

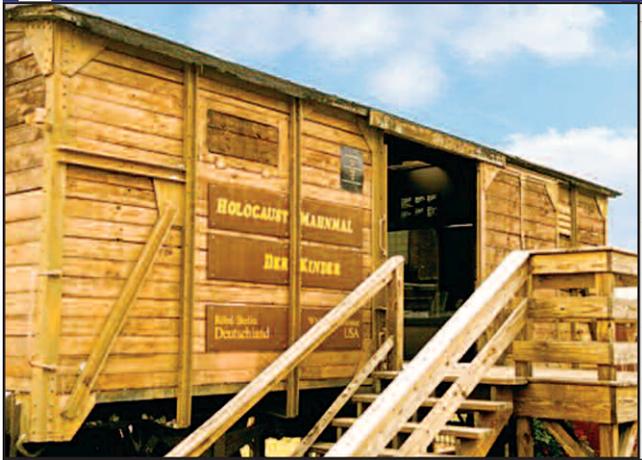
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Yom HaShoah
See About the Cover, p.2.

Editorial

This annual *Yom HaShoah* issue is always challenging because I have to again read the tragic stories and there are always ones I haven't heard before.

In this issue we have poems and articles by or about four people who are either Holocaust survivors or children of survivors. The three children of survivors, born shortly after World War II, live in the United States, and the survivor is a woman living in Israel. This woman is a friend of Sybil Kaplan and was a young girl during the war. Kaplan wrote about her (see page 20) and the woman asked that her real name not be used. All four have gone on to make remarkable contributions. Kaplan wrote this about her friend: "She is 81! And what an active dynamo!" Israel Zoberman (p. 16 and 18) and Dr. Bernhard Rosenberg (p. 13) became rabbis, and Miriam Zimmerman (p.10) became a Holocaust educator.

On the cover of this issue are images of various aspect of the Children's Holocaust Memorial in Whitwell, Tenn. that stands alongside Whitwell Middle School. This memorial to the victims was a direct result of their tolerance project so beautifully documented in the movie, *Paper Clips*. (The film can be viewed for free, online.) In *About the Cover* (to the right) are the descriptions of the images on the cover.

Thus, I am reprinting below, from Jan. 18, 2006, my review of the movie – but also because in the *Indianapolis Star* this week, in their coverage of a local *Yom HaShoah* event, they published the following: "The six candles that were lit represent the 6 million Jews who are thought to have perished in the Holocaust."

The *Star's* choice of such watered-down words as "thought to have perished" is offensive, and in stark contrast to the movie, where it was so important for the middle school students of Whitwell, Tenn., to collect a *minimum of 6 million* paper clips. This was in order for them to fully understand the scope of what that massive number – the systematic murder of 6 million Jews – meant. Whitwell has no Jewish population compared to 10,000 Jews living in Indianapolis.

The movie, *Paper Clips*, is about how the people of the small, rural town of Whitwell, Tenn., taught their teenagers about diversity, tolerance, and unchecked prejudice. Whitwell is 24 miles northwest of Chattanooga and was originally a coal mining community. The population is 1,600, none of whom are Jewish or Catholic, and their school has only one Hispanic and five African American students.

In 1998, the teachers were looking for a

About the Cover

Clockwise from top left: 1) Authentic German railcar used to transport prisoners to death camps, part of a Children's Holocaust Memorial in Whitwell, Tenn. It is filled with 11 million paper clips. 2) A remembrance quilt. 3) A sculpture designed by an artist from Ooltewah, Tenn. stands next to the railcar, memorializing the 1.5 million children murdered by the Nazis, incorporating another 11 million paper clips. 4) Inside the railcar, besides the paper clips, are books and a suitcase filled with letters of apology to Anne Frank by a class of German schoolchildren. 5) One of several butterfly stepping stones on the sidewalk leading up to the memorial. The idea for butterflies came from a poem written by a child who was held in Terezin concentration camp in 1942. 6) Torah and Ark in a room dedicated to books and artifacts. 7) The paper clips the Whitwell Middle School students collected, actually more than 30 million in all, as part of their tolerance project. ★



way to teach their students about the importance of treating others the way in which the students themselves would want to be treated. They decided to study the Holocaust. When the students could not fathom how many six million was, they decided to find something they could collect. On the Internet they found that paper clips were invented in Norway and that the Norwegians wore them on their shirt pockets to represent people during the Holocaust.

They ended up collecting more than 30 million paper clips from all over the world. As the entire town became involved in this project, the movie is about what all the residents learned from this experience. It changed their preconceived notions about differences among people. It not only taught them loving ways to react to those differences in future relationships, but also the importance of sharing what they learned with others outside their city and state.

In the course of their study, the students invited holocaust survivors to come to their city and tell their stories. One of the most touching scenes is the way the students hugged the survivors to welcome them, cried when they heard their stories, and hugged and kissed them afterward.

The movie is never boring. It moves at a steady pace, covering all the exciting details from the beginning of the idea to study diversity to what they chose to do with all those paper clips. If nothing else would have resulted, that alone is very special. This includes a scene where the postmaster is telling a teacher the

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The Jewish
Post & Opinion

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mailman can no longer deliver the school's mail. It had gotten too heavy. From then on, the school had to pick up their mail.

The background music is soft and pleasing, as are the scenic shots of the city and surrounding area. This movie left me feeling safe and at peace and it restored my faith in humanity.

Never Forget!
Jennie Cohen, April 25, 2012 ★

Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

I wrote recently about the selfish and miserable life that I had led growing up in Indianapolis, and the happiness and freedom that I had found through learning Torah and fulfilling *mitzvahs*. One of my readers was insulted. Was I saying that his life was selfish and unhappy?

Well, I guess that I sympathize with him. It isn't easy to have someone imply that the life that he has lead for so many years is selfish and unhappy. But what choice do I have? Is it better to just let him continue to suffer? I found freedom and happiness 43 years ago. Since then I'm trying to help others find for themselves freedom and happiness. This is the least that I can do.

Chassidus explains that each of us has a good side and a bad side. Our good side tries to get us to learn Torah and do *mitzvahs*, to love each other and help each other. Our bad side tries to get us to hate others and be selfish and so forth. This is not how Hashem created us. This is the result of the sin of the first man, who ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Until *Moshiach* comes, we have a bad side, and we try to overcome it. When *Moshiach* comes, Hashem will eliminate all evil. No one will ever be selfish or miserable again.

How do we overcome selfishness? The first step is to realize that it is bad. As I wrote, when I was growing up I was encouraged in many ways to be selfish. *Chassidus* teaches us to fight and modify our selfishness. One aspect of selfishness is our search for pleasure. We eat food that tastes good, we look to have a good time, we daydream or read books about pleasures that we can't experience in the real world. We work to earn money with which we hope to buy things that will bring us pleasure.

How do we fight this? We try to train ourselves not to just take, but to also give. Of course we have to take sometimes. For example, we do have to eat (about three times a day). But we can and should limit our eating, and eat only the right amount of the right foods that are good for our health.

How can we modify selfishness? Instead of looking for physical pleasures, we can train ourselves to enjoy spiritual pleasures. It is a great spiritual pleasure to give love to my wife, children and grandchildren, to the old and sick. If I manage to put a smile on their faces it makes me really happy. In addition, when you give someone a little love, they usually give you



Why Faith Matters

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

Voltaire said that God gave us memories so we might have roses in December. But memory serves not only for blossoms in winter, but for desolation in spring. We who live in tranquility must not forget those who faced the night. Let us remember, *zachor*; and struggle against darkness in our own age with renewed purpose.

In the *Shoah* there were victims, perpetrators and countless bystanders. As Elie Wiesel says, the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference. "The hottest places in hell are reserved for those, who in times of moral crisis, do nothing." – Dante ~ 4-19-12

From Facebook posts of Rabbi Wolpe. Wolpe is the senior rabbi of Temple Sinai in Los Angeles and author of several books including *Why Faith Matters*. ✨



back a lot (especially grandchildren). So you get double and triple pleasure. There are many advantages to spiritual pleasures. They don't raise your blood cholesterol, and you don't have to pay insurance on them, like you pay on fancy cars.

Our search for physical pleasure can make us really miserable, and can ruin our lives and other people's lives also. It can cause us to become alcoholic, addicted to drugs, to steal or worse. Our efforts to enjoy spiritual pleasures generally make us and those we come in contact with happy.

Life is not always easy. I consider myself very fortunate that learning *Chassidus* has shown me ways to bring a lot of beauty and happiness into my own life and the lives of many others. *Chassidus* is the deeper meaning and the secrets of the Torah. Today *Chassidus* is available all over the world. One can learn *Chassidus* at his or her local Chabad House or online at one of Chabad's web sites or even by telephone.

There are many books of *Chassidic* teachings and stories available in many languages. Learning *Chassidus* helps us to redeem ourselves from spiritual bondage and bring redemption to those around us. This brings us all one step closer to the complete and final redemption of the entire world, the days of *Moshiach*. We want *Moshiach* now!

P.S. I am happy to receive your responses. Feel free to send me an email. To write a column one needs an idea and a lot of work. The idea for this column came from a response from one of my



Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

Compassion, beauty, and balance

Iyar began April 23

Let us take a moment to imagine ourselves before a virtual gate to new spiritual opportunities for healing for ourselves, others, for *Am Israel* and the world. Take a moment to breathe and be open to receive the blessings of going forward in life. We are all on a journey and we are each supported. On *Rosh Chodesh Iyar* we enter a new month, a new week, the week of *tiferet*, compassion, beauty, and balance. This week we will also commemorate *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom HaAtzmaut*, Israel Independence Day. *Tiferet* is the heart, Israel is the heart of the world. We have so much to be proud and grateful for as Jews.

The Torah portions of this month of *Iyar* are about purity and holiness. This month we continue the cleansing, the letting go of what does not support our well being, what is toxic, what is false and open up to what does support our well being – what is true and what is real. Spring is emerging. *Iyar* is the time that asks something new to come forth from within us as well. Let us be mindful to go forward in our lives to fulfill our life purpose, adding activities that support well being and letting go of activities that simply do not. Take a moment to identify one activity that you may either add or eliminate to support your well being.

Melinda (Mindy) Ribner, L.C.S.W. is a spiritual psychotherapist and healer in private practice (www.kabbalahoftheheart.com). She is a teacher of Jewish meditation and Kabbalah for over 25 years. Author of Kabbalah Month by Month, New Age Judaism, and Everyday Kabbalah, she is also the founder and director of Beit Miriam (www.Beitmiriam.org). She can be reached by email at Beitmiriam@msn.com or Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com. Kabbalah Month by Month offers guidelines, meditations, strategies, stories to promote personal growth and healing each month. ✨



readers. Encouraging responses inspire me to try harder.

Love, Ben Zion

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Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

What's in a name?

I have trouble with names; not with spelling them, pronouncing them or even remembering them. My problem is simply this: I have trouble choosing names, particularly when it comes to my own.

I discovered this about myself several months before my marriage, during an innocuous conversation about thank you notes with my soon-to-be husband.

"What name do you want to put on the return address?" he asked me innocently enough.

I hesitated for a few moments, feeling like a contestant on a T.V. game show who was about to give the wrong answer.

"I think I'll just keep my own, if that's o.k. with you," I replied, uncertain if I had just placed myself in double jeopardy.

The problem for me was this: For the first 29 years of my life I had lived with the last name of Hirshberg. I'll admit, the name isn't very sexy or chic, but it was mine and I had grown used to it. During elementary school I got teased because of it (Hirshberg is easily converted into Hershey Bar or Hamburger by an eight year old mind) and in High School, I was taunted because of it (That's a *Jewish* name, isn't it?). Over the years, I had become both protective and proud of my name. It was a part of me that extended beyond my physical self into the world, but it also did much to define my sense of self.

Yet now that I was joining lives with the man I loved, I knew I had to look at myself in new ways. I wanted to be a team player; really I did, so I gave the name change a few tries. I tried my new identity at work but felt so conflicted that at one point I actually had 3 different business cards, each one advertising an alternative variation of our combined names. Then there was the message on our answering machine which began with: "You have reached the home of Ray Lederman and Amy Hirshberg-Lederman-Lederman-Hirshberg" which confounded even the most sophisticated phone solicitor. I knew things had gone too far when MasterCard refused to re-issue my credit card because my hyphenated name didn't fit in the available space.

For approximately the first 15 years of marriage, I changed my name more times than the oil in my car. Then one day I came upon a quote from the Jewish sages that gave me the insight and guidance I needed to finally decide.



Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

April 20, 2012, *Tazria/Metzora*
Lev. 12:1-15:33, 28 *Nissan* 5772

There is little argument that the portions *Tazria/Metzora* are two of the most troubling portions in the yearly reading of the Torah. (The other may be *Ki Tavo* near the end of Deuteronomy which is filled with a long list of curses that get progressively harsh.)

