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Mi Sheberach

A Focus on Healing



Cover art by Jackie Olenick
(see About the Cover, p.2).

*Comfort, Comfort
My People*

Editorial

I recently had the privilege of seeing the musical, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at the Booth Tarkington Civic Theater in Carmel, Ind., a suburb of Indianapolis. Was it a coincidence that the dates it played were from Dec. 14–Jan. 5, the same time as we read the Torah portions *Miketz*, *Vayigash*, and *Vayechi*? These three portions begin with Joseph in prison in Egypt where he was sent by his master Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and they end with Joseph dying.

I had never seen the musical before so I was surprised how close the plot was to the biblical story. Costumes were dazzling and it was a pleasure to hear the beautiful harmonies in the songs. The dances were choreographed well to fit the different themes of the songs. What made this an entertaining performance were the different songs and dances that had themes from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

In the play the mood is sorrowful when Joseph is thrown into the pit and also when he is put in jail for something he did not do. Even though the audience knows full well that he will eventually be exonerated, I could feel a lift in the room when he is released from jail and especially when he reconciles with his father and brothers.

This reminded me of a speech that was given several years ago in Indianapolis by Rabbi Wayne Dosick. At that time he was here to promote his book, *When Life Hurts: A Personal Journey from Adversity to Renewal*. The book is about how he and his wife coped on both a practical and a spiritual level with the loss of their home and everything in it to a fire. It was not only their residence but both had their offices there as well. They had been out-of-town and returned to find 30 years of sermons, a 6,000 volume classic rabbinical library, a 100 year old Knabe Grand piano, a Babe Ruth signed baseball, and a Bible Chomash printed in Germany in 1938 were all gone.

The following in italics was part of a longer article published in our Oct. 31, 2001 issue.

Dosick asked the audience to remember the story of Joseph in the Bible. His father Jacob favored him over his brothers and gave Joseph a coat of many colors. His envious brothers hated him for it, threw him into a pit, sold him into slavery and persuaded Jacob that Joseph was dead.

Joseph ends up working as a slave for a man named Potiphar in Egypt whose wife slanders him with a false charge of rape. But even from prison, his reputation as an interpreter of dreams reaches Pharaoh. He eventually becomes an adviser to Pharaoh whose advice spares the country from famine

About the Cover

“Nachamu, Nachamu – Comfort, Comfort My People”

by Jackie Olenick

This fine art gliece, measuring 12 x 15 inches in the frame is a limited edition of 300, on stretched canvas.

Olenick creates Judaic illuminations in several mediums based upon her favorite Torah text, psalms and prayers. She also designs personalized, illuminated ketubot for the bride and groom. The images created are joyful, contemporary, inspirational and speak to issues that guide us on our day-to-day journey. They are intended to bring blessing and holy reminders to every Jewish home. She also creates beautiful spiritual jewelry appropriate for men, women and teens.



Jackie Olenick

(see About the Cover, page 15)

during the years of bad crops. Among the buyers of grains eventually are his brothers, whom he forgives.

In the pit and in prison Joseph was unhappy. But if each element of the story did not happen exactly the way it did, at exactly the time it did, then perhaps the children of Jacob might have died from the famine in Canaan and have never come to Egypt.

If they had not come to Egypt and been saved by their brother Joseph, they would not have been enslaved. If they had not been enslaved, they would not have been redeemed. If they had not been redeemed, they would not have gone to Sinai. If they had not gone to Sinai, they would not have received the law. If they had not received the Torah, they would not have wandered in the desert for 40 years. Without the wandering, they would not have come to the promised land in Israel.

Today, 3,000 years later, one has the luxury of seeing how the story unfolds and the results of the different scenarios. When Joseph was in the pit and in prison his immediate situation looked bleak but with hindsight one can see that eventually much good resulted from those two challenging circumstances.

I have written previously that we may not desire some of the challenges with which we are faced and we may not understand the reasons for them, but as was the case in Joseph's situation, they made him a stronger person and that made a big difference for the Jewish people.

I recently experienced a similar situation but on a much smaller scale. A neighbor who had lived across the street from me when I was growing up came back into my life. When she was 49 her husband of 28 years had a heart attack and died

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suddenly. A year later she remarried and moved away and I did not see her for decades but I had heard she had lost the elder of her two daughters to cancer when the daughter was 45.

Four years ago I was reacquainted with her and attended her 90th birthday party. When I would see her every few months she was always upbeat and optimistic even though her second husband of 38 years had recently died. She had become one of the few people I have known who does not have a mean bone in her body. At her funeral recently, I heard the same

(see Editorial, page 12)



Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

New beginnings and rebirth

Shvat began on Jan. 12.

It may be the heart of winter in many places, but the month of *Shvat* marks a hidden and mystical time of new beginnings and rebirth. This month is a time of new inspiration and creativity. It is a time when it is easy to come close to God. The first part of the month may still feel energetically harsh, but that all changes according to *Kabbalah* after the full moon of this month, the 15th of the month celebrated as *Tu B'Shvat*.

This new month of *Shvat* is pregnant with new possibilities. Some of us may have lived through a cold and challenging winter this year in our lives, but spring is coming. Be patient and never lose hope. *Shvat* is here.

In *Tevet*, the month preceding *Shvat*, we had to purify ourselves and transform the negative forces that limit and keep us from realizing our vision and dreams. Even though the purpose of the challenges may not have been clear, we must know whatever work we have done to meet and overcome them has not been in vain. The seeds of our vision have been planted deeper within us. We have been strengthened. In *Shvat*, the seeds begin to sprout.

Believe that you will bear new fruit and you will. Something new will come forth within you. We will bring forth our visions into reality. This month of renewal is the time to go deep inside and contact the creative energy within you. Open to a new beginning. Say YES to the newness of life once again and all the potential within you to come forth.... This is an optimal time to conceive of new projects, breathe out the old and breathe in the new. It may not be clear what the new is for you, but simply agree to be open to the process of renewal in your life. Be open to surprises, meeting new people and doing new

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Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

Jan. 11, 2013, *Vaera*
Exodus 6:1-9:35, 29 *Tevet* 5773

With this week's portion, the unfolding of the plagues, brought by God against Egypt and the Egyptians, begin. When we observe the festival of *Pesach* in the spring, we will gather around tables that are beautifully set with all the traditional symbols prominently displayed. There may be beautiful candlesticks with new tapers or polished silver or china. You will find a cup for Elijah, a *sefer* plate, a *matzah* cover and much more. Yet, at some point many families will do something that doesn't fit with the beauty of this moment. We will dip our fingers into our wine glasses and remove a drop of wine for each of these ten plagues and place this drop on our plate. Some families may fulfill this custom in other ways, but the notion of removing some of the wine from our glass is the point and the fulfillment.

Why do we do this? The most common reason given is that by removing these drops of wine we diminish our opportunity to derive joy from this wine. Wine in Judaism is compared to life and joy. Our toast is, "*L'chayim* – to life." By removing ten drops of wine for each of the ten plagues, we acknowledge the suffering brought on by these plagues and symbolically reduce our own joy. Not only do we reduce our



things. Give yourself time to relax, let go and receive inspiration. There is much blessing available this month.

What has been written above was excerpted from *Kabbalah Month by Month*. There is so much more in this book about each month that cannot be revealed in the confines of this article. This book along with my other books on meditation, *Everyday Kabbalah* and *New Age Judaism* are all available on Amazon or could be ordered through your favorite bookstore.

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joy, but we do it at an exquisitely set table by sticking our finger into our wine glass. I would love to see this done at the White House Seder or better, at any fancy formal dinner party held anywhere in the world. And that is the point. We do this unordinary act to dramatically affirm that the suffering brought on by these plagues did not go unnoticed.

There are plagues today that are happening all around us. Sometimes we see them for a moment and sometimes we avert our gaze, but it doesn't make them go away. Maybe we should add more drops of wine to our plates for those plagues that are happening today. Maybe each *Shabbat* we should remove a few drops of wine for the plagues that are in our midst. We may not all agree, but as I look around I see things, not wrought by God as in the story of Exodus, but by Man.

There are the plagues of climate change, gun violence, economic injustice, sex slavery, homelessness, war, hate, hunger, and I am sure you could add a few others to this list. It is time for us, this society, living in this world to say to the pharaoh who holds us in slavery to these plagues to let the people and the victims go. God commands Moses to go to Pharaoh and say, "Let My people go that they may worship Me in the wilderness." It is time for us to act and fix the plagues that are all around us. We need another Exodus away from those things that subjugate us, afflict us, hold us hostage, or punish us. We need to be able to fill the cup so it is overflowing with love and kindness, goodness and hope. And we need this cup to remind us that this world is the only world we've got or will ever have and that we must take care of all its creatures.

Over the next few weeks we will read about blood, frogs, boils, darkness, and death. Though we were freed, we continue to acknowledge the terribleness of these tragic moments that helped us regain our freedom. Let us be reminded that until we rid the world of the plagues of today, we still aren't free. On *Shabbat*, we try to get a glimpse of a better time when the world won't be in pain, but we are reminded that it is through our hands and efforts that this better time will come about. We can't rely on others, when it is you and me that must change the world.

When you light your *Shabbat* candles this week, light one to help lead each of us to try and better the world in some way. Light the other to remind us that a better day is possible and that the cup of joy will be overflowing.

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Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

Every family has a story to tell

Since the beginning of time, in every culture, across every continent, one thing connects us all: the deeply human need to convey what is important to us from one generation to the next.

The telling and retelling of the stories of our lives is essential to the creation of our identities. They are the bedrock from which our lives are built, the source of our sense of belonging and the vessel that contains and preserves our values, customs, truths and traditions.

But stories, like water, are fluid. Each time one is told or repeated, something is changed. Memory fades or fails us; emotions color the re-telling, affecting not just the details but the soul of the story itself.

Does the fact that our stories change over time diminish their value? Does it matter that they might not be “true?” Perhaps not, for even when we are telling our “truest” stories, at best they can only reflect our *perceptions* of what the truth might be.

When I began researching my family history more than a decade ago, I wanted to know the facts – the who, what, when and where of the generations that came before me. But there were so many gaps and questions that I quickly found myself digging beneath the surface for answers to the bigger question of why.

As I slowly unraveled my family’s story, I found that what mattered most was not the historical facts themselves but the deeper emotional truths that the stories revealed. And in the end, I find myself wondering: why was this moment or experience or relationship of family history preserved and what is it meant to teach me today?

My story begins with my great grandmother, D’Jamila Danino. (D’Jamila is pronounced *Jamilla* which means beautiful in Arabic.) Born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1883, D’Jamila was forced into an arranged marriage at the age of 12 to a man three times her age. Abram Danino was a Syrian Jew who lived in Palestine with his first wife. In 1895, D’Jamila sailed from Egypt for Haifa and became Abram’s second wife, the one who would hopefully give him the son he so desperately wanted. She never saw any of her family again.

At the age of 13 and still a child herself,



Danino Nahmani Family Reunion (L–R) Sylvia Boris, Amy Lederman, Lynn Pollan, Carol Lewis, Farida Deske, Elise Hirshberg, and Myriam Nahmani; Back right: Shelley Hirshberg, Bella Bernard, and Jeff Hirshberg. Photo credit: Robert DeCuir.

D’Jamila gave birth to a baby boy, Albert Danino. Albert was my mother’s father, my grandfather. Whenever baby Albert cried, so did D’Jamila – so young and unequipped was she for mothering. But mother and son grew up together and for the first few years of Albert’s life, D’Jamila was safe and protected under Abram’s care.

When D’Jamila’s was 16, Abram suddenly died and she was left with Albert and a small inheritance. Within a year or so, she remarried a man named Shalom Nahmani, with whom she had a second child, a son named Felix.

Things did not go well for D’Jamila with Shalom and at 18, she did the unthinkable: she sought a divorce in the rabbinical court in Palestine. But Shalom refused to give D’Jamila a get (the requisite Jewish divorce decree that a husband must give his wife for her to obtain a divorce) unless she gave him her second son, Felix. Without the get, she was a prisoner, trapped in a loveless and abusive marriage. But with the get, she would have her freedom in exchange for her second-born son.

And so, the story goes, D’Jamila gave up Felix and fled with my mother’s father, Albert, to Smyrna, Turkey, where they lived while Albert grew up. There, Albert met and fell in love with Jeanette Franco, a beautiful girl from a prestigious Turkish family. Because Albert came from a poor family, Jeanette’s parents disapproved. D’Jamila helped them keep their love a secret and in 1920, Albert and Jeanette eloped to America. Soon thereafter, they brought D’Jamila to live with them in their small apartment in Long Beach, New York. They gave birth to two daughters: Emily in 1923 and my mother, Elise, in 1925.

