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*Meditation:
By the Rivers
of Babylon,
by Anna Fine
Foer (see p. 2).*

Editorial

Recently I watched a Master Class on the new Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) featuring author and poet Dr. Maya Angelou. These classes are one-hour television programs with interviews of celebrities and successful people who give lessons containing valuable advice. They offer words of wisdom from their life experiences to support the viewers in coping with their own challenges in order to help the viewers to live more meaningful, fulfilling lives.

In this class, autobiographical stories revealed a very traumatic experience for Angelou, which took place in her early childhood. The first lesson I learned was that it is possible to overcome huge challenges. Angelou did not let that experience dictate her life. Although many years passed since it happened, not only did she gain strength from overcoming that challenge and the aftermath of it, she has reached out to millions and used her painful experience to help others live better lives.

So much good advice was given in that hour but a couple of her teachings especially resonated with me. One was about words having a life of their own.

"Words are things, I'm convinced. They get in your wallpaper. They get in your rugs, in your upholstery, in your clothes, and finally, into you," Angelou said. "We must be careful about the words we use. Someday we will be able to measure the power of words."

In one of my first columns from May 21, 2003, I wrote that the direction I wanted to take this newspaper was to publish fewer words that hurt and more words that heal. I wrote, "I would like to publish fewer words such as stupidity, evil, cowardice, greedy, and hatred. I would like to see more words such as compassion, forgiveness, healing, loving, caring, praising, and rejoicing. News is not usually filled with the latter but there are good things happening and we welcome that kind of news from around the country."

Then on June 4, 2003 I wrote, "When I was thinking about how to explain why one's choice of words are so important, I came across an article titled "Seeking Peace Through Our Words" written by Lauren Grabelle, a rabbinic intern at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis."

This was during the first war in Iraq when the elder George Bush was in office. Grabelle wrote, "Jews are instructed not simply to desire peace, but to "seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:15). The question for us, then, is how do we seek peace when we are in the midst of conflict? How do we pursue peace in a time of war?"

(see Editorial, page 3)

About the Cover

Meditation: By the Rivers of Babylon
BY ANNA FINE FOER

This piece was inspired in part by lyrics from Jimmy Cliff's "By the River of Babylon" – "May the words of my heart and the meditation of my soul be acceptable to you" – which are themselves taken from the Jewish prayer addressed to G-d and recited after the daily silent meditation.

After reading Rodger Kamenz's *The Jew in the Lotus*, Foer began to see the idea of meditation in the geometric patterns of *kabbalah*, in which the diagram of the spheres represents the path to enlightenment. The resulting composition also owes a debt to the Tibetan *thangka*, the visual focus of meditation. Foer sees the four central circles as reminiscent of angels who accompany seekers along the path to enlightenment.

This image is available as a limited edition giclee print. For more details please visit her website: www.annafineart.com/limited.html.

Anna Fine Foer decided she was going to be an artist when she was 11 – the year she lived in Paris for a summer, visiting every museum and gallery in the city. As a fibers and crafts student at the Philadelphia College of Art (now University of the Arts), she became fascinated by the relationship between maps and the land they represent, embarking on a lifelong interest in maps and collage.

Foer immigrated to Israel, where she worked as a textile conservator in Haifa and at Tel Aviv's Ha'Aretz Museum. She studied at the Textile Conservation Centre at London's Courtauld Institute, and then worked in conservation for many museums, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. All this time, she continued to work with collage, creating landscapes that had mystical or political significance and depicted three dimensions on a two-dimensional plane.

Foer now lives in Annapolis, Md., with her father and two sons. She continues to work in collage, creating work that explores religious, spiritual, and scientific themes. In addition, she creates custom Jewish-themed pieces including *ketubot* (wedding contracts), and collages for bar and bat mitzvahs depicting each child's Torah portion.

Foer's work has appeared at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Maryland Governor's Mansion, and the Israeli Embassy; one of her pieces is in the permanent collection of the Haifa Museum of Art. She was awarded the Encouragement of Young Artists prize for work exhibited in the Artist's

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House in Jerusalem and received a Maryland State Arts Council grant for Individual Artists in 2008.

Foer grew up in Indianapolis, Ind. – was a member of and attended Sunday school at B'nai Torah, and Hebrew school at the Bureau of Jewish Education. She attended the Jewish Community Center summer camps.

See more on Anna Fine Foer on her website: www.annafineart.com. ✨

EDITORIAL*(continued from page 2)*

"The same psalm that instructs us to "seek peace and pursue it" tells us to "guard your tongues from speaking evil and your lips from deceitful speech." Peace begins with the very words we utter. When we speak words of hate, we create hate. When we speak words of peace, we create peace."

Gabelle continued: "We can pursue peace by engaging in dialogue. We have to consider the words of those whose views are different than our own. Hearing perspectives other than our own allows us to continue to see those around us as *b'tselem elohim*, created in the Divine image."

Concluding she wrote: "In the current situation, we may not feel like we have much control over what is going on in the world. Yet we do have control over what we say in response to the world around us. We could use our words and our voices to say hateful things about those with whom we fight and disagree or we could use words to seek common ground. We could make statements of resignation. Or we can use our words to uplift ourselves and to remind us of our common humanity."

One week later in the June 11, 2003 issue I wrote, "When I was thinking about the impact words can have, I recalled two remarkable young Jewish women who left behind a legacy a mere 60 years ago. Their words reveal that even in the worst circumstances, it is still possible to have a positive outlook. No doubt thinking and writing optimistically helped alleviate their suffering." Then I gave two examples of their writings.

"It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart." *Anne Frank*

"Lord, my God, I pray that these things never end: The sand and the sea / The rush of the waters / The crash of the heavens / The human prayer." *Hannah Sennesh*

Then one month later in the July 9, 2003 issue, I wrote about "the emotional effects of words of encouragement, praise, and kindness compared to words of blame, disapproval, criticism and condemnation. The former leaves one feeling grateful, uplifted, and happy, the latter can lead to sadness, anger and frustration." I proceeded to explain how speaking and hearing negative words can lead to physical illness. I concluded that editorial with: "Encouraging words are as honey, sweet to the soul and health to the being." Proverbs 16:24.

Looking back at what I published eight years ago, I was pleasantly surprised. Who would have known back then that what I was writing would be validated by



Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

**May 20, 2011, Bechukotai
(Leviticus 26:3–27:34) 16 Iyar 5771**

This is my second to last Shabbat Shalom before taking a break while moving to Canton, Ohio where a holy, kind, loving, and dedicated congregation waits to begin our new relationship. At the same time, it hardly seems that a year has gone by since I was informed by the leadership of my former congregation that this was going to be my last year and I would need to move on. After moving past being stunned and saddened, I came to acceptance of the current situation.

I didn't like the way it unfolded or was handled, but in the end this turn of events offered me a year in which I read books, went to the gym, watched movies, was home every night with Sandy, traveled to Bloomington for holiday celebrations with Rachel and her friends, took a vacation in New York City to see Josh, went to the Caribbean with Amy and Dave on Cadenza, interviewed with a lot of congregations and met some amazingly dedicated temple leaders, did some woodworking and took three courses at my friend Marc Adams' School of Woodworking (which I highly recommend to people to check out), and finally, this weekend, the highlight of the year, my niece Amanda Chapman's marriage to James Bullman in Baton Rouge. I am sure that I left some things out like the romantic Shabbat dinners with just Sandy that would begin with wine and cheese in front of a roaring fire. (Very nice.)

Though in Lexington I had four one month Sabbaticals, three of those consisted of teaching and only one was a needed respite. This year was a true blessing for Sandy and me as a couple and for me as a person. I took time for me and to think about me. I did some studying, but a lot of listening. I thought about what was really important to me as a rabbi and what kind of congregation would best mesh with my talents. Canton will fit my style and ability, and as I've said before, I can't wait for July 1 to begin and Sandy and I can't wait to call Canton our home.

During this year, I thought about the future of American Judaism and in



someone who is as admired and respected as Maya Angelou?

Jennie Cohen, June 15, 2011 ✨

particular Reform Judaism. I visited congregations that had once been thriving only to see declining numbers. Sometimes it is the economics of a certain area that isn't attracting new people. Sometimes it is the high unaffiliated rate of young people not looking to join because of...you name the reasons, or more senior people who feel they've "done" their synagogue time and don't need to be a part anymore. Sometimes it is just the aging demographics of a community as there is nothing to hold the children to their home port.

Despite the strength of our Jewish camps, participation in Jewish youth activities is down. Despite the numbers of youth going to Israel through high school movement trips or Birthright the deep connections and support of Israel is down. Despite the vast economic success of the American Jewish community, the financial giving to Jewish institutions and Jewish causes is not what it used to be.

Despite these obvious trends, I went to congregations on placement visits where the members of the search committee, board and temple are still so proud of what they have and what they created. At these different communities, I felt pride in the local congregation and community. I saw evidence of Jewish commitment, teaching and learning. I heard voices singing in prayer and desiring a closer more dynamic relationship with God.

Yes, the American Jewish community is changing. I am part of the baby boomer generation raised in families where belonging was paramount. The new generations are looking for something different. They want to be touched personally. They want to be valued and welcomed. They want to sing. They want to see the world as their synagogue. They want to make a difference in the world at large, but not just the Jewish world. They are our future and we must listen to them and find ways to meet their Jewish needs so that tomorrow's Jewish future will be as bright as one I grew up in.

Tomorrow night Amanda and James get married under the *chuppah* and with this *simchah* comes great hope and joy for them and a little bit of hope for the Jewish future. *Mazal Tov* to them on their special day.

When you light your Shabbat candles this evening, light one for the hope in a bright and exciting Jewish future. Light the other for all those who may have stepped away from their Jewish lives so that they can see the beauty of living a Jewish life filled with its blessings and joy.

Rabbi Adland has been leading Reform congregations for more than 25 years in Lexington, Ky., and Indianapolis, Ind., and beginning July 1, Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio. He may be reached at j.adland@gmail.com. ✨

The early shift: A Father's Day story

BY ANDY HELLER

As a teenager growing up in St. Petersburg, Fla., I loved to play soccer. On my best days I stood only 5'5", and soccer was the one sport whereby I could compete with taller and stronger peers. Despite my love for soccer, I played a grand total of just two seasons of organized soccer leading up to my senior year of high school. I absolutely would have loved to have been able to play more, but most soccer leagues had their games Saturday mornings. While other kids were playing soccer Saturday mornings, I had another commitment.

Saturday mornings I went to synagogue with my father. I did not just "go to synagogue, we pretty much "opened" the synagogue. Saturday morning services began around 8:30 a.m., and concluded close to noon. Most of the congregants I noticed came around 10:30 a.m., and my father and I arrived well before. I am not sure how or why it developed that way, but my sister Carrie came with the family "second shift", either with my mom or dropped off by my mom around 10:30 a.m. I had "The Early Shift" with my dad. This was the one time every week I could count on that I would always spend with my father.

As my father aged I caught him on more than one occasion questioning himself as perhaps being too pushy when it came to Judaism and his only son. He made comments like "Perhaps it was too much religion for a youngster" or "Maybe I should not have pushed so much when it came to Judaism". I always acknowledged my father's comments, but I never really "answered him".

"Ein Keloheinu" is a very popular Jewish prayer sung in most congregations. It is generally sung towards the end of the Saturday morning service, and it is a prayer that has no typical tune when sung. In fact, in my travels I have noticed this one prayer sung dozens of ways. It does seem as if each congregation has a favorite melody for "Ein Keloheinu" specific to that congregation, yet they often experiment with alternatives. The simplicity and style of the verses to "Ein Keloheinu" make it easy for a congregation to introduce a new melody, and the congregants quickly catch on and join in.

Our family's shul or synagogue was B'nai Israel in St. Petersburg, Fla. Congregation B'nai Israel like other congregations had a favored melody for the "Ein Keloheinu" prayer, and yet every now and then the rabbi or cantor would lead

the congregation in the "Ein Keloheinu" and introduce a new melody. This one prayer when sung reminds me of my father. The memory is so incredibly vivid, and I can see him to this day. I believe the reason for this is that since by the time "Ein Keloheinu" was sung I had been in synagogue for over 3 hours, I was now ready to go home and I was acutely aware of the pending conclusion of the services...as well as my father's body language.

My father was always smiling during the reciting of the "Ein Keloheinu", and I could swear with each smile I could read my father's thoughts as the service drew to a conclusion. There was the smile that said "oh, that is a nice melody, I have not heard that before". There was the smile that said "this was a real nice service, and now it is time to have Shabbat lunch with the kids". And there was also the smile that said "nice service, but an odd melody for "Ein Keloheinu". I hope we go back to our traditional melody next week".

