guidance.

Asher Shapiro, synagogue chairman, happened to notice a large number of young people at the Great Synagogue on King George davening some months ago. He learned about the Michael Levin Memorial Center, spoke with Rabbi George Finkelstein, director general of the synagogue and the board about an idea he had. Shapiro then spoke to the Center founders – Tziki Aud, Josh Flaster and Jared White – and invited them to invite lone soldiers to a Friday evening Shabbat dinner.

That was in March and nearly 200 people came.

This month we were invited to be their guests by the program director Jared White. Nearly 200 men and women, some former lone soldiers with wives or girlfriends, attended the multicourse



The Lone Soldiers t-shirt.

dinner. Both Rabbi Finkelstein and Mr. Shapiro were presented with Lone Soldiers t-shirts, which they immediately put on over their white shirts and proudly wore all during the dinner.

On the following evening approximately 50 lone soldiers, former lone soldiers and supporters gathered at Young Judea/Merkaz Hamagshimim's campus for a milk and cookie fundraiser. They sampled 14 different cookies and chose Junk Food Cookies as the best, and chose Amazing Blondies as second. The winning bakers each received a certificate for dinner for two at a Jerusalem restaurant. Names of the lone soldiers in a cookie jar were drawn and three lone soldiers each received a dinner for two at a Jerusalem restaurant.

To make your tax deductible donation in the U.S., write on the memo line "Michael Levin Memorial Center," and mail to Michael Levin Memorial Center, P.O. Box 93372, Phoenix, AZ. 85070.

Jerusalem Hosts Mediterranean International Olive Oil Competition

Imagine sitting five hours a day (with three breaks) for three days and tasting 189 samples of olive oil! Incredible? Not for the 21 judges from 14 countries attending the First Mediterranean International Olive Oil Competition in Jerusalem, Israel's capital.



According to Chaim Gan, the "grape man," TerraOlivo is an offshoot of the annual TerraVino international wine competition.

Chaim, along with Moshe Spak, international affairs director and Raúl César Castellani of Argentina, are organizers of the event, one of only eight such competitions in the world. This one, held at the Inbal Hotel, is sponsored by the Municipality of Jerusalem, the Ministry of Tourism, the Inbal Hotel and the Israel Olive Oil Council. Also sitting at the table overseeing the competition is a Tel Aviv corporation lawyer.

Israel is one of the founding members of the International Olive Oil Council, based in Madrid.

"My job as organizer is to make the selections of the jury and promote and market the competition," explained Mr. Spak. "No other competition has this quantity of countries. We chose Israel because we are Israelis, we like to make events here and olive oil is identified with Israel. Jerusalem is the identity of olive oil."

A cursory glance at references actually shows 30 references to olive oil in the Old Testament as a means of payment,

anointing and religious purposes, food, medicine, a cosmetic and for lighting.

The judges, who come from Uruguay, Spain, Argentina, Italy and Israel, use a scoring sheet with aroma, taste sensations and final sensation in smell and taste. They can also refer to a list of 25 descriptive words and four types of pepper.

All the judges are olive oil professionals; they drink from blue professional oil tasting glasses, imported from Spain, so they cannot see the color. Tasting glasses each have a separate glass covering. The waiters bring out the glasses from the kitchen where the bottles are closely guarded. On the tables are bowls with slices of green apples whose acid helps clean the palette in between tastings. There are also bottles of Aqua Panna distilled water and Pellegrino sparkling water. After two days of tasting, there will be a conference on the third day with public tasting and teachers to explain how to taste.

On the final day, a grand prestige gold medal, a prestige gold medal and a gold medal will be awarded for the best olive oil, the best Israeli olive oil, the best kosher oil and the best boutique oil.

Mr. Gan presided over the tasting, reprimanding the judges when they talked at their tables so they would not share information.

"If the Arab countries would have participated," comments Mr. Spak, who made aliyah from Argentina, "we would have a minimum of 50 to 60 samples, for example, from Tunisia, Jordan, Turkey and Egypt."

Out on the patio sat Dr. Zohar Kerem, a lecturer, food chemist and researcher from the Hebrew University, a large part of whose research is dedicated to olive oil. Dr. Kerem also works with the researchers from the Ministry of Agriculture.

"My part is looking into the quality of olive oil, the effects of shelf life, the differences between glass, plastic or tin containers," he said.



Moshe Spak.

He is also involved with learning why olive oil is good for one's health and which compounds are good for the body. He cited some research which indicates there is a compound in olive oil that does the same in the body as Advil. The fatty acids in olive oil are also a good ratio.

"It is the best fat we need to consume," said Dr. Kerem. "It also contains vitamins needed in our diet."

Next year the competition will be at the end of April or beginning of May, and it will now become an annual event.

In case you want to try Inbal Hotel, executive chef Itzik Barak's special creation is his recipe for vanilla ice cream with olive oil.

Vanilla ice cream with olive oil

10 servings

1 liter (34 oz.) cream
200 grams (1 cup) sugar
250 ml (1 cup) olive oil
1 cinnamon stick
1 vanilla stick
4 egg whites

Heat the cream, olive oil, cinnamon and vanilla sticks in a pan. When the mixture reaches 70°C (158°F), allow to cool. Whip the egg whites and fold into the mixture. Add the mixture to an ice cream maker.



Artist Yair Emanuel.

A "Household" Name in Giftware

Tucked away down an alley, in a commercial section of the Jerusalem suburb of Talpiot. Up some blue steps, one sees large blue doors with an embroidered

(see Kaplan/Israel, page NAT 19)



An artist in the studio of Yair Emanuel paints one of his designs on to silk.



Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

Shylock takes Manhattan once again

It's intriguing to think that the most famous Jew in dramatic literature is now being played by an Italian-American (and presumably Catholic). But why not? And indeed Al Pacino, now on stage at Shakespeare in the Park (in New York City's Central Park) makes Shylock his own. The Public Theater is now offering *The Merchant of Venice* in tandem with *The Winter's Tale* at the Delacorte Theatre. Both Shakespearean plays enjoy spectacular staging at this delightful outdoor theater, where free tickets are offered to the public.

But back to Shylock. Pacino creates a character who appears to be your ordinary man-in-the-street (at least ordinary for 16th-century Venice). Neither villain nor victim when he first appears, Pacino/Shylock is convincingly normal, as he goes about his daily business.

But this Shylock creeps up on you, even as events creep up on him, building in intensity with each scene. Pacino moves restlessly about the stage, always in character, even when other players are engaged in dialogue. But you never take your eyes off this brilliant actor – and ultimately you are totally in his thrall.

Does Pacino create a sympathetic Shylock? Yes and no. On the one hand, he is sensible, frugal, devoted to his co-religionists, and struggling to survive as best he can. On the other hand, he is ruthless in his pursuit of revenge. In short, a human being, with strengths and weaknesses – as written in the text and brought home strongly by Pacino. Because there is so little sentimentality in this Pacino interpretation, it is a thoroughly believable portrayal. Ultimately, stripped of his worldly goods, Shylock is also forced to convert – or die – and undergoes an actual baptism. In every sense of the word he has been stripped.

All around, it is a solid production under Daniel Sullivan's direction – handsome in its staging, lighting, and costuming, and backed by a thoroughly professional cast. A worthy effort by the Public Theater, producer of these Shakespeare in the Park summer events.

Sigmund Freud on the Carpet in *Freud's Last Session*

It is a battle of the Titans – the man of science versus the man of God, the non-believer versus the believer, the Jew against the Catholic – two great minds at odds with each other.



Al Pacino as Shylock in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. Photo credit: Joan Marcus.

This imagined encounter transpires between Sigmund Freud and the noted British writer C. S. Lewis. Whether these two men, each famous in his own field, ever met is uncertain. It is known that a young Oxford professor did meet Freud during his final days. This fact sparked the interest of playwright Mark St. Germain, resulting in *Freud's Last Session*. Such an exchange may have been apocryphal, but the playwright uses the premise to create his play. It is a brilliant exchange of opposing views on God, man, and the universe.

The two-man play was highly praised at its Barrington Stage Company's premiere in the Berkshires. And now the production has been brought to New York, playing through November at the Marjorie S. Deane Little Theater, West Side Y. Performances of Martin Rayner as Freud and Mark H. Dold as Lewis are impeccable, each taking command of his role.

The encounter takes place at Freud's home in Hampstead, London, where he has emigrated to escape the Nazi terror. It is 1939, and Germans have just invaded Poland. War, for England, is imminent. At the same time, the 83-year-old Freud is dying of oral cancer, while the 41-year-old Lewis is moving toward the height of his writing/teaching career. (Later he would

write his masterpiece *The Chronicles of Narnia* and other works on Christianity, which would sell millions of copies.)

This literate, probing piece is an examination of ideas rather than a played-out drama. Nothing much moves ahead in the 75 minutes that actors Rayner and Dold are on stage. One is reminded of the film, *My Dinner With Andre*, wherein playwright Wallace Shawn and director Andre Gregory lock horns in similar fashion.

But no matter. Despite the plotless format, the characters come across as eminently human, thanks to the combined efforts of writer and actors. While the irascible, outspoken Freud makes shocking statements, which he views as truth, Lewis, despite his British reserve, sends the ball whizzing back across the tennis net. Freud tears down Lewis's idea of God as a fairy tale, but Lewis comes back strong.

The ideas themselves have a jolting effect. At one point, for instance, Lewis comments, "...I understand you've made some inflammatory claims...that Moses wasn't a Jew, but an Egyptian? That God never chose the 'Chosen People,' but Moses did? And that after he led the Jews to the Promised Land, they killed him for it..."

"Not for that," Freud replies. "For either his imperious dogma or his insistence that all men be circumcised... My conjecture is that murdering Moses forced the Israelites to bury their guilt under the camouflage of religiosity, even to this day."

"No wonder your book's selling so well," says Lewis. "Jews must be standing in line to tear it to pieces."

"And me," Freud admits. "But Jews must wait their turn behind my greatest enemy, the Catholic Church."

Such is the jolting effect of the Freud-Lewis exchanges. Presumably the Freudian views are accurate, as St. Germain appears to have carefully researched his Freud.

Whether this meeting is fact or fiction, it makes for a provocative, challenging

evening of ideas. One listens with fascination to two sides of a highly-charged debate. The material is so dense, so worthy of reflection, that one would be well advised to see the show twice.

An Israeli Actress Tells Her Story

To Be an Actress by Nava Shean (translated from Hebrew by Michelle Fram Cohen). Hamilton Books, The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.

