

The Jewish Post & Opinion • National Edition

Presenting a broad spectrum of Jewish News and Opinions since 1935.

Volume 82, Number 1 • November 18, 2015 • 6 Kislev 5776

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Cover art by Suzy Friedman
(see About the Cover, p. 3).

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Editorial

At this time of year for the past 12 years, I have written about establishing a special day, annually, for the purpose of remembering those who, in some way, have helped us but whom we never thanked. It could be because we were too young to realize how much their help meant or we were simply too preoccupied at the time. I suggested that we make Nov. 2 Appreciation Day.

I chose this day because it is between the Canadian and American Thanksgiving Days. This year they fall on Oct. 12 (second Monday of the month) and Nov. 26 (fourth Thursday) respectively.

Wouldn't it be nice if there were a time set aside once a year to tell someone what a difference they made in our lives? What they did was valuable to us even if they were simply doing the job they were paid to do.

This, of course, could and should be done every day, but sometimes it helps to have a specific time when others are also doing this. Advice columnist Ann Landers, of blessed memory, proclaimed April 2 as Reconciliation Day. This day is for people who had been close but had a falling out and stopped communicating. It is a time for them to contact each other and rekindle their relationship.

This year I was not thinking about Appreciation Day until Oct. 17 when I received the following email:

I was looking up teachers from when I went to Northview Junior High School (now Middle School) in the late 1970s and found your article on Martha Gelb. I was pleased to see that she was celebrating her 100th birthday last year and to read the story in your publication. [See page 2 of the following link: http://jewishpostopinion.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/IN_5-14-14FFF.pdf]

After reading the article, I felt that I wanted to share with you the impact that she, as a teacher, had on me in her science class. Mrs. Gelb helped instill in me the importance of rigorous scientific methodology. Her unwavering drive to insure that our experiments were conducted with the most precision possible and that our write-ups were top-notch have stuck with me to this day.

Her primary objective seemed to be to make us understand that completing the work was not the goal, but doing the work with integrity was of the utmost importance. If the class results varied too much on an experiment, we would discuss why this might happen, how we might control variables better, and then perform the experiment again.

About the Cover

Decorative Dreidels

By Suzy Friedman

Suzy Friedman creates distinctive, special occasion art using Judaic themes. Each piece reflects Suzy's love of Judaism and its traditions.

For many years Suzy has been using her artistic talent in media as diverse as mosaics, hand-dyed and painted silk *atarot* for *talitot* and *torah* covers, cards and invitations, and hand-painted *ketubot*. Lately she has been working in pastels and oils focusing on landscape and still life. She also creates three-dimensional Giclee-process *ketubot* and other Judaic themed prints.



S. Friedman

Suzy's commissioned artwork can be found in synagogues and homes throughout the country. She has taught art to secular and religious school students. She now teaches mosaic classes in her home studio.

Her training includes a BA in Fine Art from Indiana University and a Masters in Art Education from IUPUI at Herron.

To contact Suzy Friedman visit her website at www.suzyfriedmanarts.com, email her at suzyfriedman@comcast.net, or call 317-501-3107. ★



This unwavering drive for careful experimentation without cutting corners has stuck with me for over 35 years as this simulacrum in the back of my mind: "Would Mrs. Gelb accept these results?" The mental act of running things that I produced through this "check" has helped me be an objective defender of finding the kernel of truth as much as I have been able. I thank Mrs. Gelb for passing along this scientific passion that I've described above to me.

~ Jeff Groves, former student of Mrs. Gelb's 8th grade advanced science class at Northview Junior High School, Indianapolis.

I printed this letter and took it to the nursing home where Mrs. Gelb has been residing for the past several years. Even though I printed it in large, bold letters she still had trouble reading it so I read the letter to her. She was all smiles after that and I could tell it meant a great deal to her, but she was curious what this student does now for a living. I replied to his email and posed that question. He responded:

I've just left a position with Verizon where I was doing computer systems analyst work for the past 15 years in order to take a job with a Silicon Valley company called Hortonworks where I will continue to do (see Editorial, page 4)

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The Jewish Post & Opinion

Jewish News and Opinion since 1935.

1427 W. 86th St. #228

Indianapolis, IN 46260

email: jpostopinion@gmail.com

phone and fax: (317) 405-8084

website: www.jewishpostopinion.com

publisher & editor: Jennie Cohen

graphic designer: Charlie Bunes

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The Jewish Post & Opinion since 1930 at
www.ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/JPO

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Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

Hard Times

In the past two month, we have been suffering from a wave of terror. Many innocent people were murdered, and many more were injured. I asked myself: "What can I do to help?" I can't patrol the streets. I am 65 years old, and haven't held a gun for over 25 years, since I last served in the Israeli army. Here are some ideas that came to my mind.

We can pray to *Hashem* (G-d) to protect us. We can pray for our complete and final redemption. At that time, in the era of *Moshiach* (Messiah), there will be no more terror, no more war, no more evil in any form.

We believe that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is *Moshiach*. We are now in the beginning of the final redemption. It is really happening! However, though many good things have already happened, there is still much suffering. We cry out to *Hashem*: "Ad *mausai*? (How long do we have to wait?)"

In addition to praying, there is much that we can do. Every *Mitzvah* that we do speeds up the process of our redemption by increasing good in the world. It makes the world a better place. Love your neighbor, be nice to him, do what you can to help those in need.

Hashem gave us the *Torah*. The *Torah* is the wisdom of *Hashem*. When we learn *Torah*, we unite ourselves with *Hashem's* wisdom. In the *Torah* are 613 commandments, (*Mitzvahs*). These *Mitzvahs* are the will of *Hashem*. When we fulfill these *Mitzvahs*, we bring *Hashem's* will down into this world.

Now it is especially important to learn *Chassidus*, the inner meaning of the *Torah*. This will help us to overcome the difficulties that we face, and the hard times that we are going through.

I look around and I see a lot of good. I see the majority of the population of the world trying to lead good lives, to bring peace to the world, to help the poor, the sick, the hungry. I see more and more people who believe in *Hashem* and try to follow His commandments.

However, there is still some terror. In fact, each of us has a little terrorist, a little devil inside. In Hebrew he is called the *yetzer hara*, the evil influence. Whenever I start to say my daily prayers, he sends all kinds of interesting and important thoughts into my mind, to distract me from thinking about the words of the prayers.

This little terrorist is very clever, and a master of disguise. In extreme cases he can convince us that it is right to commit

EDITORIAL

(continued from page 3)

troubleshooting and problem resolution work.

The troubleshooting is where I use most of the analytical skills that require data collection, investigation of that data and often a bunch of experimentation in order to come up with a solution.

It's not rocket science, but it still uses the scientific principles in order to resolve computer systems issues as quickly as possible.

I graduated from Georgia Tech in 1989 with a BS in Information and Computer Science...I wasn't a star student...I credit my [success to] excellent teachers that I've had that included Mrs. Gelb. Thanks for passing along my thanks.

This gentleman was fortunate that with modern computer technology and Mrs. Gelb's longevity, he was able to reach her while she was still able to receive his "thank you".

Besides teachers, these helpers could be counselors, firemen, clergy, nurses, librarians and so forth, or simply relatives and friends. They put forth a great deal of effort, often wondering if they are making any difference at all.

It does not matter how long ago this help was received. If many years have passed that shows the helper that whatever they did made a lasting impression. So don't wait, thank someone today.

We wish our dear readers a very Happy Thanksgiving followed by a *Chanukah* filled with light!

Jennie Cohen, November 18, 2015 ✨



terrible crimes. He pretends that he is a prophet, and convinces people that their crimes are holy, or at least justified.

In Russia he convinced millions not to believe in *Hashem*, and that religion is the opiate of the masses. This brought about horrible suffering and death to about 50 million innocent citizens.

What can we do? How can we overcome our own private little terrorist? We learn in *Chassidus* about the forces of good that we have inside of us. We learn about our G-dly soul. Just as *Hashem* is infinite, so also our G-dly soul, which is a portion of *Hashem*, has unlimited power to do good. We learn about all of the temptations and tricks of our evil side, and how to overcome them.

We believe that *Hashem* is good. If so, why did He create evil? And why did he put evil in each of us? This, and many other questions are answered in a very special book called *Tanya*.

This is what each of us can do to eliminate terror forever. We can learn how to overcome our own little terrorist,



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

Thankfulness is not just once a year

Each year, at this time, we pause for two major events in our lives as Americans: Thanksgiving and Veteran's Day. These two holidays, each in their own way, offer the same expressions of gratefulness and appreciation. And, each year, I draw special attention to them because, all too often, we neglect to remember how these holidays impact our lives.

When we lose someone who has devoted his or her energy to the safety and survival of our American way of life, or see the list of wounded increase with each passing day, we pause to thank them for their participation in ensuring our safety and survival.

Those who wear the uniform of this great country represent our freedom. More than that they remind us of the vigilance needed to remain a nation of tolerance and an example to the world. It is no different for those who have, but no longer, carry the banner, those who have served and now continue to remain proud of that commitment.

Our history as a nation is replete with stories of valor and fortitude. Blood has been shed, not only here, but also on foreign soil with the understanding that liberty and freedom require sacrifice. Sacrifice, at times, requires the ultimate sacrifice. There are no barriers or boundaries when searching for the opportunity to breathe free.

On Nov. 11, we will once again devote our attention to the members of our armed forces, both past and present. How I wish that we could and would remember them every day of the year. Our diversity is a testament to the contributions made every day and every night.

Throughout our country we see these efforts in action. Our veterans are living examples of goodness and allegiance. Their untiring efforts in behalf of all veterans, regardless of race, color, creed, or religion sets a standard that illustrates

(see Wiener, page 6)



who stops us from learning *Torah* and doing *Mitzvahs*. Then we will succeed in learning *Torah* and doing *Mitzvahs* to bring *Moshiach* now!

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



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

Chanukah – bring your light into the world!

Chanukah is a holiday with many names. Some call it the *Festival of Lights*, while others refer to it as the *Feast of Rededication* or the *Holiday of Miracles*. When I was growing up, my friends called it Jewish Christmas. But nothing could be farther from the truth.

Chanukah, while deemed a minor Jewish holiday, is significant in that it teaches us to appreciate how different versions of the same story need not limit its credibility or depreciate its value. Rather, we are given a chance to expand our understanding from the various lessons that each version teaches.

The historical version of *Chanukah*, recorded in the Book of Maccabees, chronicles that in 168 B.C.E, King Antiochus desecrated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and issued decrees prohibiting Jewish worship, circumcision and *Shabbat* observance. Mattathias the High Priest, along with his five, hardy Maccabean sons and a small group of Jewish insurgents, rose up and fought for three years against the Syrian army. On the 25th of *Kislev*, the Jews restored the Holy Temple and rededicated it to God. We learn from this version that through acts of defiance and resistance, the Jewish people can overcome oppression and live with dignity as Jews.

Another version of the *Chanukah* story is the quintessential assimilation story. It focuses on the internal conflict between Jews as they struggled to expand and define what practices were acceptable for Jews living within a foreign culture. In the first few centuries BCE, Hellenism and its social, economic and political influences encouraged many Jews to compromise and abandon Jewish rituals and practices. Some Jews attended the gymnasium, participating in nude sporting events, which often required reversals of circumcision. The Maccabean fight was not just against non-Jewish oppression, but against the highly assimilated Jews whose conduct threatened the continued existence of the Jewish people.

Almost 400 years later, the rabbis of the *Talmud* gave the story yet a different spin. Their version doesn't even mention the name Maccabee and the war against the

Syrians or refer to the tensions of fighting against Greek assimilation. Rather, the rabbis focused on the role that faith in God played as the key to Jewish survival. We are taught that "a great miracle happened there" when a small crude of oil lasted for eight days until more was found to keep the Temple's *Menorah* lit. The eight candles we light on our *menorah* remind us that we have survived over time because of our faith in God's saving grace and power.

The significance of light itself is another aspect of the *Chanukah* story. At the darkest, coldest and often bleakest time of the calendar year, Jews come together with family and friends, to bring light, hope and joy into their homes. For eight consecutive nights, we add an additional candle, increasing our ability to fight against darkness and despair.