What makes these portions difficult to read are the lists of bodily fluids and afflictions that are mentioned and the process of purifying oneself or one's home



"A person is given three names: the one that his parents call him, the one that his fellow man calls him and the one that he acquires by his deeds. But the one he acquires by his deeds is better than all the others."

That bit of Jewish wisdom hit my heart like a heat-seeking missile. I realized that the 'deed' which generates the most meaning and satisfaction in my life (as well as plenty of heartache!) is being the parent of my two children. Since the moment I gave birth to my son, and two years later to my daughter, I have felt more deeply connected to life, more aware of its mysteries and more accepting of the unique aspects of each person born on this earth. In my role as a mother, I have been challenged beyond all possible limits, forcing myself to relinquish expectations while opening my heart and mind to multiple perspectives and possibilities.

I ask myself daily: Am I doing the best I can for my son; have I overreacted to my daughter? Can I listen better, learn more, or be clearer in my communications with them?

What does all this parental introspection have to do with the name that is now imprinted on my Visa card? Simply, that as the mother of two children with the last name of Lederman, I have come to cherish that name as the one which best depicts my choices and my challenges and has guided and defined much of my growth as an adult. I have embraced that name as the one that connects me most to deed for which I am most proud, being a part of the family I love.

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after contracting the diseases. There are no stories here about our ancestors, our wanderings, our dealings with others, our building a tabernacle, or our conflicts with God. The greatest blessing is when *Tazria/Metzora* are a double portion read in one week instead of being split over two weeks.

Regardless, it is portions like *Tazria/Metzora* that challenge us to look beyond the simple level of the text and find deeper meanings that emerge from behind the words themselves. I remember a *bar mitzvah* boy who had these portions. He wrote a speech about caring for those who get marginalized in the community because of their disabilities and we shouldn't put them outside the camp like what is done to those in these portions. Considering that this was written 15 or so years ago it is obvious the impact it left on me. This creative approach to these texts encouraged me year after year to find something meaningful in the words even if they challenged the basic premise of Lev. 12-15.

To me, this is the beauty of Reform Judaism. Don't accept on face value the words of Torah, but read them in ways that can become meaningful to you in your life today. We don't accept every *mitzvah* because some are at odds with the lives we live today. Yet, and this is the important "yet", Reform Jews must still read the Torah, struggle with the words, and then determine what to embrace or possibly reject.

This is both the strength and difficulty of being a Reform Jew. If you don't want to keep kosher, then understand what it is you don't like. If you don't want to observe Shabbat, then make sure you understand the role Shabbat observance can play in your life. Know what a tallit is or the meaning of *Sukkot* or *Shavuot*. If Reform Judaism is going to be about choice and autonomy, then use this pillar to be the best Reform Jew you can be by making choices through knowledge. Learn and study. Make informed decisions.

In this day and age, it is easy to find the information on celebrating and observing Jewish customs and rituals. The internet is full of wonderful sites that not only provide background and history, but the "how to's" as well. I truly believe that the best way to begin embracing Judaism into one's life is through *Shabbat*. The rituals of lighting Shabbat candles, saying *Kiddush*, eating a bite of *challah* along with the recitation of the blessings associated with them help mark Shabbat in a quiet, peaceful way. Our lives are so busy and filled with "to do" lists that when Shabbat comes it is important to stop and take a breath, reflect on what is important, open up your heart and soul, and thank God.

(see Adland, page 6)



Wiener's Wisdom

By RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

A double standard

Momentous times are here.

We commemorate the reunification of Jerusalem after over 2,000 years of desolation and destruction. Our indisputable and indivisible capitol is again in the hands of its rightful guardians. We celebrate the 64th anniversary of the rebirth of the Israel as a sovereign and independent nation through determination, fortitude and sacrifice – human sacrifice provided by millions upon millions of martyrs through wars and attempts at annihilation. We memorialize all who have fallen on the field of battle to preserve and defend the people of Israel through conflicts designed to destroy the very fabric of Jewish existence.

Through all the turmoil we experienced these thousands of years, we never stopped dreaming. We dreamt, as the Prophets determined, that there would come a time when all will be right with the world and each will live in peace with his neighbor. Some imagined an individual appearing who would lead us into this eternal vision of harmony. Others envisioned a time when everyone would realize that war is futile. Death brought about by famine and hopelessness should be remembered only through stories.

Maimonides wrote that even those who await a physical Messiah are not hoping for someone to rule over the world by converting the unbelievers but rather that wisdom would succeed giving humanity the ability to understand the futility of domination and contempt and total disregard for personal satisfaction.

However, here we are. The world still contains unimaginable horrors. Nothing has changed from centuries ago except the method with which to maim and murder. There is no trust. There is no love. God seems to be more remote and we are less filled with spiritual awareness. No lessons learned. We have modernized our methods but our concepts are trapped in ages of hate and mistrust. Those who attempt to break the shackles of the past are despised and discarded.

This is not gloom and doom. This is reality. However, this reality contains so much agony and despair because of experiences that taught us to survive through personal commitment and firmness. Scripture teaches that we are responsible to defend ourselves and it is this aspect of

our survival that is a contradiction to our enemies.

We watch with amazement the condemnations that are pronounced each time the people of Israel attempt to prevent their destruction. Repeatedly threats are made, and in some instances carried out by lunatics, women, and children who are taught from the cradle that the only good Jew is a dead Jew. Religious leaders screech from their altars of hate the message of martyrdom and sacrifice of followers, led blindly into an eternal nothingness. Those who preach sit on the sidelines and cheer but are nowhere to be found in the forefront of madness. They know, very well that there is no salvation in death, only the finality of life.

Because we are responsible for civilization's maturity, we are held to a different standard. Because we are imagined as the conscience of the world, we are condemned for protecting the virtue of living. Because we are expected to turn the other cheek, we are chided for daring to lift up arms in self-defense. Because we taught the art of pacifism, we are criticized when we take up arms to right the wrongs. Because we suffered as no others, we are considered scapegoats destined for the slaughter.

Our detractors are fast to quote the Prophets to underscore the hypocrisy, in their minds, of our actions. They relate writings of Isaiah who reminds us that we need to remove things that will enslave others, denigrate others, or say evil things about others. How dare we not remember the teachings of our ancestors to respond to the needs of others who call out to us and for us to be a beacon to all who will seek out the Lord by responding to treachery with words of indignation, not action.

Through it all we still have the courage and the ability to celebrate, commemorate, and remember. These are actions of a people who understand the need for life to be lived even pausing for a moment to observe the calamities that have changed the course of history. That is why Lag B'Omer was inserted in the midst of remembering the past unfortunate chapters of history. I place this significance upon this obscure rejoicing on the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer because it was time according to the Talmud when death ceased.

The double standard ascribed to us by the so-called civilized world notwithstanding cannot alter the fact that we have proven to be resilient and is a testament to our survival as a people destined to rejoice in the goodness that lies beneath each of us. This is our hope. This has been our hope. This will always be the hope of a people determined to fulfill its destiny.

Is a virtual Jewish community what we're after?

By RABBI STEPHEN J. EINSTEIN



A true story: I know a woman who was a member of a congregation, not Congregation B'nai Tzedek (CBT), when her children were in religious school. Once they were confirmed, she didn't feel the need to remain affiliated. However, she bought High Holy Day tickets each year. After a while, since she really wasn't connected to the congregation in any meaningful way, she realized that she recognized fewer and fewer of the members when she attended on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*.

So, she decided to join her adult daughter at her shul for the High Holy Days. She did so for a number of years. This fall, however, she felt it was too much of a *shlep* to go out to her daughter's and decided to "attend" services in the comfort of her own home. It was easy: She simply had to use the internet and connect with a "holiday worship experience" from her desktop.

She reported that the services were beautiful. For *Yizkor*, she was able to send in photographs of her deceased relatives and they were flashed on the screen. The group organizing the services appreciated the donation she had sent in.

Is this the future of Judaism? Or, put differently, can the future of Judaism be assured if people abandon the synagogue in favor of services online?

Don't get me wrong. I believe that modern technology can and should be used to achieve our goals. However, if our goal is to build a vibrant Jewish *community*, can or should this be done exclusively as a virtual community?

Yes, it is possible to "rent a rabbi" for counseling, *b'nai mitzvah*, weddings, funerals and unveilings. Lots of people are doing this already. They seem happy enough. But who offers them concern when they are hurting, ill or grieving? With whom do they share their moments of joy and triumph?

Right now, the Hebrew Union College, which trains the next generation of rabbis, (see Einstein, page 19)



Happy birthday, Israel. Continued success, Jerusalem. Rest in peace you defenders of the Land of Promise.

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Gather the People



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

Ritual purity and social justice

Few of us would dispute the *moral* and *ethical* teachings of the Torah – whether or not we believe in God, and regardless of the certainty or tenuousness of our connection to Judaism. We wouldn't argue that, as a rule, stealing is either desirable or defensible for society, regardless of whether we personally take things that belong to others without their permission. We wouldn't argue that physically assaulting someone is desirable or defensible, regardless of whether we personally have ever done so. And, certainly, we could extend this kind of list almost without limit.

We are, however, almost equally unanimous in our rejection of the Torah's teachings regarding *ritual purity*. Few modern Jews would agree that there is any convincing or compelling reason to keep *kosher*, regardless of our personal practice. Few modern Jews would agree that there is any convincing or compelling reason to go to a *mikvah* before one's marriage or conversion, or after menses. And this list can also be extended almost without limit.

There is another aspect of these modern Jewish views of the *usefulness* of Torah's teaching of ethics and morals and uselessness of Torah's teachings on ritual purity. The modern liberal view is that the two are unconnected and that, while the former is reasonable and relevant, the latter is unfathomable and unnecessary. The implication is that, of course, as individuals we may choose to accept one group of teachings and to reject the other, because one is useful and one is not, and the two are entirely unrelated.

These two groups of Torah teachings are known as statutes and ordinances (or judgments) – *chukim* and *mishpatim*.

Let's deal with the second group first: the ordinances – *mishpatim*. These are laws affecting the relations between human beings in our social, political, and economic life. These commandments correspond to our intuitive idea of justice, what we would be likely to legislate for ourselves if the Torah had not given them to us – such as the prohibitions against robbery and murder.

The *chukim*, on the other hand, often said to be unfathomable by human intelligence, are supposed to inculcate "moral wholesomeness" in our individual and family life. But how is the question – which we'll return to momentarily.

In *parashat hashavua* (weekly Torah portion) *Acharei Mot*, we read: "My ordinances shall you do, and my statutes you shall keep, to walk in them...." – *lalechet bahem*. (Leviticus 18:4) "And you shall therefore keep My statutes and My ordinances, which if a person does them shall live in them...." (18:5) We are commanded to keep *both* the statutes and the ordinances.

But how can we even consider the idea of accepting and practicing teachings that are, by definition, unfathomable?

Rabbi Josef Dov Soloveitchik (1903–1993), one of the great rabbis of the 20th century, said that we do this when the inner image of God within us recognizes truths that are beyond ordinary human understanding. For instance, many of our most important decisions – such as our choice of particular ideals and people to love and make sacrifices for – express what may be called a "light from within," which reflects our true inner self.

But Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808–1888) teaches that the *chukim* do, in fact, have an explicit purpose. That purpose is to place limits on sensuality and, thereby, to teach free-willed moral self-control, which is not instinctive or intuitive behavior for humankind – in fact, quite the contrary. The goal is for us to acquire the discipline necessary to set boundaries around the animal side of our human nature, that which would have us respond without restraint to our sensual and material desires, as if we were animals.

Unquestionably, the *chukim* and *mishpatim* are inextricably linked – ritual purity and social justice are reciprocally related. First, ignoring laws regulating sexual life and the building of family, failing to control our appetites and raise our children with wholesome models, leads to moral degeneration, first of the individual and then of the family. Second, morally wholesome family life is the foundation, first of community and then of national life, which upholds justice and love of our fellow human beings. And third, without social justice and human rights, as in slave societies, the first victims are moral individual and family life, because survival becomes paramount and one no longer has control over the conditions of one's existence.

It is virtually impossible to imagine a society of justice and human rights without an underlying cultural foundation that nurtures moral individual and family life, and it is virtually impossible to

ADLAND

(continued from 4)

Friday evening Shabbat observance is a beautiful pause in the week. Even if you can't observe Shabbat to its fullest, take a moment to light candles and just watch the flames dance. We have begun Shabbat this way for centuries and this small, but meaningful ritual says it is time for God's day of rest to begin. Whether it is at Temple or in our home, seeing those lights burn and flicker connects me with Jews around the world today and with my ancestors in communities far from Canton long ago who struck a match and lit Shabbat candles.

When you light your Shabbat candles this week, light one to remember how this day has sustained our souls throughout the centuries in all the places we've lived. Light the other candle to remind us of the power of this day in our lives today.

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imagine a society of moral individual and family life without a just society that protects the institutions and practices that sustain such life.

Rabbi Hirsch concluded: A society characterized by justice and love cannot exist without a foundation of moral individuals. And the laws of justice and love that God has decreed for human society, the *mishpatim*, presuppose that the majority of us have been conceived, born, raised, and lived our lives guided by laws of sexual and family morality, the *chukim*.