One summer, when my mother was two years old, her family rented a cottage on the beach for a family vacation. On July 2, 1928, Albert went into the sea for a swim after lunch. His wife Jeanette stayed indoors with the children that afternoon because she was eight months pregnant and not feeling well. D’Jamila was busy cooking dinner in the kitchen when the doorbell rang. She opened it to find two policemen in uniform outside.

In her broken English, D’Jamila asked “What is it that happen?” She knew without them telling her – her son Albert was dead.

Although a tremendous swimmer, Albert had tragically drowned. D’Jamila collapsed on the floor and Jeanette, unable to recover from the shock, died less than one month later in childbirth, as did her baby. That was the day my mother and her sister became orphans.

There was no other family that could take the girls except D’Jamila. At the age of 43 with an old-world, Sephardic background and no education, she became mother, father and grandmamma to her little granddaughters.

D’Jamila loved my mother and her sister with all her heart. But she suffered terribly, because she had lost Albert and Jeanette so tragically and had given up her second son Felix, whom she never saw again.

D’Jamila died in 1944 when my mother was 18 years old. Once again, my mother was orphaned, with only a few relatives left that she could call family. Or so she thought until six months ago when I received something that changed all of our lives – forever.

On a warm April day in 2012, I opened my email and found this note from a woman I did not know:

“I am the 7th daughter of Felix Nahmani, believed to have been born in Smyrna, Turkey in 1905, whose mother was D’Jamila. I found you looking on our family tree. Are we searching for the same family? My father Felix never talked about his family, we could not ask about it at all. I am looking to find who he was. I live in Canada and await your reply. Daughter #7”

My fingers trembled as I punched in my mother’s telephone number. “Mom, are you sitting down? Because you need to be when you hear what I am about to tell you.”

Through my research on Ancestry.com for relatives in Egypt, Palestine and Turkey and the creation of a family tree, the seventh daughter of Felix Nahmani, D’Jamila’s son that she relinquished, had found me! Felix, the half-brother of my mother’s father, Albert. Felix, the uncle my mother had never met. Felix, the father of ten children – all of whom were my mother’s first cousins and lived in Canada, France and Corsica!

I called the 7th daughter, and a beautiful voice with a French accent answered the phone. Yes, Farida assured me, Felix was her father. And yes, she knew she had a grandmother named D’Jamila but her father never permitted them to ask any questions about her. There had been 10 children and none of them had known anything about their background or family.

My mother didn’t sleep that night, or the next. She couldn’t believe that after

(see Lederman, page 5)

Derech Eretz: As we let go

BY RABBI RAYZEL RAPHAEL



It is inevitable as the economy shifts and the Jewish community ages that institutions will merge or close. As a result more and more professionals will lose their jobs. In the past three years alone, I have witnessed, as many of my talented and capable rabbinic and Jewish professional colleagues have been unceremoniously “given the boot” by their employers.

One friend walked into her office and was told that day to surrender her key and leave. This was after years of service and juggling many portfolios as others had left. Another colleague was directed to Human Services and then out the door before she had time to go to her office and clean it out. A third was let go after years of dedication practically holding the whole organization together. A fourth was put in “herem” – not allowed to talk to any board members then dismissed as an email went out telling all the rabbis in town she was let go. The best-case scenario was my colleague whose contract ended after Yom Kippur, with no acknowledgement of the service she had performed for the previous six years; but at least there was no trauma in the process.

These were all talented, committed, experienced workers serving the Jewish community. They had all spent tens of thousands of dollars and more on their education, poured their heart and soul into their journeys of service, and dedicated their lives to helping people. What did they do to deserve such treatment? Perhaps they didn't double the *shul* membership in the expected time? Or maybe they studied Talmud in rabbinical school instead of learning how to use Twitter? Or maybe they just lacked charisma? Maybe they just got older. Whatever the case, they were treated as “disposable” rather than human beings with feelings.

Why is this happening? Of course it is primarily due to economics, power and the boards wanting staff to be fiscally responsible. But we all know that Jews have a history of being disempowered for years, and perhaps that unconscious layer creeps into our actions. A board member who loses his or her job might still claim a sense of power over a rabbi. Perhaps the Jewish community has adopted the culture of corporate America, rather than our Jewish values?

Our tradition teaches that we must treat people with *Derech erez*, and kindness,

LEDERMAN

(continued from page 4)

all these years of feeling so alone, so abandoned, that she had so much family. And they all wanted to meet her!

Over the next several months, tears were shed, photos and letters exchanged, and phone calls carried family history across the continents as we arranged a reunion at my parents' home in New Jersey. The warmth and love of this family towards my mother, their only link to their father's family, was overwhelming.

The October day we all met was brilliant with fall colors. My mother had spent weeks getting the house ready, making



hesed. Do unto others what you would have them do to you. Wouldn't the following be a better message to those that have to leave: “You have made a wonderful contribution here in the time you were with us. Our economics dictate that we must let you go, but we know you have talents beyond this job. Maybe we can put in a good word for you.” What about a letter of appreciation or a scrapbook or a good-bye ritual or party? Losing a job is one thing – losing face is another. It takes a while to recover from a job loss and reinvent oneself.

Wouldn't it be better to know that we have sent these dedicated people on without having to recover from the trauma of the leaving as well as the job loss itself?

Below are the lyrics to a song I wrote, based on a sentence from the book of Ruth. Naomi uses it to send her daughter-in-law, Orpah, on her way – in a ritual of parting. Imagine if folks left with this goodbye, instead of a harsh ending. It would be a bit of *tikkun* for those losing their jobs in the future. Who knows? You may be the next one out of a job. How would you like to go?

LAYCH-NA

© Geela Rayzel Raphael, June 1994

Chorus: *Laych-na, Shovnah Ishah, Ta'aseh Yah Imachem Hesed.*

Go and return to the path that you wander
Seek and you'll find your own destiny
May the Holy One bless you
with love and protection.
May you find the rest that you need.

Though partings are hard
and goodbyes painful
Adventure abounds behind every bend;
Follow your heart
till your soul sets to dancing
May the joy you find never end.

(see Raphael, page 16)

sure that everything was “just so” for her family. They flew in from Toronto, Paris and Corsica, with gifts, pictures, and family letters and we spend a magical afternoon at my mother's elegantly set table. My brother and cousins, from California to New York, also joined us, so that our group totaled 16 in all. It was a day that we will all remember forever.

But some of the stories that were shared were not easy to hear and my mother had a very difficult time, at first, believing them. Because D'Jamila had told her a story that most probably was not true, even though it is understandable, coming from a proper grandmother raising her two grandchildren in the 1920's.

It seems that D'Jamila was never married to Shalom Nahmani but had his child out of wedlock. Was it a terrible family secret? A torrid love affair? A night of indiscretion? A rape? We will never know. But what Farida and her family supplied was the details that suggested that D'Jamila had been sent to Turkey to give birth to Felix, where she stayed with Albert after baby Felix was born. And Felix told his own family that Shalom gave him away to a sister to raise him because his mother, D'Jamila, had abandoned him.

A terrible secret that D'Jamila took to her grave. One that must have plagued her every day of her life, especially after Albert died.

And so I ask myself: why was this story preserved and what is it meant to teach me today?

When I was growing up, whenever we heard something shocking or out-of-character with what we knew about a person, especially when that person was a family member, my mother would nod her head and comment judiciously: “Everyone has a public life, a private life and a secret life.”

I wonder now if perhaps somewhere deep inside, my mother knew that there were secrets in her own family that she had yet to discover. And that someday, these words would comfort her, knowing that we all have places deep within us, which harbor the darkest moments and choices of our lives.

Perhaps too, we can learn that secrets are as much a part of our family stories as those that we tell proudly and publicly. And in our lives, we may be called upon to open our hearts and minds to forgive the secrets that for reasons, varied and untold, were withheld from us. For in the end, even secrets can lead to great things. Anyone who experienced the love enveloping my mother on that October afternoon bore witness to this truth.

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Holocaust Educator

By MIRIAM L. ZIMMERMAN

Neuroscience explains Gaza

Mohammed texted during the meeting, violating an accepted rule of the dialogue group. When the speaker called him on it, he apologized profusely. Born and reared in Gaza, his family still lives there. He explained that his sister just texted him that Israeli planes were circling their house. He wanted to make sure his family was safe. Mohammed was instantly forgiven.

Mohammed [last name withheld for safety reasons] and I are both members of the 20-year-old Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group of San Mateo, Calif., my adopted hometown. I have been a participant since 1998; Mohammed, a pre-med student, has been a member since 2007. If the situation were reversed, with enemy planes circling my family home, I do not know if I would have had the composure to remain at a meeting with as many Palestinians as Jews.

A guest that evening, Manuel Bessudo, a Mexican Jew, has relatives living in Sderot, Israel, just five minutes or about a mile from Gaza. Manuel described how his brother and family have to “go to the bunkers” every time Hamas launches rockets into Israel. He had just spoken with his brother before the meeting and once again, the family was “in the bunker.”

Mohammed’s sister and Manuel’s brother brought the Gaza crisis into the living room of Jim Frazin’s East Palo Alto, Calif., home, where the dialogue group was meeting the night of Mon., Nov. 12, 2012. It was how I first learned about Israel’s pending incursion into Gaza, Operation “Pillar of Defense.”

Silent thoughts raged within me. Once again, a hot war demonstrated the impotency of diplomats and politicians when it comes to forging a lasting peace between these two peoples. As I felt deep concern for Mohammed and his family, I realized how much I am a minority among Jews, to care about the plight of Palestinians.

At the same time, I empathized with Manuel’s family stuck “in the bunker.” I lamented the vicious rocket attacks on Israel, motivated in part by a brutal occupation, followed by retaliatory incursions by Israel into Palestine. The spiral repeats.

What is it about conflict that gets out of control? As I mother, I used to tell my

small children, “Use your words” when they became frustrated and started to tantrum. Shouldn’t adult brains be better equipped to translate the urge to strike out into language? Is that not the purpose of diplomacy?

A heretical thought welled up inside me: a conviction that there will not be a permanent peace until Israelis mourn the loss of Palestinian children as much as their own, and until Palestinians mourn the loss of Israeli children as much as their own.

Those of us in dialogue with Palestinians are part of what is called the “public peace process.” According to dialogue group co-founder Len Traubman, along with his wife Libby Traubman, “The public peace process is based on the assumption that there are things governments can do that people cannot; and there are things people can do that governments cannot.”

Len often cites Dr. Harold Saunders, former Assistant Secretary of State under President Carter, who is the architect of “Sustained Dialogue, ‘a public peace process’ designed to change relationships among those in deep-rooted human conflicts.” As someone who played a behind-the-scenes role in the Camp David Accords, Dr. Saunders has had extensive experience in both citizen dialogue and in official diplomacy.

I am a member of the Jewish Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group for many reasons, one directly related to my role of Holocaust educator. My Holocaust students learn from me that the worst thing to do when confronted with injustice is to do nothing. I try to motivate my students to bridge the gap between moral thought and moral action. It is not enough to *think* about what is right; one must *act to make things right*. I expect no less from myself.

As an American Jew and as a single individual, there is not much I can do about peace in the Middle East. A solution I have found is to create, maintain, and deepen my relationship with similarly-minded Palestinians. Given our complex shared history, I have learned that neither the Jewish narrative nor the Palestinian narrative is entirely correct.

Influence works two ways. I can “hear” the Palestinian narrative and grieve with them for their hardships under the occupation. At the same time, I can also assert the need for Palestinian leadership to recognize Israel’s right to exist.

In my profession as a divorce mediator, almost daily I hear the history of a marriage’s demise. The husband’s take on this history almost always differs profoundly from the perspective of the wife. Each one clings tenaciously to his or her version of the past. To help couples in conflict, individuals who at one point

loved each other deeply, the mediator needs to create a boundary between a toxic past and a better future.

What do you want for yourselves and for your children? Do you want continued warfare? Or, do you want to create a functional peace that will enable both of you to move on? The questions are the same for Jews and Palestinians as they are for husbands and wives seeking divorce. Our role as mediators is to help them move forward free of their dysfunctional past.

The parallels, both psychological and strategic, between nations at war and divorcing couples, continue to amaze me. I have concluded that it is mediators, not diplomats, who will be able to bring these two peoples together. Career politicians and diplomats need to be more concerned with pleasing their stakeholders and with advancing their careers, both of which might have nothing to do with achieving peace. Failures of diplomacy discourage and demoralize both peoples.



Mohammed (left) from Khan Younis (Gaza), Palestine, a former “Seed Peace” participant, with Ilana Mealem from Jerusalem, former member of the Israeli Air Force and the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies in Israel; both guest speakers at a St. Ignatius High School of San Francisco program, “Changing Lives in the Holy Land.” Photo courtesy Len Traubman.

The many successes of the dialogue group continue to inspire me and give me hope for the future.