It is written in Proverbs 20:27 that "the human spirit is God's candle." Our tradition teaches that each of us has the capacity to bring light and goodness, holiness and compassion, into the world. Through our thoughts, actions and relationships, through our efforts to restore balance, justice and dignity in the world, we have the power to illuminate and inspire, even in the darkest of times.

The *shamash* is the special candle on the *menorah* that lights the other candles and is traditionally elevated. This year when you light the *shamash*, imagine for a moment that you have the power to become "God's candle." What would it mean to light up the world around you with hope and possibilities? What could you do to light up your world?

Your efforts don't have to be time consuming or expensive, but consider these eight small efforts that can make a world of difference and a difference in our world:

Show respect for other's ideas, even when you disagree with them.

Laugh at yourself, but not at others.

Avoid harmful speech and gossip.

Tell someone that you love them.

Donate food, clothing, time or money to organizations in need.

Visit a friend who is lonely or sick.

Say you're sorry when you make a mistake.

Stay present to the blessings in your life and be grateful.

When you light your candles this year, remember that *Chanukah* is the only holiday when we wish each other *Chag Urim Sameach* – a joyous holiday of light!

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. ✨

From ancient to modern Maccabees

BY RABBI HERBERT HOROWITZ



I've visited Israel a number of times, and always in different seasons of the year. I witnessed the sadness of *Tisha B'Av* at the *Kotel Hama'aravi* (Western Wall) and the tumultuous joys of *Purim* celebrants on Ben Yehuda Street in Jerusalem. But to date, I've never spent the holiday of *Chanukah* in Israel, until this year, when my wife and I will walk in the footsteps of the heroic Maccabees and visit their various hideouts between Modi'in and Jerusalem during the week of *Chanukah*.

What is the miracle of *Chanukah* all about? It is two-fold: the *Talmud*, in *Tractate Shabbat* tells us the miracle of the *Kohen Gadol's* (High Priest) one flask of pure oil that burned for eight days during the rededication of the Holy Temple after its idolatrous defilement; and the Book of Maccabees One and Two describes in graphic detail the battle fought by Matisyahu and his sons, their bravery and martyrdom in the face of a formidable army of Seleucid Greeks, to achieve military victory. It is an account of remarkable acts of heroism.

Rabbi Benjamin Blech in his article "Miracles, Human and Divine" explains why the *Al Hanisim* (All miracles) prayer is added to the liturgy on all eight days of *Chanukah*. He explains: "What God did may appear as miracles in our eyes but for Him they were easy. It is man's miracles however, which rightly deserve our awe and respect."

Recently, a special ceremony was held at West Point honoring the memory of Col. Mickey Marcus. Who was this miracle worker? He was a colonel in the U.S. army, fighting the Nazi forces of evil in World War II. After the war, he found his calling in organizing the *Haganah* in Israel into a full-fledged army during Israel's War of Independence. His tragic death (he didn't know the Hebrew code word and was accidentally killed by an Israeli on guard duty) was a great loss. He is memorialized in Israel and now at West Point as a modern Maccabee. All of the new recruits in the Israel Defense Forces who are ready to sacrifice their lives in defense of Israel are modern Maccabees as well.

As Rabbi Blech further explains: The miracles of human beings are the reason for the emphasis on miracles in the holidays of both *Chanukah* and *Purim*, where we recall historic moments when people

(see Horowitz, page 9)



Kabbalah of the Month

By MELINDA RIBNER

Kislev – a month of faith and miracles

Nov. 12 – Dec. 12, 2015

In the Jewish calendar, a new month begins at the time of the new moon. The Hebrew word for month is *chodesh* which also means “newness”. According to *Kabbalah*, each month offers new energies and offers new opportunities to realize one’s personal potentials. Just like there are various seasons and fluctuations in our weather, there are fluctuations in the spiritual energies available. Those who are attuned to these energies are very aware of such changes and know how to use this knowledge for their personal growth and success. Rather than promoting fatalism, this knowledge actually increases our capacity to make meaningful and effective choices for our highest good.

The month of *Kislev*, beginning Nov. 12 in the evening, takes place in one of the darkest times of the year yet the month of *Kislev* is a time of expansiveness, travel and going forward in life with trust and faith. The energy of *Kislev* is about actualizing dreams and visions. Natural optimism, hope, confidence and faith are easily accessible during this month to support rekindling dreams. This is a month of miracles and redemption. *Kislev*, more than any other time in the year, is a time when we go beyond what is logical and go for what we really want. To know what we really want inside, we have to listen to what God wants for us.

This is the month to leave the shackles of the limiting rational Greek mind and open to greater faith. When we are limited by the mind we are always tied to what is known and familiar. We seek to understand why and how. Faith by definition is beyond the reasoning powers of the month. Faith enables us to be present, to not dwell in the past or worry about the future but to live moment to moment fully with trust and fearlessness. It is faith, not the mind that opens us to new possibilities and new dimensions, enabling us to go forward in ways that we could not do solely on our own.

As much as we may want change in our life, as much as we may want more light and joy in our lives, we need to acknowledge that many of us are resistant and frightened by change. This is natural, but do not let your fear or your resistance stop

or limit you this month. Strengthen your trust in God with prayer, meditation, *mitzvot* and affirmations. Note the tendency in the mind to try to understand, explain and justify why you are not living your dreams. Assert your intention to not be limited by the mind. Know that when we align our intention with the Divine, we are not limited. Tap into the natural faith within, for faith enables us to leave the place of limitation without even knowing how or why.

The energy of *Kislev* is shaped by the holiday of *Chanukah*, the holiday of miracles that occurs at the end of the month, the darkest time of the year. It was not logical that a small group of Jews would be able to defeat the vast and powerful Greek armies. It was miraculous. The holiday of *Chanukah* reminds the Jewish people that they live on the level of miracles. The existence of our beautiful Jewish state of Israel with all its accomplishments, and with so many foes is a modern day testament to the power of miracles today.



This month of *Kislev* is the time to pay attention to your dreams, the light of your own inner consciousness. Your dreams, whether you are asleep or awake, reveal messages from your soul.

As a child, you may have had many dreams for yourself. What were they? Some of these dreams you may have realized, some you may have abandoned, as you thought they were not practical or possible, and others you partially fulfilled through improvisation and compromise. Some of these dreams you may now want to revisit in a different form. Give yourself time this month to dream.

As the nights get longer and it gets colder outside during this month, you may find yourself wanting to sleep a little longer. That is great. The healing of this month takes place through sleep. It is even good to sleep longer this month. Sleep is not a waste of time but provides an opportunity to live in another dimension. When we sleep, we are told, our soul may be able to ascend to the higher worlds. Those who have purified their consciousness may receive true vision and understand through dreams. (From *Kabbalah Month by Month*.)

May this month be a time of miracles for the Jewish people and for us as individuals.

WIENER

(continued from page 4)

their commitment to the ideals for which they served.

It is fitting that this time has been set aside because, in our pursuit of daily activities, we tend to forget. Patriotism seems to be relegated to memory.

As we honor our veterans, we also commemorate a holiday designed to remind us of the sacrifices made by the generations – Thanksgiving. These two celebrations give us pause to reflect on our good fortune and to express our thanks to a great country. Just look around the world – the people clamoring to be free and live in societies that are accepting and free from the crippling elements of war.

We certainly are not perfect, but that does detract from the good we do. Nor does it diminish the response we offer when there is a need that requires our resources. This country was founded on the principle of inclusiveness.

Thankfulness is about recognizing the wonders we witness, the magic we bring to the world and the fulfillment we represent to others. To me, the most significant aspect of these commemorations is a simple word – hope.

Thankfulness should not be just once a year. Thankfulness requires understanding. Thankfulness should be part of us all the days of our lives. Then we will truly pay homage to all who represent the value known as America.

Rabbi Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at ravyitz@cox.net. He is the author of two books: Living With Faith and Why Is This Night Different: The Passover Haggadah. ✨



May we be grateful for all instances of divine synchronicity. May we increase in faith and in our awareness that God is alive and active in our lives. The whole month of *Kislev*, according to kabbalistic teachings, is to be a time of thanksgiving. So it is interesting that America chose to place its holiday of Thanksgiving during the month of *Kislev*.

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

World must respond to refugee crisis



BY RABBIS
DENNIS C. AND
SANDY E. SASSO

The democratic uprising in Syria against the government in March 2011, has resulted in a brutal sectarian, ethnic and political conflict that has brought about the world's largest humanitarian refugee crisis since World War II.

Between President Bashar al-Assad's government and the Islamic State's infiltration, Syrians have been subjected to murder, torture, sexual slavery and other abuses. Four million people, one-fifth of Syria's population, have fled since 2011. Across the world, to date, more than 19 million people have been forced to flee repression in their countries. It is estimated that the refugee count increases by 42,500 every day.

It is evident that this is not a matter of faceless statistics, but a very present humanitarian crisis. Except for Germany and a few other Western European countries that have agreed to accept a significant number of refugees, the majority of European countries have resisted. Nativist movements in Eastern European nations have resuscitated anti-Roma and anti-Semitic rhetoric. Hungary Prime Minister Viktor Orban has been the most outspoken in giving voice to the anti-refugee sentiment, claiming that the influx of these refugees would undermine "European and Christian values." It is, in fact, Orban's xenophobic rhetoric that threatens those very values of compassion, human dignity and freedom.

The Obama administration's recent announcement of an increase in the quota of Syrian refugees to 100,000 by 2017 is welcome news. Recognizing the complexity and difficulty posed by migrations of such magnitude, we need to acknowledge that this is not only a European problem; it is a global issue. It calls upon us as Americans to respond generously. It requires the collective wisdom of all nations, including those of the Middle East. It demands addressing the political instability, repression and terror that cause the refugee crisis.

This human tragedy calls to mind another time in history. In July 1938, at the invitation of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, representatives of 32 nations met in Evian-les-Bains, France, to discuss the issue of Jewish immigration from Nazi Germany. Although the group expressed

The real smoking gun behind violent acts

BY RABBI SANDY EISENBERG SASSO

Since the mass shooting in Oregon at Umpqua Community College, two more college shootings in Texas and Arizona have occurred, the latest of 52 school firearms incidents in 2015. Tragically, the school deaths are but a fraction of the 92 gun deaths that happen on average every day.



its anguish over the plight of European Jews, no country volunteered to increase its quota of immigrants. Every country resorted to economic excuses. The Dominican Republic was the sole exception, which resulted in a small influx of Jews to the island. British resistance even curtailed Jewish immigration to Palestine.

The world's failure to address the Jewish refugee crisis gave clear signal to Hitler that no one cared about the Jews of Europe. That fall, the Pogroms of Kristallnacht ravaged Germany. The outbreak of World War II in September 1939 sealed the fate of European Jews. A later refugee conference between the United States and Great Britain in Bermuda, in 1943, also failed to address the Jewish refugee crisis. By the end of the war in 1945, 6 million Jews and 5 million other people had died.

The historic circumstances and the political backdrop of the present crisis are different, but the humanitarian disaster is a shame on the world. One Syrian toddler found dead on a Turkish beach has become the face of tens of thousands of children among more than a quarter of a million civilians who have perished. The images of desperate families trying to board crowded trains with numbers written on their arms; people herded like animals in chain-link pens... are all too painful reminders of another time. Significantly, the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., has dedicated a room to the current Syrian refugee crisis.

What can we do? Educate ourselves, donate to immigrant aid organizations, raise awareness and advocate for welcoming and responsible refugee and immigration legislation. We may not be able to complete the task, but neither are we free to desist from trying. "If not now, when?"

Sandy Sasso is rabbi emeritus of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck and director of the Religion, Spirituality and the Arts Initiative at Butler University. Dennis Sasso has been senior rabbi at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis since 1977. Reprinted with permission from the Indianapolis Star, Sept. 23, 2015. ★

There is a great deal of posturing about the reasons behind this rampant violence. Often it is hard to separate fact from political opinion. Here are some facts:

Nearly a third of all mass shootings in the world take place in the United States.

The United States has the highest firearm homicide rate among developed countries.

Civilians in the United States legally own three hundred million guns, nearly enough for every citizen to have one. A significant number of those guns, two hundred and fifty thousand, are annually stolen in robberies.

