

# *The Jewish* Post & Opinion • *National Edition*

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*Happy  
Chanukah*



# Editorial

The following excerpts are from my editorials from our past two Indiana editions. In this issue, we also have two columns each from those editions by my brother, Rabbi Benzion Cohen, and Yiddish columnist Henya Chaiet.

In my brother's column on page 3, he writes that love is one of the ways to bring peace to the world. I agree and add that music is also a powerful method.

When The Yuval Ron Ensemble was in Indianapolis for International Peace Day Sept. 21, 2011, I wrote: "Yuval Ron commented that some people think that the way to diminish darkness is with more darkness. He believes the way to diminish the darkness is with light and that is what his group does with their music. They travel around infusing light by highlighting the commonalities of the different religions and bringing them together for a joyful and uplifting experience."

Preceding *Selichot* services at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck this year, singer/songwriter Michael Hunter Ochs (photo below) gave a concert which included songs pertaining to this time of year about *chesbon hanefesh* (self-reflection) so we might make amends for our errors and improve in the coming year. During his performance he preceded each song with an interesting story of how he came to write it, but he also explained why music is so helpful in bridging the gap between people with differences.



"Music has a way of reaching and moving the heart before the mind realizes what's happening. The right song, when sung from the heart, can enable us to feel compassion for someone we might even fear – and gives us the chance to uncover our common humanity. Once we are joined by the spirit of compassion, it becomes so much easier to talk about the tough issues on which we disagree."

Besides being a good singer and songwriter, Ochs is a great entertainer and I could see how at a less solemn time he could really get the audience moving, singing, clapping, whistling and perhaps even dancing. With Debbie Friedman

# About the Cover

*Hanukkiyah in old synagogue, Mea Shearim*

By Eduard Gurevich

This artwork is oil on canvas and was done in memory of his parents, Lucy Givertsman and Mikhael Gurevich and his uncle and teacher Max Malovitsky. They fought against the Nazis in the Red Army, but his other relatives were killed by the Nazis.



E. Gurevich

Eduard Gurevich was born in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine in 1947 in the city of the illustrious Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson. He began learning to paint in childhood. Eduard Gurevich studied art in the famous art schools of Ukraine. In 1990 he made aliyah to Israel and currently lives in Beit Shemesh.

From his first days in Israel he devoted himself to painting Jewish themes. His paintings are full of his love for his Jewish roots, traditions and the grandeur of Judaism. His unique realistic style gives the viewer a sense of being there, in Jerusalem. He also has numerous paintings of the shtetls in Eastern Europe and of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

(see Cover, page 4)



gone for almost four years, we need more performers like him. ([www.ochsongs.com](http://www.ochsongs.com))

After mentioning two different ways to bring peace to the world, we have to remember that one cannot really change another person, one can only change oneself. Perhaps the best way to bring peace to the world is by bringing it closer to home. That is what these holidays are about. It's our season to look inward and see how we can make peace within, with those close to us. When we have inner peace, the world will be more peaceful. To aid with this I will leave you with an affirmation, "By being kind to myself in my own thoughts, I am blessing everyone else as well."

I receive an abundance of press releases and tons of other emails every day and I do not have time to open all of them, but some are valuable. On Oct. 22, I received the following information in italics from Baylor University\*:

*Forgiving – and being forgiven – are good for your emotional health, research has shown, and National Forgiveness Day on Sat., Oct. 25, may be a good time to let bygones be bygones and also to make amends.*

*Research by Baylor University psychologists shows that making amends over a wrong gives you emotional permission to forgive*

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*yourself, according to two studies published in The Journal of Positive Psychology. That's important, researchers said, because previous studies show that the inability to self-forgive can be a factor in depression, anxiety and a weakened immune system.*

*"One barrier people face in forgiving themselves is that they feel they deserve to feel bad. Our study found that making amends gives us permission to let go," said Thomas Carpenter, a researcher in Baylor's*

(see Editorial, page 6)

# Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

## Mother

Our mother's *yahrtzeit* is the fourth day of *Tishrei*, two days after *Rosh Hashana*. Here is a story from her life. I hope that it will bring you inspiration.

Our family lived in Indianapolis. Most families there had only one or two children. Our family was the exception. We had eight. I am number five, born in 1950, five years after the Holocaust.

Why was our family different from all of the other families? Our dear mother, may she rest in peace, once told us why. The Germans tried to destroy the Jewish people. She took upon herself to do her part to rebuild our people. She brought eight new Jewish souls into the world. It was not easy. Her friends would tease her. They would notice that she was expecting again and make comments.

This is a beautiful example of self sacrifice. Why did the other families limit themselves to two children? Giving birth and raising children is not easy. It involves a lot of pain, effort, time and money. Multiply this by eight and see the self sacrifice of our dear parents.

Self sacrifice is one of the basic themes of *Torah* and *Mitzvahs*. We give of our time and energy to learn *Torah* and fulfill the *Mitzvahs*. It is also the secret of a happy and beautiful life.

One beautiful aspect of a *Torah* life is love. To love is one of the central *Mitzvahs*. "And you shall love your neighbor as much as you love yourself." How do we bring a lot of love into our lives? By giving a lot of love. Giving love is also self sacrifice. We put our time and energy to awaken love in our heart and give it to our family and to others. We try to help anyone that we can who is in need. We go to visit the sick and the elderly and cheer them up.

The *Torah* teaches that any love and kindness that you show will automatically reflect back to you. This is basic human nature. When you give love to someone, they will feel love for you.

It is that simple. Give a whole lot of love, and you will get back even more. Life will be beautiful, full of love.

And this is only the beginning. The more love that we generate, the more love there is in the world. When each of us does his or her part the world itself becomes a beautiful place, full of love.

Chassidic teaching tells us that any and all good that we bring into the world is eternal. All of the good and love that we bring into the world is added on to the good that our ancestors did before us.

The world is getting better and better. Our teacher, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, told us that the world is now ready for the final redemption. We believe that he is *Moshiach* (the Messiah) and he is in the process of bringing the final redemption.

Look around. One hundred years ago, a thousand years ago, the strong nations conquered and oppressed the weak nations. Today we see the exact opposite. The strong nations are now actually making big efforts to help the weaker nations.

True, there is still evil in the world, but it is rapidly being destroyed. In Syria the bad guys are killing each other off, and in Iraq a worldwide coalition is fighting the terror.

We are living in special times. We recently witnessed tremendous miracles. Very soon we will witness our complete and final redemption, at which time all evil will be permanently eradicated. However, this depends on each and every one of us. It is up to us to bring the final redemption by doing good deeds.

Let us follow the example of self sacrifice that our dear mother showed us. May we all devote ourselves this year to learn more *Torah* and do more *Mitzvahs* to make the world better and holier, to bring *Moshiach* now!

We wish all of our readers to be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life. This year should be a wonderful and beautiful year for all of us and for all of the world, the year of our complete and final redemption.

## Seeing Through Suffering

Recently I wrote about the amazing miracles that we witnessed here in Israel, and the opportunity this offered to help us come to believe in *Hashem*.

One of my readers responded: "Nope; this doesn't work for me. If I credit *Hashem* with these "miracles" then I also have to credit *Hashem* when the life isn't saved, when the bad things happen and people are hurt or die, or even credit Him with the war in the first place."

This is a good question. If *Hashem* runs the world, as most of mankind believes, then why do people suffer and die? This is a complicated issue. For example, the *Torah* teaches us that sometimes people die because they have accomplished their mission. *Hashem* sent their soul down to this world for a specific purpose. As soon as this purpose has been achieved, their soul returns to heaven.

Maybe this suffering is a punishment from *Hashem*? Most people agree that some forms of punishment can have positive results. How many people advocate closing down all prisons? Children and adults who misbehave sometimes need some form of punishment to teach them

## Kidney still needed for Drew



Drew, age 11, a Jewish child in Indianapolis, has been suffering from a very rare disease Alport's Syndrome, which causes hearing loss and kidney failure, along with eye problems, since age six. She attended the Hasten Hebrew Academy until she was too weak to complete full school days. Her condition worsened earlier this summer requiring her to start daily dialysis.

A transplant team is actively searching for a live kidney donor. If you have type "O" blood and would like to be considered, please ask for Kelly at (317) 944-4370. See [www.facebook.com/kidneydrew](http://www.facebook.com/kidneydrew) and [ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-1081282](http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-1081282). ★

how to behave themselves.

Once a *chassid* came to the first Rebbe of Chabad. He told the Rebbe that he was having a very hard time and a lot of suffering from his marriage. His wife criticized, argued and fought with him all the time. The Rebbe closed his eyes, rested his head on his hands and sat quietly for a few minutes, very deep in thought.

The Rebbe opened his eyes and told him that in a past lifetime he had lived in the time of the first Temple (around 2,600 years ago). He had worshiped idols all of his life, every day. When he passed away, his soul went up to the heavenly court. The court did not know how to deal with him. He had worshiped idols thousands of times. Each time he worshipped idols he incurred the punishment of being stoned. They could arrange for his soul to be reincarnated. He could walk down the street and have a stone wall fall on him. That would be counted as being stoned. But what about the other thousands of times that he needed to be stoned?

Finally the court came up with a plan. He would be reincarnated, and marry a woman who would criticize him and fight with him. Her words would hurt him like stones. Every time that they argued it would be considered that he was being stoned another time.

The Chassid packed his bags and went home. He opened the front door and greeted his wife. Sure enough she poured out her wrath on him, but this time he just stood silently, smiling. She was astounded. She said: "What happened to you? Did you go crazy? What are you smiling about?" He answered: "Another stoning was just crossed off!"

Amazing! Here was a man who was suffering. His marriage was on the rocks (see Benzion, page 7)



## Yiddish far alleh taug

(Yiddish for Everyday)  
By HENYA CHAIET

## Dee Bubbeh Chaikheh, z"l

(Grandmother Ida Weinstein, z"l)

### Der "Malach"

(The "Angel")

*Tyereh Yiddisheh kinder, ich vil eych der tzalen hyent vaus haut aun gegangen mit mir dee leitzteh pour vauchen. Ich haub veyeter geven in hauspital, far etlechheh teh. Gaut tzu danken ich bin itzter besser un in myn ehgehmer haym.* (Dear Yiddish readers, I want to tell you today what has been going on with me these past few weeks. I was hospitalized again for a few days. Thanks to G-d, I have recovered and am back home again.)

*Ich haub ah myseh tzu dertzaylen eych vehgen der "malach" vas is mine shkheyneh.* (I have a short tale to tell you about my next door neighbor, who I think is an "angel".)

*Ah maul is mir shver gain ahroof uhn ahraup fun dee treap, bet ich Ha Shem err zaul mir schiken ah "malach" mir helfen.* (Sometimes it is difficult for me to get up and down the steps to my apartment. So I pray to G-d to help me accomplish this task.)

*Vehn ich haub gehcoomen ah haym fun hauspital is ha shem gehenfert mine tfiles. Ven ich haub em gehdaft baruch ahbaugh is mein shkheyneh der "malach" geh shtanen ahnt kegen fun mir tzuh aushelfen mir. Daus haut zach mir nisht gehglaypt daus haut pahsirt, haub ich zich gehgehen ah knip, tzu zen ayb siz cholemt zach mir auder nisht.* (When I came home from the hospital, it seemed as though my prayers were being answered. Whenever I needed to go up or down the stairs, there he was standing in front of me, my neighbor the "Angel", waiting to help me.)

*Efsher haub ich gehstorben? Nayn ich bin nauch lebbehdick. Ken das zine ahz err is tahkeh ah "malach"?* (I could not believe that this was happening, so I pinched myself to see if I was dreaming or not. Perhaps I had died. Could it be that my neighbor is an "Angel"?)

*Nuh, kinder, ich vil by eich fregen vaus daynkt ear. Ken err tahkeh zine ah "malach"? Shrypt mir ah email auder ah brief mit ayer entfer.* (Dear children, I ask you, what do you think? Is my neighbor really an "Angel"? Write me an e-mail or even better, a letter to the editor with your thoughts.)

*Ah shaynem dank eyech far lezenin mine mysehleh.* (Many thanks for reading my little story.)

*Daus bin, Henya Chalet, eyer Yiddisheh mahmeh.* ("Tis I, Henya Chalet, your Jewish mama.)

*Ahmol clair ich tzu zich ahlane ven ich vil shane nit zein auf der velt, velen meineh aynicklach mir gehdayken un dermaunen zich vegen mir?* (Sometimes I think to myself, when I am no longer here in this world, will my grandchildren remember me and speak about me?)

*In mein lehen haub ich gehven zayer glicklach tzu hauben mein Bubbeh Chaikheh biz ich haub gehven fearuntz-vantzich yor alt.* (In my lifetime I was very fortunate to have my grandmother until I was 24 years old.)

*Mein mutters familia hauben alleh gehvaynt zayer naunt tzuzamen. Dee Bubbeh un der zaydeh hauben ayechet geven naunt tzu alleh zayehreh kinder.* (My mother's family all lived close together including grandpa and grandma who always had their children close by.)

*Douch der vauch fleckt dee mameh meineh zaugen mir, "Shtel zach aup nauch der shooley un zeh effsher dahf dee bubbeh eppes hauben tzu taun far deer." Ah maul fleg ich vashen ear kich, ah maul fleckt zee dahfen eppes in mark. Zee haut mir alleh maul gehgehen eareh maun kichel tzu aunbisen mit ah glauz milch.* (During the week my mother would always say, "Stop at grandma's and see if she needs help with anything." Sometimes I would scrub her kitchen or she might need something at the market. She always gave me some of her delicious poppyseed cookies and a glass of milk)

*Ahz zee fleckt kauchen auder bahken fleg ich zitzen un vatthen ear. Ich haub zach ah sahch ausgelehrent fuhn vahtchen ear.* (When she would cook or bake I always watched and learned.)

