

# *The Jewish* Post & Opinion • *National Edition*

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Cover Art by Marc Bennett  
(see About the Cover on p. 2)



# About the Cover

*The History of the Star of David*  
By Marc Bennett

The Star of David is the most universally recognized symbol of Judaism and one of the oldest recognizable symbols in history. Despite its instantly recognizable form, the Star of David has a history that is unknown to many. *The History of the Star of David* by Marc Bennett explores the complex journey of the Star of David through 18 iterations of its use spanning centuries. The artwork allows viewers to bear witness to the depths and heights of the journey of the Jewish people. *The History of the Star of David* inspires and educates the public on the development of this symbol and the meanings it has come to evoke from remote antiquity up to the current State of Israel. Bennett's artwork evokes a sense of survival and determination, as well as a celebration of Jewish culture, tradition and faith.



M. Bennett

Pictured on the cover is star number 15 of the 18, a detail of a porcelain Passover plate, made by Joseph Wetter, Vienna (1900). The design of this Passover plate has six heart-shaped spaces for the symbolic foods of the *Seder* meal and a Star of David in the center. Each of the six items arranged on the plate have special significance to the retelling of the story of the Jews exodus from Egypt. Judaism has a long tradition of commissioning Jewish ceremonial art and ritual objects from talented craftsmen and artists. It is believed to enhance a *mitzvah* by performing these rituals with an especially beautiful object.

Bennett originally created this artwork as a gift to his Rabbi to celebrate the opening of The Aspen Jewish Community Center. Since then, *The History of the Star of David* artwork has created something of a movement that remembers the challenges and triumphs of our culture's past and inspires us to create a better future. Many prestigious institutions have since acquired pieces from Bennett's series, including: Yad Vashem, the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, Sinai Temple Los Angeles, the Aspen Jewish Community Center, and the Jona Goldrich Center for Digital Storytelling at USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education, and others.

"The History of the Star of David is a radiant work of art that serves as a daily reminder of the tremendous journey the Jewish people have endured and our shared role in crafting the next great chapter in Jewish history," remarks Ron B. Meier, PhD Executive Director American Society for



Yad Vashem. "We are honored to have it prominently displayed at Yad Vashem in Israel and in our offices in NYC."

In keeping with Marc Bennett's reason for creating the *History of the Star of David* as a gift and vehicle for positive change, the artist has joined forces with Soroka Medical Center (rendering above), Israel's most strategic hospital to create a philanthropic project. Through this collaboration, 10 percent of all *History of the Star of David* art sales will be donated to Soroka in perpetuity. Limited edition prints signed by the artist make an unforgettable gift, while providing funds to support Soroka's life-saving mission. Bennett's beautifully finished metal and paper prints are available in various sizes, delivered ready to display. Visit [www.StarofDavidArt.com](http://www.StarofDavidArt.com) to purchase.

"This is a significant opportunity for Soroka Medical Center that will support our life-saving mission," states Dr. Shlomi Codish, Director General for Soroka Medical Center. "The artwork's intrinsic optimism for the future reflects Soroka's current strategic role for the State of Israel, enabling the transformative development of the Negev."

The American Friends of Soroka Medical Center have also commissioned Bennett to create a monumental depiction of his artwork. This installation of *The History of the Star of David* will become the focal point for Soroka's new Legacy Heritage Oncology Center and Dr. Larry Norton Institute's healing garden, set to be unveiled later this year at the Soroka campus in Be'er Sheva, Israel.

Marc Bennett is an artist and filmmaker from Brooklyn, N.Y., and a member of the Directors Guild of America. Bennett has been honored with numerous awards including: the Art of California Magazine's "Discovery Award," the Stamford Art Association's "Color Award," and was honored with the "World Medal" from the New York Festivals' Television Advertising Awards. Bennett's artwork has been used in campaigns to raise awareness for numerous organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and the Museum of Tolerance. Bennett's current directorial

# 1,500+ Jewish Clergy Sign Letter to Protect Asylum Seekers

HIAS convenes faith leaders and attorneys to deliver petition to members of Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. – July 25, 2019. A delegation of rabbis, attorneys, and advocates gathered in D.C. last week to deliver a petition signed by 1,500-plus Jewish clergy members to elected officials, calling on them to protect the essential legal right to seek asylum in the U.S. The letter, spearheaded by HIAS, includes signatories from 47 states and every movement of Judaism. It expresses outrage over the United States' treatment of asylum seekers and calls for urgent moral leadership from elected officials.



The advocacy group visiting D.C. included national leaders as well as representatives from San Diego, El Paso, and Albuquerque. Each is providing support directly to asylum seekers in their local communities and shared their experiences with lawmakers. One of the participants, Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld, represents Congregation Albert in Albuquerque, which has helped provide food, clothing, medical care, housing and bus tickets to hundreds of asylum seekers who have been processed at the border  
(see Asylum, page 5)

projects include; *The Tattooed Torah*, featuring Ed Asner's voice narrating the renowned children's book, and *I Ride for the Living*, an inspirational story about the annual bike ride from Auschwitz to the JCC in Krakow, Poland. Bennett is committed to using art and film as visual languages that entertain, educate, enlighten, and inspire positive change worldwide. To learn more about *The History of the Star of David* and Marc Bennett visit [www.StarofDavidArt.com](http://www.StarofDavidArt.com). For merchandise licensing opportunities please email: [mindy@galebranding.com](mailto:mindy@galebranding.com). ✨

# Editorial

In our June 7, 2019 Indiana edition, I wrote about a play I had seen, *The Soap Myth* starring Ed Asner that was performed in Carmel, Ind., a suburb of Indianapolis. See full version at this link: <https://jewishpostopinion.com/?p=3708>

On April 30, 2019, the Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis presented their 2019 campaign kick-off. One of the special events for that evening was this play by American Playwright Jeff Cohen.

Asner was born in Kansas City to Russian Jewish immigrants and he was raised Orthodox. In person, Asner is a lot like he was on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* – which aired from 1970–77 – cantankerous but endearing. Although he will be 90 on Nov. 15, he remains a very talented actor.

The other cast members included Dee Pelletier, Ned Eisenberg, and Liba Vaynberg. Both Pelletier and Eisenberg portrayed two different people in this play. The acting was excellent as was the plot.

Asner plays a disgruntled, but loveable Holocaust survivor who, during World War II, witnessed soap that was made from the fat of human corpses. He even has an actual photo to prove it. He would like the Holocaust Museum to include his story in an exhibit, but they say they cannot since there is not enough documentation to back up his story.

The director of the museum claims this is vitally important because otherwise Holocaust deniers will say it is a made-up story. Furthermore, they will claim that the other Holocaust exhibits were also fabricated. The observer of the play has to make up his or her own mind about what is fact and what is a myth and how important that difference is.

After the play, Jeff Cohen mentioned PBS had filmed the play in New York. He hoped it would eventually be available for viewing on local PBS stations, but he said it would definitely be available on all streaming devices for free.

Ironically on May 31, one month after I saw the play, I received the following press release. Along with it was a letter to the Executive Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Sara Bloomfield. The letter, signed by 37 scholars expressed dismay at the omission of Carl Laemmle from the "Americans and the Holocaust" exhibit at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

**Press Release: Hollywood mogul saved Jews from Hitler – so why does U.S. Holocaust Museum ignore him?**

Thirty-seven prominent Holocaust scholars, filmmakers, and other public figures have signed a letter expressing



Jennie Cohen (R) with actor Ed Asner.

concern about the refusal of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to recognize a Hollywood producer who saved hundreds of Jews from Hitler.

The letter was organized by Sanford C. Einstein, an entertainment industry executive from Northern California, whose father was one of the Jews rescued by Hollywood mogul Carl Laemmle.

Laemmle was responsible for such legendary films as *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Phantom of the Opera*. Himself a refugee from Germany, Laemmle served as a financial guarantor for several hundred Jews so they could flee from his hometown of Laupheim and other parts of Nazi Germany.

Laemmle's rescue efforts were cut short by the Roosevelt administration, which informed him in 1938 that he was too old to be considered a reliable guarantor for any more refugees. He was 71 at the time.

There is no mention of Laemmle in the "Americans and the Holocaust" exhibit at the U.S. Holocaust Museum, although individuals who aided far fewer numbers of Jewish refugees are included – such as Gilbert and Eleanor Kraus, who brought 50 refugee children to America.

The curators of the exhibit, Daniel Greene and Rebecca Erbelding, claimed to Einstein that Laemmle was left out of the exhibit because they "were limited by a lack of artifacts or visual material related to Laemmle." Yet the *New York Times* and other news outlets had no trouble finding visual materials about Laemmle when they published articles about him in recent years. (Go to: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/13/movies/unlike-his-peers-a-studio-chief-saved-jews-from-the-nazis.html>.)

**Below is the response Einstein received to his letter from Director Bloomfield:**

*Dear Mr. Einstein,  
Yes, we are in receipt of various letters on this subject.*

*An exhibition is never a comprehensive look at any topic – it is always limited by physical space and three dimensional materials available. Furthermore and most importantly, and exhibition is always guided by overall educational goals geared to a particular audience.*

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## The Jewish Post & Opinion

*Jewish News and Opinion since 1935.*

1389 W 86th St. #160  
Indianapolis, IN 46260  
email: [jpostopinion@gmail.com](mailto:jpostopinion@gmail.com)  
phone and fax: (317) 405-8084  
website: [www.jewishpostopinion.com](http://www.jewishpostopinion.com)  
publisher & editor: Jennie Cohen  
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*Our curator, Danny Greene, and his team of historians and educators made choices to determine what would be included or excluded in the exhibition. I realize you do not agree with the choices made but I am very confident in their decisions and the educational importance of this exhibition.*

*Sincerely,  
Sara J. Bloomfield Director  
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
[www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)*

Next I emailed my editorial from June 7, 2019, and this letter above along with other articles Sanford Einstein sent me to Jeff Cohen. This included a telegram Laemmle sent to President FDR in 1939 (photo p. 4).

(see Editorial, page 4)



# Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

B.H.

## Back Home Again in Indiana

I was born and grew up in Indianapolis. However, thank G-d, for the last 50 years my home is Israel.

Growing up in Indianapolis was not easy or very pleasant. For many years I was the only Jew in my class in public school. My knowledge of *Torah*, the laws of G-d, and my observance of His commandments was close to zero, so life had very little meaning or positive experiences. Fifty years ago I discovered the wonderful Chassidic way of life. I joined Chabad and now wherever I find myself, every day and every minute has meaning and positive experiences.

Recently I left Israel for the first time in two years. My first stop was in Brooklyn, to 770 Eastern Parkway, the world headquarters of Chabad. Right now we can't see our Rebbe, but when I am in 770, I can feel his presence, and this is a wonderful feeling. I was also very happy to meet many old friends and some of my former students. Life is not always easy. We sometimes face difficulties. When I am in 770, I feel my spiritual batteries recharging.

My next stop was Buffalo, N.Y. There I have two married sons and their families. It was wonderful to spend time with them. On June 23 we celebrated together the *Bar Mitzvah* of one of my grandchildren who lives there. It was beautiful. Buffalo has a strong Chabad community. I was really impressed and happy. Many people there told me that my sons and their families are doing a lot to strengthen the community.

I took it easy and rested for a few days after the *Bar Mitzvah*, and then started planning the trip to Bloomington, Ind., for our July 4th family reunion. I have two brothers and five sisters, may they be well, all living in America, and I was looking forward to seeing them and their families. From Buffalo to Bloomington is a nine hour drive, but even so both of my sons were planning to attend.

Then one son decided not to go to Bloomington. I was not especially happy with this. I knew that my brothers and sisters would be happy to see him and his family. However, I understood that it was not an easy trip, and besides, he and his family had traveled to Bloomington six months earlier to participate in the previous family reunion there. And even if he did not go, I could get a ride to Bloomington with my other son and his family.

### EDITORIAL

(continued from page 3)

Jeff Cohen's response: *Hi Jennie, Thanks for all of this! It is always disheartening to see real-life examples of the kind of "exclusions" encountered by my character Milton Saltzman in his determination to see "soap" displayed in museums and exhibitions. In my opinion, the scholarly community can and should do a better job respecting the kinds of testimony and stories surrounding the Holocaust. Of course six million individual stories cannot be told by museum officials, but each story should at least be honored by those officials with something a little more personal than the*



The next day he told me that he had changed his mind, and he would also go to Bloomington. Then he told me an amazing story. That morning he drove to work. While driving up a hill, he got stuck in back of a truck that was going slow. Finally he was able to pass the truck, but then he heard a siren, and a police car pulled him over. *Oy veh!*

He had passed the truck in a no passing zone! And he had been speeding! The policeman came over and started to check his car and his car's registration papers. This was not right. All together the policeman wanted to give him five tickets, with who knows what fines to pay. The policeman went back to his police car to write out the tickets.