What does that mean for those of us modern Jews who have rejected traditional morality in favor of our own personal preferences?

If we acknowledge that the connection between *chukim* and *mishpatim*, between ritual purity and social justice, is inextricable, then for the sake of our children and our children's children, we should at least reconsider those laws.

We are bound to ask ourselves: What are the long-term effects – on society, on my community, on my family, and on myself – of forsaking the traditional discipline of ritual purity in favor of what is momentarily convenient or comfortable?

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



Jewish Counselor

By RABBI STEVEN M. LEAPMAN

Jewish views on the afterlife

Excerpt from his sermon Jan. 14, 2012

In the wake of many losses and upheavals that transpired in our small community, I wish to introduce an adult education opportunity. Grief can prompt insight and helps disclose the twisting lanes beyond sorrow. We seek guidance to contend with adversity. Judaism has such tools on hand. Thus, we will offer an eight-part series based on *What Happens After I Die* by Reform Rabbis Rifat Sonsino and Daniel Syme, a panorama of diverse Jewish views on Eternity.

We are well-served to ponder the extremes and contrasts in life with zeal, not mere surrender or even calm acceptance, but eagerly. It is equally interesting to note how the tradition of shattering a glass at a wedding derives from rabbinic injunction that amidst our joy as marriage commences life is a serious matter which commands focus. I believe there is a deeper connection – one woven into our ancestral faith yet often brushed aside rapidly and rudely in an overly secular age.

While our ancestors saw the afterlife as a spiritual reality, many today see the afterlife as mere after-thought, a cognitive paradigm or mental construction at best. We relish numerous depictions of Tevye dancing and singing his way across Broadway's many Anatevkahs but smile in bemusement at his awe of the "other side." We should be cautious over our certainties, as time may well unravel our clarities.

Our traditional rabbis were eager to teach *mitzvot* as guides for this world, yet it is a grand and gross mistake to believe these sages dismissed and downplayed an afterlife or *olam ha'ba*. Sadly, many modern Jews believe that since other religions teach there is an afterlife, Judaism does not. Not so! A contemporary Jew may disagree with ancient beliefs, but such views were clearly held in the past and pertain today. We who are progressive in religion and religiosity must be cautious not to harm our heritage or our hearts through an unflagging devotion to modernity, much as those who are overly conservative with the past may ignore present day Jewish adaptability and vitality.

Further, we cannot overlook the fact that some approach their religion as one

eons ago may've approached a sorcerer, to conjure quick answers to quandaries lacking ready solution. Magic is no religion and sedation is no synonym for enduring spirituality.

I know of a rabbi who was chastised most harshly over a prayer offered which referred to the afterlife. The complaining party admitted Judaism taught of an afterlife, but utterly and insistently demanded the rabbi never speak of it again as it made the critic uncomfortable. How we resent and resist ideas our psyches may crave! One's orthodoxies and rigidities truncate the joy of life in this life, if not beyond. Especially within Progressive Judaism, we must be very cautious over that which we would exclude. Or, as I heard it at Hebrew Union College, Reform means there is a freedom to bring in as well as push out; some ideas once discarded may prove redemptive, or at least, healing to battered souls.

These sad observations on the state of modern piety aside, Judaism does the world a great favor in its conceptualization of the world-to-come for Judaism teaches that all righteous people merit eternity – morality and decency, neither dogma nor doctrinal allegiance, open Heaven's Gates. In a Jewish paradise, one will encounter Mother Theresa, Jonas Salk, and Mahatma Gandhi!

Life contains a cornucopia of factors and forces we cannot explain, dynamics whose origins we do not comprehend. This weekend, I recall a beloved grandparent, our community celebrates a wedding, and a couple commences its wedded journey! Such a confluence of contrasts and happiness touches the heart, a mixture of purpose, promise, and providence. I'm like many other Jewish Americans born mid-century (yes – last century!). Yiddish was not a spoken appendage of my identity. Every now and then, a phrase or expression that apparently had also crossed oceans and epochs since Lithuania entered my pre-teen earshot in predominantly Protestant Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, circa 1960s.

I turn our attention to the concept of *besht*. *Beshert* is the notion that somehow, quietly yet with consistency, constancy, and full intention, what we call "coincidence" is event and edification, unfolding-by-design, planned by God or Cosmic Destiny. Hardened rationalists capitulate before *besht*. It is to acknowledge that given whatever wisdom inscribed on Life's fortune cookies, there may be a Master Baker placing slips of parchment in dough.

When Rabbi Michael Friedland (Sinai Synagogue South Bend, Ind.) and I settled on this date for this particular talk, a family fact flew right by me until a day or two later. January 14 is the birthday of Fanny

May Morse, my maternal grandmother. She would've been a century-old today. Sadly, cancer and emphysema forestalled her presence. Still, I was enamored of her. As her one-and-only grandchild, I was a focus of this eccentric dynamo's zeal, love, spicy humor, and fierce devotion. Doing some math, I realize my beloved grandmother, "Fanny" as she told me to call her, had probably been a flapper during the 1920's. She possessed a mind forensic, fervent, and forceful. Though aspiring to be a journalist her arithmetic skills were clearly matched for our information age.

Fanny survived and surpassed withering family illnesses, crises personal and financial as the Stock Market Crash of 1929 evaporated hopes of college. Fanny was a nurturer, raconteur, business-woman, devoted parent, daughter, grandparent, and spouse. To her wily delight and the bewilderment of more timid souls, she could out-cuss any sailor her Navy veteran-to-be-grandson ever met! Uncompromisingly proud of her Jewish identity, Fanny was no uncritical fan of tradition, ever ready if not merry-to-dissuade-or-disenfranchise those who placed undue confidence in custom or trust in tradition.

Fanny used to lament she'd be forgotten after she died, a rare instance of her misreading a situation. The day she died, I was in seminary in Jerusalem and a series, if not a veritable circus, of bizarre circumstances arose which compelled me to phone my parents in Pennsylvania only to learn of her passing. One of my children carries a version of her middle name. Tales of her outlandish-at-times- obscene comments, perseverance and love, continue to this day. I see another *besht* here today – we never know how our lives will bear fruit.

So what does Fanny's grandson make of the afterlife? Professionally, I should know about this, both the beliefs and the feelings yet in light of my grandmother's love and spirit, still radiant 100 years after her birth, 26 years after she departed, I confess I'm more of a child than a trained rabbi or therapist. I feel the question very profoundly today, "Where did Grandma go?"

If I say the answer is, "She lives on in my heart and memory," do I confine her energy and enthusiasms to my mind and mentality which, as is the case with all minds and mentalities, are fragile and changing constructs at best? When I used to picture Fanny's presence, I would recall the grocery store she and my grandfather ran on what was called "German Hill" back in Lancaster, Pa. I see the sign she scrawled on the back of cigarette cartons, "In God we trust, all others pay cash!" I envision the nursing home where I last saw her in this life, worn out and barely

(see Leapman, page 9)



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Is this the quiet before the storm?

This is an election year in the United States, and now that the candidates are settled upon, the battle has begun. Unfortunately, the media, the PACS and the distortion, never allows us the comfort to make decisions based on any rational perusal of the facts. The facts are buried somewhere deep below the noise of the election, and how the nation decides who and what party to vote for is, at best a mystery. Somehow the country survives and moves forward. It is not a perfect system, but it is somewhat better than most.

Another result is that Israel, who always seems to be in the middle of the world, must be content with just being in the Middle East. It is hard to believe that with all the rumbling, fighting, and power grabbing, anything can drown out the noise, but it does.

There is no way to understand how it will resolve. Will there be more democratic regimes when the fighting ends? Will there be a better life? Will it all have been worth the struggle?

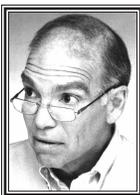
The journey has been at a great cost of lives. We must hope that another generation, looking back, will see that it was the right journey. Nations will be judged for what they did or didn't do. As in all conflicts, the least able suffer most. Innocent people die, and it appears that we are sinking into a greater cesspool.

In the coming months and years, great decisions will play out. Israel will be at the center of many of these actions. I wish I had answers to the great questions they face.

I still want to write about these great national events, but I do not do so with any great sense of giving a gift of wisdom. As believing and caring Jews, I know that our destiny is not determined by men of any stripe, that the Almighty continues to watch over our madness, and that at the end of time, we will see the Greatness of His vision.

I would not want to be a leader in this world. I am amazed that there are still men and women who offer themselves up to serve. Like all of you, my candidates or not, I want to see the world operate in order, living in peace, and elevating mankind.

I believe my first job is to put my life in order. It's a tall order, but I continue to



Shiplely Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

Students! Prepare your D'var Torah!

We live in Florida. This is a unique State. Did you know that nine of the 9/11 hijackers got their U.S. ID's in Florida? Yep! Anybody can drive here. Old ladies who have lost a leg and their hearing can get a mail-in driver's license. Saudis intending to kill Americans can get a driver's license and a pilot's license, no questions asked.

Unless you live in a cave, you know by now that we are the home of the "Stand Your Ground" law. We can carry concealed weapons in public places. We are the Dodge City of the 21st century. We are a gun toting, God fearing, shoot to kill state. Author Dave Barry says it's the heat.

Every year the clowns we elect go to the State Capitol in Tallahassee and try to see if they can pass more stupid laws than the year before. It befits us to have a governor whose company (which fired him) cheated the government out of over half a billion dollars in Medicare fees. And just when you thought that Flori-DUH had scraped the bottom of the legislative pot, they one upped themselves this year.

Our distinguished elected officials (oh yeah- it's our fault) passed a law that allows students to give "inspirational messages" at school assemblies with School Board permission. It is as close to prayer in schools as they dared to go. So, sometime in the next school year, imagine eighth graders gathered in assembly to honor this year's football team. The Captain gets up and gives a speech wherein he credits Jesus for their two and seven season. He holds up the bible and states that this is "his playbook" and Jesus is his coach. Inspirational, right?



work at it. For more than 75 years a part of that effort has been recorded in the pages of *The National Jewish Post & Opinion*. I am grateful to Gabriel Cohen and [and his daughter] Jennie Cohen for their effort to keep the peoplehood informed and for making a difference in the world in which we live.

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So, what's a nice Jewish kid to do? He cannot walk out of the assembly. First of all it would be embarrassing. So, does he just grin and bear it? Or – does he ask permission to speak at the next assembly?

There, he could practice his *Haftorah* if he has not yet been *Bar Mitzvah*; or give it again without the pressure of parents, grandparents and rabbi. Or, he could dig into the *Seder* service and come up with "The Song of Solomon" as one letter writer to our local paper suggested. You think he would get past the first verse?

And what about the Muslim kid? Do you think he would dare to suggest that he read directly from the Koran? Especially the part about infidels. I make light, but this is serious stuff. It is wonderful to be a Jew in America. But at the same time, it is tough. We are indeed a Christian country. And while the overt signs of anti-Semitism have faded, we must continue to be diligent.

Not that we should worry about a Father Coughlin taking to the radio waves as he did in the 1930s to blame the Jews for everything from plague and drought to the great depression. We seem to be beyond that. However, it doesn't take a deep dig to see the effect of a black president on our society.

I saw a commercial the other night from Carl Rove's Super-PAC. It was in theory, an attack on the Obama administration's waste of money. Its theme was a grant to study the effect of cocaine on monkeys. There was about ten seconds of dialogue and then twenty seconds of various monkey faces. The racism was barely hidden.

I have remarked many times that we are so lucky that none of the major players in the banking disaster of the past eight years are Jewish. At last! A financial crisis that it is hard to pin on the Jews! We are not a post-racial society. Not yet. Not as long as the people are looking for someone to blame for their misfortune.

But, back to Florida. Remember, we are the state where a preacher who has less than 50 people in his congregation was able to create an international incident by burning a Koran in front of his little country church. Today, with no Father Coughlin, with a Klan that is miniscule in its membership, there is the internet and YouTube and the State of Florida.

So if you live here, prepare your kid. Have him ready for the next school assembly. That might be the one. And if you live elsewhere, well, pray global warming does not reach the level that produces five months of 90° weather and high humidity. It has a strange effect. Especially on elected officials. We know.

I guess the point is, after all, that Jews are supposed to be *Tikkun Olam*. That our mission here on earth is to heal the world.

(see Shipley, page 19)



Spoonful of Humor

By TED ROBERTS

Love your fellow creature

Love, a word that applies to friends, relatives, mates, and puppies, but has no meaning conjoined with the Master of the universe. It's as futile as two different species in different centuries in different languages simultaneously trying to talk. Say a stegosaurus and your kitten. We cannot love God – we are not familiar with his characteristics, his shape, his temperament, and even despite the prattling of our sages, his ultimate desires.