Len directed me to recent research at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) that helps elucidate why we humans continually erupt in war. Rebecca Saxe, Associate Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience in the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at MIT, is researching the neural basis of social cognition.

Professor Saxe uses neuroscience “to look under the hood and see the mechanisms that actually create the thoughts and the behaviors that create and perpetuate conflict.” She continues, “That’s the question that I’m asking myself right now, can science in general, or neuroscience in particular, be used to understand what drives conflict, what prevents reconciliation, why some interventions work for some people some of the time, and how to make and evaluate better ones.”

Dr. Saxe explains how she uses MRI’s to map regions of the brain. “The idea

with neuro-imaging is: first of all, can we diagnose the problem? Can we see under what circumstances, when you're thinking about somebody on the other side, is your brain doing something that might be diagnostic of what the psychological driver of conflict is? There's lots of possible things you could imagine here, like what's the source of a loss of empathy, or the source of suspicion of the other's motives, or the perception that the out-group is always irrational. Those are coming from our brain. *It's the structure of the human brain that makes us feel that way about the out-group* [emphasis added]." From reading her article, but not her actual research, my takeaway is that we humans are hard-wired to think ill of "the other."

Recent research on infants at Yale University reinforces Dr. Saxe's findings. The Sunday following the Operation Pillar of Defense incursion, Nov. 18, 2012, CBS' *Sixty Minutes* aired a segment hosted by Lesley Stahl about Yale University's Infant Cognition Center. Researchers Karen Wynn and Paul Bloom, both psychology professors at Yale, claim that very young babies, as young as three months, have a "universal moral core that all humans share."

Using puppets and actual babies held in the security of their mothers' arms, the husband and wife researchers have concluded that the sense of justice, of right and wrong, is an innate given and not acquired. Their results were first published in the journal *Nature* in 2007.

But it is their more recent research on the origins of bias that interested me in connection with the events unfolding in Gaza. Bloom and Wynn are investigating the human tendency to prefer others who are similar to ourselves. In one study, Wynn offered the babies the choice of Cheerios or Graham crackers.

Dr. Wynn observed that "Adults will like others who share even really absolutely trivial similarities with them." The question is, "will [baby] Nate, who chose Cheerios over Graham crackers, prefer this orange cat, who also likes Cheerios – over the grey cat who likes Graham crackers instead?" Nate preferred the cat who shared his choice as did a significant number of the babies in the experiment.

The researchers carried the scenario one step further. They asked whether or not babies would prefer that the puppet which chose differently would be treated badly and discovered that 87% of the babies did. *Babies who perceived the puppet as an "other" wanted the puppet to be punished by not getting a toy.* These babies were going with their biases, concluded the researchers, biases as trivial as a preference for Cheerios over Graham crackers.

Lesley Stahl suggested that the results indicate babies are born to hate. Dr. Wynn

tempered Stahl's conclusion by observing the human tendency to categorize other humans into "us" vs. "them;" and that this categorization occurs "at the drop of a hat." Dr. Bloom suggested that there is an evolutionary advantage to such a bias: "...it makes sense that evolution would predispose us to be wary of 'the other' for survival, so we need society and parental nurturing to intervene."

I would want to read the study itself before making any conclusions. Did the researchers control for handedness? That is, might not the baby reach for the puppet on the left because he or she was left-handed?

The researchers point out that our biology works against us when seeking peace. We humans have an innate need to define enemies as "the other" and treat them poorly, whether it is Hamas' objective to drive Israel into the sea or Israel's defensive occupation of Palestine. Motivations from the "reptilian" regions of our brains keep us from utilizing the resources of our neo-cortex, our "rational" brain, a conclusion from neuroscience research.

Perhaps I should not blame diplomats and politicians for the failures in the Middle East after all. The question for me after reading all this research is, how can we humans access our innate sense of justice, despite the impetus wired into us to vilify and persecute "the other?"

As I write, it is the festival of Chanukah, a celebration of freedom and the defeat of the mighty by the few. Chanukah perfectly illustrates the Jewish concept, "Not by might, not by power, but by spirit alone." Is there no way out of the current situation in Gaza, in which two peoples are stalemated in a power struggle over land and sovereignty? I decided to take solace from the only baby currently in my life, my 17-month-old granddaughter, Lily.

Reading this research by young scientists makes me realize that Jews and Palestinians cannot mourn the loss of one another's children, *because their brains will not let them.*

One solution, according to Nike Carstarphen, Ph.D., is dialogue. Founding member of the Alliance for Conflict Transformation, Dr. Carstarphen has researched the power of emotions for conflict resolution and reconciliation. In her doctoral dissertation, "Shift Happens: Transformations During Small Group Interventions in Protracted Social Conflicts," she established the power of dialogue to enable individuals locked in intransigent conflict to make reconciliation possible.

Hearing personal stories of the other, according to Dr. Carstarphen, help individuals bridge their differences and

"hear" the humanity of the other. Her work makes me realize the importance of my work in Jewish-Palestinian Dialogue. My conclusion is that it is dialogue that makes it possible for humans to overcome the strictures of their reptilian brains and engage their neo-cortex, so that they can treat perceived others as fellow human beings.

Armed with the knowledge of such research, activists like Mohammed and Ilana could forge a lasting peace in the Middle East and beyond. The legacy for Lily's generation would be peace and prosperity for both Palestinians and Jews. Her generation will learn to control their biases and motivations from the "primitive" regions of their brains so that "others" in their lives can be treated with humanity and respect. With G-d's help, may it be so.

I was advised by my "copy editors (my daughters, Leah Sharp and Rebecca Goodman)," that my references interrupted the flow of this column. Thus, I am citing my sources at the end. I am grateful to all three of my adult children, including Joshua Zimmerman, for their support of this article.

For more information about Sustained Dialogue and Dr. Saunders, browse to http://www.sustaineddialogue.org/contact_us.htm.

To see what 20 years of Jewish-Palestinian dialogue looks like, watch the new video at <http://archive.org/details/20YearsOfPalestinian-JewishLivingRoomDialogue>, produces by Dr. Len Traubman.

For readers interested in Dr. Saxe's much more technical explanation of neuro-imaging, read her "conversation" at <http://edge.org/conversation/imaging-conflict-resolution>.

You can watch Lesley Stahl's *60 Minutes* segment on the Infant Cognition Center in its entirety at http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18560_162-57551557/babies-help-unlock-the-origins-of-morality/?pageNum=2.

Dr. Bloom's article about his research is available in a 2010 edition of the *New York Times Magazine*, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/09/magazine/09babies-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

The url for the Alliance for Conflict Transformation follows: <http://www.conflicttransformation.org>; Making the "Other" Human: The Role of Personal Stories to Bridge Deep Differences by Nike Carstarphen, is available at <http://traubman.igc.org/carstarphenpaper.pdf>. I am grateful to Dr. Len Traubman for directing me to her research.

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Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

Three plays worth seeing

The Last Seder

It may seem a little early to be celebrating Passover, but no matter. Jennifer Maisel's new 90-minute piece *The Last Seder* (playing off-Broadway) is indeed relevant and timely. Maisel's dramatized observance of a holiday (normally observed in the spring) is simply an excuse to assemble the family around the table. What other Jewish holiday works that well?

And Maisel needs to have them there, with all their problems. This particular tribe, the Prices (were they once the Prisotskys?) runs the gamut of socio-familial concerns, any one of which might affect a middle-class American family. The father Marvin has Alzheimer's, while the mother Lily pursues an affair with the neighbor Mr. Friedman. Moreover, she has the unwelcome role of caretaker. And then there are the four daughters: one is Lesbian (and pregnant), one has an African-American boy friend, one is uncertain whether to marry her lover, and one is alienated from the whole bunch.

As the group assembles for the traditional rite, there is enough going on in this busy household to keep us all entertained. The father is about to be packed off to a place called Serenity Willows. The house is being dismantled, and the siblings fight over old possessions as cartons are moved about. Familiar? Indeed.

But Maisel deals with so many issues that the piece lacks sharp focus. Whom should we follow? Who is most worthy of our attention? One grows dizzy from the possibilities, even though director Jessica Bauman capably keeps the plot aloft, juggling all the balls in the air. And the cast of eleven (mostly Equity players) is a first-rate ensemble, as they engage in banter, accusations, hair-pulling, love-making and fist fights.

Maisel/Bauman pull it together, as the group settles in for their particular kind of Seder, enhanced by songs. And here is the most touching moment of the play. Marvin (who has clearly been out of it for the play's first hour) now takes charge. And, remarkably, he knows exactly what he is doing. In fact, he makes sense. Years of such Seders carry him through this one.

Though Maisel's play could use more

focus, it is a worthy effort – and no doubt touches a chord within its viewers. Who among us has not gone through some aspect of this family story?

Zelda at the Oasis

P. H. Lin is one of the rising young Jewish American playwrights, and how fortunate for New York City theatergoers that her latest effort has come to town! *Zelda at the Oasis* playing off-Broadway at St. Luke's Theatre.

Lin has been preoccupied with *Zelda* (wife of F. Scott Fitzgerald) for a number of years, and the result, finally, is an intriguing portrayal of that doomed lady. *Zelda* sits at a New York City bar, alternately flirting with the bartender and having flashbacks of her past. Thus Lin gives us a well-constructed, absorbing play, as *Zelda's* character unfolds.

Lin had fascinating material with which to work. The Fitzgeralds were the golden couple of the Jazz Age – the 1920s, that is. But beneath the shining façade was a deeply troubled relationship. It was a marriage made in hell, as they fought and steadily destroyed each other. Scott himself managed to keep writing, falling back on his milieu and on *Zelda's* own thoughts and comments. But this famed American novelist was also a hopeless alcoholic.

Zelda was an even worse case. The spoiled pampered daughter of a prominent southern family, she had also inherited the family's bad genes – the propensity for mental illness. At the same time, she was gifted, bright, and beautiful. And she was competitive with Scott, determined to prove that she was as much an artist as he. She attempted ballet, art, literature – making brief forays into each

area. She would claim that Scott stole her own material for his novels (which seems to be true). But what novelist does not steal from the world around him!

In any event, Lin has turned tragedy – or rather melodrama – into art. She has put together a powerful piece. Under Andy Sandberg's unerring direction, two actors give fine performances. Gardner Reed is totally absorbing as she plays out the *Zeldas* of many faces, many emotions. Ultimately our heart goes out to this victim of a tragic fate. Edwin Cahill plays the many men (and several women) in *Zelda's* life. First, there is the edgy bartender, then Scott himself, as well as *Zelda's* French lover, her mother, and assorted other characters. Reed's work comes across as the more flashy performance, but then she has the more interesting character with which to work.

In short, a play worth seeing. And it can be seen these days at St. Luke's Theatre, where it enjoys an open-ended run.

Golden Boy

Clifford Odets, the son of Jewish immigrants (once named Gorodetsky), ushered American theater into a new era. His work in the 1930s with the remarkable Group Theatre turned the theater world upside down. Drawing on his own background, Odets brought a new gritty realism – in concept, dialogue, and performance – into being. He burst on the scene with *Waiting for Lefty* – a dynamic one-act play. But *Awake and Sing* which followed, the story of a Bronx Jewish family (considered to be the quintessential Jewish drama written in English), brought him fame.

Yet Odets' work has languished over the
(see Backalenick, page 9)



(l-r) Edwin Cahill as the Bar Man and Gardner Reed as Zelda in *Zelda at the Oasis*. Photo credit is Carol Rosegg.



A FOCUS ON HEALING



Jewish Chaplain

BY RABBI LEON OLENICK

Hallelujah

I was in a deep sleep when I heard my pager go off. I glanced at the clock on my night table. It was 3 a.m. I stumbled to the telephone and called the office. They told me that there was a death and a family was in need of spiritual support. They gave me the address. I washed my face and threw my clothes on and proceeded to my car. As I gradually faded out of the embrace of sleep, I realized that this address was in one of the more violent parts of town – there were often shootings and robberies and I was afraid to proceed, though I knew that I had to.

I locked my car doors as I searched the desolate and dark streets of this Miami neighborhood, for house numbers. The houses were falling apart, and there were no street lights. I thought I had entered a third world country. Signs of poverty were everywhere. My thoughts turned to the people in our world that are oppressed and who cannot live with dignity. How can we, a nation of plenty, allow this to happen? I knew this went on in our society, but was shaken when I found myself actually occupying the space where the richest country in the world had failed miserably.

Finally, I found the street I needed to be on, though it seemed like more of an alley than anything. The space was large enough for one car to drive into it from either direction. As I approached the house I saw many people in the street blocking the way. They were people of color. I am white, and was probably becoming whiter with fear. There were probably 30 people outside the house. I parked my car and made my way through the crowd and to the doorstep. I entered the house and introduced myself as the Chaplain. The house was neat and clean, the furniture reminded me of the furniture of my grandmother's house when I was growing up in Philadelphia. I was warmly greeted, and then escorted to the room where the body was kept.

