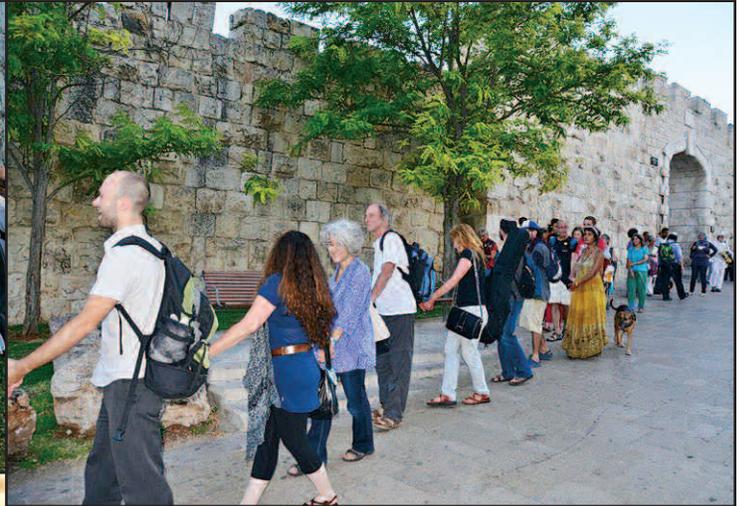


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See About the Cover, p.2.

Editorial

The following has been in our Indiana edition, but not yet in our National one.

On Sundays June 1 and 8, I watched Shawn Achor interviewed on Oprah's *Super Soul Sunday* TV show. Achor is the CEO of Good Think Inc., where he researches and teaches about positive psychology. While a student at Harvard, he studied that relatively new field and eventually taught it. His class became the most popular one at the school.

Besides authoring two bestselling books, *The Happiness Advantage* and *Before Happiness*, Achor was a speaker for TED (www.ted.com) in Bloomington, Ind., in May 2011. TED is a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less). TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers almost all topics – from science to business to global issues – in more than 100 languages.

That 12 minute speech has been viewed 7.8 million times at the following site: www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work. After viewing it, one of the reasons for his popularity at Harvard has to be how hilarious, LOL funny his presentation is.

What is the key to understanding the science of happiness? Achor said we think that one person can predict another's happiness level by observing that person's external world, but that is not an accurate way to gauge happiness. Ninety percent of one's long term happiness is predicted not by one's external world but by how one's brain processes the world.

"It's not necessarily the reality that shapes us, but the lens through which your brain views the world that shapes your reality. And if we can change the lens, we can change not only your happiness but we can change every single educational and business outcome at the same time," he commented emphatically.

He said we need to reverse the formula for happiness and success. Instead of thinking success leads to happiness, it is happiness that leads to success.

We think that if one simply achieves one's goals that will make one happy but what happens instead is he or she becomes momentarily happy when the goal is achieved, but then the original goal changes to something more. For example, the goal might have been to get an A on a test but after that is achieved the goal becomes to get an A in the class. That means happiness gets postponed until the end of the semester.

About the Cover

8th annual "Jerusalem Hug"
By JERUSALEM PEACEMAKER ELIYAHU MCLEAN

The eighth annual Jerusalem Hug held on June 23 was a success. A hundred Israelis, Palestinians and internationals gathered to demonstrate our shared love of Jerusalem. We made the front page of the June 24 *Jerusalem Post* with the headline: "Hugging the Way to a Common Goal".



Eliyahu McLean

I am saddened to hear that the bodies of the three kidnapped Israeli teenagers were found. *Baruch Dayan Ha'emet*. I was in Hebron at the Tomb of Patriarchs today and joined in a public prayer for them.

On June 17, Jerusalem Peacemakers had joined a shared prayer by Jews and Muslims for their safe return. This was organized by Tag Meir. Haj Ibrahim Abuelhawa had been one of the only Muslim leaders willing to speak publicly to the media, and in Arabic, praying that they return home to their mothers. See more about that at this link: www.timesofisrael.com/at-kidnapping-site-jews-and-muslims-join-in-prayer/
Eliyahu, June 30, 2014

We started with a listening circle and energy workshop on the grass between Jaffa Gate and Zion Gate, then proceeded
(see Cover, page 4)



On the other hand, if we can raise someone's level of positivity, he or she will have a happiness advantage. A brain that is positive performs significantly better than one that is negative, neutral or stressed. It is more energetic, productive, and creative.

In both the TED speech and in more detail on the TV show Achor spoke about five simple practices one can do to train one's brain to be more positive in just a span of two minutes, if done for 21 days in a row. One can rewire one's brain to become more optimistic. By doing these activities one can train one's brain just like we train our bodies with physical exercise. Below are the five practices:

- 1) Writing down three new things you are grateful for causes the brain to scan the world for the positive instead of the negative which is what the majority of most newscasts contain.
- 2) Journaling about one positive experience you have had over the past 24 hours allows your brain to relive it.

Inside this Issue

Editorial.....	2
About the Cover	2
Rabbi Benzion Cohen <i>(Chassidic Rabbi)</i>	3
Rabbi Dennis Sasso	4
Ted Roberts <i>(Spoonful of Humor)</i>	4
Melinda Ribner <i>(Kabbalah of the Month)</i>	5
Rabbi Irwin Wiener, D.D. <i>(Wiener's Wisdom)</i>	6
Amy Hirshberg Lederman <i>(Jewish Educator)</i>	6
Rabbi Jon Adland <i>(Shabbat Shalom)</i>	7
Howard Karsh <i>(Jewish America)</i>	8
Jim Shipley <i>(Shipley Speaks)</i>	8
Rabbi ben Asher/bat Sarah <i>(Gather the People)</i>	9
Sybil Kaplan <i>(Seen on the Israel Scene)</i>	10
Dr. Miriam Zimmerman <i>(Holocaust Educator)</i>	11
Things to love about being Jewish	13
Niagara-on-the-Lake Canada	14
G-father of Jewish vegetarianism	14
Rabbi Elliot B. Gertel <i>(Media Watch)</i>	15
Edward Hoffman, Ph.D. <i>(Book Review)</i>	16
Rabbi Israel Zoberman <i>(Book Review)</i>	16
Sybil Kaplan <i>(Book Review)</i>	17
Sybil Kaplan <i>(My Kosher Kitchen)</i>	18
Rabbi David Wolpe <i>(Why Faith Matters)</i>	18
Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi <i>(Book Excerpt)</i>	19
A. Frank sapling update	20
Rabbi Zoberman at Congress	20

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- 3) Exercising teaches your brain that your behavior matters.
- 4) Meditating allows your brain to get over the cultural ADHD that we have been creating by trying to do multiple tasks at once. It allows our brains to focus on the task at hand. **(see Editorial, page 3)**

Chassidic Rabbi

By RABBI BENZION COHEN

Miracles

A few months ago I went to a wedding here in Kfar Chabad. A good friend of mine married off his son. I had a great time dancing, singing, even jumping up and down. However, the next morning I woke up with a lot of pain in my left knee.

I said to myself "Oy vei, maybe I am getting old." Many times in my life I have had pains in my knees. From falling down, from accidents. But from dancing at a wedding?

For a week I limped around. I had to be careful even how I sat down or laid down in bed. The pain was slowly easing up. But then one day I was late for my daily visit to the geriatrics ward and I walked fast. The pain came back full force.

I said to myself "Oy vei! You are really getting old! Did you forget that you have a Rebbe?" Our Rebbe, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, is a prophet and miracle worker. We believe that he is the long awaited *Moshiach* (Messiah). When we are in doubt, when we need a blessing, we ask the Rebbe.

How do we ask the Rebbe for blessings today? One way is to look at a picture of the Rebbe and ask him. The Rebbe once told someone that when you look at the picture of a Rebbe, the Rebbe looks back at you.

Another way is to write a letter to the Rebbe. Then we take one of the volumes of the Rebbe's letters, open it, and put the letter inside to where the book opened. Then we carefully read the letters on the pages where the book opened, and see what the Rebbe has to tell us. We don't believe in coincidences. If the book opened on this page, then here is where we will find the Rebbe's answer and blessings.

As of today, about 40 volumes of the letters that the Rebbe wrote to many thousands of people about many topics and subjects have been published.

I needed a blessing for my knee. I took a pen and paper and wrote to the Rebbe, asking for a blessing for my knee, and for the complete redemption of all of the world. Then I said "Long live our Rebbe and *Moshiach*".

I took down a volume of the Rebbe's letters, opened it and put my letter inside. Then I sat down and read the pages where the book opened. On one page was a letter that the Rebbe had written around 50 years ago. The Rebbe sent his blessings for a complete recovery, and suggested that the man should have his *tefillin* checked.

EDITORIAL

(continued from page 2)

5) Doing random or conscious acts of kindness by opening your inbox to write one email praising or thanking someone in your social support network helps in three ways. It helps the person doing the act of kindness, the person receiving it and those in relationship with those two people. (On the TV show it was discussed that this does not have to be done by email but could be with a phone call, a written letter and – even better – in person.)

Below in italics is a news story from our July 3, 1970 *National Jewish Post & Opinion*. This is reprinted in honor of the 40th anniversary of the ordinations of the first ever rabbinic couple, Rabbis Dennis and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso. Rabbi Israel Zoberman of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach is also celebrating his 40th this year (see p. 20).

Love Unites Female, Male Rabbinical Students. By Harry Hoffman

Sandy Lynn Eisenberg and Dennis Sasso, both 22 and both studying to become rabbis, were married last Friday night in a wedding



I took my *tefillin* to a local *sofer* (Torah scribe) to have them checked. My *tefillin* get a lot of use, and indeed they needed some repairs. Besides putting them on every day myself, I also use them to help many others to do this *Mitzvah*.

Miracle of miracles! As soon as I fixed my *tefillin*, *Hashem* fixed my knee. I thank *Hashem* and the Rebbe that the pain is gone.

And I thank *Hashem* for giving us the Rebbe. Life is not always easy. Especially if it is lacking meaning and spirituality. I came in contact with Lubavitch 45 years ago. I met there happy people, loving people. I gave it a try, and soon decided to join. Now everything in life has meaning and beauty.

Do you need a blessing? Are you facing an important decision? Do you have doubts about spirituality and *Hashem*? Do an experiment. Ask the Rebbe! You have nothing to lose, and a whole lot to gain. If you need assistance, contact your local Chabad Rabbi, go to www.igrot.com, or send me an email.

Make your life better. You are an important part of the world. When your life gets better, the whole world gets that much better, and comes closer to the time when there will only be good. We want *Moshiach* now.

Rabbi Cohen lives in K'far Chabad, Israel. He can be reached by email at bzcohen@orange.net.il. ✨

unique in Jewish history.

The ceremony took place at 6 p.m. in Congregation Keneseth Israel, in suburban Elkins Park, with Rabbi Bertram Korn officiating.

As Rabbi Korn said to the bride and bridegroom standing under the chupah: "Sandy and Dennis, this is an historic wedding. For the first time in the story of Judaism, two students for the rabbinate are being wed."

If she graduates, Mrs. Sasso will be the first woman ever to be ordained as a rabbi.

The bride and her husband are both second-year students at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College here.

Mr. Sasso is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Colman Sasso, of Panama City, Republic of Panama.

The wedding ceremony was liturgically an unusual blending of diverse rituals in that it combined reform and traditional aspects of both traditions.

The marriage certificate was, in this case, composed by the bridal couple in order to, as they said, "combine the spiritual essence of the old certificate with contemporary concepts of mutual respect between man and woman in marriage.

While it is customary for only the groom to pronounce the marriage vow, both said the ancient words, but in their own dialect.

"You are consecrated to me according to the laws of Moses and Israel."

Processional music played as the bride walked down the aisle was adapted from an old Sephardic melody from the island of Curacao.

Mrs. Sasso, who grew up in Congregation Keneseth Israel, is a graduate of Temple University. Her husband was graduated from Brandeis University.

It is important to note that in 1970 no women rabbis had been ordained in the United States. In 1972 Sally Priesand became the first one in the Reform movement after graduating from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Since Sandy did not graduate until 1974, she was the second woman rabbi but the first one ordained by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia. Also interesting is the phrase in the article: "If she graduates...."

I wonder if the reporter thought she would drop out of school now that she was married. To me it demonstrates how people felt back then about a woman being a rabbi. Sandy brilliantly achieved that role at the same time as she – with her husband's devoted support – raised two successful children. She proved those skeptics wrong by revealing the immense, versatile contribution one woman is capable of making!