We know him not – we do not know his purposes in placing us on planet earth. We know not his desires as he tells us over and over in his book. You may not view me and live, he says to his favorite, Moses. Yes, since we are made in his image we metaphorically imagine his appearance. But when it comes to his internal character, he is as dark as his own thunder clouds – as translucent as his sunlight. How can the pebbles know why the stream eternally smoothes the pebbles? Must we know? Is not the whisper sufficient? Even the sharpest disbeliever knows that somewhere there's a power that here or there, now or then, rewards good and punishes evil. How could we live without it?

In our primitive days, we thought he liked the savory smell of roasting meat. We established altars on high places to please him. Thankfully, that perception didn't last long.

The scent of barbecue didn't last long. But we still believed he liked worldly goods – like us – wheat, wine, dough. The destruction of the second temple ended that juvenilia. We Jews still sought his favor; what did he want? What was the cost of averting personal disaster, or typhoons, or earthquakes, or floods, or a legion of mortal killers like malaria, cancer, plagues? There must be a price we could pay to avert those disasters. After many centuries we decided – because we crave it in return – love. If only we knew how. Of course, there's prayer. But that's not giving, that's begging. And there's praise, but does the brook praise the ocean?

Love, we feel, is as good an answer as any to a power totally indefinable, but driven we feel, by an engine of morality, goodness, kindness, and empathy to the creatures both human and animal that we

LEAPMAN

(continued from 7)

conscious due to emphysema and cancer. I picture her festively feuding at holiday gatherings, heartily embattled with relatives she did not cherish, tossing barbs and acerbic renderings with an ease and accuracy to make envious the most skilled martial artist. Harry Truman and George Patton had the same command of language!

Is my view of Heaven much the same as my view of an address or location, the same as the grocery store on old German Hill? Is my need to literally place her in Eternity ultimately selfish, do I need some fixture from my innocence forever abiding over my adulthood, inspiring and amusing me as my years pass and my concerns parallel hers in so many ways? Yet, if I render the afterlife a mere concept, a fiction designed to soothe sorrows



call his children. I think you could say with some optimism that this might be the definition of love. Certainly, Hillel (“That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellows”) and his Christian fellow seekers would agree. And it has all been synthesized by a 19th Century poet who never attended a *yeshiva*. He wrote a poem to express and maybe answer, to his own satisfaction, the mystery:

Abou ben Adam

Abou ben Adam (may his tribe increase!) awoke one night from a deep dream of peace, and saw, within the moonlight of his room, making it rich, and like a lily in bloom, an angel, writing in a book of gold.

Exceeding peace had made Ben Adam bold. And to the Presence in the room he said: “What writest thou?”

The vision raised its head, and, with a look made of all sweet accord, answered, “The names of those who love the Lord.”

“And is mine one?” said Abou. “Nay, not so,” replied the angel. Abou spoke more low, but cheerily still, and said, “I pray thee, then, write me as one who loves his fellow men.”

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night it came again, with a great awakening light, and showed the names whom love of God had blest.

And lo, Ben Adam's name led all the rest.

~ Leigh Hunt

That's as good as it gets. Sounds a little bit like our Jewish anthem *Tikkun Olam*. In terms of incentives, motivations, the very essence of the divine personality we know nothing. Your rabbi knows a great deal of Judaica, but is no closer to the supreme “question” than you. Let us not

(see Roberts, page 19)

aroused by anniversaries and at events she could not attend, am I turning out the lights on a building or edifice still occupied? What if there is a World Beyond but I have not paid my admissions fee, or is it a wonderful magazine I do not subscribe to?

So, here is what I conjecture. Judaism teaches me the focus is on this life. I agree. That does not mean there exists nothing beyond, but this life is our eminent domain. Still, I am a man of strong feelings and faith. Rationalism is not about denying the heart – instead, rationalism sculpts the spirit's certainties. Just as no objective evidence reveals a World Beyond, there is none to deny it. Therefore, I believe the possibility offers promise. Having comforted many mourners, I learn that those who might amputate an afterlife from their worldview can suffer intensely for this conviction. Why? Because, this certainty dismisses any hope of reconciliation or reunion. Yet, if it all concludes here, character is still worthy of cultivation and if this is not a purpose of Torah in our lives, what else would matter as much?

I find an enchanting comfort in the very idea of an afterlife, a potential that all is not yet told, that my limited forgiveness, my constrained vision, my still developing vision and virtues will yet resolve and rectify passed over predicaments. There is so much of the mind, let alone the cosmos, we cannot know and clearly do not discern at present. Therefore, in some manner I need not fully access or assess, my heart tells me the sages were right. I can accept the nebulous nature of what transcends life. I need not know exactly where a loved one has gone to know the power of that Love; I needn't have an address to have a return address.

I will anchor my life to what this world has to teach me, and place my trust in the merit of those who have gone before. What awaits is worthy of my fascination, just as these years demand my attention and my action. It is not an “either-or” but a “both-and.” To be at work in this world does not obscure sensitivity to what is not only beyond my years, but as well, beyond my perceptions. I need not know nor comprehend Creation to be of service and contribute to life's betterment and blessing. For this, if nothing else, we render our efforts and hone our intentions. “To Life” need not be a call heard only in this realm, but one we proclaim and champion all our days!

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Holocaust Educator

By MIRIAM ZIMMERMAN

From Germany and Back Again in Three Generations: A Family Reclaims Its Heritage

The following article is based on a presentation made to the Gerlind Institute (GerlindInstitute.org) on March 25, 2012. The Gerlind Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of German language and culture in the San Francisco Bay Area. My younger daughter, Leah Sharp, and I were honored to be invited to speak in the Institute's ongoing oral history series, Mündliche Geschichtsreihe.

Miriam: I would like to thank Marion Gerlind, JB, and the Gerlind Institute community for inviting my daughter and me to speak with you today about our family history. We have some jokes scattered throughout—our family collectively and individually has a great sense of humor. Feel free to laugh. Humor, after all, is a survival mechanism.

Leah: Five years ago, when I first moved to Germany, the conversation was always the same: "What's your name?" and "Why are you here?" asked incredulously. I would give them three reasons: (1) (jokingly) Bush was reelected; (2) we love beer; (3) and Ian, my boyfriend at the time, and I had both spent all our lives in California and wanted to go somewhere else. At first it was the East Coast; Europe was a pipe dream. We'd been to Europe before, and loved it. As a pair of American scientists, our natural picks were England, because of the language; and Germany, because it's a scientific powerhouse, with a lot of diverse options.

Ian was looking for a post-doc in materials science; I was looking for a Ph.D. program in physics. His Ph.D. advisor had connections in Germany. So we spent two weeks traveling around Germany, meeting various groups. We narrowed our focus to Berlin and Munich, where the options for me were greater. We both ended up with positions at the *Technische Universität München*, and ate lunch together daily. My boyfriend is now my husband. (Side note: The irony

of a Jew escaping a political situation to go to Germany was not lost on me.)

Miriam: My father, Dr. Werner Loewenstein, of blessed memory, was born in 1909 in Bür, near Essen; now known as Gelsenkirchen-Bür. His parents were merchants, owned a dry goods store on the main pedestrian shopping street. The family lived above the store.

In his *Gymnasium* (high school), Dad was voted valedictorian of his graduating class by the other students, as was the custom at the time. Since he was the only Jew in the class, he would always point out, "I did not win by the Jewish vote." He attended medical school at Universities of Freiburg, Munich, and Berlin, of which he was very proud. In Germany, students traveled to where the best professors were on any given subject.

One weekend, I visited my parents from university. We went out and were introduced to someone new who asked where he went to medical school. Dad replied, "The University of Berlin."

After they left, I asked, "What happened to Freiburg and Munich?"

He replied, "I finally figured out that when you tell people in this country that you attended three medical schools, they assume you flunked out."

At that time, Germany was the go-to place for medical research and medical education. Because of the Jewish quota for medical school admission, it was extremely difficult for Jews to get in. His medical diploma became his ticket out of Nazi Germany in 1937.

The Jewish authorities helping German-Jewish refugees at the time told him, "There are enough Jewish doctors here," and that he should not try to find an internship so that he could become a licensed physician. He was supposed to be contented with the job they got him as an orderly in a nursing home.

Armed with a letter of recommendation from the Mother Superior of a Catholic hospital in Germany where he had completed an externship and with very little English speaking skills, he found a Catholic hospital, St. Elizabeth's in Lafayette, Ind., that needed an intern. Coincidentally, "St. E's" was run by the same order of German Franciscan nuns.

After his internship, he had no place to go. The Sisters recommended another of their hospitals, St. Anthony's, in Terre Haute, Ind., where he met and married my mother. As a child, I used to love to go with Dad to St. Anthony's; he would find a friendly nun to babysit me while he made rounds.



Dr. Werner Loewenstein

Many of my Jewish friends wondered how I could teach at the Jesuit-run University of San Francisco beginning in 1985. It seemed to me to be no big deal to teach in a Catholic institution; they held comforting memories from my childhood. Besides, I never feel more Jewish than when seated on the *bema* (pulpit) of USF's gorgeous St. Ignatius Church, surrounded by Catholic imagery, which I did for nine years at USF's graduations. At this writing, I have been a "Catholic educator" for 27 years; the last 18 of which were at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, Calif.; a wonderful place to teach.

Language distinctions

Leah: When I first moved to Germany, people would inquire about my last name, my German roots. The first time I had this conversation was during my house warming party, with a colleague, Michael. I would explain that in fact, my most direct line to Germany was not through my father's Zimmerman side, but rather through my mother, Loewenstein. Back home, a part of a similar conversation, I would elaborate that my grandfather was in the last class that allowed Jews to graduate from medical school, but he was not allowed to attend his own graduation.

A sympathetic professor took my *Opa's* (grandfather's) diploma from the table at the graduation ceremony and later hand-delivered it to him. This was actually very important, because it was the only record of his accomplishment. When talking to Michael and others, however, I would simply say my grandfather escaped during World War II. I consciously chose the term "World War II," because I thought it was somehow less offensive and harsh than "the Holocaust," and perhaps more appropriate in a social setting.

Miriam: I also had a distinction growing up: Nazi vs. German. Both my parents always made the distinction that it was Nazis, not Germans, who were the perpetrators. Yet, all things German, including language, were *verboten* (forbidden) in our home. One of the few times I remember my dad angry was when his mother, my *Oma* (grandmother), spoke German to my brother as a newborn. He did not want us children to speak German. Unfortunately, my *Oma* never did learn English.

In 1968, when my husband and I used our wedding money to take a two-month honeymoon – camping in Europe, I hesitatingly told Dad that we planned to buy a Volkswagen camper in Wiesbaden. He told me VW was OK (but not Mercedes). He explained that after the war, VW made a favorable trade agreement with the new State of Israel, making the VW bug affordable to the average Israeli.



Leah Sharp

I felt a great deal of relief, not violating my dad's need to sever connection with Germany. An unexpected outcome from our honeymoon, a third of which was spent driving around Germany: I learned to like beer.

Stereotyping Germany

Leah: Before moving there, my stereotypes of Germany included the accents, efficiency, *Lederhosen*, and *Steinkrüge* (large mugs designed for beer), symbols of Bavaria. Joke: 90% of the German people wonder why people have such stereotypes. The other 10% are Bavarian.

I came to love the German lifestyle: people actually use weekends, holidays, and vacations for themselves and their families. There is not the 24/7 work compulsion. In addition, there are no frivolous lawsuits because people take personal responsibility for their actions. Everyone has health insurance so there is no need to sue; and, we did not need a car!

Miriam: In the early 1980's, Dad wanted to show my sister and me our roots in Germany. He wanted to pray over the graves of his grandparents. I, too, had stereotypes – negative ones. I did not expect a life-changing transformation as a result of being in Germany with my father. We drove around the countryside, visiting the small towns of his grandparents.

He spoke of the huge Jewish cemetery in Brilon, where his father's father lay buried. Although a tiny hamlet of a town, Brilon's Jewish community dated back to the Middle Ages. After some effort, we found the fenced remnants of this cemetery. The gate was locked.

Just then, an old lady walked by. She and my dad played "Jewish geography" in German. He asked about a family, and she would relate what happened. Like small town residents everywhere, she knew everyone and everything. Unfortunately, more often than not, she would shake her head, and I knew they had not survived.

She explained why the cemetery was so small. The Nazis had plowed over the graves and used the tombstones for construction. After the war, the townspeople created a little park as a memorial at the site. But they were able to find only about a dozen tombstones. We could obtain the key from the *Bürgermeister* (mayor).

After promising to return the key that same day, we came again to the former cemetery, without hope of finding the graves we sought. There were so few tombstones, some broken and falling over, that it did not take long to read all of the names. We were stunned to find that two of them were from the graves of our ancestors: Felix and Johanna Loewenstein.

Although these tombstones no longer marked their graves, that they survived,

humbled me. Further, what was the probability that a great-granddaughter would return to this Jewish cemetery, isolated in hills of incredible pastoral beauty? I felt called there, as a witness somehow, to the decimation of my family, of my people. My cousin Mark had just named his first-born child, Johanna. While Dad *davened Kaddish* (*prayed the Jewish mourner's prayer*), I experienced a continuity that overwhelmed and transformed me.