There is a prevalent opinion that mental illness is the cause of gun violence; that if we could only keep guns out of the hands of the mentally ill and put greater money into mental health services, our problem would be solved. There is no doubt that better services and insurance coverage for mental health are essential, but, contrary to popular belief, those changes would not significantly reduce gun violence.

Dr. Jeffrey Swanson, professor of psychiatry at Duke, tells us that even "if we were able to magically cure schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depression ... violence would go down by only four percent." Ninety-six percent of gun violence is not related to mental illness.

The president of the American Psychiatric Association, Dr. Renee Binder reports that "the mentally ill will be far more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators of it". Alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, a history of violent behavior, bullying and easy access and availability of guns are are much stronger indicators. In fact, targeting individuals who experience psychological problems stigmatizes and shames them. In the long run, it actually makes them reluctant to seek the help they need.

We continue to dwell on mental illness as an easy target, rather than acknowledge the real difficulty – too many firearms. To argue that the problem is too few guns would be laughable, if it were not so tragic. Umpqua Community College was not a gun free zone, and there were people on campus who had guns at the time of the massacre. It did not make a difference.

The recent suggestion that if only Jews during the Holocaust had guns, they would have been able to save themselves is an outrage. No personal weapons would have stopped the vast machinery of Nazism which received widespread public support. In the Warsaw Ghetto, partisans did have guns. In the ghetto uprising, 20 Nazis died and 13,000 Jews were murdered.

The gun lobby and those who feel
(see S. Sasso, page 9)



Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN
PHOTOS BY BARRY A. KAPLAN

Attending the World Zionist Congress

For a Zionist, one of the most exciting experiences might be a visit to Basle, Switzerland, site of the first Zionist Congress (which I did many years ago). In recent years, I attended Zionist congresses in Jerusalem in 2006 and 2010 from Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America. Now living in Jerusalem, I once again was a delegate to the 37th Congress.

One of the most enlightening aspects of the Congress is the meeting with members of our Hadassah Federation, who besides coming from Hadassah in the U.S., and Hadassah-Israel, Young Judea and FedZY youth from England, include those from Denmark, Sweden, Germany, South America and the former Soviet Union.

From Members of the Confederation

"Among Danish Arabs and Palestinians, there is hatred toward Jews and toward Israel and Zionism. Danish Zionist Federation has tried to get help from politicians to combat the hatred but nothing concrete has come out of the effort."

In Venezuela, "the government and its supporters are very anti Israel. Venezuela seems to be a kind of laboratory for BDS. We are sure a fierce campaign against Israel, all over the media, will be launched very soon."

"The situation of the Jews in France is very bad. It deteriorates from day to day. France is the main target for the Islamic state and the worst is to come."

"The destruction of the Soviet system of state anti-Semitism and the coming of new models of national development in the new states of Eastern Europe have significantly reduced the level of anti-Semitism incidents in the Ukraine."

In Germany, "Anti-Semitism is mostly hidden behind Israel criticism."

During the Congress

A variety of plenaries are held over the three days, as well as adoption of resolutions and speakers. Opening the congress this year was an address by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, outlining the challenges and opportunities "in light of the assaults to murder Israelis, incorporating radical ideology and modern technology."

The Zionist Congress was established by Theodor Herzl in 1897. Its purposes are to increase Zionist awareness and education, encourage aliyah, strengthen settlement, advocate for Israel and struggle against anti-Semitism. Members of the Congress are organizations and includes: the Zionist World Unions whose members are the World Zionist Union (Labor Zionist Movement, Arzenu and World Union of Meretz); the United Faction (Kadima, HaNoar Hatzioni and Mercaz); World Mizrahi / Ichud Leumi / Herut / Yisrael Beytenu; World Likud / Shas; and Hadassah / Confederation.

International Jewish organizations attending are: Bnai Brith International, Maccabi World Union, Naamat, Women's International Zionist Organization, World Council of Conservative Masorti Synagogues, World Emunah, World Organization of Orthodox Synagogues and Communities in Israel and the Diaspora, World Sephardi Federation, World Union for Progressive Judaism, World Union of Jewish Students and Zionist Council in Israel.

The Prime Minister refuted the 10 lies being hurled at us by puncturing them with single truths.

1. That Israel is trying to change the status on the Temple Mount. The truth is the Moslems are free to visit the structure, while others are limited in the days and hours.

2. Israel seeks to change prayer and non-prayers and to destroy the Al Aksa Mosque. The truth is Arab incitement and fomenting attacks have occurred since 1929 but Israel is the only country that protects religious sites in the Middle East.

3. The settlement construction has increased. The truth is the surge of settlement construction has actually been in decline.

4. Israelis are executing Palestinians. The truth is best shown by the example of the 13-year-old Arab who stabbed a 13-year-old Jewish boy on his bicycle and was wounded. Abbas said the Arab boy was killed, but photographs from Hadassah hospital showed him recuperating alive in a hospital bed.

5. Israel uses excessive force. The truth is we say, how would your police respond if they received a threat to their lives?

6. The reason we have terrorism is because of the stagnation of the peace process. The truth is because there is a State of Israel.

7. Abbas incites all the time and Fatah is his partner. He recently said, "I welcome every drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem." The truth is he has not condemned any

public attacks in Israel. We call upon him to stop inciting and stop lying.

8. The United Nations is not a force for moderation. The truth is it must be held fully accountable.

9. The Palestinians refuse to accept the nation state of Israel. The truth is they have rejected the state offered them; they continued attacks against us from 1920 to 1967, their desire is to destroy Jews. When we took possession of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, we built communities. We asked them why they are firing rockets in Judea and Samaria. Would you be prepared to recognize the Jewish state? They wanted to continue the conflict.

10. The core of the conflict in the Middle East is the Palestinian-Israel conflict. To show how absurd lies are, they claim the core of the conflict is the settlements. The truth is, it is their persistent refusal to recognize the State of Israel. We want lasting peace with no pre-conditions. The Palestinian Authority is not being held accountable for the incitement.

Israel is a modern progressive state. The biggest battle we have to fight is the battle of the facts.

Responding to the BDS

Miri Eisen, former spokesperson for Netanyahu, related on a panel responding to the BDS and anti-Semitism, that the international media has put Israel in the frame because of the "occupation."

The three elements emphasized by the media today are the Israel military, the settlements and the Western Wall. "Israel has been for over 25 years the Goliath against David in the social media," she said. The victims are perceived in the international world as the Palestinians.

In responding to BDS, she suggests, "never get mad. Let them froth at the mouth....take back the words.... Zionism is Jewish nationalism.... Be a responsible member of Israel."

Other Speakers

Other speakers during the three-day Congress included Natan Sharansky, Jewish Agency Chairman; Minister of Defense, Moshe Ya'alon; Nir Barkat, Mayor of Jerusalem; leader of the opposition, Yitzhak Herzog; Minister of Absorption, Ze'ev Elkin; and Deputy President, Speaker of the Knesset, Yuli Edelstein.

"Apart from, Body" – An extraordinary Israeli artist

Interested in up-and-coming Israeli artists? Don't miss the artwork of an artist



"The Call" by Netanel Morhan.

who is part of the new artists showing at the Artists' House*. His works are incredible! Amazing! Fantastic!

American-born Netanel Morhan, 25 years old (his father is American; his mother is Israeli) came to Israel when he was nine years old. He attended the Jerusalem Art School for high school and since the age of 17, he has done paintings of people "floating over their bodies. It's seeing your body from a totally different perspective, that you can exist beyond the body, which is the name of this exhibition," Morhan explains as he stands in a room at the Artists' House looking at four of his works. "Eight years later, I'm still investigating the same subject."

In high school, he also did big art work, and he says, "everyone expected me to be an artist." He said he would dream and remember and when he woke up, he would start to prepare for a painting.

After three years in the army, he returned to his parents' home in Maaleh Adumim, a Jerusalem suburb. Then, a year later, in 2012, he started his first painting, which now is part of a 12-painting series. The four paintings on exhibit at Artists' House are part of the new Jerusalem Artists Association members' exhibit.

In 2012, an acquaintance of Anne Schneider, from St. Louis, met Morhan and knew Schneider had plans to promote Israeli art. "She knew I was developing a business promoting Israeli art and said you want to know this artist. Here's his information," said Schneider. Schneider went to his home, he unrolled his canvas and all she could say was, "Wow!" She was speechless.

By summer of 2014, Morhan had submitted two applications – one to become a member of the Jerusalem Artists' Association and one for exhibition. He was immediately approved for exhibition, by the special committee of artists, but a date was not set.

In May 2015, Morhan was accepted as a new member of the Jerusalem Artists Association, the youngest member ever

HOROWITZ

(continued from page 5)

rose to the challenge of living up to their potential, of attaining spiritual heights that transcend that which is expected of human beings, creating real miracles by using their God-given gifts of courage, faith and wisdom.

In Israel, my wife and I will have the privilege of reciting the blessing over the *Chanukah menorah*, and say: "*Bayamim hahem bazman hazeh*" – As the miracle took place then, it continues to take place now in modern Israel. Our Israeli *dreidel* will have the *Nun*, *Gimel*, *Hey* and *Peh* for "*Po*" – here. We will take to heart the profound thoughts of Rabbi Elyahu Safran, a collector of *dreidels*: "When the *dreidel* shows a *Gimel*, it is good to remember that the other, unseen side is the *nun*. There, sometimes hidden, untold miracles abound. We are all *dreidels*; we keep spinning. That's why I continue to acquire more *dreidels* – the miracles of our eternal existence never cease to create renewed amazement."

The miracle of Israel's existence and its modern heroes is the eternal *Chanukah* story of the Jewish people. *Chanukah Sameach!*

Herbert Horowitz is Rabbi Emeritus of Shore Parkway Jewish Center, Brooklyn, NY. He is a popular lecturer and scholar-in-residence. He can be reached at rabhh18@gmail.com. ☆



"Height and Illusion" by Netanel Morhan.

accepted in its 50-year history. When this new members' exhibition was planned, he was invited to show his works.

In the upstairs room of the Artists' House hang four of his gigantic paintings: "The Call" (top) shows a man on his stomach flying out of a rich house into a more mysterious world. "Height and Illusion" (above) shows, in front, a man sleeping on a couch, behind is an aquarium with another man's head and shoulder inside the aquarium and his feet in the air. "Awakening" shows a man on a mattress inside a glass elevator with New York skyscrapers behind. These paintings are each 5 feet 10 inches wide and 6 feet 10 inches high.

S. SASSO

(continued from page 7)

beholden to it offer a variety of reasons for gun violence. They are convenient smoke screens that refuse to recognize the smoking gun in our midst. In 2011, economist Richard Florida found greater mental illness among other factors commonly assumed to be causal, did not even correlate with increased violence. What he did find was that states with stricter background checks and licensing procedures reported fewer gun-related homicides.

So often it is argued that guns don't kill, people do. Past studies have found higher gun ownership rates are correlated with higher gun death rates. How many more lives have to be lost before we acknowledge that it is people with guns who have the ability to inflict the most damage to others and to themselves?

Countries with lower rates of firearm violence all have some things in common: assault and semi-automatic weapons bans, background checks for private and online sales and at gun shows, bans on high capacity ammunition clips and requirements for lock and safe storage.

We must do more than erect memorials, offer condolences and prayers. We must insist that our political leaders have the courage to say, "Enough", and actually do something that will save lives.

Reprinted with permission from the Indianapolis Star Oct. 14, 2015. ☆



"The Higher and the Lower Court" shows a long boardroom table and chairs with clouds reflected on the table and the Hudson River behind. It is 8 feet 2 inches wide and 6 feet 10 inches high.

"He is very talented and very young," comments Yael Ruhman, an artist and member of the artists' association, who was chosen to be curator of this exhibit. "His art is very different from anything that I had witnessed on the Israeli art scene. It is different thematically and different technique wise, interesting and intriguing."

When asked to describe the style of his paintings, Morhan says "the style is surrealistic and modern-day romance with an apocalyptic touch." To Morhan the paintings are a "documentary of an out of body experience." But how do you document this, one might ask?