The autobiography of Nava Shean, a noted Israeli actor, is in some ways a typical story – in other ways, unique. The book, *To Be an Actress*, originally in Hebrew, was published in Israel. But now, thanks to the fine English translation by Michelle Fram Cohen, the book has been published in the States.



Why typical?

Here is a European Jew (born in Czechoslovakia as Vlasta Schonova) who would study in Prague, end up in the Terezin concentration camp, and finally emigrate to Israel. In short, it is the story of one more Holocaust survivor.

But why unique? Nava Shean is, was, and will always be an actor. Her consecration was apparent from earliest days. As a child, she told her mother, "Mother, when I grow up, I want to be an actress in the theater." Recalling that instinctive drive from earliest time, she says in the opening chapter of her book, "I believe an actress is born an actress, she does not learn to be one. My earliest memory is the wish to express a persona, whether in song or in text."

As it goes on, the book offers her numerous insights into her profession. How does one approach a role? How does one survive in this fiercely competitive field? How does one evolve and mature as an actor?

She raises these questions as she moves through life. This dedicated performer plays out her destiny against the backdrop of history. In many ways, the craziness of her life reflected the craziness of the world around her. The endlessly resourceful Nava Shean (like many actors) would do anything to survive, to raise her one child, to act. She divides her book into five sections – Youth, Terezin, Back in Prague, New Life (Israel), and, finally, her late marriage to Hubert Hermann, the love of her youthful years. While this would seem to be chronological, she has a disconcerting way of skipping about. One experience recalls a much earlier memory, and so on. Ideas and experiences are tossed out, without full follow-through. It is as if the actress is carrying on a casual but intimate conversation with a friend. A firmer grip and more careful organization would have

(see Backalenick, page NAT 19)



L to R: Martin Rayner as Sigmund Freud and Mark H. Dold as C.S. Lewis in *Freud's Last Session*. Photo credit: Kevin Sprague.

Parsha Perspective



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

The new moon of all new moons

Our *devar Torah* for the first day of Rosh Hashanah opens with a mystery. It comes to us in a very small package. It's the second word in the next to the last verse of the Torah reading for the day. The verse tells us: "He [Avraham] planted an *eishel bi'v'eir shavah*" (Genesis 21:33).

What is an *eishel*, anyway?

We take our cues for answering this and other questions in this *devar Torah* from the commentary of Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808–1888).

We only find this word in one other place in the whole of the *Tanakh* – in all of the Torah, Prophets, and Writings. In I Samuel (22:6) we find Saul sitting under an *eishel* with a spear in his hand. So maybe it's a tree. Our sages have alternatively interpreted this word as a *caravanserai*, an inn built around a large court for accommodating caravans at night. In either case, they tell us that, according to the root letters of the word, *alef-shin-lamed*, this *caravanserai* or tree offered everything – *achilah* (food), *shetiyah*, (drink), and *linah* (shelter).

This should come as no surprise, since Avraham is famous for his hospitality. We can easily picture him and his family bustling around, making sure his guests have everything they need. He would have used every chance he got to teach by example the practice of *chesed* (loving-kindness). He would have used every opportunity to lead people from thanking him for the hospitality to thanking God.

But why did he plant a tree? And why plant it at the place called *b'eir shava*, the well of the oath? Always before, he had built an altar when he called on the name of God. And before, Avraham had called God *eil elyon konei shamayim va'aretz* (Genesis 14:22), meaning God of the heights, who had acquired heaven and earth.

But as our rabbis would be quick to point out, this does not mean only the God of the past, the One who brought the world into existence eons ago, and then went on vacation. It means the God who is still, even now, the owner and director of heaven and earth – the Living God of the present. So that's the name that Avraham had used in the past.

But under this tree, Avraham teaches us a new name of God, one which points beyond the visible horizon of our present, to God as the One who proclaims the time that is hidden from

human eyes. The name is *Eil Olam*, and it too only occurs in one other place in all of *Tanakh*.

The word *olam*, from the root *ayin-lamed-mem*, means, to be hidden. It only came to have the meaning of "the world" later in the language of our rabbis. Here, in the Torah, it means the hidden time, the whole future, and all the distant past, which also lies beyond our understanding.

Declaring this Name of God, Avraham plants a tree – at *b'eir shava*, the well of the oath, of all places. It's strange because the well itself stands for everything that Avraham is not. As an outsider, he is *persona non grata*, someone with no rights. In fact, he is so dependent that the peaceful possession of a well that he himself has dug has to be acknowledged as a "royal gracious kindness." And he has to secure an oath to guarantee that he can keep the well.

And yet on this occasion of the oath, it is Avimelech, the Lord of the land, along with his field marshal Phichol, who come to Avraham, and not the other way around. And they come looking for an agreement unrelated to the matter of the well, saying: "We know that God is with you in all that you do. Swear that you will not deal badly with us or our descendants" (Genesis 21:22–23).

But why should they do this?

After all, the political hopes of a hundred-year-old nobody and his two-year-old son must have seemed simply laughable in the eyes of the world. And yet, obviously, Avimelech here is not addressing Avraham as a private individual whose importance comes to an end with his own life, and who, as such, would never be in a position to do good or evil to an entire country.

Did the King have a premonition that a mighty nation would grow from this two-year-old? Or as a cautious politician, did he want to form an alliance with the father of the baby, thinking that the descendants of the boy would one day repay the favor?

Maybe – but in any case, Avraham saw in the respect of the king the beginning of the future that had been promised to him, actually being realized. So this is the place where Avraham plants a tree and proclaims the name *Eil Olam*, the God who sows the future with invisible seeds in the present.

With this, Avraham lays down his own idea of the future. Out of small beginnings, like his own, the future germinates, like the seed that gives rise to a tree. And like a tree, it spreads blessing far around when it matures. And it is *Eil Olam*, the God of the hidden future, who nurtures this possibility. But as we said before, our rabbis have added to this meaning of the hidden future. They have brought the word *olam* to have the meaning of "the world," which is, of course, the most concrete, actual present.

Now, usually it's the case that when we human beings are in trouble, we think about the future. We try to find consolation in the future for a painful

present. But our sages teach us the exact opposite of that idea. Just at the time when our present becomes the laughing-stock of the world, they teach us to look at every present moment as being already a part of the future, and to think of God as the director of that future. At all times – when thunder rolls and lightning flashes, trees blossom and flowers smell, food nourishes, events mature – they teach us to take to heart the fact that the present is already a part of the future and to think of God as the director of that future. For every second that we truly live is in the very center of that eternity in which we not only will participate, but in which we already are participating if we are what we should be.

But what if we are not what we should be?

Then we have the moon and Rosh Hashanah.

And what's the moon got to do with it?

To answer that, we have to go back to Egypt. While we were still there, God gave Moses and Aaron a new mission to our people. Until then, Moses and Aaron had been the messengers of God to Pharaoh on Israel's behalf. Their mission had been to perform signs and wonders for the Egyptians, and especially Pharaoh, to try to get them back to what they should be – conscious of their duty to God and their fellow-humans. But as we all know, it didn't work. Pharaoh's heart was too hard for signs and wonders to make any difference. The will of God could only be forced on him. And as soon as the force was removed – it's an old story – he went back to his old ways.

So God turned away from Pharaoh and toward Israel to make sure that Israel would not make the same mistake. Thus God began the construction of our inner life as a people with an *ot*, a sign. And that sign was the moon. God called Moses out into the open and showed him the silver crescent of the moon struggling out of complete darkness into new light, and God said to him: "This is to be your model. Whenever you see the new moon, it is to remind you of your own possibilities for renewal. And just as I, God, make you new, and you make yourselves new, you are to pass across the night sky of the nations, like the moon, and proclaim everywhere this teaching of renewal. You are to tell the world that God has given all of us the possibility of always being able to start again. You are to tell everyone that our whole moral and physical fate lies entirely in our own hands."

So each time the moon finds the sun again, and begins to grow, God wants us to find God again. Without this, we would always slide farther and farther away. Without even noticing it, we would become less and less responsive to the light of God's spirit. Our natures would become darker and darker until, like Pharaoh, our hearts would become so hard that even the most startling signs and wonders would have no effect.

This teaching forms our foundation stone as Jews, and it is this that differentiates us sharply from all pagans. The pagan knows no renewal, not in the world and not in humankind. To the pagan, everything is bound by cast iron necessity. Guilt and evil must forever and ever give rise only to guilt and evil. For the pagan, nothing of god-like freedom dwells in the human breast. All freedom is only an illusion to the pagan.

But the Jewish God says to us: "When you fail to be inspired by My light (the Torah) and you turn your back on Me, sinking into darkness, you can struggle again toward the light, just as the new moon renews its radiance out of the darkness." With every new moon, God pronounces for all of us to hear: "I am still the same God. I am with you, alongside you, near you. I hear your every sigh. I notice all your tears. I am close to you even if clouds of the storm hide Me from you."

And what is the connection to Rosh Hashanah?

Rosh Hashanah is the new moon of all new moons. It sends a shofar-call into all of our homes and our hearts and calls us to God. The shofar is a call to freedom, a freedom that can be found only through God and in God. Each year this Godly summons enters into our Divine-human relationships and calls on us to turn from moral servitude to freedom, from moral misery to joy, from spiritual abandonment to an intimate relationship with God and our people.

We leave you with Khulda's poem called *Reflection*.

We do not see
Your face,
But in its Light
We come to see
Ourselves
For what
We dare to be—
A mirror.
In that light
We are all shining
And able
As new moons
To rise and struggle
With the night
And fling
Reflected glory
Deep into the dark.
In that light
We come to see
Ourselves
As One.
In that light
We can see forever.

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To honor my father of blessed memory

By BEVERLY R. NEWMAN, Ed.D.

July 15, 2010

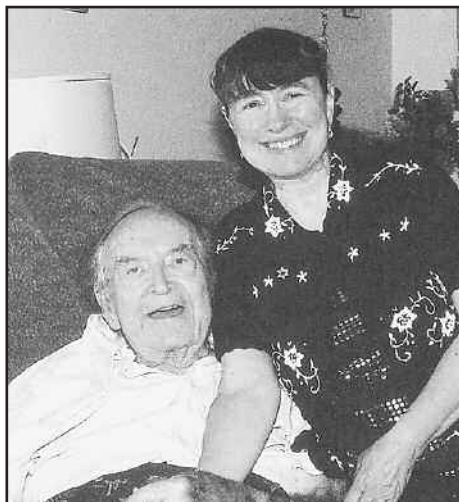
Our sages tell us the hardest *mitzvah* to fulfill is to honor our parents, but it is also possibly the best *mitzvah* of all. At the end of their days, our parents have seen their world shrink from dozens of activities per day to very few – eating, resting, and entertainment via television; but each one of these has great meaning to the elderly.