As we left the enclosure, I became aware of the nearby church with a playground next to it. We returned the key to the *Bürgermeister*. Dad asked for the name of a stonemason because he wanted the Loewenstein stones set upright and the broken one patched. The *Bürgermeister* informed us that it was contrary to Jewish law, that the stones should remain undisturbed. It was a greater desecration to restore the stones. The irony of a German bureaucrat explaining the finer points of Jewish law to Jews in Germany did not escape me. My dad persisted, and finally, he gave us the name of a stone mason.

Leah: My mother wrote the following poem, *Die Entweihung* (*The Desecration*), dictionary in hand, about this experience, after studying German for two years at our local community college:

*Nur einmal im Monat wird
das Gras geschnitten
auf dem Judenfriedhof zu Brilon.
Warum nur fünfzehn Gräber?
Es sollte doch ein grosser Todesacker sein,
denn so Viele wurden hier begraben
auf dem Judenfriedhof zu Brilon.*

The weeds are cut but once a month
In the Jewish cemetery of Brilon.
Why are there only 15 graves?
There should have been
a larger cemetery
Since so many were buried here,
In the Jewish cemetery of Brilon.

*Zu manchen Stunden fällt
jetzt ein Kirchenschatten
über den Spielplatz mit
den Kinderschaukeln.
Die Gräber sind umgepflügt—
eine "Heldentat" der Nazis von einst
auf dem Judenfriedhof zu Brilon.*

For many hours now, a church's
shadow falls
On the playground with swings.
The graves were plowed under
A "heroic deed" by the Nazis
at that time

At the Jewish cemetery of Brilon.
*Nicht nur das Leben wollten sie vernichten,
auch den Tod wollten sie heimatlos sehen.
Die Häute jüdischer Menschen
wurden Lampenschirme
und die Grabsteine zu Schrott zerrieben
auf dem Judenfriedhof zu Brilon.*

They wanted not only to kill the living
They also wanted to make
the dead homeless.
The skin of the Jewish people
became lampshades,
And their tombstones into
building blocks

From the Jewish cemetery of Brilon.
*Wissen die fröhlichen Kinder
auf den Schaukeln das?
Man müsste sie ihnen doch erzählen,
diese Entweihung der frommen Ruhestätte.
Aber es sollte nur jemand sein,
der über den fünfzehn Gräbern weint
auf dem Judenfriedhof zu Brilon.*

Do the frolicking children
on the swings know?
Someone must tell them the story,
About the desecration of this
holy resting place.
However, it should only be told
by someone
Who, over 15 graves weeps,
In the Jewish cemetery of Brilon.

German Language

Miriam: Embarrassed, Dad got lost in his own hometown of Bür; not surprising since much of the town had been razed and rebuilt after the war. Fortunately, he was not shy about asking people for directions. People complimented my dad on his German: "You speak such good German (*Hochdeutsch*)."
No one ever complimented me on my English like that. Someday, I hope I will be good enough *auf Deutsch* (in German), that I, too, receive such compliments.

Leah: I always struggled with the language. People would sigh sympathetically and say, "*Deutsch ist eine schwierige Sprache* (German is a difficult language)." I would nod in agreement, willingly taking their acceptance of my sub-par language skills. But to be honest, German was a lot easier to learn than French! My friend Yara, born in Korea but adopted by a German couple at birth, speaks native German. She grew up just outside of Munich and is probably the most Bavarian German I know, despite her Asian features. She works at a restaurant and would tell stories about older Germans who complimented her for speaking German so well. She would respond with a smile, "*Danke, Ihnen auch!* (Thanks; you, too)."

German Citizenship

Miriam: Some survivors I know look at me like I am a traitor when they learn I have reclaimed my German citizenship. I cannot really answer their questions as to why. Instead, I tell the story of Dad's obtaining his German license to practice medicine. In the 1970s, in the *Aufbau* (monthly German-Jewish newspaper),
(see Zimmerman, page 12)

ZIMMERMAN

(continued from 11)

the German consulate posted a notice than anyone deprived of a professional license during the Nazi era could, upon submission of proper documentation, receive their license.

When people asked him why he would bother, Dad responded, "I worked hard for it and earned it; it was denied me. By rights, it's mine." Similarly, I was denied my German citizenship. It was taken from me before I could decide if I wanted it. I do want it. It's mine by rights.

My sister got sick during our pilgrimage. Dad went to the *Apotheke* (apothecary) and was surprised to discover the medicine he wanted required a prescription. He took out his wallet where he carried his German medical license and obtained the medication. Thus, Dad actually used his medical license in Germany one time.

Leah: Once I got my German citizenship, I didn't bother to renew my student visa. About a month after it expired, I received a letter from the *Polizei* (police). It was too complicated for me to explain the situation on the phone, but in any case, I could not simply mail a copy of my passport. I had to go in person, so I took the earliest appointment possible.

I was very nervous upon arrival at the police station, and no one was particularly reassuring. I met with the police commissioner, who took me up to her office. In the elevator on the way up, I took my German passport out of my backpack. As soon as she saw it, she became friendly and chatty, and I knew everything was going to be okay.

I mentioned that I hadn't yet changed the last name on my German passport, but my new married name is Sharp. She said: "Oh, you married the man you had been living with." Apparently, they keep very good track of people living in Germany. [Miriam interjects: Weren't they spying on you?] After leaving her office, it occurred to me what day it was: that night was the first night of Passover. The irony of a Jew having to show her papers in Germany on Passover did not escape me.

Miriam: We finally made it to Dad's hometown of Bür and his family home/store on the pedestrian shopping street. He would not go in! No amount of persuasion would convince him. "They did not buy the store from us," was his simple explanation. Not until I became a Holocaust educator did I understand about the *Aryanization* of Jewish-owned stores and businesses. Nor would he let either my sister or me go in without him. We stood across the street gazing at what had become, as I recall, a shoe store.

For years, I felt guilty that I had not been successful cajoling him into entering the store until a chance acquaintance at a Holocaust conference at Yad Vashem explained it to me. I remember her words vividly: "It would have changed everything for him. He needed to remember his home, the store, the way it had been. He could not go in. It was better for him this way." Her words rang true. After years of regret, I finally stopped beating up on myself for my failure in getting him to go into his former home, which, I thought, was one of the purposes of the trip.

We walked to the end of the pedestrian street and found his Gymnasium. It was June. The graduating seniors played a prank: hundred's of empty glass soda bottles stood upright on the sidewalk to the front door. Everyone had to go around to the back entrance.

But Dad refused to talk to anyone. We then drove to a park where he used to play. It was next to a lovely lake with rental paddleboats. On the pier, a lamp post was knocked over. Dad exclaimed, "How about that – they have vandals in Germany."

"But, Dad, how do you know it was not the wind that knocked it over?"

He looked at me, incredulous, and replied, "In Germany, the wind does not knock over the lamp posts." I made the connection from his high school which was still in use to my high school in Terre Haute that was just condemned. The third floor, deemed unsafe, necessitated that the building be razed. In Germany, they build things to last.

Holocaust

Miriam: It was the summer that the U.S. TV series *The Holocaust* broadcast in Germany for the first time. A whole generation, ignorant of the Nazi era, wanted to know what had happened. The nightly news portrayed sit-in's, demonstrations, protests – shades of the 60's.

The Education Minister promised to rectify the glaring omission of Holocaust education in Germany. He made me wonder, who was left to teach this sensitive material? Sons and daughters of former SS? I vowed that someday, I would teach about the Holocaust in Germany, to Germans, in German.

Leah: And so the German's of my generation learned. They learned about WWII and the Holocaust in school. Sadly, they had it drilled in their heads, year after year: "We did this. Germans are bad. We are bad people."

Miriam: Teaching this material to non-Jews in a Catholic setting is a delicate endeavor. Early in my tenure at Notre Dame de Namur University where I introduced the Holocaust course, two young women confronted me in my office.

"You're telling us that to be good Catholics, we have to hate Jews. That's not the way we were raised...."

I learned the hard way that one cannot teach about the history of official Church-sanctioned anti-Judaism without including the reforms of Vatican II. I felt good that these two young women, whom I had dubbed my "Irish Mafia," felt comfortable enough to challenge me, enabling me to learn a very important lesson.

Liking Germany

Leah: But I really enjoyed my time in Munich. Sometimes, after a long week, Ian and I reminisce about our good old days in Munich and talk about moving back. While there, I learned that before 1996, you would never see the German flag except in front of municipal buildings. My generation of Germans were never very proud to be German. It was the 1996 World Cup, held in Germany, the summer before we moved there, that Germany underwent a metamorphosis. Suddenly, it was okay to hoist the German flag, to root for your team.

Miriam: One night, toward the end of our trip to Munich, Brilon, Bür, and other small towns of my ancestors, I told my dad I had a problem. "I like Germany," I said, haltingly, fearful that I might make him angry. I explained that I wasn't afraid to walk with my sister alone at night in the big cities, bathrooms on the *Autobahn* (highways) were clean, fruit was delicious. The people were welcoming, warm, especially when they found out who we were and why we had come to Germany.

His response surprised me. "I liked it too, growing up. You did not experience what I experienced." Our lengthy conversation that night with all kinds of generational nuances gave me permission to like Germany. I feel that by making the distinction between his generation and mine, he freed me from the hatred of his generation, and thus has allowed me to embrace my German heritage, as well as my German-Jewish heritage.

Leah: My Ph.D. program took a trip to Vienna. I went to a bar with a friend from my program and a couple of guys I didn't know as well, who had grown up in Vienna, and a few of their friends. I began chatting with one of the locals about Germany, Austria, and the U.S., and about how I was an anomaly for moving to Germany for my studies.

Almost out of nowhere, he declared, "You know what I hate? The guilt!" There it was, that word that my mother practically banned from our house in a vain attempt to ward off our inherited Jewish guilt, survivor's guilt.

He said, "I'm tired of being blamed. I'm tired of being blamed for something

my grandparents did, for something that happened even before my parents were born." I hugged him and said, "As the granddaughter of a German Jew, a survivor who escaped Germany and fled to the U.S., I tell you, you the grandson of the perpetrators, that I don't blame you." I didn't forgive him, because there was nothing to forgive.

Miriam: Forgiveness in Jewish tradition can only be bestowed by the wronged party. The third generation after the Holocaust has come of age and has to forge a new relationship, based not only on history but also looking forward. Israelis today look on Germany as its second greatest friend, just after the United States. New generations of Germans and Jews must remember, commemorate, and build new relationships based on mutual trust and respect, without guilt, retaliation or prejudice. The shared history of Germans and Jews should motivate us to work together to ensure that "Never again!" remains not just a slogan, but a reality for all peoples. The memory of the victims deserves no less.

Dr. Miriam L. Zimmerman became a German citizen in 2004, a positive heritage that motivates her to reach out to Germans. Her father, Dr. Werner Loewenstein, immigrated to the United States in 1937 and, as a U.S. soldier, returned to Germany and became a liberator of Buchenwald. While growing up, all things German were forbidden in the Loewenstein family home, including the beautiful German language. One of Miriam's dreams is to tell her family story to German schoolchildren in Germany, in German.

Leah Z. Sharp teaches physics at CSU East Bay. Prior to her return to the Bay Area last summer, she was a graduate student at the Technische Universität München for five years, and speaks German. During that time, and with encouragement from Miriam, her mother, she also became a German citizen. She experienced a Munich and a Germany perhaps unrecognizable to her grandfather, who studied medicine at the University of Munich in the early 1930's.

Spanning three generations of German-Jewish-Americans, the story of Dr. Werner Loewenstein's impact on the lives of his descendants is not just another Holocaust story of victimization and redemption. Although Dr. Loewenstein experienced the worst that humanity could offer, his legacy is transformed by Miriam's story of healing and forgiveness and by Leah's experience living in modern Germany that provides hope for future generations.

This presentation was well received. Audience members said it was very uplifting. Most audience members were non-Jewish Germans; one survivor also attended. Zimmerman and her daughter Leah hope to be invited to speak at other venues. ✪



Yom HaShoah

BY RABBI DR. BERNHARD ROSENBERG

This is your heritage

The following is an excerpt from my "Holocaust Siddur," a 140-page prayer book dedicated to Holocaust Remembrance Day:

"Dear children, this is your heritage as we know it: Your grandparents, Rachel and Jacob Rosenberg of blessed memory, did not speak much about their families who were all murdered, and I did not ask questions since I knew it would hurt them terribly. They died before the *Shoah* programs of getting parents to give witness were started by (Steven) Spielberg. Out of both their large families, few survived, some were able to pay a farmer to hide them during the war.

"Jacob Rosenberg, your grandfather, was born in Wodzislaw, Poland. His parents, Berish and Feigel Miriam, lived with their children on a street next to several others of their relatives. At least five houses were owned by their extended family.