Curator Ruhman says, "it remains to be seen whether he continues to have a passion for painting." *Parts of this article were used by itraveljerusalem web site.*

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, lecturer and cookbook author. Submitted July 24, 2015. ☆



Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

Mixed marriage

I don't mean to be heretical, but as Maimonides said in a hundred different ways, we must have a rationally open mind. And if we follow his lead, we must see a glimmering truth in the *Chumash* that's rarely addressed by pulpit rabbis or Jewish scholars. It's not a bland statement of fact – more a between-the-lines interpretation.

It has to do with mixed marriage, conversion, integration – “outreach” may be a better word. I deduce that in the days of Moses and initial homesteading of Canaan in those early, formative years Judaism was much more open to non-Jewish mates – more so than even today when the Greenbergs berate their daughter for marrying that fine, Christian boy next door.

If one stood by Marcia's side in this bitter family debate, one could deliver a knockout punch by reminding the Greenberg parents that Moses – our foremost prophet and CEO – married a Midianite. Yes, we know he was raised in the Egyptian court (no Hadassah chapters there) and later wandered amid Midianite sand dunes – not many of us there, either. But later he was immersed in nubile, *zofitig* Jewish ladies. Yet he marries Zipporah the Midianite. Obviously, it didn't hurt his standing with his fellow Jews. The *Chumash* has no rationalization of Moses' departure from the fold. Shocking! Yet, not a word of rebuke that this reader can find.

I don't approve or applaud or condemn this strange event. I merely note it. And again maybe this pairing wasn't all roses and moonbeams. Some scholars say, go read Exodus 4:24. See what you think. Some commentators interpret this mysterious passage wherein G-d considers killing Moses to mean that Zippy (as Moses called her in affectionate moments) was initially opposed to circumcision of Gershom. You read it – you decide.

But back to our outreach theme. When the *Chumash* refers to the ragtag mob of fugitives at the Holy Mountain, it calls them a mixed multitude. Purity is absent. Evidently, the mob that navigated the Sinai was – you guessed it – “mixed”.

Then, of course, we have Judah – our namesake. We are called Jews – short for Judah. Judah, the head of the clan, marries a Hittite. And David – in the Jewish Hall of Fame, picks Batsheva, another Hittite. And

Book Review

REVIEWED BY SUSAN LERNER

There's nothing like a love story

Take a look at your parents' wedding portraits. Those evocative photographs capture that moment in time when the future held all possibilities. You might remember stories your parents told you about their early lives. You might imagine what their lives were like during their courtship. Of all the stories we tell, there's nothing like a love story.

Rabbi Sandy Sasso enlisted her friend, Peninnah Schram, to help in her search for Jewish love stories when Sasso's daughter, Debbie, became engaged. They collected stories, added Debbie's story, and printed it all in a pamphlet to use at the *aufruf* (when the groom, and in non-Orthodox congregations, the bride are called to the *Torah* on the *Shabbat* preceding their wedding). This pamphlet served as the seed for Rabbi Sandy Sasso and Peninnah Schram's new book, *Jewish Stories of Love and Marriage*.

I had no idea the Jewish tradition held such a wealth of love stories. The authors divide the book into five sections. The first consists of biblical and rabbinic love stories, and begins with a story written by Howard Schwartz, *The Very First Wedding*, that describes the marriage ceremony



when he is excoriated by Nathan the Prophet he is cursed because he caused the husband's death, not because he adds Batsheva, the non-Jew, to his harem.

And the son of this sin, Solomon, so beloved by G-d that he is the builder of the first temple, is noted for lust for women other than Jews. We were certainly a “mixed” multitude. And again our Bible finds no fault with Sol's roving eye. *Torah* is silent – looks away.

And then to top off our marital tolerance, we have Ruth, a non-Jew carefully selected by Boaz – in the line of the *Mossiach*. Our *Mossiach*, Savior of the world, has a touch of the non-Jew in his bloodline.

None of the above is to praise or recommend intermarriage. But this scribbler (see Roberts, page 11)

of Adam and Eve. In this part of the book we also read about the nuptials of our matriarchs and patriarchs. One of the pieces at the end of the section describes the coming together of Rabbi Akiva and his wife, Rachel.

Folk tales, which make up the second section of the book, are by nature entrancing and fanciful and those in this collection are no exception. *Jonathan and the Scorpion* begins as a different kind of love story: one of two sons' love for their father. The story, which includes talking animals who grant wishes, a royal wedding, and a Jewish community in peril, ends with our hero, Jonathan, marrying the deceased king's widow and saving the Jews.

The third section is a collection of love letters of historical personalities. The last entry, titled, *You Found Your Way to My Heart*, left me *verklemt*. Here Peninnah Schram includes letters written by her father to her mother in 1930. Schram discovered them in her parents' Connecticut home and translated the *Yiddish* herself.

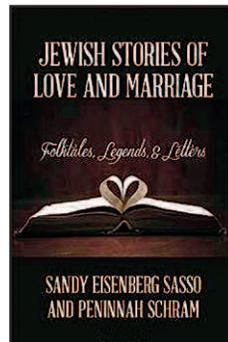
Contemporary love stories make up the fourth section of the book, which opens with Rabbi Sasso's own story. She narrates in the present tense, which invites the reader into the delightful story of her courtship with her fellow rabbinical student, Dennis Sasso. This section of the book ends with an intriguing and unique piece, *Sukkat Shalom: A Micrographic Love Story*, by Sonia Gordon-Walinsky. Like a graphic novel, but compressed, it consists of five stunning illustrations that tell a love story in the context of the liturgy of the *hakafot* (circles we make around the synagogue with the *Torah* throughout *Sukkot*, climaxing on *Simchat Torah*). The inked figures in each drawing, exceedingly complex, are formed wholly by the Hebrew prayers.

The fifth and final section of the book is a guide on how to write your own love story, one that you can pass along to your children or other family members.

Jewish Stories of Love and Marriage is a must-have addition for any Jewish library, not to mention the perfect gift for any Jewish engagement or wedding. On the first page of the book the authors pose a question about love stories: “How do we hold onto what is precious and unrepeatable once it is gone?” By the end of the book they answer the question by writing that their love story collection is only a beginning. “It is incomplete without your family's stories and your own.”

Buy the book. Read the book. Then take the authors' advice and pen your own family's love story.

Susan Lerner is a freelance writer living in Indianapolis. She is working towards an MFA in Creative Writing and posts book reviews at <http://booklerner.blogspot.com>. ✨



The way to Chanukah – a story that wants to be told



BY REUVEN GOLDFARB

My wife and I made our first trip to Israel in 1979, with Yeshayah, our one-year-old, who took his first independent steps in New York and was fairly running when we returned seven weeks later. We had the pleasure of living in Jerusalem and at *Moshav Me'or Modi'im* during much of our stay and were pleased to have adopted the observant life-style of most of our friends and many of our neighbors. When we returned to Berkeley, however, we quickly returned to many of our previous habits, among which I include driving on Friday night in order to spend *Kabbalat Shabbat* at whatever home our spiritual community, the *Aquarian Minyan*, was conducting its services.

In 1986, we again made a six or seven week visit to *Eretz Yisrael*, this time with two young kids, visited some of the same people, stayed in some of the same places, did some learning, and came back imbued with a determination to live here as we had there. That commitment lasted about two weeks. Soon we were back in the East Bay rhythm, wherein if you wanted to go somewhere that was at a distance, you drove.

In 1990, we went again. We stayed in a nice apartment and took classes at Pardes. Our kids went to Camp *Ramah* – a five-minute walk from where we were staying – and played soccer or basketball with the neighborhood kids till it grew dark. This time, when we returned, we felt more resistance to changing back. Nevertheless, there seemed to be no way to remain active and *au courant* with our community without reverting to our previous practice of driving to *Shabbat* services.

Initially, we were able to walk on Friday night to places in the general vicinity of our home. But finally, the *Shabbat* of *Chanukah* arrived, and the *Minyan* was celebrating at a home in Oakland we had never visited, on a street we didn't know, in an area we never frequented. Moreover, I had been asked to tell a story there. It seemed we would have to use the car, so Yehudit and I, along with our rambunctious kids, who would certainly rebel at being asked to walk all that way, and a guest, our *Bat Bayit* and sister storyteller, Lynn Feinerman, prepared to get in the Toyota for a ten or fifteen minute drive.

Only there were a couple of hitches before we could leave. Nine-year-old Elishama's plastic harmonica had gotten stepped on, and a piece had cracked off.

Unfortunately, all the air he blew into it rushed out that hole, ruining the musical quality of the instrument. Faint squawks were an inadequate substitute for full chords and sonorous notes. I needed to glue it back on because tape blocked the pipes, reducing the range of the scale.

I was a firm believer in super-glue, so I got out my tube and hastily squeezed a couple of drops onto the fragile rough edges. I managed to press them together, but because I had to hold them in this position for a minute, and because I had gotten some glue between my fingertip and the plastic surface, I couldn't pull my hand away when the plastic had bonded – the skin of my finger was also bonded to the surface.

I thought I had a solution, though. I reached for my exact-o knife, an aluminum handle topped by a pointed razor, excellent for cutting through paper and cardboard when I did layout work. I figured I could just saw through the thin layer of glue that held my finger and the plastic harmonica together. However, the glue resisted, and my fingertip got pulled more and more into the narrow space. Soon its skin was cut, and it dripped blood all over the instrument, the table, the floor, and my clothes. In desperation, I pulled my stuck finger and the plastic mouth harp apart, tearing skin and leaving a layer of glue on my shaky digit.

I assumed the glue would peel off over the next few days, and I figured the raw skin would eventually heal, though it was quite tender at that moment. I was grateful not to have lost more skin. I washed off the blood, put some peroxide on the wound, and summoned my family, in front of whom I'd been raving for several minutes, out to the car.

It was now fully dark out, but in December it gets dark early. Also, *Chanukah* comes just before and just after the New Moon, so you don't see much moonlight until near the end of the holiday, and this was only the fourth night. I took off down Shattuck Avenue and headed toward Oakland with my four passengers.

I suppose I should have asked Yehudit to drive, but she was still holding out – willing to accept a lift but not to be the main perpetrator. The traffic grew heavy as Shattuck merged into Telegraph, and I hesitated, not sure if the yellow signal was a blinking light or was turning red. The guy close behind me knew the terrain better and honked me on while tailgating. My New York genes kicked in as I rolled forward a couple of feet then jammed on the brakes, just to let him know: "Don't push me, man!"

He got the message, all right, and stayed close behind me – I mean *inches* behind

ROBERTS

(continued from page 10)

does believe that our attitude was perhaps that Jewish tradition was more open in the days of yore. I cast no judgment – simply an observation.

Strangely, the *Chumash* repeatedly tells us to avoid contamination by Canaanite natives, yet when we have an Israelite/Hittite meeting under the *chupah*, little is said. When bold Nathan storms into the throne room to chastise David, it's the murder of Uriah the Hittite he hollers about – not David's lust for a non-Israelite cutie. In every case Joseph, Moses, Judah, David, Boaz, Solomon, the mating is ignored.

When I discuss this with my Orthodox friends they have an interesting and rational response: In the case of the pre-Sinai characters, they were not Jews in the full sense of the word. Yes, they were Israelites, but how could you be a Jew without *Torah*? But still I reply they married outside the clan. The case of Moses is especially puzzling since though brought up in Pharaoh's court, he matured in a neighborhood as Jewish as Jerusalem. The same is not true of Abraham or Judah, who lived on streets without Hadassah chapters or JCCs. See what your rabbi says.

The humor of Ted, The Scribbler on the Roof, appears in newspapers around the US, on National Public Radio, and numerous web sites. Check out his Web site: www.wonderwordworks.com. Blogsite: www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com. His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof can be bought at Amazon.com or lulu.com/content/127641. ★



me – as we joined the stream going down Telegraph. The adjacent lane was also full of cars, so I couldn't move over to the left, where I needed to be to make the turn, and I didn't have much maneuverability because this guy was right behind me, and the adrenaline was flowing because I was literally in fight or flight mode, and, thinking of the safety of my *Minyan* friends, I decided I didn't want to lead him to the *Shabbos* house, so I tried to stay ahead of him and looked for a right turn. I took the first one I saw and found myself headed down a dark side street with few lights ahead. Desperate to shake my pursuer, I turned abruptly into the parking lot of a 7-11, but he followed right behind me. I circled around and exited the same way I had come in and sought, by speeding, to distance myself from my tailgating rival.