As they age, our parents live a much smaller life, with their friends dying one after another and their family members losing interest in them. My dear Father spent Father's Day and his birthday without a single gift, visit, or telephone call, but he also spent these times with two people who adored him, my husband and me. He knew the truth of life: that love has no price and it has no limits; it's a shadow always with us, even to the grave and the afterlife.

A few weeks ago, Daddy told me, "My wife is waiting for me in Indianapolis," and I knew he meant to join his beloved darling very soon. Mommy and Daddy were married 30 years until death did them part. Now death has brought them together, as they belong. One of Dad's most meaningful activities was to visit Mommy's grave, never empty-handed; standing before her headstone, Daddy cried and prayed every few months for over three decades, bundled flowers in hand, to give to his bride. She was always his bride, beautiful to him as she had been when he first saw her face and fell in love, vowing to marry that woman whom he had not even met yet. Over 60 years later, Daddy would supervise his son-in-law, Larry, as he cleaned Mom's grave and painted the curbing sparkling white to perfection, layer after layer of paint, year upon year of memories.

Is it really so hard to honor our parents? What do they truly want from us? ...lots of attention and time, that may be hard to find, but certainly simple to give; sharing hardships and happiness together as a Jewish family should; anticipating their needs and attempting to fill them with lovingkindness; sometimes deferring to their judgment, even when we differ with their assessments; letting them age gracefully; respecting their past, their present, and their future, no matter how dim it may seem; smiling at their faces and greeting them with exuberance; cleaning up messes, without expressing anguish at our own servant status. Yes, we are our parents' servants if we want to serve G-d, because it is our parents who served us selflessly from our infancy and beyond; we are closer to G-d when we are closer to the ones He chose to give us birth on Earth.

Did we raise ourselves? It is all too easy to raise our heads above our parents



Beverly with her father, Al Katz, this past May in Bradenton, Fla.

and our voices against them in litanies of complaints and accusations. To do the greatest *mitzvah* of honoring our parents, we must humble ourselves. We must be both their needy children at times and then, their comforting, helping "parents."

When they cannot reach what used to be attainable with ease, we must ease their fears of incompetence, abandonment and isolation. All around them, they have witnessed other elders abandoned by those they loved with true loyalty, but loyalty can be one way. Even the elders who no longer see or hear or move about freely know when their loyalty is not returned.

My Father was a miracle. He lived 90 years of adventure and desperation, life and death, independence and total dependence. In many ways, his years of deep dependence were the best of his life because he had to allow others the opportunity to do for him what he had always done for them. On the last day of Dad's life, he ate full *kosher* organic meals. He was cleaned and creamed with the best herbal lotion money can buy. He was sitting up perfectly straight in his own bedroom when he took his last two breaths of clean Florida fresh air. His room was bright, cheerful, and filled with the love of his family. He was totally at peace, to reunite with his adoring wife 33 years after they said "good-bye" on Earth.

It was a good day for him. We had already done 85 exercises on each leg. We hugged and kissed. The night before, Dad had held Larry's hand and kissed it while he was eating. A quiet beauty was around us; some might say a still small voice in our home that softly called Daddy home to Heaven.

Daddy had no pain when he left here and no pain before. For years, his dozens of doctors had needlessly prescribed 15 doses of narcotics and psychotropics for him per day. He was repeatedly hospitalized for oversedation and put into nursing homes against his will, and it truly took an act of G-d Almighty to get him home; but there he lived and there he died, without a single narcotic, painkiller, or psychotropic since Nov. 23, 2009, when I was granted the great *mitzvah* of becoming my Father's guardian. On that day, Dad's life changed forevermore with mine.

Dad went to Heaven clean, *kosher*, organic, safe from abuse, watching his heroes on his favorite television show, *Bonanza*. He was totally loved and fell asleep forever in a room decorated with photographs of family far away, the dearest pictures to him being the bubbly grins of his great-grandchildren. To a Holocaust survivor, there can be no greater love than adoring his great-grandchildren, the generation that was never meant to be.

Whom did my Father love above all? ...not his daughter or his son-in-law, who lived with him and cared for him round the clock...but people much more important in the total scheme of life. Daddy loved his great-grandchildren far more than himself. He would call out, "Mina, Mina," the name of his oldest great-grandchild, and he would point out proudly to visitors the photographs next to his recliner, "This is my family."

Our sages tell us the hardest mitzvah to fulfill is to honor our parents, but it is also possibly the best mitzvah of all.

If they follow in his footsteps, Daddy's great-grandchildren will become great as well. They will be industrious, boldly Jewish, brilliant, nurturing of those in need, honest in their professions, and honored Jewish heroes. Al Katz was a Holocaust hero. He helped to save hundreds of lives, maybe more, by passing out scraps of food to starving bodies as he drove trains through the camps of death. He gave inspiration to live to those who wished to die. He showed sunken eyes how to rid themselves of body lice and how to keep their feet, at 52 degrees below zero, from dying with frostbite. He taught his children the dignity of hard labor, as he was a slave laborer for seven years in the horrors of the Holocaust.

Dad taught thousands of school children the miracles of G-d's grace in saving his life. In story after story, in school after school, Daddy proved to children the monstrous acts of man against man and the magnificent rescues G-d wrought when all hope was gone. Two stories, in particular, left his audiences speechless at the power of G-d to save human lives in mortal danger. In the first story, Daddy suddenly has a piercing stomach pain and has to break ranks from his group of fellow prisoners, an act punishable by immediate death on the spot. When Daddy returns from relieving himself, his group has already gone on ahead, and he had to think and act rapidly. Dad joined another group for the day, slaving under brutal cold and unbearable hunger. At day's end, Dad's original group never

came back. Everyone was murdered except for Daddy.

The second story was even more miraculous than the first. Dad's entire camp of Jewish lives was about to be destroyed by showers of poison gas, when an S.S. officer called out to the thousands of assembled prisoners, "Who knows how to drive a train?" Dad's hand went up in a moment, without a thought given to the fact that he had never operated any train at any time before. When he was brought inside the train, Daddy remarked he had not driven this kind of train and needed some pointers. He learned like lightning how to guide the train and used that train to save his own life and to bring food scraps to the myriads of starving prisoners along his route. Had he ever been caught giving food to his fellow Jews, in order to keep them alive for one more day or even an hour, Dad would have been shot through the head at that very moment.

My Father was a survivor and a miracle in every way. My Mom, too, was a survivor and a miracle; their marriage made me strong. I was born of infinite love and eternal respect from a man for his wife, from a wife for her husband. When Mommy suffered from cancer for nine years, her devoted husband personally brought her to every doctor's appointment, many hundreds of them, and personally doctored her, feeding Mom, dressing her, and keeping perfect track of her enormous medical needs.

After working at least 60 hours per week, Daddy made meticulous housework his priority, plus shopping for the family and every other duty that Mommy was too tired or too sick to accomplish. This man my Mom had married was her hero, and I told him that he was mine as well, time after time over the past few months.

It was my great blessing to live with and care for my Dad because he has taught me more than I could ever learn in any other way. No matter what the obstacle, Daddy was willing to proceed; his life went forward always and backward never. At 90, he made me stand in awe of him. At 90, he recited aloud the *Shema*, the oneness of G-d, constantly, with vigor, in private and in public. I guess G-d loved him as he loved G-d; and they both loved me.

The deepest joys for both Dad and me are my grandchildren (his great-grandchildren), followed by the indescribable Florida sunsets on the beach. Night after night, Dad and I shared sunsets together and thoughts of those dear children locked in our hearts. Ironically, Dad's only great-grandson, was his hero. The elder hero had a young hero to admire for his perseverance and his benevolence toward others. For Dad and me, the beauty of the children's faces and the pastel skies are irreplaceable. I cannot ever replace my Dad, but every time I see the little heirs to his brave Jewish legacy, I will see Daddy smiling down at me from his Heavenly home holding his bride he never stopped loving. ✨



The Roads from Babel

BY SETH BEN-MORDECAI

Open and shut

As noted, a vowel in a *closed syllable* (one ending in a consonant) sounds a bit different from the same vowel in an *open syllable* (one ending in a vowel). In closed syllables, scribes used a *patach* for the sound “a” (as in “what”). In open syllables, scribes used a *kamatz* for the sound “a” (as in “father”). In Isaiah 65:1, [נִדְרַשְׁתִּי לִלּוֹא שְׂאֵלוֹ], the “a” in the word *nid-rash-ti* is in a closed syllable, so it is spelled with patach, while each “a” in *sha’a-lu* is in an open syllable and is spelled with kamatz.

To highlight whether a syllable was closed or open, the scribes invented a mark called the *schwa*, which looks like a colon beneath a letter. In *nid-rash-ti*, a schwa sits under the letters *dalet* and *shin*, showing that they close a syllable. A schwa marking a letter that closes a syllable is called a *schwa nach* (i.e., a “resting schwa”) and is not pronounced.

The scribes used the schwa mark for a second important purpose: to represent an ultra-short vowel. In English, many words are pronounced with a schwa although no special letter is used for that sound. The first vowel of the words *believe*, *today*, and *announce* are pronounced ultra-quickly (i.e., as a schwa in normal speech). Thus, we say *b’lieve*, *’nounce*, and *t’day*, but not bee-lieve, ay-nounce, and too-day unless we hyper-enunciate. A pronounced schwa is called a *schwa na*, which means a “moving schwa.”

Example A [“לִלּוֹא”]. In Example A, a schwa sits under the letter *lammed*. How do we know whether to pronounce that schwa or not? Look at the vowel immediately preceding the lammed: a kamatz. A kamatz is usually found in an open syllable. Therefore, the kamatz ends the syllable; the lammed does not. Since the lammed does not end the syllable, the schwa beneath the lammed is a schwa na, which is pronounced, and Example A must be pronounced “ya-le-da.”

Example B [“לִלְהֵא”]. In Example B, the vowel immediately preceding the lammed is a patach, which usually occurs in a closed syllable. Therefore, a consonant must follow the patach to close its syllable. The lammed follows the patach, closing the syllable. Since the schwa beneath the lammed merely marks the close of a syllable, that schwa is a schwa nach, which is not pronounced. Example B must be pronounced “yal-da.”