I have always felt that most of us have a dominant memory or two from our childhood days. We can never plan for this memory in advance, and there is no predictability to it. But there will be a memory or two that will dominate when we think of our growing up days and our parents. I have wondered what will be Lily and Jakey's dominant memory of their father when they become adults. I can only hope that whatever it is, it will be pleasant and make them smile.

Today I am grateful that whenever I hear the song "Ein Keloheinu" sung in any synagogue, and with any melody, I think of my father. This has happened to me in Toronto, Israel, St. Petersburg, San Francisco, Atlanta, and anywhere I have attended a service over the years. Sometimes the result is a tear, sometimes a smile, but always I think of my father, Dr. E. Maurice Heller.

I never had a chance to answer my father's laments when he was alive. Frankly, I am not sure I really knew what to say when my father questioned himself when it came to religious emphasis. This fall, my sister Carrie and I will be dedicating a torah scroll to my parents' memory at their beloved Congregation B'nai Israel. These past months leading up to this dedication have been a time when I found myself thinking of my father and mother, Judaism, growing up in St. Petersburg, and our synagogue as the center of our family's universe.

It was during these months of reflection that I realized I can now answer my father, and I hope he is able to hear me. I did not understand how to answer him until only recently. I felt for me to reply as my father would have liked, I would have to be nearly as observant today as he was....and I

Jews' News

Rabbi Richard Jacobs Elected as Fourth President of the Union for Reform Judaism

NEW YORK, June 12, 2011 – The Board of Trustees of the Union for Reform Judaism today unanimously and enthusiastically elected Rabbi Richard Jacobs to serve as its next President. Only the fourth person to hold the office since its creation in 1943, Jacobs follows Rabbis Maurice Eisendrath, Alexander Schindler and Eric Yoffie. Rabbi Jacobs currently serves as Senior Rabbi at Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, NY, and will assume the URJ Presidency in 2012.



Rabbi Jacobs told the board, "I became a rabbi almost 30 years ago to serve God and the Jewish people wherever I could do the most good. I've loved my years serving two amazing congregations first in Brooklyn Heights and for the past nineteen years at Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, New York." He continued, "As I prepare to leave the congregational rabbinate, I believe more than ever that vibrant synagogues are the key to the Jewish future. I will be the first URJ President who has spent decades as a congregational rabbi; synagogues are what I know and love."

In his acceptance remarks, Rabbi Jacobs said about moving into the position at this time, "Everywhere we look, there are dramatic challenges facing our people; yet each is a phenomenal opportunity to revitalize

(see News, page 20)



am certainly not. I was wrong....that was not the appropriate reply. The key to the answer is not in my level of observance, but in my memories – my wonderful, fond, and vivid memories of going to synagogue with my father and concluding our Shabbat service each week with the reciting of the "Ein Keloheinu".

So dad, in answer to your question as to whether perhaps "the early shift" was a bit too early, today I know my answer for you.

"Dad, it was perfect!"

Andy Heller is an author of two best selling real estate investing books. He and his family live in Atlanta, Ga. Andy's father Dr. E. Maurice Heller passed away August 29, 1999. ★



Kabbalah of the Month

By MELINDA RIBNER

A month of fulfillment, creativity, and love

Sivan began June 3

The month of *Sivan* is the month of fulfillment, creativity, and love. The holiday of *Shavuot*, commemorating the receiving of the Torah, took place June 7 at sunset.

Kabbalistic forecast: “*Sivan* is one of the most beautiful months spiritually and physically. Just as the trees and flowers are blossoming, so are we. *Sivan* is a time of gaining clarity of vision, discovering one’s life purpose and receiving guidance and direction on actualizing our personal life goals. A wonderful time for travel, *Sivan* is also a time of increased love and intimacy. It is not a coincidence that June is the most popular month of weddings. The Torah was given and received during the month of *Sivan*. A covenant between the Jewish people and God, the Torah is an expression of love, commitment, dedication and intimacy. It is an everlasting partnership, likened to a marriage.

“It is said that when the Jewish received the Torah, they were of one heart, so unified that were likened to one being. In the Torah passage that describes Israel’s encampment at the foot of Mount Sinai at the time of the new moon in *Sivan*, the word “encamped” is in the singular rather than the plural form. It is this unity that enabled the Israelites to receive the Torah. *Sivan* is a wonderful time to deepen existing relationships and open ourselves to meeting new people whom we will be able to draw closely to our heart this month. There is openheartedness in *Sivan* that makes it easy to communicate and bond with many different kinds of people.”

Astrological Sign: “Gemini is the energy that does not want to be contained. Mercury, the ruling planet for Gemini, was the Roman messenger of the gods who flew from the heavens to the earth. Similarly, the Torah, given in this month is the messenger between heaven and earth. People born under this sign are thought to be mercurial, quick to move from place to place, physically and mentally. Geminis want to leave the earth and fly to the heavens. They are creative and skillful communicators. The planet of Mercury is associated with communication and intelligence.” (From *Kabbalah Month by Month*.)

In case some of you are wondering, “Judaism does embrace astrology, teaching that we are born under a certain constellation and with a certain destiny. Our sages say that the length of life, number of children, and sustenance depend not on merit but on destiny. Yet it is also said that Jews are not subject to astrology. Rashi, the great Torah commentator said that prayer, charity and *mitzvot* can improve our *mazel* and this is what is meant when the Talmud says “Jews are not subject to astrology.” (*New Age Judaism*, page 101)

Torah for the month: *Shavuot*, the holiday celebrating the receiving of the Torah, culminates the completion of the journey that began on Passover, the holiday commemorating the departure of the Jewish people out of Egypt. The Jewish people left Egypt, not just to leave a place of bondage, but the Jewish people left Egypt so as to receive the Torah and enter into the holy land of Israel. The purpose of the exodus was not simply to become a free people living in the Land of Israel, but to be a people who would love, know and serve God. It is not that God needed or needs our love and service, but through our love and service to God, we human beings receive the greatest good. According to our teachings, the desire of God was and is always to bestow goodness upon all of creation.

As Rabbi Moses Luzatto said in his book, *The Way of God*, “Since God desired to bestow good, a partial good would not be sufficient. God alone is the only true good, and therefore, His beneficent desire would not be satisfied unless it could bestow that very good, namely the true perfect good that exists in God’s intrinsic Essence...Even though created beings can not emulate God’s perfection in this own right, the fact that they can be attached to God allows them to partake of it... They can thus derive the greatest pleasure from that true good to the greatest degree possible. The purpose of all that was created was therefore to bring into existence a creature who could derive pleasure from God’s own good, in a way that would be possible for it.”

When God finished creating the world, the Torah tells us “God saw that it was good.” After God created Adam, the Bible reveals that “God saw all that He had made and behold it was very good.” The human being was different than other creatures and was capable of receiving the greatest goodness. What distinguished the human being? Rabbi Moses Luzatto, in his book, later explains that the gift of free will was what made the creation of the human being “very good”. It is our free will, our ability to make choices that makes us unique among all the other creatures.

God blesses everyone and everything but the greatest blessing is our free will. That is because God wants our heart to be an offering, not a compulsion. For this reason, God is hidden until we learn how to choose. If God was not hidden, we would have no choice but to love God for we would be overwhelmed by God’s love and goodness. With God’s concealment, we have free will and the power to choose and co-create our reality.

Love has more meaning when it is a matter of choice for God and for people as well. It is a heavenly gift that God allows us to love other people, and to love God. It is the love of God within us that enables us to love God and other people. When we truly love, we feel God’s presence and that feels wonderful. Love is unconditional, not based on what we receive. But rather through love we receive the love we are giving. Reb Eliyahu Dessler in his book *Strive for Truth* provided much clarity on this subject and asked an interesting question. “Is giving the result of love or does love come from giving? Do we give to people we love? Or do we love people we give to? It is customary to think that giving is a byproduct of love. We love someone so we give to them. Reb Dessler says that if you want to love others, you should give to them. Become involved in something that is for their benefit. Giving breaks down the psychological barriers between people. We come to love the people we give to.” (from *New Age Judaism*, page 129)

On *Shavuot* we celebrate God’s gift to us. The Torah that we receive on *Shavuot* is God’s love letter to us, containing all the secrets that lovers share in times of intimacy. For many of us however there are times when we read the Bible, we question its relevance to us today. In those cases we need to search our hearts and pray that the secrets of Torah be opened to us. If the Torah were not relevant, did not contain the secrets of the universe, it would not be as treasured as it is. Finding teachers and books that make the Torah and Judaism exciting, vibrant and sweet is also essential.

On *Shavuot* we receive the Torah anew. By connecting and learning Torah, by living by the guidelines of Torah, we become attached to God. When we are attached to God, we know and love God, and that is the greatest joy. It was for this reason that we were created, yet it must also be our choice.

The deepest Jewish teaching that I know is that this world was created for love. Within God was the desire, but not the need, to love and be known. It was for this reason that God created the worlds. At the core of the heart of the human

(see Ribner, page 6)



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

The Arab Spring and fall

The revolutionary spirit is tough to keep down. When people feel oppressed or are just really unhappy they often feel like throwing a window open and shouting like the guy from the movie "Network" "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it any more!"

Or, they take to the streets and start burning cars and buildings. Somewhere along the line this past few months, some Arabs woke up to the fact that (A) Israel is not the reason they don't have a job, (B) Israel is not the reason food prices have jumped and (C) Israel is not the reason my president is so rich and I'm so poor.

So, despite all the chaos and dead Muslims caused by Al Qaeda and its minions, turns out you don't have to blow up people and things to make change happen in the Arab world. The people took to the streets and with the exception of Syria, the governments came tumbling down.

Problem: When you have been living under tyrants and their security apparatus for so long, when the party is over and it's time to govern a country. Look at Egypt. Right now there is total chaos in the country. Pass on the pyramids this year, friend – it is not worth the risk of roaming gangs, rival armed groups and a police force in disarray.

Long before elections in Egypt can take place, order has to be restored. The army is supposedly running the country. But without the Mubarak rule book to go by, they really do not know what to do. Israel is nervous and cautious. But, that army has no desire for any real confrontation with the Jewish state. Not now, anyway.

The problems in Tunisia and Yemen are far from resolved. In Syria, Assad has

taken a page from his Daddy's rule book and is playing by Hama rules. Hama was the town that last tried revolt against the Assads. Daddy sent in tanks and planes, leveled the town, massacred every man, woman and child and buried them and the whole town under a field of flowers.

The Palestinians have signed an agreement that the remnants of the PLO and Hamas will now get along. As soon as they stop shooting at each other. And who is going to run the operation? Will elections be fair and transparent? And what kind of "State" will emerge? If there indeed becomes a Palestine, will they be able to make treaties with other nations like say, Iran? Will they have airports where planes can fly in, including jet fighters and bombers? Will they be able to import arms of all types?

If the U.N. that bastion of do nothings allows the stamp of statehood on that split up piece of geography known as Gaza and the West Bank, they will be opening Pandora's Box. If we see Egypt in disarray today, imagine Palestine by Thanksgiving.

The United States, under President Obama has tried to waffle its way through this mess in the Middle East. We gave attaboys to Tunisia, not so much to Yemen, not at all in Bahrain. We said that Gaddafi had to go. Where? That one looks like a stalemate. And even after Obama's pronouncements it looks like we really don't have a dog in that fight.

Bin Laden is dead and Pakistan is a bunch of liars, terrorists and other assorted bad guys. But, like your kid that has a drug problem and keeps finding things that other people don't yet know they lost, we cannot abandon them. Not with their nukes (the systems for which they sold to any buyer who asked). Not with where they are located on the map. But over a billion a year? Are your kidding?

Every time the dust settles America looks around and finds one true friend – Israel. Israel has a lot to lose due to the chaos arising from this Arab Spring. When the only organized political parties in these other countries are the Islamists, that does not bode well for their dreams of democracy.

And in some way, these Islamist parties do play from the Al Qaeda playbook. They really believe (or say they do) that the reason for all the evil, hunger and lack of jobs in the world you can lay at the doorstep of Israel and the Great Satan, America.

Here's a starting point for the U.S. Do not allow the divided, militant bunch that make up this new alliance between Hamas and the PLO to create another rogue state. Shut this one off before it gets started.

If this Arab Spring is to show that "the people have spoken" – make sure that the people who speak for the people who

RIBNER

(continued from page 5)

being, made in the image and likeness of the Divine, is also the desire to love and be known. And it is through love, that we know ourselves and God.