I took a left turn onto Martin Luther King, then quickly made a right. One block ahead the street narrowed into a tunnel-like underpass, with traffic emerging

(see Goldfarb, page 13)



Holocaust Educator

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM L. ZIMMERMAN

Celebrating 50 years of *Nostra Aetate* – seismic shift in Jewish-Catholic relations

Her eyes, now etched in my memory, conveyed fear, embarrassment, and extreme discomfort. “My priest told me that if I stepped foot in a synagogue, that I would go straight to hell when I died,” her words that reverberated in my brain for over 50 years matched her eyes.

It was before the days of the mega *b’nai mitzvah* parties. In small town Indiana, mothers and their friends catered the reception after the ceremony. At least, that was my experience in Terre Haute, Ind., at my 1959 *bat mitzvah*. It was important that my mother, z”l, know how many guests to expect, so that she could plan how much to augment from the local bakery.

Mother asked me many times to find out from Gloria, my only Catholic friend growing up, if she would be attending my *bat mitzvah*. Gloria’s family could not afford the private school tuition of the local Catholic high school, which almost all of the Catholic kids attended, and so had to matriculate at the public Wiley High School, along with the less than faithful, such as me. At that time, we were good friends.

Confronting a close friend on such an issue, an implicit criticism for being the last to RSVP, was not something this 12-year-old found easy to do. When I finally summoned the psychic energy to ask, she looked at me with that stricken face and articulated those words that would echo in my brain for a lifetime. Sadly, neither of us had the tools to deal with such a statement. We drifted apart after that.

Flash forward six years. I was a junior at Northwestern University in the fall of 1965. A phone call from Dad, z”l, caught me off guard. He asked me if I had heard of the sweeping changes undergoing the Roman Catholic Church. I had not.

He explained that the Catholic Church no longer believed that the Jews killed Jesus; it was no longer official Catholic teaching. “If that had happened before, there would never have been the Holocaust,” he proclaimed excitedly, in his

heavily German-accented English. More words sealed in my memory.

As a physician affiliated with St. Anthony’s Hospital in Terre Haute, and as a 1937 German-Jewish refugee whose recommendation from the Mother Superior of the Catholic Hospital of Cologne, Germany, helped him obtain an internship at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Lafayette, Ind., Dad had a lifelong interest in Catholic-Jewish relations. His internship at “St. E’s” enabled him to become a licensed physician in his adopted homeland, the United States of America. He instilled in all of his three children that the U.S. was the best country in the world.

In 1985, Dad accompanied some of his Catholic clergy friends from St. Anthony’s to South Bend, Ind., to attend a 20-year retrospective of the Second Vatican Council, “Vatican II (1962–65),” at the University of Notre Dame. Dad was not interested in the changes in Catholic liturgy, but in *Nostra Aetate*, the initiative that resulted in a seismic shift in Jewish-Catholic relations.

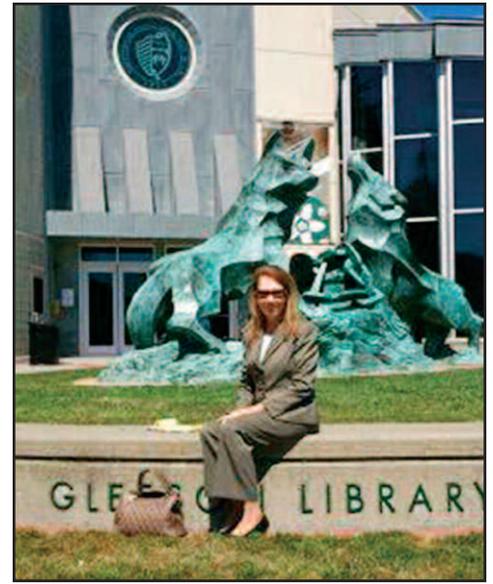
Nostra Aetate, signed on Oct. 28, 1965 at Vatican II, is “Latin for ‘In Our Time,’ a document that revolutionized the Catholic Church’s approach to Jews and Judaism after nearly 2,000 years of pain and sorrow,” according to the Anti-Defamation League website, http://archive.adl.org/main_inter_faith/nostra_aetate_whatisit.html#.VhFY0ysS11Q.

Specific provisions included repudiating “the centuries-old ‘deicide’ charge against all Jews, [stressing] the religious bond shared by Jews and Catholics, [reaffirming] the eternal covenant between God and the People of Israel, and [dismissing] church interest in trying to baptize Jews.” The biggest change, removing the deicide charge, meant that the Church would no longer teach that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus. (*Tell that to Mel Gibson.*)

Dad informed me about the interesting results he learned from attending the conference at the University of Notre Dame, 20 years after the signing of *Nostra Aetate*. One finding: academic nuns and priests know about the teachings of *Nostra Aetate*, but such teachings had not filtered down to the parish level of catechism.

Flash forward 30 more years. On Sept. 9, 2015, I attended a 50-year retrospective of *Nostra Aetate* at the Jesuit-run University of San Francisco (USF), where I, coincidentally, completed my doctorate 24 years earlier. The campus, cleaner, better landscaped, and with several new buildings, had changed enormously since I was a grad student.

The interfaith Anniversary Program at USF, celebrating *Nostra Aetate*, began with a prayer by a Buddhist priest. *Nostra Aetate* defined the “interior journey to the



Miriam Zimmerman in front of the Gleeson Library at the University of San Francisco.

heart.” It commemorated the spirit and celebrated “our oneness and wholeness that transcends” superficial differences. *Nostra Aetate* changed not only relationships between Catholics and Jews but also between Catholics and all other religions.

In his welcome, Father Paul Fitzgerald, president of USF, cited Swiss theologian Hans Küng, “There can be no peace among the nations until there is peace among the religions.” Tell that to ISIS – the violent fundamentalist Islamic regime currently beheading Christians and all other “non-believers” in the Middle Eastern territories under its control.

The gathering at USF of about 50 students, faculty, and campus and community religious leaders, celebrated 50 years of interreligious dialogue and collaboration, a direct outgrowth of the changes resulting from *Nostra Aetate*. The Joan and Ralph Lane Center for Catholic Studies and Social Thought sponsored the event.

Father James Hanvey, S.J. of the University of Oxford and former visiting professor of theology at USF, summed up key characteristics of *Nostra Aetate*. The following paraphrased snippets do not do justice to his scholarly analysis; I translated his profundity into PowerPoint-like bullet points, for the sake of brevity in this space.

Nostra Aetate represents not a loss of Church identity, but a deepening of identity. There is a fundamental image of humanity in all religions – the fundamental conditions of humanity do not change. *Nostra Aetate* gave us the courage to change; it calls for a generosity of spirit, asking us to focus on the greatness of God, not to be imprisoned by limitations of our own religious vision.

Father Hanvey elucidated five principles with which the Church must still grapple, first, the realization that difference is not a

threat but a gift and the need to reject prejudice and the violence prejudice engenders. (*Tell that to Donald Trump.*)

Second, the Church cannot be the Church if it renounces Judaism.

Third, interfaith dialogue should not be political, but created out of love. Dialogue gives space for people to speak as they are, reveal their space with God. Dialogue is a commitment to transform ourselves.

Fourth, religion stands for humanity's need to have a profound respect for all human life and creation. *Nostra Aetate* is as timely today, in reference to Jewish-Muslim relations, as it was in 1965. Finally, there is a need for religious freedom, best expressed by [this writer's favorite pope] Pope John Paul II in Albania, "Freedom of Religion is a safeguard against all forms of totalitarianism."

The Jesuit priest concluded his comments by citing how the current pope, Pope Francis, sees all this. Father Hanvey referenced those who make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, as did Pope Francis. A pilgrim is a person who starts out poor; it is how Abraham lived. This is how we should all live, "Before the mystery of God, we are all poor."

The program celebrated diversity. Two women spoke, representing non-Catholic religions, Muslim and Jewish. Long-time interfaith activist, now retired, Rita Semel reported what the Archbishop said to her in 1965 when he called to plan with her his announcement of the signing of *Nostra Aetate* at the then *Temple Emanu-El* in San Francisco: "You bring the flyers; I'll bring the nuns."

Rabbi Jonathan Singer, senior rabbi at now Congregation Emanu-El, joined the women at the podium to speak. The audience became participants as we were given time at our respective tables to eat

GOLDFARB

(continued from page 11)

from both lanes against us. Fearing the other driver more than a head-on collision, I shot into the tunnel, headlights ablaze, horn blaring. Startled drivers changed lanes to avoid me, but at one point we gridlocked because my pursuer had moved into the adjacent lane to overtake me, leaving the oncoming drivers with no space to avoid us.

He got out of his car and walked methodically to his trunk. I thought of telling everyone to duck, for I sensed some kind of projectile would soon come our way. I hunched behind the wheel. The trunk opened. He was 20 feet away. I refused to look directly at him, not wanting to provoke a further confrontation. There was a loud thump on our left rear fender. We all flinched, the traffic ahead of us opened up, and we fled from the cramped interior of the underpass, with our pursuer right behind. I did a 180 and headed back into the tunnel and sailed, with the traffic this time, out the other side, the other car still following close behind, and then made a right turn back onto Telegraph where I tried to lose myself in the traffic. I seemed to have put a few car lengths and intervening vehicles between us before risking a left turn, toward the house where we were expected, though not exactly by the route we had chosen. As we eased



the delicious Mediterranean lunch and talk about why we were there and our thoughts about diversity.

Student leaders, including representatives from the Hillel chapter at San Francisco State University and the Jewish Student Organization at USF also made brief comments. A video portrayed USF campus leaders talking about diversity and their involvement in their respective organizations. Some of those campus leaders were in attendance and gave concluding remarks. It was a well-organized and efficient program, celebrating 50 years of interfaith dialogue. I was delighted I had trekked to San Francisco to attend.

Father Hanvey graciously spoke with me privately after the USF program and filled in a great many of my information gaps. I told him of my Dad's conclusion that without the charge of deicide, the Holocaust would not have happened. He shook his head dismissively at such a thought. Did the good Father not know how much the "Jew as Christ-killer" figured in Christian art and liturgy throughout the centuries and that the Nazis used such images in their propaganda liberally and extensively? The Nazis built on images and prejudices that the Church

through the quiet streets, we looked around but saw no vehicle pursuing. The other driver had given up the chase.

When we reached the house, we stumbled inside, immensely relieved. The five flickering candles in the *chanukiah* proclaimed this a place of refuge – a sanctuary. Lynn headed for a back room to recuperate. Yehudit and I and the boys took our places in the circle, indicating little about our adventure and escape. When it came time to tell my story, I told over everything that had happened in the third person, making us characters in a tale, my narrator's voice establishing a safe distance from the danger we had just survived. It was a comical bit, though imbued with a dark and self-mocking undertone. When we got home that night, we knew that our days of routinely driving on *Shabbat* were over.

Goldfarb is a poet, storyteller, and essayist. His work has appeared in dozens of magazines, newspapers, and anthologies, and won several awards. Reuven co-founded and edited AGADA, the illustrated Jewish literary magazine. He and his wife Yehudit live in Tzfat. This story previously appeared in Ancient Roots, Radical Practices, and Contemporary Visions: The Aquarian Minyan 25th Anniversary Festschrift (1999). This text incorporates the most recent revisions. Email: poetsprogress@gmail.com and website: www.reuvengoldfarb.com. ✨

instilled for 2,000 years. There was a dire need for *Nostra Aetate*, "which brought the Church from the 13th to the 16th Century," as one of the panelists said, tongue-in-cheek, to correct such injustice.

A celebration of *Nostra Aetate* that I will not be able to attend is the 2015 Ethel LeFrak Holocaust Education Conference at Seton Hill University's National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education (NCCHE), October 25–27. The title of this year's conference, "The Holocaust and *Nostra Aetate*: Toward a Greater Understanding" stimulated the same brain neurons that motivated me to attend the USF program. Unfortunately, a competing mediation conference in Washington, DC, precludes my attending this important conference.

At the NCCHE conference, I am sure I would be able to find a scholar to corroborate my Dad's observation about the connection between the deicide charge and the Holocaust. I thought of Gloria's priest and wondered when he learned that it would have been okay for Gloria to attend my *bat mitzvah*. In small town Indiana, it would probably take longer for the Church to enter modern times. I hope that the theological changes

(see Zimmerman, page IN 18)



Father James Hanvey, S.J. of the University of Oxford.



Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Notes on the new TV season

Here is some dialogue from the new season's talk shows and TV series that invoke Jews, Judaism or Israel-related themes – and my reaction to the same.

Kosher talk on Fallon

While actor Michael Fassbender and *Tonight Show* host Jimmy Fallon were reminiscing about their years as altar boys in the Catholic Church in their respective countries, Fassbender noted that while it was boring just to sit at services, being an active part of the ritual was his "first experience at acting." He bragged that he made money as an altar boy, and that "it was all kosher."

Before he could explain that he received five or ten British/Irish pounds in tips for helping out at weddings (from the best man), enabling him to buy his first double deck tape player, Fallon interrupted: "Not kosher at all. It didn't have to be kosher [in] the Catholic Church." Yet Fassbender used the "kosher" word "properly," for the word does indeed mean fit or proper. Fallon may have understood that; his primary aim was to joke about kosher food and Catholicism.

Jimmy Kimmel in Brooklyn

On his first show during a week filming "back in Brooklyn," from which Jimmy Kimmel and his family originally hailed (though he was mostly raised in Vegas), Mexican sidekick Guillermo entered waving a handkerchief while riding on a chair carried by four dancing men attired as *Hasidim*. The bit was not disrespectful considering the *Hasidic* demographic in modern day Brooklyn.

On that same show, Kimmel did a rather probing and thoughtful interview with Democratic Party presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders. Sanders had used the phrase, "God forbid," when discussing the possibility of a Republican win if Democrats don't turn out for the election, an outcome that he believes his appeal to masses of young voters can prevent. This viewer perked up at his reference to God. I was impressed that Kimmel picked up on the phrase and thoughtfully asked, "You say you're culturally Jewish...[but that] you don't feel religious. Do you believe in God and do you believe that's

important to the people of the United States?"

It was a good question, which Sanders evaded by saying: "I am who I am." But he did elaborate: "I am who I am, and what I believe in, and what spirituality is all about is that we're all in this together, that I think it is not a good thing to believe we can turn our backs on the suffering of other people." Was Sanders invoking a neutral "spirituality"? Did he tell us that whatever he believes in is essentially "what spirituality is all about"?

As if this were not confusing (or confused, or arrogant) enough, he offered a sentence about what Judaism is or isn't about. Of the need to respond to human suffering, he said: "And this is not Judaism. This is what Pope Francis is talking about, that we cannot worship just billionaires and the making of more and more money." Doesn't Judaism say that we shouldn't worship billionaires? Didn't Catholicism get some of its teachings about helping the poor from Judaism? Is Sanders saying that such social justice is not Judaism or that it is not only taught in Judaism? But why would he go out of his way to say that?

Sanders needs to be more clear about his views of religion and spirituality. Judaism gave to the Western world the understanding that worshipping billionaires or anyone or anything but God is idolatry. As Will Herberg pointed out in his 1947 *Commentary* essay, "From Marxism to Judaism," everybody worships something, including ideologies such as socialism or capitalism or whatever, but it is best (and sanest) to worship a Living God who provides respect for the life and dignity of all human beings.

Yiddishisms on Modern Family

On the season's first episode of the ever-popular *Modern Family*, dad Phil Dunphy (Ty Burrell), helping his daughter's boyfriend (who is not identified as Jewish), sports an "Oy vey" v-neck tee shirt and brags: "They loved it at the deli. They were *kvelling*." For some reason he later uses an important Hebrew/Yiddish word to praise his daughter's ex-boyfriend, "You've done a real *mitzvah*, buddy."

It's harmless enough, I suppose, but so gratuitous.

Chicago PD

NBC's *Chicago PD* is a gritty look at Windy City cops who take the law into their own hands and sometimes cross the line into breaking it, purportedly because they deal with the most ruthless and violent of criminals. So far the show has not openly dealt with any Jewish characters or themes, though it is possible that veteran detective Alvin Olinsky (Elias Koteas) may

be the resident "tough Jew."

In a recent episode (October 28), Olinsky meets a CIA operative, and writers Craig Gore and Tim Walsh have Olinsky reminisce that in 1999 "Hazzbollah [sic!] and Latin Kings [were] in bed together" and that it "seems like a lifetime ago." The series deserves credit for pointing to connections between this Iran-supported terrorist organization and South American drug cartels, and thus with American drug dealers.

Life in Pieces

The new CBS series, *Life in Pieces*, deals with youthful senior citizens (played by James Brolin and Dianne Wiest) and their three grown children, by offering vignettes in the form of four "short story" segments per episode about family dynamics, parent-children relationships over three generations, and relationships between family members and others. While, as of the first four episodes anyway, I acknowledge that this series does deal with real issues that arise in family life, I find it a bit on the scatological side. But the show has a good cast, the writing is somewhat amusing, and there is some potential for growth here, though it's too soon to tell whether or not it will be realized.

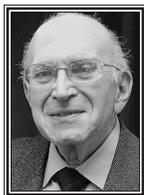
Writer/creator Justin Adler inserted a bit of "Jewish" humor when elder son Matt (Thomas Sadoski) takes office romance Colleen (Angelique Cabral) to his parents' home only to find them there when he had expected them to be out. "I thought you guys were going to be at the Kaufman *bar mitzvah*," he says in surprise. His mother explains: "They had to shut the party down early because little Joshie got overwhelmed by the hypnotist and spent the whole time in the corner crying." And this "humor" is relevant how?

Supergirl

As of the pilot episode, the new CBS series, *Supergirl*, is sweet, thanks to the performance of ingénue star Melissa Benoist and the other very pleasant and earnest cast members. Even the boss of mild mannered Kara (*Supergirl*'s alter ego), Cat Grant, played with aplomb by Calista Flockhart, exudes a certain charisma-cum-corporate-ruthlessness. Kara's boss is, after all, the owner of CatCo Worldwide Media, the "online and print empire" that she created, and the most powerful woman in National City – next to the blossoming *Supergirl*, of course.

The pilot took a pro immigrant stance, especially toward immigrants from outer space, balancing it somewhat with a caveat against criminal immigrants. It also decried the plight of newspapers beleaguered by electronic media and lack of interest.

(see Gertel, page 17)



As I Heard It

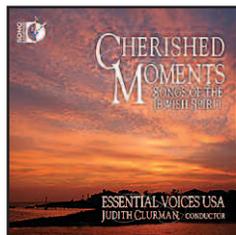
REVIEW BY MORTON GOLD

Accolades for Cherished Moments and Yontef!

There are times when I receive a CD to review that causes me to renew my faith in this business.

Most new CD's are aimed at furthering the careers of this or that performer/entertainer. This one, called *Cherished Moments: Songs of the Jewish Spirit* featuring a choral group called "Essential Voices USA" and conducted by Judith Clurman lives up to its title. It is a marvelous CD with performances that are exceedingly well done and the music of worth.

There are 14 "cuts" in all and I will give my reaction to most of them. Aside from the artistic leadership of Ms. Clurman,



credit must also be given to Larry Hochman for his intuitive and skillful arrangements.

No. 1: "Enosh" by Louis Lewandowski as arranged by Hochman for strings and clarinet. If every synagogue/temple choir only sounded like this one there would (should) be standing room only at services. There is an instantaneous feeling that one is in a Jewish house of worship and the music here reflects the spirit of the text which appears as part of the High Holiday *Yizkor* (Memorial) service. It is a *shandeh* (disgrace) that this master is for the most part only represented by his setting of Psalm 150.

No. 2: "Oseh Shalom" by Debbie Friedman, arranged by Sally Lamb McCune. See, it is possible to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear! Ms. Friedman is rightfully recognized as the foremost "leader of the folk revolution" that emerged in temples in the wake of the Vietnam War.

No. 3: "Set Me as a Seal" by Nico Muhly. The text is taken from the "Song of Songs" and is composed for chorus with piano accompaniment. My feeling is that this would be more appropriate in a concert setting than at temple services. The performance however is superb but I confess that I was less enthusiastic about the music.

No. 4: "V'erastich Li" by Ben Steinberg and arranged by Hochman. This is an

expressive and moving setting of this text, and the soloist, Michael Slattery sang it beautifully.

No. 5: "M'chalkeil Chayim" by Solomon Braslavsky, arranged by Bruce Ruben for solo violin and clarinet. While we would not deliberately quote some text without crediting the source, we regularly omit crediting the composer. The greatest compliment we can bestow is to perform his music! I always thought that this melody was by "Mr. Traditional", and I even used it in my *Yom Kippur* Suite for woodwind quintet. Braslavsky was the organist and choir leader at Temple Mishkhan Tefilah in Boston in the 1930s and 1940s. He was known as Professor then, but this was more of a putdown than a compliment. This melody will be a living memorial to him, simple yet heartfelt and lovingly sung by the cantor and congregation at *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*.

No. 6: "Songs of Freedom: A Celebration of Chanukah". This is a series of *Chanukah* songs wonderfully arranged by Hochman, Clurman and Brian Stokes Mitchell. The performances as well as the arrangements are such that these alone are well worth the price of the CD! I particularly enjoyed the performance of "Mi Y'maleil" with baritone Ron Raines as soloist, as well as the grand slam home run arrangement as well as harmonization of "Maoz Tsur".

No. 7: "Tzadik Katamar" by Emanuel Kirchner, arranged by Hochman. Kirchner, the chief cantor in Munich was a favorite composer of Dr. Jacob Hohenemser (also from Munich) whom I had the honor of accompanying while I was organist at Temple Emanu-el in Providence, R.I., in the early 1960s. The arrangement as well as the moving performance by the choir is superb.

This review is getting a bit long in the tooth so I will summarize. I must commend *Hazzan* Bruce Ruben both for his compositions as well as for the performances of them. The music is beautiful and reflects the spirit of the respective texts, and the arrangement by Hochman only adds to these qualities. I wish that I could commend Paul Schoenfield for his setting of "Al Hanisim", but I cannot. I felt that the overwhelming torrent of notes in the piano part made the entrance of the chorus seem like an afterthought.

The simple yet effective arrangement by Clurman of "Han'shama Lach" was a fitting conclusion to this disc. I believe that this disc is a significant contribution to the catalogue of Jewish music.

If this CD is any guide, Ms. Judith Clurman is a skillful and experienced conductor. Her musicianship and knowledge of choral timbres find full range with her excellent chorus. The performances of each selection have to be recognized as the platinum standard with which other

performances will have to be judged. *Yasher Koach*.

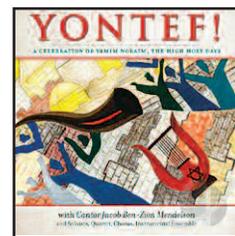
This CD may be obtained at: P.O. Box 227, Boyce, VA 22620, www.SonoLuminus.com, Info@SonoLuminus.com, or a recording of it can be easily downloaded from i-Tunes or Amazon.com.

Yontef! A Celebration of Yamim Noraim, The High Holy Days

Unless I have a deadline (the mother of all inspiration) I confess that I tend to procrastinate. True, in this case I have some excuses I could advance, but they would not forgive the unpardonable delay in writing this column. And so, in the spirit of the Days of Awe, I ask for compassion.

I requested and received a relatively new two CD set called *Yontef! A Celebration of Yamim Noraim, The High Holy Days* which features the considerable talents of Cantor Jacob Ben-Zion Mendelson along with an equally talented assortment of vocal soloists and quartet, a chorus and an instrumental ensemble.

What is striking to me in this collection is not only the marvelous performances of each selection, but the composers of the various prayers such as folks like Israel Alter, Zavel Zilberts, David Roitman, Moshe Ganchoff, Zavel Kwartin, Samuel Malavsky, Ralph Schlossberg, and Leo Low. Simply put, these *hazzan*-composers wrote music for use in the synagogue. Also used were phrases from works by Joseph Rumshinsky, Sholom Secunda and Adolph Katchko. Their compositions were familiar to generations of Jews.



I wrote "were familiar" on purpose. They are no longer familiar in the sense that they were familiar merely some 40 years ago. A "perfect storm" has occurred musically speaking in our synagogue and temples, especially in the Conservative wing of Judaism.