In the bed I saw the remains of an elderly woman who had lived past 90 years. Her frail body revealed her bones and she could not have weighed more than 60 pounds. Her huge black eyes were

covered by strands of gray knotty hair, and she had a look of contentment on her face. I went to her side and invited the immediate family in the house to join me.

The family spoke of her with love and respect, and told me how she was the matriarch of the family. The family told me that she taught them about love, respect, dignity and honor. She taught them right from wrong, and always spoke of how lucky they were to have all that they had, and the blessing of being able to live free. She never complained when she came home from work after cleaning other people's houses all day. She provided for all their physical and emotional needs. They loved her. We all gathered at her bedside and joined hands.

"Holy One, here before us is Millie. Her soul has come to join you. Please open your arms and welcome her into your garden. Let her be greeted by familiar faces of her ancestors. Allow her soul to know she did good for her family and her values will live with them through the generations. Send your angels to escort her through the valley of the shadow of death without fear. Allow her family to know she is safe in your arms, and bless her soul."

After completing my paperwork and waiting for the funeral home to pick Millie up, I sat with this wonderful family and shared in their stories of life. I hugged them and bid them farewell.

I started to walk to my car. By this time there were well over 60 people in the street. I was no longer in fear – it melted away in the presence of this holy family. Millie's oldest son took my arm and asked that I please join them. We formed a circle, and held hands while we sang songs of praise, old fashioned gospel songs for God. The energy was sacred. My heart was completely opened as I became part of the extended family of these people. I feared them a few hours ago and now we traveled together into a holy spiritual space. Time stopped.

When I did return to my car it was about 6 a.m. I was not tired and I felt that I did not have to recite my traditional prayers this morning. I already prayed straight to the source.

Leon H. Olenick is a rabbi and board certified chaplain. He offers spiritual and pastoral care to his patients, families and caregivers spanning a multicultural and religious sphere. He currently is employed by VITAS Innovative Hospice in South Florida. He is married to Jackie Olenick, a Judaic artist. He has three children and nine grandchildren. The stories are taken from a



Why Faith Matters

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

Some advice for people visiting shiva houses

Mourning is very personal. Some will weep, others will be stoic. Do not measure the depth of love by the degree of evident emotion. There is no 'right' way to grieve. You are there to comfort, not to judge.

Do not compare pain. "At least you had your husband for 40 years; my husband died after only 20 years of marriage" is, unsurprisingly, not a comfort to one who is in mourning. Respect the pain that is before you without diminishing it. We all know that things could be worse in virtually any situation. Saying it is no help.

Share any stories about the one who died. These are precious bits, the lifeblood of continual survival in this world. What you remember, relate.

Don't assume a false or exaggerated somberness. Be serious but not maudlin, unless that is how the family wishes you to be. Give space for the mourner to guide the reaction.

If you have a question – should I call/should I visit, will it be welcome? Here is the answer – call. Visit. Staying away will not be seen as delicacy, but as indifference. Better an unwanted visit than an unexplained absence.

As the poet Joseph Brodsky said, "If there is a substitute for love, it is memory." Help them remember. It is a great *mitzvah*.

Voted #1 rabbi in America by Newsweek (2012) and named one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world by The Jerusalem Post (2012), Rabbi David Wolpe is the senior rabbi of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles and author of several books including Why Faith Matters. This teaching was posted on his Facebook profile on July 19, 2012: www.facebook.com/RabbiWolpe. ✨



book of short stories coming out this year, Encounters with the Last Dance. His intention in sharing his real-life stories is to help people who are facing difficult health, caregiving and end of life issues. The stories are true, only the names have been changed. ✨



Jewish Spirituality

By RABBI ELI MALLON

Healing prayer – Imagine desired outcome

The principle of how healing prayer works can be found in diverse Jewish sources.

Visualized Prayer

All of us pray for our personal needs. Sometimes in synagogue, during formal prayer, but more often – at almost any time during our daily lives, wherever we are.

I'd guess that many people, asked how they pray, would answer, "I don't know." The prayer might be nothing more than a wish, expressed within our own hearts, that G-d "take care" of a problem in our lives, or in the lives of those we love.

How do you pray?

With a minyan? Alone?

Walking? Standing? Sitting? Kneeling? Lying down?

Eyes open? Closed?

Speaking your words of prayer verbally? Mentally? Speaking words at all?

Rabbi Morris Lichtenstein, founder of the Society of Jewish Science, taught a form of personal, non-liturgical prayer called "Visualization" or "Visualized prayer." This kind of prayer can be done anywhere – but preferably where you can sit quietly, undisturbed, for 15 minutes or more.

In this type of prayer, you use your imagination – you choose a mental image. But unlike the familiar kind of petitionary prayer in which we ask G-d to please (maybe) help us with an overwhelming problem – in Visualized prayer, we choose a mental image not of the problem, but of the *solution*.

"In these mental prayers, there should never be formed any negative images... [one] should see always with his [or her] mental vision *only the state in which he [or she] desires to be...*"¹

Are you sad? Do you want cheer? Visualize yourself as cheerful.

Are you anxious? Do you want calmness? Visualize yourself as calm.

The Divine Mind in you – the level of your own mind that is both highest and deepest – invariably responds in kind to every thought you put before it.

I have much to say about this type of prayer, but one of its strongest points is that it's a definable skill that can be taught,

practiced and mastered with relative ease. So much so that Mrs. Tehillah Lichtenstein, the Rabbi's wife – his chief student, and his successor as leader of the Society of Jewish Science – writing almost 20 years after him, used language that clearly reflects the same principles:

"When we pray with the imagination, when we visualize our prayer, when we see with our mind's eye the state in which we wish to be, we are addressing our prayer to the Divine forces within ourselves; we are invoking them into action by the visualized declaration of that which we wish to attain."²

Some of my most satisfying moments as a teacher have been those in which I was able to impart this to individuals and groups.

¹Lichtenstein, Rabbi Morris; "Prayer"; *Jewish Science and Health* (c. 1925), p. 51

²Lichtenstein, Tehillah; "When to Pray and How to Pray"; *Jewish Science Interpreter*, Apr., 1940; p. 4

Avraham and Spiritual Healing

"...Three men stood opposite [Avraham]..."¹

*Three men [who were really angels] – "One to notify Sarah of the birth of [Yitzhak/Isaac], one to destroy Sodom, and one to heal Avraham. For one angel doesn't carry out two missions...But Raphael, the angel who healed Avraham, went from there to rescue Lot."*²

A story is told:

"On the very day that he assumed the Rabbinate of Brody, Galicia, the famous Rabbi Shlomo Kluger was asked to be *sandak* [godfather] at a *bris* [circumcision]. Arriving at the parents' home, he learned that the child's father was dying and that, according to a local *minhag* [custom], the *bris* would be deferred until after the father's death, so that the infant could be given the father's name. Rabbi Kluger quickly called a *minyan* and had the *bris* done at once.

To everyone's amazement, the father spontaneously recovered!

The entire city was astir at the miracle that had happened.

Rabbi Kluger explained that he'd based his action on the 'Rashi' cited above:

'Is there a lack of angels in heaven,' he'd asked himself, 'that the same angel sent to heal Avraham had to be sent also to rescue Lot?'

It seemed to him that the only explanation was: Lot's merits hadn't been enough to send an angel to rescue only him. So, the angel who healed Avraham was sent to help Lot, too, 'on the way.'

'It occurred to me,' Rabbi Kluger said, 'that the infant's father was being judged in Heaven and that his merits hadn't been enough for *Eliyahu ha-Navi* [the prophet Elijah] to come down to earth solely to

bring him healing. But since Eliyahu attends every *bris*, I had it done at once, so that Elihayu might come down immediately, bringing healing to the child and father, too, 'on the way.'³

The Tzemach Tzedek, too, once told the father of a child who was near death: *Tracht gut vet zein gut*; "Think positively, and the out-come will be good." [lit.: "Think good and it'll be good."] The child healed.⁴

Rabbi Kluger, roughly contemporary with the Tzemach Tzedek, wasn't a Hasidic teacher. [*] Yet, both were applying the same spiritual principle or "law," expressed in the Zohar as:

It'a'ru'ta d'l'ta'ta, it'a'ru'ta d'l'e'la – "An awakening (or "push") from below (creates) an awakening (or "push/response") from above."⁵

From this, we learn the essential principle of healing prayer:

G-d – present everywhere in and around us – responds in kind to the content of our belief.

As the Nefesh HaChaim said: "Just as G-d is *Elokim*, 'Master of all forces' everywhere, guiding and directing them each moment, so it [is] His Will to grant [us] sovereignty over countless forces and worlds through the way [we conduct ourselves] in [our] actions, words, and thoughts at every moment."⁶

Everyone else in Brody believed the father was about to die. Rabbi Kluger did, too, for a moment. But he immediately replaced this with the undiluted belief that Eliyahu, attending the *bris*, would be bringing healing. He also believed without any doubt – based on Rashi's comment on Ber./Gen. 18:2 – that an angel (in this case, Eliyahu) who brings help, can and will bring it to more than one person. Its mission still remains only "one."

In that instant, Rabbi Kluger's own thinking changed. In his "mind's eye," he no longer saw the father dying. Based on his belief and reasoning, he could only see the father as healed.

As Rabbi Morris Lichtenstein later taught:

"In these mental prayers, there should never be formed any negative images... [one] should see always with his [or her] mental vision *only the state in which he [or she] desires to be...*"⁷

The change in Rabbi Kluger's own thoughts brought about the healing.

Rabbi Kluger's explanation also demonstrated to himself and everyone else that his belief was based in Torah – therefore, on a higher level of awareness of the Divine Presence and Involvement.

What's more, the community's *minhag* of deferring the *bris* was reinforcing a belief by everyone, including the father
(see Mallon, page Healing 3)



Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

Hospital blues

Being a senior citizen and moderately well informed (the two go together, you know) I'm frequently considered by youths as to career field choices – a catalog that runs from Aardvark Research to Zoologist. But when I come across a candidate with a heart for their fellow creatures and a brain that ticks strong and consistently, I recommend nursing – the best kept career secret of the decade.

Good pay, a great platform into other medical pathways, and strong demand. (Ever seen nurse unemployment figures?) I guess not. It's a non-statistic. And best of all, an opportunity to warm the cold world of those not as strong as we fortunates. My theories were put to the test last month. I was sentenced to five days in that multistoried hotel where all the attendants wore white and green and evidently had taken my career counsel to heart.

Yes, I know it's an old platitude that hospitals are for strong, healthy people – not sick, weak souls whose only desire is to be left alone to wallow in self pity and plot escape strategies. Hmmm, let's see if I could masquerade as a nurse – walk nonchalantly to the elevator and in 30 seconds I'm on the ground floor heading for the exit. Dreamer! They'd tackle me at the nurse's station that is staffed by the beefier, younger prodigies of Florence Nightingale that we escapees notice is always close by and guarding the escape elevator.

The urge to flee is provoked by the 24-hour regimen these nurse heavyweights impose. Like party girls, they don't know night from day. "Hey, that guy in 646 has been asleep for two hours now. Let's burst in the room – turn on the klieg light and do some obscenely unimaginable things with suppositories to him. And then when he's fallen asleep we'll awaken him to take his vital signs. That oughta do it."

I exaggerate, of course, a little bit, but it does seem that like bats they prefer night over day.

I tried to be a model patient. I never screamed when they showed up at the door equipped with needles that would seem made for a horse, not a human. And I admit I was infatuated with the Intravenous Concept (IV). What a great invention. No need to make a new hole in me that my Creator never imagined –

MALLON

(continued from *Healing 2*)

that the father would die. Performing the bris immediately strongly impressed and affirmed for everyone the counter-thought that the father would instead continue to live and be well.

The change in the community-thought contributed to the healing.

Finally, that Rabbi Kluger saw this process as involving an angel or Eliyahu means that his change in thought was taking place not in the "rational" or "conscious" part of his mind, but in his imagination – which in its deeper levels borders the Infinite:

"...G-d cannot be perceived through the mind alone. If you would know G-d, do not seek merely to prove His existence, but turn to Him with your heart; affirm your union with Him, affirm His responsiveness to prayer, pray to Him; if you actually turn to G-d ... speak to Him in your heart, you will be astonished to



just put it in that bottle that's dripping into his arm. So, why not a pomegranate martini once or twice a day? I tried the idea on one friendly, caring angel in white. She reacted like the drill sergeant when you suggested a picnic on your cross country march.