Suggestions for increasing love and intimacy in Sivan

1. Appreciate, and acknowledge others each day, especially your spouse and children.
2. Add romance to your life. Buy flowers, and gifts for no reason.
3. Extend yourself – do favors for others.
4. Open to meet new and different people.
5. Fully receive with gratitude all that you are given from others. Appreciate and acknowledge every gesture of thoughtfulness.
6. Make "I" statements about what you want and feel. Refrain from criticizing others, especially your spouse.
7. If you find yourself upset and resentful, take time to be with yourself, and pray about what you are learning at this time. Consider what you can give to another person.
8. Spend time in nature.
9. Recharge and nurture yourself with meditation and Learning Torah.
10. Speak to God in your own words. Express your gratitude and ask for what you need and want. (from *Kabbalah Month by Month*)

May we each be blessed this month of Sivan to open our heart to love God and other people in the deepest way. May we make the choices that promote goodness and love in the world.

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



have spoken are really listening to what they say. Or we will just be trading in one corrupt group of despots for one even worse. For Israel, the U.S. and the world.

Jim Shipley has had careers in broadcasting, distribution, advertising, and telecommunications. He began his working life in radio in Philadelphia. He has written his JP&O column for more than 20 years and is director of *Trading Wise*, an international trade and marketing company in Orlando, Fla. ✨



On this date in Jewish history

On June 15, 1834

Many Jews were killed in a riot in Safed

~ From *The Jewish Book of Days* published by Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, Inc., New York.



Jewish America

By HOWARD W. KARSH

Nakba Day

Nakba Day, the 4th Intifada, Rationalization of Genocide: "Es bin schver su sein a yid." If there is any resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, can it possibly be orchestrated by man? More and more, I think not. And at the same time, like many people the world over, I would like to believe that the senseless killings of innocent men, women and children are the work of desperate fanatics fearing that they will have no power.

Of course, like most of you, I believe that the latter group is Palestinians and their misguided supporters, but in the world press there is a much divided opinion. Added to this, we have our own "internal terrorists" who in the mistaken belief that peace is more than a concept, would like the State of Israel to embrace every opportunity, even when it appears like an act of suicide.

Nakba Day might have been a peaceful day of protest, and an indication that, perhaps there were enough moderate Palestinians that would have seen that senseless demonstrations and immoderate speech would only kill whatever chances there were for any kind of resolution. If in 2011, there is still an Arab movement to drive the people of Israel into the sea, there is little to hope for. And in the aftermath, where were the voices of moderation and regret.

One of the major issues in dealing with Middle Eastern actions and reactions is the seemingly absent voices of conciliation and change. It is true in the United States, where there is a continual disappointment in the Islamic response to the misuse of force and power, and it is true of what we see in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Tunisia. If we see criminal acts taken by Arab governments against their own population, how can anyone, individual or nation, expect us to risk our lives at a conference table?

Who will sit on the other side of these tables? What assurance can they give about the future, when the present is full of bloodshed, and how can it be, that the United Nations can consistently rebuke Israel, and never comment on the slaughters going on in the Middle East when the populations need to be protected from their own leadership?

Regardless of our dreams, it would be

Israel-U.S. bonds strong despite chill in the air

By RABBI DENNIS C. SASSO
AND DR. MARCIA GOLDSTONE

The well-known curse "may you live in interesting times" rings true today. Its relevance is highlighted by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent visit and his address to Congress after President Barack Obama's important foreign policy speeches addressing the stalled Middle East peace process.

Netanyahu's address was received enthusiastically by members of Congress across the political spectrum. Such a response affirms the resonance of Israel's story among Americans, who understand that both peoples share fundamental democratic values and that Israel is America's most steadfast ally in that region.

Even though Obama and Netanyahu don't seem to have the warmest personal rapport, Israel and America remain trustworthy friends. Military and intelligence



impossible to negotiate the future in the chaos of today. We need to see who will emerge, and we continue to be handicapped by the difference of what is said in English and the translation into the language of the countries involved. We do not know what the future holds for any of these countries. Will we make strides in our relations with Egypt or will it be a political retreat? Libya, seems, on some days, to have fallen off the news front, out-gunned by floods and the sheer number of fires all over the world. There is about to be an Egyptian election. Almost all the names are unknown to us, and the role of the military is far from clear. Historically, Jews have never prospered in chaotic times.

My wife and I are about to go to Israel, a month of visiting with children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We are going for the wedding of a granddaughter, but every visit to Israel is a visit of joy and renewal. Our family and friends are happy for us. Our non-Jewish friends are shocked that we would look forward to going into a war zone. How do you explain it to them? "Yetz, es ist gut su sein a yid."

Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc., and can be reached at hkarsh@gmail.com. He has recently been named as a community columnist for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. ✨

relationships are as strong as ever. On issues of major concern to Israel, the United States and Israel remained aligned, and our president has not wavered: foreign aid (which translates into American jobs), the qualitative edge of the Israel Defense Forces and addressing Iran's nuclear ambitions. This is not the first time that a U.S. president and an Israeli prime minister have not had the best personal chemistry. Consider Jimmy Carter and Menachem Begin; or Dwight Eisenhower and Ben Gurion. Yet, they continue to rely on one another.

The president has repeatedly stated that the basic Quartet principles – the need for Palestinians to renounce violence, recognize Israel and abide by previous agreements – remain preconditions for a suitable negotiating partner.

So, why has there been such disparity of commentary, such a perceived gap between Obama's and Netanyahu's positions? Tom Friedman in *The New York Times* described Israeli and Palestinian leadership as "ossified, unimaginative, oxygen-deprived." Bret Stephens of *The Wall Street Journal* called Obama "an anti-Israel president."

Conversely, national Jewish organizations have pointed to the commonalities between Obama and Netanyahu: Palestinian acceptance of Israel as a Jewish state; the need to hold negotiations without preconditions; opposition to the unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood at the United Nations; the obstacles to peace posed by Hamas in the Palestinian government; the need for the 1967 lines to be adjusted by appropriate land swaps guaranteeing Israel's integrity and security.

It should be noted that Palestinian spokespersons have roundly rejected these points and charged that Obama's speech was simply a reiteration of the Israeli position.

We are at a stand-still. Obama's remarks before Netanyahu's visit may not have been incorrect, but were untimely and not productive. Netanyahu failed to advance the peace effort before Congress.

Fatah's realignment with Hamas and Palestinian propaganda denying any Jewish historical connection with the Land of Israel are hindrances to serious negotiation.

All this is regrettable, particularly when regional realignments are taking place. Although the "Arab Spring" is far from producing democracies, in the contest for popular opinion Israel will not profit. Turkey, a former ally of Israel, is moving closer to Iran. Egypt is betraying former alliances with Israel.

U.S. foreign policy and military establishment increasingly regard the

(see Sasso/Goldstone, page 9)



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

A time to live

Shavuot – Feast of Weeks – that is its meaning and commemorates many things in Jewish life that are all connected because they deal with time and commitment.

Time is counted from Passover to Shavuot – it is called counting of the *Omer* and relates to the harvest being ready for gleaning. On the 50th day the holiday of Shavuot is celebrated.

Shavuot has many names – “The Harvest Holiday” – “Feast of Weeks” because of the seven weeks that separates both holidays – “The Holiday of First Fruits” pertaining to the practice of bringing fruits to the Temple on Shavuot. Each of these names indicates various aspects of our lives: Harvest represents the ability to make our lives meaningful and productive; Weeks indicate to us the value of time and how precious time is to our existence and survival; Fruits remind us that our lives can be filled with excitement and completion and includes rejoicing with each milestone achieved.

But there is much more to this holiday than just enjoying the fruits of our labor. Shavuot, after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE was connected by the rabbis to the Revelation at Mt. Sinai, where the Israelites received the Ten Commandments and their religious maturity. It was the glue that bound them together for eternity.

There are many customs attributed to Shavuot. For example: Reading the Ten Commandments in the Synagogue; Studying the Book of Ruth which describes the story of two women: a Jewish woman named Naomi and her non-Jewish daughter-in-law Ruth. From here we learn of the classic commitment made by Ruth when her husband dies and Naomi encourages her to return to her people: “Whither thou goest I will go, they people will be my people.” This book is read during Shavuot because the episode occurred during the harvest season and her conversion reflects our acceptance of the Torah on Shavuot. We are also taught that Ruth’s great-great grandson, King David, was born and died on Shavuot.

Another custom that has no explanation as to its origin is the eating of dairy products on Shavuot. There are some scholars who suggest that this tradition began because of a particular poem found

BS”D Shavuot 5771: The loving reunion

RAV ZVI LESHEM



The holiday of *Shavuot* is enigmatic in that it seems to lack unique *mitzvot*. While we do have various customs such as learning through the night and eating dairy, the *Chag* is seemingly characterized as the re-acceptance of the Torah – an event so powerful that no specific *mitzvah* can encapsulate it. Thus the *Kedushat Levi* [1] explained to the Litvaks that Shavuot is also called *Atzeret*, because its only *mitzvah* is to refrain from labor, unlike the other holidays that have special positive ways of commemoration.

Similarly I heard from my teacher, Rebbe Eliezer Zvi Safrin of Komorna



in the Song of Songs – “Honey and milk are under your tongue” – thereby connecting the sweetness of milk and honey to the Torah.

Finally there is the concept of all-night study. Many yeshivas and synagogues hold study programs that continue throughout the night until the morning when it is time to recite the morning prayers. This is a Kabbalistic – mystical custom. It is rather new and is used to instill in us the need for study to understand Torah.

Regardless of how the holiday is celebrated it is the significance that remains the important aspect of this eventful period in Jewish life. Life is a celebration and we are obligated to a commitment of survival because life is to live. Our concentration is not on where we go when our time has ended but rather where we are now in the journey each of us takes as we continue to encounter the goodness of that life as well as learning to endure the agonies associated with the journey as well. We need Shavuot to remind us of the gifts we enjoy and rejoice in the understanding that time is a reward.

And we end the holiday with the recitation of *Yizkor* – the memorial prayer for those we loved and lost. We do this because their time with us gave us the moments we now have and will represent the continuation we leave those who follow.

If we had to ‘bring the lesson’ of Shavuot into a single theme, it would be: Time is a friend if we make it so and we should be grateful to God for the time we have.

Rabbi Irwin Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at ravyitz@cox.net. ☆

shlit”ah, that Shavuot seems to have nothing of its own; its main character is that it is the summation of *Sefirat haOmer*. [2] We have learned before that the counting of the 49 days of the *Omer* from Pesach to Shavuot is like a woman counting seven “clean days” before immersing in the mikvah to reunite with her husband and re-enact their wedding night.[3] In this context the Chozeh of Lublin writes[4] as follows; *allegorically speaking a woman who loves her husband counts how long it will be until she can be with her husband, and he, if he loves her, also counts out of love, when his wife will be with him. Here as well we count down to when we will unite with our Heavenly Father, for on Shavuot HaKadosh Baruch Hu unites with Knesset Yisrael at the giving of the Torah, and on every Shavuot this holiness is reactivated.*

In a similar vein the *Kedushat Levi* explains why we don’t make the *Shehechyanu* blessing when we begin to count the *Omer*. When we were initially counting down to *Matan Torah*, while aware that we needed 49 days to prepare ourselves, we were so impatient that we simply wanted the time to pass as quickly as possible. It is simply not appropriate to make the blessing at the beginning of a *mitzvah* that we want to get over as quickly as possible![5]

What emerges from the above is that Shavuot is more than anything else the climax of a period of intense yearning for *HaShem* and His Torah. The experience of reunification is that of intense love.[6] May we merit to finish our preparations properly and to return to *HaShem* in purity and truth.

Rabbi Leshem is the Spiritual Leader of Congregation Shirat Shlomo in Efrat and Director of Overseas Programs at Nishmat: the Jerusalem Center for Higher Torah Studies for Women. He holds a PhD in Jewish Philosophy and is the author of Redemptions: Contemporary Chassidic Essays on the Parsha and the Festivals.

[1] Shavuot, s.v. *nishalti*. See also *Pri Zaddik*, Shavuot 3.

[2] This is presumably the *pshat* of the name Shavuot – the end of the process of counting the seven weeks.

[3] Based upon the holy Zohar. See our *Redemptions*, pp. 313-314.

[4] *Zikaron Zot, Emor*, s.v. *u’sefartem lachem*.

[5] *Kedushat Levi, l’Sefira*. See also *Aruch HaShulchan, Orch Chaim*, 489:1-3. I once heard it suggested that perhaps the *Shehechyanu* we recite on Shavuot is also retroactively for *Sefirat HaOmer*.