Well, at this point my son felt that all this had happened because G-d wanted him to go to the family reunion in Bloomington. He said "OK G-d, I'll go!" A minute later the policeman came back and told him that he was only going to give him one ticket this time. Amazing!

Well, we had a nice drive to Bloomington, with a few stops on the way to rest and eat. Driving nine hours at one time is not easy for me at this age, but I really enjoyed travelling together with my son and daughter-in-law and four grandchildren. And I enjoyed meeting a brother and five sisters and their families. I was very happy to see that my family in America is doing better, both materially and spiritually.

One of my brothers is a professor of biology at Yale University. For the last 50 years I have been trying to convince him that life on our planet did not just happen by accident. Now he finally agreed with me! He and his fellow scientists have learned that even the most simple one-cell form of life is amazingly complicated and holds in it an amazing amount of information.

One of my nephews is a lawyer who lives with his wife and two babies in

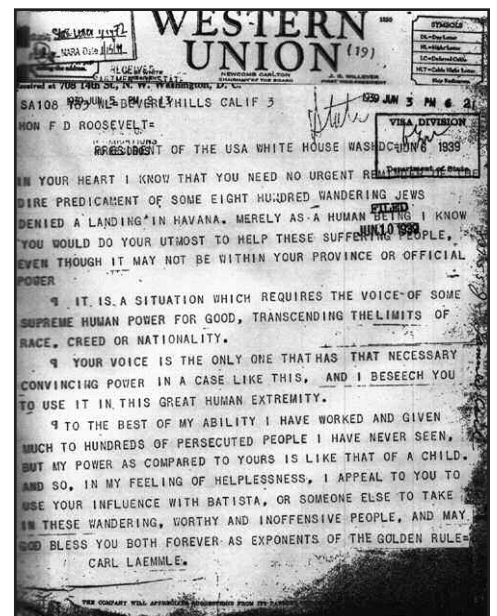
(see Benzion, page 5)

email you copy above.

*In re: these stories, sometimes it falls upon artists to tell them – and their patrons to disseminate them. I have actually written another play which tells a previously unknown (or little known) story about a highly placed German industrialist who risked his life and the lives of family members to warn the world of the Final Solution in July, 1942. His information was the basis of the Reigner Telegram that was received by Rabbi Stephen Wise and subsequently landed on Roosevelt's desk in December, 1942. Had the President acted, I can only imagine the millions of lives that could have been saved from 1943 to 1945. This German's identity remained a secret until 1983 (he passed away in 1966). Several years later, his identity revealed, Eduard Schulte was posthumously recognized by Yad Vashem as "righteous among the nations."*

*The play is called Righteous and if The Soap Myth continues to gain accolades, perhaps Righteous will receive productions as well and Schulte's story of courage and conviction will become known.*

Best, Jeff



*Carl Laemmle's telegram to President Roosevelt in 1939 imploring his help to rescue Jews fleeing the Holocaust.*

In closing, a big shout out and thank you go to two of our columnists. **Rabbi Elliot B. Gertel** began contributing his "Media Watch" column 40 years ago on July 27, 1979 (see current one on page 15). **Rabbi Jon Adland** has retired from the rabbinate and submitted his last "*Shabbat Shalom*" (see page 5). *JP&O* first published Rabbi Adland on Sept. 11, 1985, and has been publishing his "*Shabbat Shalom*" since Aug. 20, 2003. We are very grateful to both for their insights. We will miss reading Rabbi Adland and look forward to more from Rabbi Gertel. *L'Shana Tova!*

Jennie Cohen, August 7, 2019 ✨

# Shabbat Shalom



BY RABBI JON ADLAND

*Pirke Avot 1:2 – The world is sustained by three things: the study of Torah, the worship of God, and the performance of deeds of loving kindness.*

**June 28, 2019, Shlach L'chah  
Numbers 13:1–15:41, 25 Sivan 5779**

Sometime in 1996, I had the idea to send a weekly email out to addresses I had of family and friends that would have a message and encourage people to remember that Friday evening is *Shabbat*. I didn't know these things were called blogs, but I guess *Shabbat Shalom* is just that – a blog. Nearly every Friday since that time, I have sat down to write something. There have been breaks while on vacation or at GUCI or during the summer, but my guess is that I've written about 40 a year. Except for a couple, I've written all of them on Friday morning.

Sometimes I knew what I wanted to say. Sometimes I just let my fingers do the writing. Sometimes I struggled with an idea. Usually by 8:30 in the morning I had *Shabbat Shalom* written and was off to the gym. In Canton, at some point on Friday, *Shabbat Shalom* was emailed to Temple members by the office, to my list on Google, and posted on Facebook.

Over the years I have tried to inspire people to light candles and make *Shabbat* in some fashion. I have also weighed in on issues facing our country or Israel. I have remembered people who have died whose lives impacted mine. I have noted important historical dates. I have "talked" *Torah*. I have shared important moments in my life and the life of my family. I have received support from some of you and criticism on my positions from others. One rabbi said that if I don't piss people off then I am not doing my job. I don't intentionally do that, but I know that not everyone agrees with how I think.

I made the decision some months ago that when I retire, *Shabbat Shalom* would retire with me. After maybe 1,000 of these "blogs" it is time to just say thank you to everyone who took the time to open the email and read what I wrote. My B-CC High School English teachers or my freshman comp teacher would be amazed today that I could actually string coherent sentences together. I've never seen myself as a writer, but a communicator. I find something to say and I figure out how to get the message to you. It is all I've tried to do.

## ASYLUM

(continued from page 2)

and released from detention centers.

Rabbi Rosenfeld commented, "I was honored HIAS invited me to be a part of presenting the Jewish Clergy Letter to Congress. The officials we met, from both sides of the aisle, were sympathetic to the necessity of providing humane treatment and facilities to those seeking asylum in the United States. I believe we made a difference."

In the coming weeks, Jewish clergy and advocates in more than 20 states will deliver the HIAS letter to their representatives over the course of 80 visits with the district offices of members of Congress.

As the asylum crisis intensifies, HIAS is also expanding its direct legal and social services for asylum seekers along the border and throughout the country. This year, the organization brought on three new legal fellows to represent individuals and families seeking asylum in the U.S. They include Nicolas Palazzo, who is partnering with the nonprofit organization Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center in El Paso and joined the D.C. delegation. Palazzo regularly crosses into Mexico to provide legal guidance to asylum seekers affected by the Department of Homeland Security's Migration Protection Protocols, also known as the "Remain in Mexico" policy.

"The purpose of my visit was to dispel some of the myths and misinformation surrounding the border and the plight of migrants who are lawfully seeking their protected right of asylum," Palazzo said. "The right of asylum and safe refuge is under assault. Now, more than ever, it is absolutely critical that we bring an informed moral and legal perspective to the conversation on policy. My hope is that more clarity about what's happening in the detention centers, in immigration courts, and in shelters across the southern border will guide our legislators and policymakers toward a more humane immigration policy."

This month, HIAS hired a national pro bono technical advisor to support its network of social service agencies serving asylum seekers and launched a joint project with KIND (Kids in Need of Defense), which has represented thousands of children in immigration court, to provide representation to forcibly separated families. In September, HIAS will host its sixth and seventh pro bono attorney

I've had two editors who have corrected my grammar, spelling, and even content. Thanks go to Elaine Arffa and Sandy Adland for taking the time to read this (see Adland, page 6)

delegations to San Diego and El Paso.

HIAS views the National Jewish Clergy Letter as a powerful expression from the Jewish community. "At this moment when the United States is abandoning its legacy as a nation of immigrants and refugees by rescinding its commitment to provide asylum to those fleeing violence and persecution, more than 1,500 Jewish clergy around the country heeded the urgent call to raise our voices to say that this is a moral disgrace for all Americans and, in particular, for Jewish Americans who know well the danger of turning away those in need of a safe place to call home," said Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer, HIAS' Rabbi-in-Residence. "We pray that our elected officials will take seriously the tens of thousands of American Jews we represent and step up to ensure that our country continues to have a fair, humane, and expeditious asylum process."

*HIAS is the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees – including women and children, and ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities – whose lives are in danger for being who they are. Guided by our values and history, HIAS helps refugees rebuild their lives in safety and advocates to ensure that all displaced people are treated with dignity. More info at @HIASrefugees, Facebook and hias.org.*

*Backed by over 2,000 American rabbis in 48 states and more than 400 congregations across the country, HIAS stands firm in our commitment, as Jews and as Americans, to support and welcome refugees. ✨*

## BENZION

(continued from page 4)

Springfield, Ill. For two years they have been in contact with the local Chabad Rabbi. They go to Chabad for *Shabbos* meals and for holidays. We had a nice talk, and I was pleasantly surprised. His interest and knowledge of Torah has greatly increased.

Wow! Wherever I go or look I see good and amazing things happening! Not just in Israel or Brooklyn, but even in Buffalo and Bloomington! We are certainly living in very special times.

The Rebbe told us that our generation is the last generation of exile, and will very soon be the first generation of our complete and final redemption. Then the world will only know good! No more evil or war, no more sickness or death. I hope all of you reading this will learn more *Torah* and do more good deeds to help make this happen, to bring *Moshiach* (Messiah) Now!

*Rabbi Benzion Cohen lives in K'far Chabad, Isarel. He can be reached by email at bzioncohen770@gmail.com. ✨*



# Jewish Educator



BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

## A Jewish View on Love

In Western culture, February 14th, Valentine's Day, is a time to celebrate romance and love.\* Despite its commercial appeal of candy, Cupid and romantic dinners, its origins are actually much darker. Dating back to the 3rd century CE, on February 14th, Roman Emperor Claudius Gothicus beheaded at least two Christian martyrs by the name of Valentine, who later became Saints. And thus, the holiday of St. Valentine's Day was born.

As the years passed, however, the holiday morphed into something much sweeter. Chaucer and Shakespeare romanticized it in their writings and handmade cards were exchanged until the 19th century, when the industrial revolution ushered in factory-made cards. In 1913, Hallmark Cards began mass producing Valentine's cards and February has not been the same since. In fact, in 2018, Valentine's Day poured approximately \$19.6 billion dollars into the American economy according to the National Retail Federation.

Valentine's Day is definitely not a Jewish holiday but the notion of love most certainly plays a central role in Jewish thought and law. Love, in Judaism, is much more than an ideal or passion. It is a commandment, an obligation, a responsibility, a *mitzvah*.

As Jews, we are commanded to love three things: God, one another and the stranger. And while we are also commanded to show compassion and kindness, and care for our parents as well as the widow, orphan, sick, poor, and those in need, we are not required to love them.

The central tenet of Judaism is stated in the *Shema*, which is recited thrice daily: "You shall LOVE the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might." (Deuteronomy 6:5)

The relationship between God and humanity is based, not on fear of punishment or retribution, but on love.

We learn to love God by attempting to *know* God – through the reading of sacred texts, like the *Torah*, through the actions (or *mitzvot*) required of us, and through observing the world and creation around us.

Love in Judaism is not an ephemeral or lofty concept: it requires knowledge and understanding of the beloved: be it God,

our neighbor or the stranger.

At the heart of the *Torah* in *Parsha Kedoshim* is the Jewish "Golden Rule," the commandment which prescribes our relationship with and to one another: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18) The *Torah* commands us to love our neighbor with the highest quality of love we reserve for ourselves. Why? Because each of us is created, *B'Tzelim Elohim*, in the image of God. To love our neighbor is tantamount to loving God.

This is not a rule without exceptions, however. Whenever loving a neighbor actually conflicts with loving God or when love for another would be detrimental to one's legitimate interests or safety, the rabbis teach that we may prioritize our own interests over others. And we are further given guidance on what loving our neighbor should require by Rabbi Hillel who stated in the *Talmud*: "What is hateful to you do not do to your fellow." (*Shabbat* 31a)

Finally, we are taught, also in *Kedoshim*: "When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your own citizens; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Lev. 19:33-34)

What I find amazing is that over 2,500 years ago Jewish thinking understood the difference between these two types of people: our neighbors who are like us and the stranger, who is different. The distinction is more than a mere categorical one. It is based on the reality that we do not automatically treat a stranger the way we treat our neighbor and, as a result, the *Torah* commands us to consciously do them no harm.

Practically, there is a moral equation in treating one's neighbor well that doesn't exist with the stranger. With our neighbors, we seek reciprocity and hope to be treated well so that we can build a community together from which we all benefit. The stranger is someone whom we do not know or trust and in whom we have no communal investment. Human nature being what it is, little incentive exists to encourage us to include the stranger or help them.