An attorney and Semitic linguist with degrees from Brandeis, Stanford and Univ. of Calif., Seth Watkins (pen name, Ben-Mordecai) merges linguistic analysis with legal sleuthing to uncover lost meanings of

Travel

BY ROSE KLEINER

Summer in Toronto: An adventure in the Arts

With so much theater, music, and festivals of all sorts, indoors and out, Toronto’s summer arts scene is one long adventure. This adventure extends even to the regions outside the city, where more festivals, and other attractions, abound.

Toronto has also added more new *kosher* restaurants, to its already large selection, giving visitors a wide choice of dining experiences, and many opportunities for meeting new people. Singles can call the Singles Hotline at 416-635-5605.

The 15th annual Ashkenaz Festival (North America’s largest celebration of Yiddish and Jewish culture) takes place at Harbourfront Centre, by the lake, and at several of the city’s other venues, Aug. 31 to Sept. 6.

The Stratford Shakespeare Festival, and the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, although outside of Toronto, are favorite destinations for both Torontonians and visitors to the city from all over Canada, and the U.S.

The Stratford Festival’s four theaters are not confined to only plays by Shakespeare. This year’s agenda also includes *Dangerous Liaisons* (opening Aug. 12), *Evita*, *Jaques Brel is Alive* and *Well and Living in Paris*, *King of Thieves*, *Do Not Go Gentle*, *Peter Pan*, and Michel Tremblay’s *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*.

Plays by or connected to Shakespeare’s works are *As You Like It*, *The Tempest* (with Christopher Plummer), *The Winter’s Tale*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Kiss Me Kate*.

Besides the plays, the Stratford Festival also has Lobby Talks, Preshow Lectures, Stageside Chats, Postperformance Discussions, and concerts, on selected Mondays in August. Stratford’s Celebrated Writers Series, will feature Michel Tremblay (Aug. 12) and Germaine Greer (Aug. 15), among others.

The Shaw Festival is bringing this year Shaw’s *An Ideal Husband*, *The Doctor’s Dilemma*, and *John Bull’s Other Island*.

Also running, at the Festival’s four theaters, are *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Women*, *Age of Arousal*, a marvelous production of *Harvey*, *One Touch of Venus*, *Serious Money*, and a shorter,

ancient texts. His *Exodus Haggadah* uniquely includes the full story of the *Exodus* in an accessible format. His 20-year-old *ocicat* has, sadly, gone to her reward. Email: Seth@Vayomer Publishing.com. ★

noon-time play, *Half an Hour*.

Other programs at the Shaw Festival include a Play Reading Series – *The Gigli Concert*, Aug. 15; a musical reading of Leonard Bernstein’s *Trouble in Tahiti*, Aug. 29; and Moises Kaufman’s *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, Sept. 19.

There are also seminars, workshops, symposiums, preshow chats, backstage tours, and more. Both festivals have various discounts on tickets and theater package deals.

Within the city, Toronto’s numerous theater offerings will keep one going to a different play every day. Broadway’s *Jersey Boys* is at the Toronto Centre for the Arts until Aug. 22; *Rock of Ages*, a Mirvish production of the hit Broadway musical comedy is at the Royal Alexandra Theatre.

At the Four Seasons Centre, the Dancap production of Tony Award winner, *South Pacific* runs Aug. 12 to Sept. 5. *Love, Loss and What I Wore*, the award-winning theatrical performance, consisting of a collection of stories by Nora and Delia Ephron, is running at the Panasonic Theatre until Sept. 4.

There is also outdoor theatre. Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* runs until Sept. 5, at the High Park Amphitheatre as part of the Canadian Stage’s Dream in High Park program.

For music, this year’s Ashkenaz Festival, a biennial event, celebrates 15 years of contemporary Jewish music and art. The festival ends with a spectacular Ashkenaz Parade. Among the festival’s highlights, at the Sirius Stage, is *The Other Europeans*, Sept. 4, an international gathering of 14 leading klezmer (Yiddish) and lautari (Roma) musicians, creating powerful, virtuosic music.

Another highlight is the Balkan Beat Box (Sept. 5), a musical fusion of Jewish and Balkan influences. The weekend highlight is the Ashkenaz Parade, propelled by the sounds of all the festival musicians.

One of the loveliest places in the city to enjoy music, is at Harbourfront Centre’s Toronto Music Garden. Located on the waterfront, this is one of the city’s most enchanted public park locations. Its summer, outdoor, free, concerts are held on Sundays and Thursdays to the end of September.

Other programs are Dancing with Dvorak (Aug. 15), Bach at Dusk (Sept. 2), and Mozart Un-Locked (Sept. 12), to name but a few. There are also Garden Tours, and Self-Guided Tours.

Outside of Toronto, in nearby Hamilton, the Brott Music Festival, brings, on Aug. 15, Forbidden Music Revealed, with soprano Sharon Azrieli. It features music that was banned under Hitler or Stalin, including pieces by Kurt Weill and Mendelssohn.

For exhibits, the Jewish Museum at the Beth Tzedec Congregation presents two exhibitions on Theodor Herzl, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of his birth. Both exhibits (Herzl, The

Pursuit of the Zionist Vision: Up Close and Personal, and The Herzl Collection of David Matlow) run to the end of November.

A most interesting exhibit at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Drama & Desire, is an exploration of the relationship between visual art and the theater, in the context of extreme passions. There are works by Degas, Delacroix, and other masters, with exceptional loans from the Musee d’Orsay, in Paris. The exhibit runs until Sept. 26.

Facets of Fame: Portraits by Toronto Photographer Al Gilbert runs until Sept. 11, at the Market Gallery. Presented by Ontario Jewish Archives, the exhibit features the work of an internationally acclaimed portrait photographer, whose subjects were some of the most influential people of our time.

The Royal Ontario Museum’s newly opened exhibit is The Warrior Emperor and China’s Terracotta Army, focusing on the discovery of the thousands of life-size terracotta sculptures of Chinese warriors that were created 2,200 years ago.

Next door to the Royal Ontario Museum is the Children’s Own Museum, for children ages 2 to 8. It is designed to provide active learning through play and a wealth of activities. It has special areas for these activities, such as the Neighborhood Gallery, the construction site, the sensory tunnel, the garden, the animal clinic, and the theater.

Just a short walk from the Royal Ontario Museum is the Bata Shoe Museum, showing this summer – All About Shoes: Footwear Through the Ages, and Socks: Between You and Your Shoes.

Toronto’s famous International Film Festival, running for 11 days, Sept. 9 to 19, will feature 300 films, including a variety of Israeli productions.

There will be walking tours of Historic Jewish Toronto during this summer. Titled “A Sense of Spadina,” the tours are scheduled for Sundays Aug. 22 and Sept. 19. All tours begin at 11 a.m. Free tours, named after urban activist, Jane Jacobs, explore different Toronto communities. Titled “Jane’s Walks,” the series of walking tours take place on Saturdays and Sundays.

For *kosher* dining, there are numerous choices in Toronto this summer. Among the new establishments there is Hamivgash, with its Mediterranean kitchen and salad bar. Another new place is Hakotel Grill Restaurant, offering “the best authentic Israeli food in town,” and there is Delicacies, serving delicatessen and other dishes, in a large spacious restaurant.

For elegant dining, check out 398 Eglinton, the former Gladstone’s restaurant, and Bistro. Numerous other *kosher* restaurants, fast food establishments and take-out places can be found along, or near, Bathurst Street. ★



Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Lost – the finale

The much-hyped finale of J.J. Abrams's *Lost* has come and gone. Was the series really about the conflicts and hopes and backgrounds of victims of a plane wreck cast away on an island with mysterious powers and dangers of its own? Or was it about illusions or delusions? What was "real" and what was not? Who were the "heroes" and who the "villains"?

While many fans of the series found the final two hours compelling, there is debate as to whether they received the spiritual or even the narrative closure that they anticipated. As it turned out, *Lost* concluded as an "all things to all people" franchise.

There were biblical symbols to claim, if indeed the writers intended it this way. The review sequence at the beginning refers back to an episode, "What They Died For," about the appointment of a new "Jacob," or guardian of the island. The crafty leader and preserver of the island is named Jacob, as was the father of the tribes of Israel who had to resort to trickery to preserve the sacred covenant. In that episode by writers Edward Kitsis, Adam Horowitz and Elizabeth Sarnoff, Dr. Jack Shephard (Matthew Fox) becomes the island's new Jacob with a wine goblet ceremony reminiscent of the Jewish *Kiddush* or even the Catholic Mass. He then has a burning bush kind of experience that directs him to the other side of the island and the far side of the bamboo forest.

In the finale itself, written by Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse, "belief" plays a role, not so much in God but in those with character and leadership qualities. The Bible speaks of the people believing in Moses when it became clear that he was God's servant. Yet in *Lost*'s finale, as in popular New Age jargon, belief in oneself or in one's role model is the belief of choice. "Jack, I believe in you, dude," is the mantra not only of character Hugo "Hurley" (Jorge Garcia) but of everyone on the island, including those who became Jack's sworn enemies.

At certain points, it appeared from the final episode that *Lost* had been intended as a take-off on the *Wizard of Oz*, that the island was a symbol of whatever held each individual back and that each could leave the island, ruby slippers style, whenever he or she was, in the words of Kate Austen (Evangeline Lilly), "ready." There was also black smoke here that was reminiscent of the wicked witch. Evil was always close at hand, or was it?

At other points, *Lost* seemed to be taking its clue from *The Celestine Prophecy*,

where the basis of a reality more shifting and real than physical ground was a foundational energy, emanating from a certain well, an energy that had to be respected, even revered, and kept in tow. Overall, I wondered whether the writers had cast the series according to the philosophy of Bishop George Berkeley (1685–1753), who believed that reality as we know it is only as we perceive it, not as it is "materially."

But instead writers Lindelof and Cuse came up with what they termed a "flash sideways," as opposed to, say, a flash forward or a flashback. The island characters dwelled in a parallel universe, ostensibly where they might have been had the airplane not crashed. Their physical universe did indeed crash them on a strange island, a place which may or may not have functioned differently from other reality. If it did function differently, the suggestion is that this was due to human experimentation, even tampering, with energy and other processes of scientific interest, along with the usual human conflicts over land, life and leadership.