Jennie Cohen, July 2, 2014 ✨

Pope's Israel visit is positive sign

By RABBI DENNIS C. SASSO



In 1904, Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, appealed to Pope Pius X for his support in the establishment of a Jewish homeland. The pontiff declined: "The Jews did not acknowledge our Lord, and thus we cannot recognize the Jewish people." Last week, Pope Francis visited Israel and placed a wreath at the grave of Theodor Herzl.

The visit of Pope Francis is important because it affirms the church's efforts to improve its relationship with Judaism and Israel, while supporting the legitimate claims of the Palestinians. The visit, though labeled "purely a religious trip," could not escape political overtones and caused ripples of discomfort and controversy among Palestinians and Israelis. Some ultra-Orthodox Jews painted graffiti and protested the pope's visits to certain sites. Omar Barghouti, an anti-Israel activist, labeled the pope's visit to Herzl's grave as "a nauseating, offensive act."

In 1965, Pope John XXIII led the Catholic world toward improving relations with Jews after nearly two millennia of negative theological teaching about Judaism that made no room for the Jews as a sovereign people in their own land. While in 1947 the Vatican had voted in favor of the United Nations partition of Palestine, it was not until 1993 that it finally recognized Israel.

The Vatican's recognition of Israel and its denunciations of anti-Semitism have helped to amend the church's earlier teachings about Jews and Judaism. There is also an interest on the part of the church to be a player in future peace negotiations, especially regarding the city of Jerusalem.

During his trip, the pope met with Patriarch Bartholomew, the archbishop of Constantinople and leader of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, to reaffirm bonds and issue a joint declaration of "concern for the situation of Christians in the Middle East," especially for the churches "in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, which have suffered most grievously due to recent events." Pope Francis' visit to the Holy Land testifies to the church's ongoing desire to be a partner in effecting peaceful resolution to the problems affecting the region.

Pope Francis was careful in words and gestures to affirm the legitimacy and security of Israel and to promote the rights and statehood of the Palestinian people. Upon



Spoonful of Humor

By TED ROBERTS

4th of July – our holiday too!

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence was not Jewish. Sure, Adam Sandler, Goldie Hawn, Kirk Douglas, Alan Greenspan, and Bill Goldberg (a wrestling champ like Jacob) are Jewish. So is Madelaine Albright (though she forgot to tell us for a long time). And so was Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein and Binyomin Disraeli and Jesus Christ. That's the good news.

But alas, fellow Jewish Americans, George Washington – what a jewel he would be in our crown – is not. We know this because no Jewish property holder would sit on a 400-acre real estate package in suburban Washington without ONCE calling up a developer to carve it up into house lots. Besides, whoever heard of a Jew with a mouth full of wooden teeth because he couldn't afford a date with his orthodontist.

So, I'm afraid our first president never attended a *minyón*. But he was a believer when it came to religious freedom.

America – the new Zion – founded by those quirky Puritans has provided a flourishing home for Judaism. The founders envisioned their brave new world with all the sanctity of Jerusalem. They were a rare breed, with an affinity for Zion because they were Old Testament believers; separatists who'd left the Church of England in their theological dust. Their basic idea was to introduce religion into every facet of their life. Like it or not – church and state were one to them.

In a way, they were the *Chasids* of Christianity – without the joyfulness – they prayed more than they played. They spent more candlelit New England nights studying Leviticus than playing Stud Poker.

departing, the pope extended an invitation to Presidents Shimon Peres of Israel and Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority to visit him in the Vatican to pray for peace. They both accepted.

May prayers translate into praxis and piety into peace.

Rabbi Sasso has been senior rabbi at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis since 1977. Reprinted with permission from The Indianapolis Star June 3, 2014. ★

COVER

(continued from page 2)

with a human chain around the Old City walls with more and more joining, stopping for prayer and song circles at Jaffa Gate, Kikar Tzahal, New Gate and a final 'Hug' of the walls above Damascus Gate.

We didn't manage to get permits for Palestinians from the West Bank, given the current political climate, but many from Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Abu Dis and Hebron sent their prayers and intentions for peace that we included in the event. The closing drum circle at the top of the Old City walls brought Arabs and Jews, young and old, religious and secular, together for hours of drumming and chanting in unison.

See more at www.jerusalemhug.org on Facebook at www.facebook.com/events/440550596091327, and a video of the one from 2013 on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAsCcVAEfEs. Photos by Dida Mulder, Yair Bartal, and Rob Schrama. ★



In the dull old days when public schools taught American History instead of Hot Air Ballooning every high school freshman knew that those prim Puritans had a strong Old Testament core. McCauley, the famous English historian, tells us that they "began to feel for the Old Testament a preference...which showed itself in all their sentiments and habits". They were not frivolous folks. These, then, were the forebears of the group of dead, white Caucasian males who signed the Declaration of Independence that epochal 4th of July, 1776.

Who would have thought that the proclamation of the Constitutional Congress on that hot July day in Philadelphia would eventually affect the lost, wandering tribes of Israel. But it did. A little over a hundred years later, the dispossessed of Israel flocked to the New Zion. They knew a good thing when they saw it.

Our team missed the Mayflower by a couple of centuries. We also missed the Queen Mary. There were no deck chairs on the cattle boats that brought our ancestors to the New World of golden streets paved with dreams. They were stuffed in the hold like pickles in a jar and probably didn't spend the eight-day crossing mourning what they left behind – the poverty, hunger, persecution that ruled the masses of Eastern Europe – Jew and Gentile alike.

There's a deep ache in our hearts when we think of the old world they left behind, because a few decades later it was consumed in the ovens of the Holocaust.

(see Roberts, page 5)



Kabbalah of the Month

By MELINDA RIBNER

Hold off on judgment this month

The month of *Tammuz* began on the eve of June 28. *Tammuz* is the gateway to the summer. From a secular perspective, summer appears to be carefree, a time to relax, to travel, to have fun. But Kabbalistically the month is not what it appears to be. The heat that one experiences this month is not just physical. It is also emotional and spiritual.

The Jewish calendar is divided between months assigned to Esau and months assigned to Jacob from a Kabbalistic perspective. The first three months (*Nissan*, *Iyar* and *Sivan*) are given to Jacob. There we find so many Jewish holidays. The next three months *Tammuz*, *Av* and *Elul* were given to Esau. After many battles Jacob reclaimed part of *Av*, all of *Elul* but *Tammuz* is totally in the domain of Esau. Like the nature of Esau, *Tammuz* is a time when people engage in physical pleasures and warlike behaviors. Just look at what is happening in our world today. *Tammuz* is a time of unique challenges and tests, particularly for the Jewish people.

The healing opportunity of the month is seeing. The challenge this month is to see life as it is and not as we want it to be. The question to be particularly mindful of during this month is, "Am I seeing things in my life as they are, or am I simply projecting my own needs, desires and fears onto a person or situation? Do I avoid seeing or deny the truth, the reality because of prejudice?" Please reflect on your "seeing" on a personal as well as a communal level. Do not be afraid to question your assumptions. Go beyond appearances to see the intrinsic truth. Trust that whatever is true – painful as it may seem to you and as deceptive as it once was – will lead you to greater freedom. God is truth, and truth brings freedom.

Tammuz is ultimately a good month. We can grow through challenges in ways that may not be possible at other times in the year but only if we can see clearly what is taking place. *Tammuz* is a month of reversals. May we see wonderful reversals this month.

The Divine permutation for the month is reversed. What this means is that you may expect one thing to happen but something else happens. This can be a

total surprise if we were unwilling to see what was really happening below the surface. The physical and spiritual heat of this month encourages us too often to make quick judgments about people and our life situations that are based on externalities and not the truth or essence.

In this week's Torah portion, even Moses becomes angry and hits the rock after the death of his beloved sister Miriam. For this we are told that he was not permitted to enter the Land of Israel. May this remind us how important it is to not act upon our anger at any time but particularly this month. Take lots of deep breaths this month, open your heart and eyes to see what is really happening.

Tammuz is also a time of judgment. We may be confronted by things of the past and find that now we have the opportunity to choose differently than we did before. Remember that nothing is by chance or coincidental. This is such a thing as divine providence. We may reap the results of past karma this month, so we need to be flexible and accepting. Remember that the healing of seeing of this month enables us to see through appearance, to see through deception. We may feel hurt, we may feel betrayed, some of what we believed previously may crumble before us, but with the gift of true seeing, we will be happy and uplifted.

Below is a favorite story from my book *Kabbalah Month by Month* to remember in situations where one might feel a tendency to judge a little too quickly.

"There was much opposition to Chassidism in its formative years. An opponent of Chassidism had heard many amazing claims about the Chernobyl Rebbe and wanted to meet this Rebbe himself to see if there was any validity to what his followers said about him. He understood that followers see their Rebbe as a wondrous being, an angel, an intermediary, but he assumed this was just wishful thinking on the part of simple people.

"He traveled to see the Rebbe and had the privilege of sitting at the table with him for a meal. As he watched the Rebbe eat, he did not see anything extraordinary. With the food falling out of the Rebbe's mouth onto his beard gave the impression that the Rebbe did not even have the manners of a cultured person. He was ready to dismiss the Rebbe and all the claims he had heard about him, yet he stopped himself.

"He excused himself from the table, went to the corner, and prayed to God. 'Master of the Universe, please let my eyes be open to see the truth of what is. Please let me see the essence of the Rebbe and not the externalities.'

When he returned to the table, he now

ROBERTS

(continued from page 4)

What would those martyrs – pious and profane alike cleansed by their sacrifice – say about America in 2014? What would they think to see our cars and homes and VCRs and bulging pantries? What would these cultural loners say to our integration with a warm, tolerant society?

So, there was this grim, old world fast receding in the rear vision mirror of the Good Ship *Hatikvah* – steaming for the shining city on the Hudson where the only king was "Abie, the King of Corned Beef" on lower Hester Street.

They poured out of their boats into the sidewalks of New York, which they found to be of concrete, not gold. But concrete was better than the muck and mud of Polish villages. And sweatshop bosses had hearts as hard as the concrete sidewalks, but they couldn't kill you or take your daughters for pleasure and your sons for their army. The Charter of the New Jerusalem prevented that.

They could only fire you. And right around the corner was another who'd give you the same handful of silver that bought lots of bread and vegetables and even meat.

There was too much work and not much leisure. But nobody starved. And if a family jammed up in a cheap flat and emptied all their silver in a single pile, eventually they could transform themselves into the nobility of this Brave New World. Here, it only took money; money for goods, money for education. This was a game they knew how to play. Suffer now – prosper tomorrow. A bargain – a very small price compared to the fate of those they left behind. *L'chayim!*

Ted Roberts, a Rockower Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks at Jewish life with rare wit and insight. When he's not writing, Ted worships at Etz Chayim Synagogue in Huntsville, Ala. Check out his Web site: www.wonderwordworks.com. Blogsite: www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com. His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof can be bought at Amazon.com or lulu.com/content/127641. ★



saw that the Rebbe was shining from one corner of the world to another. The Rebbe was indeed a great light. His eyes had been purified through prayer so he could see the hidden truth."

So let us remember during the course of this month before becoming reactive or passing judgments on others or even ourselves, take a few moments to breathe, to feel our own feelings, open our hearts and pray for divine assistance and clarity to see ourselves and others as they are.

(see Ribner, page 6)



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

Alive and well

The summer is here and certain parts of our country experience extreme heat while other parts undergo humidity changes and lots of rain. Such is the routine of nature. It never changes, just varies a bit here and there. The same holds true for the cycle of life and the expressions of frustration and satisfaction.

Life is not about heat or cold. Life is not just about comfort or distress. Our journey involves seasons that bring about holidays. It seems that time is counted by holidays. We go from one holiday to the next and adjust ourselves to the next event and the next. We finished Passover, we moved to *Shavuot* and then, the holiday of holidays, *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*.

Passover and *Shavuot* represent planting and harvesting. When we start out in life we plant the seeds of our future by our actions and deeds. The growth that occurs is determined by the fertilizer we use and the water needed to assist in the development of that which has been planted.

What is fertilizer? It consists of traditions and customs. It contains environment and habits that are learned from these exposures. As we get older we discard some and develop others. This is part of growth. As with that which is planted, it too accepts the environment that surrounds it, discarding some foliage and growing replacements. Life imitates nature as nature imitates life. They are inseparable.

What is the water that sustains us? For vegetation it is rain. For us it is the water of knowledge and the benefits of exchange of ideas. It is allowing our minds to expand to absorb all that is around us, such as the plants do as they drink up the flow from springs and rivers.