Therefore, the *Torah* insists that when we encounter a stranger, we transcend self-interest and practice empathy. To accomplish that, we resort to our own experience, that of being strangers without power or land. This commandment is so important that we are commanded 36 times in the *Torah* not to oppress the stranger, "for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:9).

This idea of "going the extra mile" to

## ADLAND

(continued from page 5)

"blog" before I sent it out. Maybe someday I will figure out where a comma goes.

I chose the *perek* at the top for my last one. I believe that the study of *Torah*, all of *Torah* which means the teachings that have come to us throughout the ages not just the five books, should be studied and contemplated and studied again. I believe in God, but I also know that each of us has his or her own understanding of God and fighting about God is the furthest thing from God. I believe in making the world a better place and will continue to do whatever I can however I can. The world needs these three things.

Last weekend the congregation celebrated my retirement. It was amazing and meaningful and spiritual and affirming. Sandy and I are blessed to have finished this part of our journey right here. I do want to thank our friends in Lexington and Indianapolis who nurtured and loved us for the majority of our journey. In the end we are staying here in Canton as long as we can to continue to be a part of this community. This is a good city with good people.

Let me also thank Josh and Karen, and Liam, too, and Rachel and Evan [children, their spouses and a grandson] for allowing me (though I never asked) to use them as the center of some of my writings. The five of you enrich my life every day. Thank you to Sandy for reading these, making *Shabbat* in our home, baking amazing *challah*, supporting me, and going on the journey. Next week we celebrate 38 years.

So, I come to my final sign-off. When you light your *Shabbat* candles this week, light one for the beauty of celebrating *Shabbat* each week. Light the other candle and let its light guide you to the study of *Torah*, the worship of God, and doing deeds of loving kindness. Thank you for allowing me in your heart and homes for so many years.

**Rabbi Jon Adland** has been a Reform rabbi for more than 30 years with pulpits in Lexington, Ky., Indianapolis, Ind., and currently at Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio., where he retired at the end of June. He may be reached at [j.adland@gmail.com](mailto:j.adland@gmail.com). This is his final *Shabbat* Shalom. ✨



love the stranger, to dig deep into feelings of empathy, to rise to a higher level of humanity and to provide protection and do no wrong, has particular relevance as we continue to struggle with the deeply troubling social and political policies on immigration that divide our country today.

**Amy Hirshberg Lederman** is an author, (see Lederman, page 7)

# Tracing Our Roots

BY TRACIE FREUDENTHAL-MRAKICH

On March 21, 2019, my sister Linda and I boarded a flight to Frankfurt, Germany. We were attending the Stolperstein (Stumbling Stone) dedication in Mannheim, Germany. Mannheim is where our father, aunt and grandparents lived before immigrating to the United States in late 1938. Packed in my suitcase were three tins of *hamantashen* baked by my friend, Beth Valinetz-Grimm. I also carried a small photo album containing photos of our father's early life in Germany and his family and professional life in Indiana.

The Stolperstein is a 3.9" x 3.9" square concrete cube bearing a brass plate inscribed with "Here lived..." followed by the names, birth year and year and place of death of deported Jews and other groups persecuted by the Nazis. The Stolperstein project also includes individuals or families like ours who were fortunate enough to leave Germany and other countries that were under Nazi control. "Year fled" replaces the year of death, and the country that allowed them entrance is noted.



*Culture of Remembrance: Two sisters from the USA with Jewish-German roots travel to the "Quadratstadt" for the Stolperstein (Stumbling Stone) placement.*

To date, there are more than 70,000 stones throughout Germany and other European cities that have been placed by artist Gunter Demnig. On March 26, four stones were dedicated at Richard Wagner Strasse 8, for our grandparents, Benno and Kate Freudenthaler, aunt, Suse (Susan), and father, Kurt. Our family name was shortened to "Freudenthal" when they were processed at Ellis Island. The stone dedication was the excuse that I did not know I was looking for to visit Mannheim.

## What we know. . .

We know very little of our father's life in Germany. He was 16 when the family fled shortly after Kristallnacht. They sailed



*Photo of sisters Tracie Freudenthal-Mrakich (L) and Linda Tann in front of the remembrance wall made of original stones from the former Mannheim Synagogue with article in the Mannheim Morgan newspaper this past March.*

on the Noordam from Rotterdam on Dec. 25, 1938, arriving at Ellis Island on Jan. 1, 1939. From New York, they made their way to Richmond, Ind., where an aunt who had sponsored the family lived.

Like so many German-Jewish immigrants, he said little about his life in Germany. We know that our grandfather was a tobacco merchant. Shortly before our father passed in 2007 we learned that before leaving Germany, our grandfather had burned the tobacco fields (location unknown), not wanting the Nazis to profit from the fields.

We know from Volker Keller's book, *Bilder vom jüdischen Leben in Mannheim* (*Pictures of Jewish Life in Mannheim*), that our father was a member of the Haschomer Hatzair Socialist-Zionist Youth Group. The book includes a group photo on page 120 with our then 12-year-old father that was taken in their apartment in 1934. We know that our father, who was a sportswriter in Indianapolis for over 50 years, participated in track and field as a youth. However, it wasn't until he died that we learned he attended the 1936 Berlin Olympics track and field events.

We know that our sister, Carolyn, was named for our great-grandfather, Kaufmann Freudenthaler. We also know that our father walked through the rubble of the destroyed synagogue where he had celebrated his *Bar Mitzvah* a few years earlier. Finally, we know that he never again stepped foot into Germany.

## Selma Rosenfeld

A few months after our father had passed, I received an email from Michael Heitz, a school teacher/counselor in Eppingen, Germany. Michael was working with his students on a joint project between the University of Jewish Studies Heidelberg and four schools in the Kraichgau region to research and document Jewish culture there.

In conjunction with the research project, thanks to the students' efforts, the

## LEDERMAN

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

\*Editor's Note: *Tu B'Av* (15th of Av), sometimes called the Jewish Valentine's Day, is a modern-day mini-holiday in Israel. It is celebrated as a day of love, this year on Aug. 16, 2019. ✨



*Stolperstein artist Gunter Demnig March 2019 in Mannheim.*

Realschule (middle school) in Eppingen was to be renamed in memory of Selma Rosenfeld, a former student and teacher in Eppingen. Selma had immigrated to the United States in 1924, received her Master's degree from UC Berkeley, and became a Professor of German in the Foreign Language Department at the Los Angeles City College, where she taught from 1930 until her retirement in 1958. Michael shared that Selma was the half-niece of our grandfather, Benno. He was trying to gather additional information about Selma for the school dedication. He also informed me that our great-grandfather, Kaufmann Freudenthaler, had owned a Ratskeller (restaurant) in Eppingen, where Selma and Benno, were born.

Although we were unable to provide Michael with any information about Selma, he kindly sent me the booklet and map *Jüdisches Leben Im Kraichgau* created by his students, documenting Jewish Life in the Kraichgau.

Once Linda decided to join me on this journey, I reached out to Michael, not knowing after 11 years if his email address was still good. Fortunately, my email did reach him and he invited us to visit the Jewish historical sites in the area where our ancestors had lived. We planned to meet at the Sinsheim-Hoffenheim train station, a 40 minute train ride from Mannheim, on Sun., March 24.

## Tracing the Tribe

In addition to contacting Michael, I also (see **Roots page 8**)



## ROOTS

(continued from page 7)

posted on the 'Tracing the Tribe' Facebook group my plans to travel to Mannheim for the Stolperstein dedication, asking if there were any members of the group from Mannheim. To my delight, Susan Salms-Moss responded. Susan, currently residing in NYC, lived in Mannheim for over 30 years. She initially went to Europe to study music, became a world class soprano, married, and raised two daughters in Mannheim. Today, she provides text translation services.

Coincidentally, one of Susan's daughters currently lives on the same street as the apartment building where my family had lived. Susan became an invaluable resource and friend whom I look forward to meeting in person! She connected me to her friends and family in Mannheim, and provided tips and advice as we prepared for this journey. She also introduced me by email to Dr. Manfred Loimeier, a professor at Heidelberg University who is also an editorial coordinator at the *Mannheimer Morgen*, the daily regional paper. It seemed there was interest in our trip to Mannheim for the Stolperstein dedication.

### Tracing our Roots

**Sun., March 24:** we met Michael Heitz at the Sinsheim-Hoffenheim station as planned. This is one of the train stations where 6,551 Jews from the former regions of Baden and the Palatinate were deported to Gurs, in Vichy, France (at the foot of the Pyrenees), on Oct. 22, 1940. They were loaded onto seven trains for the two-day and two-night trip. Had our family, not fled Germany after Kristallnacht, they would have likely been on one of those trains. Those who survived the brutal living conditions at the Gurs internment camp were later transported to, and murdered at Auschwitz.

When the Hoffenheim train station was renovated, the students from the Albert Schweitzer Schule in Sinsheim were instrumental in the creation of a monument made from two of the large rectangular stones from the train station. Located about a block away from the train station, the monument is in remembrance of the 18 Jewish Hoffenheim deportees to Gurs. In addition to the monument, a plaque at the former Hoffenheim town hall commemorates the 18 former Jewish residents – 14 who died at Auschwitz and four children who survived because their parents were able to send them from the Gurs camp to an orphanage in France. Later, some of the children were smuggled out of France through the underground or stayed with the underground fighters.

There is also a marker where the Hoffenheim Synagogue stood before being destroyed on Kristallnacht.

In nearby Simsheim-Steinsfurt, we visited a building that was formerly a synagogue (built in 1893–94). It survived only because the building was sold before Kristallnacht. Inlaid in the stones adjacent to the building are tiles commemorating the various groups that were persecuted and deported from Steinsfurt to the death camps: Jews, Roma (gypsies), homosexuals, those of other religions, political, forced workers and those with mental or physical issues were the first to be "euthanized" by the Nazis. Inside the building, the name of one of our relatives, Ludwig Freudenthaler, is on a plaque in remembrance of all the Jewish soldiers from Steinsfurt who served in the German army during WWI.

After Steinsfurt, we made a brief stop in the old farming village of Eppingen-Richen, where our great-grandfather was born. It was here that we met the honorable Lord Mayor of Eppingen, Klaus Holaschke, who was out riding his bicycle. Michael explained to Mayor Holaschke why we were visiting and later shared with us that the mayor is deeply engaged in preserving the Jewish heritage of Eppingen and the Kraichgau area.

From Richen, we headed to the Jewish Cemetery in Eppingen, established in 1819. Before the trip, I searched findagrave.com looking for any ancestors buried in this cemetery. I found several ancestors including our great grandparents, Kaufmann and Bertha Wolf Freudenthaler; great-great grandparents Joseph Hirsch and Rachael Stiefel Freudenthaler; and great-great-great grandmother Johanna Freudenthaler.

There are also many aunts, uncles and cousins buried there. To my surprise, I learned that Johanna's husband, great-great-great-grandfather Ascher Schmay Freudenthaler, had adopted the name "Freudenthaler" in 1809. Schmay was Ascher's father's name. Michael explained that in 1809, Jews were given the right to have "inheritable names", and Ascher chose "Freudenthaler" for a nearby town. Since Ascher Schmay Freudenthaler, died prior to the establishment of the Eppingen cemetery, his resting place is the Jewish Cemetery in Heinsheim.

After visiting the cemetery, we enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Ratskeller in Eppingen, located a short walk from the town hall. This was the restaurant owned by our great-grandfather, Kaufmann. The Ratskeller was the first and only restaurant in Eppingen that was run by a Jewish family from 1876–1924. It was surreal. The furnishings have not changed over the years. I felt like I had stepped back in time to the 1920s.

After lunch, we explored Eppingen, which mostly escaped the bombings during WWII. The old part of Eppingen is a beautiful town with preserved unique half-timbered buildings dating back to the early 15th century. We stopped by the "Alte Universität" which hosted parts of the Heidelberg University in the years 1564–1565 due to the black plague. The "Alte Universität" was also known as the "Alte Judenschule" (old Jewish School), where regular school for the Jewish children of the town took place during the early 19th century.

We then walked to the old synagogue (built 1774) where a beautiful Sephardic wedding stone that was hidden away during the Nazi reign adorns the outside of the building. From an outside door, we entered the basement to see the medieval *mikvah*. The *mikvah* was rediscovered in the late 1970s and then restored. It is one of the seven oldest *mikvot* in Germany. Like other still standing synagogue buildings, it was sold in the late 1890s and was no longer used as a synagogue. The Jewish community of Eppingen had built a new, beautiful neo-romantic style synagogue. The new synagogue, inaugurated in 1873, was destroyed during Kristallnacht.

