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Mi Sheberach

A Focus on Healing

THE OATH OF MAIMONIDES

The eternal providence has appointed me to watch over the life and health of Thy creatures.

May the love for my art actuate me at all time; may neither avarice nor miserliness, nor thirst for glory or for a great reputation engage my mind; for the enemies of truth and philanthropy could easily deceive me and make me forgetful of my lofty aim of doing good to Thy children.

May I never see in the patient anything but a fellow creature in pain.

Grant me the strength, time and opportunity always to correct what I have acquired, always to extend its domain; for knowledge is immense and the spirit of man can extend indefinitely to enrich itself daily with new requirements.

Today he can discover his errors of yesterday and tomorrow he can obtain a new light on what he thinks himself sure of today.

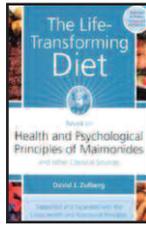
Oh, God, Thou has appointed me to watch over the life and death of Thy creatures; here am I ready for my vocation and now I turn unto my calling.

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

Editorial

An important message: *I'm not sure that we will be able to print and mail all of our next National issue in August, but we will have it on our website and it is easily printable on a home printer because the dimensions of the pages are 8-1/2 X 11 inches. If you have any questions about this or anything else, use the information on page 2 of this edition to contact us.*

I was not planning for this to be a "summer reading" issue but after receiving so many wonderful book reviews I wanted to include as many as possible. Since this is a wellness/healing edition, I will mention one book that stood out. For a future issue, I hope to review *The Life-Transforming Diet: Based on Health and Psychological Principles of Maimonides and other Classical Sources* by David J. Zulberg, Feldheim Publishers.



The market is flooded with all kinds of diet, exercise and health promoting books but this one is unique and I doubt you will find another like it. All the foods mentioned are kosher and the book has an appendix titled, "Shabbos Meals in Halachah". Based on the teaching of Maimonides and the author's research, he created herbal supplements that are certified kosher.

David Zulberg spent seven years studying in Israel and is considered one of the foremost experts in Maimonides' medical works. David holds a Masters in business from Columbia University in NYC. He is an ACE certified Fitness specialist, a certified Health Coach and studied herbal medicine at the American College of Healthcare Sciences.

On May 17 I had the pleasure of attending a special tribute service for Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso that took place at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis. Sandy is retiring after 36 years of sharing the pulpit with her husband Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso. Two months prior to that, Dennis received the prestigious annual Rabbi Ira Eisenstein Award for Distinguished Rabbinic Leadership. Read more about what is going on with them in their columns on page NAT 3.

As the first ever rabbinic couple, they came to Indianapolis in 1977 to become the first to jointly lead a congregation, and Sandy was the first woman to lead a Conservative congregation. Three years prior, this newspaper had a photo of her because she was the first woman rabbinical student to graduate from the Reconstructionist

About the Cover

"Maimonides Prayer"

By Jackie Olenick

All doctors, nurses, and health care workers will want this beautiful version of "Maimonides' Prayer." The piece measures 12 x 14" in a double matt and is also available in a beautiful gold wooden frame.

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



Jackie Olenick

(see About the Cover, page 13)



Rabbis Sandy & Dennis Sasso. (undated photo).

Rabbinical College in Philadelphia. (See news item in IN Editorial, June 12, 2013.)

To give an idea how our society has changed since then in regard to female congregational leadership, an article in *The Indianapolis Star* on May 19 reports that when Sandy was 23 and in her first year of seminary studies, a woman wrote her a letter saying "the very idea of a female rabbi makes me sick." Today approximately 50% of the Reform rabbinical students are female.

The Sassos are not only known for their informative sermons, wonderful storytelling, and laugh-out-loud funny jokes and puns, but so much more. They both have doctorate degrees and have also received honorary doctorates. In Indianapolis they have been involved in arts, civic and interfaith activities and have taught at local universities and a seminary. They both write columns for *The Indianapolis Star*. This is the tip of iceberg for their numerous accomplishments.

Some of you may know Sandy because of her award winning children's spirituality books. They have been best sellers not only on Jewish books lists but on Catholic and other book lists. Her latest book, *The Shemah in the Mezuzah* won the 2012 National Jewish Book Award for Best

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Illustrated Children's Book. Her book for adults, *God's Echo: Exploring Scripture* (see Editorial, page 11)

Mentor's faith grounded in belief that good can overcome evil

BY RABBI DENNIS C. SASSO



Recently I was privileged to receive the Rabbi Ira Eisenstein Award for Rabbinic Leadership. It honors the memory of my beloved teacher and mentor, and founder of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Ira Eisenstein (1906–2001) was the prime disciple (and son-in-law) of Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan (1881–1983), whose ideas launched Reconstructionist Judaism in America.

I was fortunate to serve as Ira's assistant rabbi for three years in New York, before coming to Indianapolis in 1977. This column is devoted to some of the lessons I learned from my teacher.



Rabbi Ira Eisenstein

Like Kaplan, Ira taught that Judaism is not merely a faith tradition but "the evolving religious civilization of the Jewish people," where believing, behaving and belonging intersect in a constant becoming. For Kaplan and Eisenstein "salvation" is not an otherworldly destination, but the ongoing quest to fulfill our true humanity and the improvement of the world.

I will always remember the power of Ira's thinking, but it was Ira's living that impressed me most. He cared not only about what we were thinking, but about how we were doing: How were the children? Did we make time for ourselves and each other? He was not only an inquiring teacher but also a caring elder who delighted in the next generation's flowering.

From Ira I learned that religion does not exist in a vacuum. It is a human, social reality where "belonging precedes believing." If we want to help people love and practice their faith and heritage, we must first help them feel at home in it.

Ira taught us that religion is ultimately about an attitude towards the world and life itself.

"Do we find life good? If we believe that life is worthwhile, that it is good, that, ...in spite of poverty and war, in spite of ...all the sad and difficult conditions in the world, the world is a wonderful place and can be made still better ...then we believe in God."

Ira wore his rabbinate naturally and disdained artificiality. When we were ordained, he told my wife Sandy and me that in the course of our labors we would certainly receive a lot of criticism and

You are not what you do

BY RABBI SANDY EISENBERG SASSO



June is a month of graduations and weddings and the third most popular month to have a baby. Social scientists call such times of transition "liminal moments." You are poised somewhere between what you have always known and the still unknown place to which you are going. The place in between is filled with uncertainty and anticipation. As I retire at the end of this month and envision a new chapter in my life, I have been thinking about what these changes mean and what they teach us.

For years you are a student and your main responsibility is to go to class, read and study. Then you take off your graduation robe and you enter the job market and assume a new role and obligation in society. For all your life, you have been single; your primary responsibility is to yourself, your family and friends. Then you link your life to another, and you become part of a couple, responsible to one another in deeply intimate ways. Life changes once again when you embrace a new life and become parents, with worries and joys you could never have imagined. When you retire, you leave much of what has defined you and begin to wonder whether who you are



some praise. He warned us not to allow the former to weaken our ego, nor the latter to inflate it. "On the one hand" he said, "congregants want the rabbi to be apart from them. They want to respect (their) rabbi, and (so) prefer to keep a distance ...On the other hand, they want rabbis to be regular (people) who are not standoffish. (This is) the narrow bridge which a rabbi must traverse..."

Ira shunned what he called the metaphysical hairsplitting to which many resort to explain God's role in the light of evil in the world. He said: "I am not concerned about saving God's reputation for omnipotence or goodness. My theology does not call for this kind of apologetics. For me, God is the name we attach to those powers in nature and in humanity... which make for harmony and growth, for interdependence and self-realization..."

At a time when we are tempted to be cynical and pessimistic, when people unabashedly use guns and homemade bombs to kill and maim; when wars abound; when distrust and indifference

(see D. Sasso, page 14)

is only what you do.

I want to suggest that in the process of making a transition that what you have done up until now is not all that you are or are meant to be. You are more than your grades, your looks, your status or your job: you are a person with moral character, dreams and hopes.

Robert Frost taught, "The afternoon knows what the morning never expected." For all of you making transitions, here is what the afternoon knows.

When you hit a wall, seek the help of others and make a door. You will be amazed at what you will find on the other side. Do yourself a favor and exit the superhighways now and again; travel the side roads, wander the unmarked paths to get where you want to go.

It is easy to become complacent, get used to routine, to say, "I've been there, seen that, done that." Don't allow days to pass without noticing them. Be amazed; be surprised by something.

Learn to listen more, not just so you are prepared to counter the other's argument, but to be open to change. Let new information and ideas cause you to rethink your position. Don't be so entrenched that no one can move you.

Life can make you feel cheated or feel blessed. Find 100 reasons each day to be grateful. It may be a friend, a piece of music, spring blossoms or a good book. Then you won't feel cheated, you will feel blessed.

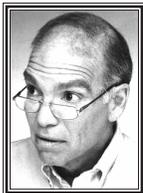
You can spend most of your life figuring out how to accumulate more and more things – money, power, fame. Selfishness will get you more stuff, but generosity will get you more joy.

You can exclude, criticize and blame others for all that is wrong; or you can accept responsibility for making things right.

You can be afraid of making a mistake, of not being accepted, of being laughed at, or you can have courage and forgive yourself for your mistakes (we all make them) and move forward.

In many ways we are all in transition, including our city, state and nation. Maya Angelou's poem at President Clinton's inauguration, "On the Pulse of Morning," spoke of the hope that each new hour holds, of new chances and new beginnings. She ended her poem: "With hope – Good morning." A good morning, if we heed what the afternoon knows.

Rabbi Sandy Sasso retired from Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis after 36 years as senior co-rabbi with her husband Rabbi Dennis Sasso. She will continue speaking, writing and become part-time director of Religion, Spirituality and the Arts Initiative, a project of Butler University Center for Faith and Vocation. Reprinted from the Indianapolis Star June 4, 2013. ✨



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

The legacy of Roman Blum

Roman Blum died a few weeks ago. He was 92 and he wasn't well. He died a very rich man. According to estimates from his accountant and lawyer, somewhere in the area of \$40 million. A nice area. Roman Blum left no family. His wife died a few years ago.

Roman Blum was a Holocaust survivor. He said he was from Warsaw, but the few records found about his early life say he was from Chelm. Those of you who know Yiddish folktales will appreciate why Roman Blum did not want to be known as someone from Chelm.

According to what records are available, he lost a wife and daughter at Auschwitz. Probably his parents as well. But, Roman Blum survived. After Auschwitz was liberated, he found himself in a Displaced Persons Camp – those sad and horrific places where those who had lost everything were thrown until they could “relocate”.

There he met a woman who also had survived. In the confusion of the Camp and the uncertainty of what had passed and what was about to happen, Roman Blum became convinced that this woman and he were the only Jews left on earth, that through some horrible but miraculous circumstance, they had found each other.

Roman Blum felt convinced it was their obligation to re-start the Jewish people. While there was no real love, these two survivors with no other family left, married. It is ironic then that they had no children.

Through luck and perseverance, they came to the United States and settled in New York in a community of other Holocaust survivors. There, Roman Blum built a new life among people he originally thought no longer existed.

As I wrote above, the irony of their marriage to re-start the Jewish people produced no progeny. Nor, to the best of anyone's knowledge was there anyone left from either of their families in Europe.

So, Roman Blum began to build a business. He did something he was not allowed to do in Poland before the war. He bought property. He developed property.

He was, according to those of his friends who remain, charming, outgoing, a “lady's man” and fun to be with.

As the business prospered, Roman Blum kept buying, selling and developing. The stacks on his desk grew higher according to those who visited his office. Roman Blum was all business during the day and a good friend to all in the evening.

One wonders why, such a man, whose first thoughts after the horror of Auschwitz was to re-populate the Jewish world never gave a serious thought to that world after he would leave it. But, apparently he did not.

As Roman Blum grew older, his lawyer, a fellow survivor, kept asking him to make a will, to do something with his wealth. No family. No favorite cause or charity. Just friends and the business. Roman Blum's wife was dead. Roman Blum was old. His lawyer and friend pleaded with him to do something.

The last time his lawyer met with him he asked again for Roman Blum to take the time to think about his legacy, his money. The lawyer was headed for vacation. He recalls Roman Blum saying to him “when you come back, we'll get it done.”

The lawyer left for vacation and Roman Blum died. The house was sold, the paintings and furniture and tchotchke's all went. The money and the properties and the things that were left all were carefully accounted for. A genealogist was hired to see if the Nazis left any trace of family in Europe. The estate waited. Nothing.

Now? This was a man who felt after surviving the worse hell on earth ever perpetrated on the Jews that it was his personal duty to bring back the Jewish people from extinction. Now, everything he coveted, everything he accomplished is to be given to the State of New York. Ask your lawyer. That's the law when you have no will. What would Roman Blum do if he had made it another month or two? We will never know.