In the end, the writers affirmed the notion of purgatory – which does, by the way, have its origin in the Talmudic teaching that throughout the 12 months after death the body exists and the soul ascends or descends, and that after 12 months the body no longer exists and the soul ascends without descending (Shabbat 152b). The *Lost* take is that purgatory is a parallel world that we make with everyone we meet, whether the circumstances be normal or bizarre. We should live as though we do not know what our "real" world is: that in which we find ourselves, that which we make, that which we would like to make, that in which we would like to find ourselves.

I'm sure that the Talmud was not on the mind of the writers, but they did make a point of featuring Jewish symbols while making it clear that they favored no one monotheistic religion or any of them. In the ante-room of a mysterious church, functioning as a funeral chapel, is a stained glass window featuring a Jewish star, a Muslim crescent, and a Christian cross, among symbols of other religions.

There is also on display a menorah along with crucifixes. Though it is clear that Jack is the main character, the writers do not make the episode about him. They refrain from having him look down into an empty casket, supposedly containing his father's remains, and seeing himself. They thus distance themselves from any Dickens *Christmas Carol* solutions, thereby making the series a commentary on any one person or rendering any one person a Christ-like figure. The empty casket is symbolic of every man or woman.

Their dismissal of Dickens aside, the writers make it very clear that, in their view, certain helpful narratives, from the *Book of Exodus* to the *Wizard of Oz*, even

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a proverbial leprechaun in a well, are spiritually helpful and fulfill the same purpose: to provide us with a working myth for moving forward and for return, the two poles of life. Those with whom we have conflicts may be valuable guides and teachers, as well, even when they are most wicked. After all, erstwhile villain Ben Linus (Michael Emerson) guides Hugo with understanding and tenderness in the last episode, encouraging Hugo to "do what you do best," namely, to take care of people. Yet one's wickedness does have to be atoned for, whether in life or in purgatory. When the souls gather at the end of the last episode, Ben expresses regret that he cannot join them because he has "other stuff to work out."

In the end, Jack's dead father, Christian (representing true spirituality for Christians and others?), welcomes him to the world of the dead by telling him: "There is no 'now' here. This is the place that you all made together so that you could find one another. The most important part of your life was the time that you spent with these people. That's why all of you are here. Nobody does it alone, Jack. You needed all of them, and they needed you....to remember and to let go." He adds that death (and perhaps life, too) is "not leaving [but] moving on."

So the final message of *Lost* is neither New Age nor Christian, but humanistic and sociological: "Life is with people," and there is never any leaving, only moving on. I suppose I can live with that message, but, personally, I don't regard it as profound enough to live by. Whether or not it's a good philosophy of life or of the afterlife, it is certainly promising grounds for a sequel or two.



CD Review

REVIEWED BY CHARLIE EPSTEIN

Herskowitz delivers

If you are looking for a new and different gift for your Jewish jazz fanatic, may I suggest Matt Herskowitz's unusual *Jerusalem Trilogy*. This interesting recording began from a proposed concert of works by Jewish composers for the Lyric Chamber Music Society of New York. The composer was commissioned to write something for the concert to represent a more contemporary side of the program. This would be especially exciting since this would be a unique work by a living composer. His music blends classical and jazz with a touch of Arab and Jewish themes.



This recording features entirely new original compositions and arrangements. It is a return to the style of the "pianist-composer-improvisor" in a 21st century context. The music provides discords much like Stravinsky.

Even the last cut is titled, "Prokofiev's Revenge."

Joining the composer who is at the piano are musicians Daniel Schnyder on sax, Mat Fieldes on bass, and drummer David Rozenblatt. On different cuts, guest artists include violinist Lara St. John, cellist Mike Block, and Bassam Saba on the nay, a Persian flute.

This intriguing CD has an Aug. 10 release date.

Charlie Epstein, of Indianapolis, has been a theater, movie and the performing arts critic for The Jewish Post & Opinion for more than 30 years. ★

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



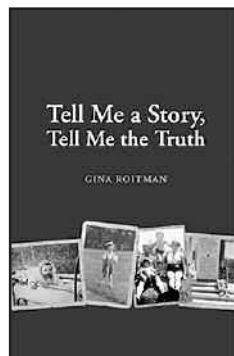
Book Review

BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Confessional by second generation Holocaust survivor

Tell Me a Story, Tell Me the Truth. By Gina Roitman. Toronto: Second Story Press. 2008. Pp.155. \$17.95.

I am glad that I turned to the pages of this slim volume, yet one carrying within it compelling dramas. One of the photos on the book's front cover reminded me of my own family album from that distinct



planet of Europe's Displaced Persons Camps, following the conclusion of WWII and the massive dislocation of the Shoah's surviving refugees.

Gina Roitman, the gifted Montreal author of this important confessional and intimate sharing by a second generation Holocaust survivor, was born – though her mother was advised she could not bear more children – in 1948 in southeastern Germany's Passau, living in the Pocking-Waldstadt Displaced Persons Camp. Gina moved with her parents to Canada when 18 months old. The parents, Sula Kluger and Benzion Miedwiecki, in whose memory the book is dedicated, met and married at the camp.

Sula, the only survivor of five sisters, escaped from Krakow with her first husband to Uzbekistan, where he and their 3-year-old son died. Benzion, hailing from Baranowicze, Byelorussia, lost his first wife and their three children in Auschwitz. Just like my own father, Yechiel, Benzion was drafted into the Russian Army, with both having miraculous survival stories. Benzion's skill as a tailor twice saved his life. While each survivor bears a unique tale of woes and each responds in one's own way, Gina's parents' suffering and endurance provided for a trying journey of rebuilding their lives in a new culture, blessed with two children after tragic personal losses.

Gina, represented in the book through the figure of Leah Smilovitz, was exposed along with her four years younger brother David to a trying childhood in the Holocaust's heavy shadow, with their mother's true horror stories when Gina would refuse eating her lunch. As the book's title reflects, Gina found her mother's frightful Holocaust stories too incredible to be true. Confronted with Gina's unruly



Rabbi Zoberman at the age of 3 at the Wetzlar Displaced Persons Camp in Germany.

conduct, Sula would lay a guilt trip on her by responding, "I survived Hitler for this?" (p. 5), and even used a belt for punishment. Gina, a mature though vulnerable child, would console her mother when down and distressed, was regarded by Sula as an adult since turning 12, thus imposing upon her old-world standards.

Nonetheless, Gina remains grateful for her mother's life's wisdom that continues to guide her even after she died at 63 when Gina was only 28 years old. My own mother, Chasia, tried to shield me and my two sisters from her traumatic past, mostly avoiding the display of raw emotions. But she did relish spoiling us. Like Sula, however, Chasia kept a full refrigerator. The insecurities of one's refugee life are hard to erase.

Sula's high energy corresponds to my mother's, as Gina describes the meticulous Passover preparations with Sula interjecting her prewar home memories, understandably evoked at a holiday time though she was constantly living with the past. How penetrating and poetic is the author's observation, "Our Passover dishes were purchased second-hand in a refugee camp in Germany. And like our family the set was incomplete" (p. 150). I was more fortunate since three of my mother's six siblings came to then-Palestine in the 1930s. However, Gina enjoyed a tender bond with her father whose stories, unlike her mother's, were spiritually uplifting. The account of his dying while recalling his daughter Drora who perished in Auschwitz is deeply moving.

The role of Yiddish in Gina's life – just like in my own, for we both were exposed to it at birth – is profound. "My mother tongue was Yiddish, and it already has been designated a dead language...I had been raised with the values and mores of a culture that was gone before I was born, leaving me lonely and hungering for something I never had" (p.148).

The flavorful portrayal of immigrant life in Montreal, Gina's falling in love in Israel only to be thwarted by the



Book Review

BY JACOB NEUSNER

Autobiography of an impresario: Encounters with Hershel Shanks

Freeing the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Adventures of an Archaeology Outsider. By Hershel Shanks. London and New York: Continuum. 2010.

If hard pressed to name the principal figure, the most influential voice, in the archaeology of ancient Israel, electors point to numerous imposing candidates in Europe, the USA, and especially the state of Israel. Generations have followed in sequence and built on the work of predecessors a highly professional and accomplished edifice.

But if nominations were called forth for the single loudest voice, only one name would resonate. In this sustained advocacy and apologia in the form of an autobiography, Hershel Shanks, a lawyer who became an editor of mass-circulation archaeological publications, spells out his claim for a serious hearing. That is remarkable, as Shanks has never devoted even a week to actual on-site digging or published an authentic archaeological report of his own findings,

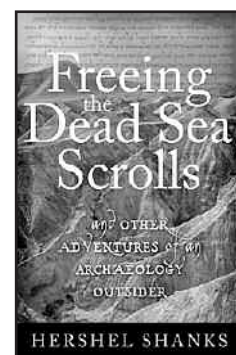
In consequence some will maintain that here he confirms the indictment of his critics: He has done more harm than good or – and I regard the nihilistic view as extreme and bigoted – that he has done no good at all. But he wins sympathy, too, from friend and foe alike for the contribution he has made to his chosen field. Here his claim is spelled out chapter by chapter.

He tells a series of stories, not continuous but distinct from one another. He starts with memories of a Jewish childhood in Western Pennsylvania and records several anecdotes of his practice as a lawyer, narrating his education in the



mother's cunning overprotection, as well as other enchanting vignettes provide for an essential read to better understand and appreciate all affected by the monumental Shoah.

Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Va., was born in 1945 in Chu, Kazakhstan, to Polish survivors. From 1947 to 1949 he lived in Germany's Wetzlar Displaced Persons Camp. ★



law and his successful legal career. He tells without much explanation of his decision to and how he took a year off from the law to make a trip to the state of Israel and how he founded *Biblical Archeology Review*. The narratives involve well-known scholars in archaeology and in politics. Shanks found the doors open to him and attests to the hospitality of Israeli scholarship. Some may have regretted their generosity.

He emerges from this engaging narrative as the impresario of ancient Jewish archaeology, organizing events and following up on issues and maintaining a persistent claim for attention for his field and himself. His autobiography tells the story of his life and career. Not having the education and experience and understanding to grasp first hand the issues of his field formed no impediment to his passing his opinion on topic after topic, and he rightly calls himself an outsider. The archaeological narrative on the authenticity of important alleged finds of objects from the Solomon Temple and from the life and family of Jesus and the like form the main components of the narrative chapters. He follows in acute detail the controversies surrounding the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls and his role in expediting access to the manuscripts. His account of the disgrace of John Strugnell forms the climax of that story and his narrative of the events is eloquent and gripping.