After touring Eppingen, Michael took us to his home in nearby Sinsheim-Weiler to meet his lovely wife, Margit, and enjoy coffee and homemade apple cake. Michael and Margit were excited to receive the tin of *hamantashen*.

After cake and coffee, I brought out the photo album and sports photos with German writing on the back to see if either Michael or Margit could translate them for us. Because the writing was in "old German," it was difficult to read. Michael was extremely interested in the photos and asked to scan them for his archives. Michael and Margit's backyard has a wonderful view of Mount Steinsberg with its medieval castle. Their yard is filled with fruit trees and backs up to a vineyard that was established in 1150. Before returning us to the train station, Michael gave us a bottle of "Weilermer Steinsberg" 2016 Späetburgunder from the vineyard. It was hard to say our goodbyes, but we made plans to meet for lunch on Wednesday in Strasbourg, France, since he would be there for a conference.

**Mon., March 25:** In the morning, we walked to the "new" synagogue, about 20 minutes from our hotel. There we met Marlies, who is a member of the synagogue board, and Lisa Wazulin, staff writer, and the photographer from the *Mannheimer Morgen*.

I dreaded the interview because we had so little information about our father's life in Mannheim. Fortunately, Marlies came to our rescue, explaining to Lisa that our



lack of knowledge is common among the second generation survivors. Lisa's story, *Following Their Father's Traces*, focused on how we came to Mannheim for the Stolperstein dedication and to gain a better understanding of our family's roots.

Prior to WWII, the Jewish population in Mannheim was around 6,000, with multiple synagogues serving the Jewish community. Members of Mannheim's Jewish community who did not or could not immigrate before October of 1940 were rounded up in the Gurs deportation. Today, there is only the "new" synagogue with roughly 400 members, half of whom had emigrated from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s.

We started our tour of the synagogue in the foyer, where there is a section of the interior wall built from stones that came from the destroyed synagogue and one special red-colored stone from Auschwitz. The photographer took our photo by the plaque on the wall that reads:

*"Day and night, we wept for the martyrs of my people. – Jeremiah VIII.*

*We wistfully commemorate all the Jewish people who were persecuted, humiliated and murdered in the years of the National Socialist terror 1933 – 45."*

While we were there, a school group was learning about Judaism in the sanctuary. The synagogue hosts two to three school groups a week and community events throughout the year, both to educate the younger generations and to be a part of the greater community.

We joined the students in the beautiful sanctuary to take a few photographs. While there is no wall separating the women from the men that you would find in an Orthodox synagogue, the women sit separately from the men – either on the sides of the main floor of the sanctuary, or upstairs overlooking it.

Although Jewish girls at the "new" synagogue may have *Bat Mitzvahs*, they differ from *Bat Mitzvahs* held at reform and conservative synagogues in the United States. They do not read the *Torah* or chant the *Haftorah*, as orthodox tradition forbids women from having contact with these holy items. For this reason, Susan's daughters prepared for their *Bat Mitzvahs* long distance, and then celebrated their *Bat Mitzvahs* in the United States.

Monday evening, we met Orna, a friend of Susan's, at our hotel. Orna was born in Tel Aviv. Her father immigrated to Palestine in 1936 from Kaiserslautern, Germany. Her mother was born in Drohobycz, near Lemberg, Poland, which is now the Ukraine. In 1956, Orna's father moved the family back to Germany. Orna and her husband, Bernd, have three daughters. One daughter lives in Tel Aviv, and their two other daughters live in

Mannheim. Next year, they will celebrate a *Bar Mitzvah* in Mannheim. Orna took us to a nice restaurant overlooking the Rhine. Meeting Orna was like meeting family. Orna and Bernd received the second tin of *hamantashen*.

**Tues., March 26 – Stolperstein dedication day:** There were 23 Stolperstein dedications scheduled. Ours was the last one of the day. The apartment building was a short walk from our hotel. We arrived at 3:45 p.m. for the 4:05 p.m. scheduled time. We knew that Orna and Bernd would attend but had no idea how many others would be there – especially since our story had appeared in the morning paper. Approximately 15 people – Jewish and Christian – had shown up for our dedication. I had brought along my small photo album in case any of the attendees were interested in learning about the lives we were honoring. Plus, I was still trying to learn about the sporting event photographs.

Gunter Demnig was running about 45 minutes late, but we were all busy talking to each other and didn't mind the wait. Once he arrived, Gunter immediately got to work, removing the stone, digging out some of the dirt, and leveling the ground. He added small rocks for drainage and placed two rectangular and one square stone, before placing the four Stolpersteine with our families' information engraved on the brass plates. After the stones were in place, he poured fine sand between the gaps and brushed away the residual sand.

The whole process took less than ten minutes. *Gunter does not say anything with words, yet his deeds speak volumes. I did not think it would be emotional, but I was wrong.* Although I recorded the dedication for our sister, Karolyn, and cousins, Norman and Jeffrey, I wish they had joined us on this journey.

After the stones were placed, I thanked everyone for attending and expressed how important it was for my sister, Linda, and me to represent the Freudenthaler family at the Stolperstein dedication. I shared that including the two of us, there are 18 descendants of Kurt and Suse Freudenthaler; and how the number 18 is spelled with the Hebrew letters Chet and Yud, to form "Chai," the Hebrew word for life.

Following the ceremony, we walked to the local school for the reception. The Mannheim Stolperstein coordinator, Rolf Schönbrod, said a few words and introduced a teacher and two of her students. The students had raised money to cover the costs of some of the stones where there was no living family to help. Each stone costs 120 euros (\$134). We also heard from a representative from the Mannheim Mayor's office. In between each speech, a pianist played solemn music.

As we were leaving the reception, Orna introduced us to Volker Keller. Volker had written the book, *Bilder vom jüdischen Leben in Mannheim (Pictures of Jewish Life in Mannheim)*. This book includes the group photo with our father referenced in the sixth paragraph. He was extremely interested in the photos and asked if he could get copies.

It was during our conversation with Volker that Orna solved the mystery of the sporting event photographs. She had noticed the letters "B" and "K" written on the back of some of the photos. They were from Bar Kochba sporting events! Our dad, who loved track and field, was active in the Bar Kochba Sports Club! As Michael Heitz had already scanned the photos, it was easy for Volker to obtain digital copies. It will be interesting to see if any of our photos are included in a future book on Jewish life in pre-war Mannheim.

**Wed., March 27:** Prior to taking the train to Strasbourg, France, for the day, I met Jessica, Susan's daughter, for coffee. Jessica lives down the street from our family's former apartment. We talked about growing up in Mannheim and why she returned after graduating from Brandeis University. Like so many of us, she fell for a boy! Jessica was excited to receive the last tin of *hamantashen*. We had a short but enjoyable time getting to know each other, and I look forward to seeing her again.

Upon returning from Strasbourg, we enjoyed a special dinner at the Goldene Gans Hotel, located a short walk from the train station. Evi, who we met at the Stolperstein ceremony, had invited us to dinner at her hotel. Both she and her husband, Jürgen, treated us like family. We also met Evi's sister, Julia, and nephew, Frieder. We enjoyed getting to know Evi and her family and were treated to a delicious meal prepared by their son, Chef Felix. It was a nice way to cap off a trip of a lifetime.

This journey came together thanks to Susan, Michael and Orna, I hope that some day I will be able to "pay it forward" for other second or third generation holocaust survivors who are interested in placing Stolpersteine for their relatives. Perhaps someone who reads this article will be inspired to follow in our footsteps to honor their family with a Stolperstein ([www.stolpersteine.eu/en/home/](http://www.stolpersteine.eu/en/home/)).

*Tracie Freudenthal-Mrakich grew up in Indianapolis and spent 18 years in the Los Angeles area (Pasadena) working in sales and marketing before moving back in 1999. See a longer version with more photos at: <https://jewishpostopinion.com/?p=3630>, and her review of *The German-Jewish Cookbook: Recipes and History of a Cuisine by Gabrielle Rossmer Gropman and Sonya Gropman* at: <https://jewishpostopinion.com/?p=3468>. ✨*

# Holocaust Educator



BY DR. MIRIAM L. ZIMMERMAN

## My Maftir in Munich

“Are you German or English?” The three-year-old little girl’s question caught me off-guard, made me realize one is never too old to have an identity crisis. I have a German passport and a USA passport; which am I? But my youngest grandchild was not asking an existential question. Leah, my daughter, explained that Maya is in a bilingual preschool with a native English teacher and a native German teacher in each classroom. The English teacher speaks only English; the German teacher, only German. The children learn to speak the appropriate language to each. I had been trying out my German, so my granddaughter was, understandably, confused. Am I German or am I English? It was I who placed the existential spin on Maya’s innocent question.



Maya age 3.

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of my May 15, 1959 *Bat Mitzvah*, I gave a shout out to our children and grandchildren watching from afar. The live stream of my synagogue, Congregation Beth Jacob in Redwood City, Calif., collapsed the distance from Thousand Oaks, Calif., where our son Josh lives with his family; and Munich, Germany, where our daughter Leah lives with her family.

I also welcomed my San Mateo, Calif., daughter Rebecca, her husband Jason, and their children Sarah and Jonah, all of whom witnessed my *Bat Mitzvah* celebration at Beth Jacob. Clearly, I am Jewish, German or English – language notwithstanding.

Just days before my *Bat Mitzvah* celebration, Richard and I returned from two weeks in Munich, during which time Maya asked her question. We had first night’s *Seder* in her *Maxvorstadt* (district of Munich) apartment, followed by a community *Seder* the next night at her Temple, Beth Shalom, the *Liberale Jüdische Gemeinde München*.

A feeling of apprehension took hold of me as we approached her synagogue, with a police car and two officers in the parking lot. All over Germany, synagogues need armed guards. I felt grateful and safe as a Jew because I live in the United States and can attend my synagogue without fear. But just a few days after our return on the last day of Passover, the shooting at the



Miriam Zimmerman (R) congratulated for becoming a *Bat Mitzvah* by Rabbi David Raab in May 1959.

Chabad synagogue in Poway, Calif., shattered my illusion of Jewish safety in this country as compared to Germany.

Sixty years ago, my hometown synagogue, Temple Israel on South Sixth Street in Terre Haute, Ind., felt completely safe. It was the scene of my Friday night *Bat Mitzvah*. In a reform congregation in southern Indiana during the 1950’s, there were no Saturday morning services. I do not remember my *Torah* portion.

What I do remember is my mother, of blessed memory, nagging me to ask one of my best friends, Gloria, if she would be attending. Mother and her friends would do the catering, augmented by the local bakery. She wanted to have accurate numbers for the dessert reception after the evening service. It was before the era of mega Saturday night parties.

Gloria looked at me with stricken eyes, which I can see to this day. “My priest told me that if I stepped foot into a synagogue, I would go straight to hell when I died.” Her response, rather, her priest’s response, reflected pre-Vatican II Catholicism, before the great reforms of the Church in the mid-1960’s, culminating in *Nostre Aetate*. That declaration changed the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish people forever.

Gloria and I, newly minted teenagers, did not have the tools to deal with the priest’s pronouncement. Sadly, we drifted apart after that. Happily, in recent years, we became friends on social media, and now, we occasionally “like” each other’s grandchildren.

It was very unusual for a girl to have a *Bat Mitzvah* in those days. Small town Indiana had a turnover of rabbis, often fresh out of rabbinical school. As soon as they qualified for a larger pulpit (and more money), they moved on. Rabbi David Raab, of blessed memory, felt strongly that

a girl should become *Bat Mitzvah*. Terre Haute rabbis before and after him were not so inclined. Mine was not only the first *Bat Mitzvah* in Terre Haute, but because Rabbi Raab left soon after, for many years, it was the only one.

Rabbi Nathaniel Ezray, of Congregation Beth Jacob since 1995, mercifully said that I did not have to have the same *parashah* as my actual *Bat Mitzvah*. Since I have no memories of it, it must not have been important to me. I gratefully accepted *Acharei Mot*, on the *Shabbat* closest to my birthday this year.

It pleased me greatly to practice my *Torah* portion daily in Munich, listening to Cantor Barbara Powell’s beautiful voice on my phone, in a country which, 82 years ago, spewed forth my father, of blessed memory, and made studying *Torah* illegal. Chanting my *Maftir* in Munich while surrounded by the toys of my grandchildren was my small revenge.

Cantor Barbara asked me why I wanted to commemorate the 60th anniversary. My *Bat Mitzvah* had been just another chore I was expected to do, a check mark on the list of things that would help me get into a good university. My parents, of blessed memory, placed education at the top of Maslow’s hierarchy. After all, it was my father’s medical school diploma that became his ticket out of the Nazi inferno.