"We visited the town several years ago and found Jacob's original birth certificate in the town hall records. Maria and her family hired someone years ago who found the original deed to the land our family owned, which is now the parking lot of the town hall.

"Jacob had four brothers and sisters, all married with children before the war. Jacob also was married before the war and had two children who were murdered. We do not know their names, but he worked in the town of Bezdin in the meat business.

"Jacob was in several concentration camps, escaped, was a partisan fighter, was shot and captured again, and ended up in Auschwitz from which he was liberated. He had a tattooed number on his arm, but we cannot find the records at this point. We did find the old large *shul* in the town, which is falling down and dangerous to enter. There was a plaque on the outside wall indicating the Jews who were rounded up and taken to Treblinka.

"Rachel Rosenberg's maiden name was Frankel. Her parents were Jacob and Bluma. She had four brothers and sisters, who also were married with children. Her family was well off and owned a leather factory in Cracow. They lived in Slomnicki, Poland, near Cracow.

"We could not find any record of her family's existence when we went to the

town to visit several years ago. When our guide asked someone where the shul in the town was, they replied there wasn't any, but as we drove out of the town, I noticed a large building that also was crumbling. It had a Jewish star and turned out to be the shul. When we went to the town hall, there were no records of any Jews ever having lived there.

"Bubby was sent to the labor camp Plassau/Krakowa. It was the worst work camp. They made ammunition that turned your skin yellow and wrinkled. It made her sick. She was liberated from Skazyskokarmiene Werk C. They never thought she would be able to have any children after that.

"There were no survivors of any of their immediate families.

"After the war, both of your grandparents were sent to the Regensberg detention camp in Germany. They met there. Relatives of both apparently had known each other. They married, and I was born in Regensberg.

"Jacob worked for a couple of years. They were sent by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society to Memphis, Tenn., where they lived for two years. Jacob worked in the meat business there. After two years, they traced his half sister, Regina, to Kansas City, Mo. That is how your father and grandparents ended up in Kansas City.

"Though they both grew up very religious, your grandparents became less so after the war due to economics and the terrible memories that they had. At 12, I decided to become a rabbi because of the Holocaust to make sure that "never again" would this happen. My parents became kosher and religious again."

Chair of the New York Board of Rabbis Holocaust Education Committee, Rabbi Dr. Bernhard Rosenberg has produced a PDF Holocaust *Siddur* and *Haggadah* that can be downloaded for free. The 140-page *Siddur* is available at <http://www.jewishfreeware.org/downloads/YOM%20HASH OAH/>. The 66-page *Haggadah* at: <http://holocausthaggadah.com>.

A prayer book, the *Siddur*, includes a full traditional evening service for *Yom Hashoah*, Holocaust Memorial Day, in Hebrew, with English translations. Also included is an appendix with four suggested sample interfaith community programs and a large selection of readings, poetry, essays and other materials to help synagogues and community groups create their own programs. In Hebrew and English, the *Haggadah* features essays, songs, and numerous explanations for a Holocaust Seder.

Rabbi Dr. Bernhard H. Rosenberg is Spiritual Leader of Congregation Beth-El in Edison, N.J., www.bethelison.org. His website is: <http://bernhardrosenberg.com>. ✪



Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

A Dangerous Method

A memorable and haunting film, *A Dangerous Method*, is the account of eminent psychotherapist Carl Jung's encounter with a troubled but brilliant woman, Sabina Spielrein (Keira Knightley), and their association with Sigmund Freud (Viggo Mortensen). It is a consummate period piece, marvelously mounted and acted, directed by David Cronenberg and written by Christopher Hampton and John Kerr.

The film reminds us that Freud had regarded Jung (Michael Fassbender) as his heir apparent in the psychoanalytical movement, but that Jung's differences with Freud over theory and method, together with his repeated indiscretions with Spielrein, who was his patient, along with Freud's own ambivalences, resulted in a complete break between Freud and Jung.

The film is significant, not only in its superlative acting and direction and fine writing, but in its documentary-like chronicling of a pivotal chapter in the history of psychoanalysis. Particularly significant in this film's depiction of Freud's (and everybody else's) ambivalences is the point made repeatedly that Spielrein was Jewish.

The implication from the beginning is that Spielrein, at first called "Russian" but soon labeled "Russian Jew," had been driven to psychotic fits by the emotional and physical abuse by her father who is, of course, Jewish, a successful "import-export man" in Russia. We soon learn that after beating his children, Papa Spielrein would ask them to kiss his hand. Carl Jung gets the Spielrein woman to admit that she becomes "excited" (that is, sexually aroused) when beaten.

Another strange Jew introduced here is Otto Gross (Vincent Cassel), a sex-addicted psychoanalyst who eloquently hijacks the language and, indeed, the methods of Freud's movement to advocate debauchery and profligacy. Freud is very protective of Gross (because of the Jewish connection?) and wants Jung to watch over him a while (to provide an "outside" perspective?).

Some dysfunctional Jews do not a movie (or a movement) make. We are reminded that Freud was concerned that the "enemies of psychoanalysis" were finding



L-R: Keira Knightley, as Sabina Spielrein, and Michael Fassbender, as Carl Jung, in *A Dangerous Method*.

"ammunition" in its "circle" being "all Jews." That was why Freud was hoping for a Gentile like Jung to take over the movement. Yet, this film tells us, Freud and Jung and Spielrein had to contend with Jewish/Gentile issues every step of the way, and even sought out such issues.

Despite Spielrein's deep-seated mental problems, and despite his having been her therapist, Jung enters into an affair with her. For her part, Spielrein seduces Jung, knowing that he is married and a new father. Troubled to the point of psychosis, brilliant to the point of genius, and psychologically speaking, as insightful and sensitive as she is damaged, Spielrein pursues Jung after assisting him in a psychological experiment in which his wife participated, having witnessed her insecurity in the marriage and hopes that giving Jung a son would solve their marital problems. Indeed, most scenes with Spielrein make us feel sorry for Jung's wife (Sarah Gadon), who is terribly disrespected by all.

There is an element of meanness, even cruelty, to Spielrein's behavior. After the affair begins, she stalks Jung, enlists his participation in her masochistic sexual fantasies (in effect getting him to play out the symptoms while he is supposed to be working on the cure) and then asking him to confess the affair in detail to Freud in order that the master psychoanalyst might work with her, once she decides to pursue his tutelage. It seems that she wants Jung to be "honorable" and to discuss the affair openly with Freud so that she does not fail to catch Freud's attention.

True, Jung is no angel. The suggestion is made that he has had affairs before Spielrein. We learn that he definitely had a long affair afterwards, with a woman whom he describes as "half Jewish." Had he been pursuing Jewish women? At first

he comes across as saintly and vulnerable, as an idealistic guy with sexual urges, not to mention surges of risk-taking that startle him.

This film suggests that Jung's desire to please Freud and to take over the "business" from him provides much of whatever moral and psychological bedrock Jung possesses. Yet in the last analysis Jung comes across as rather naïve and helpless in all his machinations, and as unraveling when Freud finally cuts him off. Given his irresponsible, caddish and cruel behavior, to wife and to mistress alike, Jung's stated philosophy in the film. "Nothing happens by coincidence" (his "synchronicity" theory, though this word is not used), comes across as altogether self-indulgent, a justification of bad behavior by convenience and opportunity.

And as for Freud, for all his sex-entered theories, he emerges as a very conservative family man, a father of six, and as a rather unforgiving patriarch within the psychoanalytic movement who brooks no dissension, or is, at least, rather arbitrary in the dissension that he chooses to tolerate. Clearly, Freud does not like it when Jung challenges the patriarch's view of monotheism as projection of patricidal tendencies. Freud sees a threat to the "firm ground of sexual theory" in Jung's "sliding into mysticism" through his interest in telepathy and parapsychology and, worse of all (to Freud), the value of religious motifs. Withal, Freud comes across as a rather heartless and uncompassionate father figure in the way he cuts Jung off.

Spielrein is ambivalent about her Jewishness, to say the least. She derives inspiration, maybe even an element of emotional equilibrium from the operas of

(see Gertel, page 19)



Book Review

REVIEWED BY PROF. ARNOLD AGES

Only Europeans to love Germany were German Jews

The Pity of it All: A History of Jews in Germany 1743–1933. By Amos Elon. Henry Holt & Company (New York, 2002).

It is the tenth anniversary of Amos Elon's magisterial book and the subtitle of this fine work tells it all: "A History of the Jews in Germany," that is to say, that the Jews in that country were considered by Germans to be a *corpus separatum*, a distinct and separate entity. The thesis of this book is that the Jews in Germany would have loved to have been considered an integral part of Germanentum, Germanness, because they loved the country and its ethos, however difficult such an idea seems, when it is filtered through the prism of the Holocaust.

It is all the more ironic when, as Elon astutely observes, Europeans in general in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries detested Germany and the Germans, while the only Europeans who dissented on this issue were the Jews of Germany – who loved the country! The irony is multiplied when one considers that from the time Moses Mendelssohn first entered the gate of Berlin in 1743 until the crack of doom sounded over German Jewry in 1933, the plight of German Jews was with, rare exception, perilous.

Despite a potent literature of anti-Semitism and a subterranean network of the same syndrome which coursed through Germany for centuries, German-Jewish thinkers, as Elon documents with bewildering exactitude, competed with each other to see in German tradition and thought, parallels with the Jewish ethos and its morality. So enraptured were some of these thinkers with German culture, which one of them, the great neo-Kantian philosopher Hermann Cohen, declared that the limited human rights which Jews possessed in Germany were far superior to the wider liberties that Jews had in

western democratic societies.

Cohen and his Jewish contemporaries were able to make these extravagant claims because despite the regnant anti-Semitic which polluted German air, there were moments in the experience of German Jews when it seemed that things were improving as Jews, benefitting from the Napoleonic victories in the early part of the 19th century, were accorded freedoms denied to them in the ghettos. With those limited "civil rights" – which were not available in all of the 36 principalities, mini-states and jurisdictions which made up greater Germany, many Jews sloughed off the incivilities to which they had been subjected and gained prosperity and a niche in the business sector which was quite remarkable.

In examining the conversion registries, (the agency which they believed would permit them to assimilate into German society) Elon notes that the event split families, touched even the literati and, robbed German Jewry of some of the finest minds among German Jews. The author's description of Heinrich Heine's conversion – in secret – is one of the most poignant aspects of Elon's retelling of the travail of some of the founders of the *Judische Wissenschaft* (Jewish Enlightenment) movement who, with the exception of the scholar, Leopold Zunz, also abandoned the traditional faith in pursuit of university posts and other benefits. In most cases conversion, as Heine learned didn't "convert" into a university professorship.

The assimilation of German Jewry into the German mainstream was the aim of almost all but a small percentage of the Jewish population. Many of the best minds in the community gravitated to the study of medicine, in part, because the other professions were closed to them. Jewish university students were anxious to join the numerous duelling fraternities that were part of campus life but so many of these Jewish students petitioned for entry into these organizations that Jews were eventually barred because it was considered inappropriate, by "authentic Germans," for them to seek honor in duelling with gentiles. Elon reproduces, in this context, a quaint picture of the members of a Jewish duelling fraternity.

One of the best parts of the Elon saga pivots on the experience of German Jews during and after World War I. There are some startling revelations about the super patriotism which German Jews exhibited during that bloody epoch including the fact that such distinguished figures as Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, Nahum Goldmann and a constellation of German-Jewish scientist and intellectuals (Einstein excepted) enthusiastically supported the

German war effort. True, they did moderate that enthusiasm towards the end of the war when the writing on the wall pointed to a German collapse.

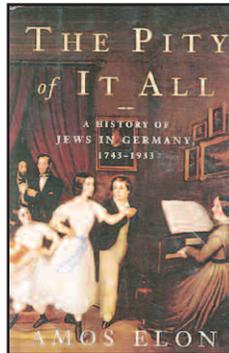
German Jews were overrepresented numerically among the soldiers who fought during the World War I (including one who was involved in awarding Hitler a medal) but this did not stop the anti-Semites from spreading vile rumors about Jews not participating in the front lines. So intense was the rumor mongering that the government instituted an insulting census to ascertain the exact number of Jews in the German army. The results of that census were never officially released but leaks seeped out to anti-Semitic groups that confirmed their outrageous lies. Elon asserts that the census figures were not released because they showed massive Jewish participation on the front lines of the war.

Among the many vignettes presented by the author, the career of Walther Rathenau stands out. Foreign Minister of Germany in the post war cabinet of 1919, Rathenau was assassinated by one of the many individuals who abhorred the liberal democracy that was emerging in Germany after the debacle of 1914–18. The assassination has been richly documented in various sources but what Elon reveals about Rathenau is fascinating. In his younger incarnation Rathenau penned a vitriolic essay against his fellow Jews in which he advocated a reconfiguration not only of Jewish dress, manners and ethics but a radical reconstruction of the physical Jewish body in order to eliminate the unseemly aspects of Jewish physiognomy. Later in life Rathenau claimed that he wrote the essay during one of his dark, depressive moods.