But I must admit that aside from this confusion I was treated with extreme tenderness. Of course, I came into the game with a great advantage. My wife was a nurse! So, in a way I was a sorority sister. It was a mantra. As my sister of mercy raised her arm equipped with needles, other sharp accessories, suppositories, or worse, I hollered, "My wife! She's one of y'all – she's a NURSE! Have mercy".

"Yes, yes, you told me that Mr. Roberts, last night and the night before, but we still must do this procedure."

"Sure, sure, I understand. My wife, she's a nurse, ya know. She explained it to me."

So that helped a little, but not enough. I'm ashamed to admit, that though I've logged many years of marketing – basically the art of persuasion – I never talked a single nurse out of a single procedure. Dedicated angels of mercy that they are. I couldn't help but rejoice at my good luck.

*Ted Roberts, a Rockower Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks at Jewish life with rare wit and insight. Ted lives in Huntsville, Ala., where for 25 years he has served as bar mitzvah teacher. His inspiration is his patient wife, Shirley. Check out his website: 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. Submitted 6-21-12. ☆*

find how close He is to you, you will feel His nearness, you will have found G-d."⁸

It's not that "we" ever heal another or ourselves. Healing always comes from G-d. But we *allow* healing to occur by seeing only that perfect state – just as Rabbi Kluger did:

"When we pray with the imagination, when we visualize our prayer, when we see with our mind's eye the state in which we wish to be, we are addressing our prayer to the Divine forces within ourselves; we are invoking them into action by the visualized declaration of that which we wish to attain."⁹

That's the principle: G-d is always responding in kind to our thoughts.

We apply it, then, by the thoughts that we intentionally choose in prayer.

And at all other times, too.

¹ *Bereishith/Gen.* 18:2

² Rashi on above

³ based on: Friedman, Alexander Zusia; *Wellsprings of Torah*; Alpert, Rabbi Nison L., ed. and Hirschler, Gertrude, trans.; The Judaica Press, Inc., 1974; vol. I, p. 37 (no further source is given for this anecdote)

⁴ See *Sefer HaSichos* 5687, p. 113 and sources cited there; explained in *Likkutei Sichos*, Parshas Shemos 5751; see also <http://rabbielimallon.wordpress.com/2011/01/16/hasidut-and-positive-words/>

* Rabbi Kluger (1783-1869) was a teacher of Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (the "Beis Ha-Levi"), whose great-grandfather was Rabbi Chayim of Volozhin (chief disciple of the Vilna Gaon) and whose great-grandson was Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (the "Rov")

⁵ see Tanya; *Igeret Ha-Kodesh* # 4 (p. 405), citing Zohar 77b and elsewhere

⁶ Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin; *Nefesh HaChaim*; Rabbi A.Y. Finkel, trans.; Judaica Press, 2009; p. 32

⁷ Lichtenstein, Rabbi Morris; "Prayer"; *Jewish Science and Health* (c. 1925), p. 51

⁸ Lichtenstein, Tehillah; *Applied Judaism*; "Can We Prove That G-d Exists?"; p. 96 (originally part of "How Shall We Find G-d;" *Jewish Science Interpreter*, June, 1940; p. 4)

⁹ Lichtenstein, Tehillah; "When to Pray and How to Pray"; *Jewish Science Interpreter*, Apr., 1940; p. 4

Rabbi Mallon first came as an adult to Jewish learning, after experience with Transcendental Meditation (TM), Yoga, and other growth-producing modalities. He also studied Jewish Science and Visualization at the Society of Jewish Science in New York. Over the years, he has taught people of all ages as a bar/bat mitzvah instructor, Hebrew school teacher, cantor, pastoral counselor and rabbi, in addition to his work in public education. He resides in New City, NY. View other word works by him at: <http://rabbieli.mallon.wordpress.com>. ☆



Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Heartfelt love of life

Parkinson's, Shaken, Not Stirred! A Collection of Poems by Elaine Benton. Available as a Kindle E-Book from Amazon.com. 2011. Pp. 87.

Poet Elaine Benton, born in England in 1963 and made *aliyah* to Israel at age 21, proves to us in clever rhyme and wise insight that she cannot be defined by the two debilitating diseases with which she has been afflicted. Converting her private agony into a source of hope for others, reflects a noble spirit who in the midst of her own distress reaches out to those who presently suffer of whatever ailment and condition, or potential victims in life's uneven journey.

The first disease, Gaucher, a rare genetic disorder inherited from Benton's parents kicked in when she was only 5 years old, and the second one, Parkinson's – who both her father and her brother share with the latter also having Gaucher – touched Benton at the age of 44. All of us can learn from an indomitable will that does not bend to the deck of cards life dished her out, though she admits to the challenging and demanding coping with medical shortcomings that profoundly affect her and her family.

She freely relates to the adverse social impact as friends suddenly disappears from view, but chooses to blame ignorance rather than malice for the reversed attitude, while wholeheartedly acknowledging the kindness of strangers who are most helpful as she tries to maneuver with her wheelchair in public. Tenderly yet resolutely Benton urges disabled people who would benefit from using a wheelchair not to be vain and help themselves to it since it is bound to make a huge difference in their lives. What an indication of her down-to-earth rootedness away from impractical pretense!

Beholden to "darling" husband Brian for his loving understanding and support, she clearly and proudly states her own contribution to a healthy relationship

Finding healing, renewal in 2013

BY CAROLINE FLOHR

As a new year dawns, many Americans still grieve losses experienced in 2012. For some, it's very personal – the death of a parent, spouse or child. Others mourn the lives lost in one of the many tragedies we experienced together as a nation.

As a mother of a 16-year-old twin daughter killed in a car accident involving eight teenagers, I assure those of you who are still coming to terms with your loss and grief – it is possible to journey from



that has withstood a severe test of reality. Having some limitations does not imply the lack of abilities and even special gifts! Benton also lavishes praise on her daughter Tobi, family, friends and doctors who have stood by her side on a trying though fulfilling and lesson-filled journey which continues to unfold with contrasting reassuring hope and frustrating realism. Her gift of humor, and indispensable medication, is evident throughout the book whose poems pour out of a simultaneously aching and grateful heart.

"The Parkinson's Locomotion," for example, is bound to uplift many a downcast spirit with Benton able to laugh at herself with self-deprecation. "Drugs, help to a point, not complete satisfaction,/Get me through, each day, is some compensation,/My sense of humor, intact, a true salvation,/comical shaking, dancing, makes distraction" (pg. 57). She vents her frustration and anger which is therapeutic. "Much time, spent at the doctors, in deliberation,/The disease, speeds on, leaving devastation,/ Less able, to go out, feeling isolation,/ Why I have, Parkinson's? No justification!" (pg. 57).

The author's contagious and heartfelt love of life has grown and matured, no doubt, in the dark crucible of pain and doubt, turning her into a faithful teacher who insistently bids us not to take for granted our basic blessings, an approach born of an affirming, caring and compassionate Jewish heritage and Benton's soaring soul. She can be reached at ElaineBenton@elainebenton.net and her website: www.elainebenton.net.

Rabbi Israel Zoberman is spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Va. A Certified Pastoral Counselor, he is the first rabbi to earn a doctorate in Pastoral Care and Counseling from McCormick Theological Seminary in 1980. ✨

the unimaginable to acceptance and a spiritual peace. I urge you to embrace the healing power of family and community, love and faith. You will be surprised at how it can transform you.

You can find renewal in this new year.

I have learned that death defines not the end, but a beginning. I have learned that, by weaving tragedy into the fabric of our lives, we can be stronger, spiritually richer and, yes, even happier for it.

Here are some of the milestones I experienced on my journey to inner peace:

- **Deeper meaning:** Through the death of someone so important, you will be changed. The question is how you will be changed. Will you grow, or become diminished? I grew with the realization that death – so often viewed as an end – is just the beginning of another phase of existence. One of my favorite quotes is from poet Rabindranath Tagore: Death is not extinguishing the light. It is putting out the lamp because dawn has come.

- **Celebrate life:** When the bereaved are able to look at the life of a person who has passed and see more beauty than pain, they should rejoice. The reality of a person's absence will always have an element of sadness, but the joy of wonderful memories is even more powerful. When loved ones leave this Earth, graces are given to those relationships left behind. These are gifts. When we can acknowledge them, our lives can expand in the present.

- **Ready for anything:** Once you've experienced the worst and pulled through, you know you will be able to weather just about any adversity. Maya Angelou wrote, "You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it." Have faith in that inner strength we all harbor.

- **Appreciate what you have:** Life as we know it will come to an end. This includes everyone we know, love and care about; it's a fact that we often forget, and it's as startling to remember as it is true. Come good or bad, we do not know what the future will bring, which means we should take every opportunity to fully embrace the present, and our loved ones.

Caroline Flohr is the author of "Heaven's Child," www.heavenschild.com. It details her spiritual journey beginning with the sudden death of 16-year-old twin daughter, Sarah. Flohr was forced to dig into the deeper meaning of existence and came away with profound edification and appreciation for the gifts left behind by those who leave us. Flohr lives with her husband and children on Bainbridge Island, a suburb of Seattle. ✨



As I Heard It

BY MORTON GOLD

Music by Hillel Tigay

In the many years that I have written this column I have always tried to find something positive to write about any CD or video that I was reviewing. One must confess that I am hard pressed to do so on this occasion. It is not a question of my liking or disliking the material or the genre, style or whatever. If there is something positive I can describe, I will do so. If there is some *chachma*, some form, idea or artistic smarts about the contents I would surely mention it.

As it is I cannot in all honesty write something positive about the following and I would beg my readers to understand where I was coming from. The video in question is called "Judeo: Modern Music from the Past." It was performed by Hillel Tigay, as soloist and conductor. He is connected with Cong IKEA in Los Angeles. The aim of these selections is to "blend ancient prayers with sounds inspired by U2 and Peter Gabriel." NOTE: SOUNDS not melodies, not harmonic progressions, but something simply described as sounds.

The first two selections which I confess is all I could endure have ample "food (or music) for thought and comment. In the first selection, Mr. Tigay accompanies himself on the guitar. He appears disheveled and seems not to be interested in communicating visually with a potential audience. His voice is modest and his singing can best be described as subdued. His main interest appears to be on the guitar accompaniment because that part is voiced louder than the vocal part. (Thus far this is neither really good nor entirely bad.)

It is the second selection that settled the matter for me. This may not be entirely fair to be sure, but for me it was enough. The children sang a phrase in unison which musically can be described as follows: sol (up to) ti-do followed by lower mi-(down to) re-do. These two fragments were repeated and repeated and I lost count just how many times these two couplets were repeated. This was followed by a lively phrase shouted more than sung by a choral group.

When they seemed to have enough, they stopped and then the children returned with their two phrases which were duly repeated umpteen times. At this point a percussionist entered the



(L-R) Seth Numrich, Danny Burstein, and Danny Mastrogiorgio in *Golden Boy*. Photo credit: Paul Kolnik.

BACKALENICK

(continued from page 8)

years....until now. But now Lincoln Center pays tribute with a superb revival of Odets' *Golden Boy* at the Belasco Theatre (a 1907 historic landmark in its own right). The show is a knockout, not only as a fighter's story but as a top-notch production. Thanks to Lincoln Center and to director Bartlett Sher, Odets again resumes his place in the sun.

Golden Boy is the tale of a boy who turns from music to the fight game, from violinist to boxer. The monumental struggle lies within the character himself. Will Joe Bonaparte be true to his soul and his music? Or will he follow the path to



fray. His playing was enthusiastic, unremittingly loud and long. This sort of cadenza seemed to me to have nothing at all to do with the previous goings on and for the life of me I can't figure out just why it was there.

I fully subscribe to the idea that if something does not add to an idea then it detracts from it. This is precisely what occurred here. If there is any *chachma* in this selection, I did not detect it. I suspect that unsophisticated ears and/or background might like this sort of thing. What these settings have to do with Jewish music is something that eludes me. Yes, they may be described as novel and appealing especially to the young.

Who knows, but in this imperfect world, this performance might even be commercially viable. If so, then I wish Mr. Tigay all the luck in the world.

Dr. Gold is a composer/conductor and music reviewer for The Jewish Post & Opinion. He is the 2010 recipient of the Kavod Award given to him by the Cantors Assembly of North America at their convention in May 2010. ★

the fame, riches, glamour that the fight game offers? In short, will he sell his soul for a chance at the title?

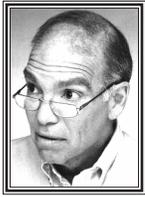
The struggle, so clearly spelled out in this 1937 drama, reflects the playwright's own dilemma, it would seem. Odets' himself left the struggling Group Theatre in the 1930s, to be a screenwriter in Hollywood. The Group, with its innovative ideas and techniques (stemming from the Russian director Stanislavsky) was critically but not commercially successful. Art, then as now, needed to be subsidized.