Sometime during and after the Vietnam War, many temples experienced financial difficulties. They could no longer afford to have professional *hazzanim* whose primary duty was to *daven*, or lead services. The title was kept but the responsibility was changed. Their main function was to train youngsters for their *bar* or *bat mitzvah*, and read the *Torah*. A beautiful voice, especially a trained and powerful tenor voice either was not on the list of qualifications or if it was, it was at the bottom of the list. This had ramifications for the music used in the service.

Selections like Leo Low's "Uv'shofar Gadol" (masterfully rendered by Cantor J. (see Gold, page 16)



Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Novel focuses on divided Jerusalem

Gospel of Judas. By Amos Oz. Ketter-Books. 2014. Pp. 308. Originally in Hebrew; English translation available as *Judas*.

Amos Oz, Israel's premier author whose books have been translated into 37 languages, is the very embodiment of *Eretz Yisrael Hayafa*, that beautifully inspiring Israel, particularly in its early pioneering phase, a reborn nation increasingly being tested in a challenging and chilling environment from without and within.

Oz is a member of the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism, whose center left views are reminiscent of a less polarized Israeli society before the ascension into power of the political right. This was when the labor block dominated life in Israel and the *kibbutz* – to whom Oz was exposed to as a teenager – was a leading social force. His latest book, *Judas*, returns us to that foundational socialist phase in Israel's young history which many look back at with nostalgia, often overlooking the inner tensions that were already there. Those tensions



have continued to impact the Israeli scene with unresolved issues of war and peace, acerbated by the acquisition of territories following the 1967 War.

The soaring book's saga, in the best tradition of Oz's wide and deep reach, focuses on divided Jerusalem – of which Oz is a native – at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s. The book's protagonist, 25 year old Shmuel Ash, who is originally from Haifa, studies for his master's degree in history and the science of religions at Hebrew University, struggling with his thesis on "Jesus in the Jews' Eyes". Suddenly his girlfriend leaves him, his students' socialist circle disbands due to an ideological rift, and his father unexpectedly can no longer support him.

Shmuel is forced to abandon his education and get a job, helping out elderly Gershum Vald who resides in a house with heart-breaker, 45-year-old Atalia whose husband for a brief year and a half, Micha,

Gershum's only child, was brutally murdered in the 1948 War of Independence. Thirty-seven year old Micha, a math whiz, volunteered to fight despite his age, health issues and the opposition to the war of both his wife Atalia and her father, Shaltiel Abarbanel. Gershum, though mourning his beloved son's death, praises him and all who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the nascent Jewish state, while admiring David Ben Gurion for his foresight and unwavering leadership.

The late Shaltiel, a renowned lawyer, orientalist and top Jewish leader, broke away from Ben Gurion and the majority who sided with creating a Jewish state. He argued that it would only lead to endless wars with the Arabs and because they were far more numerous, they would win in time. He opposed both a Jewish or Arab state since Jews and Arabs, both victims of Christian Europe, should first learn to live together. Then the Arabs would eventually cease fearing that the Jews are plotting to control the Arab world through their qualitative superiority. Ideally, Shaltiel envisioned a world without borders, along with separate and separating national symbols contributing to incessant conflict and bloodshed.

Surely Oz is aiming at those in the current religious and nationalistic camp in Israel who call him a traitor for his liberal perspective, just as Shaltiel was called one and was thought to have lost his mind. Shmuel's grandfather who worked for the British mandatory police, was murdered by Jewish extremists for being a traitor too, though he was a double agent. *Judas* (the book's title) whose name is synonymous with betrayal in the Christian-Western mindset promoting Jew-hatred, but Shmuel is convinced that ironically and tragically Judas was the one most faithful to Jesus. From all of his disciples, and being a man of stature, he was sent by Jerusalem's priesthood establishment to spy on Jesus yet became captivated by his unique personality. Thus Shmuel regards Judas as the true founder of Christianity.

Though Shmuel appreciates Israel's essential need and obligation to be militarily strong, he points out the limits of military power to bring peace with the Arabs. Ironically, this follows centuries of physical powerlessness of a people who tragically discovered the limits of its coveted spiritual power, a power which purported to substitute for the loss of its sovereignty to protect Jewish life. He is also concerned of triumphant military hubris by a people finally gaining military prowess after a long hiatus. (This writer remembers well the understandable allure and needed reassurance of the *Yom Ha'atzmaut* military parades in Israel of the 1950s, with my father, Yechiel, a Polish Holocaust survivor, rejoicing in "Jewish

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(continued from page 15)

Mendelson) could no longer be performed because it called for a trained choir (and organ!) and took too much time. Or one could also cite "*Baavur David*" given a virtuoso performance by his son, Cantor Daniel Mendelson as another example. Our learned spiritual leaders believed that increased congregational participation would and should make up for this loss and music by entertainer-composers such as Rav Shlomo Carlebach and Debbie Friedman and others would fill this musical vacuum.

The use of organ accompaniment fell by the wayside as also occurred in many Christian churches and guitar accompaniment frequently was substituted or the music was sung without any accompaniment. (Not always to my ears.)

Just as extended works by Christian composers of sacred works are now frequently performed only in concert halls or on special occasions in the church, the same fate has befallen works of our musical heritage. This is why I must salute Cantor Jacob Ben-Zion Mendelson not only for his superb musical and artistic renditions of the various settings, the tasteful arrangements (mostly by Elliot Z. Levine) but for selecting the works by the composers that he did.

The program booklet is professionally done and his remarks are right on the mark. (I enjoyed his observation that only some 300 people were still around at 3 p.m., to hear *V'chach Hayah Omer* by Max Helfman. To which I would observe that 300 Jews in many congregations is considered a huge crowd! These days the attention span as well as the *sitzfleisch* of most people is limited. The members of Temple Israel of White Plains, N.Y., are indeed fortunate to have him as their *Hazzan*. We are also fortunate to have these CD's (Morein Productions 162) to enjoy and also as a reminder of a norm too often, we no longer have. *Yasher Koach!* Very highly recommended.

Dr. Gold is a composer/conductor and a music reviewer for the Post & Opinion. ✨



tanks" and "Jewish airplanes.")

Oz, the peace activist who advocates for a two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the great humanist that he is, bares to us his tormented soul. In the prophetic tradition of a lover's quarrel he chastises, warns, and hopes against hope with an emerging pessimistic note that should concern us all.

Rabbi Israel Zoberman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Va. ✨



My Kosher Kitchen

REVIEWED BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Some of the magic found in Israel

Zahav: A World of Israeli Cooking. By Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. \$35 Hardcover. October 2015.

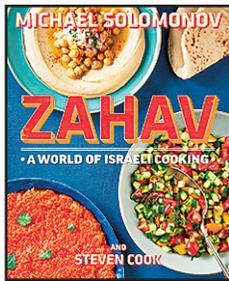
Israeli-born Michael Solomonov grew up from the age of two to 15 in Pittsburgh. Then the family returned to Israel. After a while, when his Bulgarian father and American mother divorced, he returned to the U.S., eventually learning to be a chef, graduating from culinary school in 2001. Returning to Israel, where his brother had grown up and was on leave from the army, he saw Israel through the eyes of a chef. His brother was killed soon after.

Returning to the U.S. and Pittsburgh, Michael met Steven Cook and in 2005, Michael became chef of "Marigold Kitchen." In 2008, the two opened "Zahav," in Philadelphia. In 2011, Michel was awarded the James Beard Award for Best Chef-Mid-Atlantic.

Michael and Steven also co-own "Percy Street Barbeque," "Federal Donuts," "Dizengoff" and "Abe Fisher," all in Philadelphia.

As Michael and Steven worked together at their first restaurant, "Marigold Kitchen," Michael writes after the death of his brother in Israel, "I began to see cooking as a powerful way to honor David's memory. I could expose people to a side of Israel that had nothing to do with politics and didn't ever make the evening papers." This led to the opening of "Zahav" in May 2008. Michael writes that he hopes this cookbook's recipes have "some of the magic" that he and his partner found in Israel.

The style of the chapters is quite unique from other cookbooks. The nine chapters include: *Tehina*, the secret sauce with 34 recipes including seared chicken livers with caramelized onion *tehina* and *tehina* shortbread cookies; *Salatim*, vegetables are everything, 20 recipes including Israeli pickles and spicy fennel salad; *Mezze*, hospitality incarnate, 20 recipes like fried cauliflower with herbed *labneh*; Beyond Chicken Soup, the world in a bowl, 16



recipes such as celery root soup; Grandmother's *Borekas*, tradition was my teacher, 20 recipes with fried leek patties; Live Fire, as close to magic as I'll come, 16 recipes with Bulgarian kebabs and pomegranate-glazed salmon including mujadara; Ben Gurion's Rice, rice is easy, perfection's hard, 11 recipes; *Mesibah*, it's party time, 7 recipes such as whole fish in grape leaves; Milk & Honey, a glimpse of the divine, 17 recipes with *konafi* and carrot *basboosa*.

After an essay with introductory remarks in each chapter, there are recipes; each is introduced with casual (and fun to read) remarks and paragraphed ingredients. There are also sidebars with fascinating information such as sumac, date molasses, freekah and rose water. There is no doubt that this book has "a world of Israeli cooking," so the recipes below reflect that idea.

Chickpea Brittle

(3 cups)

- 2 cups cooked or canned chickpeas, rinsed
- 1 Tbsp. canola oil
- 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 3 Tbsp. heavy cream

Preheat the oven to 340°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. Toss the chickpeas with the oil, transfer to another baking sheet, and roast until crisp, 25 to 30 minutes.

Combine the brown sugar, butter and cream in a saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring, until the mixture darkens in color slightly and large, lava-like bubbles cover the surface, about 10 minutes. Add the chickpeas and stir to combine. Working quickly and using a rubber spatula, spread the mixture out in an even layer on the prepared baking sheet. Let cool to room temperature. Break into 2-inch pieces to serve. The brittle will keep a week in a sealed container.

Gluten-Free Chocolate Almond Situation

- 8 Tbsp. (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- big pinch salt
- 2 scant cups chopped dark chocolate (at least 60% cacao), melted and cooled slightly
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup almond flour

Preheat oven to 375°F, with a rack in the middle. Oil a 9-inch round or square cake pan. Line the bottom with a round of parchment paper, and oil the parchment.

Combine the butter, sugar and salt in a

GERTEL

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I am a bit concerned about a scene in which Cat launched into a typical sarcastic tirade after the incognito Kara raised some questions about her boss's coining the name, "Supergirl." Kara's new colleague, James (formerly "Jimmy") Olsen came to her rescue as Cat was about to fire her, giving Kara credit for a clear image of Supergirl. Cat tells Kara: "Mazal tov, you bought yourself another day." Do writer Ali Adler and the rest of the crew plan to make her Jewish or *kosher* style? And if so, can they pull this off in ways other than gratuitously?

Rabbi Gertel has been spiritual leader of congregations in New Haven and Chicago. He is the author of two books, *What Jews Know About Salvation* and *Over the Top Judaism: Precedents and Trends in the Depiction of Jewish Beliefs and Observances in Film and Television*. He has been media critic for *The National Jewish Post & Opinion* since 1979. ✪



mixer or other bowl. Beat on medium high until pale and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add melted chocolate and mix just until combined. Scrape down the sides and mix for another few seconds. With the mixer on low speed, add eggs, one at a time, beating until each one is incorporated before adding the next. Scrape down sides of bowl, then add almond flour. Mix on low until just incorporated, about 10 seconds. Pour batter into prepared pan and smooth top with spatula. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes before turning out onto a rack to cool completely.

Roasted Okra

(Serves 6)

- 6 cups small whole okra
- 5 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1/3 cup basic tomato sauce
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp. grated dried lime
- 1/2 tsp. *kosher* salt
- handful cilantro leaves, chopped

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Toss the okra with 2 tablespoons olive oil and arrange on a baking sheet. Bake until the okra turns brown, about 25 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and toss the okra with the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil, the tomato sauce, lemon juice, dried lime and salt. Top with the cilantro. Serve hot or chilled.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food and feature writer, and author of nine kosher cookbooks living in Jerusalem. ✪



Shabbat Shalom

By RABBI JON ADLAND

October 30, 2015, *Shabbat Vayera*
Genesis 18:1–22:24, 17 *Cheshvan* 5776

There are few *Torah* portions filled with as much drama as *Vayera*. From the strange visitors who reveal to Abraham that Sarah will give birth to a son at the age of 90 to the story of Sodom and Gomorrah to Abraham telling King Abimelech that Sarah is his sister (not the first time) to the birth of Isaac and the casting out of Hagar and Ishmael to the journey to the top of Mt. Moriah and the story known as the *Akedah* – the binding of Isaac.