[6] Perhaps this is also an explanation of the custom of eating dairy, which symbolizes *chesed*, as opposed to meat, which is *gevura*. ☆

Standing again at Sinai

BY RABBI STEVEN WERNICK



One of Judaism's most profound ideas is the notion that each year at *Shavuot* each of us stands at Mount Sinai, poised to receive the Torah as if for the first time. The holiday, in other words, is an annual renewal of the relationship we Jews as a people experience with God through Torah.

It is incumbent upon us at Shavuot, then, to consider to what we are renewing ourselves. As a proud Conservative Jew, standing again at Sinai, I commit myself to a dynamic Judaism that is learned and passionate, authentic and pluralistic, joyful and accessible, egalitarian and traditional.

There's a problem, though. Too many Conservative Jewish synagogue and institutions – the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism included – have forgotten the passion, the joy, and even the accessibility. They have been too bland for too long. Conservative Jewish leaders have carried out the routine daily tasks of planning services and events, celebrating *mitzvot* and *simchas*, helping arrange *shivas*, and soliciting new members. These are important tasks, and if they are not done correctly our synagogues flail and disorder reigns, but they are not enough. This is *keva* – the fixed tasks that define a Jewish life – and it is part of the balance every Jewish community needs. But these kinds of tasks are not the reason why our *kehillot* – our synagogues, our sacred communities – exist, and the *kehillot* that go about their work in this routine way are missing something incredible.

Kehillot should exist to transform Jewish lives, to foster a community that empowers Jews to seek the presence of God, to find meaning and purpose in Torah and mitzvot, to fully engage with Israel, and to be inspired by Judaism to improve the world. Jews going to *shul* should find our emotions affected and our passions engaged. Our hearts should beat faster. The more *kavannah* – the more intentionality – we bring to our *kehillot*, the more spiritually rewarding it will be.

From the *bima* to the boardroom, from preschool through adulthood, with day school, religious school, USY, Camp Ramah, the college campus and Torah discussion over coffee and the Shabbat table in between, what we as Conservative Jews do best is applying our ancient values and traditions to modern settings. We seek to benefit from the dynamism of today's scholarship and inquiry by using our



An Observant Eye

BY RABBI AVI SHAFRAN

Roman Rite leads to Jewish thought

Roman Catholic rituals aren't usually even a small part of my family's Shabbat table discussions but a recent Sabbath meal was an exception, granted in the spirit of revisiting an ever-timely Jewish concept.

The late Pope John Paul II was recently beatified by his church. Beatification is a stage in the process by which the Church renders a person a "saint." For a candidate to attain that stage, a miracle performed by the candidate has to be documented and accepted by a special Vatican committee.

Many, it seems, are the miracles out there. John Paul himself beatified more than 1300 people and canonized 482 saints during his tenure; and the current pope has beatified 790 and canonized 34. (Of course, every breath we take and move we make are miracles, but that's not what the Church has in mind here.)

To advance the cause of John Paul's canonization, evidence was proffered that a French nun had been miraculously cured from Parkinson's disease after praying to the pontiff shortly after his death in 2005. (Yes, Catholics pray to dead people, as intermediaries; for a Jew, that would constitute a most grave *halachic* offense.) The testimony was notarized and the miracle certified, despite grumblings from some corners. ("Did the prayers for this nun exclude the invocation of any and all

knowledge of Jewish texts and modern life to live Jewish values in this world.

When I stand at Sinai again this year, I will recommit myself to these values. And these are the values to which United Synagogue is committed as we work to strengthen and transform *kehillot* across the continent. As we stand at Sinai at this moment of renewal we commit to a mission to identify, create, nurture, and deliver the multifaceted support that will enable each of our *kehillot* to fulfill its own sacred mission. We commit to creating a web of connections that brings each *kehilla* closer to other *kehillot*, and to the many centers of energy that comprise Conservative Judaism's common sense of community, shared mission, and purpose.

Rabbi Wernick is chief executive officer and executive vice president of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. ✨

[other] recognized saints?" one conservative Catholic publication asked with suspicion.)

Supernatural interventions have played a great role in Jewish history, of course. But – although many Jews are not aware of the fact – Maimonides clearly states that they do not, and cannot, *prove* anything at all.

He points out (Yad: Yesodei HaTorah, 8:1) that there is simply no true way to distinguish a Divinely-sanctioned miracle from trickery or sorcery; a wonder may be wondrous, but it might also be an illusion. And so, any belief founded on a supernatural sign is, in the end, inherently flawed.

(The requirement that a prophet establish himself or herself by, among other things, performing a miracle or making a miraculous prediction, Maimonides explains, is a purely technical requirement, and does not imply that inherent meaning lies in miracles. [ibid, 7:7])

The wonders recounted in the Torah – even the parting of the Red Sea we recently revisited on the Seder nights – are not, Maimonides explains, demonstrations of G-d's existence but rather expressions of His love for His people.

The sea split, he continues, so that the Jews leaving Egypt could escape from the pursuing Egyptians, not to prove G-d's existence. The manna fell from heaven not as a theological statement but so that the people would not starve. Even seemingly demonstrative miracles like the ten plagues are interpreted by the Talmud and Midrash as messages, not mere manifestations.

(see Shafran, page 18)



SASSO/GOLDSTONE

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creation of a Palestinian state and an end to the occupation as essential for U.S. interests in the region. As Obama forthrightly stated: "There is an impatience with the peace process, or the absence of one, not only in the Arab world" but "already manifesting itself in capitals around the world."

A unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood by the U.N. General

Assembly in September would be in violation of every relevant international agreement and represent just another blind alley for the Palestinian people. Without a bold initiative on the part of the United States and courageous statesmanship by Israel and the Palestinians, the current impasse will no longer yield "interesting times" but painfully "dangerous times."

This column was co-written by Sasso, senior rabbi at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis, and Marcia Goldstone, executive director of their Jewish Community Relations Council of Indianapolis. Reprinted from the Indianapolis Star, June 7, 2011. ✨



Musings from Shiloh

BY BATYA MEDAD

As Shavuot approaches

May 30, 2011

Experimenting: You can call it moussaka

I'm not good at following recipes, and I generally cook according to what's in the house. I don't plan a menu and then check what I need and then hunt for the exact right foods. So, on Friday I found myself with chopped meat (turkey) and vegetables and the desire to bake them together, not stew them. I love having the food in a "cook and serve," even though just the two of us were home.

One of the vegetables I felt like cooking with the chopped meat was eggplant, so I decided to make a version of moussaka, which is layered eggplant, chopped meat, other vegetables and sauce.

There are probably more versions of moussaka than chocolate cake, so my version is just as "kosher" or authentic. Yes, it's definitely kosher!

I thawed the chopped meat for easy mixing and sliced up some eggplant* and sweet potato. Then I mixed the chopped meat with diced onions, eggs, garlic powder and a squeeze of catsup.

And then I layered them in the "bake and serve" baking dish, eggplant on the bottom.

After that I baked it, mostly uncovered. I added foil on the top towards the end, so the top wouldn't burn.



Yes, I must admit that it was absolutely delicious and unbelievably easy to make. You can add different vegetables if you want, like tomatoes and squash. Really, there are no "laws" preventing creativity.

*There is absolutely no need to precook, fry, or salt the eggplant! This was a simple one-step dish. If you want an easy meal, just serve it with a nice salad and you're set!

May 31, 2011

Glorious Jewish, Zionist evening!

I was one of the many lucky people to

have attended last night's Moskowitz Prize for Zionism event. I was supremely privileged to see living legends, the proof that Zionism and idealism are far from dead.



Having flown twice with Nefesh B'Nefesh *olim* to Israel as a journalist and seeing how quickly and joyfully they got all of the work done for my father's *aliyah*, I have no doubt that they deserve their prize. Another prize winner, former MK Chanan Porat showed us that the spirit rules the body. His strength and determination shine through, although he's physically frail.

June 1, 2011

Jew or Muslim? You can tell by how it's tied

Last week my husband received his diploma, a masters degree. It took over 30 years from his first attempt to the ceremony last week. That's even longer than the 22 years it took me to get my bachelors degree. I started at Stern College, NYC, and I finished in the now-closed Jerusalem branch of Empire State College, SUNY.

I got a real kick out of observing the other attendees at the ceremony at Hebrew University, Mt. Scopus, Jerusalem. You had Jews and Arabs and probably other nationalities/religions who didn't dress in such obvious costumes. My camera zoom caught two styles of women's hair-covering, both as scarves, the religious Muslim and the religious Jew. The big difference is in how they're tied and wrapped.



P.S. At Yafiz I've been noticing more and more Arab women with Jewish style hats and scarves. To be honest, if I had covered my neck like the Arab women do, I'd have a much younger looking neck at this age.



June 2, 2011

Fear and danger of the trains on Jerusalem streets

It seems like forever that downtown Jerusalem is in "transition" between buses, cars, taxis, emergency vehicles and pedestrians sharing Rechov Yaffo, Jaffa Street, the main street which starts at the Jaffa Gate of the Old City and leads us to the Central Bus Station and the road to Tel Aviv and the trains, the Jerusalem Lightrail.



In recent months, there are practice, training runs of the trains and all other vehicles are banned. That includes ambulances and fire trucks. So, if you're going to need those, plan your emergency for another location. Yes, I'm serious. Another problem is that people with hearing problems don't hear the little whistle that announces that a train is moving. An elderly friend told me that she's terrified. Oh, and one more "minor" problem. The trains can't stop quickly, even in an emergency. You can thank Ehud Olmert and his cronies.

June 3, 2011

Next week Shavuot? I'm not ready!

I go from Shabbat to Shabbat, getting my spiritual and physical breathers, rests, input of energies... My life has gotten so busy, and next week it will get even more so, since the pool is opening. The following week will have everything – work at Yafiz, tutoring in Rimonim, classes in Matan, the pool and family and friends.

But soon after that, the year of learning at Matan will end, the kids will get their vacation from learning in Rimonim and I'll just have to juggle Yafiz, the pool, family

(see Medad, page 11)



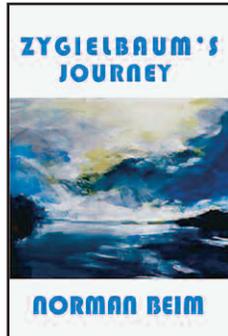
Book Review

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

Holocaust era tales never cease to fascinate

Zygielbaum's Journey. By Norman Beim, New Concept Press, New York.

Recollections of the Holocaust era are endless, still reaching us three generations later – still fresh and still devastating. Every tale is the same, with its underlying theme of Nazi horror and Jewish extermination, yet each biography is unique.



And now one more such tale has surfaced, thanks to playwright/author Norman Beim. It is the story of Shmuel Zygielbaum, a Polish Jew and Labor leader, who fought tirelessly during the Holocaust years to undermine the Nazis' "final solution".

Beim has assiduously assembled the facts and transmuted them into an absorbing read. With a strong, forthright style that hurtles ahead, the author lets those facts speak for themselves. Using a first-person narrative style, Beim creates a vivid tale – a personal memoir, as it were.

Not surprisingly, *Zygielbaum's Journey* begins with his happy, privileged childhood – a stark contrast to his later years. His family lived in a grand house in Borowitz, a small village in central Poland, where his paternal grandfather owned a successful flour mill. "There were picnics in the woods, swimming and fishing in the stream nearby," the narrator recalls.

But Zygielbaum's life soon changed. The mill burned down (under suspicious circumstances), and the family returned to his mother's home town. There the family struggled to survive – with his father continuing to study Talmud and his mother toiling as a seamstress. Zygielbaum himself soon joined the work force – at age 13 – experiencing numerous miserable working conditions over the next decade. Ultimately, working in a saw mill, he joined the Bund (the Jewish Workers Alliance of Lithuania, Poland, and Russia). "And thus it was that, in 1915, in the town of Chelm, I found my life's calling."

MEDAD

(continued from page 10)

and friends and the rest of life.

Did I mention that the pool is opening? I have permission to be a little late to the store on pool days. Otherwise it wouldn't pay to pay for membership. I'm terribly out of shape compared to recent years, since I didn't go to a pool even once this past winter. Walking with a backpack is good, but there are muscles I can only work on in the water.

Teaching Torah, me?

This year, since I've had the wonderful opportunity for studying the Bible in Matan, I'm sometimes the featured speaker/teacher at our *Shabbat Shiur Nahshim* Women's Study Classes. I, also, sometimes give the short *D'var* (Words of) Torah at our *Rosh Chodesh* Women's Prayers at Tel Shiloh.

Unless there's another volunteer, I'll give the *D'var* Torah this morning. It'll be a short "taste" of my Shabbat one, connected to Shiloh, Chana, Shmuel, clothing and education.