“Education is something they can never take from you,” a heavily German-accented mantra echoed throughout my youth. Besides, my parents couldn’t afford to bribe college officials, like some parents today.

No one ever explained the spiritual aspect of coming of age as an adult Jew to me. As an adult, I looked forward to mastering the letters of *Torah* Hebrew, if only for a brief passage. The *parashah* takes place just after the death of Aaron’s sons, Nadav and Avihu. What happened to Nadav and Avihu is what happens when you disobey G-d’s orders regarding sacrifice and try to enter the Holy of Holies when you are not the high priest, and it is not *Yom Kippur*.

In sermons over the intervening 60 years since my *Bat Mitzvah*, I have heard more than one rabbi complain about the laws of temple sacrifice on *Yom Kippur*, as not being relevant to today’s worshippers. But it seems to me that the gift of *Acharei Mot* is to provide a means to satisfy the religious craving to be innocent and pure before G-d.

G-d gives the Jewish people a mechanism to atone for sin, for missing the mark. By casting lots to determine which goat is to carry the sins of the community to *Azazel* in the wilderness and then projecting the sins of the community onto the goat, all can feel purged and free of guilt. The

(see Zimmerman, page 11)



# Tribute to Eva Kor

By DR. MIRIAM L. ZIMMERMAN

She chose Jan. 31 as her birthdate, because she did not remember her birthday. Deported to Auschwitz as a child, Eva Kor, now of blessed memory, chose a date just four days after the Jan. 27, 1945 liberation of the extermination camp as her birthday.

It took a few days after liberation before Eva realized that the whole world was not a concentration camp. Unsupervised in the immediate aftermath of liberation, Eva, her twin Miriam, and the other “Mengele twins” played in the environs of Auschwitz. On the banks of the Olah River, Eva noticed a little girl on the opposite bank, dressed in Sunday finery, probably on her way to church. At that moment, Eva realized there was a world beyond the horrors of Auschwitz. Eva told me the story herself, at the 50th anniversary celebration of the liberation of Auschwitz.

I had the good fortune to accompany Eva to Auschwitz in January 1995 (see *Jewish Post and Opinion* July 12, 1995, “Forgiving the Nazis,” reposted at this link: <https://jewishpostopinion.com/?p=3699>). Eva’s former biographer, Mary Wright, who accompanied us on this pilgrimage, told me she thought Eva kept returning to Auschwitz in search of her childhood, beginning ten years earlier at the 40th anniversary celebration.

At the 50th, I got to know Eva beyond the confines of the Jewish community of Terre Haute, Ind., my hometown and Eva’s adopted hometown. My first thought upon hearing of Eva’s July 4th passing was what a shame it is that Eva will not be at the 75th anniversary in January 2020.

My father, of blessed memory, first told me about Eva. The intensity in his eyes has stayed with me. “You’ll never guess who has settled in Terre Haute.” I could not. “Eva Kor, a Mengele twin,” was his awestruck answer. No doubt it was my blank face that inspired him to give me an immediate crash course in medical experimentation in concentration camps. Eva and her survivor husband Mickey, a pharmacist, became close family friends.

My father, Werner Loewenstein, graduated from the University of Berlin Medical School in 1934. As a medical student, he witnessed the demise of the medical profession under the Nazis. He knew a great deal about Mengele, even before his friendship with Eva.

Outspoken, and with an Israeli’s disconcerting directness, she might have ruffled the feathers of some of the more “southern-mannered” among the Jewish community of Terre Haute. Dad always came to Eva’s defense whenever anyone complained. “They took her childhood

## ZIMMERMAN

(continued from page 10)

ritual transforms the community to be worthy of G-d’s presence.

The scapegoat as a psychological process vilified Jews during the Third Reich in Germany and unified the German Volk. Today in the United States, people scapegoat Jews, immigrants, and other minorities. Understanding the psychological underpinnings of the scapegoat mechanism is crucial to dismantling its power over practitioners and victims alike.

Scapegoating occurs between individuals as well as among communities. For the last 18 years, my husband Richard and I have worked together as divorce mediators, a second career for both of us. Many ask us what we think causes divorce, as if there could be one cause. I believe it is not a single issue, neither lack of skill, nor faulty communication that gives rise to relationship loss.

We see some of the best people during the worst moments of their lives, struggling to make sense of what is happening to them. In my experience, what many couples have in common at this point in their lives is a tendency to demonize, to blame, to scapegoat the other. I have no advice, only stories.

Questions abound: how are you using scapegoats in your life? Are you scapegoating your spouse? Is this what you want



away from her; you cannot fault Eva for anything she does.”

At dinner after the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival’s 2006 screening of *Forgiving Dr. Mengele*, another documentary about her life, Eva told me how my mother, Hazel Loewenstein, z”l, had influenced her. Mother wanted Eva to become president of the local Hadassah chapter. Eva replied that she did not like speaking in front of groups. Mother told Eva (Mother, too, was known for her directness) to take a course in public speaking. Eva did so, at Indiana State University.

I always felt that the Jewish Community of Terre Haute was too confining for Eva’s spirit. Fortunately, she was able to make

(see Eva, page 12)

to do? The never asked question: how are you contributing to the problems in your marriage? Every divorce has two stories.

What *Acharei Mot* does not do is offer an alternative to the scapegoat. Is it possible to feel purged, pure, and free of guilt without projecting our sins onto an innocent vessel, the scapegoat? If so, how?

In the *parashah*, “land” is repeated multiple times, in reference to having “spewed” up, literally, vomited up, earlier nations because of their abominations. Words repeated in *Torah* acquire additional meaning, require additional explication. A warning to Jews for all time: do we want to be spewed up from the land the way the land spewed up other peoples for not obeying G-d’s commandments?

I am grateful to Rabbi Ilana Goldhaber-Gordon for pointing out that there can be an environmental spin to *Acharei Mot*. In Exodus, we are commanded to be stewards over the land and the animal kingdom. In the current era of species extinction and climate degradation, have we fulfilled this duty? The land is already spewing us up by way of wildfires, hurricanes, floods, heat waves, drought, and volcanoes. We are oblivious because we are not listening to the words of *Acharei Mot*. We are not obeying G-d’s commandments.

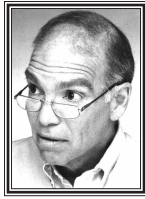
Another answer both to Cantor Barbara’s and Maya’s question has to do with a new stage of defining who I am. Judaism has wonderful life-cycle rituals, including the *Brit Milah* and naming ceremonies, *B’nai Mitzvot*, marriage, *Mikveh*, the *Chevre Kadisha* and Jewish mourning traditions, among others. But there is no ritual, to my knowledge, to mark the transition from one’s work life to retirement. Indeed, was there retirement in biblical times? Or, did people simply expire on the job?

My *Bat Mitzvah* anniversary celebration was an opportunity for me to remember my long ago self as a teenager becoming a spiritual adult. The question for me now is to discover how I fulfilled that youthful promise and to decide how I can renew and redefine what it is that will best reflect G-d’s plan for me. I believe that ultimately, it is I who must determine that plan.

If my *Bat Mitzvah* represented my transition to a spiritual adult, how can I transition to a spiritual retirement? I have become a German citizen, a symbolic act that opened doors for me. More revenge. The future is tantalizing and beckons seductively. There are so many worthy options from which to choose. With G-d’s help, may I choose wisely.

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

# Shipley Speaks



BY JIM SHIPLEY

## The Final Curtain

“A Near Death Experience”: Ever had one? There actually is such a thing. Been there – done that. Well, I did – and it ain’t a picnic. About two months ago I developed a cough that would not go away.

We complacently kept the same primary medical practice after our Doc retired. The “new” doctor hired by the practice almost killed me – seriously. I complained during a routine visit of a constant cough. He told me to go to the drug store and get some cough medicine. Didn’t help.

Cough persisted. Got so bad I could not sleep. Two of our children were here for the weekend (Thank God). That Friday night I told them that I was really sick – I mean to the point where I could not breathe well.

Friday night in the ER at a large local hospital? Chaos. I asked my son to call 911 – so that we could get an ambulance and get right in. Turned out to be the right decision: Perforated lung, Pneumonia, some heart problems, etc.

I was in the Advent Altamonte South Hospital for three weeks (3). In the first thirty-six hours it was, believe it or not “Touch and Go”. No – seriously. I heard, through a haze, talk of trying to keep me alive. That, dear reader, will get your attention.

As I lay there, contemplating the worst – at that point you do not think of the next time you will jump in the pool – some thoughts began to materialize. “I am about to be 89 years old...how much time have I got altogether?” “This is going to cost my family a fortune...for what? – a couple of extra years?” “So...what would it be like to just to ‘let go’?”

I do not believe there is anything “on the other side”. I believe done is done. A life is lived for better or worse and what you leave behind is what you leave behind. I believe that dreams of an “after life” – a heaven or hell are pretty much just that – dreams. Sorry – when that curtain goes down – the show, for better or worse is over. This column is not designed as a religious discussion – just a personal experience. But I do know that “taking one’s life” – however it is done, is a sin and not acceptable under Jewish law.

So, lying there in pretty much a stupor from the drugs I was being fed, I wondered – how do you just let go? There is no formula. I was awake enough to hear

### EVA

(continued from page 11)

the world her stage, becoming a great human rights advocate and a model for forgiveness, for the betterment of us all.

In those last days in Poland in 1995, Eva explained to me how forgiving the Nazis made her feel. By letting go of her hatred for them, she was no longer their victim. By letting go of anger, she rose above her tormentors and was able to move on with her life, free from the pain which had been their legacy. The controversy over Eva’s forgiving the Nazis does not take into



the voice of my daughter Robin.

I opened one eye and croaked to her: “Robbie...is it worth it?”

She shouted back at me: “Of course it is!”

Well, think about *your* life. Under the same circumstances, would you just “let go”? I know! Unless you have been there – at the brink – it’s academic.

In my case, it was a matter of things unsaid – old wounds that had to heal...and a change in my overall behavior. I am not a drunk or embezzler. I am not nor have I ever been a sexual predator.

But...I have a sharp tongue, can be insensitive, mess up priorities...things like that...do not sound that serious. Would you give up the chance to rectify some of even the little things?

I am lucky in that I have been forgiven for most of my “trespasses” by those close to me. BUT: Lying in that drug induced fog I began to think of the simple things that are a part of everyday life and what I would do differently if I could.

So – here is the challenge: One night soon, in the dark – without the drugs or the actual challenge facing you: What would you do? Would you want to get back to a real life and like “one more chance” – or just let go.

I would put the odds at over 100 to one – you would *not* let go – not let any chance at life slip away. You would face the challenge, promise to be a better person and fight to get back to where you were – or better: Where you would like to be. I did just that.

I think that is why, we Jews in all our wisdom frown most mightily on giving up the greatest gift: Our lives. I didn’t. I am on the other side of “well” now and most grateful. Eighty-nine? Piece of cake!

*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. This column was submitted May, 15, 2019. ✨*

account the psychological benefit of healing that forgiveness affords.

Without forgiveness, would Eva have had the spirit and energy to create C.A.N.D.L.E.S. (Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiment Survivors), an organization of Mengele twins? Subsequently, she founded the Candles Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Terre Haute, where schoolchildren from all over the State of Indiana and beyond come to learn about the Holocaust and hear Eva’s story. She spoke internationally, promoting human rights as well as Holocaust education. Her awards are too numerous to list here. For more about Eva’s accomplishments and Indiana’s only Holocaust museum, visit its website: <https://candlesholocaustmuseum.org/>

Eva’s legacy challenges us to become better people: more forgiving, more conscious of social injustice, especially to children. In an unprecedented era where the United States government separates refugee children from their mothers, I cannot help connecting Eva’s story to these children, yearning for their families. The children are scarred for life. Some are dying, even though the facilities were not set up as extermination camps.

One Holocaust textbook describes a continuum of seven different types of camps under the Nazis. Critics of the term “concentration camp” to describe the U.S. facilities fail to make such nuanced distinctions. Pictures of people massed together behind bars such that they are unable to sit or lie down certainly depict a concentration camp, whether in Nazi Germany or in the United States.

Eva’s son, Dr. Alex Kor, told me that within the last few years, Eva obtained her birth certificate when she was honored in her Romanian hometown. Her birthday was, indeed, on January 31, but in 1934 and not in 1935. Thus, Eva found out that she and Miriam were a year older than originally thought.

When asked if he saw a change in his mother after her forgiveness of the Nazis, Alex Kor responded: “There is no doubt that since 1995 my mother was a happier and more content person. This made my relationship with her so much better in the last 24 years. In the documentary about her life titled, *Eva: A-7063*, this change in her is very noticeable. See more at <https://www.thestoryofeva.com/>.”