Each chapter, even each paragraph, is filled with lessons to teach and conclusions that we often challenge. The writers of the *Torah* who drew on the stories passed down from generation to generation did not spare us from the troubles our first patriarch and matriarch faced. And when this is all concluded and we turn to *Chaya Sarah*, she dies.

I am not drawing an absolute parallel in what I am about to write, but next week we will observe the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Though the drama in his life was much different than Abraham and Sarah's, nevertheless his life's journey was filled with drama of the creation and defense of Israel. He was born in Jerusalem in 1922. He fought in Israel's wars. He served Israel twice as Prime Minister. He was murdered for trying to achieve peace with his enemies.



Yitzhak Rabin

His murderer was an Israeli who rejected what Rabin was trying to do. Like the stories of our Bible heroes, his story was filled with twists and turns, and struggles and heartaches. The famous moment of his signing a peace agreement with Arafat in September 1993 and then having to shake the hand of someone he couldn't stand to be near will always be imprinted in my mind. He did what he had to do to help Israel and he died doing what he believed was the right thing for Israel. Twenty years later there is still tremendous pain and distrust between the left and right politically in Israel because of what happened in November 1995.

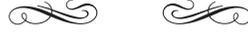
No person's story is ever a straight line. We certainly see that in the Biblical stories we read year after year and most of us can identify with the notion of twists and turns as well. There is no "go to school, get

ZIMMERMAN

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in the Catholic Church wrought by *Nostra Aetate* has made it more difficult for priests to prohibit any Catholic child from entering a synagogue, in Terre Haute, Ind., or anywhere else in the world. This is indeed, good news for those interested in Jewish-Catholic relationships.

The magic of social media has made it possible for Gloria and me to resume a



married, have 2.5 children, go to work each morning and come home each night, and then retire" story that I've ever heard. There are just too many variables that happen each day. How did you end up where you are today? If you have a partner, how did you meet him or her? How did you get the job you have? How did you become passionate about the hobby in your life? We tell our children, just as we were told, to make good choices, but what if we have two good choices to make at the same time?

If you follow Abraham's story in these five chapters of Genesis he constantly had to figure things out. Argue with God about the people of Sodom or not. Follow God's command to take Isaac up the mountain or not. Yitzhak Rabin had to make choices as well whether it was when he commanded Israel's army, served as Prime Minister, or tried to find a way to peace with the Palestinians. Every choice we make has consequences, but we can't see into the future so we don't always know where the road is leading us.

Most of our lives aren't like Abraham, Sarah or Rabin. We aren't presented world changing moments, but we do have the opportunity to act. As Jews, we can decide to be active in our Jewish lives. We can participate in *Tikkun Olam*. We can find ways to study and learn. We can celebrate all that is good and all that Judaism has to offer. The *Torah* teaches us "*Na'aseh v'nishmah* – do and listen." Most people believe that the words should be flipped, but I believe that it is action that must come first and then we will hear the results of the good we have done for others and for ourselves.

When you light your *Shabbat* candles this week, light one for the opportunity to take control of your life. Light the other candle and may its light help us navigate the twists and turns and choices and surprises that we can't anticipate, and fill life with the beauty of the unexpected.

Rabbi Adland has been a Reform rabbi for more than 30 years with pulpits in Lexington, Ky., Indianapolis, Ind., and currently at Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio. Email: j.adland@gmail.com. ✨

friendship interrupted for 50 years by pre-*Nostra Aetate* attitudes about Jews. A few years ago, we became friends on Facebook where she has "liked" and commented on pictures of my grandchildren.

Although not about *Nostra Aetate*, I would like to conclude this column with a mention of a ceremony at my own Notre Dame de Namur University, in celebration of diversity and interfaith dialogue. I was asked to represent Judaism, in prayer. You can read my prayer at the following link: www.facebook.com/Jewish-Post-Opinion-newspaper-191424237534424/timeline/?ref=hl. This ceremony could not have taken place at a Catholic institution without the reforms engendered by *Nostra Aetate*.

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



KLEINER

(continued from page 19)

in the calendar). The best fun is with the *dreidel*-shaped piñata, which is banged open and bursts out with a shower of sweets and toys.

One of the February entries on the calendar reminds us that this is a leap year. That means that Adar, the 'happiest month of the Jewish calendar', continues for two months, *Adar 1* and *Adar 2*, bringing 'double the happiness' to that time of year.

February also happens to be Jewish Disabilities Awareness Month, making us aware of the importance of including all persons in the life of the Jewish community, no matter what abilities they have. An entry for June 5, which is Jerusalem Day, speaks of the 70 different names, in the Bible and post-biblical literature, by which the city of Jerusalem is known.

We learn of an interesting *Tisha B'Av* custom practiced by Italian Jews that connects that fast day with the joyous holiday of *Chanukah*. The book of *Eicha* (Lamentations) used to be read by Italian Jews by candlelight. After the reading the candle was put away to be taken out on *Chanukah* and used as the *Shamash* candle in the *menorah*. This act symbolized going from mourning of the Temple's destruction to rejoicing in its restoration.

There are also, in this calendar, easy recipes that children can handle and, of course, candlelighting times, *Torah* readings, and dates of feast and fast days. With all its wonderful historic and cultural content, the Jewish calendar is indeed a "memory capsule" and a welcome companion throughout the year. ✨

The Jewish calendar – a memory capsule

BY ROSE KLEINER

The Jewish calendar gives us more than the current date, *Torah* reading, or candle-lighting times for the *Sabbath* or holidays. In its pages and illustrations, the Jewish calendar helps us recapture the memory of a people's past from its earliest beginnings – its history, civilization, and culture.

When illustrated with images of fine art and precious ceremonial objects that are linked to the Jewish experience in the world over the centuries, these calendars serve as a kind of memory capsule.

The images in Pomegranate's Jewish Museum Calendar (below) present a variety of paintings, as well as two lovely *menorahs*, one modern (by Ludwig Wolpert, 1958), the other traditional (19th century, Fez, Morocco).

Most of the monthly pages in the Pomegranate calendar are decorated with paintings by contemporary artists such as Menashe Kadishman, whose canvas delights with its vibrant colors (Untitled, 1981).

A more toned down, richly colored work is Alfred Wolmark's oil painting, *Sara* (c. 1913), or Pinchas Litvinovsky's *Man* (c. 1925).



Fitting into the "memory capsule" theme of the Jewish calendar are Moritz Oppenheim's *Shavuot* (1880); the portrait of a very traditional wedding by Ilya Schor, *Marriage Scene: Blessing of the Bride and Groom* (1958–1959), and Louis Fabricius du Bourg's depiction of *The Purim Festival in the Portuguese Synagogue, Amsterdam* (c. 1750).

Pomegranate's second wall calendar, *Jewish Celebrations*, with paintings by Malcah Zeldis is almost exclusively on the theme of memory. The calendar celebrates



those traditions which have given shape and meaning to Jewish life over the centuries.

It focuses on such events as the holidays (*Chanukah*, *Purim*, *Passover* and *Shavuot*), as well as on life celebrations like a wedding and *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. All the paintings are done in warm, joyful colors.

Universe Publishing has both a desk and wall calendar (above). The wall calendar's illustrations cover objects from the collection of the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam.

There is a drawing of a synagogue interior in Ancona, Italy dated 1938 by Martin Monnickendam and a family portrait of a Passover Seder, by Jacobus Otterbeek from The Hague (1877). There are ceremonial objects from Poland, Germany and France going back more than two centuries.

The Universe desk calendar with its cornucopia of fascinating illustrations and thoughtful guide constitutes a "memory capsule" that is second to none. The images here cover a treasure trove of works of art by some of the most gifted early and contemporary artists.

Starting with page one, there is a most striking silver Alms Container (1969) by the talented artist, Moshe Zabari. Another modern silver object, a *Torah Pointer* by Brian Weissman, was created in 2009. Yaakov Agam's *CandelabrAgam Menorah* is dated 1980. A silver spice container by Iris Tutnauer, 1998 is a fine example of an ultra modern work of art.

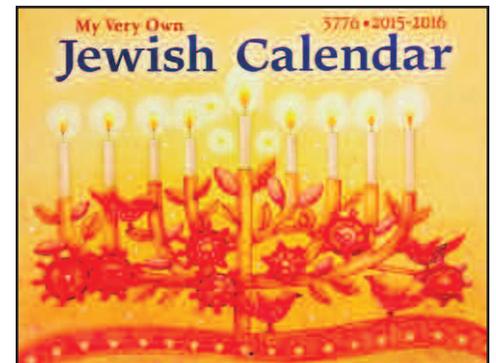
Complementing the above contemporary creations are images of myriad objects from different countries, and different centuries. Among those treasures is a handsome silver *Torah Shield* from Poland (1838); a *Torah Case* from Tunisia (1832); a *Rug Depicting Theodore Herzl* from Jerusalem's Alliance Israelite Universelle School (c. 1900); and a stunning *Torah Crown*, from Germany (first half of the 18th century).

A 16th century brass *Cooking Pot* from Germany is inscribed in Hebrew letters with the family name and the date of its

completion. Was this pot, possibly a "cholent" pot, brought to the town's public oven on Friday and taken on the Sabbath at noon to the home of the family whose name is inscribed on it?

Other pages in this calendar are brightened by objects such as a *Ketubah* (Marriage Contract) from Verona, Italy (1733); a *Torah Ark* from Urbino, Italy dates back to 1500. The Universe desk calendar is the only one with a comprehensive guide to each of the holidays, festivals and other observances, listing their significance according to various categories. With the help of this guide we can bring into our lives the memory of an ancient people, its challenges and triumphs.

Kar-Ben Publishing's *My Very Own Jewish Calendar* (below) makes it possible for children to explore their heritage on a level suitable for their age. Filled with stories, anecdotes, trivia, photographs, illustrations, activities, and simple recipes, this calendar is an educational guide that gives youngsters a window onto the immense diversity in Jewish life and culture throughout the world. Some examples follow.



An entry on "A Red *Rosh Hashanah* Wardrobe" tells us that in India the color red stands for purity; it is the color of wedding dresses. For this reason, when *Rosh Hashanah* comes many women wear red dresses on that holiday.

An environmental tip comes from a custom originated by Jews of Syria, Morocco and Iraq. What to do with the *lulav* after *Sukkot*? In the above communities after *Sukkot* the *lulav* is stored away and brought out before *Passover* to be used as kindling for burning the *chametz*.

Moroccan Jews have another custom that retains continuity from one holiday to the next. When reciting the *Kiddush* on *Shavuot*, they break a few pieces of *matzah* which was saved from *Passover*. They dip it into a mixture of honey and milk, to be passed around to everyone. This signifies the conclusion of our *Exodus* from *Egypt* and the start of our receiving the *Torah*.

Chanukah celebrations in Mexico do not include *latkes*. Instead there are the *burmelos*, a type of fritter (recipe given

(see Kleiner, page 18)

Rabin Remembered

The Jewish Post & Opinion

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(Above) Former U.S. President Bill Clinton speaks at the annual gathering at (Yitzhak) Rabin Square in Tel Aviv (site of his assassination on Nov. 4, 1995) for a peace rally in remembrance. This 20th anniversary of Rabin Memorial Day took place on Sat., Oct. 31.



(Above) An attendee displays a "Peace Now" (in Hebrew) sign. (Right) Musicians perform for the occasion.



"It was an amazing feeling in Kakar Rabin on Saturday evening. It was a very Israeli experience for me – new and fresh even after all these visits (41!) over the years. The fact that I understood enough of the speeches to be brought to tears gave me some hope that my Hebrew has progressed," said Steve Schuster, CEO Rainier Communications, 3-time winner "Technology PR Agency of the Year" (who took these photos). ☆