The distinct chapters of the life do not coalesce but form free-standing stories. The accounts of those issues of archaeology that involved his participation are elaborately spelled out and read well.

The upshot of reading this book in my judgment is one sided. In my judgment if Hershel Shanks had not devoted half of his life to biblical archaeology some of the most important outcomes of the past 40 or 50 years would have come about but hardly so expeditiously as they did. A single concrete event justifies that statement. He played a critical part in expediting the publication of the Dead Sea scrolls, and his narrative in that connection forms one of the key chapters of this public record.

But the still more noteworthy result of his engagement with the field is his founding and leadership of *Biblical Archaeology Review* (BAR). Through the handsome and lively publication, he won for biblical archaeology a mass audience beyond the wildest dreams of academic archaeology before Shanks, and he built up a stupendous hearing for his subject. This he did for decades of vital and energetic journalism, his achievement being comparable to the *National Geographic*.

But that analogy of his work to the other does not capture the man's accomplishment, unless we call to mind that BAR was the work of one man joined with scarcely a dozen workers, lacking vast sums of money, and the

(see Neusner, page NAT 19)

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Revered by some and reviled by others

Tillie Olsen. By Panthea Reid. New Brunswick, N.J. Rutgers University Press, 2010. 449 Pages. \$34.95.

Some biographers become so enamored of the person they are writing about that a special word is utilized to characterize what they produce – hagiography. Originally referring to the biography of a saint, the word is now used for a biography that treats its subject with undue reverence.

Panthea Reid, professor emerita, Louisiana State University, author of books about the lives of Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner, spent ten years writing this biography of Tillie Olsen. That large investment of time and effort would by itself entitle her to write a hagiography; indeed, some of Olsen's disciples call her "Saint Tillie." However, what Reid has produced is a forthright and honest account of Tillie Olsen's life – warts and all. This is a courageous achievement because Olsen has become a feminist heroine, regarded by some as an important literary figure. Scott Turow, author of *Presumed Innocent* and other best sellers, was Olsen's student at Amherst where she taught briefly. He claims that Olsen is "one of the 20th century's most exalted writers." Others call her "vastly talented" and an "iconic feminist."

As Reid brilliantly shows, Olsen's reputation is based on a meager output – one book of four short stories, *Tell Me a Riddle*, an unfinished novel, *Yonnondio*, and a work of nonfiction, *Silences*. But she promoted herself as "a compassionate crusader and a superb performer." She had "a galaxy of selves ranging from the heroic, the inspiring, the generous, the self-effacing, the self-denying to the self-aggrandizing, the petty, the vain, the manipulating, the extorting, and the fabricating."

Born in 1912 to Russian Jewish parents who settled in Nebraska after their participation in the failed Russian Revolution of 1905, Olsen grew up in Omaha where her Jewish birth name of Tybile was soon Anglicized to Tillie. Her parents were active in the Socialist Party and, when Eugene V. Debs, its candidate for president in 1924, spoke in Omaha, Olsen's father arranged for Tillie and her sister to present him with flowers after the speech. Influenced by her parents, her reading, and by several

young men who became her lovers, Olsen became more and more radical, joining the Young Communist League. She dropped out of school, traveled around, moved to California, and, in 1914, married Abe Goldfarb who became a functionary for the Communist Party. Tillie also worked for the Communist Party as they went to Minnesota and then back to California. There, she left Goldfarb and married Jack Olsen (born Jacob Olshansky). She remained a revolutionary, publicly named as a Communist and fearful of being called by the congressional committee on un-American activities.

At one point, she was arrested and bailed out by Lincoln Steffens and Ella Winter who gave her address to Bennett Cerf, cofounder with Donald Klopfer, of Random House. They wanted her to write a novel for them, and there then ensued many advances from the publishers and endless frustration for them as she failed to produce. Her negotiations with Random House and Macmillan are a sordid chapter of Olsen's irresponsibility, spelled out in ugly detail. It took 30 years before this book appeared under the title of *Yonnondio*, issued by a different publisher. Her few book publications, along with her articles, established her as a Marxist and feminist literary critic. The reputation she acquired enabled her to secure many speaking engagements and fellowships.

Olsen's unhappy relationships with her parents, her siblings, a number of men, and her children round out the full portrait skillfully drawn by Reid. An unusual final chapter, titled "Enter Biographer," describes the relationship between Olsen and Reid from 1997 until Olsen died in 2007 when she was just two weeks short of her 95th birthday. There were many difficulties in this interaction, complicated by Olsen's decline into Alzheimer's disease.

This book has few references to Olsen as a Jew or Jewish writer, although books on 20th-century Jewish women writers often include some mention of her. Reid does comment about the observance of Christmas by Olsen and her husband. Also, the book begins with an extensive discussion of the pious Jews in Russia who were Olsen's forbears. Olsen perceived her Jewish heritage as emphasizing the elimination of hatred and ignorance and as advocating changing the world. However, it was far more important to her to stress her interest in radical politics and in feminism. She was a contributor to proletarian literature far more than to Jewish writing.

Reid has succeeded in giving us a well-rounded and well-grounded picture of Tillie Olsen, based on meticulous research that is documented in her acknowledgements, her three appendices, and her 69 pages of notes. This book is a major achievement in offering a balanced appraisal of Tillie Olsen, who was revered by some and reviled by others.

Short stories involve Chicago Jews and use Yiddish words

The Love Song of A. Jerome Minkoff and Other Stories. By Joseph Epstein. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010. 260 Pages. \$24.

A man once received a ten-page letter from a friend of his. Accompanying the letter was the following note: "Please forgive me for writing such a long letter. I didn't have time to write a short one." To understand this seeming paradox, just ask any writer who is given a limited number of words in which to produce an essay, story, or review. Literary critics sometimes debate the question by arguing about whether or not it is easier to write a short story than a novel. One consideration is the size of the space the novelist has to develop characters and plot line as contrasted with the sharp limits confronted by the short story writer.

Regardless of where one comes down in this controversy, Joseph Epstein clearly demonstrates that he is a superb master of the short story format in this excellent collection of 14 stories that involves Chicago Jews and uses Yiddish words. He proves the truth of Polonius's comment in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that "Brevity is the soul of wit." Also, he shows how a skilled author can establish a plot and introduce a well-formed cast of characters in a few pages.

Although each story in the collection is unique, Epstein's first one, "The Love Song of A. Jerome Minkoff," is a prototype of the human association issues that are featured throughout the book. Minkoff, the protagonist, is a 64-year-old family doctor who was widowed three years ago when his wife died of ALS. He meets Larissa Friedman, a wealthy 52-year-old woman from Los Angeles, who was visiting Chicago to attend an ALS fund-raising dinner. Her husband died of the same disease two years ago, leaving her with \$64 million as she reveals to Minkoff when their relationship ripens. They are seriously considering the prospect of his retiring and moving to her elaborate home in California. How this works out is revealed on the final page of the story, demonstrating Epstein's rich comprehension of the complex questions that arise in male-female interactions, featured in a number of the subsequent stories.

Variations on the theme of human relationships continue to be presented throughout the book, including colleagues in a university English department; high school classmates 20 years later;

employer and employee; next-door neighbors; beggar and donor; customer and sales clerk; friends of long-standing; fathers and sons; authors and fans; brother to brother; a man and his mistress. In each instance, Epstein makes penetrating observations without losing sight of his obligation to entertain and educate his readers. The narrative story line and the development of the personalities who are featured testify again and again to Epstein's mastery of the short story form and his lively interest in the ordinary occurrences of everyday life.

Born in Chicago in 1937, Epstein is an essayist, lecturer, and editor, as well as a talented short story writer. He taught at Northwestern University for more than 20 years and served as editor of *The American Scholar* for 22 years. Collections of his essays have appeared in more than 13 books, including the well-received *Snobbery* in 2002. His latest collection of short stories was preceded by two similar efforts: *The Goldin Boys: Stories* (1991) and *Fabulous Small Jews* (2003). He is highly regarded as a master of both the essay and the short story forms, deserving plaudits because of his insightful comments on the human condition no matter whether they are expressed in his essays or his short stories.

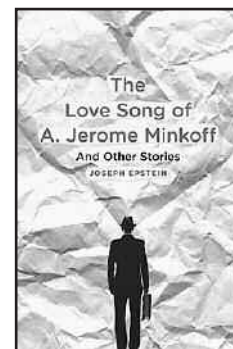
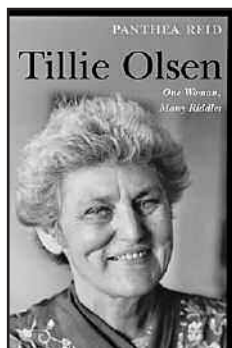
Mystery takes place in Silicon Valley

Smasher. By Keith Raffel. Woodbury, Minn.: Midnight Ink, 2009. 302 Pages. \$14.95.

Silicon Valley is the scene of this exciting mystery that brings together three seemingly separate plots involving a career Jewish couple, Rowena Goldberg and Ian Michaels. As the strands of the story gradually come together, it is increasingly apparent that they are interrelated and their connection is essential in order to determine whodunit.

Rowena is a deputy district attorney who is trying her first murder case. The defendant, Daisy Nolan, is accused of killing her rival for the position of vice-president in their firm. Ian, the CEO of Accelnet, a technology company with 400 employees, has taken time off to watch his wife at work. He loses his composure when the defendant threatens Rowena, and he leaps up to respond to her. Forcibly escorted out of the courtroom, he is asked by the district attorney to stay away from the trial. Two weeks later, Rowena and Ian are struck by an auto while jogging, rendering her unconscious and breaking his leg. One element in the mystery is thus established – how did Daisy

(see Teicher, page NAT 18)





Kosher Kuisine

By SYBIL KAPLAN

A Rosh Hashanah symbol

Pomegranates are referred to in the Bible in many various ways. In the sensual poetry of Song of Songs, we read: "I went down into the garden of nuts...to see whether the vine budded, and the pomegranates were in flower" (Song of Songs 6:11). In another passage, the poet writes – "I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate" (Song of Songs 8:2). Song of Songs has four additional mentions of pomegranates, and there are also references in Joel, Haggai and I Kings.