What we do know is that rather than being used in some bureaucratic way to shore up some unknown and probably questionable policy, the legacy of Roman Blum could have been a reservoir holding precious water in the Negev. It could have been a scholarship program for worthy Jewish kids studying ways to make life better in the world. It could have been – well, so many things. But this is not to be.

If there is a heaven and if Roman Blum is there with his family and those who knew him, what would he say? What question would he answer? “Roman, so you did good, nu? So what did you leave behind, Roman, for those Jews you felt were no longer alive? Tell us Roman Blum, what did you do?”



Yiddish for Everyday

BY HENYA CHAIET

Meineh Yungeh yorn (My early years)

Yiddisheh kinder hert zach tzu ich vil reddn mit eyech hynt fun meineh yungeh yorn.

(Listen and I will tell you about my early years.)

Ich haub zich gehaudevot in oremkeit, auber ich haub alleh mol geven tzufreeden mit vos haut pahsert. Der far vos ich haub gehat mein mutters mishpaucheh zayer naunt.

(I was raised in [financial] poverty. However I was always happy with what was going on. I believe this was because we lived so close to all of my mother's family.)

Meineh chaverim zeinen geven meineh koozeenez. Mir flegen zen dee Baubeh un Zaydeh kimat yeder taug.

(My friends were my cousins. We would see Baubee [our grandmother] and Zydee [our grandfather] almost every day.)

Heint iz ahn andersheh velt. Yeder mensch gait vuh zein parnahseh iz. Mishpauchehs zeinen aus gehsprayt iber der ganser velt. Ah sach kinder vaynen veit avek fun zayer bubbeh un zaydeh.

(Today the world is very different. Everyone goes to where their work takes them. Families are spread over all the world. Many children live very far from their grandmother and grandfather.)

Heint reddn zay offen Internet. Zeinen zeh tzu freedn? Ich freg eich.

(Today they speak to each other on the Internet. Are they happy? I ask you?)

Henya Chaiet 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. Chaiet lived in La Porte and Michigan City, Ind., from 1952 to 1978 and currently resides in Walnut Creek, Calif. Email: afeinn87@gmail.com. ★

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. ★



Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

Ain't science great

When it comes to objective, non-biased perceptions of my fellow human beings, I pride myself on my lack of bias. If three men in plaid Walmart shirts knock me down, kick me passionately in the ribs, and from my battered body remove my wallet – believe it or not – I would not hate the next human being I met wearing a plaid Walmart shirt! There, does that establish my neutrality of observation?

And much of my observation is focused on gender issues. I postulated the counter culture observation that Jewish women are different from men. Sure women can serve in the military, operate a jackhammer, and even solve a quadratic equation. So, don't get me wrong, we're not talking about inferiority, but simply about differences. Physiologically, they are obvious. My Uncle Max in his underwear is obviously different from Aunt Mamie. But we're talking subtleties.

I was the first researcher in this field to notice – get this – that women cannot effectively wink. They have a tendency to close both eyes, which is improper. I've even met women who used their hand to hold open the non-winking eye. My friends, when I brought this egregious situation to their attention, immediately and cruelly attacked my experimental modus operandi. (Scientists are always skeptical of results THEY didn't discover.)

The Journal of Gender Differences headlined my observation on its cover. My jealous co-workers immediately attacked my sample size of two, my wife and my granddaughter. I thought it was clever of me to cover the extremities of age. Due to this furor among behaviorists, the Journal retracted my conclusion when they found I had mistakenly cited 2,000 subjects instead of two. Big deal. Two or two thousand or two million. It was still a worthy scientific contribution – as important as that government funded study showing that women DO NOT paint their nails while driving.

But despite my defeat on the no-wink issue, I've got a new hypothesis as solid as a rock and it's not like I've made up my mind before viewing the experimental data. The idea first came from a sample of one – my lovely wife. Yes, sample size one. Then another experiment.

I know I've nailed this one. I'll send it off to the Journal of Gender Differences



Laugh with Big Al

BY AL MUSKOVITZ

"Breaking news!" is modern day "Crying wolf!"

By anyone's definition the tragedy that occurred at the Boston Marathon in April was "BREAKING NEWS!" It was shocking, life-altering, unadulterated "BREAKING NEWS!" The devastation leveled by the tornado in Moore, Oklahoma and the heart wrenching aftermath was also worthy of "BREAKING NEWS!" Breaking news the way it was meant to be. Meant to be? Yep. Because these days just seeing "BREAKING NEWS!" in giant letters on my TV screen, with an accompanying dramatic sound effect, does not always get my immediate attention. Nope. Not in our current 24/7, scoop the competition media world we have today where – EVERYTHING has become "BREAKING NEWS!" Breaking news is broken and watered-down.

Today it's standard procedure for both national and local news programs to return from commercial breaks with "BREAKING NEWS!" Turn on your favorite national cable news channel on any given day and "BREAKING NEWS!" might be live coverage of a police chase in San Bernardino, Calif. Locally, it's not



this week. It's simple and it's based on a sample size of eight – eight, not two. Hypothesis: No woman watching a TV movie of normal length has ever seen the end of the movie. Why? The answer is elementary, Watson. She falls asleep on the couch every time. No matter the movie, no matter the cast, she's a goner in 30 minutes to an hour. This covers all female species, wives, girlfriends, aunts, nieces, friends, or your female feline. It never fails. I'll set up the experiment in my living room.

First, a large supper, then I'll seat my female guests in our most comfortable armchairs. Next, the movie. Then: The Big Sleep. The scenario is always the same.

1) Excited chatter about the entertainment to come. 2) Total silence. 3) The soft sound of deep and rhythmic breathing. No, my wife does not snore. I then ask a few clever questions to deduce when she left the world of the waking.

(see Roberts, page 14)

unheard of for a water main "break" to be... "BREAKING NEWS!" (Pun intended.) But I say, "NO IT'S NOT!" It's "Semi-Kind-Of-Depending-On-Where-You-Live-Of-Nothing-Else-Is-Really-Going-On-Important News". It's worth covering during a newscast, but does not fit the criteria of... "BREAKING NEWS!"

Today's "BREAKING NEWS!" is a modern day version of "CRYING WOLF!" – over use it and it doesn't get taken seriously and has a chance of getting ignored entirely. I'll never forget my introduction to legitimate breaking news. It came on that fateful day on Nov. 22, 1963 when I heard the words that are forever etched in my memory: "We interrupt regular programming to bring you this special report from Dallas". Yes, our president getting assassinated, THAT was "BREAKING NEWS!" Today? You just wait and see, this July, some news agency will deem Kim Kardashian giving birth to a 23 lb. baby as "BREAKING NEWS!"

Now, even by my standards, today's legitimate "BREAKING NEWS" stories fall prey to another dilemma; the "We-have-to-fill-24-hours-of-programming-and-scoop-our-competition-so-don't-let-the-facts-get-in-the-way-of-a-good-story" dilemma. The Boston Marathon terrorist attack is a case in point. Don't misunderstand, this story obviously required 24/7, around the clock, non-stop reporting. But it turned into a 24/7, around the clock, non-stop misguided, misquoted, misinterpreted, speculation-athon.

Talking heads and field reporters went around and around in trying to describe how many bombs actually exploded or were found. By the time they were done, they sounded like a twisted version of a Dr. Seuss book – "2 bombs here, 3 bombs there, bombs, bombs everywhere!" But they were wrong. By the time journalists were done getting their collective feet out of their mouths, we found out that the terrorists were white, dark, part of a bigger group, a smaller group, no group, robbed a 7-11, didn't rob a 7-11, blah, blah, blah. And they got all this information from their... RELIABLE SOURCES!! But you know who the biggest loser is in this whole mess? ME! Because I watched every single minute of it! Yes, I'm a loser. But that's not breaking news, that's "OLD NEWS!"

I now return you to your regularly scheduled reading of this esteemed Jewish publication, which we all know is one reliable source we can count on; except for when they give me the privilege of writing this column.

Alan Muskovitz is a Detroit-area writer, voice-over/acting talent, speaker and emcee. Visit his website at laughwithbigal.com and "Like" Al on Facebook. ★

Gather the People



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

Are there any heathens among us?

What is a “heathen,” from a traditional Jewish point of view?

We could propose an elaborate and scholarly definition – unlike the more commonplace dictionary definition that emphasizes simple non-belief in God – but the primary test of heathenism is the belief in practice that one or more gods can be manipulated by “magical charms.”

We recognize, of course, that Jewish belief requires us to subject ourselves to God’s will, not vice-versa. But that raises the question of how we understand God’s will, whether or not we believe in its existence in any practical sense. *Torah* is the main source of our understanding of God’s will. *Torah* specifies particular behaviors, elaborated as *chukim* and *mishpatim* (statutes and ordinances), which we are to observe. More to the point, *Torah* specifies consequences for respecting or ignoring those statutes and ordinances.

Do we in fact believe that, for the most part, there are negative consequences for lying, cheating, stealing, gossiping, etc., and positive consequences for promoting justice, showing kindness, and upholding righteousness?

We venture to say that even the cynics among us recognize that when we’re speaking not primarily about individuals, but whole communities and peoples, historical consequences for observing or ignoring the *Torah*’s statutes and ordinances are virtually certain and unmistakable. But, nonetheless, we often manage to convince ourselves that individually we can escape those consequences.

How do we manage to persuade ourselves that we personally can thwart God’s will?

In the *Torah* reading Balak, the non-Israelite prophet Balaam also sought to circumvent God’s will. So potentially he offers us some insight into our own behavior.

The Moabites were at war with Israel, a war they feared they would lose. Balak, the king of Moab, invited the prophet Balaam to come and curse Israel, hopefully ensuring a Moabite victory.

Balaam initially refused Balak’s invitation, because God instructed him not to go.

But when Balaam saw the potential for enriching himself and gaining high position and honor, he avoided refusing a second invitation from Balak and, instead, sought another “consultation” with God.

Balaam ultimately set out to do Balak’s bidding, although God had warned him to say “only the thing that I shall say to you” (Numbers 22:20).

Setting out to serve Balak, his travel was interrupted by his own donkey, when the animal refused to go forward upon seeing the angel of God blocking the way – which, ironically, was not apparent to Balaam, who we may assume nonetheless considered himself a great prophet. In anger, Balaam repeatedly struck his donkey, until finally the animal protested aloud: “What have I done to you that you should strike me three times?” (Numbers 22:28)

The angel’s message to Balaam was that his mission, as he had conceived it from Balak’s commission, contravened the will of God. However we may understand this encounter, it comes to teach us that Balaam’s humiliation had the net effect of making him more responsive to God’s will. That is, his moral consciousness was raised – at the expense of being humiliated in front of his servants – by “voices” from the most unlikely of sources, first from his donkey, then from an angel of God.

What was it about Balaam’s mission – as devised by Balak – that presumably offended God?

For the sake of enriching himself by serving the most contemptible ambitions of a politically powerful ruler, he was willing to place his prophetic powers, such as they were, real or imagined, in the service of a corrupt purpose, to destroy an innocent people.

But for all his efforts, including repeated sacrifices to the One God from different venues, Balaam’s attempts to curse Israel not only failed, they produced blessings instead.

Withal, Balaam, a monotheist who was nonetheless motivated by the misguided notion that he could manipulate God by some form of heathen “magic,” began, according to Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808–1888), to speak in the “pure spirit of prophecy.” By confessing to the angel of God that his purpose was to pervert the will of God (Numbers 22:34), it became possible for him to serve that will with authentic prophecy.

Yet notwithstanding the authenticity of his prophecy – since God could as well put words in Balaam’s mouth as He had put them into the mouth of his donkey – Balaam was ready, willing, and able to advise Balak on how to entice Israel’s young men into the cult of Peor. Difficult as it may be for the modern mind to grasp,

Moabite women seduced thousands of Israelites into worship of Ba’al Peor by requiring that the men defecate on their idol before the women gave themselves up to them sexually.

By his own prophetic words, Balaam knew Israel to be not beautiful but good – upholding a moral ideal, revealed by the placement of its tents around the Sanctuary of the *Torah*. He allied himself with Balak’s aim to curse (*kavah*, from the root *kof-vet-vet*), more specifically to “hollow...out” the *yashar* (morally straight) core of the Israelites, thereby undermining the source of their national strength. (Numbers 22:11)

Are we not in some significant ways like Balaam?

Many of us have been sufficiently educated and exposed to a godly way of life to be convinced that One God is masterminding the Creation, arranging educational rewards and punishments for our moral integrity and lapses. Like Balaam in this respect, we’re capable of seeing the future, not as “fortune-tellers,” but as servants of God, with insight into his design for moral human life and society. Like Balaam, we are monotheists.

But like Balaam, we are also invited to serve powerful interests that are largely driven by their appetite for power and privilege, with little or no regard for the ultimate effects of their actions, whether on the well being of individuals, families, communities, nations, or even the whole planet.