*Mein mutter is gehven ah schneiderkeh un zayer farnumen mit ear arbet. Zee fleckt mir zaugen vaus tzu kauchen nor ich fleg daus getidaft aus lernen ahlayn.* (My mother was always busy as she was a dressmaker. She would tell me what to cook but I had to learn to do it on my own.)

*Ich fleg iber redder mit Dee Bubbeh Chaikheh ah tzoreh vaus haut mir gehdieget.* (Many times I would talk over with my grandmother something that was worrying me.)

*Ven der zayde is gehstorben haut Dee Bubbeh Chaikheh gehcoomen vaynen mit unz in unzer haym. Zee haut gehven zayer frum auber nit farnatisht. Ich haub shane domaulst geh lerent zach zein ah nurse. Ven ich haub-gehkent fleg ich coomen ah haym zein mit ear uhn zach aus redder vaus gayt auhn mit mir.* (When my grandfather died my grand-

### COVER

(continued from page 2)

The dream of Eduard Gurevich is that people throughout the world could appreciate the beauty and wisdom of Judaism and Israel through his art. He participated in many international exhibitions and his works are in numerous private collections in Germany, Canada, USA, France, Russia and Israel. See more of his work at: [www.artmajeur.com/eduard-gurevich](http://www.artmajeur.com/eduard-gurevich) and [www.facebook.com/JudaicaLifeArt](http://www.facebook.com/JudaicaLifeArt). ✨



mother chose to come live with us as she was closer to my mother than her other four daughters. At the time, I was already in nursing school, but I came home as often as I could to be with her. We would always talk about what had been going on with me.)

*Mein Bubbeh's Chanukah sudeh haub ich allehmaul zayer gehglichen, vil ich eych gehben tzu farzuchen.* (I always loved her Chanukah feast so I will give you a taste of it.)

#### Menin

1) Forshpiez – gehockteh herring auder gehocktehleber – zoureh gehrkes

2) Suppe – shvoymen mit beblach

3) Gehbrauteneh ganz mit latkes fuhn kartaufel. Zee haut geh pregelt dee latkes mit geneneh schmaltz

4) Compote fuhn floymen, eppel, un rauzingkes

5) Mandelbrot, tayglach un maun kichel un hayseh Sweetouchnee chai

#### Menu

1) Appetizers – chopped herring or chopped liver – sour pickles

2) Soup – mushrooms and lima beans

3) Roasted goose with potato latkes that were fried in the goose fat she rendered

4) Fruit compote of prunes, apples and raisins

5) Mandelbrot, tayglach, poppyseed cookies and of course Sweetouchnee hot tea

*Zaul eych vale bacoomen, ess gezunter hayt. Daus bin ich, Henya Chalet eyer Yiddisheh mahmeh.* (May you digest your food well and in good health. Tis I, Henya Chalet your Yiddisheh mother.)

*Henya Chalet is the Yiddish name for Mrs. A. Helen Feinn. Born in 1924 ten days before Passover, her parents had come to America one year prior. They spoke only Yiddish at home so that is all she spoke until age five when she started kindergarten. She then learned English, but has always loved Yiddish and speaks it whenever possible. Chalet lived in La Porte and Michigan City, Ind., from 1952 to 1978 and currently resides in Walnut Creek, Calif. Email: [afeinn87@gmail.com](mailto:afeinn87@gmail.com). ✨*



## Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

### An enigmatic Biblical question: Aaron, the charmed

Remember when Newton dropped that apple and it fell down instead of up? Bam! He accidentally discovered gravity. And do you also remember when Salk accidentally forgot to refrigerate a chunk of mold and it turned into penicillin? Well I, a non-scientific, non-theological dodo have blundered into a similar world-shaking revelation.

Consider the evil that paints the world. Now consider those ten rules – the Decalogue that the majority of mankind ignores – issued by the Creator. Why are they ignored? Because, after much study and reflection, I have deduced that ten is too many. And such a load for Moses to haul down that mountain! And for all we know all ten may not have reached their sinful recipients – he may have dropped one of those 50-pound tablets. Maybe that lustful gang took advantage of the missing commandments. (Does not our Creator tell us in His book dozens of times that man's heart is part evil.) Maybe Joe Israelite didn't know he shouldn't steal or envy his neighbor's wife, who made a *kugel* to die for.

Even the Creator can err – regardless of his divinity. In fact, he admits as much before the flood when he realized that puppies and kittens are innocent, but man – OY, whatta mistake.

Therefore, my solution: Ten rules are too many – who can remember ten? Doubt me? OK, let's hear you recite them. The problem is not our theology; it's our semantics. Why not ONE commandment, "Thou shall be honest"? (Maybe honorable?) Don't just envy not your kugel-making neighbor's wife – envy not his new Mercedes. Honest, honorable covers the entire field of ethics. And consider how many forms of misbehavior the current code ignores. You didn't tell me that I couldn't bash the head of the kugel-maker's wife with a rock. Show me. No wonder the world is corrupt with sin. Look how many felonies are omitted. No wonder you cheat on your expense account – show me where it says a \$40 hotel room can't be marked up to \$150 on your expense account. Quote me one word about expense accounts in the

### Trailblazing rabbi finally gets her due

BY RABBI SANDY E. SASSO



October 14, 2014 marked the 70th anniversary of death of Regina Jonas. You have probably never heard of her. But the story of this extraordinary trail blazing and courageous woman deserves to be known.

Regina Jonas was the first female ordained as a rabbi in Berlin in 1935. Not until 1972 in the United States was another woman, Rabbi Sally Preisand, ordained by the Reform movement at Hebrew Union College. I followed soon after, the first to be ordained from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1974. Yet, it really wasn't until the 1990s that much was known about the life and teachings of Regina Jonas.

In 1942 the Nazis deported Jonas to Terezin, a concentration camp where she taught, preached and comforted fellow inmates. In 1944 she was sent to Auschwitz where she died. For a long time her memory died as well. Those who survived and knew her were silent about her legacy. In part, it was because she was a woman. In part, the issue of female



Regina Jonas

graphics of the two tablets. Maybe, just maybe, it was in the engraved tablet that rolled down the mountainside on that second delivery and was never delivered.

And every Sunday school student knows that when Moses walked into that orgy he smashed the original two tablets. By then he was tired and could easily have transcribed a mistake or two. By the way, the activity "orgy" according to our sages, is not once prohibited in the Decalogue.

But to leave the ridiculous and deal with the would-be sublime, it has been a first rate conundrum in our history as to why Aaron, the ringleader, was not punished. "And let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." 3,000 Israelites fell that day – but not you-know-who. Aaron gets a pass. This is not a question for scribblers. Ask your rabbi.

*The humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the Roof, appears in newspapers around the US, on National Public Radio, and numerous web sites. Check out his Web site: [www.wonderwordworks.com](http://www.wonderwordworks.com). Blogsite: [www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com](http://www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com). His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof is available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) or [lulu.com/content/127641](http://lulu.com/content/127641). ☆*

ordination was divisive and after the war there was a pressing need for unity. No group claimed her as a model. She belonged to no one who felt the need to tell her story.

When she was murdered immediately after her arrival in Auschwitz on Oct. 14, 1944, no one offered a memorial prayer. There was no grave to visit, no family to remember. In Terezin, this past July 2014, a memorial plaque was dedicated to honor her life. The second week of October, 70 years after her death, synagogues across the United States of all denominations, will include Rabbi Regina Jonas' name as the Kaddish, the traditional prayer of remembrance is recited.

Regina Jonas' legacy is important not only for the Jewish community, not only for women, but for all of us. When she was not allowed to come in through the front door of the synagogue to lead services, she entered through the back and stood tall. She did not sacrifice her calling for the sake of unity, because she knew that unity blind to diversity is bound to unravel. In the midst of the world's depravity, she did not abandon her hope for the world. She would not allow the inhumanity of others to diminish her own humanity.

Facing the hatred of a world that scorned her as a woman and rejected her as a Jew, she persevered. She wrote, "Humility before God, selfless devoted love to all His creatures, preserve the world." At a time when there was little humanity, she encouraged others to work for the blessing of all humankind.

With the escalating acts of violence and hatred that we experience in our own day, her legacy teaches us the importance of wedding two apparently contradictory ideas – power and compassion. Power alone is dangerous; it is unmanageable. Love alone is sentimentality, it is ineffective. The philosopher, Martin Buber reminded us that reality requires the "love-deed Yes" and the "power-deed No." He wrote, "We cannot avoid using power, cannot escape the compulsion to afflict the world, so let us cautious in diction and mighty in contradiction, love powerfully."

The story of Regina Jonas was almost lost to us because of gender bias and fear of discord. Recalling her story, let us remember the past, not to live in it, but to live with it as we move into the future. In biblical tradition, whenever "God remembers," something new happens. When we remember stories like Regina Jonas', new beginnings await.

*Sasso was senior rabbi of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis from 1977–2013, and currently is director of the Religion, Spirituality and the Arts Initiative at Butler University. Reprinted from the Indianapolis Star Oct. 7, 2014. ☆*



## Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

### Love is strange

There is a recent movie titled, *Love is Strange*. It is a remarkable movie for several reasons. In the first place it depicts the most sensitive approach to human relationships. Secondly it describes very vividly the prejudices that still exist in our society. We consider ourselves to be more enlightened than the generations past, and yet we still see old stigmas remain part of our connection to one another. Finally, we are witnesses to age discrimination coupled with family conflicts that add to the burdens of those seemingly different.

How sad that we have progressed so far only to be drawn back into a contempt for things that are contrary to our understanding of acceptable mores. These customs are derived from Scripture and relentless diatribes uttered by the so-called watch dogs of our moral responsibilities.

Scriptural references to homosexuality are found in two areas. One is suggested in Genesis 19:1–11. We read that Abraham's nephew Lot is under a great deal of pressure because the population around him is clamoring for him to surrender two guests that have come to his home (Angels) to warn of impending disaster. Rather than capitulate, Lot offers his daughters as substitutes. Much has been written about this so-called honoring of guests, but we should concentrate on the prospects of the desire for the populace's need to satisfy their sexual desires by having these men submit to their sexual advances.

Most scholars would agree that the text is not so much interested in what is suggested but rather that the emphasis is on the hospitality and the obligations connected with justice. The more conservative Biblical interpretation would argue otherwise, but it is evident that the customs of that generation considered hospitality a sacred obligation. This is also evident among other peoples in that area of the world. Life is meaningless without honor.

The Prophet Ezekiel understood this episode as not reflecting the sins of Sodom in relation to sexual immorality but rather justice. His reference states: "this was the guilt of Sodom: pride, excesses, and prosperity were the hallmarks of their existence, but not aiding the poor and needy." The essential meaning is that aid and support are some of the ingredients in maintaining God in the equation of decent and moral responsibility.

There are two other verses found in Scripture relating to homosexuality. We read in Leviticus, 18:22, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination." Further it reads, 20:13, "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them." It seems that there is no room for doubt as to what these passages are instructing us regarding sexual behavior.

Yet, it is not that simple because to fully comprehend what is being taught, we must also understand the time and place of their origin. Israel was surrounded by societies that contained no restrictions on human sexual behavior. Sex is a natural part of life and was part of their religious rituals and practices. Sex was, and is an expression of fulfillment and survival. It was considered abnormal to be celibate. Their deities required sex as part of normal religious rituals and, the priests were the primary beneficiaries of sexual favors. Prostitution in the holy places were demanded and promoted. Male sexual exploitation was accomplished, not as a means to love, but rather as a way to debase the very nature of relationships.

Therefore, to set Israel apart and incorporate holiness into its psyche, the practices of surrounding cultures were considered abominations and unworthy of a people dedicated to the belief that God was, and is the sole protector of the community's fate and security. To earn this protection, it was necessary to be different. This was considered an act of holiness. God is Holy and by extension, Israel too must be Holy as a reflection of this relationship, and by extension this relates to all of humanity.

However, the ultimate reason for these admonitions derived from the fact that Israel was a nomadic people. To ensure their continuity and safety, it was necessary to procreate. Only through relationships of men and women could this be accomplished.

Back to the movie. If the reasoning behind relations of men and women was primarily for procreation, then if for whatever reason that is not possible, does that necessarily mean that sex itself is abnormal? Again, if sex is part of our make-up, inherited as part of our creation, then why would some practices be acceptable while others not?

Society determines acceptable behavior derived from various sources. If our civilization accepts certain modes of conduct, then it stands to reason that it can also change these concepts. Each generation adapts lifestyles to the time in which it occurs. If we are not able to grow and change then we have no way

(see Wiener, page 7)

## EDITORIAL

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College of Arts & Sciences....

*In one study of "Self-Forgiveness"... it was found that the more [the offender] had tried to make things right, the more it was permissible to let go.... the guiltier a person felt and the more serious the wrong, the less likely he or she was to self-forgive. Making amends appeared to help by reducing those feelings, the researchers found....*

*People are more likely to show forgiving behavior if they receive restitution, but they are more prone to report they have forgiven if they get an apology, according to another Baylor study on "Forgiving Behavior" published in The Journal of Positive Psychology. The study underscores the importance of both restitution and apology, researchers said.*

This may not be surprising news but what is impressive is that the researchers are doing something tangible with the results of their studies. Since they found how important forgiveness is to one's health and wellbeing, they decided to establish a National Forgiveness Day, making forgiveness (for oneself and others) a little easier.