For this reviewer the best part of Elon's narrative deals with the dying days of the Weimar Republic and the consolidation of the Nazi hold of the emerging regime. The author believes that in 1933, it was by no means certain that Hitler and his hooligan empire would take power. In fact, Elon cites a Jewish reporter's absence of comment on Hitler being named chancellor because neither the journalist nor any other sensible observer could have conceived what was about to happen. One of the scenarios suggested by the author was that the German army would have taken over the reins of government. A military regime might have led to armed conflict with neighboring countries, but it would not have been the Holocaust.

There is one question which Elon does not ask but which is embedded in his retelling of the history of German Jewry. Germany was one of the most advanced

(see Ages, page 19)





Book Review

By RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Israel's war of Independence

1948. By Yoram Kaniuk. Tel Aviv: Miskal-Yedioth Ahronoth Books and Chemed Books. 2010. Pp. 190. In Hebrew.

Yoram Kaniuk, veteran Israeli award-winning author who in the 1948 War of Independence fought under Yitzchak Rabin's command in the *Palmach's* famed *Harel* brigade, discloses a uniquely gripping account with a lyrical touch of an insider's perspective that is bound to stand out in the literature concerning the pivotal events of Israel's rebirth.

Kaniuk truly fits the classic image of the authentic Israeli *Tzabra*, prickly and irreverent on the outside, but sweet and sensitive on the inside. He belongs to the unfortunately fast diminishing greatest generation of Israelis whose sacrifices at a young age provided for the proverbial "silver platter" upon which the Jewish state was presented following so much history and pain.

Recalling those receding and disturbing memories is a tricky exercise that Kaniuk readily admits to in his direct, revealing and conversational style. He was but a "foolish" 17.5 year old who dropped out of his Tel Aviv *Tichon Chadash* (now named for Rabin) high school early in the senior year. He was driven to assist in the illegal effort to bring ashore Holocaust survivors though his admired principal wanted him to graduate first. He was "foolish" in his reflective hindsight because of the deadly risk that he and the other altruistic co-volunteers could not envision, as well as the faced odds. "Wise ones prefer existing countries over those being dreamt. Wise ones do not attempt to create new countries in a hot climate in a land of native Arabs surrounded by Arab countries regarding them as evil foreigners" (p.28).

Kaniuk was inspired by beloved teachers who called on their patriotic and committed students to redeem Jewish history from chronic suffering and debilitating powerlessness. This was even as his friends' parents were mourning for

those they left behind in Europe, having discovered their tragic end. All too soon he was transferred from sea duty to fighting on the hills around Jerusalem. He witnessed cruel and capricious death in close proximity, the kind of terrifying experience that torments memory.

Kaniuk's vehicle delivered Cambridge-educated Abba Eben from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and arrived while Egyptian planes were bombing his hometown. On the way back to Jerusalem, a penetrating bullet ricocheted inside the armored vehicle randomly killing two fellow soldiers in a chilling scenario miraculously sparing Kaniuk.

The author bemoans the disproportionate number of killed commanders given the practiced doctrine of first protecting the lives of the ordinary soldiers that has developed into IDF's *Acharai* (Follow me!) motto with the officer leading subordinates into danger. He describes the Kastel battle in which 23 commanders came to save seven privates, including him. Kaniuk critically points out that generally the officers lacked combat experience. With troops that were meager, ill-prepared and without proper equipment and food, it cost many lives. Yet these poor conditions did not prevent, and moreover highlighted, the 1948 victory which is sarcastically and sadly dubbed as "the children's crusade" (p.91).

Kaniuk struggles with his Jewish conscience, the leftist ideology of *HaShomer Hatzair*, and the ethics or lack of them in wartime. He is touchingly sympathetic with the human plight of the Arab refugees – he so obviously is with the Jewish ones from Hitler's Europe caught up in the conflict, as he observed those forced to leave Caesarea in a long and sad procession.

The appearance of a mysterious stranger at Kaniuk's parents' Tel Aviv apartment led to new revelations concerning the family roots of Kaniuk's father, Moshe, who tried to conceal them. Moshe, a musician and gifted man of culture was from Galicia's *Tarnopol* but chose to depart for what Berlin had to offer. His extended family of some 60 members who stayed behind were all shot in one pit by the Germans and the stranger at Kaniuk's door, perhaps a distant cousin, was the only one to survive the massacre. Ironically, he was killed on Jewish soil when the Arabs attacked the Haifa oil refineries.

The native Israelis and the joining survivors would put down one another though the author admires the survivors' inner strength to endure all that they had, far more challenging, he asserts, than what the Palmach fighters went through. Kaniuk is bitter that those who were supposed to live in their Jewish state were murdered, blaming not having established

it earlier as well as God for their death. "Israel is surely the state of the dead. It is a reminder that they could have been spared if they would have built it 50 years earlier. How can a Jewish state live with the historic glue of the kind of God who murdered with apathy a third of its people" (p.25).

How penetrating and poetic is the author's breathless rendition of the Yishuv's response to the November 29, 1947, historic Partition vote at the United Nations. "And when November arrived all stood outside or gathered around whoever had a radio, and they laughed, happy as they never were or ever would be, and counted emotionally, forcefully, beseechingly, faithfully, fearfully, the votes from the United Nations. From the open windows, in coffee shops, in shoemaker shops, in bakeries – they all yelled the counting as if it were a prayer. Thousands of people said together, 1234...and then came that shout. An end came to 2,000 years of exile, fear and humiliation" (p.64).

Kaniuk states too cavalierly with disregard to the historical reality of exile, persecution and expulsion that the Jews have been content to constantly be on the go. "Particularly us, from the midst of all other peoples who did not contemplate running away from their homelands for two thousand years, will suddenly be a people that loves a land that is his and not his, establishing there a state?" (p.15) Conceivably, this skewed approach is affected by the author's stated disappointment with Israel's turn of events.

In 1949, he participated in transporting Holocaust survivors from European ports to Haifa aboard the "Pan York". My own Polish family, myself included, arrived from Marseille, France, the same year to the same destination of a millennial quest with a ship named *Atzmaout* (Independence) on the eve of Israel's first anniversary, following two and half years (1947–1949) in a Displaced Persons Camp in Wetzlar, Germany. Kaniuk's attachment to and heartfelt admiration for the survivors is deeply appreciated.

He unassumingly portrays himself as an anti-hero who was afraid to fight yet faced death head on. Far from glorifying war, even for the sacred cause of the Jewish people's liberation, the author's pervasive humanism coupled with stark realism of any war's ugly face serves to underscore the humbled heroism of Kaniuk and his generation of young Tzabraim. They along with their equally heroic brethren from Nazi Europe's hell accomplished the nearly impossible feat of resurrecting the old-new Hebrew state.

Rabbi Zoberman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Va. (See his poem, p. 18) ★



Book Reviews

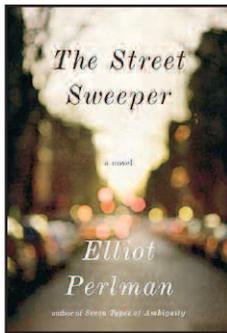
REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Impressive and absorbing Holocaust novel

The Street Sweeper. By Elliot Perlman. New York: Riverhead Books, 2012. 627 Pages. \$28.95.

Just as we are about to accept the sad fact that the doors are rapidly closing on additions to the libraries of books about the Holocaust, Perlman has produced this exceptional novel, contributing substantially to our knowledge about this dark blot on history. An Australian lawyer, Perlman, who has spent time in New York, published two well-received novels and a collection of short stories that were all widely acclaimed in Australia. His new book, among other things, adds heart-rending details to what we know about Auschwitz, vividly augmenting the images we have about Nazi brutality.

While Perlman introduces a large and sometimes confusing cast of characters, his story focuses on two men. We first meet African-American Lamont Williams when he begins a six-month probationary period



as a cleaner at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center which has agreed to participate in a program designed to help former prisoners. He has just completed a six-year sentence for innocently driving two friends, not knowing that they robbed a liquor store while he waited in the car. He wound up in prison but is now living with his grandmother in the Bronx and hoping that he will be permanently employed by the hospital.

The second protagonist is Adam Zignelik, son of Jake, a New York Jewish lawyer who worked for the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) of the NAACP. Jake was divorced from Adam's mother, an Australian Jewish lawyer, who had interned at the LDF; met Jake; became pregnant; was married for three years; then returned to Australia with their son. Eventually, Adam came back to New York, earned a Ph.D. in history, and was appointed to the Columbia faculty. Jake and Adam were friendly with two Black men, William McCray and his son, Charles. William, a lawyer, worked with

Jake and Charles, a historian, became the first African-American to chair Columbia's history department. He is now forced to tell Adam that, after eight years, his lack of productivity rendered him ineligible for tenure.

Lamont befriends Henryk Mandelbrot, a critically ill hospital patient and a Holocaust survivor, who describes his horrible experiences beginning with his slave labor in constructing homes and other facilities for the German occupiers of Poland. He was then sent to Auschwitz where he became a *Sonderkommando*, helping Jews to undress for the Crematorium and then hauling the corpses to ovens and pits where the bodies were burned. When one *Sonderkommando* warned the Jews what was about to happen, Mandelbrot watched as this man was thrown into the oven. He tells Lamont about further horrible experiences, eager to preserve the memory of what happened.

William, concerned that his son will have to terminate Adam's appointment, suggests to Adam that he investigate what Black soldiers did during the war and, especially their possible role in liberating concentration camps. He gives Adam some leads and a considerable part of the book is devoted to describing Adam's travels as he tracks down these sources that lead to horrifying images. His diligent inquiries provide further harrowing information about the Holocaust, including terrifying eyewitness accounts.

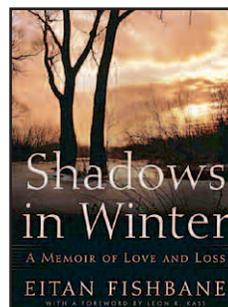
Perlman introduces many secondary characters and incidents but the emphasis on Lamont, Adam, and the Holocaust is more than enough to make this an impressive and absorbing book.

Vigor for contemporary concerns on Jewish survival

Shadows in Winter. By Eitan Fishbane. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011. 156 Pages. \$19.95.

Jewish Renaissance and Revival in America. Edited by Eitan P. Fishbane and Jonathan D. Sarna. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011. 180 Pages. \$29.95.

These two fine books splendidly testify to the love that Eitan Fishbane had for his late wife, Leah Levitz Fishbane. She died of a brain tumor in March, 2007 at the age of

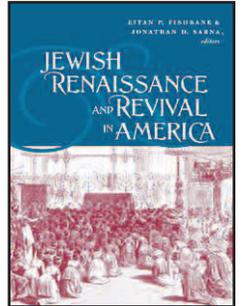


32, leaving behind her husband and their daughter, Aderet, almost four years old. His boundless grief and his struggle to deal with his daughter's questions are painstakingly and sorrowfully set forth in the first book, *Shadows in Winter*. The second book, *Jewish Renaissance and Revival in America*, is a further expression of Fishbane's admiration for his wife. He organized a conference on her work that was held at the Jewish Theological Seminary shortly after the first anniversary of her death, featuring several speakers who discussed her scholarly contributions and her personal attributes. The book contains most of the papers presented on that occasion.

The Fishbanes were both students in Jewish studies at Brandeis University where they met and fell in love. He finished his doctorate and took a job at Carleton College where he taught for a year before they moved to Los Angeles where he was on the faculty of Hebrew Union College for three years until he was appointed assistant professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary. She suspended her studies to look after their child but later resumed her Ph. D. candidacy at Brandeis, completing the first two chapters of her dissertation under the supervision of Jonathan D. Sarna, a renowned expert on American Jewish history. These chapters open the book edited by Sarna and Fishbane. The focus of her research was a group of young American Jews in Philadelphia and New York during the last 30 years of the 19th century who contributed significantly to strengthening Jewish life without becoming rabbis.

Fishbane's center of attention is explored in a paper by Arthur Kiron, a curator in the University of Pennsylvania library and an assistant professor in Penn's history department. He explores Jewish readers in "Victorian Philadelphia," referring to the years of Queen Victoria's rule – 1837–1901, a somewhat peculiar usage when applied to the United States. However, the material he presents about a leading Philadelphia rabbi, Sabato Morais, clearly supports the significance of Fishbane's work on the influence of Philadelphia Jews in fostering Jewish identity.

The book concludes with an impressive "afterword" by Arnold Eisen, current chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Like Cyrus Adler, also a



(see Teicher, page 18)



My Kosher Kitchen

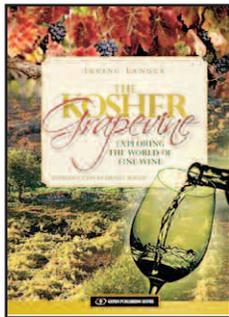
BY SYBIL KAPLAN

World of kosher wine and recipes

The Kosher Grapevine. By Irving Langer. Gefen Publishing, 2012. Hardcover, 158 Pages, \$34.50.