Both Passover and *Shavuot* are symbols of the cycle of life. On Passover we understood the planting of the seeds of redemption. We achieved this because we continually fed the seeds with our sweat and the unimaginable hardships that occurred. Eventually the seeds grew into a desperate need for room to grow – to escape the confines of chains and shackles.

It was not an easy transition. It is most difficult to take something that is wild and domesticate it. Our people were spread all over the known world through servitude and to bring them all together with one goal, the goal of freedom required

RIBNER

(continued from page 5)

May we be blessed with good eyes to see God in everything that is taking place in our lives.

Melinda Ribner L.C.S. W. is the author of The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women, Everyday Kabbalah, Kabbalah Month by Month, and New Age Judaism. Internationally known for her pioneering work in kabbalistic meditation and healing, she is also a spiritual psychotherapist and has used kabbalistic wisdom as part of treatment. www.kabbalahoftheheart.com. ✨



determination and perseverance. The descendants of the first migrants into the unknown knew only despair. They relied on the glimmer of hope that was handed down with each generation. They could only imagine. This is what they clung to. This is what finally gave them the ability to sprout and flourish.

Shavuot, on the other hand, was the result of nurturing a hope, a faith that we were determined to breathe the air of freedom and salvation. However, to achieve a true understanding of independence we needed to control our future by learning from the past. This could only be done with civility and an organized effort for connection to each other and the world around us.

The experience in the wilderness taught humility, for it was necessary to rely on each other as we relied on God. The lesson was quite simple: if one suffers, all suffer because we are one in spirit and in this we learned the lesson of survival.

Sinai was the culmination of the hardships we endured woven into a fabric of human existence consisting of laws and obligations that would ensure the future for us and all who follow. The Law was designed to teach a rag-tag group of nothing the value of life and the exceptional opportunity given to make life worth living.

The High Holidays, as they are referred to, enable us to absorb these lessons, attach them to our daily lives and then review the progress that we have made all these centuries. It is an opportunity to renew our commitment to the pledge made by our ancestors: To do, to listen, to teach, to remember, to continue searching for the answers that will afford us the ability to appreciate the benefits of discipline.

God has told us through the values put before us that creation was designed to enable us to enjoy all that was created – not for just one, but for all. We seem to forget this as we struggle aimlessly through life. We overlook that which is good and concentrate on the bad things



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

Living with death: An inspiring commitment to friendship

By her own account, my mother is not a religious woman. She does not read the Bible, know Hebrew or put much stock in the observance of Jewish rituals. She has been known to comment on my own degree of commitment to Judaism in anxious, hushed tones, the kind she uses when someone in our family is seriously ill. My brother once told me she told him about the “weird tent with hanging fruit” in our backyard (our *Sukkah*) and the cleaning frenzy I engage in before Passover as evidence that I’ve gone off the deep end and joined some bizarre cult.

(see Lederman, page 7)



that are part of our journey. Tragedy has its moments, but fulfillment is the water needed to complete the planting for the contentment of life.

Rosh Hashanah and *Yom Kippur* are the brakes on the train of our existence. They are the emergency cords that will bring a complete stop to what we have been and when the train starts again, we will ride into a new chapter that will, hopefully, ensure a future of happiness and completion; the witnessing of celebrations that will make us smile and laugh. After all, creation was designed to help this process.

There is so much that can be written or spoken about what these holidays mean. We all have different ideas and concepts. The one thing that unites us is the understanding that we all plant seeds, we water that which has been planted and then we step back and watch the harvest of our indulgence grow into a New Year filled with all we want and need. Perhaps this will also give us a greater appreciation of God, even when we doubt.

Then the inscription in the Book of Life will indicate longevity, healthfulness, and satisfaction. Above all, it will be written that this year will find us in tune with life through the belief that God is everything in our lives.

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 can be obtained on Amazon.com. ✨



Shabbat Shalom

By RABBI JON ADLAND

Pirke Avot 2:2 – Rabban Gamaliel the son of Rabbi Judah the Prince said: Great is study of the Torah when combined with a worldly occupation, for toil in them both puts sin out of mind. All study of the Torah, which is not supplemented by work is destined to prove futile and causes sin. Let all who occupy themselves with communal affairs do so for Heaven's sake, for then the merit of their fathers sustains them and their righteousness endures forever. And as for you, G-d will then say: I count you worthy of great reward as if you had done it all yourselves.

**June 27, 2014, Chukkat
Numbers 19:1–22:1, 29 Sivan 5774**

I am going to take a break from writing during the month of July. I like to write “Shabbat Shalom” first thing in the morning on Friday and between July 4th, my Friday at woodworking school and traveling to a wedding, I won’t be able to do that. It is hard to believe that I have been writing “Shabbat Shalom” for 18 years. It is even harder to believe that there are a few people on this list (besides family) who received the earliest ones I sent.

The first one I have saved was from April 19, 1996. There may have been earlier ones, but they aren’t in my files. I started writing “Shabbat Shalom” to encourage my congregants at Temple Adath Israel in Lexington, Ky., to think about *Shabbat* and possibly even to become more engaged in celebrating *Shabbat* and living a more active Jewish life. There were probably 20 email addresses it was sent to. I didn’t get into topical issues or remembrances of people who influenced my life or reflecting on what is happening in the world or this day in history. It was about *Shabbat*. (I am not even sure when I added in the closing words about lighting *Shabbat* candles, but it has been around for awhile.)

Here is what the April 19, 1996 “*Shabbat Shalom*” said:

A rabbi and a soapmaker went for a walk together. The soapmaker said: “What good is religion? Look at the trouble and the misery in the world after thousands of years of teaching about goodness, truth, and peace – after all the prayers and sermons and teachings. If religion is good and true, why should this be?”

The rabbi said nothing. They continued walking until he noticed a child playing in

LEDERMAN

(continued from page 6)

So it was with both amazement and awe that I recently witnessed her response to the painful and inevitable death of her closest and oldest friend, Eleanor, from cancer. For in those long six months, she met the task of loving and caring for Eleanor with instincts and behavior that are deeply Jewish.

She knew from the start how to provide comfort care, the kind that in its early stages took the form of a pot of chicken soup and a brisket big enough to feed the neighborhood but sadly ended with the stroking of a barely conscious forehead covered in sweat. She understood intuitively that visiting the sick, or *Bikur Holim*, often meant sitting quietly by Eleanor’s bedside, asking nothing, just giving her friend the sense that she didn’t have to bear her sickness alone. And she helped create *Shalom Bayit*, a calm presence in the house, through her hugs and advice when Eleanor’s adult children became stressed and argumentative over what to do for their dying mother.

We talked often during this time about the questions that plagued her; theological questions that became real through the process of participating in the last stages of life of her dearest friend. “Why did Eleanor have to suffer so much? Who



the gutter. The child was filthy with mud and grime. Then the rabbi said: “Look at that child. You say that soap makes people clean, but see the dirt on that youngster? Of what good is soap? With all the soap in the world, that child is still filthy. I wonder just how effective soap is after all?”

The soapmaker protested and said: “But, Rabbi, soap can’t do any good unless it’s used!”

“Exactly,” replied the rabbi. “So it is with Judaism or any religion. It isn’t effective unless it is applied and used.”

“Judaism is filled with many positive messages and examples of how to act in the image of God. Yet, unless we use it, it won’t be effective. I encourage you to add one new aspect of Jewish living to your life. It can only enhance your life, soul and relationship with God.”

Still a great story and lesson today. Judaism isn’t effective unless it is used. I am not simply talking about the 613 *mitzvot* or the holidays or the life cycle events, but the totality of Jewish thought and practice. Even if you just take a small slice of this Jewish pie it is well worth it. Judaism can add meaning, depth and spirituality to your life.

(see Adland, page 13)

should be the one to determine the time of her death: the doctor, her family, Eleanor, God? What words of comfort could she speak to her dying friend about the significance of her life, about the children and grandchildren she would leave behind?”

We covered much more territory than simply pondering those questions. Talking about Eleanor gave me a chance to find out more about my mother – her values, her needs and concerns, her own fears of death. It was a gift that Eleanor gave to us, a time to talk safely in the third person about a very first person matter.

The *Talmud*, the sacred Jewish text that interprets the Torah, says that when a person meets his death, he will be asked these questions:

“Did you conduct yourself honestly in your business?”

Did you take time to study the Torah?

Did you busy yourself with having children?

Did you think about the World-to-Come?”

This text is instructive in that it establishes that the first question we are asked upon our deaths is not “Did you believe in God?” or “Did you perform all of the Jewish commandments?” but rather “Did you act ethically in your business life, in the way you treated your employees and in the manner in which you served your clients and patrons?”

The heart of Judaism is found in Jewish ethics, in the way we treat others in our daily lives. While numerous qualities such as justice, mercy, righteousness, compassion and loving kindness are highly esteemed, at the core of Jewish ethical living is the demand for human decency. It is as simple and as difficult as that.

Jewish tradition does not limit the domain of religious observance nor does it consider the performance of Jewish ritual as superior or more “religious” than the manner in which we live out each day. Praying three times a day is considered equally as important as visiting a sick friend or not saying something hurtful about someone you know.

My mother may not be considered a religious person by certain standards. But in loving and caring for her friend, she responded in the only way she knew how, from her heart. And in this act, she confirmed her essence as a spiritual being engaged in a deeply human experience.

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



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Rise of anti-Semitism

Two separate articles that I read recently created an idea for a column. The first is a reprint of letter titled, "A Letter to the World from Jerusalem" by Eliezer Ben Yisrael from summer 1969. Link: www.jr.co.il/articles/politics/a-letter-to-the-world-from-jerusalem.txt

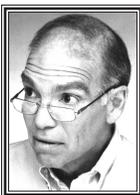
It is a message that needs to be reread every now and then, when the world seems to forget the struggle that has gone on in the name of the State of Israel, but perhaps, it is just another call from a particular time in history of the Jews, trying to understand why Jews are vilified and opposed.

The other was a recent series of articles in the Jewish Press about the rise of anti-Semitism in the world. I have written recently in these same pages that I am personally alarmed by how many recent attacks against Israel are led by Jews. We have free choice, a gift of G-d, and we live in a free country where we have the right to our own opinions, but for me at least, the whole agenda of J-Street and the world-wide efforts to isolate and create pressure on the State of Israel to take responsibility for political outcomes not in their interests and not in their control, make no sense.

With regard to the first issue, the rising incidents of anti-Semitism, I was wondering if there has ever been a poll, a serious, well developed poll to determine how Jews feel about the non-Jews. If we were going to write our own "Letter to the World 2014, from everywhere in the world where Jews live, what kind of grade would you give the world?

Because we have been victims and victimized for almost all of our history, just the fact that we survive irritates people. In the first chapter we would want to thank the United States of America for the privileges it has given us, even though the majority of Americans think that those very same rights are coming to them. We know better. We have scars.

I am often tired of trying to appease the world which has a poor record of Jewish treatment, by indicating that it could have been even worse. We could have all been murdered in the Holocaust. The question of why we were not, has never found its way into history. It just didn't work out,



Shiplely Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

Terror, large and small

Today I want to write about the three kidnapped teenagers in Israel. That's today. However, by the time this is printed, the crisis may well be over, for good or evil. This act, however it plays out, is terror, plain and simple. For the three sets of parents in Israel, it is of little concern whether just these three or another one hundred were kidnapped. Terror of any kind is really a personal experience.

When terrorists blew up the Sbarro pizza restaurant in Jerusalem, most of the dead were teenagers. Koby Mandel was 13 when he and a friend were bludgeoned to death by adult Palestinians. That was an act of terror.

The Israeli Olympians in Munich were murdered by terrorists. All of these despicable human beings called the murders and the kidnappings "political". No. There is nothing political about murder. Not in Israel, not in Serbia or



thank G-d, but neither was it because a movement arose to stop it from happening. Hitler, it seems, simply made some wrong moves and ran out of "gas."

It seems to me that we could learn a great deal from the Gay Movement in creating an aggressive agenda that has no finite goals. They simply will not stop ever. There will always be another wall to climb, another ceiling that is holding them back.

The ADL and Abe Foxman never tried to do that. They were always working to minimize the danger. J-Street believes that if we can only give everything away, our enemies will live in peace. The Palestinians will never rest until they have driven us into the sea, and there will be no free pass of the proponents of "J-Street, the Vassar Movements to punish Israel economically, and all the rest." Hitler didn't differentiate. Neither did the leaders of the Crusades, or the sadistic perpetrators of the pogroms.

Jews have always searched for both the reasons and answers to why we have suffered from the disdain of the nations. None of the traditional answers or corrections have worked. But it is even more hurtful to see the victims as "victimizers."

Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc., and can be reached at hkarsh@gmail.com. (Submitted May 21, 2014).★

Rwanda or Poland, Hungary, Germany, Romania and France in the 1930s and 40s. Murder is murder. Terror is murder.

Children become tools in a terrorists' mindset. Arabs kill Jewish teenagers and use their own teenagers as human bombs. Muslims, mostly Arabs have killed more Muslims, mostly Arabs than all the armies of the West fighting futilely in the Middle East. The great sectarian war that has been brewing since France and England carved up the Middle East into a group of non-countries in 1919 is now at a boil.

So, Sunni Militias under the name of ISIL (The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) slaughter surrendering Shia soldiers from the Iraqi army. This is also terror. This war which will escalate to cover most of the region is really one group of terrorists attacking another group of terrorists.

We have not encountered a situation like this since the Middle Ages. The Caliphate destroyed the Roman armies. Roman armies that were a long way from Rome. The Catholic Kings of Europe set about a Holy War to destroy the Caliphate. What the Crusaders did in taking Jerusalem was clearly an act of terror.

One can grow weary in a hurry trying to figure out where the next threat lies or even to sort out the good guys from the bad guys. One thing history has taught us. When strife occurs, when economies falter, Jews will ultimately suffer. We are "The Other". We are that in every nation on earth save one: Israel. Israel is our homeland. It is the only place on earth where an undefeated Air Force proudly displays the Star of David on its aircraft.

Zionism became a word when a Hungarian journalist came to the conclusion that the only way Jews would ever be truly safe would be in their own land. There was discussion over the years debating where that land should be. Ridiculous. The Jews had a land of their own. They were driven from that land by the Romans. The Romans were followed by the Caliphate which was followed by the Turks and then The British.

There was no indigenous government in the land until the Third Jewish Commonwealth was declared in 1948. That piece of desert with few natural resources had little value some 60 years ago. The Jews, returning to their land, have changed all that. The desert blooms, the main export of the country is not so much tulips, roses and oranges. It is brains. The tiny land has produced the most Nobel Prize winners per capita of any nation on earth.

And as I write this, three Jewish teenagers are missing and could be used as trading pawns for Palestinian terrorists

(see Shipley, page 9)

Gather the People



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

Our most grievous sin

We read in the Torah, Numbers 20:12, that God tells Moses he is not to go into the Promised Land. This dumbfounding irony follows Miriam's death, when the people had no water to drink, because Moses struck the rock to bring forth water, instead of speaking to it as God had directed him.

It brings to mind the idea of "sin," which, to modern, forward thinking, secularly educated Jews, seems retrograde, a throwback to an ancient time of religious ignorance and superstition.

Modern thinking, however, including that of many Jews, in this and other religious matters, unfortunately is often dominated by Christian concepts and practices, which frequently are antithetical to those of Torah and Judaism. Protestants teach that sin, including original sin, extinguishes human capacity to be at one with God, *except* by God's rescue of the sinner – salvation is by *faith* and by *grace* – at God's initiative. Roman Catholics typically teach that humans can reach toward God for redemption, but only because of the sacrifice Jesus made for them.

The essence of the Jewish view of sin, however, is that each of us has the wherewithal of free will to choose directly or indirectly to go off the path of righteousness, thereby missing the mark and bringing grief to ourselves and others – and we may in turn chose to return to that path.

Thinking about Moses' life in this context, in relation to his sin, what he had done and the extraordinary consequence he suffered, it occurred to us that the essence of his lapse, or misstep from the path, was that he *took the creation for granted*, treating it as a static phenomenon. He failed for an instant to appreciate that God is continually masterminding the creation, that the creation is a constant process, and that its wonders can emerge for us at any moment if we chose to put ourselves in the right place at the right time, or if we chose to avoid being in the wrong place at the wrong time. And this misstep had potentially devastating consequences for the faith and hope of the people.

Moses apparently felt that more than God's masterminding was necessary for the flow of water to begin at that particular moment, that it was necessary for him to strike the rock. And in that action, he implicitly took the creation for granted, because he rejected God's assurance that the water would flow when he spoke to the rock.

What, more precisely, is the creation that we shouldn't take for granted? An easier question to answer would be: What within our view is not a part of the divine creation, and thus may be taken for granted?

Certainly we should not take for granted those who are most dear to us. Certainly we should not take ourselves for granted.

We concluded that, like Moses, if we want to avoid dying in the wilderness, denied entry into the promised land of this life, we must stay on the path of righteousness, continually appreciating the divine masterminding in *all* of creation, not taking it for granted.

But how do we begin to ensure that outcome?

By not taking *ourselves* for granted, by not treating ourselves as something other than the moment-to-moment creation of God, with the infinite capacity to live in God's image.

It requires an ongoing commitment to integrate into our lives the practices, symbols and rituals that enable us always to strive to remain on the path – actively committed to righteousness, truth, and justice, freedom, peace, and kindness – instead of unconsciously acting as if these ideals uphold themselves, leaving us permanently free to do what is convenient or makes us comfortable or satisfies our sensual urges or material appetites at any moment.

To say that such an extraordinary commitment is required begs the obvious question: How are we, each of us alone as individuals, to maintain such a commitment, given our pressures and disappointments, which can drain our energy and dissipate our spirit?

Torah and Judaism neither contemplate nor counsel that, as isolated individuals, we are to uplift ourselves in the image of God, that alone we are to recognize God's masterminding of creation and continually align ourselves with it. On the contrary, we have been commanded for our own good to act as members of a family, a kehilla, and a people, whether in prayer or the communal life that precedes and follows it. Our tradition has taught us that the most efficient and effective way to remain on the path of righteousness is through active participation in a congregational community, having the support of many others who are pursuing

SHIPLEY

(continued from page 8)

in Israeli prisons. There is no peace process. There can be no peace process as long as sections of the Palestinian government are sworn to wipe Israel off the face of the map.

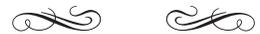
And the worst is yet to come. The U.S. entered into the age old schism between Sunni and Shia with little forethought, little knowledge and on the basis of lies perpetrated by a few misguided souls within the Bush administration. And, now we reap the whirlwind. Terrorism on a grand scale.

Never mind what we "should have done". Done is done. As the Sunni Shia conflict consumes almost all the Middle East as it must, Israel stands alone. The only nations not really involved are Tunisia and the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan – interestingly enough, the only two areas of the Middle East in which the U.S. did not become involved.

This is the time that all Jews must stand together. Israel, as this plays out, will face its strongest test since the 1973 war. They will need real support and a unification of all Jews. No matter what you may believe of the government of the Jewish State, no matter your political leanings, Israel is going to need our total support.

I do not expect American Jews to go there and take up arms. But you can defend Israel in a number of ways. Just do not be a bystander or a nay-sayer. If you are a Jew you are in one way or another a Zionist.

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. ★



the same path, and giving them support in return.

We concluded to our surprise that, like Moses, our most grievous sin – that which causes the most grief to us and those we care about – is taking the creation for granted. But *not* surprising to us was the realization that the most effective antidote to taking the creation for granted is one's own committed participation in and strengthening of a congregational community.

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



Seen on the Israel Scene

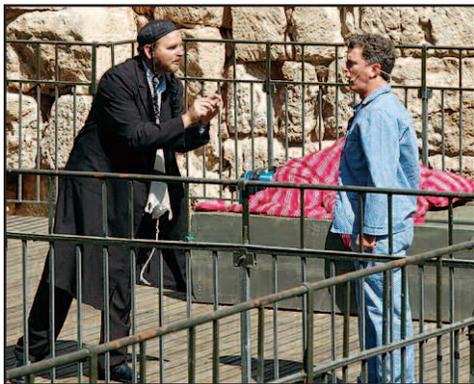
BY SYBIL KAPLAN
PHOTOS BY BARRY A. KAPLAN

Don't miss English-language musical in a new setting

Close your eyes and imagine yourself sitting out of doors in the citadel of Jerusalem, known as the Tower of David, protected by a high wall and large towers. The outline of the citadel dates from the Crusader period; the citadel itself is mid-16th century.

The stage in front of you is framed with a black iron fence on some sides, and there is an ancient wall as a backdrop. This is the new setting of *Ah, Jerusalem*, a must-see musical, a truly enjoyable tale of romance, history and comedy. A cast of seven carries you through several periods of history as they meet a challenge.

Indianapolis Axelrod family – Charlie, a 46-year-old psychiatrist, his wife, Mattie, and their 17-year-old daughter, Robin, are about to depart for Cancun when Charlie is awakened by an Orthodox, *keepah* and *tzitzit*-wearing man, claiming to be his Uncle Mordechai from an 18th century *shtetl*. Uncle Mordechai challenges Charlie to go to Jerusalem and find a scroll given to a relative, Naftali, within three days, to redeem the family name.



Uncle Mordechai meets Charlie.

The songs, "It's Jerusalem Air," and "Pray for the Peace" create the setting for the introduction by Shmulik, an Israeli tour guide, who assures the family that they are about to have an encounter with Jerusalem that will change their lives forever.

From here on, we are treated to a wonderful musical blending of professional voices and clever choreography as



The Axelrods arrive in Jerusalem; Shmulik, the tour guide, wears red shirt and black vest.

the family is guided by Shmulik to the Temple where Charlie must make a sacrifice; to a romantic meeting between Robin and a young King Solomon; then Charlie transforms Philip the Mean in the Crusader period to a nice guy; in a 1922 Jerusalem bus station, Mattie convinces an angry, frustrated Mrs. Morris Myerson not to leave the *kibbutz* and go to America; finally there is a confrontation with Gedaliah, the "cherub," who sees the family recover their heirloom.

The script is written by Bernie Kukoff (with Lucile Lichtblau and Alan Gelb). Kukoff previously produced five Broadway and off-Broadway shows (including *All Shook Up*, the Elvis Presley musical; *The Thing About Men*; and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*.) Kukoff also created the Gary Coleman show, *Diff'rent Strokes*; and produced some of *The Cosby Shows*.

The great singing voices of the cast render the wonderful, catchy, creative music and lyrics of talented, former Clevelander, Danny Paller. Watching the face of Paller, while he stood at the back and sang with the cast was truly amazing. He says he has seen the show about 15 times but there is "something different every time you watch it, with different nuances each performance."

When the show premiered in the winter of 2013, they performed in a theater; more recently, Daniel Alter, the general manager of the company, came up with the idea to consider doing it at David's Tower.

"Here there is a different use of space," says Paller, "and the scenery just makes it." They restaged the production in the

process, sending photographs to New Yorker, Kukoff. "Because of the location," says Paller, "there is more of a cinematic staging."

The musical will run from July 4 to September 5 at 4 p.m. Tickets are 85 NIS with special rates for students and groups. Ticket reservations may be made through the web site www.towerofdavid.org.il or email tickets@tower.org.il or when in Jerusalem, phone *2884.



Mattie, Charlie and Robin find the family scroll.

So they finally recognized the value of seniors

According to an undated American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee web site report, the elderly are expected to number almost a million by 2015, or about 11 percent of the population. Those who care about Israel might then be interested to know how senior citizens are treated here.

Julian Landau, a 78-year-old who came to Israel from the U.S. in 1969 and who now volunteers at the offices of the
(see Kaplan/Israel, page 12)



Danny Paller



Holocaust Educator

By MIRIAM L. ZIMMERMAN

Ida and The Book Thief

Memorial Day Weekend 2014: two Holocaust films in two days; fortunately, my husband Richard willingly accompanies me on most of my discretionary Holocaust activities. *Ida*, an award-winning Polish film by Pawel Pawlikowski, opened in San Francisco during the long weekend.

Thanks to numerous trailers available online, we knew the story of *Ida* before the lights darkened in the single-screen Clay Theatre, in the Fillmore district of the City. Spoiler alert: just before taking vows that will consign her to a nunnery forever, 18-year-old Anna, an orphan reared in a convent in 1960's Poland, discovers that she was born a Jew. Her real name is Ida Lebenstein.



First-time actress Agata Trzebuchowska (left) portrayed Anna/Ida, with seasoned actress Agata Kulesza, who superbly played the worldly Wanda, Ida's aunt.

I wanted to like this film. I am searching for a feature-length film to show my Holocaust class at Notre Dame de Namur University, to replace *Defiance*, about Jewish partisans in Belarus during the war. I have shown *Defiance* for the last several years and want something less reminiscent of a Hollywood thriller. The theme of a novice nun discovering her Jewish roots should play very well in a Catholic setting, so I thought.