Thus Odets made the trek to Hollywood. He would provide, he claimed, financial help for his theater. But it also meant big bucks for Odets himself. It would seem that Odets wrestled with his soul as much as his anti-hero Joe Bonaparte. Hence a deeply-moving character study in *Golden Boy*.

Director Sher deals with the problems of a broad shallow stage, as he mounts a series of staccato scenes in his lengthy three-act play. But it works. Sher is blessed with a first-rate cast, particularly Tony Shalhoub as Joe's father. In a quiet, deliberate style, he dominates the stage. Seth Numrich is an appealing boyish Joe, who evolves (or rather deteriorates) believably into the swaggering champ. Others in the cast – among them Danny Mastrogiorgio as Joe's manager and Yvonne Strahovski as the world-weary Lorna – give strong performances.

In all, a memorable experience at a memorable theater.

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



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

A time remembered

Seth Lipsky of the *Jewish Ideas Daily* recently reviewed a biography of the late Menachem Begin. Begin was Prime Minister of Israel through some troubled times. He also was the hard liner who sat with the president of Egypt and made peace.

In 1969, Rachel and I were in Brussels overnight heading to Israel. As we arrived at the airport for the final leg of our journey, we were the last on the bus taking us out on the Tarmac where they had parked the EL Plane. So, we were first up the steps to first class. As soon as we got through the door I saw that there already were four very large men seated in staggered seats. They looked like NFL linebackers. Security? Oh, yeah. For there, seated in the first row was a slight man in his 50s, reading and making notes on a manuscript in his lap.

"Begin!" I whispered to Rachel. Our seats were right behind him. Now if you know my wife, this next will come as no surprise to you.

We left the ground, the seatbelt sign went off and Rachel quickly got up and moved to the front of the section – right in front of the magazine rack (remember – it's 1969). This put her right in front of Begin. She picked up an Israeli newspaper – in Hebrew – of which at the time she spoke only half a dozen words. She began to peruse the front page, standing about six inches from Menachem Begin.

Begin, who was indeed an admirer of good looking ladies looked over his spectacles. Rachel was in her "Laura Petrie" stage with the sheath dress just above the knees and the right hairdo. "Tell me my dear," he asked in that cosmopolitan accent of his, "do you speak Hebrew?"

"Ketsat (a little bit)" she replied with one of the six words.

"Come," he beckoned. "Sit down."

He then called me up and I stood by them and we chatted for the four or five hour flight to Tel Aviv. As we descended the steps (no airways in 1969) all the workers, the baggage handlers, the mechanics crowded to the plane to applaud this "back bencher" who was their hero and their spokesperson in a stratified society.

As he entered the state car waiting for him he graciously asked if we would join him at his home after Shabbat.

The following Saturday evening we went to their modest apartment. It was in downtown Tel Aviv where Begin and his family had lived since the founding of the State. It had six exits so that when the British came to arrest him (which they did on a regular basis) he could escape easily. Rachel and I were invited back for tea the next day and that began a love affair between the Begins and the Shipleys that carries on to this day through his son Benny, a member of Netanyahu's cabinet.

Begin was a man of incredible principle. He believed passionately in the Jewish Homeland. He fought the Nazis in the Polish army – was captured by the Russians and spent a year in a Russian prison camp.

Released when the Nazis attacked Russia he made his way to what was Palestine and fought to make the dream of Israel a reality. Begin was a lawyer by training, a philosopher by temperament. The hours over the years we spent with him and his wife Aliza were precious.

Begin was the first leader of the Herut political party. They felt that history backed up the dream. That the Arab nation did not designate by nationality – that was the Europeans who did that as they carved up the oil rich region amongst themselves after WWI.

Begin and his party knew that the only thing the "So Called PLO" as he referred to it wanted was to destroy the Jewish State. He believed that the State of Israel was truly a Jewish Homeland and that Jews from Africa, from Asia as well as those from Eastern Europe like himself had equal rights. And he fought for those every day of his life.

He would not allow the State of Israel or its people to be threatened by any nation, any group. He did not hesitate to take out the Iraqi nuclear facility. I do not believe he would hesitate today.

He told Rachel and me he did indeed want to write a memoir after leaving office. "From Destruction to Redemption" was his working title and I was honored that he wanted me to help edit it.

He never got the chance to write it. After the death of his dear Aliza he resigned and spent his last years living with his eldest daughter, a virtual recluse. He was one of the founders, one of the great ones. No, friends, they don't make 'em like that anymore. And that is a pity, now more than ever.

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. ★



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

What just happened in Israel and what does it all mean?

I admit freely that I haven't had the time to understand the latest events in Israel, and in the world around Israel. There was a major confrontation between Israel and Gaza. New weapons were tested and worked. Life was shaken up, and there were casualties on both sides. At a magical moment, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stepped off a plane, and suddenly we were in a new "calm." In the days after, the Palestinians proclaimed that they had won whatever the action was entitled to be called. Then the Palestinians celebrated a new status at the United Nations.

Both proclamations seemed absurd. The only thing the Palestinians in Gaza won was escaping more casualties, and because the United Nations is a mockery, the only loss was realizing how isolated Israel is.

I need to remind you that I am a person of history. I have never owned any product produced by Ford. I use no products connected to Bayer. Among the countries I would never want to go to are Germany and especially Switzerland. If I knew how to boycott Citgo I would, but I discovered that the gas in the station comes from a "gas-farm" that is a neutral supplier. All you get at your station is the additives. The gas could come from anywhere and does. I believe that banks are greedy and dishonest, and as soon as I can unravel my accounts, I am going to a "Credit Union." My only moral lapse is reading the Sunday *New York Times*, both with enjoyment and pain.

The situation in Egypt will determine all of the short term plans for Israeli security. It is impossible that the current policy of monitoring the fragile "calm" did not happen in a moment, and we may have to wait years to understand how it was secured and initiated.

There is so much that is not revealed, a great deal like life itself. We often seem to be in a game of explaining everything within the moment we live with whatever information we have.

It is usually like living on a roller coaster, up and down and frightening. The comfort

(see Karsh, page 11)

Gather the People



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

Rosh Chodesh a vital Holy Day

Before you looked at the title of this *devar Torah*, could you name the *vital* Jewish holy day that occurs once every month?

It's *Rosh Chodesh* of course, the beginning of the new month.

So maybe you're asking yourself: "*Vital holy day*? How can it be holy or vital if the day passes unobserved every month by the overwhelming majority of American Jews?"

Maybe you're thinking: "Anyway, it's just the beginning of the new month, the new moon, hardly an earth-shaking event."

Withal, why should we take time and energy to think about Rosh Chodesh?

Those of us who attend *Shabbat* morning services are familiar with the blessing that we recite once a month, on *Shabbat Mevarekhim ha-Chodesh*, the Sabbath before Rosh Chodesh. You'll find this part of the liturgy in any traditional siddur (prayer-book). If you examine it, you may notice that we stand for this blessing, calling ourselves to pay special attention to the words we are about to recite.

The ritual has several notable features:

The Torah scroll is removed from the ark and held by the *chazzan* (cantor) or a member of the congregation during the blessing.

We pray that in the month ahead we will reawaken ourselves to a life guided by Torah.

The prayer actually announces when the new month will begin.

At the conclusion of the prayer the congregation affirms its belief in God's power to bless us with "life and peace, joy and gladness, deliverance and consolation."

In *parashat hashavua* (weekly Torah reading) Bo, we read: "Then *Adoshem* said to Moses and to Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying: this renewal of the moon shall be for you the beginning of new moons; it shall be to you the first of the months of the year." (Exodus 12:1-2) And we note that Akeidat Yitzchak (Rabbi Yitzchak ben Moshe Arama, 1420-1494) teaches that this was the first commandment we received as a nation, while we were still in Egypt.

Here's the picture: *Adoshem* calls Moses and Aaron and shows them the silver crescent of the moon. He tells them that it's an *ot*, a sign that will serve to focus

Israel's attention. The sign signifies a beginning of renewals or revivals because, according to Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808-1888), *chodesh* doesn't mean month but the *beginning* of the month. It is a day that we are to consecrate, using it to separate and dedicate ourselves to a sacred purpose. The new moon is somehow to be an inducement to moral spiritual action in our day-to-day lives.

So while we have this commandment to sanctify the beginning of the months, it isn't about commemorating astronomical events, such as the phases of the moon. This isn't a form of nature-worship. Akeidat Yitzchak's commentary teaches that, "...to think that any star or heavenly body has dominion over the Jewish people is completely erroneous." To the contrary, the liturgy and ritual of *Kiddush haChodesh*, sanctifying the beginning of the months, are focused on the social life of humankind.

Moreover, Rosh Chodesh differs from other *moadim*, the fixed times of our meetings with God. It has no reference to historical or seasonal events like the *Shalosh Regalim* (three pilgrimage festivals) or *Rosh Hashanah* (New Year).

The Rosh Chodesh *moeid* (meeting time) has a voluntary quality to it since, although God specifies the time of the month, the determination of the exact day is left to the people. In effect, the Rosh Chodesh meeting between God and us is one that we mutually agree to. It isn't the movement and position of heavenly bodies that determines the day of our *moeid*, our meeting with God every month. Only those days specifically fixed as *moadim* by the representatives of the people, not God, are recognized as such. So it is not as if God and we were locked into a relationship by the fixed laws of nature.

But what has this meant practically?

Our verse reads in part, *hachodesh hazeh lachem rosh chadashim*, "this month shall be for you the beginning of new moons..." The word *lachem* (for you), according to Rabbeinu Bachya (Rabbi Bachya ben Asher, 1255-1340), tells us that God did *not* instruct Moses and Aaron to convey the commandment to the people, although it applied to them. So the tradition teaches that the determination of the new moon was reserved to the "elders of the people, a court of experts."

According to the *Baal haTurim* (authored by Rabbi Jacob ben Asher, 1270-1343), the Hebrew *el Moshe v'el Aharon* in our verse (Exodus 12:1) should be understood to tell us that the head of a *beit din* (rabbinic court), represented in the text by Moses, sanctifies the new month by saying *mekudash*, "it is sanctified."

KARSH

(continued from page 10)

of real faith is knowing that there is a loving Creator on deck steering toward a proper course and that sometime in the future, at the proper time, we will see everything and how it all came together. It must be very hard to run the world all by yourself.

Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc., and can be reached at hkarsh@gmail.com. He is a community columnist for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. Submitted Dec. 10, 2012. ✨



Rabbeinu Bachya tells us, "It is unanimously agreed that the authority to determine the calendar adjustments is vested in the hands of the "Jewish Supreme Court" or its equivalent as something handed down from the time of Moses, provided such court is composed of the most knowledgeable and God-fearing people of their generation." In effect, Moses had the "authority to delegate the adjustments..."

In the *galut* (Diaspora), we are without an authorized court of elders. But we have the benefit of a fixed calendar, the preparation of which was delegated to Hillel the Younger (Hillel II, 330-365 C.E.), the last representative of the Sanhedrin. Thus fixing the date for Rosh Chodesh remains in human hands, albeit indirectly, and consequently we know when to celebrate the day.

Although in ancient times *Kiddush haChodesh* was a privilege reserved to the high court, nowadays the members of our congregations recite the blessing, ensuring that we remain conscious of the calendrical cycle and the spiritual opportunities it affords at the beginning of every month.

What we most need to understand is that *Kiddush haChodesh* is meant to be a joint venture between God and Am Yisrael (the Jewish people), to be an inducement to our own voluntary renewal – every month! In this vein, Rabbi Hirsch teaches us that, "The moon, finding itself again in conjunction with the sun, is only to be a model for our finding ourselves again with God, the rejuvenation of the moon a picture of, and an incentive to, our own rejuvenation."

The inevitable demands and indignities of our day-to-day lives have the certain effect of distancing us farther and farther from our high moral spiritual calling, and from all of its potential blessings. So every month, if we avail ourselves of the opportunity, we can allow ourselves to be inspired by the prospect of softening

(see Ben Asher/Bat Sarah, page 12)



Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

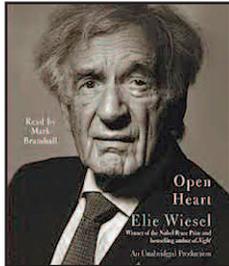
Renewed gratitude for the gift of life

Open Heart. By Elie Wiesel. Translated from French by Marion Wiesel. New York: Knopf. 2012. Pp. 79. \$20.

Prolific author Elie Wiesel's latest book, which originally was published in France in 2011 and became a bestseller, is light only in size. *Open Heart* is a generous gift from a truly loving heart of the most distinguished representative of the generation of Holocaust survivors. Wiesel has risen from Auschwitz's hell, which he entered at age 15, to become the world's witness to the human condition and humanity's prophetic voice of both sacred remembrance and chastising warning. He even admits to making enemies because of his steadfast stance against trivializing Auschwitz, protectively defining the Holocaust as "the Event."