For many Jews, pomegranates are traditional for Rosh Hashanah. Some believe the dull and leathery skinned crimson fruit may have really been the *tapuach*, apple, of the Garden of Eden. Originating in Persia, according to Matthew Goodman (The Food Maven in *The Forward*), the pomegranate is one of the world's oldest cultivated fruits, having been domesticated around 4000 B.C.E. The Egyptians imported pomegranates from the Holy Land in 1150 B.C.E., and natural pomegranate juice or pomegranate made into spiced wine was a favorite of Hebrews living in Egypt. Pomegranate wood could also be carved into skewers on which to roast the lamb for Passover.

The word pomegranate means "grained apple." In Hebrew, it is called *rimon* (also the word for a hand grenade!). In fact, the English words "hand grenade" are said to come from this and that both the town of Granada in Spain and the stone garnet come from the name and color of the pomegranate. The juice can be made into the concentrated syrup, grenadine also.

The Hebrews yearned for the pomegranates they left behind in Egypt while wandering in the desert – "And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates" (Numbers 20:5). And so it was the spies reported their findings in Canaan back to Moses – "And they came unto the valley Eshkol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bore it upon a pole between two; they took also of the pomegranates, and of the figs" (Numbers 13:23).

"For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land...a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates" (Deuteronomy 8:7-8). Thus pomegranate was one of the seven species of *Eretz Yisrael*.

We know pomegranate images were woven into the hems of the robes of the priests – "And beneath, upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about (Exodus 28:33). Pomegranates were also used on the faces of the shekel in the second century B.C.E.

King Solomon had an orchard of pomegranates, and pomegranates of brass were part of the pillars of his great Temple in Jerusalem.

Throughout the bible, as seen from the previous quotations, the pomegranates are referred to and became symbolic of fertility.

The tradition of *kabbalah* (Jewish mysticism) recounted that there were 613 seeds in each pomegranate, equaling the number of *mitzvot* commanded by God.

On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, when it is customary to eat a "new" fruit that has not been eaten during the year, many Sephardic Jews chose pomegranate. They recite the prayer *ken yehi ratzon* – "May it be thy will, O Creator, that our year be rich and replete with blessings as the pomegranate, rich and replete with seeds."

In modern days, a study at the Technion Institute of Technology in Haifa last year showed the power of the fruit. The cholesterol oxidation process, which creates lesions that narrow arteries and result in heart disease, was slowed by as much as 40 percent when health subjects drank two to three ounces of pomegranate juice a day for two weeks. The juice reduced the retention of LDL, the "bad" cholesterol that aggregates and forms lesions. When subjects stopped drinking the juice, the beneficial effects lasted about a month. Other studies showed that pomegranates fight inflammation and cancer and slow cellular aging. Pomegranates are a good source of potassium, low in calories and low in sodium.

Eating a Pomegranate

When choosing a pomegranate, look for one that is large, brightly colored and has a shiny skin. Store a pomegranate in a plastic bag in the refrigerator and it can keep up to ten weeks. To open a pomegranate, score the outside skin into four pieces, and then break the fruit apart with your hands following the divisions of the membranes that separate the sections. Pull off membranes then scrape the seeds into your mouth or lift them out with a spoon.

Pomegranate Recipes

Some years ago, a food columnist for the *Jerusalem Post* compiled a cookbook titled *Pomegranates* with 64 recipes (5 non-kosher). Juices and syrups, starters and soups, salads and side dishes, main courses, desserts and drinks are included.

Here is one recipe from that book and three of mine.

From *Pomegranates* by Ann Kleinberg

Celebration Salad with Pomegranates Poppy Seed Dressing (6–8 servings)

- 8 cups mixed salad greens
- 2 heads Belgian endive, trimmed and coarsely chopped
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced into half rounds
- 1 avocado, peeled and cubed
- 2 navel oranges, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces, membranes removed
- 1 red grapefruit, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces, membranes removed
- 1 cup black olive rings
- 2 Tbsp. poppy seeds

Place greens and endive in large serving bowl and add onion, avocado, orange and grapefruit pieces, olives and 1/2 cup of pomegranate seeds. Add poppy seeds to vinaigrette, shake and dress the salad. Toss gently and sprinkle the remaining pomegranate seeds on top.

Basic Vinaigrette with Pomegranate Juice

- 1/4 cup pomegranate juice
- 3 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- 1 Tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 4 tsp. sugar
- 2 minced garlic cloves
- 1 1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- pinch of fresh ground pepper

Combine ingredients in a small bowl and whisk well. Pour into cruet or screw-top jar. Shake before dressing a salad.

Pomegranate Mousse (6 servings)

- 1 pound pomegranate pulp
- sugar to taste
- 1 1/4 cups whipped cream
- 1 Tbsp. gelatin
- 3 Tbsp. orange or lemon juice

Puree pomegranate seeds in blender to equal 1 1/4 cups with juice or water. Add sugar to taste. Mix in whipped cream. Warm orange or lemon juice. Add gelatin and dissolve. Stir into mixture. Pour into souffle dish and chill.

Pomegranate syrup

- 1/2 cup
- 1 1/2 cups pomegranate juice
- 1 2-inch cinnamon stick
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1/8 tsp. ground allspice
- 1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg

In a saucepan, heat pomegranate juice with cinnamon stick, brown sugar, and white sugar to boiling. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes or until juice is about 1/2 cup.

Add nutmeg and allspice and cook one minute. Discard cinnamon stick. Strain. Good over regular or pareve vanilla ice cream.

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 17)

Nolan arrange for someone to kill Rowena?

The second mystery revolves around Ian's determination to ward off the efforts by Ricky Frankson, a dot.com billionaire to buy Accelnet. Is it possible that he is so frustrated by Ian's resistance that he made plans for Ian's murder so that the intended victim of the auto accident was not Rowena but was actually Ian, with his elimination making it possible for the purchase to proceed?

Finally, the death in an auto accident of Ian's aunt, physicist Isobel Marter, in Geneva where she was attending a conference many years ago, rounds out the puzzles spelled out in this book. The suspicious circumstances surrounding Isobel's death are related to the fact that she was part of a group at Stanford that won the Nobel Prize for discovering the quark, a particle of the atom. She did not participate in the award since she was dead before it was made. Since only three people can receive a Nobel Prize and since they must be alive, her elimination made it possible for three of her colleagues to become Nobel Laureates. Ian finds records that suggest that his aunt should have been a recipient of the award had she been alive, thus arousing concern about whether or not her death was actually an accident.

Ian pursues the mystery of his aunt's death while simultaneously attempting to figure out who was the intended victim of the auto accident that put his wife into a coma. His efforts, sometimes clumsy, try the patience of the Palo Alto police, especially Sergeant Susan Fletcher who Ian met four years earlier when she helped him to become absolved of his sister's murder.

The large cast of characters includes a woman rabbi in the synagogue that Ian grew up in and where Rowena is now an active member. The rabbi is a regular visitor to the hospital where Rowena is a patient. Ian and Rowena's mother stay at her bedside, worrying as to whether or not she will ever regain consciousness.

Throughout this ordeal, Ian is trying to fend off a hostile bid for his company, seeking desperately to find an investor that will help him to retain control. His troubled relationships with his board members add additional interest and illustrate the kinds of problems experienced by some firms in Silicon Valley.

As is not uncommon in mystery stories, there is a logical solution to the issue of identifying the culprit, satisfying readers with the reasonableness of the ending. The setting for the events described here provides an eminently acceptable background for the three mysteries and for the sensible outcome.

Keith Raffel, himself a successful Silicon Valley entrepreneur, has made good use of his knowledge and his experience to produce an intelligent mystery story that will undoubtedly have a broad appeal. ★

SHAFRAN

(continued from page NAT 6)

But it is known that representatives of the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly, representatives of the Union for Reform Judaism and officials of the Jewish Federations of North America were making the rounds on Capitol Hill several days before the first reports of the letter appeared.

If it turns out that American Jewish communal leaders took upon themselves to pressure American elected officials to meddle in the domestic affairs of another country, particularly in a matter of no concern to the vast majority of those officials' constituents (and in fact contrary to the concerns of a good portion of their Jewish ones), would that constitute a responsible wielding of communal clout, or an egregious, unprecedented abuse of the same?

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

LENHOFF

(continued from page NAT 7)

podcasts, Twitter, online video such as YouTube, and social networks like Facebook.

With a broadly based effort to recruit and train Ethiopian Jews for service across the African continent, Israel can restore its pre-1973 programs there with a new creative humanitarian dimension. At the same time, major benefits will be provided Israel's Ethiopian Jewish community. Just as the Peace Corps was a major win-win domestically and internationally for America, the initiative we propose could do the same for Israel, and for any other country wishing to join the fight on poverty in this way.

Professor Howard Lenhoff, president, American Association for Ethiopian Jews (1978–1982) and author of *Black Jews, Jews, and Other Heroes, Gefen, Jerusalem 2007*. ★

KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page NAT 10)

design painted on them, and above the entrance, the word "Emanuel."

In the showroom are painted wood dreidels, mezuzot, hamsas, jewelry boxes, candlesticks, salt and pepper shakers, matchbox covers, kiddush cups, havdalah sets, tzedakah boxes, seder plates, washing cups and more.

Out of material with some embroidery are picture frames, totes, wall hangings, tallit bags, keepot, tallitot and evening bags.

On a table marked new items are necklaces with *mogen davids*, hamsas and pomegranates; key chains and metal trivets, washing cups and kiddush cups.

To your right is a large, open area where ironing and sewing is done by some workers; the side wall holds stock;

and ahead of you through the glass is an office with a rather ordinary Israeli man in his 40s in slacks and a collarless t-shirt.

This is the studio of artist Yair Emanuel.

How does it feel to be a "household" name?

"I don't think about it," he tells me. "I don't want to think who is buying and where are my things. If I think about it, I will feel too proud of myself." And so one gets an immediate impression of a very talented, humble man.

How do you describe your style?

"A combination of all the new, mostly Judaica, which is old, but I make it new and happy not heavy like silver. It doesn't look serious," he says.

How does he develop ideas?

Emanuel does the graphics by hand on paper, then he scans it onto the computer where he does the measurements. After that, he makes the actual item.

What is your technique for wood?

"First we paint the wood with white for background then I draw an outline on the white then I paint inside the lines. Finally, we put on varnish."

What about the embroidery?

The embroidery is one of three types. "One is hand embroidery on painted cloth. Another is computer embroidery. The third is appliqué, where we cut out the shape then embroidery the patches."

One of the ways to recognize an Emanuel work is the pomegranates.

Why do you use them so often?

"It's a very nice fruit, we bless it on Rosh Hashanah and it has a very interesting shape, like a crown on top. I also like the color."