Unfortunately, students would learn very little about the Holocaust from this film. It is a beautiful period piece, capturing the desolation of 1960's communist Poland in perfectly shot black and white montages. In this plodding 80-minute film, less is definitely more.

My quarrel with this film is with the choice of an actress whose one expression

dominated the entire film. I have met many stoic nuns in my years as a "Catholic" educator, a few of whom I have come to love very much, but this novitiate's demeanor could fill a book on arrested emotion. It would be a very short book.

She never allowed the audience to understand her emotional life, her motivations, or her responses. Her characteristic deadpan never varied, whether she was told she must meet her only living relative, an aunt, before she can take her vows; or when she learned she was a Jew; or when she found herself digging up the alleged graves of her parents. Was she so wounded by her upbringing in a convent that she suffers from emotional castration? The audience will never know.

The film cries out for a word that is the opposite of lyrical poetry to describe conflicts that never escalate into dramatic tension and behavioral facades that never leak emotion. The one big unknown is whether or not she will return to her monastic life after her coming of age experience that includes both a new identity and sexual exploration. I decided that I would have been disappointed whether she took vows or removed her habit for good because the actress provided no clues as to why Anna/Ida made this decision. My emotional estrangement from the lead character resulted in indifference bordering on apathy.

The Book Thief

In contrast, the luminous Sophie Nélisse effortlessly projected emotional depth in her starring role as 12-year-old Liesel Meminger in *The Book Thief*. This 2013 movie, based on the popular novel by Markus Zusak, is now available "On Demand." Thus, we were able to view the film in the comfort of our own home.

There is a lot to love about this movie: a great cast including Geoffrey Rush and Emily Watson as Liesel's adoptive parents, Hans and Rosa Hubermann; a wonderful director, Brian Percival, borrowed from *Downtown Abbey*; and the marvelous Sophie as Liesel, whose expressive visage in almost every scene carries the movie. The casting director did a perfect job in creating an ensemble cast with depth of character and plausible emotions.

Early into the footage, the film depicts the book burnings in Nazi Germany, in stark contrast to a child who "borrows" books to feed her hunger to learn about the world. Intellectual tension between destroying books because they are perceived as threats to seeing books as life enhancements suffuses the film. It provides an ominous foreshadowing



Sophie Nélisse as 12-year-old Liesel Meminger in *The Book Thief*.

of German poet Heinrich Heine's observation from a hundred years earlier (paraphrase), "*When they burn books, they will, in the end, burn people.*" Born a Jew, Heine, like many of his Jewish contemporaries, converted to Christianity in the 1800's; which was, according to JewishEncyclopedia.com, an act he regretted all his life.

In *The Book Thief*, collectively, books become another important character in the action, providing key plot points.

Leisel's communist mother is unable to care for her children; hence the adoption by the kindly Hans and gruff-spoken Rosa who convincingly conceals her heart of gold. Rosa calls Liesel, "*Soumensch* (female pig)," at first, as a curse. Later, the term evolves into an expression of endearment.

Like the movie *Ida*, *The Book Thief* depicts events about the Holocaust from the experience of non-Jews. The latter film employs Death as a narrator/commentator throughout the film to provide continuity and additional layers of meaning. The masculine voice of Death points out that at this time in Nazi Germany, he is extremely busy. Although in general I do not like such conceits, in the film's context, Death provided irony and closure.

Both Richard and I felt *The Book Thief* was an outstanding film. The promise of *Ida*, in contrast, was never fully realized. Neither of these fictional films is educational enough about the Holocaust to replace *Defiance* in my classroom. I recommend both of them, despite reservations, but only to audiences who already have in-depth knowledge about the Holocaust.

My reluctance comes from a teaching of Holocaust survivor and activist Elie Wiesel. Wiesel points out the danger of using art to depict the Holocaust. By definition, art transforms and often beautifies. He advocates using oral history and non-fiction to tell the Holocaust story.

Viewing these films has whetted my appetite for this summer's San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (www.sfjfff.org). I already received a save-the-date card: July 24 to August 10, 2014. If you live in the Bay Area or are planning a trip to

(see Zimmerman, page 19)

KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page 10)

Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI), which offers many services to seniors, spoke with a reporter candidly about this issue.

"The Israel government treats its citizens poorly," he stated, because the main thing it gives them – whether they are natives of immigrants – is a pension. But who can live on under 2,000 NIS a month?"

Actually, U.S. citizens who meet the requirements of the Social Security administration can also receive US Social Security.

There is an organization called Ken l'Zaken which has conferences for senior citizens and informs them of their rights, but the government per se really has little involvement with seniors.

In or out of the work force, seniors are guaranteed health care and its services are mandatory including primary care and special care, general hospitalization, rehabilitative care and ongoing treatments. Four health funds provide health services and offer supplementary health insurance.

If they worked in Israel, pension funds were deducted from their salary and are payable after retirement. For those who worked in Israel, left and then returned, today there is a new web site to find out if there is pension money waiting for you that was deducted in previous years.

A few months ago, I actually received a letter stating when I lived in Israel before, one of my employers had taken out pension money from my salary and now the insurance company needed information so they could return it to me. After about a month of jumping through some hoops and filling out some forms, the money actually appeared in our bank account.

One important issue is "old age" is not what it used to be because people up to the age of 80 and older are active and can contribute to the economy, as a survey revealed in April of 2012.

In an article titled, "Senior Citizen Employment Vital to Israeli Economy," the survey by the Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies (JIMS) revealed that 30 percent of Israeli senior citizens who are not working are able to work and their net employment would be worth 6.4 billion shekels in income.

"The study, 'Senior Citizens: A Great Unexploited Reservoir of Human Resources,' took into account existing polls, which show that 70 percent of Israel's 700,000-plus seniors want to work. It added other factors, including the health of the seniors, labor differentials

for men and women and unemployment rates. It concluded that while 80,500 seniors are currently employed, another 219,800 – or approximately 30 percent – are employable."

"The figure of NIS 6.4 billion was reached by using the minimum wage to calculate a conservative estimate of the value of the senior citizens' potential work."

"Certainly, even under different circumstances not all of these seniors would seek or find work, but keeping them out of the labor force is clearly a great economic loss to Israel and a personal loss for each of them," said Zev Golan, co-author of the study.

"Seniors made up 4.8 percent of the Israeli population in 1955, but will reach 13–14 percent by the years 2025–30, according to JIMS. Twelve percent of the 65+ population is currently employed, but 71 percent of men and 63.1 percent of the women aged 60–64 are in the labor force.

"The agenda in Israel is focused on raising the employment rate in the haredi [ultra-religious] and Arab sector," said Keren Harel-Harari, the study's other author. "Senior citizens are ignored, though many of them want to work and many of them were working until they were forced or encouraged not to."

Sometime after we arrived in Israel, someone asked us if we had checked with the National Insurance offices to see if we qualified for Israeli social security. It skipped our minds until one very cold and rainy day when we were in their offices and no one else was there and we decided to speak with a clerk about Israeli social security. She took some information and said she thought we qualified, particularly since I had lived and worked in Israel previously for 10 years, I was a returning Israeli while Barry was a new immigrant, and we were both of the right age.

A few weeks later we received a letter approving us with Barry receiving one third and me receiving two thirds and every month, the money is promptly put into our bank account.

The AACI has a special senior division, RAPS (retired active persons) for those over 55 with branches in every major city, many smaller cities as well as *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*.

In Jerusalem alone a large number of senior citizen residences exist and approximately ten have a sizeable number of English speaking residents. These *Batei Avot* (Seniors Residences) are visited by volunteer members of the AACI at least once a month and every homebound member is visited on the eve of holidays, receiving a small gift. In addition to the benefits accruing from membership in AACI itself, the Seniors Division conducts

activities and programs of special interest to seniors and their needs.

The AACI branches conduct regular meetings where topics of interest are discussed and special interest groups meet. They include Hebrew conversation, Yiddish, choral groups, handicrafts, folk dancing and exercises and other interest groups determined by members. Periodic "retreats" dealing with topics of interest to members are held by branches and regions. Every AACI branch has a Welcome Committee which works in conjunction with the general AACI Klitah Committee to welcome the new senior immigrants. The Seniors Division arranges for people to be invited to *sederim* on *Pesach* especially for those who do not have families in Israel. The Division also grants emergency loans.

Once every year a Seniors Congress is held where members and associates meet for 3 or 4 days to enjoy being together, touring the region where the Congress is held and discussing pertinent problems of the membership and seniors in general. Together with Histadrut Hagimlaim (the Israel Pensioners' Organization), they participate in furthering legislation guarding and protecting seniors rights.

New immigrant seniors receive an "absorption basket" of money upon arrival in the country and for a period of time over the next year or so. There are special *ulpanim* (language classes) for women over the age of 60 and men over the age of 65 which last for more months than for younger students, have less hours of classes, are geared to the older students and where teachers pay more attention to their needs. Apartment rental subsidies and mortgages are available to seniors and there are various forms of housing available such as nursing homes, partial-support homes and retirement buildings.

Senior citizens can purchase monthly discounted transportation and the National Insurance Institute (as Julian mentioned above) pays a special old-age benefit to senior citizen immigrant residents of Israel.

The Ministry of Senior Citizens' Affairs issues a senior citizen certificate for discounts in a variety of areas. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services offers home help, meals, transportation and other forms of aid.

Sybil and Barry Kaplan are a journalist/photographer team of foreign correspondents who live in Jerusalem. Sybil is a food writer and cookbook author who leads weekly walks in English in Machaneh Yehudah market and is co-president of one of the English-speaking chapters of Hadassah-Israel. The Kaplans are also active members of Kehilat Moresheet Aoraham. ★

10 things to love about being Jewish

BY RABBI NECHEMIA COOPERSMITH

Take a moment to appreciate this most precious gift.

I did an informal survey last week asking my Aish colleagues what they love about being Jewish. Many overlapping themes emerged in the replies. Here are the top 10 in no particular order.

1. The Jewish people is one big family

Wherever we go around the world, we feel that instant connection when we *bagel each other*. And being part of a *big global family* means each of us has an international network of people who genuinely care and will help each other.

"All Jews are responsible for one another (*kol Yisrael areivim zeh la-zeh*)" (Sanhedrin 27b). The *medrash* tells the story of a passenger on a boat who takes out a drill and begins drilling a hole under his seat. The passenger next to him sees what he's doing and says, "What on earth are you doing?!"

The man with the drill replies, "It's none of your business. I'm only drilling under my own seat."

We're all in the same boat. Every Jew is my responsibility; we are different parts to an organic whole.

2. Learning Torah

The Jewish people received God's instruction manual for living, the blueprint to the universe whose wisdom and values have changed the world. We have the privilege to plumb its endless depths and refine ourselves by wrapping our heads around the source of Truth that transcends this world.

3. Shabbat

One day a week we unplug from the incessant noise and hard work of 'doing' to refocus on just 'being.' Shabbat brings an inner peace within oneself, and provides a weekly opportunity to connect and relate to family, friends and God.

4. Being Jewish means you're a revolutionary

Starting with our forefather Abraham who went against the entire polytheistic civilization and brought monotheism to the world, Jews are part of a revolutionary movement charged to change the world. With the national mission to be a light unto nations, every Jew can lead by example and deed. We are partners with God in fixing the world.

5. Part of a chain of history that defies all odds

The Jews are one of the oldest nations in the world, and by natural law we should

have *ceased to exist*. We have survived despite being exiled from our land – twice! – scattered across the globe and persecuted with a vengeance. This tiny nation miraculously returned to their homeland, revived their language and is making a mark on the world that far surpasses its numbers.

As Leo Nikolaivitch Tolstoy wrote in 1908: "The Jew is the emblem of eternity. He who neither slaughter nor torture of thousands of years could destroy, he who neither fire, nor sword, nor Inquisition was able to wipe off the face of the earth. He who was the first to produce the Oracles of God. He who has been for so long the Guardian of Prophecy and has transmitted it to the rest of the world. Such a nation cannot be destroyed. The Jew is as everlasting as Eternity itself."

Each Jew is part of this eternal chain that includes such luminaries as Abraham, Moses, Rabbi Akiva, Maimonides, Rashi, the Vilna Gaon... We are the current link in the chain; we are writing our chapter of the continuing Jewish story.

6. Revolutionary views on women

When ancient civilization degraded women, viewing them essentially as chattel, the Torah gave women full protection of their rights in marriage, obligating the husband to honor and cherish his wife. The respect for women's internal strengths – deep insight, spirituality and intellectual prowess, steadfast commitment to Judaism's moral vision – is obvious from many *biblical accounts of Jewish women*. "In the merit of righteous women, the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt," (Talmud, Sotah, 11b).