This 1986 Nobel Peace Laureate – he deserves the literature prize too – and Founding Chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, who has earned our nation's greatest honors along with foreign high ones, enjoys a special relationship with President Obama. Perhaps Wiesel's most revealing personal book in which he opens his aching and grateful heart to us, shares and even shocks with his uniquely probing yet sensitive scalpels the watershed impact of his open heart surgery on June 16, 2011 at age 82. Wiesel utilizes this trying medical and life-changing ordeal in his already eventful life to teach us about life's demanding trials and transitions, courageously facing his own mortality at his "greatest pain and darkest anguish." After all, his first passion is teaching and when forced to cancel classes in Florida due to illness he was in a state of crisis.

With his life's experiences passing before him and compelled to engage in stock-taking, this master teacher who is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, is asking challenging questions albeit as his own student: How well has he fulfilled his obligation as a survivor, he who suffered



heavy family losses and miraculously surviving with the consecrated mission to tell a tale of woes without despairing of the Creator nor of a blemished creation? Wiesel is attempting to justify his own survival, wrestling with a God who deprived him of so much but also blessed him beyond measure. Isn't it reminiscent of Biblical Job's searing saga?

Having contributed immeasurably toward a sane and sacred world, ever standing guard, Wiesel nonetheless doubts if he has done all he could and should have in his struggle against evil. He and fellow survivors believed that the world would change for the better, never allowing for genocides again, and how painful it must be for heart-broken Wiesel to conclude, "The fact is, the world has learned nothing."

Snatched from the jaws of the Nazi death machine and naturally carrying with him the survivor's guilt, now that that he has survived another scary experience but under markedly different circumstances, he wonders what's in store for him. While he would have liked to continue with his active and exhausting yet fulfilling schedule, he laments being forced to reduce his commitments.

Wiesel, with his indomitable will is still very involved, exhibiting great stamina and resolve. May he fulfill his heart's fondest desire to live to witness the *B'nai Mitzvah* celebrations of his beloved grandchildren, Elijah and Shira, the children of son Elisha who is named for Wiesel's father Shlomo, who perished so close to liberation.

May Wiesel do so along with his wife Marion, faithful soul-mate and professional helpmate, herself a survivor from Vienna, who has endured health issues of her own. Her brainchild is Beit Tzipora in Israel, the centers to enrich Ethiopian children, named for Wiesel's precious little sister whom he saw with their mother for the last time upon arriving in Auschwitz. Heartfelt good wishes to the entire family for many more years of joy and accomplishments!

This unusual book is sprinkled with culled rabbinic insights from Wiesel's vast treasure trove of knowledge and wisdom, along with biting humor. How hard and heart-wrenching it is to accept the following reflection, testimony to Wiesel's profound humaneness and humility, "Yes, I have written much, and yet, at this stage of my life, at the very threshold of the great portal, I feel that I have not yet begun. Too late?"

Reading this transforming account a few days following the multiple tragedies at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., this line resonates with so much painful relevance and prophetic

EDITORIAL

(continued from page 2)

from everyone else who knew her. I couldn't help but think part of the reason she was such a giving, kind-hearted woman was from having experienced those tragic situations in her life.

Jennie Cohen, January 16, 2013 ✨



BEN ASHER/BAT SARAH

(continued from page 11)

our hearts and reawakening our souls, purposefully reasserting the unique capacity for goodness that exists within each of us.

Rosh Chodesh is when we meet with God for *internal* moral spiritual rejuvenation – as individuals, families, communities, and a people – in our synagogue sanctuaries. The potential transformation that can take place within us on those holy days can be the basis for transforming our *external* social life throughout the remainder of our days.

How can we realistically imagine such a grandiose expectation?

As Rabbeinu Bachya teaches, "Reciting the benediction of the new moon is equivalent to testifying to the fact that God created the universe and all that is in it" – which, of course, God is still creating from moment to moment, including the potential for recharging our moral spiritual energies on Rosh Chodesh.

So you see, Rosh Chodesh can be a vital holy day – if we choose to make it one.

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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). ✨



meaning, "We must choose between the violence of adults and the smiles of children, between the ugliness of hate and the will to oppose it."

We'll do well to keep close to our hearts this delightfully instructive *Open Heart*, both chilling and heart-warming. Contending with the human abyss without succumbing to it, Wiesel emerges from his latest encounter with death with renewed gratitude for the gift of life as his divine guide, looming ever larger in the face of adversity.

Rabbi Israel Zoberman is spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Va. A Certified Pastoral Counselor, he is the first rabbi to earn a doctorate in Pastoral Care and Counseling from McCormick Theological Seminary in 1980. ✨

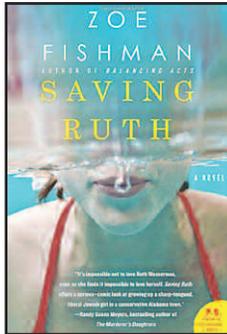
Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

A Southern Jewish Community

Saving Ruth. By Zoe Fishman. New York: William Morrow, 2012. 280 Pages. \$14.99

Many Jewish towns in the South have Jewish communities, often dating back to the time when Jewish peddlers settled down and opened dry goods stores. This experience has been well described in two excellent books by Eli Evans: *The Provincials* and *The Lonely Days Were Sundays*. In Zoe Fishman's second novel, she has told the story of a Southern Jewish community, undoubtedly based in part on her own experience of growing up in an Alabama town.



The first person narrator is Ruth Wasserman, 19-year old daughter of Marjorie and Sam, and sister of David who is a year and a half older than she. Sam is a lawyer. The unnamed town in which they live has a large enough Jewish community to have a synagogue and a rabbi. Sam attends Friday night services regularly and occasionally succeeds in persuading his family to accompany him.

Ruth has just completed her first year at the University of Michigan and is home for the summer. David, who won a soccer scholarship to Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, is also home and the two of them are working as lifeguards and swimming instructors at the local pool. They have lots of time to socialize with friends and Ruth has several dates with Chris, a friend of David's, who is attending a local college. She has become quite attractive, having lost a good deal of weight. Her eating habits become a source of tension between Ruth and her parents. The problem is aggravated when her dentist tells her that she has the mouth of a 90-year-old with reduced enamel and many cavities. He wants her to see a nutritionist.

A major issue arises at the pool when a visiting Black child almost drowns but is saved by Ruth. The child's mother threatens to sue the pool management for negligence. An even greater problem arises when Ruth learns about why David is so silent and antagonistic. The near accident at the pool, David's situation, and tensions at home especially about her diet all contribute

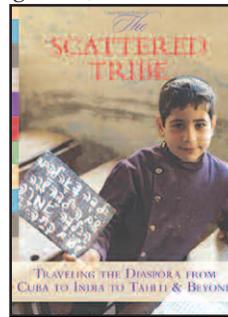
to Ruth's insecurity. Although there is some movement towards resolution of the problems, author Fishman wisely avoids total settlement of the concerns that have been raised. She leaves the door open for a possible sequel to the story or for recognition that the complexities of human relationships do not lend themselves to simple answers.

This realistic presentation sheds considerable light on the intricacies of family life and makes us look forward to future books by Zoe Fishman.

Jews in faraway places

The Scattered Tribe. By Ben G. Frank. Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2012. 288 Pages. \$17.95.

Ben G. Frank is a gifted Jewish travel writer who seeks out unusual Jewish communities all over the world. He presents their history, their present status, sites to see (both Jewish and non-Jewish), and things to eat and to buy. He has previously published Jewish travel guides to Russia, to Europe, to the Caribbean and South America. He has also written articles on travel for Jewish and non-Jewish magazines and newspapers.



What binds the travel destinations in this new book is not geography but rather their exotic nature. Accordingly, he starts by writing about Jews in Russian cities, including St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Odessa as well as three cities on the Trans-Siberian Railway. He then jumps to the South Pacific, describing Tahiti, (with its functioning synagogue, including 200 Jews who show up on *Yom Kippur*), Moorea and Bora Bora which "provides a textbook definition of bliss." Frank is so enchanted by Bora Bora, its thatched-roof, over-water luxury bungalows and "probably the most beautiful turquoise lagoon on earth" that he foregoes his emphasis on Jewish communities. He does this at least once again when he writes about his visit to the Taj Mahal in India which he describes as "this number-one wonder of the world, this memorial to love, this readily identifiable structure – perhaps the most beautiful building ever constructed."

A fascinating chapter describes Frank's visit to Vietnam and the inevitable questions about present-day attitudes towards its former American foes in the Vietnamese war. Frank finds a few Jews in Burma (now Myanmar), locating the synagogue and the Jewish cemetery. He is

Letters to the Editor

Freedom of the Press – The Post & Opinion encourages readers to send letters. All letters to the editor should be addressed to The Jewish Post & Opinion, 1427 W. 86th St. #228, Indianapolis, IN 46260, or by e-mail: jpostopinion@gmail.com.

Dear Dr. Miriam L. Zimmerman,

I read your article "Veteran's Day 2012" in the *JP&O* with great interest. My father, Dr. Georg Glass, received the same medal and notification in 1935 when he was a Jewish refugee in Shanghai. We had left Berlin in 1933 soon after Hitler was elected "Fuehrer und Reichskanzler" (Leader and Chancellor of the Realm).

I do have a quibble though with your daughter's translation of the first line of the Award Document. The letter "s" at the end of both "Fuehrer" and "Reichskanzler" is not indicative of a plural form but of a possessive (genitive) case. Both terms refer specifically to Hitler in whose name the Award was given.

Moreover "Reich" does not indicate an Empire ("Kaisertum") but a Realm. The post of Imperial Chancellor disappeared after the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II following WWI.

Sincerely, Werner Botho Glass, Sc.D.

Zimmerman's reply

Dear Dr. Glass,

Thank you for your interest in my *JP&O* article. I regret the translation errors and appreciate your correction.

My daughter is self-taught in German, from having lived there. She had very little, if any, formal training in the language. Although she studied in Munich for five years at the Technische Universität München, her Ph.D. program was international and the official language was English. Of course, that does not excuse the error. I take it you are a native German speaker.

I am very interested in German Jews and in motivating them to obtain German citizenship. If you left Germany between the years 1933 and 1945, you qualify to become a German citizen. Are you interested?

Sincerely, Dr. Miriam L. Zimmerman ✨



interested in the golden pagodas of Burma and its rapidly changing political situation.

From Burma, Frank goes on to India, North Africa, Cuba, and ends in Israel where he recalls his first visit there in 1952 when he was 18 years old. He writes about Israel as "a great place to live or to visit, to

(see Teicher, page 14)



My Kosher Kitchen

REVIEWED BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Slow-cooked Kurdish/Turkish dishes

Jerusalem: A Cookbook. By Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi. Ten Speed Press. \$35 hardcover. 320 pp. October 2012.

In 1974, Rhode Island-born Joan Nathan, foreign press attaché to Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek and Montreal-raised Judy Stacey Goldman, a freelance writer and editor, decided to write a cookbook to reflect the mosaic of Jerusalem by giving examples of cookery from various communities. The result was *The Flavor of Jerusalem*.

Sami Tamimi grew up in East Jerusalem, went to work as a porter in a West Jerusalem hotel at a young age and then got into food and working in Tel Aviv restaurants.

Yotam Ottolenghi's father is Italian Jewish, his mother is of German descent, and he lived in West Jerusalem. Both moved to Tel Aviv in the 1997. Later, Ottolenghi studied to be a chef at Le Cordon Bleu in London. The two met, became friends and then business partners.

Tamimi is junior partner in Ottolenghi Deli. They decided to write this cookbook as a journey into their "culinary DNA," which form part of their "private odyssey."

"Everything we taste and everything we cook is filtered through the prism of our childhood experiences." They include traditional recipes, fairly traditional and recipes "loosely inspired by the flavors of Jerusalem."

Starting off with their personal introduction, they include essays on Jerusalem food, the passion in Jerusalem's air, about the recipes and history of Jerusalem.

In a rather unconventional style, there are chapters on vegetables (32 recipes), beans and grains (15 recipes), soups (9 recipes), stuffed foods (9 recipes), meat (18 recipes), fish (9 recipes), savory pastries (7 recipes) and sweets and desserts (16 recipes).

Scattered throughout are "essays" on za'atar, falafel, humus, couscous, kibbeh, lamb, sweet cheese and nine other topics.

Measurements are metric and regular and there is an introduction to each recipe about its origins, which I personally feel makes a cookbook wonderful and interesting and more than just a compendium of recipes.

The full-color photographs are mostly Arab subjects, but none of the pictured food or places are captioned. If you want to try some really interesting Jerusalem recipes or know someone who likes to try special recipes from Israel, this would make a lovely gift book.