In addition to the wood and embroidered items, Emanuel has begun a new style with colored metal in kiddush cups, trivets and washing cups in deep shades of burgundy, wine, silver, gold, and deep blue. He describes it as sand cast aluminum.

How did Emanuel begin in this work?

He was born 47 years ago in the religious Kibbutz Sha'alavim in the Ayalon Valley, five kilometers (3 miles) after Shaar Hagai (the point on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway where the road begins to ascend, 23 kilometers (14 1/3 miles) from Jerusalem, in an Orthodox family. "I had connection to Judaica from my family," he says.

He studied art at the Bezalel Art school when it was located behind the Central Bus Station, taught art in Mitzpe Ramon (100 miles south of Jerusalem), then he started to do art to sell.

In 1990, he started to make silk paintings by hand. "Then I started with other fabrics and embroidery. I like to make new things."

In 2004, he saw that the neighborhood of Talpiot was "empty and cheap," so he opened his factory and showroom here.

Items in his showroom sell for 25% less than in town. He does shipping and payment depends on the amount of things bought.

His wife is a counselor, and they have two children, ages 15 and 17. The 15-year-old son is learning art in a special high school of art.

In the future, he sees himself continuing as he is. "Every week I make two to four new designs. I like what I am doing and I like to make new things."

Sybil Kaplan lives in Jerusalem. ★

BACKALENICK

(continued from page NAT 11)

served to make a more effective book.

No matter. Style is not the issue. What matters is that Nava Shean offers a look into her innermost feelings as she struggles from one challenging moment to the next.

Her childhood offered a taste of theater and a totally assimilated life. She had no sense of being Jewish until she landed in Terezin, rounded up with other Jews. There, in that bleak, dark setting, she would direct theater – which would prove to be a survival tactic against all odds. There followed a return to Prague, and, finally in 1948, illegal emigration to Israel.

With a new life in Israel, she would struggle to balance motherhood, theater, and kibbutz life. As a single mother, she had to provide for her baby Ora, and, as a kibbutz member in Givat Brenner, she had to carry her load. Decisions, solutions were not easy, even in Israel where child care is perhaps more available than in the United States and other countries.

But Nava Shean would prevail, creating and performing her own one-woman show, when other opportunities did not arise – or were aborted – when she suffered disappointments and betrayals. On the other side of the coin, she gained steady recognition, played memorable roles, and forged strong professional relationships.

In short, *To Be an Actress* is a splendid opportunity to look into the heart and mind of a dedicated actor. And, incidentally, to find out what acting –

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even under the most stressful circumstances – is all about.

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

NEUSNER

(continued from page NAT 16)

National Geographic that of a great many experienced professionals and millions in subscriptions and membership. Having served as consultant for a major *National Geographic* project, I can report that the professional staff is first class and highly skilled. However talented and experienced, the staff of BAR could not do for Shanks what the staff of the *National Geographic* did for the editing and production of that distinguished publication. Shanks made up the difference.

Those two chapters in the Shanks saga – the publication of the scrolls and the creation of BAR – form only part of the account. Other archaeological issues and debates on the authenticity of finds come to the fore, an ossuary attributed to the family of Jesus and objects deriving from Solomon's Temple defining moot points, for example.

In his narrative Shanks lavishly expounds his views and the course of debate in which he participated. He is careful to identify his friends and his enemies, and records those with whom he had quarrels and made up afterward. No one who follows the course of biblical studies can ignore this engaging and important chapter in the record of a generation now coming to its end.

What does Shanks omit from his account? He himself persistently takes issue with critics and some of the critics are labeled as enemies. Give a book of his a critical review and you will find yourself subject to not argument and debate but name calling, an "academic pit-bull" for example. But the issues raised by Shanks's career are academic and deserve a serious hearing and a constructive debate. It is common to find a review centered on the author and not the book.

Not earning a Ph.D. exacted a heavy price from Shanks and left him dependent upon second-hand opinions in place of first-hand knowledge of the evidence and argument and traditions of learning that govern in the academy. That is why he is right to call himself an archaeology outsider.

Jacob Neusner is Distinguished Service Professor of the History and Theology of Judaism and Senior Fellow, Institute of Advanced Theology at Bard College Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. ★



Musings from Shiloh

BY BATYA MEDAD

Matching funds, the right partner

In the world of fundraising, "matching funds" is a popular technique. A very wealthy donor or a government agency will promise to "match" or equal as much financial support as the project can generate, effectively doubling the income. The technique is also sometimes part of an employment contract in which the employer promises to match the employees' retirement fund payment.

This isn't new, not at all. Thousands of years ago, G-d made such a deal with the Jewish People. Read about it in *Parshat Shavua*, Torah Portion of the Week, Ekev: (13) And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, (14) that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. (15) And I will give grass in thy fields for thy cattle, and thou shalt eat and be satisfied. There's one big difference between G-d's conditions and the examples I gave earlier: (16) Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; (17) and the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, so that there shall be no rain, and the ground shall not yield her fruit; and ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

Yes, if we don't keep our side of the contract, it's not just a simple situation where we get nothing. We lose what we have. This has happened. The Jewish People has been exiled from *Eretz Yisrael*, the Land of Israel in the past. We had better shape up, or it can G-d forbid happen again.

Are they after the Israelis?

On one of my walks in Manhattan, during my recent visit to the USA, my eyes caught sight of Hebrew writing on some T-shirts.



Even after 40 years here in Israel, I'm not the swiftest in the Hebrew-reading

department, so it took me more than a second or two to realize that these young men are promoting "Jews for Jesus," a Messianic Christian sect.

And only when I cropped the picture and saw the enlarged shirt/writing, did I notice that there's also Russian written on it, so they are also targeting Russian Jews.

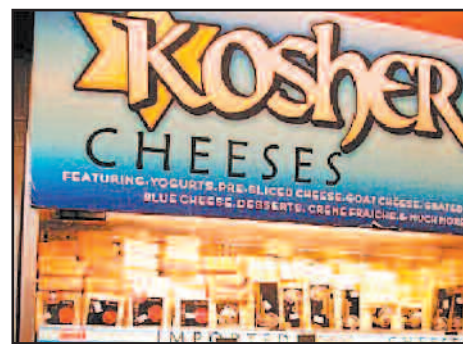
There are lots of Israelis, students, tourists, *yordim*, Israelis who live permanently abroad who are in the area of Bryant Park everyday. I didn't speak to these guys, so I don't know if they're Israeli or American, but it was clear that they're Christian missionaries targeting Jews.



Losing Direction

I must admit that when I prayed in America during my recent visit, I most probably didn't face the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Israel. I rarely had even the vaguest idea which way was east. It was very confusing. I prayed in all sorts of places, indoors and out, sedentary and traveling. I had no idea where the sun had risen and where it would set. I just did my best to focus on the words and on G-d, pleased and proud that I found places to pray and hadn't forgotten with all of the distractions and pressures of the visit.

Another thing was that even in Arizona, I found it pretty easy to find food certified as *kosher*. And in New York, I was constantly amazed at what big business *kosher* seems to be in the food trade.



So many large stores have enormous *kosher* sections, even selling only *kosher* baked goods. That must force the *kosher* specialty shops to lower their prices or they will lose customers. Some of these giant supermarkets have such a variety of easily available *kosher* food, it's almost like being in Israel. Yes, very confusing and *too easy* to be Jewish.

That's a problem and reminds me of my facing the wrong direction when praying. It has become so easy to live as Torah Observant Jews in some neighborhoods that people think they're in the *Holy Land*. With so many *kosher* stores, restaurants and Jewish schools, it's hard to focus on the *mitzvah*, the commandment, the ultimate goal of *aliyah artza*, immigrating to the Land of Israel.



Israel's President Shimon Peres (front in suit), who celebrated his 87th birthday this week, gets down on the tarmac at Ben Gurion Airport to help greet 85 new recruits to the IDF who arrived on the Aug. 3 Nefesh B'Nefesh charter flight. The flight carried a total of 234 new olim (immigrants) to Israel among 3,000 making aliyah with Nefesh B'Nefesh over the course of the summer. Since its founding in 2002, the organization has been responsible for bringing over 25,000 people from the US, Canada and the UK. Photo credit: Sasson Tiram.

Decompressing and debriefing after my trip to the USA

I'm still trying to decompress after my visit to the States, Arizona, New York and New Jersey. Granted, I only landed just over 12 hours ago. And about the landing...I flew British Airways (Premium Coach) since they have an "easy" route, Israel to London, then London to Phoenix, which the agent recommended as best for my very elderly father. My Arizona to New York was on Delta, more comfortable than expected. ...when the wheels hit the ground at Ben Gurion International Airport, there was clapping, just like on El Al. I got a kick out of that, since I've been flying El Al for years and missed their menu.

One thing I "enjoyed" this visit was noticing the great variety of dressing styles you see in America today. There was a time when my kerchiefed head and over-the-knee skirts made me stand out, but today there are all sorts of ethnic and fashion statements on American streets. I wasn't the only middle-aged person with a backpack, though wheeled bags of all sizes and shapes were much more common. There were hats and turbans of all styles and fabrics. This was very different from the mid-1950s when my concept of "normal" and "acceptable" was formed. And there seems to be an increase in tolerance from even a few years ago. At times I wondered if it was safe to have my Israeli backpack with Hebrew writing on my back, but obviously, it didn't attract danger, even in Arizona where there are many more Arabs than Jews.

The large supermarkets offer everything their customers could possibly need or crave from junk food to strictly organic, *kosher* and *halal*. Commercially, it seems to be bad news for entrepreneurs, since the large chains can easily sell more variety for less money.

On one hand, superficially, there's a very obvious prosperity, but things are different when you speak to people. Even the successful are more worried about money and the future. Most in my generation with adult children aren't in the financial position to help their own children the way we were helped by our parents.

My very elderly parents are now in a wonderful "old age home" in Arizona. It can be described as a luxury resort for senior citizens. Some of the residents use it as a "hotel," not needing any special care packages. For those, like my parents, there are individual care packages suited to their individual needs. My sister did a great job in choosing the place. Arizona has a great variety of facilities. And if you're wondering, there are only a few Jews in the place, and they quickly found my parents, happy for the increase in numbers. (My parents aren't religiously observant, but they are very sociologically and culturally Jewish.)

Now, I must "reinvent" my life after almost a year of being the full-time care-giver for my father. I also need some sort of job I can do part time and when traveling. It's so good to be home here in Shiloh, Israel.

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