7. The Jewish family

The heroes of the Jewish people are the generations of committed mothers and fathers who embraced the sacred task to create a vibrant, loving home and instill Jewish values in their children. In Judaism it is the home, not the synagogue, that plays the most central role. Jewish life is built around the family coming together – to eat, to learn, to celebrate, to mourn, and most importantly to transmit the torch of our shared heritage to the next generation.

8. God-consciousness

Judaism nurtures the awareness that *God* is actively involved in everything. There are no accidents; everything that happens to us is purposeful and for the best. We can feel secure knowing that we are wrapped in God's loving embrace.

9. Enjoy the physical world

Jews are not ascetics; living a Jewish life requires a full immersion in the world. The challenge is to use the physical as a means to an end, elevating it towards the spiritual, and not let the physical take control of you. So enjoy that vanilla frappuccino. The Talmud teaches that in the World to

ADLAND

(continued from page 7)

I've always believed in *mitzvah goreret mitzvah* – that one mitzvah leads to another. There are too many of us who have embraced and enjoyed the freedoms offered to us in this country and in this age who have forgotten about our Jewish souls, the Jewish community, and living Jewish lives. I can only urge you to find a way to connect or reconnect. For those whose Judaism is ever-present, continue to be role models through your Jewish actions and words.

When you light your Shabbat candles, light one for *zachor* (remember) the Sabbath day. May the memories of our ancestors who preserved its observance motivate us toward making it a part of our lives today. Light the other candle for *shamor* (observe) Shabbat and let this observance lead to participation in Jewish life that is meaningful and spiritual.

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



Come, the Almighty will take us to task for not partaking in any *permissible* pleasure that was available. (Jerusalem Talmud, Kiddushin)

10. Action is paramount

While feeling and intent are obviously important in everything we do, the Torah is most concerned about action. Do the *mitzvah*, the commandment, even if your heart isn't in it. Being good is too important to be conditioned upon those rare moments of inspiration and pure motivation. That's why Judaism's terminology for charity is '*tzedaka*,' which comes from the Hebrew root '*tzedek*,' justice. The word 'charity' comes from the Latin word '*caritas*' – affection, dearness, since charity connotes an act of kindness that stems from love and concern.

Tzedaka doesn't rely on feelings of love to kick in. Do the just and right thing and write that check. And by forcing yourself to do the right thing, chances are your feelings will get in on the act.

Rabbi Nechemia Coopersmith lives in Jerusalem with his wife and children. He is the chief editor of *Aish.com*, one of the world's largest Judaism websites. He is the author of *Shmooze: A Guide to Thought-Provoking Discussion on Essential Jewish Issues – a must-have little book for anyone who loves a good question. From Aish Hatorah Resources. Aish is the place for everything you want to know about Judaism.* ✨

Theatre at Niagara-on-the-Lake Canada

By HAROLD JACOBSON AND ROSE KLEINER

Shakespeare put it nicely when he said that “all the world’s a stage.” After visiting Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL), arguably Canada’s most beautiful small town, it would seem happily that all the world’s a theatre. As the home of the world famous Shaw Festival, a repertory group that features the best of George Bernard Shaw’s works, the town provides four different venues for his plays as well as space for some of Shaw’s contemporary playwrights and the occasional Canadian production also.

But NOTL is a generic theatre exhibiting ubiquitous and extravagant floral displays in front of almost every private home garden perfuming the town’s air and giving it both visual and sensory pleasure. The latter has been enhanced in recent years by the development of a viniculture industry which draws thousands each summer to wine tasting events in the numerous wineries in and around NOTL. A drive around the perimeter of NOTL affords an unparalleled view of the hundreds if not thousands of acreage now dedicated to cultivating the vine. One of the area’s most spectacular successes is ice wine, whose grapes must be harvested in temperatures hovering around the freezing point. If you have to ask the price of a bottle of this sweet elixir, you can’t afford it.

The sidewalks in NOTL on the town’s main street, Queen, has its own version of theatre, with a Babel of languages spoken by the theatre-goers and others who find an exoticism in the town that is *sui generis*. There are no chain restaurants or fast food outlets in NOTL but plenty of cozy eating facilities, ice cream parlours, high end gourmet shops, quality linen and wool emporia. The Prince of Wales Hotel, resplendent in its design in the center of NOTL is arguably the most distinguished of the score of hotels and bed and breakfasts in the area. This season will put special pressure on the hotel industry as it inaugurates the first International Music Festival in the Niagara Region and it will feature a fragrant bouquet of classical music intertwined with wine tasting.

Why has the Shaw Festival implanted itself in NOTL? Here are some possible answers to explain the special cachet of this isolated town in south-western Ontario which is so off the beaten track that there is no access to it by train or bus. Twenty-two answers to this question are provided by the town’s glossy Niagara on the Lake magazine. Here are a few

tidbits from the list. NOTL was the site of an Indian village called Onghiara and later Butlersburg in honor of a British commander who lived in the town’s garrison. NOTL was the capital of Upper Canada until the War of 1812 between Canada and the United States caused the capital to be moved to York now Toronto.

NOTL acquired its name because the town fathers wanted to differentiate it from Niagara Falls some 20 miles to the west. The town was the first in Canada to have a newspaper, a lending library, an historical museum and the first provincial parliament. Although most of NOTL was incinerated by American troops in 1812 there are several houses still standing from that period which may be visited. The chief municipal officer in the town is known as the Lord Mayor, a vestige of the British presence in the town.

The historic nature of NOTL, its physical beauty and literacy (and its proximity to the American border – minutes away from New York State) are doubtless factors in explaining why the Shaw Festival decided to set up its theatrical enterprise in the town.

In the 2014 season the Festival is presenting ten plays by Shaw and his contemporaries, some modern dramas and a version of *Cabaret* that has gathered enthusiastic support from the critics. This reviewer has been privileged to see two productions this summer – *Arms and the Man* by Shaw, directed imaginatively by Morris Panych, a Canadian luminary of the theatre and what can only be called the “sleeper” offering of the season *The Charity That Began At Home* by Sir John Hankin. This British playwright, a Shaw contemporary (who took his own life before he was 40) has confected a kind of Downtown Abbey with comedic steroids that highlights the idiosyncrasies of the British aristocracy. The ingenious plot pivots around Lady Denison (brilliantly depicted by Fiona Reid) who has the
(see Jacobson/Kleiner, page 19)

The grandfather of Jewish vegetarianism turns 80 with energy

By JEFFREY COHAN

Richard Schwartz, author of the seminal book about the Jewish ideal of vegetarianism, is entering his ninth decade on quite a roll. Eightieth birthday events were held in Jerusalem and New York this spring to honor his achievements as an animal-protection and environmental advocate.



Richard Schwartz. Photos by Steve Shuster.

He continues to enjoy excellent health, which he attributes to God’s blessings and to his vegan diet. And a large network of friends and family members has showered him with praise, gifts, and affection.

But if you ask Schwartz what has meant the most to him in his 80th year, he will tell you it’s the rise of Jewish Vegetarians of North America (JVNA), which this year has become the fastest growing veg-advocacy organization in the United States.

“It’s urgent that JVNA keep getting support,” said Schwartz, the president emeritus of the nonprofit organization. “We’ve got to keep getting the vegetarian message out there,” he said. “By doing that, it will be a healthier world, it will
(see Cohan, page 15)



A flower bedecked street in Niagara-on-the-Lake Canada.



Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Captain America

Captain America: The Winter Soldier, the most recent installment of the Marvel franchise, offered more impressive high-tech action scenes than any fan in the history of the comic strip could hope to behold in one sitting, along with powerful doses of good citizenship training in courage, patriotism, and dissent against would-be dictators within American government itself. The cast and direction provide compelling and engaging entertainment.



Garry Shandling as Senator Stern in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*.

One wonders, however, whether the suggestion here is that heroes have to be frozen from the fallen soldiers of World War II because there is less conviction in post Great Generation America. Much more shocking still, however, is the suggestion that remnant mad scientists from the German Nazi era are more benign than an American senator named Stern who supports cyber-fascist organization, HYDRA, run by Alexander Pierce (Robert Redford), head of American intelligence agency SHIELD, who in his spare time plots to sacrifice seven million people to bring order and well-being to the majority of folk. At one point the complicit Senator Stern, played by Garry Shandling, looking like everyone's favorite Jewish uncle (because of previous roles), publicly offers a fascist salute, "Hail, HYDRA!"

Why suggest a Jewish character in a Nazi-style pose, and why would Shandling want to play along? Clearly, when it comes to depicting Jews, this film's producers, Anthony and Joe Russo, and writers, Christopher Markus and Stephen Freely, show none of John Turturro's (*Fading Gigolo*) scruples regarding the depiction of Jewish characters.

Rabbi Gertel is the author of two books, *What Jews Know About Salvation and*

COHAN

(continued from page 14)

be a more compassionate world, a more environmentally sustainable world, a more just world, a more peaceful world. This is really the issue of the day."

Schwartz is perhaps best known as the author of "Judaism and Vegetarianism," which is in its third edition and which still reigns as the most authoritative book ever written on the subject. He has also been associated with Jewish Vegetarians of North America since the organization's birth in 1975.

Just in the past 12 months, JVNA has transformed from a small, all-volunteer group into a professionally led organization with a new website and newly installed Executive Director, Board of Directors, Advisory Council and Rabbinic Council.

Board members include Alex Hershaft, a Holocaust survivor and one of the most prominent leaders of the veg-advocacy movement. Members of JVNA's newly formed Rabbinic Council include such widely respected and recognized figures as Rabbi Steve Gutow, the president and CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and Rabbi David Wolpe of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, who was named the most influential rabbi in America by *Newsweek* last year.

Meanwhile, the organization's new Advisory Council includes Paul Shapiro, the vice president of farm animal protection for the Humane Society of the United States, and Caryn Ginsberg, author of "Animal Impact."

Fund-raising is at an all-time high for JVNA, which has allowed the organization to make presentations at synagogues, universities and conferences from coast-to-coast.

The explosive growth of JVNA coincides with the growing interest in plant-based eating in the United States.

Meat consumption, nationally, has declined by 12 percent since 2007, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture figures, while plant-based alternatives are proliferating on supermarket shelves and on restaurant menus.

Amid all these positive developments, the birthday celebrations for Schwartz were energetic. The JVNA-organized party in New York, held May 19, sold out more than two weeks in advance. Some of the most prominent figures in the veg-advocacy movement came to pay their respects to Schwartz.



Over the Top Judaism: Precedents and Trends in the Depiction of Jewish Beliefs and Observances in Film and Television. *She has been a media critic since 1979.* ✨



Jeffrey Cohan (L) with Rabb Dovid Sears.

"Richard is an Orthodox Jew. I'm a very unorthodox Catholic. For both of us, our faith has been critical to us in our belief in compassion for animals and the vegetarian movement," said Bruce Friedrich, senior policy director for Farm Sanctuary.

At the New York event, Friedrich compared Schwartz to the Biblical prophets. "If you care about the environment, or you care about your health, or if you care about animal welfare – all three of which are profound principles of the Torah – if you care about any of those issues, Richard has a message for you, and that message is vegetarianism," he said.

Steve Schuster, a member of the JVNA Board of Directors from Boston, describes Schwartz as an inspirational leader. "The first time we exchanged emails, probably 10 or 12 years ago, the change in me began immediately," Schuster told the audience in New York. "I went from thinking a lot about vegetarianism, thinking a lot about animal welfare, to actually transforming into an activist. When I think of (Schwartz), I think of *tikkun olam* personified. He's taught us all that we must act. When we see an injustice, we have to spring into action."

To JVNA leaders and members, the abhorrent conditions on the nation's factory farms – which produce more than 90 percent of our country's meat, dairy products and eggs – constitute just such an injustice.

While Schwartz remains active on the Board of Directors of JVNA, he is passing the baton to a new generation of leaders, who are building on the foundation he laid.

"Many of us around the world are pledging to continue the work that he began," said Rabbi Adam Frank, a JVNA supporter in Jerusalem. "He has brought Torah and awareness and sensitivity to a world that is sorely lacking it."

Jeffrey Cohan is the executive director of *Jewish Vegetarians of North America* and the son of Edwin Cohan and grandson of Charles Cohan, both of whom lived in Indianapolis. ✨



Friedrich



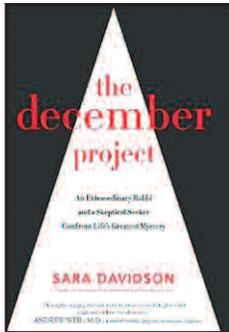
Book Review

REVIEWED BY EDWARD HOFFMAN, PH.D.