When a day is set aside for a specific purpose and everyone is forgiving, it takes some of the stigma away. It makes others more amenable to listening to us and accepting our apology and us more likely to forgive when we are asked.

We Jews already have a fall season leading up to and including *Yom Kippur* to ask for forgiveness from our fellow humans and God. We also have prayers in the daily *Amidah* that asks for forgiveness for all sins, and praises God as being a God of forgiveness.

I have seen the following bedtime prayer in one of our prayer books: "I forgive all those who may have hurt or aggravated me either physically, monetarily, or emotionally, whether unknowingly or willfully, whether accidentally or intentionally, whether in speech or in action, whether in this incarnation or another, and may no person be punished on account of me..."

What is different about this nationally designated day is it is not limited to one religion. All can participate regardless of their religious practices or lack thereof. In these times of rampant terror and violence, we need all of the help we can to tip the scales in a positive direction. I applaud the researchers at Baylor and suggest that they broaden it to an International Forgiveness Day.

*\*Baylor is a private Christian university located in Waco, Texas with 16,000 students from all 50 states and more than 80 countries.*

Jennie Cohen, November 19, 2014 ✪



## Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

### Thank God, Chanukkah is coming

*Kislev begins on Nov. 23*

*Chanukkah* was established long ago as the holiday of giving thanks to God, not just for one day but for eight days. Eight is the symbolic of infinity, of miracles, that which is beyond the natural order.

Chanukkah is a joyous holiday with mass appeal. It does not have the restrictions associated with biblical holidays. The holidays prescribed in the *Torah* have certain restrictions, things we must do and not do, which acts like a container for the light of Divine revelation. On Chanukkah, there are no restrictions. As my teacher Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, of blessed memory, would say, "On Chanukkah we get both the vessels and the light together, it is a complete gift. One simply lights the Chanukkah menorah, and one is plugged into Divine Light."

The holiday of Chanukkah celebrates the military victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks, spiritually the victory of faith over reason. Previously a day of cult sacrifice, the 25th of Kislev was chosen as the most appropriate day to rededicate the Holy Temple by lighting the menorah, the symbol of the Divine Presence.

Any oil could have been used for the menorah, but the Maccabees wanted a vial of oil that had not been defiled, and they searched for one. Quite surprisingly, they found a buried vial with pure oil. Looking for a vial of oil that had not been contaminated was an expression of the desire to return to the original purity of their connection with God. And as the legend goes, the oil burned miraculously for eight days, rather than the expected one day. We celebrate this miracle of light and return to our true essence.

According to *Torah*, a Jewish holiday is not just a celebration of a particular historical event; rather it is a spiritual transmission of cyclical energies that were available when the historical event originally occurred. Chanukkah is all about light shining amidst the darkness.

Our world is very dark today. Random acts of terrorism and violence can make one feel disheartened. People are lacking clarity today on a personal level as well. Thank God, Chanukkah is coming. On Chanukkah, we wake up to the true reality. There is a God in the world! God

#### BENZION

(continued from page 3)

(no pun intended). As soon as he realized that everything that Hashem does is really for good, and that his suffering was really bringing him tremendous benefit, he actually became happy with his lot. He started to appreciate his wife, who was saving his soul, and his marriage was saved!

People often tell me that they envy me and those who believe in Hashem. We don't have to carry the burdens and hardships of life all by ourselves. We have a Strong Helping Hand and a loving Father at our side always. Our lives are full of happiness and joy. Even if some suffering comes our way, (G-d forbid) that can also bring us happiness.

Indeed we are now living in special times. People are living longer and healthier lives. Just 100 years ago only half of the people born lived to become adults.

But are we happier? I found happiness living a life of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*, and you can too. Look for Hashem, and you will find Him. If you are having difficulties, go to your local Chassidic Rabbi or Chassidic web site. They will be more than happy to help you.

What brings me even more happiness? The thought that every *Mitzvah* that I do, and every *Mitzvah* that I help someone do is bringing the world closer to our complete and final redemption. Then we will all be happy all of the time, and there will be no more suffering. I hope that all of you will join us in our efforts. Do *Mitzvos* to make your life better, and to bring *Moshiach* now!

*Rabbi Cohen lives in K'far Chabad, Israel. Email him at [bzcohen@orange.net.il](mailto:bzcohen@orange.net.il). ✨*



loves us! And with divine assistance and love, we can overcome our challenges, we can see the truth of who we really are and reclaim that truth for ourselves. With the light of Chanukkah we are ignited to do what only we can do in this world.

These eight days of Chanukkah are a special time to receive and bask in the light of the Divine, the light of miracles, the light of love, the light of joy. We know we are coming close to God when our hearts open and we feel gratitude for the privilege of being alive. Chanukkah brings joy and clarity.

Take time to meditate each night when you light candles. During this time, become aware of your gratitude for all the blessings in your life. Gratitude opens the doors of blessing. Be mindful particularly during the holiday to express gratitude. Be mindful to not complain during this time.

Let this be a spiritual practice during the week of Chanukkah to spend time each

#### WIENER

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to advance in our beliefs. Human beings were given the ability to choose as well as discern the practices necessary for harmony and meaning.

Based on what we believe is normal, individuals who are different should have the same rights as those who are not. If it is agreed that all people cry, die, laugh, suffer, and rejoice, then how they exist is no different than all of us. If God created us in His image, then who are we to say that one is better than the other, more righteous than the other, more deserving than the other?

If God is love and mercy, then where is our mercy and love, if we are an extension of God? We do not have to agree with lifestyles different than ours, but we are obligated, as human beings to be accepting. We do not all look alike, are not all politically motivated, nor do we practice the same religious concepts, and yet we are still created in God's liking, and must be understanding when people act in ways that are considered strange. The underlying issue is whether we are hurt by their actions that threaten our survival.

As we age, our sympathies should broaden, our minds become more open, our hearts be filled with more compassion. We cannot like every person, nor do we want to associate with everyone. Societies are built around self-designed comfort zones. If we find ourselves uncomfortable with something, we should not berate it but rather understand that we are not all built the same way. That is the ultimate in tolerance.

There are so many ways to translate the intention of Biblical authors. We have to consider the time in which it was written, the mind-set of the people determined to bring civilization to barbarism and depravity in order to enhance the cultural and historic realities they envisioned. In the final analysis we should feel the ultimate message found in all Holy writings: to discern God's love and caring, to support all relationships.

*Rabbi Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at [ravyitz@cox.net](mailto:ravyitz@cox.net). His new book Living with Faith is available on Amazon.com. ✨*



day thanking God for all the good in your life, thanking others for all the good they bring to you and others, and even thanking yourself for all the good you do.

Complaining only brings harshness, pain and challenge in our life. If we complain, it is a sign that we are not happy

(see Ribner, page 9)



## Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

### What price happiness?

When I was growing up, money meant *authority*. Dad made the money so he also made the decisions. Our family lived by the Golden Rule as in: He who has the gold, rules.

We were told at an early age that it wasn't "polite" to talk about money but it sure seemed to be the subtext of most conversations. What things cost, rising inflation, salaries, who drove what type of car, where people shopped and where to get the best deal were dinner table topics served along with the meatloaf and potatoes. And back when dessert was a Good Humor Bar that cost a nickel, I knew that my family was definitely happier when we had more money, not less.

It's easy to make the leap from ice cream treats to world views, so I grew up thinking that money could make you happy. And until I began questioning my life and career choices in terms of my own happiness, I had no reason to doubt it.

Money is an all-powerful force – influencing everything from global politics to interpersonal relationships. Our American culture is deeply consumer-oriented and for many, self-worth and identity is derived from what we earn, own, wear, buy and drive rather than from what we think, feel or give to or care about.

Money is both a means and an end – to material goods as well as to emotions and feelings such as peace of mind, pleasure, happiness and satisfaction. Scientific research suggests that there is definitely a correlation between money and happiness, but only up to a certain point. Having money gives us a sense of emotional well-being because when we have enough to provide for our basic needs, we feel more secure and satisfied. Having what we need frees us up to make choices, to experience pleasure and leisure, and to use our time in ways not just related to survival.

But when material worth is the primary measure by which we assess our own value, we will rarely, if ever, be happy. Why?

Because, as human beings who live in community, we unconsciously compare ourselves to others. We make assumptions and judgments – that others are happier,

more successful, more loved – based on what we think they have that we don't. And just like in the movie, *When Harry Met Sally*, we think to ourselves: "I want whatever she is having!"

Keeping up with the "Goldbergs" is definitely a lose-lose proposition. So is another human tendency that psychologists call hedonic adaptation. When we get something new, we love it for a while but then get used to it. The new car or bedroom set becomes our "new norm." It's just a matter of time until we want a bigger car or a larger home. That's when the vicious cycle of "not-enough" and "if only" thinking takes over.

We all do it to some degree or another. We look at our living room and think: "If only we had a nicer home, we'd entertain more." Or we book our summer vacation to spend a week at the beach and think: "If only we had more money, we could go for two weeks."

The issue of being unhappy with what we have and always wanting more has been around since the beginning of time. Adam and Eve are a great example: God tells them they can eat from any tree in the Garden of Eden but the Tree of Knowledge and bingo, Eve goes straight for the apple from that tree.

Over 2000 years ago, the rabbis dealt with this problem when they gave us this bit of wisdom: "Who is rich? One who is happy with his lot." So, how do we become happy with our lot? Research suggests that when we spend money on meaningful experiences and on people we love rather than on tangible things and possessions, we tend to feel good about ourselves and the money we have.

And charitable giving, to people and organizations that we care about, also has a direct effect on our happiness. The emotional reward that we feel when we are able to make a difference, even a small one, often surpasses the temporary joy of buying something new. This is supported by readings from MRIs which indicate that giving money to charities actually stimulates brain activity in the regions of the brain where we experience feelings of pleasure and reward!

As Jews we are guided by the *Torah* which gives us the blueprint for Jewish living. One of the key values in the Torah is *Tzedakah* – using our money and resources to help those in need. The Jewish win-win is the *mitzvah* of giving, of our time, talents, resources and money. Not only does it make us happier but it improves the lives of others.

The beauty of the concept of *Tzedakah* is in its absolute equality. No matter how much or how little we possess, each one of us has the potential to consciously become a better person, and a happier



## Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

### Did ISIS make the difference?

(Submitted Sept. 23, 2014)

Suddenly, it appears that Israel and Israel's issues with the Palestinians are not "Front Page News." Apparently, through sheer brutality and disrespect for life, the world has a new and deeper view of "terrorism," and if this is true and continues, it will be a better world.

Just the oppression of Christians and the Yazidi people might have done it by themselves, although each was clearly an act against humanity; but the addition of the stark public beheadings of two American journalists, and an English aid worker, suddenly provided the "tipping point," and suddenly in all the world's capitals, there is a new understanding of what international terrorism is all about, and pointedly, that they can wind up being victimized in their own countries by some of their own citizens gone mad.

The Obama administration, late to the realization, is struggling to find a path that is consistent with their desire of "limited involvement with no boots on the ground," but it is apparent that they are constantly too late, and doing too little to avoid the reality that they underestimate the "enemy" and are being drawn into a conflict they did not want.

The Jewish left, the peaceniks and J-Street, are suddenly nowhere to be found or heard of. And importantly, the recent conflict in Israel, stopped but not resolved, seems to be benefiting from the fallout. The indiscriminate rocket attacks on civilian populations have made Hamas a pariah, and there will be no support for concessions by force.

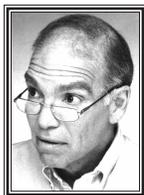
In the news as well are the shooting in Ferguson, Mo., of Michael Brown, who was unarmed by a White police officer,

(see Karsh, page 9)



person, when we use the money we have to make our world a better place.

Amy Hirshberg Lederman is an author, Jewish educator, public speaker and attorney who lives in Tucson. Her columns in the AJP have won awards from the American Jewish Press Association, the Arizona Newspapers Association and the Arizona Press Club for excellence in commentary. Visit her website at [amyhirshberglederman.com](http://amyhirshberglederman.com). ✨



## Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

### With mixed emotions

Every time I pick up a newspaper (I am of that generational bent) I hold my breath. I do the same thing in turning on the news. Matter of fact, wife Rachel will greet me with “Anything in the news about Israel?”

To be a Jew and to live like a Jew, be it Orthodox, Conservative, Reform or whatever, you must be aware of the Jewish world and what happens to Jews. Israel. What is happening in Europe with the rise of Anti-Semitism all of a sudden? Somebody gets arrested or accused – “Oy! I hope he/she is not Jewish.”

When the financial world collapsed I held my breath. But then the names started to come out: Jamie Dimon – Thank God! Angelo Mozilo – Thank God! Charles Prince of Citi Group – Whew!

No Jews except maybe Hank Greenberg of AIG but he was no longer in charge. Throughout most of my life anytime a scandal broke, the initial reaction has been “O, God! I hope he’s not Jewish!”

Then, along came Bernie Madoff. Not only was that mumser a crook, he stole from Jews! Listen, we’ve had our share. The guy who fixed the 1919 World Series was a Jew. The Mafia that ran Vegas was all Jewish. But, so were and are a number of Nobel Prize recipients, way above our percentage of the population.

Tiny Israel with its population less than that of the State of Florida is the 12th largest economy in the world. Their percentage of Nobel Laureates far exceeds any nation in the world.