Like Balaam, we occasionally encounter an “angel” of God – one way or another receiving a reminder, often from the most unlikely of sources, of how we are to serve God – so we occasionally speak, if only in a low voice to ourselves, the words of authentic prophecy: we speak truth to (worldly) power, at least in our imagination, confirming that we have the potential to do so.

But like Balaam, our prophetic words are not our own, because our true character remains unchanged. Our implicit conviction is that we can serve the purposes of perverted power without suffering any personal consequences, because – like Balaam – we’re caught up in the absurd heathen self-delusion that we can manipulate the Mastermind of all Creation. Like Balaam we delude ourselves with the belief and practice of affecting piety and other hallmarks of service to God. We go to synagogue and pray (that we can change God’s behavior, while maintaining our own behavioral status quo), we hang *mezzuzot* on our doorposts as if they were magic amulets, we give lip service to the *mishpatim* (social ordinances) – like Balaam, not acting

(see Ben Asher/Bat Sarah, page 15)



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

Commemorating the past with the present

Throughout the ages, the one thing that we have steadfastly resolved was that our children would have it better than we had. Largely, we have accomplished this mission. Our children do have it better.

Making life better, however, does not mean that their economic lives will be enhanced or that material things will line their shelves or that inheritance is the most important thing. What makes life better is the legacy we leave and an understanding of who we are and where we came from.

This is one reason we name our children with names that represent the past as well as the present. We may have Samantha's, Jaryd's, or other exotic names, but the names we insist upon are the Jewish names they will carry with them through their Jewish journey. From birth, to *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, to weddings, to the end of time, we refer to their Jewish names for this connection to our heritage. It is important not only because it represents the link to the previous generation but also because it continues a tradition that goes back even farther – to a time when it was understood that names, ideals and faith were the things we gave our children that will outlast all the wealth and power that can be accumulated.

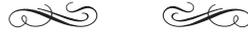
There is a famous story found in the *Talmud* that describes a person who once saw an elderly man planting a carob tree. The man was asked when he thought the tree would bear fruit. "After seventy years," was the reply. "Do you expect to live seventy years and eat the fruit of your labor given that you are now so old?" "I did not find the world desolate when I entered it," answered the elderly man, "and as my fathers planted for me before I was born, so do I plant for those who will come after me."

This, in essence is what *Bar* and *Bat Mitzvah* is all about. The ritual of calling a boy to the Torah to recognize his religious maturity began in the 4th century because the *Mishnah* (*Avot* 5.21) mentions, "thirteen is for *Mitzvah*." The significance being that this age allows the young to assume their place in the religious life of our people. Many people have varying views as to what this actually means. To

New Website to Educate the Jewish Community about Genetic Health Issues

NEW YORK, May 29, 2013 – Jewish individuals seeking to learn about the many genetic health conditions they may be at risk for can self-educate at GeneSights (www.GeneSights.com), a new online education resource conceived by the Program for Jewish Genetic Health of Yeshiva University and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. GeneSights is designed to provide effective and accessible learning at the viewers' convenience and to encourage these viewers to become active in ensuring their own health and well being.

GeneSights consists of individual "lessons" with topics selected based on their current relevance to the Jewish community, including specific diseases and medical conditions, genetic technologies and bioethical issues. The site's inaugural lesson focuses on hereditary breast and ovarian cancer and, more specifically, the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. Mutations in



me it is a "rite of passage," the coming of age when the beginning of obligations and commitments connect to consequences.

In the 16th century, we witness the beginning of the party aspect to this milestone in our search for life's meaning. Some do get out of hand. I wonder, at times, what would be different at the wedding or other celebrations that bring joy to our journey. The reason for the recognition has been overshadowed by the gifts and display of themes – each surpassing the other in trying to achieve recognition that is envied by those who do not have such occurrences in their lives.

Perhaps, if there is a lesson to learn it is that we need to remember who we are – remember parents and grandparents who are part of the legacy of continuity; remember siblings who share this inheritance. All of them are an important part of the foundation received that allowed us to reach this time in our lives.

Yes, we have surely seen to the comforts and needs of our children. They have it better and yet, they surely are missing the intimacy of faith and understanding that comes with knowledge and experience. At the foot of Sinai, we obligated ourselves to the concept of acceptance for when God was to give us the Torah. A request was made for the promise that this gift would not be lost or wasted. God wanted

(see Wiener, page 15)

these genes are responsible for the vast majority of hereditary forms of breast and ovarian cancer, and are found in approximately 1 in 40 Ashkenazi Jewish men and women, regardless of cancer history. In addition to the inaugural lesson, GeneSights also is pre-loaded with a two-part "Genetics 101" webinar to serve as a genetics overview for the typical viewer who may desire a baseline lesson.

Most GeneSights lessons begin with a short public service announcement video of the topic, available to the general public and featuring real people disclosing their personal health stories. Viewers interested in learning more about the featured topic are then directed to register on the site, for free, for access to a full-length webinar presented by an expert in the field, supplemental written materials to serve as practical next steps, and links to other resources and organizations dedicated to the specific subject. Once registered, viewers are able to access all other GeneSights lessons.

New lessons will appear on GeneSights approximately every two months. One upcoming disease topic is Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, two conditions more prevalent in the Ashkenazi Jewish population. On the technology front, GeneSights will explore pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), a reproductive option for couples who are identified to be at increased risk for passing a genetic condition on to their offspring.

"Advances in scientific research have identified many genetic diseases and conditions that are commonly found amongst Jews," said Nicole Schreiber-Agus, PhD, scientific and programming director for the Program for Jewish Genetic Health. "In addition, advances in technology, and in genetic testing in general, continue to impact routine healthcare. GeneSights is designed to provide the Jewish community with easy access to user-friendly, actionable information, as well as a better general grasp of the field of genetics and its associated opportunities and limitations."

Seed funding for the GeneSights series was provided in part by UJA-Federation of New York and by a generous grant in honor of Beatrice Milberg. For more information, visit www.GeneSights.com.

The Program for Jewish Genetic Health, a joint initiative between Yeshiva University and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, was established with the goal that nobody in the Jewish community facing a genetic health issue should be deprived of proper care due to lack of awareness, financial barriers or difficulty in navigating the healthcare system. For more information, visit www.yu.edu/genetichealth. ✨



Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

“Popular resistance” and the Middle East

Recently, I attended a panel discussion at the International House of the University of Chicago, co-sponsored by the I-House’s Global Voices lecture series with the Student Forum on Political Thought, Students for Justice in Palestine, and the university’s political science department. The announced theme was popular resistance and social movements, with particular reference to the current uprisings in Arab countries. With such a broad topic, I hoped that maybe, just maybe, most of the panel time would not be used for the usual demonization of the State of Israel at such events.

Happily, the first speaker did not mention Israel. Bernard Harcourt, University of Chicago professor of law and political science, chose to offer an historical overview. He began by asserting that 1968, the year of radical left resistance, exhausted Marxist idealism, while 1989, the year the Berlin Wall fell, marked the end of liberal idealism. The year 2011 (London riots, the Indignants Movement in Spain, and Occupy Wall Street), he concluded, established once and for all that there is no easy answer to social problems in the “conventional ideological parity of Left versus Right” (his phrasing). To Harcourt, 2011 marked a reaction “not so much to global politics as to the conditions they produced.”

I sat there wondering why his dates were pushed so close to the night of this panel discussion. After all, many people began to lose faith in the Marxist revolution, or at least the celebrated Communist concretization of it, with the Soviet Purges of the late 1930s. As for the end of ideologies, including “liberal idealism,” I had thought since college days that most academics dated that around the time of Daniel Bell’s 1960 classic, *The End of Ideology*. And I recall at least as much disillusionment during the recession of the 1980s as with the one of 2008, not to mention the shaping of my grandparents’ and parents’ generation by the Great Depression. Perhaps Harcourt’s own thinking had changed only recently.

My first impression was that Harcourt’s remarks were non-sequiturs before the order of the program was established. Yet in notable even if unintended ways, his

remarks became indictments of the presentations that followed, as I shall explain later. Though I did not agree with Harcourt’s time line, I was grateful that the program did not start out with Israel-bashing. Perhaps, I thought, the speakers would think outside of the box?

That hope, that illusion, was dashed as soon as the next speaker, As’ad Abukhalil, a political science professor at California State University, started to speak. He began with the “Palestinian Uprising,” which he characterized as a consistent, focused hundred years’ war against Zionism and Britain. The “Palestinian Uprising,” he maintains, was the inspiration for all the Arab uprisings – in Egypt, in Syria, you name it. His evidence for this was a statement by Tunisians who have said that their inspiration came from the Palestinian uprising, a sentiment confirmed (?) by a draft of the new Tunisian Constitution which contained a clause prohibiting relations with the State of Israel.

Abukhalil blamed everyone for the mess in the Middle East who would blame the Palestinians. If Arabs live under dictatorships, he lamented, they are blamed; if they revolt against dictatorships, they are dismissed as “angry Arabs.” To Abukhalil, the very expression, “Arab Street,” was coined to paint Arabs atavistically. Then the “white man” lectures Arabs to resist “peacefully” even as America supports Arab dictators.

Abukhalil then credited the Palestinians for recognizing early on the “dangers of Zionism.” He suggested that the Palestinians did not need the West to advise them on methods of resistance, for, he claimed outright, in the 1950s and 1960s there was “no Palestinian violence whatsoever.” I gathered that he was referring to Arafat’s Fatah movement, which began violence against Israel in 1964, before Israel captured territories from Egypt and Jordan during a bitterly-fought but, thankfully, brief war for survival in 1967, when Israel was attacked by virtually all its Arab neighbors, who would not accept any negotiated peace because they did not recognize the existence of Israel.

Abukhalil resents that the Palestinians were recognized as a people long after their uprising began. Yet none of the panelists dealt with the fact that Egypt and Jordan did not recognize the existence of the Palestinians, and referred to the Arabs then under the rule of those countries as “Syrians.” I could not help thinking that it is ironic that the Arabs in Palestine who refused to recognize the right of Jews to be in Palestine were not themselves recognized as “Palestinians.” Abukhalil declared that the word, “Palestinian,” was not heard until the

assassination of Robert Kennedy. If I heard him correctly, he brought up the assassination to show that the Palestinian uprising was “only effective when they took up the gun.” But surely such talk does not help the Palestinian Arab cause.

Palestinian Arab violence, Abukhalil argues, was the result of frustration, and did not begin until the 60th year of the concerted revolt that he posits. Yet he conveniently ignores Arab pogroms against the Jews in the region that go back to the 1920s and earlier. In fact, violent Arab attacks were consistent in every year in every subsequent decade (as any internet search under “Terorism deaths in Israel” will yield.) He insists that, given the Zionist presence in the region, the Palestinian revolt could not have remained nonviolent, even as French resistance to the Nazis could not be passive.

I could not help thinking after this reference to French resistance that Abukhalil completely ignored collaboration by the Palestinian Arabs, especially the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, with Hitler against France, Britain and America, and, of course, against the Jews. This was confirmed in a lecture that happened to be given a few days later by history Professor Bernard Wasserstein of the University of Chicago, who observed that Palestinian Arab collaborators with the Nazis were not renegades or outcasts, but were well-educated and from the elite Palestinian families. Several Palestinian Arab government officials were actively involved. An Austrian Jewish woman who had fled to Palestine from the Nazis told me that an Arab friend of her family, a physician, couldn’t keep from sharing, “I am waiting for my fuehrer to come here.”

I surmised that Abukhalil was ignoring Arab violence and Arab support of the Nazis in order to shift full blame onto the Zionists and on the State of Israel for all terrorism and violence in Palestine. If I heard him correctly, AbuKahalil actually suggested that the “Zionists” propagandized that Arab nations and Arab Palestinians were agents of the Soviet Union and Iran, as if this were not apparent from the 1960s until now. Yet many of us recall that America learned about Soviet weaponry through Israel’s agony in at least a few wars. And aren’t Iran and Syria still trying to ship weapons to the Palestinian territories?

The third speaker, Abdullah Al-Arian, an assistant professor of history at Wayne State University, blamed the turbulence in the Middle East on colonialism. He quickly got around to citing Zionism as an “imposition of a non-Arabic polity” on the Middle East through British efforts to spawn “surrogates.” I wondered what he made of the Jews who were in Palestine

(see Gertel, page 9)



Holocaust Educator

By MIRIAM L. ZIMMERMAN

Inspiration for reconciliation from our tradition

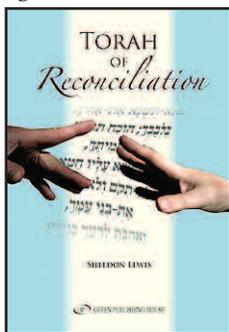
The *Torah* is a book of healing, of reconciliation, and of peace. To prove it, Rabbi Sheldon Lewis spent over ten years culling passages of Torah that promote “mutual respect even when people disagree, as a pathway to reconciliation (p.xix).” Published in 2012 by Geffen Publishing House, Rabbi Lewis’ *Torah of Reconciliation* is an accessible text, perfect for someone searching for examples of peacemaking in the Torah, for a sacred self-help book dealing with intractable conflict, or for sources justifying Jewish-Palestinian relationship building. As a divorce mediator, I wish all my clients could read this book.