One of the things I created since living in Israel is an English-language walk through Machaneh Yehudah, the Jewish *shuk* (market). I do these weekly for any length of time for people who live here and for those visiting. Tourists can email me and I will tell them the dates of the weekly walks.

One of the places we visit is the Iraqi *shuk* within the larger *shuk* where there are two restaurants. This recipe comes from one of them, Azura, a Kurdish/Turkish restaurant where food is cooked on the old-fashioned Israeli *ptilia* or kerosene burner for long hours of slow cooking.

Stuffed Eggplant with lamb and pine nuts (4 servings)

- 4 medium eggplants, halved lengthwise
- 6 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 1/2 tsp. sweet paprika
- 1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 finely chopped medium onions
- 1 pound ground lamb
- 7 Tbsp. pine nuts
- 2/3 oz. chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tsp. tomato paste
- 3 tsp. sugar
- 2/3 cup water
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 tsp. tamarind paste
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 425°F. Place eggplant halves, skin side down, in a roasting pan large enough to accommodate them snugly. Brush the flesh with 4 tablespoons of the olive oil and season with 1 teaspoon salt and plenty of black pepper.

Roast for about 20 minutes until golden brown. Remove from oven and allow to cool slightly. While the eggplants are cooking, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large frying pan.

Mix together cumin, paprika and cinnamon. Add half to the frying pan along with the onions. Cook over medium heat about 8 minutes, stirring often. Add lamb, pine nuts, parsley, tomato paste, 1 teaspoon sugar and black pepper. Cook and stir another 8 minutes until meat is cooked.

TEICHER

(continued from page 13)

enjoy a vacation from which you will come away inspired and reflective on what a nation can achieve." Frank does not touch on the current Israeli-Arab problem and this may be consistent with his objective of writing about Jews as "the scattered tribe" although some readers may question his including Israel at all in a book that is otherwise so successfully focused on unfamiliar and exotic Jewish communities. This small quibble aside, we are indebted to Frank for his fascinating tour that takes us off the beaten track to find Jews in faraway places.

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



Place remaining spice mixture in a bowl. Add water, lemon juice, tamarind paste, 2 teaspoons sugar, cinnamon sticks and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Mix well.

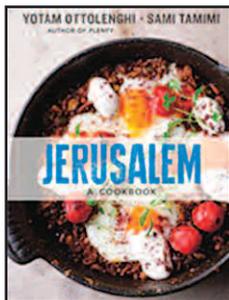
Reduce oven to 375°F. Pour spice into bottom of eggplant roasting pan. Spoon lamb mixture on top of each eggplant half. Cover pan tightly with aluminum foil, return to oven and roast 1 1/2 hours. Remove foil after half hour and again after one hour and baste eggplants with the sauce. Add some water if the sauce dries out. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Roast chicken with Jerusalem artichokes and lemon (4 servings)

Jerusalem artichokes, known as sunchokes in America, are a sunflower tuber with a slight artichoke-like flavor. The Italian name, *girasole articiocco*, became Jerusalem artichokes.

- 1lb. Jerusalem artichokes, peeled and cut lengthwise into six 2/3-inch wedges
- 3 Tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 8 chicken thighs or a quartered whole chicken
- 12 large shallots, halved lengthwise
- 12 sliced garlic cloves
- 1 halved then thinly sliced medium lemon
- 1 tsp. saffron threads
- 3 1/2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2/3 cup cold water
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. lightly crushed pink peppercorns
- 1/4 cup fresh thyme leaves
- 1 cup chopped tarragon leaves
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food and feature writer, and author of nine kosher cookbooks. ★





The Roads from Babel

BY SETH BEN-MORDECAI

Accumulating cacti

When a Hebrew word seems to make no sense in its context, grammar sometimes provides a resolution.

An earlier column examined Hebrew homonyms, words that are pronounced identically to one another, but which have different meanings. More specifically, the column looked at words whose only spelling difference is that one is spelled with a *qamatz* and the other with a *patah*. To refresh your recollection, a *qamatz* and a *patah* are vowel-marks that are placed below a consonant in Hebrew spelling. A *qamatz* is T-shaped. A *patah* is a horizontal line.

Because Israelis pronounce both *qamatz* and *patah* like the sound “a” as in “mirage,” students of Hebrew tend to dismiss the importance of learning whether a word is spelled with one or the other. After all, speaking is what is important. But knowing which words are spelled with which vowel mark allows Hebrew readers to distinguish the different meanings of homonyms. Similarly, educated Americans know that the homonyms “reed” and “read” are pronounced the same, but that the first means a plant and the second means to gather meaning from looking at written words.

Below are several pairs of Hebrew homonyms whose only spelling difference is the use of a *qamatz* or a *patah* in the second syllable:

AshAm (offense, crime) versus *Asham* (be found guilty).

‘AqAr (sterile, barren) versus *‘Aqar* (uproot).

pArAsh (horseman) versus *pArash* (withdraw).

rAshA (bad person) versus *rAsha* (act wickedly).

tsAvAr (cactus) versus *tsAvar* (amass, accumulate).

In Hebrew, *hu ‘AqAr* and *hu ‘Aqar* are pronounced the same, but the first sentence means “he is sterile,” while the second sentence means “he uprooted.” Likewise, *hu tsAvAr* and *hu tsAvar* are pronounced the same, but the first sentence means “it is a catus,” and the second sentence means “he accumulated.”

When learning a new Hebrew word, it may be convenient to pronounce a *qamatz* like “a” as in “father” and a *patah* like “a” as in “what.” Doing so will enable you to



Yiddish for Everyday

BY HENYA CHAIET

Chicago winters when I was a girl

Yiddisheh kinderlach hert zich tzoo un ich vel eych dertzalen ah bissel vegn mineh yungeh yoren. (Yiddish lovers listen and I will tell you a bit of my life story when I was a little girl.)

Vinter is geven zayer kalt un greyleh shnayen in shtaut Chicageh. (The winters were very cold and snowy in Chicago.)

By unz in hoyz flegen mere brennen holtz in ahn ayven, nor dos haut alleh mol geven kalt. (We had no central heat only a wood burning stove, however we were always cold.)

Shabbes fleckt der tateh gayn frel in shul un dee mahmeh fleckt nemen alleh finif maydlach tzoo er in bet aryn. (On Shabbat papa went to *shul* very early and mama would take her five little girls into her bed to stay warm.)

Ich gehdenk nauch dee grayseh kishen un dee paraneh vos zee haut gebracht fun Europe. (She had these very large pillows and down comforter that she had brought with her from Europe.)

Mere hauben zich goot aungehvarem. Zee fleckt unz lehenen dem Yiddisher zeitung der Forvetz. Ah Bintele Breve gehdenklich nach hynt. (She read the *Jewish Forward* to us. I especially remember the Letters to the Editor called, “Bintel Brief”. Some of the stories were very sad.)

Az der tateh iz geh coomen fun shul iz geven tzoo essen ah hayser cholent. Der cholent haut far shmeckt dee gahnsey hoyz. (When papa came home from *shul* we had hot *cholent*. The aroma from *cholent* permeated the entire house.)

recall the correct spelling of many homonyms and will propel you to the top of the class.

An attorney and Semitic linguist with degrees from Brandeis, Stanford and Univ. of Calif., Seth Watkins (pen name, Ben-Mordecai) merges linguistic analysis with legal sleuthing to uncover lost meanings of ancient texts. His Exodus Haggadah uniquely includes the full story of the Exodus in an accessible format. When not lawyering or writing, he enjoys feeding “his” raccoon Ranger, and Ranger’s two cubs. Email: Seth@VayomerPublishing.com. ★

Haynt ahz ich bin kalt, ken ich machen varem in ayn minute nor dos dervarem nisht mein neshaumeh. (Today if the house is cold it only takes a few minutes to heat up, however it does not warm my soul.)

Zol ach zein varem in der neshaumeh. (May your soul as well as your body be warmed.)

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

ABOUT THE COVER

(continued from page 2)

All jewelry is designed with words and symbols, to bring one closer to the sacred, to lift one up and open ones heart.

Olenick presents and teaches hands-on workshops for temples, schools and organizations where participants of all ages and all levels of skill can learn about Judaic art and create their own unique pieces for their home.

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi has honored Olenick as an artist and artisan in the Sacred Guild of the Disciples of Betzalel. Two of her images are included in the set of the Coen Brothers movie, *A Serious Man*.

The Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) has selected several of Olenick’s images for book, CD and songbook covers. Many images adorn greeting cards, which can be purchased at fine gift and Judaica shops throughout America. This year the URJ has selected Jackie’s artwork exclusively for their calendar.

The artist’s work has been exhibited and extensively collected throughout America and is in private, organizational and synagogue collections.

She works in several mediums including acrylic and collage/multimedia, for which she is noted. Olenick has created bold and bright, large pieces that are appropriate for a temple or can serve as a focal point in a home.

She is married to Rabbi/Chaplain Leon Olenick (see his article in the Healing Section) and they have three grown children and nine grandchildren, from whom she constantly draws inspiration and *naches*. To see more of her artwork visit her website at www.jackieolenickart.com or email her at jackieolenick@gmail.com. Also check on Facebook and Twitter. ★



Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

The Jewish Post & Opinion

1427 W. 86th St. #228
Indianapolis, IN 46260

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The weather and Hadassah-Israel National Conference

Everyone is talking about the weather that started on Mon., Jan. 7. The headline read: "Chaos reigns as rain and winds pound the country." There were winds to 52 miles an hour, flooding closing one of the major Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highways, flooding other places (like my storage room downstairs!) and so much snow on Mount Hermon, the ski area was closed.

On Wed., Jan. 9, it rained, hailed and snowed. They continued until the next night with temperatures in the 40s for the weekend.



Snow on streets and palm trees of Jerusalem? Yep! Photos by: Simcha (Eddie) Margolis.

With all of this, my friend, Paula and I headed out in her car at 7:30 a.m. on January 9, (leaving behind her husband and no electricity in their home) for the two-hour drive to Caesarea and the 30th anniversary of Hadassah-Israel and its annual conference to participate in the second day of activities. Its theme was "From the Bible to the Palmach."

Approximately 200 women attended, representing the 2500 members of 20 Hebrew and English-speaking chapters throughout Israel. We arrived in time to hear a fascinating lecture by Smoky

Simon, Chair of World Machal, the organization of volunteers. David Ben-Gurion said, "The Machal forces were the Diaspora's most important contribution to the survival of the State of Israel."

Simon explained that Machal were the volunteers who came to Palestine in 1947 to help the state, militarily. He proceeded to give a history of the factors leading up to the War of Independence, the formation of Machal (when 4800 volunteers came from 58 countries), his own role as Chief of Air Operations and the founding of the Israel Air Force.

Then Bar Ilan University School of Communications lecturer Dr. Aliza Lavie discussed research she had found on women who had authored prayers for women, based on her book, *A Jewish Woman's Prayer Book*.

This was followed by a lecture by former diplomat, former member of Knesset, Tamar Eshel, niece of Avshalom Feinberg, relating his roots. Eshel's mother was Feinberg's younger sister. Feinberg is remembered as one of the members of the espionage group Nili, which passed information about the Ottomans to the British, along with Sarah and Aaron Aaronsohn.

The last speaker we heard, Alex Giladi, presented film clips of himself explaining his work as one of the pioneers of Israel television. A journalist and correspondent, he was Israel's first member of the International Olympic Committee; led the Israel TV delegation to the 1972 Munich games and subsequent games; is senior vice president of NBC sports; and is president and CEO of Israel's first commercial television channel.

On the previous day, delegates had heard about the present and future of Hadassah Mt. Scopus from their director, Dr. Osnat Levtzion-Korach and about the Hadassah-Israel fundraising project for 2013, the pediatric intensive care unit at Hadassah Ein Karem, from their director Professor Philip Toltzis.

Despite the inclement weather,

RAPHAEL

(continued from page 5)

Rabbi Rayzel Raphael is a rabbi in Private Practice in the Delaware Valley. She performs wedding and life cycle events, concerts and teaching. Website: www.Shechinah.com. She is also part of the music group MIRAJ. The above song is available on their CD: Counting Angels in the Wilderness at www.cdbaby.com/cd/miraj2 (number 13). This column had editorial input from Michael Schatz. ✨



From the White House, East Wing, Chanukah Reception, on the 6th night of Chanukah. Rabbi Israel Zoberman is joined by his daughter, Rachel Zoberman Azoff, at the Menorah used for the occasion.



delegates on the first day toured in the area. The conference ended with the installation of the National officers and everyone being sent home in the still windy and raining weather. With torrential rain and winds, traffic and multiple accidents along the way, our trip to Jerusalem lasted two and a half hours.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, lecturer and cookbook author. She also leads walks through Machaneh Yehudah, the Jewish produce market in English. ✨