Currently our oldest daughter, one grandson and one granddaughter live in Israel. They will tell you that life is not that easy. But, you don’t have to sweat who the cheaters and the grafters are – they are all Jewish. But, it’s Israel, our country. Who else is going to game the system and figure the angles but Jews?

We, here in the U.S., so proud of our Jewish heritage, sweat the news about a Jew committing a crime. Why? Is it shame or fear? Deep within our souls, our Neshuma, we are still the “Other”.

Within the lifetime of my parents this nation witnessed the “Palmer Raids” where the Attorney General of the United States ordered the roundup of Eastern Europeans, overwhelmingly Jewish and

shipped them out of the country – including American citizens – because in his own words, “Every Communist is not a Jew, but every Jew is a Communist.”

We have risen again after every mind-numbing disaster pressed against us. None greater in modern times than the Holocaust. Born in Germany, but supported, benignly or actively in most of Europe. Ninety percent of the Jewish population of Europe was exterminated.

And now, two contrary things are happening. Jews are returning and Jews are leaving. At the same time that Jews are leaving France in record numbers for the U.S. and Israel, young Jews are returning to Germany – from Israel!

We have always been a contrarian people. Stiff necked, going against the grain, living on after our death has been declared, prospering in areas where even Jews did not believe Jews could prosper. There would be no Hollywood without the Jews. No Broadway, no “tin pan alley”. And still we wring our hands every time a Jew does wrong.

And Jews are going back to Germany. I doubt there is a single Israeli, moving to Germany who does not have Holocaust in their past. But, they say, things are different now. The Nazis? Yes, I read about them – we were taught in school. But that was then, this is now.

Don’t they look across the border to France? Don’t they see the rise of Moslem Fundamentalism around them? Didn’t they see thousands of Germans – not all of them Moslems on the streets of their new country, Germany, shouting “Gas the Jews”?

Yes, Jews should have the right to live wherever they want. Jews should be granted the same rights as anyone else. We fought hard for that in this country. It is the reason the Third Jewish Commonwealth was created.

But there are over a billion Moslems in this world. If just two percent are insanely militant, that is 20 million crazies to take to the streets where they are allowed to and where it is tolerated. Obviously it is in Germany. Obviously it is in France. Why would you leave the nation that God gave us and our people fought so hard to create and make it prosper just so you could buy cheaper cream cheese?

Yes, it is a contradictory world. The Millennial generation is tough to figure out here in the U.S. much less in Israel. But some things are built into our DNA. We wince when a Jew commits a crime. We cry when a Jew is killed because he is a Jew. We take such pride in our Jewish Homeland.

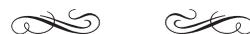
In this contradictory world we are a contradictory people. There may come a day when we don’t keep looking over

### RIBNER

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with God, with ourselves, with others. We are not open to receive blessing in our lives. What a shame to deprive ourselves and not be open to the wonderful light available during Chanukkah.

*Melinda Ribner L.C.S.W. is the author of The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women, Everyday Kabbalah, Kabbalah Month by Month and New Age Judaism. Internationally known for her pioneering work in kabbalistic meditation and healing, she is also a spiritual psychotherapist and for more than 30 years has used kabbalistic wisdom as part of treatment. She offers a free newsletter on meditation, healing, kabbalistic energies of the months, holidays, and so forth. [www.kabbalahoftheheart.com](http://www.kabbalahoftheheart.com). (Received Nov. 2013.)* ✨



### KARSH

(continued from page 8)

and a viral response to Ray Rice’s physical abuse of his girl friend-now wife, and Adrian Peterson’s discipline of his four year old son. Suddenly, the people in the United States were awakened to problems which are endemic in every city in the United States.

It has been challenging for any of us to wrap our minds around the news. What is happening on a day-to-day basis all over the world; terrorism, abuse of women and children, and all of the issues are race, are in this moment, no longer tolerable.

This seems to be a window of opportunity. We need to “wipe out” the ISIS movement. We should not want to “contain or degrade, we need a “search and destroy” mission. We need to face the issues of race. We need to eliminate the “free pass” for celebrity entertainers and star athletes.

We need to responsibly address all of the issues that have lingered too long, even the most difficult issue of bringing peace to Israel. We can do it all if we will it done.

*Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc., and can be reached at [hkarsh@gmail.com](mailto:hkarsh@gmail.com).* ✨



our shoulder. Some day. I don’t think the first place that will happen will be Germany. Or France.

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



## Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

### Witness to Kristallnacht

Over the past few years, Barry and I have become acquainted with a fellow journalist on press tours. Walter Bingham hosts “Walter’s World” on Arutz 7, Israel’s English-language internet radio station, identifying with religious Zionism, based in the JudeaSamaria community of Beit El and regarded as the voice of the Israeli settlement movement.

On the anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, which Walter characterized as “the biggest pogrom of the Nazis before the Holocaust,” he gave an illustrated lecture as a witness from *Kristallnacht*. In the Rehavia neighborhood Chabad House in Jerusalem, where he is a regular attendee, Walter addressed the gathering wearing a dark-blue, long sleeve shirt and khakis with *tzitzis* on one hip and a holstered pistol on the other.

The dapper 90-year-old interspersed his early life with the background of Germany after World War I and the rise of Hitler. Walter was born, Wolfgang Billig in Karlsruhe, a town in southwest Germany near the Franco-German border on Jan. 5, 1924, to Polish-born parents. In 1933, there were 155,000 people in the town of which 3,358 were Jewish.

He went to a school where he was the only Jew in his class. After Hitler came to power in 1933, he recalled “the boys didn’t talk to me or play with me,” and they had to unlearn what they had been taught because Hitler wanted children taught a new alphabet and a new language. Non-Jewish children were also sent to “Hitler youth” after school where they were indoctrinated including being told to report anyone (including their parents) who talked against the regime. He described the uniforms and activities of the youth and said, “I went to school with boys who were more and more indoctrinated.”

He recalled his uncle had a shop on the main street and when restrictions against Jews began, people were told not to buy from Jews. He also recalled the book burning in May in the local park where all the books by or about Jews were burned. “In my town, we went and saw the big bonfire and how they threw the books on the fire with glee,” Bingham said.

“Soon the teacher stopped calling on

me in class. The boy next to me copied one time and he got good marks and I got bad marks.” Also a lot of bullying by the Hitler youth took place, he said.

The “race teacher” came to lecture how to recognize the inferior race; his cousin told him how the race teacher came to her class and called up a blond, blue-eyed little girl to show she was Aryan. (She was actually Jewish.)

Soon, Walter (then Wolfgang), 11 years old, had to sit in the back row alone and could not answer questions in school. The Nuremberg race laws came into effect in 1935, anti-Semitic laws making Nazism an official ideology incorporating anti-Semitism as a form of scientific racism. These were posted for all to read in the towns and included the fact that Walter and the other Jewish children could no longer attend school.

After protesting, the Jewish authorities then were given the most dilapidated building in town to hold a school for the Jewish children. In 1938 after finishing eight years, his parents got him into a school in Mannheim, 54 kilometers (33 miles) north which offered an additional year of school. He lived in the Jewish orphanage while in school, but on Oct. 28, 1938, all male Polish Jews living in Karlsruhe were deported to Poland, and this included his father. Had Walter been at home, he too would have been sent with the men. When questioned, his mother said she didn’t know where he was. He never saw his father again.

What was the trigger that precipitated *Kristallnacht* on Nov. 9? The pretext for the attacks was the assassination of the German diplomat, Ernst vom Rath, by Herschel Grynszpan, a German-born Polish Jew living in Paris, two days before.

This “night of broken glass” resulted in the destruction of 7,500 Jewish stores and businesses and 200 synagogues throughout the country.

“That day I went to school,” said Walter, “and I saw a big commotion in Mannheim. I contacted my mother and wanted to come home and I took the 3:22 train to my home town. Fire engines were there to protect neighboring property. I saw *Kristallnacht*. People were standing there laughing and enjoying the site. I remember it vividly.”

“In one of the synagogues there happened to be a *Torah* written on leather from the 12–13th century. My uncle managed to get it out and hide it under the roof in the Jewish hospital. After the Holocaust, he returned to retrieve the *Torah*. The only part of the hospital standing was the section where he had hidden the *Torah*.” Today, it is in the Hechal Shlomo Jewish Heritage Museum in Jerusalem, adjacent to the Great



Hechal Shlomo Jewish Heritage Museum in Jerusalem

Synagogue on King George Street, opposite the Leonardo Plaza Hotel.

After *Kristallnacht*’s destruction, the people of Walter’s town and other towns were required to pay for the tearing down of what was left of the synagogues and businesses destroyed.

Walter was part of a *B’nei Akiva* (religious youth) movement. In 1936 he was selected for the Kindertransport where the British allowed 10,000 children (without their parents) from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Danzig to be brought to England and placed in British foster homes, hostels, schools and farms. Walter was sent with *B’nei Akiva* to a kind of farm to prepare to go to Palestine. “I was fortunate to be reunited with my mother after the war,” he adds.

Having a Polish passport, at one point he was called up to join the Polish army. He went to their office and told them he had never been to Poland, did not speak the language and they were anti-Semitic. He was released and joined the British army.

He was involved in the invasion of Europe at Normandy as an ambulance driver. However, he realized if he were taken prisoner, all he could reveal was his name and army number. Wolfgang Billig was not a good name to have. He told his officer who told him to change his name.

He went to the nearby village where he found a phone booth with a phone book. He looked for names with his same initials and chose Walter Bingham. He wrote down the name and gave it to his officer who had new army papers issued. Next day, when roll call was held, he didn’t respond until his officer reminded him what his new name was!

Knowing German he asked for a transfer as an ambulance driver. After training in London, he was sent to Hamburg where he worked as a document specialist checking Nazi documents. After the war he kept his name and married Leah, who died in 1990. They had only one daughter and he knew she would marry and change her name (Sonja Kent). Walter moved to Israel in 2004. An amazing story by an amazing man!

(see Kaplan/Israel, page 19)



# Jerusalem Peacemaker

BY ELIYAHU MCLEAN

## Peace Journey to Acco

The Abrahamic Reunion Peace Journey to Acco on Oct. 26 was a success. Eighty Jews and Arabs journeyed together from Jerusalem and the Galilee to Acco. On a day amidst the ongoing tensions in Jerusalem we went together: Israelis, journalists, and camera crew, Palestinians from Beit Haninah, Beit Iqsa, Wadi Joz, Ras al-Amud in Jerusalem and also joining from Ramallah, Bethlehem, Husan and Hebron (in the West Bank).

Upon arrival in Acco's Old City, we gathered at the Shaduli Sharuti Sufi center. Sheikh Ghassan Manasra opened with blessing the Islamic New Year that day, and recently celebrated Jewish holy days. Via Skype on an iPhone, we connected to David Less and a Sufi peace event in New Zealand, where they sang for us an ancient Maori song for peace. We then broke up into smaller groups for text study of sources in Hebrew and Arabic, from Jewish, Muslim, and Christian religious texts, deepening the connection among the group.



The Al-Jazzar Mosque of Acco.

After a shared lunch at the Sufi Center, we walked the alleyways of Old Acco to the historic Al-Jazzar Mosque. Gathering in its main courtyard, we prayed for the healing of its Imam and our host, Sheikh Sameer Assi who had to go to the hospital that day. The mosque staff welcomed us...there we listened to the Chief Rabbi of Acco Yosef Yashar speak of his city as a model of Arab-Jewish co-existence, and of his work in Jewish and Arab schools lecturing together with Imam Sameer Assi.



Sheikh Ghassan Manasra with Chief Rabbi of Tsfat, Shmuel Eliyahu at The Abrahamic Reunion Peace Journey to Acco.

We took the bold step of welcoming two 'controversial' religious leaders to join us, opening our circle, inviting them to shift from fear of 'the other' to a path of engagement, and peacebuilding. Joining us from Hebron was Sheikh Khaled Ahmad, one of the founders of the Hizbet ut-Tahrir, the pan-Islamic party. From Tsfat, we were joined by recently denied candidate for Chief Rabbi of Israel and Jerusalem, Chief Rabbi of Tsfat Shmuel Eliyahu. Rabbi Eliyahu said: "if we Jews and Arabs look within our religious traditions, we find that we all share faith in the one G-d. Therefore it's imperative that believes in the one G-d work for the sake of peace in order to serve the one G-d. In the end of days all the nations and peoples will come to serve the one G-d...so let's do it together now!"

At the end of the day, we traveled to the Hof HaCarmel beach in Haifa, where we, including some West Bankers who had never been to a beach, watched the sunset and had fun on the beach together. We closed with a prayer for peace on the waves of the Mediterranean.

Thanks to the Rising Tide International community and the German Global Hope Fund for their support.

### Multi-faith prayer gathering

In response to ongoing tensions in Jerusalem around the Temple Mount/Haram as-Sharif we hosted a powerful multi-religious prayer gathering on Nov. 11.

We gathered, forming an opening circle at Jaffa Gate, 50 Jews, Christians and Muslims. In addition to Jews and Muslims from the Jerusalem area, joining us was a group of 'universal Sufis' from Germany, a visiting CCJ (Council of Christians and Jews) delegation of pastors from the UK, from the Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Quaker and Pentecostal churches, and a pastor with the Church of Scotland in Jerusalem. The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development sent a group of volunteers, as did the Catholic Sisters of

Zion joining us from the Ecce Homo Convent on the Via Dolorosa.