The book emerged out of Rabbi Lewis’ personal response to the tragedy of 9/11 that brought down the World Trade Center. That “incomprehensible act” motivated him to “search for a way of acting in the world beyond anger and vengeance.” Parashah by parashah, the rabbi painstakingly analyzes and explicates passages in Torah that help guide the reader to a deeper understanding of conflict and peace.

I had the good fortune to hear Rabbi Lewis speak at my own *shul*, Congregation Beth Jacob in Redwood City, Calif., on May 24, 2013, when he discussed his reasons for writing the book and answered congregant’s questions. At my husband’s urging, we put a sticker by our name so that we could pay for the book after Shabbat and thus were able to take a signed copy with us.

Rabbi Lewis is a familiar leader in our area, rabbi *emeritus* of Congregation Kol Emeth in Palo Alto, where he served for 33 years. His bio describes his years as a peace and interfaith activist. He was a student of Abraham Joshua Heschel in the 1960s and served in Vietnam as a US Army chaplain after his ordination at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City.

As of this writing, I have completed the



GERTEL

(continued from page 8)

for generations, and of the efforts of Palestinian Arabs to be surrogates of the Nazis during World War II.

The panel discussion ended with a presentation by University of Chicago political science professor John Mearsheimer, known for his crusade against what he perceives as a destructive “Israel Lobby” in American society. Mearsheimer stressed from the outset that resistance to neo-liberalism around the world does not necessarily mean that the reluctant nation is opposed to liberal values. Such resistance, rather, is due to the failure of the United States to export those values effectively because America has been all too “interventionist” since World War II, and especially since the dismantling of the Berlin Wall in 1989.



pages devoted to *Bereshit* (Genesis). The stories in Genesis are full of strife and, surprisingly, reconciliation. The case of Ishmael and Isaac in Chaye Sarah (Genesis 23:1–25:18) illustrates that G-d ordains “multiple parallel destinies.” Ishmael and Jacob of the next generation each have 12 sons, hinting “at their special place in G-d’s plan.” By the end of the story, Isaac and Ishmael have reconciled and, together, bury their father Abraham in the cave of *Machpelah* (Genesis 25:8–9).

The learned rabbi points out that in Genesis, conflict is healing. “Genesis stories seem determined not to leave any conflict without healing.” Examples abound from family relationships: Stories about “Abraham and Lot, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Laban, then Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers, all move from discord to reconciliation.... Thus the message of Genesis is one of hope for unity within a family and, by extension, beyond (p. 107).”

Regrettably, I do not possess the scholarship to analyze critically the methodology or accuracy of Rabbi Lewis’ undertaking. But as a lay reader interested in Torah’s guidance in all things to do with peace, reconciliation, and healing, this book is a treasure trove for understanding.

The rabbi integrates citations from Talmud and wisdom from our sages, of blessed memory. For example, he explains the *eruv*, the device that extends personal space and thus permits carrying objects into a public area, as a “joining together.” He cites Rabbi Joshua Halevi who explains that the *eruv* promotes “peace among neighbors who might have become estranged.”

The work of Rabbi Lewis is a necessary (see Zimmerman, page 14)

As regards the Palestinian Arabs, Mearsheimer’s advice for them was mostly in the realm of public relations. He said that it was all too easy for the Israelis to portray them as terrorists because the Palestinian Arabs had made bad decisions, particularly the Second Intifada.

It occurred to me that Mearsheimer’s arguments failed to take into account that Israel, like America, can only work with available policies and the leaders that their constituencies tolerate. It is not as if Israel were digging in its heels for ideological reasons against an eager and accommodating, or at least interested, interlocutor. Nor was there a movement of liberal reformers waiting to topple Mubarak that could be foiled by American policies. Even the Muslim Brotherhood, as Al-Arian pointed out, was all too happy to work within Mubarak’s guidelines.

Interestingly, Mearsheimer concluded as did the other panelists, whether in their formal remarks or in the later discussion, with words of admiration for the “original” or “early” Zionists. The “original” Zionists, Mearsheimer observed, were secularists who challenged the Jewish religious establishment. Israel’s “suicide,” he warned, is being hastened by the increased Zionist sentiment among the ultra-Orthodox, boding a “more religious” Zionism. Abukhalil waxed nostalgic, as well, about “early” Zionists “who didn’t necessarily want to displace the Palestinian nation,” but were willing to settle for parts of Argentina.

During his prepared presentation, Abukhalil had also waxed nostalgic about the writings of Ahad Ha’am, the father of cultural Zionism, who in an early 20th century essay had wondered aloud whether the Jews could have treated the Palestinians a bit better. Abukhalil cited the essay as an indictment of most Zionists, but it is certainly to their credit. Have Palestinian Arabs ever considered in print that they could have been nicer to the Jews, or that they forfeited opportunities for statehood through bad decisions?

The expressed nostalgia for the “original” Zionists reminded me of the first speaker, Bernard Harcourt. He did posit disillusionment long ago with leftist and neo-liberal resistance alike, questioning the conventional ideological polarity of left versus right. Why, then, are the “good” Zionists those who mouthed yesterday’s ideologies? Were the other speakers saying that the only good Zionist is an anachronism who mouths platitudes that today’s academics no longer believe, anyway?

Rabbi Gertel is the author of two books, *What Jews Know About Salvation and Over the Top Judaism: Precedents and Trends in the Depiction of Jewish Beliefs and Observances in Film and Television.* ★



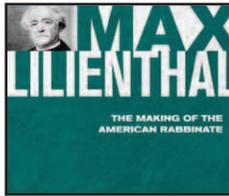
Book Review

REVIEWED BY
PROFESSOR ARNOLD AGES

Brilliant and controversial rabbi helped create Reform Judaism

Max Lilienthal: The Making of the American Rabbinate. By Cantor Bruce L. Ruben. Wayne State University Press. Detroit, 2011. 324 Pages.

Although I am a fan of *hazzanut* and have been treated often to the talents of great cantors, I regret that I have never had the pleasure of



hearing Cantor Bruce L. Ruben, who for many years, was the head of the School of Sacred Music at Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College as well as a long time practitioner of the cantorial arts in a synagogue where he served as *chazzan* for 20 years.

However, my attention has been drawn to him by the publication a year and half ago of a book which demonstrates the results of meticulous research which he conducted at the City University of New York for his PhD work. Writers who are able to transfer the music of the spheres into a felicitous prose style are rare indeed and Ruben belongs to that exclusive caste. His beautifully crafted biography of Max Lilienthal is an odyssey both of his subject's geographical peregrinations and his spiritual journeys. The odyssey also includes a richly woven canvas which depicts Jewish life in Germany, Russia and the United States in the first half of the 19th century.

The name Lilienthal was not known to this reviewer: the Encyclopedia Judaica contains a 150 line entry on this fascinating individual but it is little more than a skeletal rendering of brilliant and controversial individual who went from an embrace of *Halakhic* Judaism to a more liberal interpretation of the sancta of Jewish life and who, along with Isaac Meyer Wise, helped to create the Reform movement in Judaism. Ruben's study unites and elaborates all the interstices in Lilienthal's career – an exercise which the author executed only after devouring every written source available (in 100

pages of footnotes, bibliography and indices) and excavating them with an almost intimidating thoroughness.

Max Lilienthal was *sui generis*. Born in Germany in 1814, he was one of the few rabbis in his epoch that had both an Orthodox *smicha* from the Furth Yeshiva and a doctorate from the University of Munich, a degree he received after completing original dissertation research in the manuscript section of the royal archives in Munich. At the age of 25, in the absence of any suitable rabbinic post in Germany, he accepted a position as a teacher and rabbi in Riga, which at that time, was a mostly German-speaking city.

Ruben seems to have been inspired by a rhapsody in the section where he describes Lilienthal's voyage to Russia-Poland during a period where roads were generally impassable, railroads were in their infancy and river travel was a far cry from today's luxury Rhine River tours. Lilienthal had recourse to these diverse transportation modes and author Ruben uses musical tropes to accompany the young rabbi on his way to Riga. As this reviewer read about Lilienthal's itinerary, which included a lengthy and disastrous sled ride in the frigid Russian winter (Lilienthal fell off and was abandoned), he was reminded of the musical score of "Peter and the Wolf".

In Russia, Lilienthal made contact with Czar Nicholas I and his minister of education, Count Sergei Uvarov who saw in the young rabbi a potential candidate in his, Uvarov's, desire to Europeanize Jewish education. This would be done by transforming the elementary Jewish schools, the *yeshivot* and other institutions into state run schools with a double curriculum stressing the Russian language and secular studies.

Lilienthal was not opposed to this idea in principle even though he had been warned in Germany that the Czar was interested in promoting Russification not to acculturate Jews but rather to convert them. Ruben suggests that the German idea of *bildung* (self transformation) to which he was exposed as part of the enlightened circles in his homeland, was a worthy goal for the Jews of Russia who, he believed, were immured behind walls of obscurantism, unilingualism (Yiddish) and congealed tradition.

In any case Lilienthal visited many Jewish communities, examined their diverse institutions of learning, observed their merits de-merits and lacunae – and prepared reports for Uvarov and eventually the Czar. His suggestions for a more nuanced structure in the Jewish schools

were highly praised and he even received a royal gift on one occasion. It is doubtful, however, whether Lilienthal mentioned in his report the raucous opposition to his ideas which he encountered in places such as Vilna where no less a person than the Lubavitcher rebbe denounced him as an arch heretic. Even the *maskilim* – that is to say, the enlightened secular Jews, were not enthralled with the Lilienthal mission. Much of their opposition was based on criticism of Lilienthal's lack of political acumen.

The young rabbi finally had to leave Russia. The trigger for that move was the 1843 Czarist imposition of new Draconian laws barring Jewish residence in the western borders of Russia – a decision which showed Lilienthal that his Russification plan was a mere ploy to ingest Russian Jewry and force them to convert. It was a disappointing period in Lilienthal's life.

The second act in his eventful career occurred upon his return to Munich where he was able to pledge his troth and marry Pepi Netre, the daughter of a prominent Jewish businessman. This marriage, which produced six wonderful children, should be balanced with the wonderful accomplishments which Lilienthal achieved when he decided to leave his beloved Germany for the New World. Ruben's description of the Manhattan into which Lilienthal plunged is in some ways worth the price of this volume. Although many have written about New York City, the tableau which author Ruben offers us of the city in 1845 is a pastiche which reminds us simultaneously of Saint Saens, Hoffman with a bit of Chopin thrown in.

At the mid century point most of the Jews in Manhattan were from Germany; they had joined their fellow German gentiles in the massive immigration waves which washed upon America's shores in those tumultuous post Napoleonic epoch. The author notes that there were so many German Jews located in lower Manhattan that the community was called Kleindeutschland. Three German synagogues immediately engaged Lilienthal to rotate among them, deliver sermons in German and organize the educational facilities for the children in the constituency.

Lilienthal was very prudent in his early career in New York: he wanted basic changes in the synagogue liturgy and improvements in general decorum. One of the leitmotifs in his critical apercu of the German synagogues was the practice of *Misheberachs* (blessings on behalf of the sick) which, to his dismay, were auctioned off. But he understood that he had to proceed very cautiously. Like many rabbis,

(see Ages, page 14)



Bruce Ruben

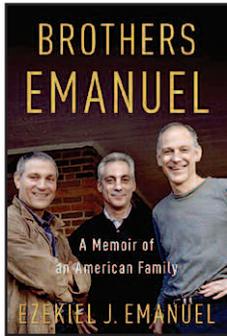
Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

Their parents and early years

Brothers Emanuel. By Ezekiel J. Emanuel. New York: Random House, 2013. 276 Pages. \$27.

The three Emanuel brothers – Ezekiel, Rahm, and Ari – are remarkable achievers. Ezekiel, the oldest, is a physician who is vice provost and professor at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a renowned bioethicist. Rahm is former chief of staff in President Obama's administration and is now Mayor of Chicago. Ari is a successful, wealthy talent agent in Hollywood and model for the character, Ari Gold, on the TV series, *Entourage*.



How could one family produce such eminent individuals in such different fields of endeavor? This is the question that Ezekiel, the oldest brother, set out to answer in this engaging family memoir.

Ezekiel's thesis is that the basis for the brothers' attainments lies in their family, their parents and their relationship to each other. The book clearly and entertainingly sets forth the rationale for Ezekiel's belief by describing in detail the boys' parents and the early lives of the three brothers.