I have no doubt that our move to



In the next few decades, Zygielbaum grew in strength, experience, learning and leadership, becoming a highly-esteemed Bund leader – and surviving the many struggles and chaos of war-torn central Europe – and the ever-present problems of anti-Semitism. (Along the way his life would include two marriages and several children.) Thus he was prepared for his ultimate struggle with the Nazi regime and for his own harrowing escapes from the Gestapo and SS men.

With the growing Nazi menace, his strongest efforts focused on getting the word to the world powers. He had seen plenty of evidence of the Nazis' treatment – in fact, annihilation – of the Jews. And long before the Allies were at war with the Germans, Zygielbaum would travel to other countries, in vain efforts to alert the leaders. He was met, again and again, with disbelief and polite dismissal.

Somehow Zygielbaum would survive the war. What happened to him after that would give away the plot, as it were. Better to pick up the book and read this strong, moving tale....One more Holocaust story – and yet a unique biography.

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

Shiloh, 30 years ago this summer, has contributed greatly to my spiritual life. It's hard to believe it; I've spent almost half my life in Shiloh. Yes, I'm *that* old!



Where you live does have its influence. In some ways it's obvious and in others it's subtle and takes a while until you really see it. I've definitely metamorphosed into a different person here.

June 4, 2011

Pre-Shavuot KCC from Jewish Boston

It's the Jewish month of Sivan and the latest Kosher Cooking Carnival has been brought to you by David Levy of Jewish Boston. Please check it out, visit the links and "share" it in the media.



KCC is a monthly collection of blog posts on the subject of kosher food, kosher recipes, Jewish Laws of Kashrut, kosher restaurant and cookbook reviews... Yes, anything kosher.

June 7, 2011

As Shavuot approaches

This post is included in a Shavuot round-up on the *Real Food Digest*. The (see Medad, page 12)





Confidentially Yours

BY AVI AND ADELE

Wrestling with dating disappearing acts

Dear Avi and Adele:

I'm a 24 year-old woman who recently had a troublesome dating experience. An older guy I met at a recent Jewish young adult happy hour asked me for my number. He called me a few days later and asked me to go out with him the Saturday evening of that week. I agreed and we set a time and a place. He said he would call me the day before to confirm all of the plans. Well, guess what? I never heard from him. AT ALL. What chutzpah!!

I'd like to give him the benefit of the doubt – maybe he had a last minute shiva to attend or he choked on a piece of matzah – but my friends say “NO WAY.” What do you think I should do? Should I tell him that I'm going to blacklist him on J-date so that he never gets a date here ever again? I know I'm probably going to run into him again, but I want him to know I'm upset that he didn't even call and I want to know what's the right thing to do.

~ Need a Mensch with Manners

Dear Need a Mensch:

No stand up guy will stand you up. But you're not off the hook here either. Avi and Adele are particularly against reinforcing stereotypical gender roles and you're no exception. You had a guy make plans with you? Great! You didn't confirm? Tough luck.

Think about it like you are at work. If you had scheduled a meeting with a new client, how would the days leading up to the meeting go? Would you schedule it, then just sit back and wait for the client to do all the heavy lifting of contacting you? Surely not. Would you show up at some place just hoping your client will join you in a great corned beef sandwich and watch you consume multiple matzah balls? Surely not. Once an agreement to meet has been made, each participant can feel free to confirm, formulate and mold the plans.

Why the business motif? Because dating is best handled like a business. It's a serious endeavor (for some) that can only cause you *tsuris* (trouble) and headache if poorly managed.

So, what you could have done in this situation? You could have called him the day before “just confirm.” In this communiqué (no matter if it's by J-date

message, phone call, text or written on stone tablets), you could also let him know that you have another hot prospect on the hook so if you don't connect by sun-up Friday, you're sure to be unavailable. He need not know that your hot prospect may very well be watching *Don't Mess with the Zohan* for the 12th time. This moves the game forward, which is what it's all about.

And if you still don't hear from him? Let him know how lame he is! He'll ignore the message anyway and you'll feel better. Happy prospecting!

Working the dating scene...at work

Dear Avi and Adele:

I'd like to go out with a girl I work with. She's great and we enjoy the time we've spent together. Is this a good idea?

~ Workin' it at Work

Dear Workin' It:

Yes and no. Your work may have a policy about company dating, which is a protection to them and you. They want to avoid lawsuits, distracted employees and messy situations. They want you to avoid lowering your work performance. If your work does not have a policy, consider what it is you like about this girl and how it would translate into personal life. For some people, work life and personal life are very separate and different. So if you find her organized, in control, confident and very polished at work, be prepared for the possibility that she will be the exact opposite outside the office!

Additionally, you may or may not know anything about her Jewish life from work: she may keep kosher at home or at work or both. She may take Yom Kippur off from work but not go to synagogue. If she's not Jewish, she may have a deep-seated interest in learning more about being a part of the Jewish community or she may have little interest.

At the end of the day, knowing a person at work may or may not offer a good entrée into her personal life. Avi and Adele advocate a simple approach: just like meeting her anywhere else, proceed with simple steps at a pace that feels right. And if it works, be prepared to talk about what it means with your work life. And if it doesn't, be ready to be a grown-up at the work place and get over a sticky situation.

Livin' and lovin', Avi and Adele

Please go to www.letmypeoplegrow.org – a blog dedicated to cultivating Jewish conversations on topics that matter, while educating, entertaining and engaging our national Jewish community. ✨



MEDAD

(continued from page 11)

good news is that our kids want to visit and probably bring some friends.

The bad news is that our neighborhood keeps having water problems; that means that water isn't flowing in the pipes to our homes.

The kids have requested that I cook chicken for the evening holiday meal. They love my simple chicken. To cook the chicken I need lots of flowing/running water. My cooking time is limited because of work. I called Mekorot, the Israeli Water Company. News is not very encouraging. I could hear the guy's TV as he manned the emergency line at 5 a.m. He certainly has an easier job than I have.

My older son also requested/demanded 1, 2, 3 Cookies one of my legendary recipes. I haven't made it for years, not because it's hard to make. It's really very easy. The reason is that they are absolutely irresistibly delicious! He even wants a few varieties. Yes, that simple basic cookie recipe can be anything from cinnamon to chocolate chips to granola and more. There are just three basic ingredients, flour, margarine and sugar. Yes, no eggs. He promised to take all the left-over temptation away from the house. But when my daughter heard that I'd be making the beloved cookies, she requested that I keep some for the grandchildren who will be coming for Shabbat after Shavuot.

We may eat fish Shavuot lunch. And in the afternoon we'll be hosting, as we do every year, a Torah *shiur* (class) in English. I plan on serving fruit. I'll slice some up, arrange on platters and stick in toothpicks. I only serve water to drink. Juice isn't on our menu.

G-d willing the water *mavens* will fix the problem very quickly. B"H, we have an emergency tank so I can still flush the toilet and wash my hands. Years ago water problems were much more frequent, and emergency tanks were the norm. Newer homes don't have them.

Batya Medad is a veteran American olah, immigrant in Israel. She and her husband made aliyah in 1970 and have been in Shiloh since 1981. She's a wife, mother, grandmother, EFL Teacher, writer and photographer. Besides her articles and photographs we've been featuring in this publication for a number of years, Batya is very involved in the international cyber community as a Jewish blogger. She has two active blogs, <http://shilohmusings.blogspot.com> and <http://me-ander.blogspot.com>, besides having established the Kosher Cooking Carnival; details on me-ander. You can contact her at shilohmuse@yahoo.com. ✨





Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

The sound of silence

I talk a lot and I can't deny it. I was one of those babies who didn't say anything until the age of two, but once I uttered my first word (which my mother swears was "beet"), I never stopped. This was a huge source of embarrassment for me in elementary school when I would sheepishly hand over my report card filled with comments like: "needs to refrain from excessive talking" and "distracts others with continual chatter."

Since grade school I have tried harder than most to curb my enthusiastic mouth. Sometimes I succeed but more often than not, I resort to little tricks like counting to 30 before I speak or using meditative mantras like "silence is the path to serenity." Once I even went so far as to attend a retreat where we spent the better part of two days in total silence. At first, it almost killed me, so I kept swallowing loudly and whispering to myself. But after a while, I actually began to enjoy the act of not speaking. It opened my eyes, ears and heart to the sounds of the world around me that are otherwise lost in the chatter and noise of daily living.

One of the hallmarks of modern times is noise. The never-ending sounds of traffic and construction, the ringing and music from cell phones, radios and televisions, the incessant conversations in restaurants, offices and social gatherings, are indicative of our need to live out loud. Sadly, for many of us, silence has become all but extinct – the dinosaur of modern life.

Judaism has much to teach us about the idea of silence. At the heart of Jewish tradition is the statement of faith found in the *Shema*, which means "listen" or "hear." The opening line of the *Shema* is translated as: "Hear! O Israel, the Lord our God is One." Only when we are quiet enough to listen, when we become silent within ourselves so that we can hear the wisdom within and around us, can we really understand the essence of the divine.

Silence offers us many opportunities to live with greater purpose, awareness and intention. When we minimize our need to respond verbally to the external world, we increase our ability to reflect meaningfully on our internal world. When we refrain from automatically responding, we make



Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

Who's a Jew?

It's an ancient question. Mossy with age. The question: Who's a Jew? *Halachically*, it's simple. "Got a Jewish mama?" asks the Orthodox rabbi. "OK, you made the cut." (No pun intended.) But the Reform or Conservative Jew says, waitaminute. Here's a gal who's never been in a synagogue, makes a bonfire on *Shabbos*, loves pork cutlets, and is a prompt, dues paying member at the First Baptist Church. AND I forgot to tell you her mama's Jewish. How 'bout her?

She's Jewish – not perfect, but Jewish, say many Orthodox rabbis.

Case II: Here's a born Baptist with a perfect *mitzvah* record. He won't even



room for possibilities that might not otherwise emerge; insights and understanding about life, people and ourselves, that words and witticisms can distract us from comprehending.

Judaism views the ability to speak as the ultimate gift to humans. Speech separates us from other forms of life and enables us to fulfill God's mission to be holy. But speech was given to us to be used purposefully, and only by balancing our speech with the ability to embrace silence do we gain wisdom.

A wonderful reminder of our need for silence is the weekly holiday of Shabbat. Shabbat is intended to help us turn down the volume of the world by freeing us from the din and chatter of electronics, traffic and the sounds of the work place. It can become the one day of the week when we intentionally seek silence as a means of restoring ourselves. Just as the body needs rest in order to be healthy, the soul needs silence in order to grow. As the Talmud says, "There is no better medicine than silence."

Jewish sages valued silence as vital to living a meaningful life. This is beautifully described by Rabbi Gamliel who said: "All of my life I was privileged to be in the company of the wise men of Torah and I learned from them that nothing is more valuable to productive living than silence."

With that in mind, I have nothing more to say.

Lederman is an award winning author, Jewish educator, public speaker and attorney who lives in Tucson. Visit her website at amyhirshberglederman.com. ★

sew mixed seeds in his field (if he had a field) and his shirt doesn't combine flax and linen. And there's more; he's been through a Reform conversion. Nope – he ain't a Jew, says the Orthodox rabbi.

But let's get historical. How 'bout the flocks that followed the self-made *Moshiach* of past ages? Sabbatai Zev – Jakob Frank. They worshipped these charlatans – were they Jewish? How about the crowds that surrounded the Baal Shem Tov – one time heretic – now in the penthouse of our sages? He denigrated Torah knowledge. His product was joy – even ecstasy. He had all the passion of Sinatra doing "My Way" (though he sang poorly – never got a record contract). Whatever gets you through the night is okay said ol' blue eyes. The Baal Shem Tov sorta agreed. Well were his folks Jewish? The Gaon of Vilna didn't think so. He cast a Herem upon them.

And remember some Lubavitchers say that Menachem Schneerson is the *Moshiach*. Were the Samaritans and the Kairites – who denied the authority of the oral law – Jews? Reform and some Conservative Jews even now cast a skeptical eye on the divinity of the oral law (The Talmud). Oh, it's a notable compendium of stories – knowledge – but maybe G-d didn't whisper it in the ear of Moses at Sinai, say most Jews.

And finally consider Jerusalem in about 40 CE. There's a bunch of Jews gathered around a Jewish teacher. He said he had a lineage traceable to the *Mosiach*, the seed of David. His followers were observant Jews who studied Torah and followed the *mitzvahs* a lot closer than my unaffiliated, unobservant relatives in New York City in 2011. Were those Jewish Christians – that's what they were called – Jews? Heretical, mistaken, imperfect, but Jews.