Alex also commented that the planned January 2020 journey to Auschwitz for the 75th liberation by the Candles Museum would proceed as scheduled; he will be going. It is time for the Second Generation of Holocaust Survivors to take over.

With Eva’s passing, the world has lost a great human being. Her memory is for a blessing; may she finally rest in peace. ✨



# Kabbalah of the Month



BY MELINDA RIBNER

## Av – Out of Sorrow Comes Joy

On *Tisha B'Av* (August 11), the saddest day of the year, we complete the challenging time period known as the Three Weeks. The last nine days of those, beginning with *Rosh Hoshdesh Av* (August 2), have restrictions similar to *shiva*. On *Tisha B'Av* we commemorate the destruction of the ancient Holy Temples in Jerusalem as well as many other tragedies. Let us not despair. Out of sorrow comes joy. Out of darkness comes light.

A few days after *Tisha B'Av*, we celebrate the ancient holiday of *Tu B'Av* (August 16), the most joyous and hidden day of the year. It is the time of the full moon of this month. The month of *Av* can be an emotional roller coaster for many. On *Tu B'Av*, the energy of the month changes.

In ancient times on *Tu B'Av* when the Holy Temple stood, young maidens would dress in white and dance before the men. They would flirt and with their eyes say, "Look at me". And in one look, marriages would be made. It was only on this day that the people from the various tribes would meet for the purpose of marriage. Each marriage brought joy and blessing not just to the couple, but also to the community and to God. It is a Jewish *Sadie Hawkins* day.

*Tu B'Av* is a day for the feminine, a revelation of the *Shechinah*, the day to connect with the soul mate, a special time to be with your own soul. *Tu B'Av* is also a day of forgiveness and new beginnings.

The Jewish calendar is divided between the holiday of *Tu B'Shevat*, the full moon of the month of *Shevat*, and the holiday of *Tu B'Av*, the full moon of the month of *Av*. On *Tu B'Shevat*, the masculine energies expand that culminate in the holiday of *Passover* and *Shavuos*. On *Tu B'Av*, the feminine, more inward turning energies, begin and include the High Holidays, and *Chanukah*.

Many people are not aware that Judaism and Jewish spiritual practice is dedicated to restoring the balance between the masculine and feminine in both the spiritual and physical universes. Judaism may appear to be patriarchal on the outside, but on the inside it is all about the Divine Feminine. *Shabbat* and *Torah* are feminine. Prayers are continually said to unite *HaKodesh Borechu* (the Holy One

Blessed be He) with the *Shechinah*, the Divine Feminine.

Several times a day, Jews recite the *Shema* that is a code for this unification. "Shema Israel, Adon-ai Eloheyinu, Adon-ai Echod." Listen Israel God (transcendent), is our God, God (immanent) is one." Even the letters in the Divine Name, *Yud, Hay, Vav* and *Hay* are both masculine (*Yud* and *Vav*) and Feminine (*Hay*). God is one, but transcendent and immanent to us. When the balance between the masculine and feminine is restored on high and in this world, God's oneness will be revealed. There will be peace and joy.

As we now move closer to the messianic era, we are told that "the light of the moon will be equal to the light of the sun" according to the prophet *Isaiah*. Women and men embodying the feminine will lead the way. Because the external world is already quite adapted to the dominance of the masculine, the values and wisdom of the feminine will have to rise to create the balance needed for peace and harmony. It is the revelation of the Divine Feminine, the *Shechinah*, that opens our hearts to the experience of love and unity. Evil will be eradicated in the presence of the Divine.

*Tu B'Av* is the time for the revelation of the Divine Feminine, offering us a glimpse of the messianic time. People do not know yet what to do on *Tu B'Av*. My teacher *Reb Shlomo Carlebach*, of blessed memory, used to say something like this, "The higher the holiday, the least known it is and less clear how to celebrate it." We are learning in recent years how to celebrate *Tu B'Shevat*. In the messianic time, with our Holy Temple rebuilt, *Tu B'Av* will become very clear to us.

My newest book, *The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women; Revealing the Divine Feminine* is a guidebook for facilitating the rise of the feminine spirit and the revelation of the Divine Feminine. Through an interview format with each biblical woman, the path to revealing the Divine Feminine, the *Shechinah*, is revealed. We stand on the shoulders of these holy women before us. In this book, women have a voice!

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



## New Temple in Virginia Beach and an African American Museum Visit



RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

*Statement by Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman, founder and spiritual leader of the new Temple Lev Tikvah (Heart of Hope), a Reform Jewish congregation in Virginia Beach that will be at the forefront of Jewish-Christian relations and dialogue:*

My heart indeed overflows with hope, gratitude and love as I humbly though proudly announce the blessed birth of the youngest synagogue in Virginia Beach and Hampton Roads. It is housed in a unique ecumenical Christian setting, the only such in the world, making it now an even more exceptional interfaith center. Church Of The Holy Apostles, established in Virginia Beach in 1977, is both an Episcopal and Catholic congregation. Their loving embrace of my new Reform Jewish Temple is ample and inspiring testimony to their genuine ecumenical spirit reaching beyond their own common and diverse Christian traditions. With this golden opportunity we are making and impacting history. Our one God is surely smiling upon us.



*Rabbi Zoberman is founder and spiritual leader of the new Reform Jewish congregation, "Temple Lev Tikvah" (Heart of Hope). It meets at The Church of the Holy Apostles in Virginia Beach, which is the only Episcopalian and Catholic Church in the world. Now it is the only interfaith center in the world with Episcopalians, Catholics, and Jews under one roof.*

They graciously invite their Jewish brethren to tend to our 4,000 year old nourishing roots that have blessed the human family, instrumental in birthing the two other great monotheistic world religions of Christianity and Islam. Bishop James Magness of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia and Bishop Barry Knestout of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond are to be commended for  
(see Zoberman, page 14)

**ZOBERMAN**

(continued from page 13)

their broad ecumenical vision, spiritual fortitude and shining faith in action. Together we reaffirm a holy bond in face of a complex and trying history. We are committed to overcome troubling past shadows. Having already made major strides forward, we should maintain and build upon those breakthrough accomplishments of monumental change.

We are mutually enabled to cultivate a precious interfaith linkage, appreciating each other's differences and particularities while celebrating our often overlooked but no less important commonalities, as we collectively admit to our shortcomings, ignorance and biases. This awesome journey of mutual discovery while interfacing under one roof, challenges us all to bring out the best God planted within us. It gains added critical significance against the unsettling backdrop of the global resurgence of consuming dark forces. This includes but is not limited to anti-Semitism with its recent deadly and shocking manifestation in American synagogues, along with horrific terrorist attacks on Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and others at worship and elsewhere.

In our gratefully most ecumenical nation on earth and in our own Hampton Roads community of interfaith firsts, we offer promising and consoling good news. I am acutely mindful of my personal sacred responsibility to ever be a builder of *Shalom's* essential bridges of healing, hope and harmony. After all, I am a family member of the Holocaust's surviving remnant of European Jewry. The Holocaust continues to weigh heavily on both Jews and Christians. It ought to bring us closer away from the abyss, raising our prophetic voices in unison when confronted by genocidal crimes as in Syria. The cry of abandoned refugees and the abused anywhere calls us for a joint response of divine compassion, born of a Judeo-Christian heritage of indispensable values and ideals, building coalitions pursuing social justice.

Polarizing religious, racial, and cultural strife threatens to paralyze American democracy. We enthusiastically recall that our Commonwealth of Virginia is home to the revolutionary 1786 Virginia statue of Religious Freedom authored by Thomas Jefferson, a great native son. It became enshrined in the First Amendment protections we dare not to do without, that has allowed diversity within unity to flourish like nowhere else. It produced the irreplaceable noble American experiment we are pledged to uphold and renew.

The unfolding and transformative religious drama in our midst with remarkable Christian partners and willing Jews can

happen only in our free America. Let us count our blessings even as we commit to turning blemishes into blessings and keep from turning blessings into blemishes. We shall together yet repair our blemished planet into a blessed and better home for all of God's children. The Divine delights in diversity, God's divinity and human dignity are one and inseparable.

*The article was inserted into the Congressional Record on June 21, 2019 by Congresswoman Elaine Luria (D) of Virginia's second district.*

**National Museum of African American History**

On George Washington's birthday Feb. 22, 2019, during Black History Month, I was privileged to travel to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, close to the Washington Monument on the inspiring National Mall of our nation's capital. The long-awaited tour was organized by the Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission.

As a family member of the Holocaust's surviving remnant of European Jewry, I knew ahead of the searing visit of the tragic bond between the African American experience and the destruction of European Jewry. This is a binding bond among all affected by infectious racial, religious, ethnic, national and gender hatred seeking to demean, dehumanize and demonize the 'other'. There is an unmistakable thread connecting the 2015 murder of nine Black members at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston S.C., with the gunning down of 11 Jewish worshippers at a Sabbath service in Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue in 2018; between the historical lynchings of Blacks and the 2017 White Supremacist mayhem in Charlottesville, Va., resulting in a murder, with the dreaded shouts of "Jews will not replace us!" still ringing in our ears. Vitriolic anti-Semitism is precipitous on the rise in the United States and Europe.

The imposing structure of the African American Museum stands within sight of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. I recalled my first visit there and the subsequent ones, when I felt an overwhelming sense of uncontrollable loss. It was the same sensation of being assaulted to the core of my humanity that I experienced traveling the challenging halls of the African American Museum. Yet, I emerged from both encounters with greater resolve to mend the world, *Tikkun Olam*, turning blemishes into blessings. Who can remain untouched gazing at the casket of brutally murdered 14-year-old Emmett Till and the photo of his agonizing mother, the only exhibit we are forbidden to photograph

that we should focus uninterruptedly?

We were guided by an incredible docent telling the story of proud Africans forcibly and so cruelly separated from their rich roots and brought to America – those who made it through the terrifying Middle Passage – and brought here to be violated of all that is sacred. Both they as slaves and Europe's Jews were deemed sub-human. The vital Jewish and African American partnership during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s needs to be revitalized in the context of a wider coalition to move America forward.

I wish that both museums could be connected by a bridge or a tunnel to visualize their inseparable bond. The large number of visitors at the museum, particularly the many students, is a hopeful sign. We dare not despair of past and present pain, for that only serves the hateful aggressor, while indifference, as Eli Wiesel taught us, only enables evildoers to succeed.

I was in Jerusalem when I watched in disbelief on American TV the tormented images of Virginia's Governor Ralph and Pamela Northam. I have known them for many years as good people and outstanding citizens who have blessed our community with many gifts. A regrettable past painful lapse in judgment, contributed to a large extent by one's early environment, should not be a barrier toward redemption. Governor Northam's planned 'Racial Reconciliation Tour' is commendable and should lead toward sacred healing born of honest dialogue and redeeming acts.

A visit to the African American Museum is highly recommended for all of us along with the Holocaust one. Former Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell's formation of Virginians for Reconciliation is laudable. Further legislation on all levels is necessary to bring about a more equitable society with opportunity for all toward a more Perfect Union. We need better tools to fight the scourge and resurgence of all forms of hatred, bigotry and discrimination. Democracies are at risk of backsliding, as was the case in Germany, and require eternal vigilance.

A precious teachable window is open to us following trying circumstances, as we celebrate this year the 400th Anniversary of Virginia with its dark shadows and shining lights. Let us pledge, one diverse but united family, to rise together higher and higher.

*Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman is a member of the Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission and the Holocaust Commission of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater. He is past national Interfaith Chair of JCPA (Jewish Council for Public Affairs). He is Honorary Senior Rabbi Scholar at Eastern Shore Chapel Episcopal Church in Virginia Beach. ✨*



# Media Watch



BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

## Two Strange Law and Order: SVU Episodes About Jews

### Jewish Psychos?

After a book-signing, the celebrated writer of a novel based on personal experiences in prostitution is found dead. Videos quickly lead to the killer, who discovered before the book event that the female prostitute he had been seeing was a biological male. The killer resented the lie and the (trans)gender revelations.

The only address that the publisher had for that murdered author was that of the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan (a Jewish Community Center). But detective work soon leads to an impressive mansion on a Manhattan corner.

A search of the mansion yields two aged Jewish men, the brothers Edelman: Joe, the older brother played by Judd Hirsch; and Ben, the younger brother, portrayed by Wallace Shawn (photo above center). Veteran series writer Michael Chernuchin puts ample Yiddish vulgarisms in both of their mouths, rendering them foils for political correctness, but not in any good or constructive way. They just spout epithets for gays (“feigele”) and blacks (“shvartze”). When Joe uses the latter word, Detective Olivia tells him that that term is not acceptable and he wonders whether she means the word or the race. Such “humor” is weird not only in the strange context of this tale but in the context of a police detective becoming an arbiter of acceptable speech, however inappropriate and obnoxious the suspect.