Spirituality relevant to old age

The December Project. By Sara Davidson. HarperOne. \$26.95. 193 pp.

In our celebrity-and media-driven culture, it is a pleasure to read a book of earnest and lively dialogue on a major life-theme: growing old. As more and more baby boomers enter what Rabbi Zalman M. Schachter-Shalomi calls the “elder years,” it’s certainly a topic of increasing importance in America today. The book chronicles two years of weekly conversations between Reb Zalman (as he prefers to be known) and his 70-year-old friend Sara Davidson, a Jewish writer whose many books include the acclaimed 1960s memoir *Loose Change*.



Now close to 90 years old and physically frail, Reb Zalman offers his perspective on the bodily, mental, and spiritual challenges of old age. As the founder of the Jewish Renewal Movement – rooted in what he initially called neo-Hasidism – Reb Zalman has for more than 40 years been a leading figure in American Judaism. A refugee who escaped from Nazi Europe with his family as a teenager, he received *smicha* from Chabad in Brooklyn and became a well-respected professor of Jewish studies in Canada during the 1950s and 1960s.

However, he eventually left the Lubavitcher orbit in the late 1960s to follow his own star – and his circle of mentors and colleagues included such mavericks as Abraham Joshua Heschel, Shlomo Carlebach, the Catholic monk/theologian Thomas Merton, Timothy Leary, and Abraham Maslow. Reb Zalman was also close with both the Sixth and Seventh Lubavitcher Rebbes.

Living with his wife Eve Islen in the university town of Boulder, Colo., Reb Zalman has faced a variety of health problems in his 80s but has remained intellectually dynamic and upbeat. Indeed, having long worked with Reb Zalman on writing projects related to spiritual psychology, I felt honored to help him

produce his recent memoir, *My Life in Jewish Renewal*. We communicated by phone and email.

In Reb Zalman’s conversations with Sara Davidson, he listens empathically to her anxieties about coping with her mother’s Alzheimer’s condition, her frustrations as a writer about the collapse of the American book-publishing industry, and her existential/spiritual uncertainties as an aging, non-religious Jew.

The heart of *The December Project* lies in his gentle advice, often laced with self-deprecating and good-spirited humor. For example, in response to Sara Davidson’s intense worry that she will inherit her mother’s Alzheimer Disease, Reb Zalman comments that persons with this condition retain self-awareness, respond meaningfully to love and care, and live fully in the moment.

When Davidson shares self-pitying feelings about the burdens of aging, he energetically declares – paraphrasing Judaism’s classic text *Pirkey Avot* – “You’re not obligated to complete the job, but you’re obligated to do your part.” He adds, “You’re a cell on the planet and you have responsibilities to your family and your community.” He contends that Judaism has always been concerned with the Big Picture of history – and that merely striving to live individually in the present moment is *not* the Jewish ethos at all.

An especially useful section of *The December Project* comprises 12 activities designed by Reb Zalman, Eve Elsen, and Sara Davidson to bring greater clarity and joy to our elder years. The goal is to “make each day sweeter and more meaningful... {and} accept the challenging times and see their value.” Not surprisingly in light of dozens of recent studies from Positive Psychology, they recommend the cultivation of gratitude as a foundation for this phase of life. Other activities include “Make Friends with Solitude,” “Dis-Identify with the Body,” “Forgive, Forgive,” and “Make Room for Intuition.”

As a psychologist, I found the latter activity to be particularly useful, as American society offers us little training in developing our intuitive capabilities. How do we do so?

“Practice listening for intuition about small things,” Reb Zalman and his colleagues advise, “which have relatively small consequences.” Then “keep notes on your Intuition page {of your journal}, and after a time, look for patterns. If you lean into what you receive,” they recommend with much broader applicability, “you’ll begin to get a sense of when it’s the real juice.”

In a way, discovering “the real juice” of spirituality relevant to old age is what *The December Project* is all about. I would have



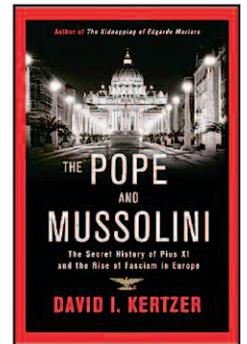
Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Bond between Mussolini and Pope Pius XI

The Pope and Mussolini (The Secret History of Pius XI and the Rise of Fascism in Europe). By David I. Kertzer. New York: Random House. 2014. Pp. 549. \$32.

We are in the debt of prolific and award-winning author David I. Kertzer, the Paul Dupee, Jr. University Professor of Social Science and professor of anthropology and Italian studies at Brown University. His eye-opening and sobering account is a must-read for all seeking the indispensable truth concerning the critical though controversial bond between Benito Mussolini, Italy’s Fascist dictator, and Pope Pius XI, the Vatican’s leader representing at that time 300 million Roman Catholics.



We are also grateful to the late Pope John Paul II who made possible this nearly decade in-the-making breakthrough study, upon authorizing in 2002 the open sharing of the Vatican’s Secret Archives of Pius XI papacy with full disclosure in 2006, along with Kertzer’s availability of the Italian government archives of the Central State Archive and that of the Italian Foreign Ministry.

In a mesmerizing tale, gradually drawing the reader deeper and deeper into a complex web disentangled and clarified (see Zoberman, page 17)



liked to have heard Reb Zalman bring more of his own elder-experiences involving Hasidic prayer, meditation, and inspirational Torah study to the fore, but that is not the book that Sara Davidson chose to write. We can be grateful that she and Reb Zalman have created this thought-provoking work. Highly recommended.

Edward Hoffman, Ph.D., is an adjunct psychology professor at Yeshiva University and author of *The Kabbalah Reader (Trumpeter/Random House)*. ★

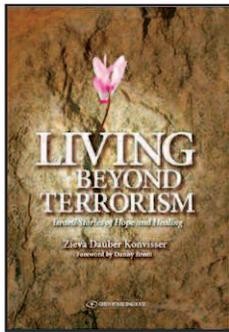
Book Review

REVIEWED BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Resilience to master any crisis

Living Beyond Terrorism. By Zieva Dauber Konvisser, Gefen Publishing, \$26.95 paperback, \$9.99 e-book, 356 pp., May 2014.

It was Aug. 9, 2001. I was in Jerusalem after 19 years absence, to attend a National Convention and do research to write a memoir, *Witness to History: Ten Years as a Woman Foreign Correspondent in Israel* (still unpublished). I was staying at the Sheraton (now the Leonardo) and when I came out, I was to cross the street to the Kings Hotel and meet my good friend and personal guide, Pat (z"l). She and I were going to the Bible Lands Museum for a reunion with her former boss and a former friend of mine, Ruth Abileah. All the traffic from the hotel down King George into town was blocked.



We heard there had been a terrorist attack but decided to go on with our plans.

When we returned to the hotel, National board members were waiting for us and told us to go and call our families and tell them we were okay.

One by one, Hadassah women came in and told stories of being on Ben Yehudah, of having wanted to eat at Sbarro Pizza on the corner of King George and Jaffa Road, of hearing an explosion and ambulances. It was the Sbarro pizza restaurant terrorist attack.

Dr. Zieva Dauber Konvisser is a fellow of the Institute for Social Innovation at Fielding Graduate University. In 2003, she was at the Israel Center for the Treatment of Psychodrama in Jerusalem, beginning research on the "possibility if posttraumatic growth coexisting with posttraumatic stress."

According to the founding director of this center, Professor Danny Brom, in the book's foreword, Dr. Konvisser contributes to "the study of politically motivated violence by documenting many of the challenges that confront people who experience such violence and by elucidating the many ways people find to overcome the horrors of their encounter with deadly

ZOBERMAN

(continued from page 16)

by the skillful author, the inescapable conclusion emerges; clearly, the common notion that the Vatican opposed Mussolini's anti-Jewish racial policies is debunked. The book's impeccable academic standing of painstaking research with meticulous notes reflects the extraordinary care undertaken by Kertzer and his team, mindful of the great sensitivities of the discussed issues. Though Pius XI and Mussolini are the main protagonists, the figure and impact throughout of Cardinal Secretary of State Eugenio Pacelli who in 1939 became the much debated Pope Pius XII, hovers over the entire book.

The year 1922 brings fatefully and fatally together two unlikely men to rise to great power. Achilli Ratti, a priest and librarian appointed Archbishop of Milan, who in 1922 becomes Cardinal as well as Pope Pius XI in a surprise replacement for Pope Benedict XI. His partner to be, Benito Mussolini, a radical socialist leader transformed into Italy's Fascist movement's founder, prime minister, and dictator who



violence. Equally, this book contributes to the development of the concept of posttraumatic growth." Dr. Konvisser herself explains in the preface that the focus of this book is on "resilience or recovery and posttraumatic growth."

Dr. Konvisser is a second-generation Holocaust survivor, having lost more than 30 relatives in Vilna. During a trip to Israel in 2002, she reflected how survivors of terrorist bombings moved beyond their traumas and subsequently visited Israel eight times between 2004 and 2010 to speak with such survivors.

She spoke with 24 survivors in 2004 who made up the research study sample for her doctoral dissertation then revisited them in 2007, interviewed seven more plus 15 Arab Israelis. In 2013, she again asked them to reflect upon and describe changes in "their family, work, health and/or outlook in life since the interviews.

The result is 36 stories as told by 48 survivors and family members with 33 incidents described.

The book is a tribute "to those who survived attacks with or without disability or loss, as well as family members of those who perished...By telling and retelling their stories, we celebrate their lives as people – as human beings." Some are more familiar as the Sbarro Pizza attack, the Café Hillel bombing with the bride-to-be and her doctor father, and the stoning of Koby Mandell, others include shooting attacks on roads, suicide

(see Kaplan/book, page 19)

would inspire Hitler's own ascent into absolute power.

Both Pius XI and Mussolini shared humble backgrounds, authoritarian personalities and disdain for both Communism and modernity represented by the French Revolution which they regarded as the tragic outcome of a Masonic-Jewish plot. The Protestants too were deemed a threat by Pius XI and his 1928 encyclical forbade interfaith dialogue, while dissolving Friends of Israel, an international Catholic organization focused on converting Jews when it sought to further aid its purpose by removing the deicide charge, the alleged drinking of Christian blood at the Passover ritual and the Good Friday liturgy reference to the "perfidious Jews."

The Lateran Accords of 1929, based on mutual interests between Pius XI and Mussolini, ended Italy's hostile church and state separation going back to 1861. A restored privileged Church presence in society's institutions, with the Vatican reciprocated support for Mussolini as Catholic priests enhanced the Duce's incredible personality cult in spite of persistent attacks on them by the manipulative leader. It was Cardinal Pacelli who when elected Pope Pius XII made sure that gravely ill Pius XI's intended speech copies – finally somewhat disengaging from Mussolini's racial policies – for the tenth anniversary of the Accords' celebration, would disappear upon Pius XI's death. The Germans vigorously campaigned for Pacelli's election, "Mussolini's most powerful ally in the Vatican" (p. 352).

Two missed opportunities to stymie Hitler's rise: Pope Pius XI's support for Hitler in the March 1933 elections in spite of Germany's Catholic bishops valiant opposition to Hitler, and Mussolini's denied request to excommunicate Catholic Hitler following his 1938 invasion of Austria, Italy's benign neighbor. Though the Vatican derided Nazism as neo-Paganism it was indifferent to the bitter fate of fellow Jewish Italians who were for long an integral and important part of Italian society.

In fact, Mussolini's government utilized medieval anti-Semitic Church literature to impose harsh discrimination laws, driving many Jews to commit suicide or be baptized to escape persecution. A thousand Jews hiding in Rome's Catholic facilities were transported to Auschwitz. Pope Pius XII's protest via Cardinal Maglione was not assertive enough. Most of the total 7,500 Italian Jews who were in Auschwitz perished.

Rabbi Israel Zoberman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach. ☆



My Kosher Kitchen

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Summer salads go international

Admittedly, I am very old fashioned in my kitchen. I have two sets of wood antique library card catalogue file drawers where I store recipe cards plus another set of wood drawers which a former neighbor, a wood worker, made especially for me. And yes, I use these index card recipes all the time. I have a sticky variation of the post-it notes with a blue tab sticking up which I then attach to any recipe cards I use very often so I can find them easily. Of course the cards are divided and subdivided and further divided for easy finding. So when Jennie suggested a column on salads, I went to “salads around the world,” and picked out these for summer.