How 'bout my relatives in New York? What's with them? And how 'bout the Israeli who says living in Israel is enough? I put the question of Who's a Jew in a spiritual – not a legislative – sense; not who's eligible for citizenship and associated benefits in Israel, but who can live in the house of Judaism as it's been designed by the celestial Architect: the one who told us in His book of the "mixed multitude" (Jews, slaves, Hittites, Nubians) at Sinai and offered us his Covenant. His definition of Jew is evidently a loose one.

There's much to be said for a democratic G-d who gives his personal guarantee, his covenant, to a "mixed multitude." Why not walk in His ways and show similar toleration?

Ted Roberts, a Rockower Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks at Jewish life with rare wit and insight. When he's not writing, Ted worships at (see Roberts, page 19)

Running with an angel

By ANDREA SIMANTOV

This year the city of Jerusalem hosted its first, ever, Full Marathon and runners from all over the world were keyed up for the premier run. Various organizations and institutions were fielding teams for the March 25, 2011 run in order to both raise funds and call attention to a myriad of causes that require both visibility and financing. The event was a celebration of Israel, fitness, and warmhearted fun. Especially in these troubling times, the vibes surrounding the race were palpable and filled with joy.

Everyone who registered to run with Team SHALVA has managed to connect to the special work they do in offering help and hope for families who are raising a child with special needs at home. From business executives to housewives to therapists to professional athletes, the SHALVA story has warmed the hearts of so many who participated in this premier event.

One runner who stands out, however, is Nicole Schiavi Jansezian, a young mother in SHALVA's *Me & My Mommy* program. Originally from New York, she came here seven years ago as a freelance journalist for Christian magazines and held a staff position with the Christian Embassy.

In her travels throughout the Old City, Nicole Schiavi became friendly with members of the vibrant Armenian Community and met a film journalist named Tony Jansezian. Tony is a producer for a pro-Israel Christian cable television network based in Jerusalem. Their friendship blossomed into romance and four years after meeting, they married in an Italian social club in Manhattan before returning to Jerusalem to make their home.

The deeply religious couple knew that when their first son was born, he would be named 'Daniel', after the prophet who was the exemplar of faith. Nicole, age 36, went into labor three weeks early and even though her mother's flight had been booked for a fortnight later, they Skyped the exciting happenings to New York as they occurred. Throughout the labor, delivery, and subsequent hospital stay, Nicole and Tony waxed enthusiastically about the professionalism and warmth of the Israeli birth experience.

Daniel's birth was joyous and uncomplicated. While his birth weight was a little low, this was to be expected from such an early delivery. There was some visible lethargy and concern grew that he might have Down syndrome, even though the early signs were not conclusive. Baby

Daniel lay nestled in his mother's arms while Nicole and Tony counted their blessings, secure in the knowledge that they were 'good people'. Barely allowing a thought to pass regarding the possibility of Down syndrome, Nicole brushed away the notion. "God wouldn't do that to us," she reassured herself. "He couldn't do this to me because I couldn't endure such an outcome. He only gives us what we can handle and I'm not a brave enough, strong enough, or special enough person" she concluded.



(L-R) Nicole, Daniel and Tony Jansezian.

Nevertheless, the next day brought the dreaded news. Daniel had Down syndrome and the cocoon of faith that had so lovingly enveloped the couple slowly began to unravel. "I was despondent and felt ashamed of myself for being unable to access my 'piety'. Here I am, a woman of faith who believes that all He does is good. And I can't look into my husband's eyes because either I failed Tony or God failed us and neither one of these conclusions was something that I could live with. It would take me weeks to find my religious conviction and say to God, 'Sorry I was angry. Please show me the way.'"

The baby was hypotonic (low muscle tone) and nursing him was proving to be impossible. Nevertheless, Nicole was determined to feed Daniel only breast milk and routinely pumped in order for him to receive nutrition via a bottle. In the meantime, Tony began reading up on Down syndrome and asking questions of the hospital staff in order to better understand what to expect from their new son. A resident social worker gave Nicole an English language version of SHALVA's booklet, "Your New Baby" but she wouldn't even look at it. Tony, however, read it cover-to-cover.

The baby stayed in the hospital for another three weeks after Nicole was discharged and she returned daily to bring his milk and try to make sense of what had happened to their small family. In the interim, Tony called SHALVA and made an appointment for an initial Intake Assessment.

Under protest, Nicole dressed and got into the car.

Smiling, she recalled her first impression of SHALVA after entering the front gate.

"It was 'hate at first sight'. I mean, what was I doing there? What did any of this have to do with me? I wanted to go home and attend to my career!" On that auspicious morning, one of the therapists asked, "Nicole, do you feel sorry for Daniel?" The floodgates burst and as the young mother began to sob, the therapist said, "From this day forward, you will never, ever pity your baby."

This was easier said than done but would form, eventually, a superb foundation for providing hope for the future.

"At the beginning, I found going to SHALVA depressing because I was consumed with the regular 'Stage Charts' of infant growth and achievements. The therapists told me to stop looking at other babies and focus only on Daniel, letting him reach his personal goals at a rate that was correct for him. At first I thought that the staff was being insensitive and not hearing me but I now understand that they were teaching me an important lesson.

"What was the first step I took toward letting go of my personal rage and accepting that Daniel was a separate human being? I stopped comparing him to my cousin's baby who was born during the same week." One of the first milestones that Daniel reached was to nurse, finally, directly from Nicole. Her joy was nearly incalculable.

With her new uplifted mood, Nicole invited her visiting mother to come to SHALVA with her. Not content to be merely an observer, Mrs. Schiavi worked intensely alongside the therapists in order to provide more assistance to her daughter during the visit. This proved very helpful when both Daniel and Nicole traveled to New York for six weeks. Instead of just mommy, he had daily therapy sessions with mom and his drill-sergeant grandma!

Nicole Jansezian has gone from reluctant participant to one of SHALVA's greatest advocates. Many mothers have come to rely on her infectious attitude and no-nonsense approach to raising a child with Down syndrome.

"My motto is 'No Limits' and I avoid websites that tell me to expect less. This isn't to say that I'm unaware that things may not come easily to Daniel but the regular 'baby sites' encourage parents to set goals and I think, 'Why not us?'"

She and Tony talk openly about the goals that they have in mind for Daniel. Musing aloud, Nicole doesn't skip a beat.

"Tony speaks five languages and is comfortable in all worlds. We are an 'international' family and with relatives

(see Simantov, page 15)



Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

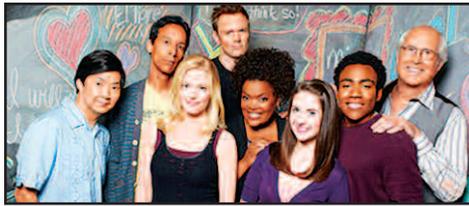
Getting it out there

The just-ended 2010-11 television season may become known for a new kind of depiction of Jewish themes. While somewhat gratuitous but not contemptuous, this genre of Jewish imaging might be called, simply, "getting it out there" – that is introducing Jewish themes usually at the end of an episode and without plot-driven focus on Jews and Judaism, just to show that Jewish themes "come up" in contemporary life.

Consider the popular ensemble comedy, *Community*, about students of diverse backgrounds and ages at a community college, as a case in point. In an episode about elective courses, gut courses, and an acting class, writer Emily Cutler concludes by pulling out "Professor Garrity's all black production of *Fiddler on the Roof*," which is retitled, *Fiddler, Please*. The half hour fades out with a weakly attempted rap piece, "It's hard to be Jewish in Russia," as actors dressed as old world Jews implore, "Someone drop an Old Testament beat." A segment here lampoons "media studies" professors, but it does not seem that any mockery of *Fiddler* is intended. The writer expects us to accept mention of the Jewish-themed play as a kind of tribute to it.



Cast members (L-R): Eric Close (kneeling), James Murray (on desk), Freddy Rodriguez and Tim Blake Nelson star in *CHAOS*, a comedic drama about a group of rogue CIA spies in the *Clandestine Administration and Oversight Services (CHAOS)*, who combat threats to national security amidst bureaucratic gridlock, rampant incompetence and political infighting.



Community starring (L-R): Ken Jeong, Danny Pudi, Gillian Jacobs, Joel McHale, Yvette Nicole Brown, Alison Brie, Donald Glover, and Chevy Chase.

Consider, also, an episode of the short-lived (?) new series, *Happy Endings*, a reincarnation of *Friends*. Principal character Dave (Zachary Knighton) wants to quit his job and open up a restaurant. His friends become increasingly concerned by his plans as he comes up with one reckless and silly scheme after another. One of the friends, Penny (Casey Wilson) is dating a man who belongs to a self-styled "hipster" clique where aloofness and apathy are valued. When asked if any in that clique are adults, she chimes back, "They will be after the bat mitzvah." At the end of the episode the gang crashes a "Nineties [themed] bat mitzvah party." Dave's African American buddy dresses up in a *talit*, despite the mantra of the hipster clique: "It's not cool to try so hard to dress up for a Nineties bat mitzvah." But apparently writer Leila Strachan regards it as cool to draw a bat mitzvah theme into an episode totally unrelated to its plot-wise. It seems that just bringing up the subject of a bat mitzvah, like bringing up *Fiddler*, is a form of honorable mention.

Contrast these detached but respectful (?) references to things Jewish with a more standard approach of mentioning Jews in the short-lived series, *Chaos*, about an earnest American Latino man, Rick Martinez (Freddy Rodriguez) working for an eccentric but effective CIA team. At the very beginning of the debut episode of *Chaos*, a point is made of referring to a chair taken from "Plotkin's office." We are further told that "Plotkin ate a bullet last week – no, literally. He ate a bullet on a dare. It got lodged in his lower intestine and septic shock set in. Now he's out on full disability and you're the proud owner of his Herman Miller."

Here, a Jewish name is put "out there" but the effect is deprecation of at least the common sense of an agent with a Jewish name who gets away with "full disability" because of his stupidity (or ineptitude or unsuitability for the job?). Is this a wholesale deprecation? True, the episode, written by Tom Spezialy, offers a female agent who eschews political correctness and refers to Arabs coming "with poison pills and guns." But they are dangerous enemies; the Plotkins in this world are *schlemiels* (fools).

SIMANTOV

(continued from page 14)

from Romania, Armenia, America and Italy, I think that Daniel can be a little lazy and only learn English, Armenian and Hebrew! I want him to go to mainstream nursery school; if possible, I want him to go to Hebrew University," she said with a smile. "I want Daniel to be Prime Minister."

When asked about her fears, she speaks more quietly.

"I fear that everything I said won't happen."

Nicole chose to run with Team SHALVA for several reasons. As with everything in her life, she sees Divine Intervention in this event as well.

"Since becoming members of the SHALVA Family, I've made great friends and deeply respect those who dedicate their working-lives to making the future brighter for families that are raising a child with special needs.

"Everyone at SHALVA has been friendly, loving, and deeply committed to our success. I've come to understand that if I am pushing Daniel to reach a difficult milestone then I have to push myself. And when I say, 'You can do it, Daniel,' these words must come from my heart. Running with Team SHALVA and getting my friends and family to sponsor me was a small way for me to spread the word and say 'Thank you.'"

As Nicole exited the building, Tony pulled up to the curb and stepped out to help her with the bags and to strap Daniel into his car seat. She turned to me with tears in her eyes.

"My husband and I aren't blind to the challenges ahead. We understand that it is important to live in the present. But while we are living in 'the now', we will continue to have faith in miracles."

Putting his arm around his wife's shoulder, Tony finished the thought.

"Nicole and I want to be examples for Daniel, to do all of the things we make up our minds to do. There are some things that are, today, beyond our reach. But it doesn't mean that they are 'out of reach'..."

To learn more about SHALVA – The Association for Mentally & Physically Challenged Children in Israel, go to www.shalva.org. ★



Is there a difference between beginning-of-episode references to men with Jewish names as *schlemiels* and the trotting out of Jewish cultural references at the end of an episode? In the eyes of the writers and producers, probably not. But it does seem that while *Chaos* coughed out a stereo-

(see Gertel, page 19)

Travel

By HAROLD JACOBSON AND ROSE KLEINER

Ft. Lauderdale is no longer the college students' exclusive spring preserve

It's hard to believe that more than 50 years have passed since Ft. Lauderdale became the magnet for American college students looking to experience the "Where the Boys Are" syndrome popularized by the 1960 film of that name. The city which hugs more than ten miles of oceanfront beaches has matured in the interim and now appeals to a broader and far more mature spectrum of tourists.

Many of the latter arrive now at the city's ever expanding international airport (plans are afoot to enlarge its dimensions), literally from the four corners of the earth to partake of the area's diverse attractions – beachcombing, sun bathing, picnicking, water sports, cruises, fine dining, incredible shopping, legitimate theater, art galleries and golfing facilities.