As we descended into the Old City from Jaffa Gate, we were joined by Sheikh Jamal al-Din from Beit Haninah, who joined us in solidarity before continuing to the Al-Aqsa mosque. There the sheikh sent prayers from al-Aqsa, atop our gathering space at the new 'Ezrat Yisrael' egalitarian prayer platform and space, next to Robinson's arch.

We went up to the extension of the Western wall, just to the right and below the ramp that leads up to the Mughrabi Gate, the main entrance for non-Muslims to the Temple Mount, called Haram as-Sharif, the Noble Sanctuary, in Arabic. Leaning on the walls with our heads and hands we held a silent prayer for peace to prevail. As we gathered in a large circle – Jews, Christians and Muslims – we heard the evening call to prayer at Al-Aqsa mingle with the chants of Hasidic Jews at the Western Wall plaza echoing off of the vast walls and intermingling with the Muslim prayers.

Rabbi Yaakov Nagen from Ottniel yeshiva shared "Abraham is crying, instead of love and peace, his sons are divided, according to the *Midrash* when G-d asked him to bring his son for sacrifice, Abraham said which one? I love Isaac and I love Ishmael." Reb Nagen added: "In the vision of the prophets, the Temple Mount will become a 'House of Prayer for all Peoples'. Each will see the respect the other religion has for the same holy space. That the prayers (of the other) to G-d go up from there makes this place holier and not less... this shared holy space will bring us together in connection, and not division." Abdallah Zahaikie from Sawahre in the West Bank offered a prayer in Arabic, that we come to live together in respect, dignity and friendship.

We sang a song together praying for the peace of 'Isaac and Ishmael', and the whole world. Then we did a "zikr", chant for peace of '*Shalom, Salaam, Shelomo*', 'peace' in Hebrew, Arabic and Aramaic, then a chant to welcome the '*shekinah*', the divine presence, in Hebrew, and the '*sakina*', that same concept as is appears in the Quran, in Arabic. This gathering inspired us all, uniting our intentions to help calm the rage and violence in Jerusalem, to bring Abraham's family together in love and respect.

Media came, but their editors nixed publishing our story, there was too much 'bad news' and no room for this in the papers the next morning... please help us 'share' the 'good news' from Jerusalem!

Eliyahu McLean, Rodef Shalom (*Maker of Peace*), is director of *Jerusalem Peacemakers and Abrahamic Reunion Coordinator*. [www.jerusalempeacemakers.org](http://www.jerusalempeacemakers.org) ✨



## Holocaust Educator

By MIRIAM L. ZIMMERMAN

### A tribute to my husband Richard

While driving from San Diego International Airport to Coronado Island, our shuttle paused at a railroad crossing. My mantra from my hometown of Terre Haute, Ind., came to mind, "I do not feel like I am home until I have to wait for a freight train." As we waited, I was struck by the beauty and cleanliness of downtown San Diego, in contrast to Terre Haute's dinginess.

My business partner and I were headed to Coronado Island in San Diego Bay for the annual convention of the Association of Professional Family Mediators (APFM). My business partner, Richard, is also my husband of 45 years. It is the *Bar Mitzvah* year for Divorce Mediation Group, our mediation practice begun 13 years ago, a result of Richard's vision of how we could combine our skills and work together.

Can you imagine starting a new career at midlife? The risks we took in leaving well-established careers for a totally new venture! If anyone told me 15 years ago that Richard and I would have a successful mediation practice together, I would have laughed out loud. Yet, it works; we actually enjoy being together 24/7, with adjacent computers in our home office. We only use our leased office when we actually mediate, less than 20 hours a week. We manage all the paperwork and administration from home. When I had small children, I would have done anything to be able to work from home.

I think of Richard's parents who worked together throughout their lifetime in the family store in Lafayette, Ind., the "Queen City." Originally ladies' wear, it ended as a uniform and maternity store. Over the course of the years, the Queen City relocated on three different sides of the Courthouse Square of Lafayette.

The Queen City reminded me of my grandparents' store in my father's hometown of Bür, Germany, a suburb of Essen. My grandmother, Bertha Katzenstein Loewenstein, worked alongside her husband all their lives. I wondered if traditionally, Jewish men and women have worked together at higher rates than those in the larger community.

Richard and I originally met at a NFTY (National Federation of Temple Youth) intercity conclave. When asked how we

met, he replies, "In a bowling alley." The host city, Lafayette, boasted a very clever group of Temple teens, of which Richard was the president. Instead of having guests arrive at the synagogue where there was nothing to do, they selected a bowling alley.

While waiting for local parents to pick up their out of town guests after work, bowling channeled our teenaged energies. Richard said he watched me and decided I was the girl he wanted to marry. I always wondered if it was my gutter ball that did it.

The whirlwind APFM conference gave us a four-day respite from our sometimes angry and combative clients. Because our son graduated from the University of California in San Diego, we have explored San Diego during parental visits over the years. Thus, we chose not to sightsee. Instead, we opted to relax as much as possible and take in the conference.

A lecture junkie, I was in heaven. I listened with interest to Dr. Bill Eddy, co-founder and president of the High Conflict Institute, LLC, in San Diego, who lectured mediators on how best to cope with high-conflict couples. Richard and I could probably write our own treatise on high-conflict couples. A projected book on my back burner that we could write together might raise the nation's consciousness about mediation and promote it as the constructive conflict-resolution process that it is. I would also emphasize divorce prevention, possibly as penance for contributing to the demise of so many marriages for so many years.

I am grateful to Richard for his vision that resulted in our mediation practice. His experience as a CPA and as an attorney enables him to help clarify couples' legal rights and obligations during divorce. A graduate of Indiana University's (IU) Kelley School of Business, Richard passed the CPA exam while a senior in college. His expertise allows him to prepare a one or two-page spreadsheet, integrating all our clients' financial data into a single document, no matter how complicated.

Not being able to talk about money is a huge factor in divorce. The clarity and neutrality of Richard's spreadsheets facilitate constructive conversations about money. So many times over the years, couples have told us, "If we could have had this discussion on our own, we wouldn't be seeking a divorce." Unfortunately, finances often (usually!) drive decisions during divorce.

If someone tried to tell me 15 years ago that a spreadsheet was a viable conflict resolution tool, I would have laughed out loud.

In order to remain licensed as both an attorney and a CPA, Richard had to attend many continuing education programs. A

model that he learned in one of them was team mediation. In this program, a husband-wife pair, with husband as therapist and wife as lawyer, taught interested professionals a gender-balanced team approach to divorce mediation. Richard returned from the weekend training energized and motivated to start such a practice.

After searching for a therapist to become his partner, Richard made a realization and turned to me. I will never forget his words: "You don't have to be a therapist to be a mediator. You have a doctorate in counseling psychology, and undergraduate and masters' degrees in communication. You should be my partner."

Subsequently, I attended the same training, taught by the same mediation team, Coast to Coast Mediation Training, and emerged equally enthusiastic. I, too, was looking for next steps. After 25 years of college teaching including ten years as a faculty administrator at a small Catholic university, I did not want to apply for a position as a Dean, the next likely step for someone with my experience. And so, Divorce Mediation Group was born.

Thanks to my wonderful husband's vision, I will never have to attend another faculty meeting, even though I continue to teach one course (on the Holocaust) as an adjunct. Working with him makes me appreciate the discrepancy in our respective styles of how we process information and see the world.

Objectively, Richard's *modus operandi* is a one-step-at-a-time, analytical style. Formerly, I described his style as "tunnel vision, rigid, and logical positivistic." My style, which I describe as "associative, free, and creative," he would describe as "disorganized, confusing, and chaotic." If anyone predicted that I would be married for 45 years to someone so completely opposite, I would have laughed out loud.

Remarkably, years ago, we learned how to put up with each other's distinctive styles, despite their disconnect. Perhaps opposites do, indeed, attract. Now, we appreciate the value of each other's style, and have learned how to support each other as we use our respective strengths to help our clients.

Daily, I am confronted with the reality that former friends can become enemies, and that love can dissipate either quickly or gradually over time. In my opinion, the opposite of love is not hate, but apathy. Divorce is usually not the first choice for either party. Unfortunately, divorce is often the only choice, given the reality of a dysfunctional



Richard as of his 1969 Stanford Law School graduation.

relationship, and the inability of couples to overcome the deficits in their marriage.

I have been married for twice as long as I have been single. I was 22 when Richard and I tied the knot in 1968 in Terre Haute's Temple Israel. In his last year of law school, Richard took me to Palo Alto, Calif. After living in Palo Alto for a year, there was no way I would ever leave the Bay Area. For this, too, I am ever so grateful. Yet even though I live in California, I always say that for me, "Home is Indiana." Over the years, Richard would always cite two reasons as to why he left Indiana: "summer and winter."

When we started having children in the mid-1970s, Richard would come home by 6 p.m. and pitch in with whatever I was doing. A hands-on dad, he has always maintained a wonderful relationship with our three children. Now adults, each of our two daughters has one daughter, and our son has two daughters. As parents, all three of our offspring and their spouses are devoted and responsible; our grandchildren are thriving as a result.

Richard's first job out of law school was in the tax department of the former international accounting firm, Arthur Andersen & Co. It was back in the day when "Arthur" was a prestigious CPA firm. Richard was turned off by having to help save taxes for rich people; he did not like being at the beck and call of wealthy clients.

The professional atmosphere and working with extremely competent peers at Arthur Andersen were not enough to keep him there. He chafed under the yoke of having to account for every minute of his time. He explained to me, "What I did not like about practicing public accounting, I also would not like about practicing law." Richard has never practiced law, but worked in corporate finance for several private and nonprofit companies as CFO (chief financial officer).

At midlife, he was a whistleblower, having found financial malfeasance by the president of a nonprofit research institution of which Richard was CFO. Hounded out of a job, he was highly motivated to create his own domain, an initiative that resulted in our mediation practice.

Richard has what I think are terrific ideas as to how to improve the business climate in the United States. He has long advocated that executive compensation should be tied to the long term success of a company and not based on short term profits. Success of a corporation can only be measured over time. A manager can drive a company into the ground, ultimately destroying it, even though stock values might go up in the interim.

It is also common for the CEO (chief executive officer) to be the chairman of the board of directors. A corporate board

should be completely independent of management, Richard explained to me; the CEO should not even be a member of the board. A board should act only for the benefit of the shareholders and not as an arm of management. Instead, the board should oversee the work of management.

Business is not my forte (extreme understatement), but Richard's observations ring true to me. He also feels that the revolving door between government regulating agencies and the industries they regulate should be closed. He cited Eisenhower's warning about the military-industrial complex, as an example.

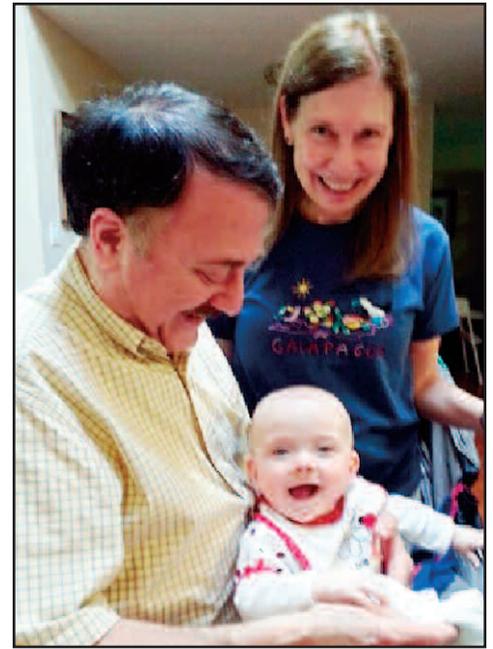
Richard explained to me recently in a discussion on why there have been so many wars lately, "It is in an individual congressman's interest to get military production in his district. There is no motivation to cut back on size. Whichever congressman (or woman) is able to get a contract in his or her district, now has a source of campaign funds, from the voters and from those working in the company itself." The solution, he concluded is "honesty in government; transparency."

We should not be building planes the Air Force says it does not need nor tanks the Army says it does not want. Follow the money. Who in our country is keeping tabs on how much we are spending for military action and who is getting it? We will never have peace in our time when members of Congress personally benefit from military expenditures.

Richard found fraud in every entity for which he had responsibility, with one exception. In my opinion, if more people like Richard were running corporations and governments, we would not have the multiple messes that will plague our children and grandchildren for years: economic chaos, planet degradation, unfair tax laws, relentless poverty for half our people, and a health care debacle without end.

On Saturday night, Nov. 1, 2014, our three adult children and I gave a 70th birthday party for Richard at our home. Not since Passover have all of our offspring including our four granddaughters been under the same roof. We were joined by Bay Area cousins and dear friends to celebrate this milestone. Richard's close friend, Joe Vogel, from his ZBT (Zeta Beta Tau, a Jewish fraternity) days at IU and his wife Penni joined us. Joe is originally from South Bend, Ind.; the Vogel's now live in Seattle.

As husband, father, provider, *mensch*, and now, grandfather, I could not ask for anyone better. The values and bonds that brought us together: small town Indiana Jews, hard work and education, family ties and religious observance, morphed into respectful support of one another's careers, successful parenting and now



*This is now: Richard and me, with grand-daughter Ziva Sharp, April 2014.*

grand parenting.

Richard has supported my personal and professional obsession with the Holocaust, willingly driving me to Holocaust films, lectures, and commemorations, too numerous to delineate here.