We are told that one brother put quarters around the house to test the honesty of a black maid. During questioning, a brother requests a corn beef sandwich from a deli. It is recalled that one of the brothers cheated an Izzie Berkovitz at gin rummy one summer while at Kutcher’s (a kosher summer resort hotel in the Catskill Mountains, but who was supposed to get that reference?)

It turns out that while the brothers had nothing to do with the murder of the author, one of the brothers was the real author. The murder victim was hired by the publisher who was not privy to the real identity of the author, and therefore procured someone for the book-signings.



Scene from “Law & Order: SVU” episode “Alta Kockers” (Season 20, Episode 10) aired Nov. 29, 2018 on NBC.

But there is strong evidence of a crime in the brothers’ basement: They had created a grave for their mother, who had been riddled with cancer, but the cause of her death had been asphyxiation, probably for reasons of euthanasia.

The sons are brought to trial, but they are written for sympathy. There is a dark old secret of sexual abuse at an after school club. At least one brother was afraid to report the abuse because he feared that his mother would have regarded him as “dirty” and would have not loved him anymore.

Why did writer Chernuchin and the producers hanker after a Jewish version of *Psycho*? Was this just so funny-sounding Yiddish vulgarisms, never used by refined individuals, could make their way into the script? Was this some kind of last hurrah as the clock runs out on portrayals, already dated, of certain Jewish types?

NBC touted the episode as a tour-de-force for two veteran actors. But it seemed more like an easy, cheap reprisal of clichés in the series, which constantly exploits child abuse for dramatic effect, and like sheer appropriation of old tropes for getting gratuitous laughs with Jewish expressions and mannerisms. Did some kind of nostalgia for those terms and attitudes prompt this discombobulated half-hearted homage to Hitchcock?

### Jewish Youth and a Muslim City Councilwoman

*Law and Order: SVU* decided to exploit real-life controversies regarding religion, Jews and Muslims.

A Muslim New York city councilwoman is raped in a synagogue, and two youths with red (MAGA?) hats are seen fleeing the scene (photo right). When asked why she was at the synagogue, the victim says that she was “set up by those people,” lured there “by a man pretending to want peace. I was lied to by a Zionist.”

She was referring to the rabbi who had invited her to tour a Holocaust exhibit in response to some of her previous anti-Semitic slurs. He claimed that she had not met him in the agreed upon room and that he had concluded that she had chosen not to show up. He added that he had extended the invitation because she had been

repeating tropes that might normalize anti-Semitism in ways that started in Germany.

No one mentions that the rabbi should have shown better judgment than inviting her to the synagogue in evening hours when there was no staff to guide guests and to ensure their safety.

We are told that there was a Jewish youth group meeting that night, and the two young men, who are quickly found, were wearing hats associated with that activity. (Something else is said – gratuitously – about a planned Israel trip.) The councilwoman had confronted the boys earlier, in a clear effort to provoke them and to manipulate the media so that it appeared like they spit at her and tried to rip off her hijab. Writers Michael Chernuchin, Julie Martin and Richard Sweren (who usually handle the “Jewish” themes) make it clear that the councilwoman is no victim in her efforts to demonize Jewish youth: “It’s in their blood to be Islamophobes,” she says.

The writers never let up on the councilwoman’s anti-Jewish rhetoric. “Everybody’s so concerned about the Jews,” she says. They have her assistant observe that the Muslim-American politician is “exercising her right to criticize Israel,” but is not anti-Semitic. They also have the mother of one of the Jewish youths slamming Sharia law.



Scene from “Law & Order: SVU” episode “Assumptions” (Season 20, Episode 23) aired May 9, 2019 on NBC.

The writers allow their Muslim protagonist to observe that the synagogue sanctuary felt like a place of reverence and Godliness. But they certainly have no qualms about manufacturing a gratuitous association of a synagogue sanctuary with violent rape.

The rapist turns out to be the woman’s ex-husband, a “conservative Muslim” who resents her ending the marriage because she is a lesbian and struggles with being an observant Muslim. According to Sharia law, the punishment for homosexual acts is death. This seems to be his revenge and “justice.”

“Why can’t she be both gay and an observant Muslim?” the police inquire. When all this comes out in court, the woman’s parents are shell-shocked but supportive. The implication is, of course, that when

(see Gertel, page 16)

# Book Review



REVIEWED BY  
PROFESSOR ARNOLD AGES

## Robert Alter as Warrior Translator

*The Art of Bible Translation.* By Robert Alter. Princeton University Press (Princeton, N.J., 2019) 127 Pages.

The author of this powerful treatise on Bible translation is an emeritus professor of Hebrew and comparative literature at the University of California in Berkeley who has already translated the entire corpus of the Hebrew Bible into English and has composed this slim volume to explore, analyze and criticize the major English translations of Jewish Scripture from the much venerated 17th century King James version (1611) to modern ones representing individuals, as well as Protestant, Catholic and Jewish renderings.



While he honors the beautiful English cadences of the first text, Alter takes no prisoners and is an equal opportunity detractor of bad or inadequate translations in the King James work and rather surprisingly, even in the Jewish Publication Society's highly praised work, given that its editors, among whom were rabbinic scholars well versed in Hebrew.

Before alluding to Alter's criticism of specific translation problems, this reviewer wishes to record his appreciation for the formidable exertions Alter expended in his translation of the *Chumash* – the Pentateuch, which, as he mentions in the current volume, was the spring board for his courageous continuation in translating the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

His interpretation in that first volume contains one of the most highly original translation-interpretations of a controversial verse in Genesis 49:10 – seen by Christians (as well as some Jewish commentators) as a prediction of the Messiah in the use of the word "*Shilo*." Alter has no theological axe to grind because his approach to the Bible is primarily literary but his deep knowledge of the architecture of Biblical Hebrew leads him to dispose quite effectively of the alleged Messianic resonance in the passage.

As one who has been involved in professional translations from French to English this reviewer understands but cannot always agree with Alter's blanket criticism about making the target language easily accessible to the reader by changing the word order, eliminating parataxis ("and"), inverting syntax and using "dynamic equivalence" to render the original text more amenable to the English-speaking reader.

The author would not endorse this approach because he is dealing with the Hebrew text of Scripture – in which otherwise excusable linguistic manipulations of the text often betray scanty knowledge of Hebrew roots, grammar, poetic rhythms and word order. The thorough possession of these elements by Alter leads him into controversial explorations, such as his surmise that "*tohu vavohu*" in the creation story was a couplet invented by the Hebrew author in the same way "helter-skelter" was coined in California. Alter's selection of "Welter" ("*tohu*") seems infelicitous.

The decades which Alter has spent converting the Hebrew text of the Bible to not only an accurate parsing of the original but also to capturing the oral quality of both the prose and poetic texts – has prompted him to unravel a Ten Commandments for translators bent upon making the Hebrew Bible amenable to modern English-speaking public.

The problem is that most translators, from the great executors of the King James edition to the current crop have sought to make Scripture not only amenable but understandable – and in so doing – have distanced themselves from the compactness and rawness of the Hebrew original and have thus deprived it of what Bergson called its "*élan vital*".

However, in his own exegesis of the text Alter frequently (and happily from the reader's perspective) violates his own prime directive ("Let the Bible speak – don't simplify, don't change the word order or explain...") by indulging in learned clarifications of the real meaning of specific Hebrew passages. Thus he unpacks the delicious erotic sensibilities of Sarah's response to the three angels in Genesis who announce a geriatric pregnancy for her by suggesting that at her advanced age she might actually experience one again sexual pleasure.

The author is also very critical of English representations of basic Hebrew words by recourse to bureaucratic or political terms which do not fit the context. He is therefore unhappy with the Jewish Publication Society's use of the term "dominate" to describe the functions of the sun and moon in the creation segments of Genesis because that verb suggests political domination as in "The Soviet

## GERTEL

(continued from page 15)

Muslims change their perspective on homosexuality, they will be nicer to everyone, including Jews. I suppose that this is the message for Orthodox Jews and traditional Christians, as well.

Clearly, the writers believed that they were performing a public service, exposing anti-Semitism, political press manipulation and Muslim fundamentalism. But what they really offered was a discombobulated stream of "un-woke" rants and behaviors that made everybody look bad and did nothing to treat religious beliefs and practices with intelligence, nuance, and sensitivity.

And the writers seemed intent on making the Jewish teenagers look bad, one way or another. The boys do, after all, knock down an elderly woman, even if by accident, and run away without rendering assistance.

In real life, the news media may pay dearly for maligning a youth from a Kentucky Catholic school who appears in a video to be smirking at a Native American protester, although video footage that soon emerged shows that he and his fellow students had been harassed by various groups for wearing MAGA hats and for participating in an anti-abortion rally. This episode of *Law and Order SVU* chose to have a Jewish young man smirk in police headquarters during investigation of a rape. Which images from this discombobulated episode will linger?

*Rabbi Elliot Gertel has been spiritual leader of congregations in New Haven and Chicago. He is the author of two books, What Jews Know About Salvation and Over the Top Judaism: Precedents and Trends in the Depiction of Jewish Beliefs and Observances in Film and Television. He has been media critic for The National Jewish Post & Opinion for 40 years since July 27, 1979. ✨*



Union dominated its satellites."

In the same vein Alter faults a modern Biblical translation for describing the Pharaoh in Exodus using the term "issued instructions" to kill male Israelite children at birth – a bureaucratic phrase totally out of synchronization with the simplicity of the Hebrew original. In his survey of Samuel 3:20–25 and the release of Abner, Alter shows that clumsy English renderings of key words conveys ideas completely alien to the Hebrew text.

The preceding sections represent only a very small sampling of Alter's corrections and emendations of the English that can be found in Bible translations right across

(see Ages, page 17)



# My Kosher Kitchen



REVIEWED BY SYBIL KAPLAN

## Gluten free and kosher

**Food You Want: For the Life You Crave.** By Nealy Fischer. Da Capo Lifelong Books. \$28 hardcover. April 2019.

This *kosher* cookbook of gluten-free recipes is quite a delight to read. Not only are there at least 128 recipes, but there are 107 full color photographs, many of the author and her family sampling the recipes and enjoying them.



"These pages are designed to help you obtain a simpler recipe for success, both in and out of the kitchen.... these pages are infused with craveable global recipes inspired by our life in Asia and Israel." The recipes are gluten free because the author became gluten free more than 10 years ago.

Recipes have two strategies – *Nail this* (the most essential elements to master for the success of a dish) and *Flip It* (tips to encourage the reader to be creative and adapt the recipe to your preferences and limitations). The author then gives the reader a 10-step guide to becoming a flexible chef; what to substitute chart; pantry, fridge and freezer essentials; and gadgets.

The chapters include: All-day breakfast, Breads and muffins, Soups and small plates, Salads and dressings, Fish, poultry and meat, Veggies anytime, Indulgent desserts, Drinks and nibbles for friends, and Condiments and pantry essentials. The book concludes with a conversion cheat sheet.

Some nice ideas in the format are above the ingredients list is a listing of what tools to use, which is bolded and, where applicable, divided into dry ingredients, wet ingredients and toppings.

She also has my favorite idea in cookbooks – numbered instructions opposite the ingredients so you don't have to keep looking up and down. My other favorite is a comment about each recipe. If you are gluten-free or know someone who is, this is a great, modern approach. Here are a few of the recipes to try:

### Savory Quinoa Bowl

(4–6 servings)

1/2 cup red or white quinoa  
(makes 2 heaping cups cooked)  
2 small Persian or Kirby cucumbers, chopped (1-1/2 cups)  
2 chopped tomatoes (about 1 cup)  
1 peeled, chopped avocado (about 1 cup)  
1 cup arugula  
1/2 cup chopped green onion (about 4)  
1/2 cup chopped fresh mint  
1/4 cup finely chopped shallots  
3 tablespoons lemon juice  
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
6 large eggs

Cook the quinoa: mix it with 1 cup water in a saucepan over medium low heat. Bring to a simmer and cook, covered, for 10 minutes. Check to see if it is done or needs a tad more liquid. Set aside to cool. Toss the cucumbers, tomatoes, avocado, arugula, green onions, mint and shallots in a large bowl. Add the cooled quinoa to the veggie bowl then season with lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper. Divide the mixture between 6 bowls.

Fry the eggs in a lightly oiled frying pan over medium heat until the whites have set or to desired doneness. Season with salt and pepper to taste, then carefully slide them on top of the quinoa bowls.