In response to the burgeoning tourist growth, many of the large American and international hotel chains have established a presence on the city's main thoroughfare. Local planning bylaws however, have required these new hotels to be built on the west side of the Ocean Drive, thereby permitting locals and visitors to have unimpeded access to the vast expanse of parkland and beaches on the Atlantic Ocean.

One of the best kept secrets in the area is the magnificent Lago Mar Hotel, nestled off 17th Avenue in a quiet preserve with the largest ocean front square footage in the area. This refined establishment with its tree covered canopy, two swimming pools, outdoor dining area, exquisite guest rooms and vistas offering views of cruise boats on their way to points south has been attracting families with its wholesome ambience for decades.

One other hotel which merits much praise in this brief survey is the Hyatt Bonaventure, a 15 minute ride from Ft. Lauderdale in Weston, Fla., just off I-595. The Hyatt offers what are perhaps the most spacious accommodations in the hotel industry, one bedroom suites supplied with numerous amenities including extraordinary in-room coffee. The hotel's golf course, Elizabeth Arden Spa and its swimming pool, located just off a private lake, are much used resources.



The magnificent Lago Mar "Family" Hotel in Ft. Lauderdale.

The Hyatt also is a favorite Passover destination. A recent visit to the hotel during that holiday indicated that guests were being treated there to a wide variety of sumptuous food offerings, synagogue prayer facilities and lectures.

The Boca Beach Club: The secret is out and it's stunning

Three years ago, during a visit to the Boca Raton Resort and Club in Boca Raton, Fla., the writers made a request to visit the hotel's beach property, then under renovation and reconstruction. The Oceanside facility was under wraps but we decided, after receiving permission, to take the half mile trek to reconnoitre what was to be called the Boca Beach Club.

The security around the site which backs onto the Atlantic Ocean would have made the people at Homeland Security proud. We could not move onto the property without a thorough identity check and workmen cast suspicious glances on our approach to the main building. Three outlines of outdoor swimming pools were visible in the back of the hotel but their design was obstructed by plastic tarpaulins and other construction materials.

Since the windows of the massive main structure were opaque due to a cloudy wax material we cheerfully asked a member of the construction crew if we could just peek inside to get some idea of its architectural and design features. "Absolutely not!" was

the instant response. Realizing that our quest for some hot travel news had come to an end, we vacated the premises and went back to the welcoming, sumptuous elegance of the Boca Raton Resort and Club.

Three years after that untoward encounter we made it back to the Boca Beach Hotel and it became understandable why secrecy was the order of the day in 2008. Management along with its cadre of architects, designers and landscapers have created something truly unique – an Oceanside facility that hugs its environment with ingenuity, exquisite good taste and attention to aesthetic details.

Brightly decorated guestrooms with a lighting system that makes reading at night times a pleasure, afford spectacular views of the ocean panorama and their windows, which open virtually to the width of the rooms, invite the splendors of the sun and the refreshing sea breezes of the Atlantic.

"Barefoot elegance" is one way to describe the Boca Beach Club's ambience but that felicitous phrase does not capture fully the waterfront vista with its three heated pools (no diving), selected shaded sitting areas protected by a huge semi transparent triangular covering and dotted with ultra luxurious cabanas. The beach area also leads to a richly equipped indoor fitness facility with all manner of exercise machines.

The Boca Beach Club has extended its charm to the ocean's edge where, in addition to chaises lounges, it has also set up tables right on the sand, where bathers may, after dipping into the Atlantic, enjoy a luncheon repast while gazing at the yachts, speed boats and other sea going vessels which pass by.

The Beach Club shares almost 400 acres of land and half a mile of beachfront with its partner, The Boca Raton Resort and Club (accessible by a ten minute shuttle ride), one of the most popular venues for Jewish guests on Passover where dietary laws are observed. ✪



Bird's eye view Boca Beach Club.

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

The rise and fall of Yavneh

The Greening of American Orthodox Judaism: Yavneh in the Nineteen Sixties. By Benny Kraut. Detroit: Wayne State University Press; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2011. 200 Pages. \$35.

In 1960, a few modern Orthodox Jewish students, who were attending 13 north-eastern universities, organized Yavneh: the National Jewish Religious Students Association. They had found an icy reception to their Orthodox practices from other students and from faculty, even though many were Jewish. There was little sympathy for their need to have kosher food and to observe the Sabbath as well as other Jewish holidays. Hillel Foundation rabbis, mostly Conservative or Reform, were uninterested or even hostile to their concerns. Moreover, they recognized that their parochial preparatory education did not equip them to debate the philosophical and scientific issues that confronted them at the university.

The initial formulation of Yavneh's goals and programs was designed to cope with these concerns through further Jewish education and observance; study of the relationship between Judaism and Western culture; promotion of unity among all campus Jews; and preparation for future leadership of the Orthodox Jewish community. The history of what happened to these aspirations is thoroughly presented in this book as it traces the organization's development over the 20-year period of its existence.

Many factors eventually contributed to Yavneh's relatively quick demise. Among these was the insistence of its student leaders that they would govern the organization without any adult direction and, in fact, the students really ran Yavneh. They established a National Advisory Board consisting of some Orthodox rabbis but it rarely met and contributed little save for some modest help in fund-raising. The heavy price the students paid for autonomy included absence of major financial support and administrative know-how. Another price of strident independence was tense relationships

with other organizations, especially the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation. A lengthy chapter – the longest in the book – is devoted to this failed connection.

The final chapter of the book offers a trenchant analysis of why Yavneh failed, attributing it, in part, to the different set of pre-occupations in academia during the 1960s referred to here as “the revolutionary zeitgeist.” Also, as more Orthodox students arrived in universities in the 1970s and as Jewish Studies programs became frequent, there was more openness to Orthodoxy and less hostility towards kosher food and Sabbath observance. These developments reduced the need for Yavneh as did the shift in interest of many Orthodox students to such causes as Soviet Jewry and support for Israel. Author Kraut insists that Yavneh was a success, reflecting and shaping American Orthodox Judaism.

Kraut died in 2008 soon after delivering the manuscript of this book to the publisher. At the time, he was director of Jewish Studies at Queens College, having come there in 1998 from the University of Cincinnati where he directed Judaic Studies for 22 years. He was a noted American Jewish historian and Judaic scholar with many well-received publications. In his student days, he was active in the leadership of Yavneh so that his fine book is based on personal experience as well as on diligent research. We are indebted to him for providing clear illumination of a little-known episode in American Jewish history.

Soviet Jews fleeing Russia

The Free World. By David Bezmozgis. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011. 400 Pages. \$26.

A hundred years ago, the Russian empire was home to more than five million Jews which made it the world's largest Jewish community at that time. As a consequence of border permutations, pogroms, persecution, and successful efforts to promote free emigration, the Jewish population of Russia has substantially diminished. From the 1960s to the 1990s, more than a million Soviet Jews left for Israel; a half million went to the United States; and substantial numbers have moved to Europe, Canada, and South America. The democratization policies of “perestroika” and “glasnost” under Mikhail

Gorbachev contributed significantly to large-scale emigration. To complement the factual accounts of this enormous population movement usually presented in dispassionate numerical reports, Bezmozgis provides this exciting fictional narrative that humanizes the impersonal and objective statistics.

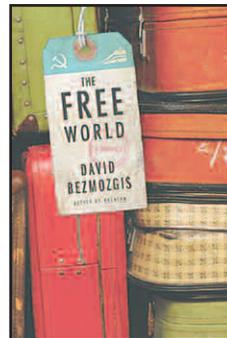
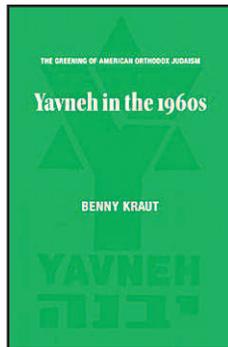
The story recounts the 1978 experiences of the Krasnansky family which manages to leave Riga, Latvia for Rome, en route to their final destination, Chicago. They are stuck in Rome for six months while awaiting final clearances. The book describes what happens to them in Rome and, through flashback scenes, it recounts aspects of their lives in Latvia, then under the domination of the Soviet Union.

The oldest generation consists of Samuil, an old Communist and Red Army veteran, and his wife, Emma. They are not happy about leaving Russia but do so in order to remain with their two sons, their daughters-in-law, and their two grandsons. Karl, the older son of Samuil and Emma, and his wife, Rosa, are the parents of the two boys. He is the driving force behind the decision to leave, hoping to find new opportunities not available to him in Riga. His younger brother, Alec, and Alec's wife, Polina, have gone along with the determination to leave without any great enthusiasm although Alec hopes that he may find more chances to fulfill his womanizing predilections. Partly to fulfill that aspiration, he settles in a Rome apartment with his wife while the rest of the family finds accommodations in Ladispoli, a beach resort where many other Russians are living while waiting for their visas to leave Europe. They are all supported by HIAS and the Joint Distribution Committee.

Although Alec gradually emerges as the focal character in the story, each of the other adults and the many people with whom they interact are presented in nuanced portrayals. Alec's adventures occupy central stage, demonstrating the complexities of the family's limbo period in their temporary home.

Author Bezmozgis, originally from Riga, has succeeded in providing a robust and spirited depiction of relatively unfamiliar experiences. Although he slips occasionally in maintaining the reader's attention, for the most part, he effectively describes a time and a place that are not ordinarily in the forefront of our knowledge about Jewish history. This debut novel more than fulfills the expectations established by Bezmozgis's first book, *Natasha and Other Stories*, a widely-hailed, prize-winning collection of short stories. Only 36 years old, Toronto-based Bezmozgis has firmly established himself as an important Jewish

(see Teicher, page 19)





My Kosher Kitchen

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Gourmet kosher cooking

Kosher Elegance. By Efrat Libfroind. Feldheim Publishers, 2011. 257 pages. \$44.99.

The book is subtitled, *The Art of Cooking with Style*, but that is too much of an understatement for this gourmet cookbook.

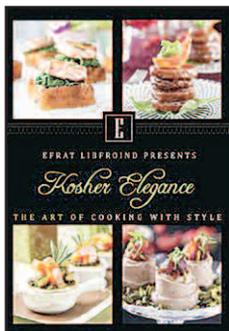
Mrs. Libfroind's book of more than 100 recipes would more accurately be called a book of works of art you can eat, definitely not for the novice cook and unquestionably for the sophisticated, experienced cook.

Even her chapter titles and contents reflect a different approach to elegant kosher cooking. Chapter 1, "Sophistication" is recipes for "those looking for the very finest in every category"; chapter 2, "Occasions" is recipes for Shabbat, holidays or special events; chapter 3, "Brunch" is just that; chapter 4, "Hors D'oeuvres" is appetizers; chapter 5, "Layers" shows how ingredients can be made into special layered presentations; chapter 6, "Simplicity" is two-minute recipes; chapter 7, "Sushi" may not qualify as traditional sushi recipes but they are original creations; chapter 8, "Temptation" and chapter 9, "Chocolate", are Mrs. Libfroind's signature desserts.

Although I am a good cook, cookbook author and food columnist, most of these recipes seemed very complicated to me, however, among those I will definitely try are liver in wine sauce on bed of spinach and potatoes, heavenly broccoli-cauliflower bake, fried chicken tartlets, iced coffee and potato chip chicken.

Each recipe is on the left-hand page with introductory remarks, a column of ingredients and a column of instructions (albeit, unnumbered, which is my personal, favorite style) and there is a tip at the end. The right-hand page is a full-color breathtaking, amazing photograph.

After the index there is an index of how-to information (e.g., how to make chocolate curls, sun-dried tomatoes, home-made cream cheese and more) and a really nice touch is pages for the cook's own notes.



Efrat Libfroind is an Israeli pastry chef and teacher who lives in Jerusalem and is a regular contributor to *Binah* magazine, a glossy weekly magazine for observant Jewish women.

This is undeniably a unique contribution to the world of elegant, kosher cookbooks and it would make a beautiful coffee-table or kitchen hostess gift for any kosher cook. The following are recipes from the book.

Heavenly Broccoli-Cauliflower Bake (Makes 1 10-inch round pan)

1 lb. broccoli
1 lb. cauliflower
1 1/4 cups heavy whipping cream
1 cup milk
4 eggs
1 tsp. salt
1 glove garlic, crushed
5 oz. shredded feta cheese
2 Tbsp. flour

Whether the vegetables are fresh or frozen, they do not require blanching. Preheat oven to 350°F. Break up the vegetables into small florets and places in baking pan. Mix cream, milk, eggs, salt, garlic, feta cheese, and flour. Pour over vegetables and bake for about 40 minutes.