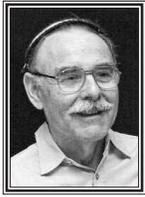
Richard is also my staunchest defender and loving critic. I can always count on my husband to give me an unembellished, straight answer to any question, even the quintessentially feminine plea for a negative response, "Does this make me look fat?"

He proofread my Master's thesis and my doctoral dissertation, many times, until I got them right. His feedback on my articles is never "spinned"; I can count on him to spot a misplaced modifier, split infinitive, or any misuse of language. He points out my inconsistencies and challenges my logical fallacies. I am a better writer as a result.

As a writer, I find I cannot put into words the love and affection I feel for this man. His integrity and intelligence, his devotion to family, his love for me – how fortunate I have been to share life with such a man. I am not laughing out loud now, but filled with gratefulness.

I look forward to the next 20 years, side by side, with Richard as my lover, companion, co-grand parenting partner, and friend. As we start making noises about retirement, I hope to write a book with him on how to ensure a lasting marriage, bringing peace to the world, one couple at a time.

*Dr. Zimmerman is professor emerita at Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) in Belmont, Calif., where she continues to teach the Holocaust course. She can be reached at [mzimmerman@ndnu.edu](mailto:mzimmerman@ndnu.edu). ✨*



## Gather the People

BY RABBI MOSHE BEN ASHER, PH.D.

### Moral spiritual leadership and legacy

In *parasha* (weekly *Torah* reading) *Toldot* we read about Esav and Yakov, the sons of Yitzchak and Rivka. The *Talmud*, *Midrash*, and traditional rabbinic commentaries all note the evil in Esav's character and the motivations of Rivka and Yakov in deceiving Yitzchak to get the *bechorah*, the birthright of the firstborn, for Yakov.

But what was the birthright of the firstborn son at that time? And what, if anything, does it have to do with the leadership and legacy that we bequeath to our own children today?

I confess to knowing less from personal experience about childrearing than virtually any parent, not having had children of my own. But over the years I have worked as a deputy probation officer, family therapist, community organizer, and rabbi, and I learned much from parents who had extensive experience from raising their own children. One of the first lessons they taught me – it's sufficiently commonplace to be a cliché – is that when a family has two or more children, one child is very likely to follow in the moral spiritual footsteps of the parents, assuming that the parents are more or less unified in such matters, and one child is very likely to depart notably from the parents' path.

Given their character, Esav and Yakov represent what sociologists call "ideal types." Apparently, they are in many respects prototypical evil and good sons. That is to say, they represent consistent types that serve as models against which later examples are judged – Esav the prototype for Rome's ideal of conquest, Yakov for Jerusalem's ideal of peace.

On the one hand, regarding Esav, the *Talmud* teaches that on the day he sold his birthright to Yakov, he also dishonored a betrothed maiden, committed murder, denied God, and denied the resurrection of the dead (Baba Batra 16b). Moreover, Or Hachayim (Rabbi Chaim ben Attar, 1696–1744) teaches that it was *Esav* who deceived his father, not by a transparent ruse of affecting his brother's *physical appearance*, as Yakov did, but by camouflaging his *moral character*, asking his father disingenuous questions about the *mitzvot*.

On the other hand, Yakov had nothing material to gain by acquiring the *bechorah*. As Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch

(1808–1888) notes: "...Out of this whole 'sale' agreement, we do not find that Yakov derived the slightest preference or advantage. On the contrary, Esav became great as a rich prince while Yakov was still slaving as a shepherd for Lavan's sheep. So the *bechorah* gave him no material advantage at all. The question could only have been, to whom was the spiritual leadership of the house to be entrusted." (Comment on Genesis 25:34) But Yakov nonetheless, knowing his brother's anger and tendency to do violence, effectively risked his life to obtain the birthright.

Why might he have taken such a risk?

Because he knew his brother's character, that Esav was unworthy to perform the sacrificial rites as head of the family. And as *Akeidat Yitzchak* (Rabbi Yitzchak ben Moshe Arama, 1420–1494) teaches: "Yakov was aware that the *heter bamot*, the permission to erect altars for God wherever one wanted ... [on the high places] could lead to grievous abuse if the exercise of the priestly functions was left in the hands of the unworthy."

Recall that the central Sanctuary was a place that instructed the individual and the community on self-sacrifice, through the symbolism of animal sacrifice, for the purpose of living or returning to a godly life. The means were the rites and education, guided by the *kohanim* (priests), employing the Sanctuary's symbol-laden furnishings and utensils. The *bamot* or high places, however, could easily become venues dedicated to little more than pouring out personal thoughts and feelings rather than internalizing the *Torah's* words and expectations for behavior. So the high places had the very real potential to promote worship of nature and the moral indifference that not uncommonly accompanies it.

And yet, withal, the *Torah* narrative leaves us with questions about such absolute characterizations of these two brothers. So one might think to ask: How did Esav and Yakov become what they seemingly became?

Rabbi Hirsch comments that the contrast between them "...may have been due, not so much to a difference in their temperaments as to mistakes in the way they were brought up." Despite their differences, "...both had exactly the same teaching and educational treatment, and the great law of education, 'bring up each child in accordance with his own way,' was forgotten." (Comment on Genesis 25:27)

Presumably, if Yitzchak and Rivka had come to understand Esav's unique character and qualities at an early age, they might have challenged themselves more effectively to direct his "strength and energy, agility and courage" to God's service. If so, Esav might never have become a *gever tzayad* (a man of hunting) but rather a *gever lifnei*

*Adonai* (a man before God). And it certainly wasn't helpful that Yitzchak and Rivka played favorites with their sons, he favoring Esav and she partial to Yakov.

Was there any good reason for Yitzchak and Rivka to think that only one of their sons would be chosen for moral spiritual leadership?

God had singularly chosen Avraham to serve as the father of a special nation – him and him alone, although with Sarah as his partner, of course. He was to convert the men and she the women. Their son, Yitzchak, was also singularly chosen, although with Rivka as his partner, to fill a special destiny. But the process of choosing one son for the birthright ended with Yakov.

So at what point should it have become apparent that to build and sustain a great nation, it wouldn't be enough to choose only one son for moral spiritual leadership. In fact, since Esav and Yakov were fraternal twins, born of the same mother, might it not have been reasonable to assume that both of them should share the moral spiritual leadership of the family?

What's the difference between the parental expectations of Yitzchak and Rivka and our own?

They expected that all of their children would meet their family's minimum moral requirements. They expected that one of their male children would exercise moral spiritual *leadership*, for the sake of their immediate family and their future generations. And the *Torah* narrative tells us that, notwithstanding dramatic differences in our children, they can all be raised to exercise such leadership. So seemingly there was nothing inherent in the character of Esav and Yakov to have prevented such an outcome, only the parenting failures of Yitzchak and Rivka.

But why should Yitzchak and Rivka have assumed that any of their children would show extraordinary moral spiritual leadership?

One may answer that it was simply tradition for the firstborn to do so. But that begs the question, because already there was a departure from the tradition. Ishmael, although the firstborn of Abraham and Hagar (Genesis 16:4), was not given the *bechorah*.

More to the point of the question, we read in the *Zohar*: "Said Rabbi Yitzchak: 'The words "and Sarah saw" imply that she looked at him [Ishmael] disdainfully, as being the son not of Abraham but of Hagar the Egyptian, and, furthermore, only Sarah regarded him so, but not Abraham, as we read that "the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son" [Genesis 21:11] – not the son of Hagar, but his son.' Rabbi Shimon said: 'The Scripture really speaks in praise of Sarah. For what she saw was that he was

(see Ben Asher, page 15)



# Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

**Pirke Avot 2:16** – Rabbi Joshua said: *The evil eye, the evil desire and hatred of his fellow creatures put a man out of the world.*

**Nov. 14, 2014, Chayei Sarah  
Genesis 23:1–25:18, 21 Cheshvan 5775**

The name of this week's *parashah* is "The life of Sarah," when in reality it is really about the death of Sarah. We read at the beginning of the *parashah*: "Sarah's lifetime – the span of Sarah's life – came to one hundred and twenty-seven years. Sarah died in Kiriath-arba – now Hebron – in the land of Canaan; and Abraham proceeded to mourn for Sarah and to bewail her."

We learn much from these verses and this portion. We learn about the importance of burial and establishing a Jewish cemetery. We learn about mourning. We learn about the concept in Judaism that it is our lives in this world that matter the most. The *parashah* doesn't begin, "And Sarah died at 127." Instead, it affirms that Sarah lived and how long that life lasted.

Over the last few weeks, I have led a class looking at the *Tanach* book *Kohelet* which is known in English as *Ecclesiastes*. The last thing we did at the end of the three sessions was to consider the verse, "A good name is better than fragrant oil, and the day of death than the day of birth." (Ecl. 7:1) One might think that the "B" part of the verse contradicts our verses from Genesis 23, but we are taught in the *Midrash* that unlike what normally happens that people gather to launch a ship on its voyage with great fanfare and bands and cheering, no one cheers at its return.

In reality, the opposite should take place. We should cheer the return of a ship at the end of its voyage as it has weathered the elements, gone on a journey and made it back to port. So, too, with humans. We should celebrate the end of a journey a person has gone on and recall the footsteps a person has taken. At the beginning of a person's life there is nothing yet to cheer about other than the journey that lies ahead. In our *parashah*, we begin by recalling a good name and then are reminded that her journey, Sarah's journey, was 127 years long. Abraham mourned and bewailed her at her death as there was so much to remember and retell.

I must say that most of *Ecclesiastes*

## BEN ASHER

(continued from page 14)

indulging in idolatrous practices. Hence she said: Surely, this is not the son of Abraham, who follows in the footsteps of Abraham, but the son of Hagar the Egyptian, who is reverting to the type of his mother.'" (Zohar I: 118b)

The simple meaning of the text, according to Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak, 1040–1105), is that Abraham was grieved because Sarah had sent Ishmael away, but that he was even more "greatly displeased" since Ishmael had fallen into "wicked ways." And according to *Bereshit Rabbah* (53:15), "Even as he [Ishmael] grew, so did his cruelty grow with him."

What this may teach us in the final analysis is that the expectation of moral spiritual leadership by one's children is closely related to the extent that as a parent one has exerted moral spiritual leadership and created a moral spiritual legacy to be passed on to succeeding generations.

All of this leaves us with some questions:

- What is our living moral spiritual legacy, as Jews in the 58th century of the Jewish people, to the generations that come after us?



leaves one wondering why this book was included in *Tanach* (a question asked by the rabbis in the *Talmud* as well) as it really isn't uplifting or encouraging. The book speaks at great length about the futility of life or better, "What's the point?" For me, it is a book to take issue with and argue against. I don't believe that life is futile or worthless and that we should just eat, drink and be merry. I want to live a life that is filled with meaning and accomplishment. I want my life to be the ship on its journey. I want my life to be lived with purpose and to hopefully have someone say at the end that "a good name is better than..."

Let's be honest – life is complicated and can't always be lived on the higher or highest plane. Sarah had her moments; some of those coming in last week's *parashah*. We all have our moments just as the ship on a voyage must endure its storms as well. In the end, as we look back and take into account who we were and what we did, most of us will see the gems that made life better not just for ourselves, but for those around us as well. Maybe it is kind words. Maybe it is a donation to a worthy cause. Maybe it was a smile to someone who had his or her head down. Maybe it is using our hands and hearts to make a difference.

In my last bulletin article, I put out a call inviting people to help St. Paul's with its Thanksgiving Basket program and when I

- If we raise our children with an ambition to show moral spiritual leadership, what is it that we do differently from other parents to enable their success?

- And why should we bother with such a seemingly lofty ambition – what's really in it for us, for them, and for all who come after them?

Finally, what if we're mostly stumped by these questions? And what if many others like us are also mostly unsure how to answer them?

My conclusion, not surprisingly, is not a happy one: If it's true that we're not purposely and actively living lives that enable us to readily and confidently answer these questions, then we face an awesome challenge.

To remedy the deficit, all of us – beginning with the adults – have to equip ourselves with a much more deeply illuminating and relevant education in traditional Jewish texts. Anything less is likely to be insufficient if we want to bequeath a dynamic example of moral spiritual leadership and an inspiring legacy of living a moral spiritual life. Insufficient because such leadership and legacy are the sources of sustenance needed to nurture the survival and success of future generations of Jews.

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*Rabbi Moshe ben Asher is a Co-Directors of Gather the People, a nonprofit organization that provides Internet-based resources for congregational community organizing and development (www.gatherthepeople.org).* ✨



went downtown on Tuesday night to help sort food there were 7 other Temple members schlepping and moving and sorting food that eventually will go into 1,200 bags for families in Canton at Thanksgiving. I learned that Fisher's Foods was incredibly generous to this program as well. I heard that others will help out next week. Our ship only sails once. The question I ask is what kind of cargo will we bring back to its final destination? Live life as Sarah lived her life. At the end, it should be about our lives, not our death. It should be about the journey and the deeds. It should be about the good name.

When you light your Shabbat candles this week, light one to help guide you on your journey and may that journey be filled with righteous acts. Light the other candle to help you see what is around you so that you always know which way to steer.

*Rabbi Adland has been a Reform rabbi for more than 25 years with pulpits in Lexington, Ky., Indianapolis, Ind., and currently at Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio. He may be reached at j.adland@gmail.com.* ✨



## Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

### Shiva fun in recent TV and film

In the fall of 2014, TV and movie writers could not get enough of *shiva*, the traditional seven days of Jewish mourning. Fox's *The Simpsons* began its 28th season with the passing of Rabbi Krustofski (voice of Jackie Mason), Krusty the Clown's perpetually disappointed father.