Their mother, Marsha, was born in 1933 to a Russian immigrant father and a Romanian immigrant mother. Although her father was a dominating authoritarian, he imbued his five children with the urgency of fighting against injustice. Marsha learned this lesson well and, throughout her life, she fought for civil liberties and equal rights, a stance she conveyed to her sons. Their father, Benjamin, was born in Palestine in 1927 to a family of Russians who had fled Odessa for Palestine after the 1905 pogroms. He studied medicine in Lausanne, interrupting his education to participate in the 1948 War of Independence. After graduation, he was an intern and resident in the United States where he met and married Marsha. They went to Israel where he learned that there were too many doctors and so they settled in Chicago along with Israel-born Ezekiel and where Rahm was born in 1959 and Ari in 1961. Their intent was eventually to return to Israel and they visited

frequently with their three sons but their home was Chicago where Benjamin was a successful general practitioner.

The book describes the early maturation of the three boys, replete with loud arguments at the dinner table, filled with vitriol and foul language. Apparently, this is where Rahm learned to use the profanity for which he is widely known. The boys also learned about current affairs and how to debate. Their liberal opinions were molded at the dinner table and at the political rallies to which their mother took them.

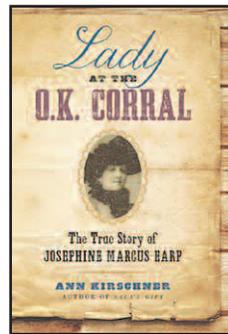
The enduring relationships of the three boys to each other and to their parents are warmly described. The book stops short of describing their outstanding careers in academics, politics, and business. Perhaps Ezekiel, Rahm or Ari will continue the story, telling about their adulthoods and their many accomplishments to date. They still have mountains to climb and our learning about their further achievements will be enhanced by this fine story about their beginnings.

Josephine Marcus, common law wife of Wyatt Earp

Lady at the O.K. Corral. By Ann Kirschner. New York: HarperCollins, 2013. 304 Pages. \$27.99.

The continuing fascination with the "Wild West" has resulted in an unending flow of books, movies, and TV programs. One of the characters who is the subject of this continued attention is Wyatt Earp, lawman, prospector, and gambler. In 1879, he and his brothers came to the Arizona boomtown, Tombstone, where silver had been discovered. It was there on Oct. 26, 1881 that the famous gunfight at the OK Corral took place. Three men died and the others, save for Wyatt, were wounded. He went on to a checkered career, mostly as a gambler who restlessly moved from place to place in the West, including Nome, Alaska, before he died in 1929. His ashes were buried in a Jewish cemetery outside of San Francisco.

The question as to how this came about opens this book, paving the way for the story it tells about the life of Wyatt Earp's Jewish common law wife, Josephine Marcus. As the title of the book suggests, this is her biography, although her life was closely inter-twined with that of Wyatt



EDITORIAL

(continued from page 2)

with *Midrash* was published in 2007.

One of the speakers at the tribute for Sandy was Rabbi Joy Levitt, executive director of the JCC in Manhattan. One of the local speakers, Rev. Tanya Vonnegut Beck, a trailblazer in the Episcopal Church was also in attendance at the Sassos' installation in Dec. 1977.

Even though they are two separate individuals, after so many years of being spouses, co-workers, parents of two and grandparents of three, they are linked together as one. When I see one of them alone on the pulpit or teaching a class, I feel as if the other is there in spirit. When I read one of their writings or hear one of their High Holiday sermons, I assume the other was consulted before it was submitted or delivered.

Although the speeches at the tribute service were all lovely, what stood out were the tributes Dennis and Sandy spoke to each other. We live in a society where half of the marriages end in divorce, and in Hollywood seven years is considered a long marriage. In this community where the Sassos have each contributed so much, perhaps their greatest gift is their love and devotion to each other.

When two famous celebrities become an item, the press creates one catchy name for the "super couple". Remember "Bennifer" for Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez, "TomKat" for Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes and "Brangelina" for Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie? I wonder if either of them would answer to "Dandy" as a one word name for the first ever rabbinic couple.

Jennie Cohen, June 12, 2013 ☆



Earp with whom she lived for almost 50 years. Accordingly, readers will be rewarded by the presentation of two life stories for the price of one.

Josephine's parents came separately to New York from Prussia in the 1850s. Her father was a baker who, in 1855, married her mother, a widow with one daughter. They then had a son and two daughters; Josephine was born in 1860, although the date is unrecorded. The family did not prosper in New York and, attracted by success stories of Jews in San Francisco, they moved there in 1869. An indifferent student, Josephine was fascinated by the theater and she joined a stage company that traveled throughout the Arizona territory, arriving in Tombstone in 1879. There, she did not socialize with the Jews of the town. She became involved with a deputy sheriff who was recovering from a failed marriage but who refused to set a

(see Teicher, page 15)



My Kosher Kitchen

REVIEWED BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Summer vegetable recipes

When we lived in Overland Park (Kansas), I loved going to the local farmers' market. Now, living in Jerusalem and being a *madrichah* (leader) of weekly walks in Jerusalem's own *Machaneh Yehudah*, I love shopping several times a week for the fresh produce.

Regardless of where you are living, here are some recipes to get the summer use of fresh vegetables started.

Cheesy Cherry Tomatoes

My daughter, Shara, who lives in Victoria, B.C. gave this to me and I hope she is using it with fresh produce there.

halved cherry tomatoes
salt and pepper to taste
2 tsp. bread crumbs
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 crushed garlic clove
grated Romano-type cheese
pinch of basil

Preheat oven to 300°F. Place halved tomatoes in a baking dish and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Combine bread crumbs, olive oil and garlic and mix. Spoon atop each tomato halve. Add a pinch of basil to each. Bake or broil in oven until brown. Serve warm.

Swiss Chard with Cheese (4 servings)

2 Tbsp. margarine or olive oil
1 Tbsp. minced garlic
1/4 cup diced onions
1 bunch Swiss chard – stems and ribs chopped in one bowl,
chopped leaves in a second bowl
1/2 cup dry white wine
2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese

In a frying pan, place margarine or olive oil and garlic and sauté onions 1–2 minutes.

Add chard stems and ribs and wine, reduce heat and simmer until stems are soft. Add leaves and cook until wilted. Stir in cheese and serve.

My Favorite Imitation

"Mashed Potatoes" (4 servings)

1 head cauliflower cut into flowerets
water
1 minced garlic clove
1/4 cup mayonnaise
salt and pepper to taste

Book Review

REVIEWED BY SYBIL KAPLAN

An imaginative and meticulously researched story

Rav Hisda's Daughter, Book I: Apprentice.
By Maggie Anton. Penguin. \$16 paperback.
July 31, 2012.

Once in a while I miss a really special book to review. Most frequently, it's because the publisher won't ship the book overseas. This is the case with Maggie Anton's book, published almost a year ago, but her three previous books, *Rashi's Daughters* were so unique, I kept trying to get her newest book because I was sure it would be exciting to read and review. If readers have missed it, it's significant to read it even now.

This novel is subtitled "a novel of love, the Talmud and sorcery" and focuses on Hisdadukh, the Persian name Anton gave to the heroine, Rav Hisda's daughter. In Anton's own words, "Rav Hisda's daughter is the woman mentioned more often in the Talmud than any other, one endowed with wealth, wisdom, and power. Thus she has opportunities not available to the average Jewish woman of her time. Still she is constrained by her gender in that, despite all her learning and intelligence, she can never be a rabbi."

The story is set in the 3rd to 4th centuries, Babylonia, in a period with which very few Jews are familiar. Based on actual Talmud texts and populated with its rabbis and their families, *Rav Hisda's Daughter* brings the Talmud to life – from a woman's perspective.

Hisdadukh is the youngest daughter of Rav Hisda with an older sister and seven older brothers.

According to *Baba Bathra* 12b in the



Place flowerets in water in a pot and cook 25 minutes. Drain well. Place cauliflower, garlic, mayonnaise, salt and pepper in a food processor and process until blended and creamy. Spoon into a greased casserole. Heat in a preheated oven 10 minutes before serving.

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

Talmud, at the age of eight, Rav Hisda's daughter "was sitting on her father's lap and in front of him were sitting Raba and Rami b. Hama" [two of his students]. He said to her: Which of them would you like [implying which one would you like to marry]? She replied: Both. Whereupon Raba said: And let me be the second."

Anton says that sparked something that would lead to a book of historical fiction about this very special young lady whose charms were a point of rivalry between the two young students. Anton says she "pored through the thirty-seven Talmud tractates to unearth as many mentions as [she] could of Rav Hisda's daughter, her husband, Rami bar Chama, and their family members."

Rav Hisda was a judge and head of a Torah school in Sura; her mother was daughter of a rabbi and the family was also beer brewers.

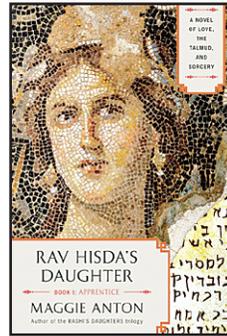
Anton tells us that "The Talmudic sages permitted all sorts of magic if its purpose was healing, protection from demons, or merely furthering a rabbi's education." This led Anton to have Hisdadukh become an enchantress – a writer of amulets and incantation bowls.

Quoting again from Maggie Anton, "the Babylonian Rabbis created the Talmud, which has been the source of Jewish law and traditions for over 1500 years. And in *Rav Hisda's Daughter*... I show how this process began."

Maggie Anton is a Talmud scholar, with expertise in Jewish women's history, and like her previous novels on Rashi's daughters, she writes an absorbing book. The rabbi under whom she studied Talmud, Rabbi Rachel Adler, Professor of Jewish Religious Thought and Feminist Studies, HUC-JIR, in Los Angeles, calls *Rav Hisda's Daughter* "an imaginative and meticulously researched story, compelling and rich both intellectually and emotionally."

Rav Hisda's Daughter received the Library Journal's choice for 2012 Historical Fiction and a 2012 National Jewish Book Award in Fiction.

If you enjoy reading about Jewish women, this book should definitely be on your list of "must read," along with the three previous works, *Rashi's Daughters*. And make a special note to read the sequel to *Rav Hisda's Daughter* when Hisdadukh, as a widow, fulfills the thought she had at age eight and marries the other rabbi who never lost his feelings for her. ☆





Book Review

REVIEWED BY RIVKA SARAH
(RIKI) ROSE HOROWITZ

Guidebook on spirituality through feminine path

The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women, Revealing the Divine Feminine. By Melinda Ribner. Charleston, SC. Feb. 2013, 271 pages.

In her newest book, Melinda Ribner covers much heretofore unexplored territory, charting a new course in which she reveals a treasure trove of wonderful secrets by brilliantly interweaving narrative, *Midrash*, mystical truths, inspired channeled teachings, prayers and spiritual practices to create a revolutionary new genre.

Ribner, one of the leading *Torah* and *Kabbalah* scholars in the world today, proves herself to be a woman of great vision, boldly going out on a limb in her exploration of the biblical mothers and other women in the bible including Eve, Dina, Batya, Chana, and Queen Esther. In addition to the women we usually consider the mothers of the Jewish people, Ribner includes Bilha and Zilpa, the lesser wives or concubines of Jacob, who gave birth to several of the tribes.

The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women elevate women and the woman's role in a way that allows the reader to understand the holiness and special stature that women held, and to see the beauty of women's wisdom based on intuitive knowing, gentleness, loving and nurturing others.

Each of the biblical women is viewed as an archetype of the feminine from whom people can learn and with whom we can identify. The teachings, prayers and meditations she presents uplift and inspire readers to find these qualities of the divine feminine within themselves, and participate in restoring the balance of the feminine and masculine in their lives and in the world.

In addition to extensive information culled from the *Torah* about each of the biblical women included in the book,

Ribner includes prophetic "Interviews" in which she asks each of these women to explain her position on a number of troublesome issues with the text, and for her opinion on matters pertaining to the world today and what wisdom she can impart based on her own experiences and unique viewpoint. Through these provocative interviews as well as sections on prayer and meditation, she grapples with important issues facing the world today, asking questions we've long struggled with as well as some we did not even know how to ask.

Throughout the book are spiritual practices devoted to helping the reader attain the attributes and qualities that each of the biblical mothers possessed. Each of these women has special gifts to impart to the reader, a unique perspective as well as a holy transformational tool which can be utilized to bring the reader closer to the Divine. Eve gives us the gift of love and secrets of holy intimacy. Sarah provides discernment and integrity, Rebecca embodies the quality of gleaning the truth and not being afraid to use what she calls "The Art of Spiritual Deception," to serve the highest purpose.