Tip: I recommend using only the florets for this recipe, but don't throw away the stems. Add them to soup for unbelievable flavor and nutrients.

Fabulous Quick Salmon Roll-Ups (Makes 4 roll-ups, 4 slices per roll-up)

4 thin slices bread, crusts removed
Salmon filling
4 fresh skinless salmon fillets
1/2 tsp. paprika
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 pinch kosher salt
3 Tbsp. olive oil
Spread
3 Tbsp. pesto sauce (see recipe below)
2 Tbsp. mayonnaise
Crumb coating
4 slices bread
1/2 cup basil leaves

Flatten bread with a rolling pin until it is paper-thin and place it on a sheet of plastic wrap. Mix pesto sauce with mayonnaise and spread over bread.

Salmon filling: Mix paprika, garlic, kosher salt, and olive oil, and dredge fish in the mixture. Heat 1 Tbsp. of olive oil in a skillet and fry salmon for approximately 5 minutes on each side. Cool. Place a slice of salmon on a slice of pesto-covered bread. Using the plastic wrap, roll the bread around the salmon and press tightly shut. Continue with remaining slices.

Crumb coating: In a food processor, grind bread and basil and spread crumbs on a sheet of plastic wrap. Smear a bit

SHAFRAN

(continued from page 9)

The distinction may seem subtle, but it's not. We know G-d not because of any miracle but rather because He communicated directly with our ancestors at Mt. Sinai, a carefully preserved historical fact we will soon celebrate on Shavuot. That was no mere miracle, but an actual *interaction*, a mass meeting of the human and Divine – the only such interaction in human history.

That, explains Maimonides, is why, when G-d tells Moses to lead the Jewish People from Egypt, He adds: "And this is your sign that I have sent you: When you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve [Me] on this mountain," referring to Mt. Sinai.

That mass revelation 50 days after the exodus from Egypt is what established, beyond all doubt and suspicion, that the miracles the people had witnessed had not been trickery or sorcery but expressions of the love and concern of the Creator, Who was now introducing Himself directly to their minds and souls, and gifting them with the Torah.

It's, admittedly, strange that a Catholic rite brought me to reflect anew on the difference between a religion that "proves" things by "miracles" – indeed is based on them – and the incontrovertible truth to which we Jews are heir. But the difference is well worth pondering as we continue our "count-up" to this year's commemoration of the day we met the Creator.

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Rabbi Shafran is an editor at large and columnist for Ami Magazine. Communications to: rabbishafran@ami magazine.org. ✨



of the pesto-mayonnaise mixture on the outside of the roll-ups and roll in crumbs. Freeze for about 1 hour and cut into 1-inch slices.

Tip: For great eye appeal, sprinkle roll-ups with black sesame seeds and serve alongside a small bowl of soy sauce.

Pesto sauce

2 cups fresh basil leaves
2 cloves garlic
5 Tbsp. pine nuts
1/2 tsp. salt
1 pinch black pepper
3/4 cup olive oil or canola oil

In a food processor, grind the basil, garlic, pine nuts, salt and pepper. Add oil while the food processor is running.

Sybil Kaplan is the "Creating a Stir" columnist for the Jerusalem Post; a food writer and lecturer; leader of "Shuk Walks" in Machaneh Yehudah; presenter on RustyMikeRadio.com with "Shuk Shopping;" and compiler/editor of eight kosher cookbooks. ✨

Will the future king of England be a Jew? Possibly.

It could happen!

It is interesting to note the following in the family tree of Kate Middleton, wife of Prince William:

Kate's mother is Carol Middleton, daughter of Ronald Goldsmith and Dorothy Harrison (both Jews).

The parents of Dorothy Harrison are Robert Harrison and Elizabeth Temple (both Jews), the latter a descendant of the Myers family (traditional English Jews in the 19th century).

Bottom line: Princess Kate is a Jew on her matrilineal side, and as a consequence, the future king of England will be a Jew according to Jewish Law and tradition.

Submitted by Arnold Parris of Overland Park, Kansas. Information attributed to an Orthodox (Sephardic) rabbi in Israel. ★



ROBERTS

(continued from page 13)

Etz Chayim Synagogue in Huntsville, Ala., where for 25 years he has served as bar mitzvah teacher. His inspiration is his patient wife, Shirley. Check out his Web site: www.wonderwordworks.com. Blogsite: www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com. His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof can be bought at Amazon.com or lulu.com/content/127641. ★



GERTEL

(continued from page 15)

type, *Community* and *Happy Endings* were attempting to show that Jews are out there and that there is nothing wrong with getting out that message, even, or especially, for no reason at all. Some may see this as a sweet and straightforward gesture. Yet because of persistent stereotyping, past and present, such a gesture may well be misread and may be more problematic than the writers and producers think.

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

TEICHER

(continued from page 17)

writer whose future work we await with keen anticipation.

Complex relationships across generations

We Had It So Good. By Linda Grant. New York: Scribner, 2011. 325 Pages. \$25.

Born in Liverpool in 1951 to Russian and Polish Jewish immigrants, Linda Grant was educated in England before pursuing post-graduate studies in Ontario and British Columbia, Canada. After ten years, she returned to England in 1985 and worked as a journalist until she published her first book in 1993, a history of the sexual revolution. Two years later, her initial novel, *The Cast Iron Shore*, appeared. Her interest in Israel and in Jewish affairs is manifest in her writing which now includes five novels and four non-fiction works for which she has received several prizes.

Grant's new novel, *We Had It So Good*, demonstrates both her writing skill and her continuing concern for Jewish subjects although the major emphasis of the story is on cross-generational relationships.

Her protagonist, Stephen Newman, born in California in 1946, is a member of the baby boomer generation. His Jewish immigrant father, Simon Newman, works in a fur storage warehouse and is determined that his son will be strong and will have a college education. Simon's own strength is manifested in the work he does and in the apocryphal story he tells about his arrival in America as a youngster. At Ellis Island, his parents were banned from entry to the United States because of tuberculosis. Simon refused to return to Europe with them and never saw them again. He made his way to California and eventually married a Latina from Cuba who gave birth to Stephen and his two sisters.

To toughen up his son, Simon arranged for him to get a maritime union ticket which enabled him to work as a cabin boy on cruise ships each summer while he attended college. A good student with a special interest in chemistry, Stephen won a Rhodes scholarship and sailed for England aboard the SS *United States*. His shipmate was fellow Rhodes scholar, Bill Clinton, but they had little contact after reaching Oxford. Stephen became friendly

with two girls, Grace and Andrea and with some other students, including Ivan. His relationships with these people, especially Andrea who he marries, occupies the rest of the book.

Stephen is dismissed from Oxford because he is caught defacing a library book and he winds up in a London commune with his wife, Andrea, and some of his former classmates. Eventually, he writes for a science magazine and this ultimately leads to his work as a BBC producer of science programs. Andrea becomes a psychotherapist, having studied with a number of Jewish mentors and tutors. They have two children, Marianne and Max. The family travels to California to see Stephen's parents and to explore the possibility of settling in Los Angeles. Stephen argues that America is a good place for Andrea to practice since "shrinks" are popular there and since "the Jews are neurotic." However, he is unable to find work; the relationship with his parents is problematic; and so they return to England where the story's emphasis shifts to the third generation, Marianne and Max. However, maintaining her attention on inter-generational associations, Grant describes Simon's trip to London after his wife dies and explores further the connection between Stephen and his father.

The novel is a fascinating examination of complex human relationships across the generations, displaying Grant's sensitivity and her superlative skill in portraying the tangled knots of interaction among men, women, and children.

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



Thoughts

The Anthony Weiner story

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

I'm repeatedly asked, so one comment. The Maggid of Dubno said we have two kinds of need in us, material and spiritual. No matter how much we fill one kind – with possessions, sex, power, acclaim – if we do not fill the other, we will keep on seeking. And mistaking. And hurting and being hurt. In the absence of spirit, appetite is endless.

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



NEWS*(continued from page 4)*

Jewish life. Only very rarely has Jewish history known an era of so much creativity or innovation; no previous generation has possessed our resources and potential... This moment in Jewish history demands bold thinking with big ideas; this is not a time for staying the course. It's time to reinvent the architecture of Jewish life."

As President of the URJ, Rabbi Jacobs will assume many new official posts on Jewish communal organizations including the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, among others.

Rabbi Jacobs will join Rabbi Yoffie in the campaign to make youth engagement a key priority for the Reform Movement and its 900 congregations. Their efforts aim to engage a large majority of post bar/bat mitzvah teens and their families in Jewish living and learning.

Rabbi Jacobs' acceptance speech can be found online. His biography, writings and other articles can be found at urj.org/rabbijacobs. ✨

NECHAMA – Jewish Response to Disaster volunteers needed for extended deployment

NECHAMA – Jewish Response to Disaster needs immediate support from the Jewish community as they work to assist tornado disaster victims in the South. Because of the devastation by spring storms, the organization extended its current tornado cleanup deployment in and around Birmingham, Ala., through June 30th.

In a 72-hour period in late April, 362 tornadoes hit Alabama and Mississippi killing over 300 people.



Join the volunteers and wear your tee shirt with pride! Volunteers pose for photos in between the hard work of clearing flooded homes in Alabama.

In late spring, in response to the devastation, NECHAMA deployed staff and volunteers to the Birmingham/Tuscaloosa, Ala., area, where the dead number in the hundreds. NECHAMA works with the victims of this underserved area as they recover from their extraordinary losses, and helps individuals restore order to their property and lives.

The scale of damage from these storms is compared to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

"The need is extreme," says Dan Hoeft, director of operations for NECHAMA. "Our FEMA, AmeriCorp and Red Cross partners have made clear that they need us. These storms are record-breaking in destruction to personal lives."

Immediately after the Birmingham deployment ends, NECHAMA will be undertaking extensive flood cleanup work in Memphis, Tenn., as a result of the flooding of the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Over 1,000 homes in the Memphis area have sustained flood damage. Many of those people do not have insurance and are unable to clear and clean their homes alone.

If you and your group are interested in either the Birmingham or Memphis deployments, please contact Amy Cytron, NECHAMA's volunteer coordinator, at acytron@nechama.org.

Contributions are needed and welcome. Visit the website to make a financial contribution to NECHAMA.

To register for updates, contact NECHAMA; 763-732-0610 or email info@nechama.org.

NECHAMA is a member of national Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. More information about the organization is available at NECHAMA - Jewish Response to Disaster, the organization website at <http://www.NECHAMA.org>. ✨

Free Holocaust programming resource available online

Rabbi Dov Lerner is delighted to announce the FREE availability of a Holocaust programming resource by colleague and friend Rabbi Bernhard Rosenberg. It is located on his website: www.jewishfreeware.org. This is an extensive collection of (1) film titles, (2) summary of content, (3) basic details and (4) suggested discussion questions on the theme of the Holocaust. This resource is intended to provide useful information to assist professional staff and committees for synagogue programming and/or classes in Religious School or Hebrew High School and/or community programs.

The direct link is: <http://www.jewishfreeware.org/downloads/YOM%20HASHOAH/>.

"The Holocaust As Seen Through Film With Bibliography" is the creation of Rabbi Doctor Bernhard Rosenberg. This extensive collection contains films dealing with the theme of the Holocaust with a bibliography. There are suggested discussion questions for each film appropriate for Yom HaShoah, Tisha B'Av and Jewish History classes or synagogue/community/school programs. Anyone wishing to suggest more films and bibliography and/or discussion questions is asked to contact Rabbi Rosenberg at chaimdov@aol.com. ✨

American Friends of Migdal Ohr appoints Evan Bernstein

NEW YORK, NY – The American Friends of Migdal Ohr has announced that it has hired a new Executive Director, Evan Bernstein, capping off a nationwide search. The 36-year-old Bernstein left The David Project Center for Jewish Leadership in Boston, where he was the National Director of Development in charge of all fundraising, marketing and public relations.



Bernstein will replace Robert Katz, who, after five years of dedicated service, decided to step down in order to pursue other endeavors.

Migdal Ohr (www.migdalohrusa.org) is one of the most significant nonprofit organizations in Israel and works primarily with children at risk. It is comprised of multiple campuses and programs that help Jewish Israelis in need from infancy to adulthood. The main campus in Migdal Ha'Emek has multiple schools and dorms for children across the religious spectrum. Across Israel, there are youth clubs and special training schools to help provide young people with a trade. Migdal Ohr also has a prisoner outreach program and provides thousands of meals to the poor every year. The majority of the people served are children that are comprised of orphans, the impoverished, and the underprivileged. The staff of 800+ ensures that all of Migdal Ohr's children and adults have their individual needs met with love and tremendous sensitivity. ✨