True, Krusty's gig as spokesperson for Hamco Ham has not endeared him to his father. But when Krusty faces an existential crisis after being insulted at a celebrity roast by Sarah Silverman and others, young Bart Simpson urges the clown to confide in his father who "must have learned something from that...scroll he's always reading." Dad's parting words to Krusty, just before dying suddenly, is that Krusty has always been "eh." This pushes Krusty's self-doubt to the breaking point. "O God," he's dead," Krusty laments. "And he never lived to see me be successful."



Rabbi Krustofski and his son, Krusty the Clown in *The Simpsons*. © 20th Century Fox Film Corp.

As regards Jewish belief and practice, writer Joel H. Cohen offers the choice between denial of the afterlife – "Once you're dead that's it. *Caput!*" and an idealized fantasy in which there is indeed a Lieberman Presidential Library. Another view of Heaven is that it is really entirely Jewish, with Jesus and Rodney Dangerfield sharing the spotlight. But the option of Heaven chosen by Krusty is the blessed assurance that his father respected him but could never tell him.

Ever sympathetic to his clown hero, Krusty, to the point of hyper-empathy, young Bart Simpson attends temple services even as Krusty seeks consolation from rabbis, including a disciple of his father's who uses Krusty's own jokes in the synagogue. While the joke-stealing may bolster Krusty's damaged ego, it adds

to his disappointment. For his trouble, Bart learns that all religions are equally boring – and disappointing. Krusty's rabbi father is no help, and neither is any synagogue. Is writer Joel H. Cohen saying that all religion is disappointing but that comic imagination helps a little?

The helpfulness of rabbis and synagogues in the face of death was also questioned on the big screen, in the movie, *This Is Where I Leave You*. When Mort Altman passes away, his widow Hillary, played by Jane Fonda, tells her four grown children, "Dad wants us to sit shiva. Now is the optimal time to do it." Mom lays down the law that "for the next seven days you are all my children again and you are all grounded." All children, significant others, ex's, friends, interactions, must take place in the family's impressive suburban home – at least to the extent that this is possible.

Tellingly, one of the sons (Adam Driver) has a childhood friend (Ben Schwartz), nicknamed "Boner," who is now the town rabbi. A standing joke in the film is the siblings' – not to mention the mother's – falling back on that nickname, whether accidentally or on purpose. The rabbi explains shiva well and tries to be supportive. He does miss at least one important opportunity to make peace, however. Altman's only daughter (played by Tina Fey in her most sympathetic role) is married to workaholic Barry, who is referred to more than once as the "jerk" of the family because he is always talking business on his cell phone and needs to rush off to close deals. When Barry leaves the house, the young wife and mother pulls the plug on the marriage. Would it have been helpful had the young rabbi reminded her that Barry is not obligated to sit shiva, and that he had fulfilled an obligation to be present for her during the time he did manage to stay for shiva?

The children find their mother's shiva demands quite odd since she is not Jewish and is sitting in the same spot where the family placed their Christmas tree. There are other inconsistencies here. Writer Jonathan Tropper ends up suggesting that the family matriarch has exploited Jewish rituals to break the news to her family of her evolving sexual orientation.

Still, there are nods in this movie to authentic Jewish rituals and values besides shiva. There is a dignified plain pine casket in keeping with Jewish teachings about simplicity and equality in funerals. On the shiva table are *hamantashen* (presented as quintessential Jewish food or because the events are supposed to take place around *Purim* time?).

If this film has an underlying message, however, it is that rituals and religion don't matter much anyway, because people do not change much. This movie suggests



Cast of *This Is Where I Leave You*. © Warner Bros.

that religion can often exacerbate the worst in people, as when the two younger brothers seek out their old Hebrew School classrooms to smoke marijuana in the temple on Friday night. (If what is written on the blackboard is any indication, there is a dedicated and competent Hebrew teacher in the synagogue which served as the setting for that scene.)

*This Is Where I Leave You* suggests that the best that family can achieve is to bring enough self-awareness so that the hell-raisers and soft-touches and all in between build enough self-awareness to do what they are going to do anyway with as much common sense, grace and self-confidence as possible. Shiva is used here to foster this "moral vision."

FX Network's *League*, a spoof about eccentric characters in a fantasy football league, started the season by killing off one of its Jewish characters, Ted Rappaport (Adam Brody). Ted is run over while bragging to his league mates. Writers Jeff Schaffer and Jackie Marcus Schaffer then introduce what may be a television first: playing a Hebrew term against a similar-sounding loan word from another culture. The league members make a big deal about an award called "Shiva," which has misogynous overtones in this series, and the standing joke of the half-hour is a back and forth between that kind of "shiva" and the Jewish mourning period. There is slapstick before and during the funeral, which includes tricking an arrogant friend (though all are arrogant here) to pull a silly stunt after the Mourners' *Kaddish*.

The point of all this is obviously to show that Jewish funerals can have their light side. Technically speaking, however, shiva begins after the funeral. Fortunately, the writers stopped at the burial.

Rabbi Gertel has been spiritual leader of congregations in New Haven and Chicago. 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

REVIEW BY CHANA TOVA SOKOL

### One man's pilgrimage to serve God

*Teach Them Diligently: The Personal Story of a Community Rabbi.* By Rabbi Berel Wein. Maggid Books. 2014. Koren Publishers. Jerusalem. 161 pp. \$24.95.

In a hopeful way this book covers most of the last 100 years of Jewish world history interfaced with an eye on one man's pilgrimage to serve God.

A powerful theme throughout *Teach Them Diligently* is that Rabbi Wein is able to teach Judaism with a sharp focus on always adhering to the 613 *mitzvos*, while remaining normal in the secular working world. Rabbi Wein was able to do it all in the secular and *frum* world, but he wrote clearly that it only looked like that, it wasn't the case. For example, he did attend law school, but could not go to the one of his choice. Although he received a full scholarship, what stopped him was he wanted to learn *Torah* during the day full time. Thus, he sacrificed attending that law school and instead went to one with night classes only.

The impetus for writing the autobiography was for his grown grandchildren who wanted to know his family and personal history in writing. The book offers this in detail, without spending time on personalities. The few words on each person are short and to the point, thus a short book.

At a young age Rabbi Wein was a serious student who could speak in front of audiences with talent. Many of his abilities were inborn. He applied himself to his studies, spending little time playing. He especially enjoyed learning *Torah*. He appreciated the holiness of his parents, family and teachers. He was not mischievous. Growing up in Chicago, Judaism was authentic because of his parents and his grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Halevi Rubenstein. In 1911 Rabbi Rubenstein was sent to America from Israel to raise funds "for Jerusalem charities". (p. 11)

The pungent humor of Rabbi Wein describes the situation: "In Chicago Rabbi Rubenstein encountered immigration

difficulties and was threatened with jail and/or deportation. Lacking a rabbi, the Jewish community of South Chicago offered to help him if he stayed on. This story is reminiscent of the famous "Four Captives" of Babylonia who were ransomed by Jewish communities in Italy, Morocco, and Spain provided that they remain as rabbis in those communities. Never underestimate the powers and tactics of Jews in hiring or firing – a rabbi." (p. 11)

Throughout the book we have another biography, that of Rabbi Wein's father, Rabbi Zev Wein. He was a *shul* rabbi in Chicago and described as pious. Among his many attributes were his photographic memory and gentle demeanor. He was a loving and supportive father for his son. Rabbi Berel Wein loved him so.

Rabbi Berel Wein writes of his romance and love for Jackie, his first wife. She gave him the support only an amazing woman like Jackie could pull off. His dedication to and respect for her are written in the book openly and for an Orthodox rabbi it is refreshing to read this. A brief book review cannot do justice to the sensitive manner in which Rabbi Wein describes her sudden passing, but in the book it is expressed with all the pain it entailed as well as with strength and openness.

Besides the wit and the covering of serious growth and destruction of the Jewish nation around the world, the book has short phrases of great snippets of wisdom. One such quote: "Success generally depends upon the right perspective. Living in Israel certainly provides that." (p. 142) Rabbi Wein dedicates much of his book to the birth and development of the Jewish nation in the land of Israel.

The descriptions about Rabbi Wein's cousins in Europe who perished in World War II are brief but poignant. One story takes place after World War II. Rabbi Wein escorted his father and many Chicago rabbis to greet the chief rabbi of Palestine Rabbi Isaac Halevi Herzog. Background: Rabbi Herzog had met Pope Pius XII and demanded the release of the thousands of Jewish children that parents brought to the Catholic Church for safe-keeping during the war. The pope refused!

Rabbi Herzog spoke to the group and pleaded: "You have to rebuild the Jewish People." He later had each man and boy shake his hand. He told them the same directive. Rabbi Wein, then a young boy, remembered this well: "Did you understand what I said to you? Don't forget it." (p. 2)

Rabbi Wein said, "All my life, Rabbi Herzog's words have echoed in my ears and soul. Numerous times in my rabbinic career, I've been discouraged and downhearted. But (his words) inspired and challenged me, shaping many of my decisions and actions." (p. 2). The message: Rebuild the Jewish People.

This Rabbi Wein did in all his tasks in life and continues to do so. Admirable accomplishments of Rabbi Wein included marrying Jackie, holding onto learning *Torah* even while attending law school, getting rabbinical ordination, switching from lawyer and toolmaker to rabbi. He moved at great sacrifice from Miami to Monsey to find the best education for his daughters. In Monsey he headed OU and discussed the challenges and disappointments he encountered simply traveling through grueling New York traffic and dealing with people eager to grab their own 'turf' in the business of *kosher* products.

A deeply important point in the book is how Rabbi Berel Wein was a serious Jew during a time when millions of Jews were dumping *Torah* observance. His dedication as a teenager was startling and stellar. At 19 he was a *Talmud Chochom* and ready to marry!

The wilderness of no *Torah* was vast and Rabbi Wein single-handedly developed networks of rabbis via many of his projects. He built an Orthodox Jewish community in Miami. He also worked for decades as dean of Yeshiva Shaarei *Torah* in Monsey, N.Y. The tasks included building the school from only an idea, hiring and overseeing staff, recruiting students, building a campus, raising \$3 million and teaching almost daily.

Other books by Rabbi Wein include: *The Legacy: Teachings for Life from the Great Lithuanian Rabbis* (with Rabbi Warren Goldstein), *Patterns in Jewish History, Vision and Valor: An Illustrated History of the Talmud, The Oral Law of Sinai: An Illustrated History of the Mishnah, Bamesila Na'aleh: Sermons on the Weekly Parasha, Echoes of Glory, Faith and Fate, Herald of Destiny, Living Jewish, The Pesach Haggadah, Pirkei Avos, Sand and Stars* (with Yaffa Ganz), *Second Thoughts, Tending the Vineyard, Triumph of Survival, Chikrei Halacha, Eeyunim B'mesechtot Hatalmud, and Chukei Chaim*. He is currently working on a book on the Prophets.

Rabbi Wein now lives in Jerusalem, rabbi at Beit Knesset HaNasi. He is married to a widow, Mira Cohen, who was a United States *rebbetzin* as well as a linguist and mother and grandmother and more. Rabbi Wein describes Mira: (She) "has proven to be everything I could have hoped for..." (p. 154)

At the end of the book Rabbi Wein recommends: "Now consider writing your own story. Your descendants will appreciate it." (p. 161)

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## Book Review

REVIEWED BY  
PROFESSOR ARNOLD AGES

### High praise for book on Maimonides (Part 1)

*Maimonides: Life and Thought.* By Moshe Halbertal. Translated from the Hebrew by Joel Linsider. Princeton University Press. 2014. 385 Pages.

As Voltaire once observed – The Bible is plus *célèbre que connu* – The Bible is more celebrated than known – a comment which can also be applied to that great eagle of Jewish learning Moshe ben Maimon, Maimonides (1135–1204). There is a huge library of books, articles and monographs written about this philosopher – the bibliography is enormous and yet few people, outside of the university specialist or in *Yeshiva* community, can discuss his major works.

That situation will be changing now with the publication by Moshe Halbertal of his volume on Maimonides which is blazing new intellectual horizons for its comprehensiveness, its philosophical depth, its chronological accuracy, its biographical detail and – most important of all – the English version. This executed by Joel Linsider is one of the most lucid translations of any philosophical work I have encountered. I have the greatest respect for translators for they are the major diplomats of our age – ambassadors who translate the culture of one civilization into another.

Halbertal divides his opus into chapters dealing, among other things, with Maimonides' life in Spanish and Arab cultures, his concern with the Jews of Yemen and the challenge of Islam. Chapter two deals with the commentary on the *Mishna*, the great code of Jewish law, the idea of revelation, and the tensions between the latter and Jewish law. In his third chapter he explores the great sage's views on immortality, resurrection, ethics and the idea of saintliness in Jewish tradition. Linsider's translation of chapter four of Halbertal's essay is a vivid explanation of what *Halakhah* (Jewish law) actually is and how the authority of the rabbis is maintained. Similarly the following chapter

illuminates the deeply troubling views of Maimonides on creation, prophecy, faith and Jewish "chosenness". Chapter six pivots on the form and content of Jewish law and the connection between law and Jewish sources in the *Talmud*.

Chapter seven is Halbertal's effort to explain the authorial voice in the *Guide to the Perplexed* and how it can be read on several different levels. Chapter eight is a further meditation on the Guide and how it deals with prophecy, the presence of evil and the reasons for the commandments. In each of these chapters the author provides a clear and comprehensive review of the issues at hand.