Dina offers insights into overcoming trials and tribulations, while Miriam teaches the reader about faith and trusting one's intuition. It was surprising to find a section on Batya, the Egyptian princess, "mother" of Moses, who opposed her father's decree, choosing instead to remain true to her own beliefs and understanding of right and wrong. She teaches us to have the courage to rebel against tyranny and to translate vision into reality. Chana teaches the power of prayer, and getting one's prayers answered by crying out to G'd and never giving up, while Queen Esther imparts the secrets of her power and beauty.

In addition, Ribner includes a section on *Kabbalistic* and *Midrashic* commentary on these biblical women; an additional section on meditations and contemplations on the *Shechina*, to make yourself a dwelling place for Her; and finally a summary and blessings.

Ribner has clearly researched the topic extensively and has mastered her subject. Her insights into our biblical foremothers are at the same time practical and mystical, her meditations sacred and therapeutic. They will assist readers in getting closer to the Divine as well as in understanding themselves. This is a practical guidebook on spirituality through the path of the feminine. It will help people live more meaningful, fulfilling lives.

It is a must read for girls and women of all faiths, as well as the men in their lives. While reading this book I found myself wanting to share the teachings with everyone I know. There is much to be

ABOUT THE COVER

(continued from page 2)

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

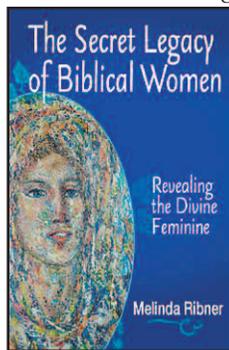
She works in several mediums including acrylic and collage/multimedia, for which she is noted. Olenick has created bold and bright, large pieces that are appropriate for a temple or can serve as a focal point in a home.

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. ✨



gained from these teachings. I highly recommend this book for anyone with an open mind. It offers a new perspective and opportunities for growth and transformation through its continued use.

Rivka Sarah (Riki) Rose Horowitz is a holistic healer, writer, and Jewish educator. Her classes and workshops focus on Kabbalah, Jewish Meditation, and healing. For more information see her website at www.rivkasarah.com. Her new book coming out this summer is titled, The Messiah Chronicles. It will be published under the name Rivka Sarah Horowitz. ✨



AGES

(continued from page 10)

however, Lilienthal, despite major gains in the educational sector, and as a preacher (his English improved rapidly), became the target of some bitter opposition, the reasons for which need not troubled the reader.

Ten years after his Manhattan experience, Lilienthal moved to Cincinnati in order to occupy a prestige pulpit in that city. It was in that Midwestern locale that the full flowering of his intellectual, social and organizational skills reached maturation. As one of the few rabbis in the New World with both authentic rabbinic credentials and a doctorate from a German university, Lilienthal began to think through the liberal religious agenda that was percolating in his mind and transmitting his ideas both in his sermonic materials and in the various Jewish periodicals which were circulating in the United States. In fact, many of Ruben's analyses of Lilienthal's theological positions are based on a close reading and synthesis of the articles he published.

Ruben's book offers an important and nuanced corrective to the impression that Isaac Meyer Wise was the "father" of Reform Judaism in America. There is considerable truth to this notion but it must be augmented by homage that must be paid to Lilienthal whose rabbinic scholarship, intellectual acuity and friendship with Wise, provided much of the rationale behind the founding and development of Hebrew Union College and Reform Judaism's Central Conference of American Rabbis.

One cannot leave the saga of Max Lilienthal without reference to Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses Grant. When the American Civil War broke out Lilienthal was appalled by the conflict and even more so by the misguided decision of Grant as head of the Union army to expel Jews from areas in Tennessee where it was alleged they were engaging in smuggling activities. Lilienthal joined a delegation of Jewish businessmen and other leaders who asked for a meeting with Abraham Lincoln. By the time Lilienthal arrived for the meeting, the president had already rescinded "the foolish order" and welcomed his guests warmly.

Bruce L. Ruben's work is now *de rigueur* reading for anyone who wants to know the history of 19th century American Jewry as well as the travail experienced by a traditional Jew who sought a more mellow interpretation of Jewish history and religion.

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

ZIMMERMAN

(continued from page 9)

counterweight to other depictions of Torah and G-d as "cruel, unforgiving, chauvinistic, suspicious of others, warlike, and violent." Over and over, the rabbi cites examples of G-d and Torah as "kind, eager to forgive, embracing of others and their destinies, seeking peace, and abhorring every vestige of violence."

Rabbi Lewis maintains an amazing website, www.TorahofReconciliation.com, which includes all sources he cites in his book for each of the Five Books of Moses. Each chapter ends with a section entitled, "Applied Peacemaking from the Responsa Literature". Those sources are also on the website.

The website has a blog that Rabbi Lewis hopes "will stimulate learning and conversation about the pathways to reconciliation, whether interpersonally, in a small circle, or on the world stage." In addition, the blog affords him the opportunity to present his findings of new, post-publication "sources in Jewish tradition that speak to the theme of reconciliation." He invites interaction with his readers: "The blog is a perfect place for me to share these sources with you. I would also welcome learning from you similar sources that inspire you."

Rabbi Lewis includes his personal reflections that help clarify the complexity of commentary and text. "The intended result is to reveal the rich, wise resources available in Judaism for the crucial task of peacemaking in the modern world. The sources speak of reconciliation in the home between individuals and apply to the search for peace between peoples and nations," his website affirms.

In the book's conclusion, Rabbi Lewis points out, "Against great odds, the Torah of reconciliation has a very strong and sustained voice. At times the message of peace within Torah has been eclipsed, but its message has been unremitting (p. 338)."

Torah of Reconciliation is endorsed by Rabbi Amy Eilberg of the Jay Phillips Center for Interfaith Learning in St. Paul, Minn.; Rev. Douglas K. Huneke, Senior Minister Emeritus, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Tiburon, Calif.; and Dr. Adriane Leveen, Senior Lecturer of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. I join their voices in acclaiming this book.

Visionary peacemakers can look to the past and find inspiration for reconciliation from our tradition and for healing in the future. When it comes to Torah, "all its paths are peace." Rabbi Lewis helps the reader not only to find these paths, but, also, to embark on them.

Dr. Miriam L. Zimmerman is professor

emerita at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, Calif. She can be reached at mzimmerman@ndnu.edu. ✪



D. SASSO

(continued from page 3)

consign people to poverty, hunger, homelessness and despair – Ira's faith may yet prevail. It was a faith grounded in the optimistic yet never Pollyannaish conviction that human reason and love can overcome darkness and hate; that the creative power of human kindness and goodness is greater than the destructive forces of evil; and that human effort and cooperation are the godly tools at our disposal to bring about freedom, justice and peace.

Rabbi Dennis Sasso is beginning his 37th year as senior rabbi of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis. This will be his first year serving without his wife Rabbi Sandy Sasso who retired this month. Reprinted from The Indianapolis Star May 6, 2013. ✪



ROBERTS

(continued from page 5)

And in my thesis to prove this scientific observation that I expect to verify, I must answer the "why" question. My answer is the soul of simplicity expressed in that old rubric: "A man works from sun to sun. A woman's work is never done." You're shuffling papers at work – she's doing the same or similar stuff and on top of that, in most marriages she's also provisioning the house, washing your clothes, and preparing meals.

Funny thing, as predictable as her snooze on the couch, it never happens at the theater. Another gender difference; it's as though the frugal, thoughtful planner who is your wife or friend, mentally resolved to get her money's worth. "This cost me ten bucks. I'm gonna enjoy every minute of it."

Wait till the Journal sees this insight into the female psyche. Next investigation: Why does it take them so long to get out of the car. I really know, but I guess I oughta do the experiment before I reveal the results.

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. ✪

BEN ASHER/BAT SARAH*(continued from page 6)*

l'shem shamayim (for the sake of heaven, i.e., for God's sake), but to manipulate heaven so as to escape the consequences of serving perverted worldly powers for the sake of enriching and inflating ourselves.

And to the extent that we engage in any or all of these behaviors, they have the potential to curse and destroy the moral core of an innocent nation, and to make us like Balaam, heathens in spite of our monotheism.

© 2013 Moshe ben Asher & Khulda bat Sarah

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). ★

**WIENER***(continued from page 7)*

assurances that this episode in the religious birth of a people would not last for just one generation, but for all time.

At first the people offered the generations of the past as a guarantee, this was rejected because of their failings. The people offered their holy representatives, which was also rejected because of their shortcomings. Finally, the people shouted that they would pledge their children as security and this was gladly accepted by God. This proclamation assured God that the generations that follow would be the guardians of all that is sacred and important in life.

Perhaps, as each Bar and Bat Mitzvah takes his or her place in the line of tradition they will always remember the particular day they stood to declare their acceptance of all that is expected. It is not only an obligation but also as a cherished moment in the journey of enjoyment, fulfillment, satisfaction and an important link in the chain of Jewish survival. Then we will have given them a much better life than can be imagined.

Rabbi Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at ravyitz@cox.net. His new book Living with Faith was published April 2013. It can be obtained on Amazon.com. ★

**TEICHER***(continued from page 11)*

date for marrying Josephine. She finally realized that he was not going to marry her. She met Wyatt, a widower with two previous common-law relationships,

and they then lived together until he died in 1929.

During the final years of Wyatt's life, he and Josephine resided in Los Angeles where they worked with difficulties on producing his biography. She continued these efforts until she died in 1944. By then, he had become a well-known figure in Western legends. She wrote a version of her own life story which is part of the basis for this biography.

Author Kirschner has done considerable research to produce this book. She has a Ph.D. in English literature from Princeton. She was associated with Columbia University before becoming University Dean of Macaulay Honors College, City University of New York. She has had an eclectic career as an academic, a writer, and an entrepreneur in television and interactive media. Her previous book, *Sala's Gift*, describes her mother's Holocaust experience. This new book adds to her well-deserved reputation.

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. ★

**KAPLAN/ISRAEL***(continued from page 16)*

not believe like themselves to follow a tradition which is not their tradition.

Batya Kallus, vice chair, and Shira Pruce, public relations chair, of the Women OF the Wall, explained in a calm and professional way that their purpose since their founding in 1988, is to have a women's only prayer group celebrating according to *their* traditions at the Western Wall.

Currently, men have four-fifths of the external space of the Western Wall and an entire synagogue inside. The women have the remaining one-fifth and are pushed against the ramp which non-Muslims use to go to the Temple Mount above where Jews are forbidden to pray.

When the rabbi of the Western Wall refused to allow the Women OF the Wall to pray as they believe, the issue went to the Supreme Court in 2003. They decided how the women wanted to pray was "not part of the local custom."

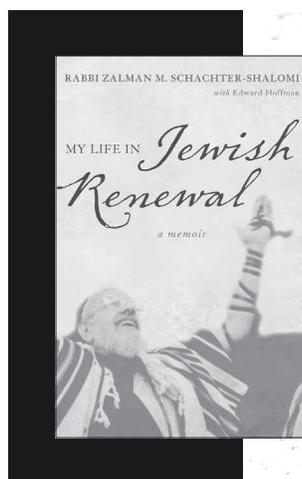
They were then told to pray at Robinson's Arch, constructed as part of King Herod's renovation and expansion of the Second Temple and part of the Temple Mount's massive western retaining wall. This forms its eastern support but is actually an archaeological site and not synonymous with the Western Wall.

Each month, on *Rosh Chodesh*, the first day of the Hebrew month, which has customarily been considered a woman's holiday, the women who wish to have a women's only prayer group (where they can wear prayer shawls, and pray as they wish) have been subjected to arrest by policemen and have been attacked with bottles, chairs and other objects by religious men who were not arrested for their behavior.

Last month, Orthodox rabbis encouraged and condoned the busing in of Orthodox girls' school students in large numbers, most of whom had no idea that they were being used as pawns in a highly controversial situation. Rather than praying, they looked at the Women OF the Wall, talked to each other and on their cell phones and watched the thousands of men who blew whistles during the women's praying, threw bottles and chairs at them and then threw rocks at the women and the buses on which they were transported away from the Western Wall.

The government is now looking for a solution. In April, Natan Sharansky, chairman of the Jewish Agency, proposed a solution for resolving the controversy over female prayer at the Western Wall. He called for the renovation of a respected site to make it accessible to non-Orthodox worshippers at all hours of the day.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, book reviewer, food columnist and feature writer who moved from Overland Park, Kan., to Jerusalem in September 2008. ★

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All aboard for the Jerusalem Railway Station

The Jerusalem Railway Station, now called The First Station, reopened May 14, 2013, *erev Shavuot*, for a full day of exciting, fun activities – after being closed for 15 years, but the station was never like this!