Irving Langer is CEO of a real estate firm and lives on Long Island, NY; but more significantly he is creator of the Kosherwineclub.com and writes a wine and dine column in a Jewish paper.

In his preface he writes that "this book is my foray into the world of kosher fine wine." After an introduction on the history of wine making by Daniel Rogov (z"l) – Israel's late foremost wine expert – there are chapters on what makes wine kosher; changes in Jewish wine drinking (25 years ago more than 90% of kosher wines produced in the world were sweet; today, over 80% of the kosher wines produced are dry); grape varieties (14 red and 7 white are used for kosher wines); which wines are best for you (those that give you the most satisfaction); and wine language (truly knowledgeable people...use these terms in order to best describe their experience in tasting wine).



Part 1: Understanding Wine has four chapters – a Jewish perspective on wine; the science of wine making; a clever discussion of wines relating them to *Chassidim* and differences between red, white and sparkling wines; and a global survey of kosher wines in America, around the world and Israel.

Part 2: Practical Basics has four chapters – 10 steps of wine tasting (how to develop an appreciation of fine wine), understanding dry wines (making the transition from sweet wine to dry), wine menus in a restaurant (pairing wine with food and breaking the rating code), and storing wine (simple dos and don'ts).

Part 3: Delving into Our Tradition has one chapter – a fascinating scholarly voyage into Jewish history, law and tradition.

Appendix 1 has a glossary of wine terms, Hebrew/English glossary and wine-producing regions of Israel. Appendix 2 has who's who in the industry, wineries (34 in Israel,

6 in Europe, 1 in New Zealand, and 5 in the US), wine distributors, online wine stores and web sites. There are approximately 87 beautiful color photographs and numerous black and white.

This is not a coffee-table book. This is not for wine experts. This is a very readable, enjoyable, informative, practical guidebook to supply all the answers with "everything you always wanted to know about kosher wines."

What occasion is coming up in your life? Couple announcing an engagement? Anniversary? Birthday? Wedding? Housewarming? Just going to friends for a lovely dinner? Buy this book!

This book is more than just an exploration; it is an adventure, an exciting journey, an eye-opener into the wonderful world of kosher wine. Here are some recipes using wines.

Fettuccine with Salmon in Wine Sauce (2 servings)

8 ounces Italian dry fettuccine
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1/4 medium chopped onion
3 1/2 ounces fresh salmon fillet, cubed
3 Tbsp. white wine
2-3 Tbsp. tomato sauce
3 1/2 ounces fresh cream
salt and pepper to taste
chopped parsley
basil leaves

Boil water for fettuccine. Heat oil in a frying pan. Add onion and salmon and cook over high flame 1 1/2 to 2 minutes until salmon turns brown. Add wine. For a special effect, when the sauce bubbles, light the sauce with a match for 10 seconds then close it with a lid to put out the flame. Remove lid if doing flambé. Add fettuccine to boiling water. Add tomato sauce and cream to salmon sauce and cook over high heat 5-7 minutes. Drain fettuccine after 7 minutes and add to sauce. Add salt and pepper to sauce and stir to blend. Pour into a bowl. Garnish with chopped parsley. Decorate with basil leaves.

Elegant Baked Pears (4 servings)

4 halved and cored pears
1/2 cup red wine
1/4 cup sugar
3 inch-long sticks of cinnamon
6 whole cloves
few drops red food coloring

Place pears in a baking dish. Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine wine, sugar, cinnamon, cloves and food coloring in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Pour over pears, cover and bake in oven 20 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 minutes more, basting a few times, and test with a fork to make sure pears are tender.

Hagbaha*

BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

In the 1947 photo taken in Germany's Wetzlar D.P. Camp, the American zone, Following an escape from Poland and a Sojourn in Austria, Clad in refugees' newly acquired garb Grandparents Zvi (Son of martyred Rabbi Yaakov and Dena Manzies Zoberman) And Rachel (Daughter of martyred Yitzchak And Zipora Anker) of Zamosc, Poland, Gratefully raised me high, Their little Torah they managed to save In the face of the many scrolls They could not.

Rabbi Israel Zoberman, below with his parents, was born in 1945 in Chu, Kazakhstan, to Polish Holocaust survivors. ★

*The act of raising the Torah during services.



Chicken with Mustard and Garlic (6 servings)

4 lbs. chicken parts (legs, thighs, or wings, or a combination)
4 minced garlic cloves
2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
2 Tbsp. dry white wine
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 tsp. herbes de Provence*

*If you don't have this, combine lavender leaves, marjoram, thyme, savory, basil, rosemary, sage and fennel seeds in small amounts, mix and use 1 teaspoon.

Preheat oven to 450°F. Mix garlic, mustard, white, oil, soy sauce and herb in a bowl. Spread on chicken parts. Place in frying pan and spread on other side. Cook chicken on high heat until it starts to brown. Transfer chicken to greased baking dish and bake 30 minutes.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food and feature writer, and author of nine kosher cookbooks. She leads "Shuk Walks" in Jerusalem produce market, Machaneh Yehudah. ★

EINSTEIN

(continued from 5)

cantors and Jewish educators, is sustained by members of Reform synagogues, part of whose synagogue commitment goes for such educational advancement. Without that support, how do we ensure Jewish continuity?

Our synagogue affiliation also connects us to the larger Jewish world. For instance, Robin and I will be leading our final CBT Tour to Israel next month.

While there, we will engage in a number of social action projects. Our congregation will provide sustenance for a number of groups we visit – such as *Carmei Ha-ir*, which distributes 1,300 sandwiches to needy children in Jerusalem, Modin, and Beitar every day.

Remember the crucial teaching of Hillel: *Al tifrosh min ha-tzibor* – do not separate yourself from the community.

Rabbi Stephen J. Einstein has been senior rabbi of Congregation B'nai Tzedek in Fountain Valley, Calif. for 36 years. We wish him a "Yasher Koach" for the double chai years of service as he retires at the close of this year. This message is from their Feb. 2012 bulletin. ★



ROBERTS

(continued from 9)

degrade the theologian. He is familiar with mankind's wrestling with the question. Who are we – what is He – and much more complex, how do we love him? Leigh Hunt may be on to something, at least a thin sliver of the solution.

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



GERTEL

(continued from page 14)

(notorious anti-Semite) Richard Wagner. She makes a point of mentioning Christ in her thesis (without reference, at least according to this screenplay, to anything in the Jewish tradition).

In this film, Spielrein's ambivalences about being Jewish play off of Freud's ambivalences toward Gentiles. His conservative image is very much re-enforced when he expresses surprise that Spielrein has mentioned Christ in her thesis, leading him to take her to task for "your idea of a mystical union with a

blond Siegfried." Freud tells her point blank, "We're Jews, Miss Spielrein, and Jews we will always be." Does Freud object to Spielrein's affair on moral grounds? The film suggests that he chooses to argue against this Jewish-Gentile affair more from a cultural standpoint than a moral one.

Yet Freud is more than accepting of Spielrein, of her indiscretions, which can be characterized as willful and spiteful, and of her emendations of his theory. Is it because she is Jewish? She marries a Russian Jewish man, thus meeting the expectation of Freud (and of her own father, one would think). She describes her husband as "kind." In the end she visits Jung during one of his incapacitating breakdowns and tries to bring him comfort. Remorseful and pregnant, she takes counsel with his wife (in a scene both awkward and touching) and contemplates where her actions have led. Have self-knowledge and conscience finally replaced self-indulgence and a sense of entitlement?

Startlingly, though perhaps not unexpectedly, the film ends, more than anything else, as a Holocaust memorial, and a very effective one at that. In many ways, reading the notes at the end of the film is essential to understanding the characters, to appreciating the world in which they lived, and to putting their flaws and their triumphs into perspective.

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



TEICHER

(continued from page 17)

chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary and one of the people studied by Fishbane, Eisen is not a rabbi but was greatly influenced by the achievements of members of the group that Fishbane considered in establishing Hadassah, Gratz College, and the Jewish Publication Society.

Contemporary concerns for Jewish survival can find substantial vigor in the inspiration to be found in these two books.

Dr. Morton I. Teicher is the Founding Dean, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University (home of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine) and Dean

Emeritus, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. ★



SHIPLEY

(continued from 8)

Maybe that is the message we should give our kids to take to school assembly. *Baruch ha Shem.*

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. ★



AGES

(continued from 15)

countries in the world during the last two centuries and the Jews who lived there believed, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that they were fully assimilated into the fabric of German society – which is precisely the sentiment felt by Jews living in the western democracies today. The question implied in Elon's great book need not be articulated but it is clear.

Arnold Ages is "Distinguished Emeritus Professor," University of Waterloo, Ontario Canada. ★



KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page 20)

take them back to Yugoslavia where they enjoyed the "Communist paradise" for two years. Hungary was still wide open so they went to Hungary where they stayed six or eight months under pretty bad circumstances.

"I got a Hungarian passport, so I went to Paris where I met my childhood boyfriend. I was 18, he was 24 and we married on the day Israel was declared a state."

They went to the Jewish Agency wanting to go to Israel, but were discouraged to do so, so they went to Venezuela.

A conclusion

The play was interesting and although we missed the nuances in Hebrew, we understood enough Hebrew, combined with the music and dance, to appreciate the uniqueness of the production. But truth is stranger than fiction and Deborah's story has stayed with me longer than the production.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food and feature writer, and author of nine kosher cookbooks. She leads "Shuk Walks" in Jerusalem produce market, Machaneh Yehudah. ★



Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

The Jewish Post & Opinion

1427 W. 86th St. #228

Indianapolis, IN 46260

Our first play in Hebrew – Commemorating Holocaust Memorial

According to its mission statement, The Theatre Company Jerusalem fuses contemporary theater with ancient Hebrew and Aramaic writings to create a dynamic new theatrical art, relevant to modern day questions and dilemmas. The Theatre was founded in 1982, by Gabriela Lev, a professional actress and its current artistic director, and strives to create a different, original and unique theatre in Jerusalem. Theatre Company Jerusalem is supported by the Jerusalem Municipality, the Jerusalem Foundation and the Ministry of Culture and Sport.

Since October 2010, the Theatre Company has shared the renovated mid-19th century historic Masie House, not far from downtown and adjacent to the Machneh Yehudah market with two other theater companies for their rehearsals and performances. This is the second time, we, as members of the foreign press, were invited to one of their productions.

The night before and the night of Holocaust Memorial day, we were invited to see a group of second and third generation Holocaust survivors, perform in Hebrew, *Woman Dreams Man*, an innovative dance theatre performance with music and singing.

After the war, Irenke, a Jewish Hungarian circus performer and singer, seeks to find her lover, Daniel. This is all presented as a dream sequence through mist generated by a machine which gives the illusion of seeing everything through a haze and in flashbacks.

Irenke writes letters but we re not sure if she is in Hungary or Israel. Where is her beloved – in Israel or was he killed? The images are the circus, representing the circle of life, nature and art; the bed, representing the place of love and dreams; and the letter – the communication between the circus and home, dream and art. The three male characters – the ring master, the musician and Daniel – live within the psyche of Irenke and move between the demonic and the angelic.

The acting and the dancing were exceptional; the singing was a method to move the plot along and show connections between the characters.



Cast of Theatre Company Jerusalem. Photo by Barry A. Kaplan/Jerusalem.

One real survivor's story

Prior to the start of the performance, I happened to interview Deborah, a friend from Hungary and a Holocaust survivor whom I had invited to attend. As we talked, I began to wonder if her story wasn't more interesting than the play.

She was born in Budapest in 1930. When she was nine, her mother married a Christian, thinking it might be better for her and her twin sister, and the family moved to Yugoslavia. When she was 11, some Communist Jews were publicly hung. "The Catholic priest came to our classroom telling us how good it was they were hung. We came home and asked the cook what happened to the people they hung and she didn't know what to answer, but we didn't go back to school."

Her mother then sent her and her sister to a convent in Budapest where they lived from 1942 to 1944. When the Germans came to Budapest, it was to take care of the Jewish question and in three months, 400,000 of the 600,000 Jews there had been killed and my friend and her twin

had been kicked out of the convent.

"We had to have false papers, so in the summer of 1944, we went to a hotel. We couldn't leave the room because they didn't want anyone to see us. One day they arrested my mother and dragged her away to a factory. My aunt had a Christian friend going to medical school. He was 24 years old, so we went to the school and sat on the steps waiting for him. When he came out, he took us in."

For two months, the two girls stayed with him and although he actually saved their lives, he also abuse both of them. The people in his building denounced them and the Gestapo came and told him the girls were Jewish. Someone got her mother out of the factory. They all went to her aunt's apartment but they were by then 45 people together with no food, no electricity, and no sanitation.

The Russians came in and liberated Budapest. In February 1945, the twins, their mother, and Christian stepfather maneuvered with a Russian army tank to
(see Kaplan/Israel, page 19)