### Herbed Everyday Bread

(2 mini loaves or 1 large loaf)

1 packet active dry yeast (2 teaspoons)  
1/4 cup warm water  
1 cup all-purpose gluten-free flour  
1 cup oat flour  
1/4 cup almond flour  
1/4 cup flax meal  
2 tsp. xanthan gum  
(omit if already in flour)  
1-1/2 tsp. dried rosemary  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
2 large eggs + 1 beaten for brushing  
2 tablespoons raw honey  
1/2 tsp. rice vinegar

In a large bowl, mix the yeast with the warm water; let stand until the yeast bubbles, about 8 minutes. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together gluten free flour, oat flour, flax meal, almond flour, xanthan, rosemary and salt. Stir olive oil, 2 eggs, honey and rice vinegar into yeast mixture. Stir dry ingredients into bowl. Mix well. Transfer dough to parchment-lined loaf pans and let stand covered in a warm place until bread rises to double in

### AGES

(continued from page 16)

the theological spectrum. This small book can deliver very large benefits.

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



height (about 45 minutes). Preheat the oven to 350°F. Brush the top with the remaining beaten egg. Bake the bread until it is golden and set in the center, 30 to 35 minutes for mini loaves or about 45 minutes for a larger loaf. Cool the bread completely before removing from the pan or pans and slicing.

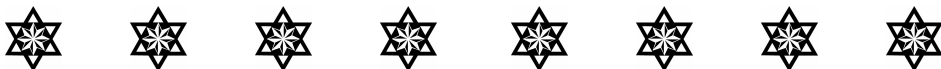
### Date-Bar Bites

(32 to 36 squares)

1 pound Medjool dates, pitted and chopped  
1/4 cup maple syrup  
juice and zest of 1 orange  
2/3 cup coarsely chopped raw walnuts or pecans  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1-3/4 cups all-purpose gluten-free flour  
1-1/2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats  
1 cup packed dark brown sugar  
3/4 cup coconut oil at room temperature  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
1/8 tsp. salt

In a saucepan over medium heat, combine dates with 1/2 cup water, maple syrup, and orange juice and bring to a boil. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the orange zest, nuts, cinnamon and vanilla. Set aside. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 13x9-inch baking pan or line it with parchment paper. In a food processor, mix together flour, rolled oats, brown sugar, coconut oil, baking soda and salt until combination is crumbly but still holds together. Press 2/3 of the dough into the baking pan (reserve 1/3 for the topping). Spread the filling evenly over the crust. Sprinkle the remaining 1/3 of the topping over the filling. Bake for 30 minutes or until lightly golden. Cool completely then refrigerate until cold to make the cutting easier. Cut into 1-1/2 inch squares.

**Sybil Kaplan** is a journalist, author, compiler/editor of 9 kosher cookbooks (working on a 10th) and food writer for North American Jewish publications, who lives in Jerusalem where she leads weekly walks of the Jewish food market, Machaneh Yehudah, in English, and writes the restaurant features for Janglo.net, the oldest, largest website for English speakers. ★



## KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page 20)

Holy Temple, only olive oil produced in Tekoa was allowed in the service.

The Jewish community, which was founded in 1978 by a group of Jewish pioneers, is today a mixed religious and secular community comprised of approximately 3,000 people like Mira and Oren. Mira and Oren moved to Tekoa in 1983.

While working in a research lab, Mira said to her husband one day, "wouldn't it be great if we could grow mushrooms at Tekoa?" In order to learn more, Mira went to the agriculture department of the Hebrew University and to Germany; Oren went to Holland – both to learn more. "Ultimately, we scraped together enough money to start a mushroom farm which began in 1986," says Mira.

Initially, they grew oyster and shitake mushrooms, which were particularly attractive to a market that likes special foods, selling to chefs and specialty stores. In 1990, they started expanding, reaching out to other specialties like lemon grass, asparagus, limes, snow peas, baby broccoli, baby artichokes, and more.

They have also added quick preparation products which only need hot water added.

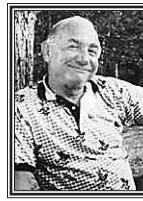
"Every year we try to add something new, a healthy product or mushroom related or not easily available in Israel," says Mira.

Today, the farm employs 50–60 people involved in production, sales and marketing. All of the growing rooms are climate controlled. In the room for oyster mushrooms, which we saw, approximately one ton is grown on wheat straw. Among the mushrooms grown and sold at Tekoa Farms are oyster, shitaki, King oyster, shimeji and shinoki.

Their vegetables and spices include snow peas, ginger root, Belgian endive, red endive, turmeric root, shallots, Brussel sprouts, baby artichokes, sundried tomatoes and lemongrass. Fresh fruits include limes, raspberries and blackberries. Mira says they are hoping in the future to have a visitor center where people can come for tours, but they are not set up for this now.

*Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, lecturer, book reviewer, food writer and author of Witness to History: Ten Years as a Woman Journalist in Israel and nine cookbooks, including What's Cooking at Hadassah College. She lived in Israel from 1970-1980; she and her husband, Barry, came to live in Jerusalem in 2008, where she works as a foreign correspondent for North American Jewish publications, lectures to senior citizen residences, leads walks in English in Machaneh Yehudah (the Jewish produce market), and writes stories about kosher restaurants on Janglo.net for which Barry*

## Spoonful of Humor



BY TED ROBERTS

### A Fable: Adam Sees the Light

Can you imagine Adam – G-d's first human creation in Eden's green meadow? See him, newly minted. His fresh body gleaming and his mind totally empty of facts, attitudes, opinions – as empty as Eden is of thorn bushes – ready to begin its lifelong task of accumulation of data and weaving that data into an intellect. He turns slowly 360 degrees, a full circle, and takes in grass and forests, and flowers, and mountains, and brooks, all covered by a blue dome.

As he registers every throb of the new creation in the lush, green grass of Eden and wonders at his consciousness – as flimsy as the few white clouds that sail above him. He looks closer and sees the songbirds. And look, there are small creatures in the grass and larger ones hopping and bounding amongst the trees. Truly, a brave new world full of creatures, unlike himself, that are necessary for him to understand – he who at birth has no identity and a head full of inexperience. Then he chances to stare into that copper disc that illuminates his new world. It beams over all.

Still sitting on the green Savannah and swiveling his head in all directions, because the Lord of creation has put a potion called curiosity into his bloodstream; unappreciated at the time by Adam, but destined to nourish his intellect. So much to see that it took many hours to inscribe it all in his heretofore blank brain like the honeybee fills his comb with nectar.

Then among his recording of his surroundings, he made an alarming observation. That bright orange thing was no longer straight ahead. The trees on the far horizon appeared to consume it. And he could no longer see the sharp outlines of trees and mountains. In fact, the creatures that had been joyfully bounding in the woods were no longer visible to him. Darkness was replacing light. He trembled. Even a partially stocked brain knew that somehow darkness meant blindness and blindness was death.

As the trees pulled more and more of

photographs. She has been reviewing books for 40 years. ✨

the light below the horizon, Adam's blindness increased. He chose to run to escape this danger, but he fell over a large boulder. He rose, only to run into a tree. He resumed his running – somewhere there must be light and he must find it. He was cold and blind and fearful all at once.

And the Lord G-d saw his fear and took pity on him. Ah, we need a light for the night, thought the mind of G-d wherein dwells all the mechanisms of the universe. Therefore, he flung the full moon into the midnight sky. Adam stopped. Only a small improvement. Now at least he could see the river, which lay in his path. But still the garden's beauty seemed blurred in dusky yellow. So, the lord flung millions of points of light into the sky. They helped but a little.

The good Lord, who made the heart of Adam, understood the heart of Adam. This fear of nighttime blindness needed more than moon and stars.

The Creator spoke in Adam's ear the secret of day and night. How they revolve like all things in nature; life and death, the seasons, the great architecture of the galaxies. But Adam's mind could not accommodate the voice of his maker. It was like talking to the beasts. He needed one of his own kind. The ragged hole of fear in Adam's soul could only be filled by a helpmate. Thus, Adam slept and G-d made Eve.

She stood beside him and pointed to the horizon where the earth had swallowed the sun. Her eyes expressed no fear, only wonder. They sank to the grass in each other's arms – huddled like two babes. Neither knew anything except the warmth of the other. They watched and waited. Their fearful eyes focused on the pine tree where they had last seen the sun. Would it ever return to bless them with light and warmth? They dozed, frightful, but full of the need to sleep. Then Eve, feeling a warmth at her back and noticing the lightening of the black sky, laughed the first exultant laugh of creation and put her hand to Adam's face in order to turn it to the life-giving light behind them.

"It returns, it returns," she whispered with awe; "but not where it was eaten by the earth." They stand, they face the rising sun, and then they lift their faces to heaven – wherein the laws of nature are made – to thank He who gave them life and light and warmth. Around them all living things hummed a hymn of hope.

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



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# Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN  
PHOTOS BY BARRY A. KAPLAN



## The Jewish Post & Opinion

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### Touring the Knesset

Submitted 12-29-18  
(Photo by Alice Fierstein)

Many of us travel by the Knesset building, acknowledging its purpose but rarely have the opportunity to take a tour. When Hadassah-Israel organized its General Assembly meeting Dec. 17th, they chose to hold it there, preceded by a tour.

Israeli-born, Adina, doing her national service instead of going into the army, was our tour guide. She explained that the word *Knesset* took its name (meaning assembly) and fixed its membership at 120 from the *Knesset Hagedolah* (Great Assembly), the representative Jewish council convened in Jerusalem by Ezra and Nehemiah in the 5th century B.C.E.

Beginning in 1949, the Knesset was housed in Tel Aviv then on King George Street in Jerusalem. The current building was opened in August, 1966. The Plenum wing houses the Chagall State Hall, a library, a cabinet room and committee rooms.



The Plenum Hall has three stories: on the lower floor are the Knesset members in seats in the shape of a *menorah* with the opposition on one side and the coalition in the center. At the front of the hall is the dais where the speaker of the house, currently Yuli Elstein, sits.

Behind the dais is a wall created by sculptor, Dany Karavan, said to remind one of the Western Wall. The one picture hanging on the wall is Theodor Herzl. One gallery is for the press; the other, with bullet-proof glass, is for the public.

The Chagall State Hall is where official ceremonies are held and is decorated with three hand-woven tapestries designed by Marc Chagall in the 1960s. The tapestries took eight years to complete.

The one on the left is "Return to Zion," representing the present with vibrant colors, holidays depicted on the borders

and the Bible at the top. The one in the center represents the past, "Exodus," showing the exodus from Egypt, Moses on Mount Sinai and King David. The one on the right represents the future, the prophetic "Vision of the Final Redemption," a peaceful, utopian piece with many Biblical references.

From here, we saw the replica of the Declaration of Independence signed by members of the people's council. Originally they signed a rolled up piece of paper because the declaration was made on a Friday afternoon, May 14 and there was not time to write it; the British were leaving Saturday, May 15. Later after the Sabbath, the wording was transferred to the signed paper.

The new wing was planned in 1981; construction was completed in 1992. It contains 48 chambers for Knesset members, an auditorium; and storage areas. In the new wing are glass cases with gifts given to the Knesset and a photo wall of intimate moments. The committee rooms sit in this wing. There are 12 permanent committees whose members sit around the table. Partial members and professionals and experts sit against one wall; journalists, guests and citizens sit on the opposite wall.

The Kedma wing was completed in stages between 2005 and 2008 and contains meeting rooms, chambers for committee chairpersons, and offices. We were then shown the attendance board with the names and photographs of Knesset members. Those lit up are there; those shadowed have not yet come to the sessions held Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, beginning at 4 p.m. Of the 120, 34 are women; 18 are non-Jewish, 13 are Muslims and one is Christian.

General guided tours of the Knesset are held each weekday from Sunday to Thursday. Representing the primary languages of Israel's citizens, tours are available in English, Hebrew, Arabic, French, Spanish, German, Russian and Amharic. The guided tours last for approx-

imately one hour. Specialized tours focusing on the art and photography in the Knesset building, the architecture of the Knesset and the parliamentary work of the Knesset are also available. Visitors must bring their passports to join an organized tour. Select Knesset sessions are open to the public.



### Mushrooms, Specialties and More in Tekoa

Submitted June 23, 2019

When Mira Weigensberg (above), born and raised in Montreal, and her husband, Oren Kessler from Brooklyn, moved to Israel in 1979, she joined a research lab at Hadassah Hospital and came across interesting research. "Edible mushrooms had a potential effect on the immune system," she explained as we sat in the office of Tekoa Farms.



Tekoa is a Jewish communal town five miles south of Jerusalem close to Herodium, the palace fortress and small town built by King Herod between 23 and 15 BCE. Tekoa was also the birthplace of the prophet, Amos, and at the time of the  
(see Kaplan/Israel, page 18)