A bubbly young woman and a cheerful young man, dressed like train conductors, handed out information sheets and flowers; six restaurants were packed; vendors sold produce, organic crops, dairy products, breads and pastries, herbs and spices and more in a farmers' market; a large number of artisans displayed their wares in the design market; clothes by 30 designers were displayed in the Station Urban Fashion area. Jewelry booths, stuffed animals, children's clothes and books, and building kits in wood were among the things to buy. Parents and children also sat in a tented area on a canvas floor watching a variety of performers.



"Train conductors" offer information on opening day. Photos by Barry A. Kaplan.

Opening day, one could find plenty to eat from ice cream and toppings, beer from the Shapira Brewery (located in the industrial zone of Beit Shemesh), and corn on the cob (from Moshav Argaman in the Jordan Valley) to *dim sum* (from Laavote Chaviva factory), *kubeh* and other foods in a wrap by a Druze from Dalyat el Carmel and vegan hot dogs and potatoes with fillings from Alex Potatoes of Tel Aviv. A woman in green was dressed like a street lamp and ready to be photographed by all.

Some of the original tracks are covered by a 9,832 foot long wood deck which provides a pedestrian walkway and entry to the gift shop, photo exhibit room and restaurants. The exhibit room shows the old rail station history, in photographs and



Woman dressed like a street lamp.

slide shows, from its 1892 opening to its 1998 closing. One hopes the captions will be translated into English in the next two weeks for those who cannot read the Hebrew.

Each of the various bazaars and restaurants will have various days and hours of opening and will be an interesting and refreshing attraction for locals and visitors. Adom, which has been located in Feingold Court, off downtown's Jaffa Road, is serving seafood, fish, Italian and French foods. Vaniglia offers 66 flavors of ice cream plus sorbet and sugar-free varieties.

Hamiznon Kitchen station is a boutique chef-operated coffee shop. It will be open Sunday through Thursday, 7 a.m. until last customer; Friday 7 a.m. until before *Shabbat*; Saturday evening, after *Shabbat* ends.

Fresh Kitchen, part of a chain, offers breakfasts, pasta, salads, and sandwiches with natural ingredients. This is its first branch in Jerusalem and it is *kosher*.

Landwer is a coffee house with Italian and Mediterranean food and the first one in Jerusalem. Sunday through Thursday, it is open from 8 a.m. until 1 a.m.; Friday and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 2 a.m.; re:bar serves healthy drinks, shakes and yogurts.

Among the permanent features The First Station are Chick Chick Chock, a family bazaar with toys, clothing and games for children. It will be open Tuesdays from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. A Matter of Design Market showcases hand-made arts and crafts. It is open Monday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The Farmers' Market has produce, organic crops, dairy products, breads and pastries, herbs and spices by 16 vendors. It will be open Thursdays from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Station Urban Fashion displays clothing for men and women by 30 designers. Clothes will be available Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

A smart tour visitor's center will make available walking tours, Segway tours and electric bicycle riding tours. The First Station definitely adds a new dimension to sites to see, activities in which to participate and places to shop in Jerusalem for visitors and locals.

Women OF and FOR the Wall

If I ever had an iota of interest in or sympathy for the two-month old, grassroots, Orthodox, Women FOR the Wall group, it was totally destroyed listening to its founders at the Media Central briefing. (Media Central is an independent media-liaison organization offering foreign journalists a place to work with a variety of speakers, trips and other support services.)

Listening to Ronit Peskin (when she slowed down enough so one could take notes) or Leah Aharoni, co-founders of Women FOR the Wall, claim to be dedicated to heritage and tradition, but they certainly need a lesson in committing *laashon hara* (derogatory speech about other people) as well as defamation and slander because that was exactly what they did in their tirades against the Women OF the Wall.

The Women FOR the Wall claim the Women OF the Wall "runs against the traditional approach and are trying to impose their wishes on people who come to pray at the Western Wall."

The Women FOR the Wall do not seem to understand that *they* are doing precisely what they reject. They are, in fact, trying to coerce women who do
(see Kaplan/Israel, page 15)



A FOCUS ON HEALING



Ask the Rabbi

BY RABBI STEVEN Z. LEDER

I often receive emails asking what the Jewish view, my view or both might be on a particularly confusing moral dilemma. Here is a recent one:

Hello Rabbi Leder,

I am a psychologist in West LA. I am writing to get your thoughts about two concerns that a Jewish client has asked me about. She is dying of cancer after exhausting all treatments. In our last conversation, she questioned if the pain became too great, what Judaism says about ending her life by taking extra pain medication. I looked on the internet and although suicide is mostly opposed by Judaism, I found a reference to a warrior who rather than be taken captive, tortured and eventually killed anyway, took his own life. His action was considered righteous. What are your thoughts on this matter?

Secondly, she finds the story of Job very disturbing in its portrayal of a righteous man whose family is killed by God and who himself was made to suffer great tragedies and pain. She is wondering why God would do that. ~ Gary

Dear Gary,

Going beyond what is required to treat the pain by upping medication to the point of death is active euthanasia and forbidden by Jewish law. However, Jewish law does sanction and even encourage passive euthanasia. If there is some medication she is on or some device, like a respirator that is keeping her alive, it would be permissible to stop the medication or remove the device, thereby allowing her to die. In truth, many people do increase pain medication until a terminally ill and suffering person dies.

I have a don't ask, don't tell policy and always agree to officiate at the funeral of such a person.

As for Job, I consider the book a myth and a great leap forward in theodicy because by its own admission, Job is a "blameless man." The book of Job recognizes that terrible things happen to us that are entirely undeserved. Prior to this, the Bible viewed suffering as punishment for an individual's or a society's sins. Job is a more enlightened view in the sense that it does not blame the victim. The author of



Jewish Chaplain

BY RABBI LEON OLENICK

Jesus the Holy Cable Guy

In my work I serve as a Hospice Chaplain Rabbi. I believe that Elijah the Prophet comes to us in times of need. Elijah is the prophet of healing and bringer of light who mysteriously appears when needed, often times unnoticed and unacknowledged.

While I was at home recuperating from a hip surgery, I was not able to travel or even sit at the computer for long periods. I watched lots of television or read for entertainment before I was able to get around and walk comfortably. My wife thought it would be beneficial to have the "on demand" programs so I could watch movies and recorded programming – something other than afternoon game shows or soap operas. She called the cable company and made arrangements for them to install the proper boxes. Little did I realize that Elijah the Prophet would visit us disguised as Jesus the holy cable guy.

The doorbell rang and a Hispanic man appeared. He was about five feet tall, wearing overalls and not so clean shaven. He had a warm smile and announced himself as the cable man. He introduced himself as Jesus Martinez*. We told him what we wanted and he proceeded to check wiring around the house. He went outside and then to the garage, the attic – he was very efficient. After about 30 minutes he said that the assigned task was very complex and it would involve moving furniture, and probably drilling holes in



Job would say your client's cancer is not her fault. She is not being punished by God. But Job would also say that we cannot fully understand God's ways. This is where faith comes in. Faith that earthly justice and cosmic justice are not the same, and that what is inexplicable does nevertheless have meaning. I hope this helps you and your client to find peace and an end to her suffering.

~ Rabbi Steve Z. Leder

Rabbi Leder is the senior rabbi of Wilshire Boulevard Temple in Los Angeles. This is from their Feb. 1, 2013 bulletin. ✨

our walls. We decided not to proceed.

Our very friendly ten pound dog was hovering by Jesus' feet in an unusual way. Mr. Cheech, our dog finally laid down by Jesus and would not budge. Jesus smiled and told us he was a "dog healer" and asked permission to lay his hands on Cheech. We granted him permission. Jesus said he was able to feel the area in Mr. Cheech's hind legs where we know there is arthritis. Jesus closed his eyes and for the next 15 minutes he proceeded to massage his hind quarter. Cheech was totally still and was purring like a cat. When Jesus the holy cable man was finished he shook out his hands as Cheech sprang up. He said, "I am sure he feels better."

Jesus then looked at me and asked about my condition. I told him about my very recent surgery. He asked, "Would you like me to help?" I invited him to touch my very large and raw wound. As he closed his eyes I was able to feel the healing energy coming from him and going directly into the incision area where I had pain. It felt like the pressure from the incision was decreasing. He stayed in this position for about 30 minutes. When he was finished I was relieved.

I asked him where he studied, and how he acquired this power. He said, "It is a precious gift from G-d." I offered him money and he refused. He said, "The cable company was the vehicle used to bring me to your home and help you. I am grateful I could be here for you and Mr. Cheech."

After leaving our home, I sat with my wife, Jackie. We spoke about Elijah the prophet and the tales we studied over the years. We now know with certainty that Elijah the Prophet comes in different forms and disguises when needed. Even to the home of a rabbi, disguised as Jesus. This is a true story and happened as written two days after returning home from the hospital.

**Only Jesus' last name was changed for this story.*

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 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. ✨



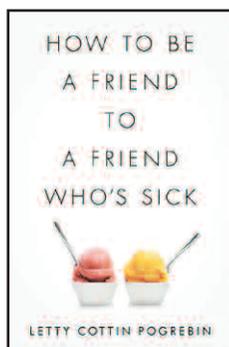
Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

Bikkur Cholim manners

How to be a Friend to a Friend Who's Sick.
By Letty Cottin Pogrebin. PublicAffairs, New York. 2013. 290 pages.

Every disease is a social disease. When a person is diagnosed, his or her family, friends and community are involved as well. The shock moves through a widening circle, and the questions are always the same: How do we react; how should we react? Will I say the right thing; is there a right thing to say? Should I call, buy a gift? The questions and uncertainties pile up because every serious disease is a social disease.



All of us who have been sick understand one of the powerful motivations behind Letty Cottin Pogrebin's marvelous new book, *How to Be a Friend to a Friend Who's Sick*: "I'm also a woman with lots of friends and a writer who became fascinated by the disconnect between how people treat sick people and how sick people wish to be treated."

That same disconnect has struck me repeatedly as a rabbi and a patient. (Full disclosure: I both know Pogrebin and am quoted briefly in the book.) Sometimes it seems there is such a gulf between being sick and being well that the two populations cannot understand one another. With Pogrebin's book in hand, they now can.

"Here's what you're going to learn in these pages," she announces, "empathy translated into action equals kindness." If we can understand something of what the sick are experiencing, not their symptoms but their state of being, we might be able better to help them. Part of it is individual: There will be some who long for a room filled with flowers and others who want an austere décor that matches their internal state. Some will wish to learn all about their sickness; others prefer to remain in a fog of unknowing. But many things are shared. It is almost universal, for example, that the sick do not wish to hear how fortunate they are beside the visitor: "Ah, well. You are actually lucky to get cancer at

45. I was only 30 when ... "Yes, thank you. I feel much better now.

Pogrebin's wisdom is a product not only of her research but her illness. Shortly after Yom Kippur in her 70th year she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She gives a brief, poignant account of the degradation, promise and sheer foreignness of the world of cancer treatment, alongside the remarkable cancer community, from health care professionals to support groups. In addition, her celebrity as a pioneering Jewish feminist was noted in the press: "Feminist Activist Stricken With Quintessentially Female Disease." Pogrebin makes the tart comment: "Just as construction workers get mesothelioma from overexposure to asbestos, it seems entirely possible that I contracted breast cancer from overexposure to women's troubles." In the course of her treatment she becomes interested in the endlessly complex problems of those who have to tend to the sick: less the doctors and nurses than the family and friends. They, too, enter an alien territory where it is easy to go wrong in word or deed. Often the burden falls upon the one who is ill to make the visitor comfortable, or even to comfort them. So where is the one who wishes to be a friend to turn for understanding of this experience which, sooner or later, will come to us all?

Pogrebin's chapters outline the dilemmas. The first is called "I Can't Believe You Said That!" Ecclesiastes said there was no end to the making of books, but could have as justly insisted there is no end to the making of stupid remarks. Here is a precious example Pogrebin unearths in one of her interviews:

"How'd it go?" Pete, one of the men I interviewed in the waiting room, was asked by his friend Fred.

"Great!" said Pete. "They got it all."

"Really? How do they know?"

"If the tone deaf ever need a poster child, Fred's their guy."

The point of course is not that Fred is unintelligent or evil. But unprepared people sometimes say what comes into their heads without an awareness of what it might mean. One more example in Pogrebin's list is this charmer:

"Wow! A girl in my office just died of that!" shrieked a friend when Nel was diagnosed with leukemia. Seeing her horrified reaction, Nel's friend backpedaled. "Wait! It wasn't leukemia! It was lymphoma! I mixed up my Ls."

It is still legendary in my own family that when my mother suffered a brain aneurysm we were keeping vigil at the hospital (a vigil that turned from hours to months), and the doctor told us the first 24 hours were the most crucial. My parents' good friends came to sit with us. My father

told them that the first 24 hours were the most crucial, but we had at least passed the halfway point. His friend consulted his watch and said, "Well, not quite."