Bread Salad (4 servings)

Italians call it panzanella; in Middle Eastern countries, in Arabic, fatt means “crush,” and the Turkish suffix “ush” equals fattush, particularly popular in Lebanon. Any kind of crusty, heavy, dense day-old bread will work.

- 3 medium chopped tomatoes or 16 cherry or plum tomatoes, halved
- 3 kirby cucumbers, cut up, not peeled
- 1/2 chopped red pepper
- 1/2 chopped green pepper
- 1/2 chopped another color pepper
- 4 sliced green onions
- 1/3 cup black olives
- 3 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley or cilantro
- 2 cups cubed bread
- 8 chopped hard-boiled eggs

Dressing

- 1/4 cup olive or canola oil
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 2 minced garlic cloves
- 1 tsp. paprika
- salt and pepper to taste

Three to four hours before serving in a jar, combine oil, vinegar, garlic, paprika, salt and pepper. Close with a lid, shake and set aside. In a salad bowl, combine tomatoes, cucumber, peppers, onions, olives and parsley. Add 1/4 cup dressing, mix and refrigerate about 2 hours. One to two hours before serving, add bread cubes and toss.

Refrigerate for half an hour. When ready to serve, sprinkle chopped eggs over salad and remaining dressing. Mix.

Antipasto Salad (4 servings)

Traditionally, an antipasto is the first course served before an Italian meal, but this salad is a nice start for any meal.

- 2 cups bite-size pieces romaine lettuce
- 2 cups bite-size pieces head lettuce
- 1/3 cup shredded white cabbage
- 1/3 cup shredded red cabbage
- 1 small chopped red onion
- 1 small chopped red pepper
- 1 small chopped green pepper
- 1/3 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 1/8 cup chopped black olives
- 1/2 cup chopped drained artichoke hearts
- 1/3 cup mozzarella cheese cubes
- 1/2 cup any other kosher Italian cheese cubes

Dressing

- 1/3 cup olive or canola oil
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 crushed garlic clove
- dash paprika
- dash oregano
- dash basil
- dash dry mustard

Mix dressing ingredients in a jar. Close lid and shake well. Set aside. In a salad bowl, combine lettuces, cabbages, onion, peppers, tomatoes, olives, artichoke hearts and cheeses. Just before serving, pour dressing over salad and toss.

Asian Cole Slaw (4 servings)

When I serve oriental food, particularly stir fry, I find it hard to choose a side dish other than rice or noodles so a cole slaw fits.

Salad

- 1 cup shredded bok choy
- 1/2 cup shredded carrots
- 1 diced cucumber
- 1/2 cup sliced water chestnuts or 1/2 cup sliced, cooked kohlrabi*
- 1/2 diced red pepper
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup bean sprouts

Dressing

- 3 Tbsp. rice vinegar
- 1/3 cup sesame oil
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 minced garlic clove
- 1/2 tsp. ginger (optional)

In a jar, combine rice vinegar, oil, sugar, soy sauce, garlic and ginger.

Close with a lid and shake well. Set aside. In a salad bowl, combine bok choy, carrots, cucumber, water chestnuts or kohlrabi, red pepper, cilantro and bean sprouts.



Why Faith Matters

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

God Bless Funeral Directors

A word for a profoundly Jewish but often disrespected profession: God bless funeral directors.

As a rabbi, I have marveled for many years at the skill and care of funeral directors. My father, a rabbi in Philadelphia, would often recount how his friend, Joseph Levine, would care for those who were bereaved and frightened, and gently guide them. I have seen the same care repeatedly in my own years conducting funerals and meeting with families who had suffered a loss. Death is the most sensitive time; when a funeral director is unkind, the results are devastating. But day after day, a mortuary worker must speak with families whom he or she does not know, and be warm without being cloying, caring without presuming too much, discuss financial arrangements at a time when the family can barely add two and two.

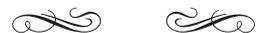
Because my own synagogue has two cemeteries, I have seen this work up close. In the Jewish world we do not sufficiently salute and applaud those who stand on the emotional front lines day after day. They help usher us through our most difficult transitions, and most of them do it with heart and skill. God bless funeral directors. (From The New York Jewish Week 6-25-14.)

From his Facebook posts:

“A child is an orphan when he has no parents. A nation is an orphan when it has no children.” *The Rebbe of Ponevezh*. May all the children of Israel be safe. ~ 7-1-14

The bodies of the three kidnapped youths, Eyal, Gilad and Naftali, have been found north of Hebron. “For the thing which I greatly feared has come upon me, and that which I was afraid of has come unto me.” (Job 3:25) *Baruch Dayan Emeth*. ~ 6-30-14

Wolpe is the senior rabbi of Temple Sinai in L.A., and author of *Why Faith Matters*. ★



Just before serving, add dressing and toss.

*In Israel, we don't have water chestnuts readily available, so I substitute with cooked kohlrabi which is very available and very inexpensive.

See Sybil's bio on page 12. ★



Book Excerpt

BY REB ZALMAN
SCHACHTER-SHALOMI

Psalm 139

YaH! You have scanned me and discerned me;
You know when I am relaxed or agitated.
From afar, You comprehend my fantasies.
You design my conduct and my repose;
You direct my paths so I can manage.

Before my mouth opens,
You know what I am about to say;
You have shaped my past and my future,
Your hand, gently on my shoulder.

All this awes my awareness;
It is beyond my skills to fathom.

Whereto can I withdraw from Your spirit?
Flee from facing You?

If I would mount up to Heaven –
there are You.
If I make my bed in Hell –
You are there, too.

Soaring on the wings of the dawn
to find shelter in the setting sun,
it would be Your hand that would carry me,
Your right hand, holding me safe.

If I want to find oblivion in darkness,
trading light for darkness –
to You, it would still not be dark.
Night is as bright as day for You;
Dark and light – the same in Your sight.

You have designed my innards,
shaped me in my mother's womb.

I am overcome with thanks
at Your awesome wonders,
Your astonishing works,
of which my soul is aware.



ZIMMERMAN

(continued from page 11)

San Francisco, try to be in the City during this time to participate in the oldest and arguably the best Jewish film festival in the world.

If not, take advantage of its year-round programming, including a free short film rotated monthly on its YouTube channel, [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL80ADAAD046DCDEAB)

My essence is not hidden from You
Who have made me in concealment,
Who has knitted me beneath the surface;
Your eyes have seen me as embryo.

My days are all inscribed in Your ledger;
Days not yet shaped –
each one of them is counted.

How precious are Your stirrings in me,
O God!
How powerful their impact!
I can't number them –
beyond all sand grains.
When I emerge from my reflection,
I am still with You.

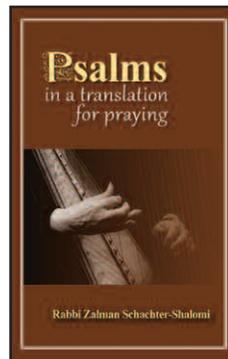
If You, God, would only rid us from our evil!
If only the cruelty would disappear!
And defiance of You vanish,
Forgiveness overtaking enmity!

I detest hatred of You, YaH!
Quarrelsomeness repels me;
I loathe hostility to the utmost.

God! I open myself to Your scrutiny;
know what is in my heart.
Examine and know my longings;
see and remove any defiance from me
and guide me in the way
that serves Your intent for our Earth.

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Available paperbackbound from Amazon.com, as an e-book from iTunes Books, and as two volumes of recordings from Amazon.com/mp3. Nook and Kindle versions forthcoming. ✨



JACOBSON/KLEINER

(continued from page 14)

unwisdom to invite ungracious and boring guests to her estate because congenial people do not provide the requisite behavioural conduct. The results of this decision are uproariously deployed across the stage in a witty series of dialogues, monologues and expostulations. Don't miss this gem at The Shaw Festival.

Observant Jewish travelers to the Niagara region will find many kosher products in NOTL's Value Market, located at the east end of the town's main street, Queen. There are no kosher restaurants in the town but 20 minutes away by car, in Niagara Falls, Ontario there is one pizza outlet at 6417 Main St. – phone number 289-296-4000. The Chabad website in Niagara also contains valuable information about kosher products. ✨



KAPLAN/BOOK

(continued from page 17)

bombing on buses, in buildings and military operations.

Among the most amazing things is one of the three appendices which lists 58 organizations supporting terror survivors and families. There is also a glossary and a selected bibliography at the end.

This is a very difficult book to read. Every story is upsetting and painful. Whether one has personally experienced a terrorist attack in Israel, is related to someone or acquainted with a victim; whether one visits Israel on a regular basis or has never visited Israel and has only heard stories or read about terrorist attacks and their victims – this is a book to read to understand the 12 qualities one may “cultivate to master any crisis”.

They struggle, confront and ultimately integrate painful thoughts and emotions.

They adjust their future expectations to fit their new reality and focus on the important things in life. They call on their inner strength, core beliefs and values.

They stay in control and do not fall apart. They are helped to move forward with strength gained from their past experiences and prior adversity. They are helped by spirituality or grappling with fundamental existential questions.

They stay healthy and focus on their body image. They are creative, find the silver lining and give back, moving forward with action. They stay connected and seek outside resources to help them survive rough times. They tell their stories and make sense of their lives. They are hopeful, optimistic, and celebrate life. They discover who they are. May we all learn from their misfortunes.

See Sybil's bio on page 12. ✨

The Anne Frank tree sapling one year later

The Jewish Post & Opinion

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

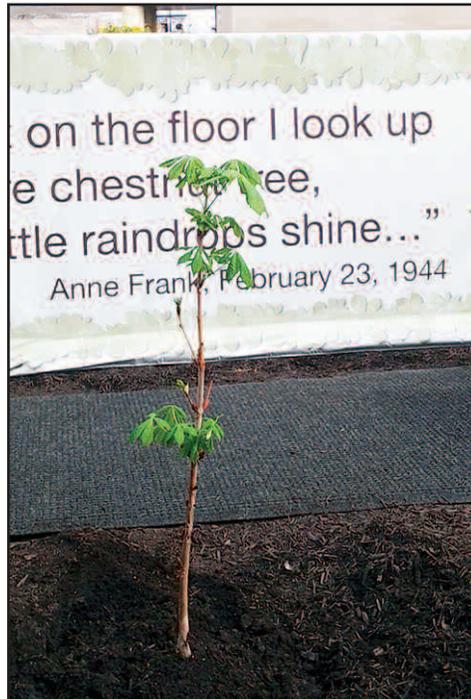
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In our May 1, 2013 edition, we published the news story with photos from the first US planting of a sapling from the chestnut tree that stood outside the secret annex in Amsterdam where Anne Frank was in hiding with family and others during World War II. This planting took place inside the Anne Frank Peace Park in front of The Children’s Museum in Indianapolis on April 14, 2013 (photo left).

The tree had given hope to the 13-year-old who was cut off from the outside world from 1942–1944. In her diary she wrote,“(Peter and I) looked out at the blue sky, the bare chestnut tree glistening with dew, the seagulls and other birds glinting with silver as they scooped through the air... ‘As long as this exists,’ I thought, ‘this sunshine and this cloudless sky, and as long as I can enjoy it, how can I be sad?’” Feb. 23, 1944.

In 2009 that 170 year old tree was dying and many saplings from it were planted all over the countryside in Holland. The Children’s Museum in Indianapolis received saplings at that time but they had to be in quarantine for three years before they could be planted. Even with the brutal winter this year, see how much the sapling (photo right) has grown in 14 months?

On the back page of our last edition was a photo of another sapling from that tree planted at the capitol in Washington DC on April 30. Along with the other nine being planted at different locations in the US, these growing saplings are a symbol that we can thrive again after the worst genocide in history. They demonstrate that tolerance can prevail over prejudice. ✨



Planted in the Anne Frank Peace Park outside The Children’s Museum in Indianapolis on April 14, 2013 (photo left), this sapling is from the chestnut tree that stood outside the Secret Annex in Amsterdam where Anne Frank hid with her family and others from 1942–1944. Although saplings from this tree have already been planted all over the countryside in Holland, this was the first one planted in the United States. (Photo right: June 12, 2014.)



On June 25, Rabbi Israel Zoberman offered the opening prayer at a session of the House of Representatives in Congress. He received this honor on the occasion of his 40th Anniversary in the Rabbinate. L–R: Congressman Scott Rigell (2nd District of Virginia), Rabbi Zoberman of Congregation Beth Chaverim, Virginia Beach, Va., and Speaker of the House John Boehner (8th District of Ohio).