Halbertal uses his access to the storehouse of the Cairo Geniza to unfold many of the problems which occupied Jews. His readings of Maimonides' Responsa, that is to say, the answers to questions posed to him, show that early in his career he was very impatient with people who conceived of the deity in human terms or who used astrology – both errors, he believed were tantamount to idol worship.

One of the other issues explored is his *Iggeret Teman*, the Letter to the Jews of Yemen, which is featured in several older editions of *siddurim*; it is Maimonides' excursion into the field of comparative religion. There he counsels the Yemenite Jews with regards to the pressure they live under the dominion of Islam. His preamble to the question includes a comparison of both Christianity and Islam with Judaism, and points out that while Islam is a monotheistic faith and Christianity is one tainted with violations of that doctrine through Trinitarian beliefs, Islam is a greater menace to Judaism – why? Because Christianity, while hostile theologically to Judaism, still reveres Jewish Scripture; Islam, however, deems that Scripture to be a forgery and hence is a threat to Judaism. He then urges Yemenite Jews to honor the permanence of the covenant between G-d and His people and to remember that it is the final revelation despite what Islam teaches.

It is also in that document that Maimonides derides the institution of the Gaonate, that is to say the succession of rabbinic leaders in the former Babylonian sphere – which he attributes to the hereditary nature of the leadership of those cadres. This, he argued, in scathing-ly brutal language, inevitably leads to corruption and decay. In one of the letters unearthed by Halbertal, Maimonides rebuffs the criticism of his *Mishneh Torah*, the great compilation of Jewish law, by alluding once again to the corrosive influence of the hereditary rabbinic leadership referred to above who are unable to liberate themselves from their

proprietary views on who owns rabbinic scholarship.

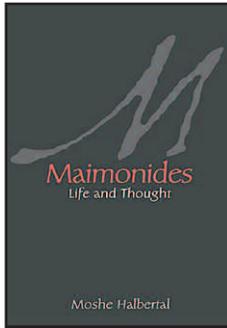
One of the most astute chapters in this book dealing with the Book of Commandments is the author's elegantly subtle probing of exactly the meaning of the phrase "revelation from Sinai" which Jewish tradition anchors there in order to validate the authority of Jewish practice which, while not mentioned in Sinaitic texts, is deemed to be part of the revelation communicated at Sinai but formulated by the rabbis. The way in which Maimonides backdates observances such as *Purim* and *Hanukah* is magisterial because he defines revelation as an all embracing, ongoing normative event. In Halbertal's examination Maimonides' most controversial assertion pivoted on the authoritative use by the rabbis of the classic 13 rules of interpretation to determine its value as direct revelation. Nahmanides was unhappy with Maimonides' distinctions in this matter and expressed great opposition sadness as a result.

Maimonides also attracted a lot of criticism, as the author informs us, in his views on the reality of the *olam habah*, life after death. For the great philosopher the afterlife is not a reward for the punctilious observance of the commandments because, as he viewed it, it is no sensual or individual paradise but rather the experience of being exposed to the radiance of God's presence.

The contemporary Spanish writer, Miguel de Unamuno would not have been pleased with Maimonides' formulation; Unamuno said the only legitimate afterlife would be one of *carne y hueso* – flesh and blood resurrection not some amorphous intellectual experience of the divine. This argument from his Commentary on the Mishna is a preoccupation to which he returns constantly even to asserting that observance of the commandments is not designed to procure rewards but rather to lead the individual to the knowledge of the Creator. Halbertal admits, during one critical pause that Maimonides' view of immortality in the Treatise on Resurrection "Leaves one largely unsatisfied."

Much more satisfaction is derived from Maimonides' explanation of why he wrote the *Mishneh Torah*. The reason is that no contemporary compilations of Jewish law – and there were several – clearly traced the subject with any clarity. The Talmud was, according to him a morass of complications and argumentation that few could approach as a coherent source of information; it was also written in Aramaic an unknown language to most Jews and hence could not be depended on for solutions to problems of Jewish law.

As for the Halakhic decisions of the (see Ages, page 19)



**KAPLAN/ISRAEL**

(continued from page 10)

**2014 Feast of Tabernacles evening**

Imagine what it feels like to be an Israeli and sit among 5,000 enthusiastic, emotional, supportive Christians from 80 countries in half a basketball stadium for an evening of thanks. Jerusalem's brand-new Payis Arena opened Sept. 11, the largest sports arena in the Middle East, seating 11,600 for basketball games.

The arena was divided in half with a stage created with several different levels for the orchestra and performers in the middle. After a jubilant opening with Hebrew songs by an eight-member singing group and modern dancers, the evening was off to a rousing start with delegates actively standing, swaying, clapping and singing – often with a hand or both hands extended in the air, raised to G-d.

Israelis were told, "You are our best friends; every day we pray for Israel; these people are your ambassadors in the nations."

The feature of the evening was a parade of 300 Israel Defense Forces (IDF) paratroopers who all fought in Operation Protective Edge – some lone soldiers. Some were wounded, all received medals of excellence. Their commander and the soldiers were called to the stage to be recognized, including the Druze commander and soldiers, as well as those from the Christian, Arab-speaking community and their commander and an Orthodox priest from the Galilee who is involved with their recruitment.

The representatives were told, "There are Christians behind you, there are Christians praying for you."

After the IDF commander thanked the Christians, Kobi Oshrat, lyricist who wrote the 1979 winning Eurovision song, *Halleluyah*, led the audience in singing his song as well as his 1978 song, *Long Way*. He then led a song from the *Yom Kippur War*, *Don't Worry*, relevant for Operation Protective Edge which asked people not to send the soldiers cookies or chocolates but to send underwear!

A narrative explained the rockets in the war and ICEJ's projects delivering nine bomb shelters to the south, and taking children and the elderly on day trips. A heart-warming parade followed, recognizing the Golan Heights Fiji UN observers who had been captured and taken hostage in Syria before being released. They marched in wearing red T-shirts, carrying the Fiji flag, singing their national military song, followed by a group of women in long, blue gowns.

**KAPLAN/RECIPE**

(continued from page 20)

**Pareve Chanukah Ponchikot (36)**

2 cups flour  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 Tbsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. nutmeg  
1/4 cup vegetable oil  
3/4 cup non-dairy creamer or almond milk  
1 egg  
oil  
confectioner's sugar or cinnamon sugar.

In a mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and nutmeg. Mix. Add oil, non-dairy creamer and egg and mix. Heat oil in a soup pot. Drop by teaspoon into oil and fry on all sides until brown. Drain on paper towels. Roll in confectioner's sugar or cinnamon sugar.

*Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, book reviewer, food columnist, cookbook author and leader of walks in Jerusalem's Jewish produce market, Machaneh Yehudah. ✨*


**Annual "Feast of Tabernacles" Shows Worldwide Christian Solidarity**

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) was founded in 1980 to represent Christians the world over who are concerned for Israel and the Jewish people. Among their projects are working with the Jewish Agency to financially assist Jews coming on *aliyah* and their integration; helping poor, elderly, disabled and youth at risk; and creating in Haifa an assisted living home complex for 70 Holocaust survivors. As the largest Christian Zionist organization with a staff of 50, for 35 years they have sponsored the largest, annual tourist event in Israel during *Sukkot*. One evening is devoted to saying thank you to Israeli guests.

As part of the ICEJ's project assisting the Jewish Agency in bringing Jews to Israel, a group of Bnei Menashe from India were recognized. (These descendants of one of the Lost Tribes, Menasseh, son of Joseph, have been immigrating to Israel since 2013, assisted by the ICEJ.) Also recognized were 35 recent arrivals from the Ukraine whom the ICEJ had helped.

A particularly delightful program of songs was presented by a group of teens from the children's home in Ashdod, beautifully dressed in black and sparkling silver costumes. The ICEJ sent this professional choir to perform in the Czech Republic. After a violinist and his ballerina wife performed, the Rock City Church worship team from London sang

**AGES**

(continued from page 18)

Gaonate, the body that saw itself as the successors of the great rabbis of the Talmud and hence authorized arbitrators of the structures of Jewish law, Maimonides advanced an interesting argument to counter the universality of their edits. They lived in a specific geographical environment and their decisions were local ones that were not necessarily accepted by Jewish communities outside the perimeter of their precincts. Only the Babylonian Talmud, he argues, is binding on all of Israel and his *Mishneh Torah* is the only compilation that arranges *Talmudic* learning in concise, coherent and logical sequences.

The *Mishneh Torah*, however, is not merely a legal document codifying the matrices of Jewish law but also a theological and philosophical meditation. In his comments on the divine Maimonides returns constantly to God as a spirit not a corporeal or physical being. This is a supremely important part of his argument because while corporeal beings can be affected by physical change, not so the Lord of the universe and of Israel, the Eternal presence who was there at the creation of the sphere of the universe itself. This argument is dangerously close, as the astute reader will note, to the idea that creation did not occur at a precise moment but is eternal; Maimonides, anticipating criticism counters that it is the incorporeal God who initiated the eternal movement of the sphere of the universe. He appears here to have his cake and eat it as well!

This is a book which should be in every Jewish and university library. It is without doubt one of the best Jewish books of the last quarter century.

**Editor's note:** Look for Part 2 in our next National edition or our website.

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and led the audience in lively, high spirited gospel songs.

The closing inspirational speaker was Robert Stearns, visionary leader, founder and executive director of Eagles' Wings, a global movement of churches, ministries and leaders, who followed his exuberant, mesmerizing speech leading songs. The IDF group was then called back to close the evening and sing *Hevenu Shalom Aleichem* and *Hatikvah* with the participants. What an amazing experience for Israelis!

*Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, book reviewer, food columnist, cookbook author and leader of walks in Jerusalem's Jewish produce market, Machaneh Yehudah. ✨*



# My Kosher Kitchen

BY SYBIL KAPLAN  
PHOTO BY BARRY A. KAPLAN

# The Jewish Post & Opinion

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## Let's make sufganiyot

From Israel have come two popular foods for Chanukah – *sufganiyot* or jelly doughnuts and *ponchikot*, which are ball-shaped or resemble a doughnut hole.

In *The World of Jewish Desserts*, Gil Marks writes that doughnuts fried in oil, *ponchikot* were adopted by Polish Jews for Chanukah. The name is taken from the Polish word, *paczki* [poonchkey] which led to the nickname, *ponchiks* the Polish name for jelly doughnuts. Poonchkey are similar to jelly doughnuts only larger, more rich tasting and are traditionally served on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent. They were made to use up shortening and eggs which were prohibited during Lent.

Sufganiyot have a more interesting history. In *The Jewish Holiday Kitchen*, Joan Nathan, an acquaintance of mine from our Jerusalem days and noted cookbook author and maven of American Jewish cooking, said she learned the origins of sufganiyot from Dov Noy, dean of Israel folklorists.

Noy relates a Bukharian fable, which says the first *sufganiya* was a sweet given to Adam and Eve as compensation after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. He says the word *sufganiya* comes from the Hebrew word, *sof* (meaning end), *gan* (meaning garden) and *Ya* (meaning G-d). Thus the word means, the end of G-d's garden.



According to Noy, this fable was created at the beginning of the 20th century, since *sufganiya* is a new Hebrew word coined by pioneers.

Some say sufganiyot, which means sponge like, are reminiscent of the sweet, spongy cookie popular along the Mediterranean since the time of the Maccabees. Hebrew dictionaries say the word actually comes from the Greek word, *sufgan*, meaning puffed and fried. Try these for Chanukah this year.



Cover art by Eduard Gurevich. See About the Cover, p.2.

### Oven Fried Soofganiyot (sic.) (24 minis) (source unknown)

- 1 cup skim milk
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 egg
- 3-1/2 cups flour
- 2 Tbsp. instant yeast

#### Syrup

- 2 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup water

#### Sugar coating and filling

- 1/4 cup sugar
- Jam

Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease mini muffin cups. Heat milk and butter in a saucepan. Stir in sugar and salt. Let cool. In one mixing bowl, combine egg and milk mixture. In a second bowl, combine 3 cups of flour with yeast then add to egg-milk mixture and beat for 2 minutes with mixer or hand mixer. Stir in 1/2 cup flour to make soft batter. Cover and let rise until double in volume. Turn dough onto a floured work space. Roll dough into a log. Cut off pieces and form into balls. Place each ball in a muffin cup. Cover pans and let rise for 30 minutes. Place in oven and bake 12–15 minutes until lightly browned.

Meantime, combine sugar and water in a saucepan. Heat, then boil until thick.

Reduce heat and keep warm. Remove doughnuts to a cooling rack then toss in sugar syrup and remove with a slotted spoon. Roll in sugar. To inject, poke a hole in the side of each doughnut, inject jelly.

If not serving immediately, wait to dip in sugar syrup and rolling in sugar. These can be made 3 months ahead and frozen after cooled. To use, defrost, cover with foil, reheat in 350° oven 15 minutes, dip in sugar syrup and either roll in sugar or inject with jelly.

### Classic Sufganiyot (32–36)

- 3-1/2 cups flour
- 2 eggs
- 4-3/8 tsp. baking powder
- 3/8 tsp. salt
- 2 cups vanilla yogurt
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla oil
- confectioner's sugar or cinnamon sugar

Mix flour, eggs, baking powder, salt, yogurt, sugar and vanilla in a bowl until well blended. Heat oil in a soup pot. Drop tablespoons of batter around the pot, fry until brown on both sides, drain on paper towels. Roll in cinnamon sugar or confectioner's sugar. (see Kaplan/recipe, page 19)