My brothers and I looked at each other, incredulous. But when the need to say something is urgent, what comes out of our mouths is often not what we would wish. The Spanish proverb puts it crisply: A fly (or a foot, as Pogrebin has it) does not enter a closed mouth.

What about visiting? Some people are less desirous of visits than others. (When I have been in the hospital, both for a brain tumor and lymphoma, I went under an assumed name to keep visits to those closest to me. Other patients welcome a steady stream.) We need to reach a point, Pogrebin writes, when people can forthrightly speak the following sentences:

1. "Tell me what's helpful and what's not."

2. "Tell me if you want to be alone and when you want company."

3. "Tell me what to bring and when to leave."

But she acknowledges we are not there yet. So we play a guessing game on both sides of the sickness divide. She records seven lines sick people do actually wish to hear:

"I'm so sorry this happened to you."

"Tell me how I can help."

"I'm here if you want to talk."

"Just give me my marching orders."

"That sounds awful; I can't even imagine the pain."

"I'm bringing dinner."

"You must be desperate for some quiet time. I'll take your kids on Saturday."

These are specific offers and steps that express understanding and action. From the time when I was undergoing chemo, I will always remember how a group of people, knowing I was vegetarian, realized that cooking for someone is complicated: It involves getting dishes back, worrying if you like the food (sometimes lying that you did), etc. So they gave a credit card to two vegetarian restaurants and told me to order whatever I wanted. The delivery guy didn't care if I liked the food or not. It was considerate, it was generous, and I will always be grateful.

The dilemmas ramify. How does one deal with dementia, which presents a whole new set of challenges and pain? Pogrebin has some compassionate, helpful advice for those who watch their relatives slipping away and, even more, for those who find themselves slipping away. Preserve what you can. Express as much as can be expressed while the sun is lowering but not yet gone.

Although Job's friends later go awry, in the biblical book of Job, for the first seven days of his loss they merely sit silently and

(see Wolpe, page Healing 3)

Where are the Jewish Wellness Initiatives?

BY ALIZA WADLER SOLOMON

In the Jewish community, we believe in taking care of each other. While we have demonstrated this commitment in numerous ways – like visiting the sick and helping the less fortunate – we've neglected to take care of our health.

Like all Americans, members of the Jewish community have been eating more and moving less, and we've suffered the consequences. It's no secret that we have a food-centric culture, in which celebrations and holidays involve elaborate meals full of fat and calories. We like to cook and eat but we don't like to exercise very much, and unfortunately, we're unwittingly passing this onto our kids.

Physical activity levels in Jewish schools are lower than in secular schools because of the dual Jewish and secular curriculum, which doesn't allow sufficient time for gym and health classes. Many Orthodox schools have even fewer physical activities because of limitations on coed exercise. Although our lack of exercise and poor diet stems in large part from cultural issues, we've left the health and wellness initiatives up to non-Jewish organizations, which don't always understand our culture and the reasons that our health is declining.

The good news is that many non-Jewish organizations can serve as great models for how to create these types of programs in our community. For example, The Alliance for a Healthier Generation aims to reduce childhood obesity through programs in which schools, families, and doctors empower kids to make healthier choices. Another example is Action for Healthy Kids, which galvanizes children, schools, and communities to promote education about nutrition and fitness.

While these organizations serve the general population, the Jewish community as a whole lacks similar resources. The troubling fact is that, after hours of Google research, I was able to find *just five* Jewish organizations working to improve our community's health through fitness and nutrition. To continue our altruistic tradition of helping each other, we need to create more Jewish wellness initiatives while doing everything we can to support those that already exist.

The Jewish Community Health Initiative (JCHI) is one of the best examples of Jewish organizations that work to improve health by emphasizing fitness and nutrition. The organization, led by Dr. Mendel Singer, a professor of public health at the Case Western Reserve

A prayer for rabbis and caregivers

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

“Dear God, I am called upon to care for others. Each day I am aware of the privilege and the burden of this blessing. I feel my inadequacies and rejoice in the moments when I touch another heart. But sometimes I am laid low; my own sorrows and challenges envelop me. I wonder how to help another when I seem to be tangled in disappointments, in tasks undone, words unsaid, love unspoken. Please enable me to nurture the seeds of my own soul. Help me to understand that limitations are not failings. Let me see expectations as hopes, not demands that twist me up inside and freeze the flow of goodness I feel within me. God, let me open from within and spread that warmth, Your warmth, to others. For Your sake. In Your name. Amen.”

This prayer was posted on Rabbi Wolpe's Facebook profile on January 30, 2013: www.facebook.com/RabbiWolpe. ✨



Medical School, is cultivating partnerships with Jewish communities across the country to create a Jewish health movement. Dr. Singer's goal is to focus on disease prevention through healthy living, rather than disease treatment, which many other Jewish organizations are already working on.

One of the JCHI's latest partners is Camp Zeke, a new Jewish overnight camp that focuses on fitness, organic food, and healthy cooking. Campers can throw on an apron and cook with a professional chef, participate in energizing fitness activities, like strength training and dance, and in the process, join a community of like-minded peers. Camp Zeke is also establishing a series of year-round cooking and fitness seminars for a mini version of the summer experience.

Some other examples of Jewish organizations that do work in the area are the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center and Hazon (two organizations that just merged), and the Jewish Family and Children's Service. Isabella Freedman has historically hosted programs such as Torah Yoga, adult weight loss camps, and food conferences. Hazon aims to create “healthier, more sustainable communities” by spearheading the Jewish food movement. The organization raises awareness through physical activities like cross-country bike rides. For its part, the Jewish Family and Children's Service runs a nutrition program that has expanded across the country since its founding.

WOLPE

(continued from page Healing 2)

weep with him. Such instinctive empathy, so rare in the days of professionalization and protocols, is what Pogrebin helps restore. She teaches, but like the best teachers, seems to remind us of what we already know but have not articulated until we saw it on the page.

There are so many questions that suddenly plague us when we are ill: money, shame, the loss of the integrity of our bodies. The very experience of being in the hospital is jarring to the psyche. I remember days when all I wanted in the world was to pluck the IV from my arm. Pogrebin understands. For the sufferer and those who love her, she helps. This is a wise book. It is a book we need.

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 review was posted on his Facebook profile on April 10, 2012: www.facebook.com/RabbiWolpe. ✨



Healing comes out of a very simple human relationship – knowing your life matters to another person, and connecting to something larger and unseen.

~ Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D.



While these organizations are doing admirable work, we as a community need to strengthen them, talk about them, help them grow, and hopefully inspire more social entrepreneurs to do similar work. As we proceed, let's remember that, throughout history, some of the greatest Jewish minds have stressed that physical health is a core component of our Jewish identity. Let's act on this message and make the Jewish teaching of *shmirat ha'guf* – or taking care of the body – part of our daily conversations with community members.

Aliza Wadler Solomon is a graduate student of Public Health who is working closely with Camp Zeke, a new Jewish overnight camp that immerses kids in pure foods, energizing fitness activities, and culinary arts. ✨



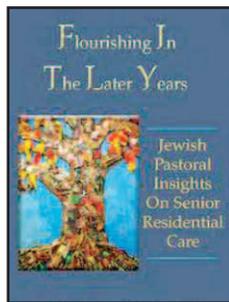
Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Invaluable information and insight to Jewish pastoral care

Flourishing In the Later Years: Jewish Pastoral Insights on Senior Residential Care. By Rabbi James R. Michaels & Rabbi Cary Kozberg. Mazo Publishers. 2012. Pp. 297.

This second edition – the first one was published in 2009 – proves that *Flourishing In the Later Years* is a flourishing and welcome addition to the growing field of Jewish Pastoral Care,



particularly its geriatric focus, receiving long – overdue professional attention. The Christian denominations and seminaries have been ahead in the essential area of Pastoral Care, though our Jewish counterparts are finally catching up.

The editors, our colleagues Rabbis James R. Michael & Cary Kozberg, are pioneering professional Jewish Chaplains whose critical contributions to their chosen vocation, and avocation, are deeply appreciated. In fact, their present book is not restricted to those who serve or live in senior residential facilities, but offers invaluable information and insight to all who are touched by and care for the human condition – spiritually, psychologically, and physically – with particular emphasis on Jewish settings.

The editors emphasize that four major factors impacting geriatric care have emerged since the first edition was published: “senior residential care” is replacing “long-term care,” with focus on the individual’s needs; the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; the new Jewish “Green House” residences in Dedham, Mass., and the use of technology to benefit the elderly. The book, and eye-opener, is divided into three parts: Clinical Issues, Pastoral Programming, and What Will the Future Bring.

As a son of Polish Holocaust survivors, I was interested in Dr. Paula David’s chapter, “More Battles: Age-Related Challenges for Holocaust Survivors.” The one by Sara

Judaism means healthy living

BY BENJAMIN WALDMAN

“Whoever is idle and does not exercise...even if he eats the proper foods and takes care to follow the rules of medicine, will be full of pain for all his days and his strength will fade away.”

When Maimonides wrote these words in the 12th Century, gym memberships and personal trainers were as foreign to his contemporaries as iPhones and Facebook. Nine centuries later, popular attitudes toward fitness and nutrition have changed. Farmers’ markets are thriving, schools are switching to whole grains and low fat milk, and companies are providing incentives for their employees to exercise. Today, few people deny that a healthy lifestyle greatly improves one’s life. However, the American Jewish community has been slow to embrace this wisdom into its identity.

The *Torah* (in Deuteronomy 4:15)



Paasche-Orlow, “Revealing The Jewish Voice In Clinical Pastoral Education,” reminded me of my four CPE units from Saint Luke’s Methodist Hospital in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in the 1970’s. I was fortunate to be among the early rabbis to receive this unique and essential training, followed in 1980 by a doctorate in Pastoral Care and Counseling from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, the first rabbi to earn the degree from the Presbyterian Church, USA, affiliated seminary.

The 23 contributors, including the editors, reflect wide and varied background, expertise, and experience that we ought to learn from and celebrate. Rabbi James. R. Michaels is Director of Pastoral Care at the Charles E. Smith Life Communities (the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington) in Rockville, Md., and Rabbi Cary Kozberg is Director of Religious Life at Wezner Heritage Village in Columbus, Ohio.

Rabbi Michaels poignantly concludes, ‘as the Baby Boom Generation enters its senior years, the need to provide spiritual comfort and guidance for them and their families will continue to grow and evolve. Will we create new pastoral models to fulfill the need? This is the question that we who are concerned about the welfare of Jewish seniors must address. In doing so, may we work to fulfill the Jewish people’s mission of bringing *kedushah* (sanctity) to the world” (p.286).

Rabbi Zoberman, a Certified Pastoral Counselor, he is the first rabbi to earn a doctorate in Pastoral Care and Counseling from McCormick Theological Seminary. ✨

implores us to “[b]e extremely protective of [our] lives,” from which rabbis derived the concept of *shmirat haguf*, literally protecting one’s body. This protection has been viewed to include physical health and wellness. *Shmirat haguf* is difficult to accomplish given the fact that many Jewish traditions revolve around food.

There is a well-known adage regarding Jewish ritual; *we won, let’s feast, we lost, let’s fast*. Unfortunately, between the deep fried food on *Chanukah* and the cholesterol rich food on Passover, traditional Jewish comfort food does not inherently align itself with a healthy lifestyle. Moreover, there is a notion that observing the laws of *kashrut* inherently equates with maintaining a healthy lifestyle. While the jury is still out on any health benefits of keeping *kosher*, in this day and age, *kashrut* is not sufficient to fulfill the requirement that one take care of his [or her] body.

As a community, we must redouble our efforts to take care of our health. How better to affect change on a communal level than by reaching out to the youth? Teaching our children about fitness and healthy cooking in a warm and energetic environment will ensure that they internalize the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Earlier this year, a passionate group of social entrepreneurs founded a new overnight summer camp called Camp Zeke.

Zeke, which is derived from the Hebrew name *Yechezkel* connotes immense strength. Immense strength, emanating from a joyful, healthy, and active lifestyle is what the camp seeks to instill in its campers. Camp Zeke will be the only Jewish camp where children will enjoy their classic summer camp experience, while simultaneously eating healthful food and learning valuable lessons from experts in exercise, cooking, and nutrition. They will be able to don an apron and cook elaborate dishes with a professional chef and customize their experience with numerous electives. Though current Jewish camps might offer sports, dance, yoga, and cooking, Zeke will be the only camp to do so as part of a comprehensive curriculum designed to guide kids along the path of growing up as healthy adults.

Camp Zeke will utilize traditional camp activities from capture-the-flag to communal meals – which at Zeke will be prepared by the campers – as learning opportunities that will remain with campers long after the summer is over. The time-honored Jewish teaching that physical and spiritual wellbeing go hand in hand is an integral part of Camp Zeke’s mission and will help to fill a current void in the Jewish community.

Benjamin is a New York-based attorney and freelance writer who works closely with Camp Zeke. ✨