

Editorial

Below in italics is the Ethical Will Rabbi Steven Z. Leder created for his children. While ordinary wills tell our loved ones what to do with our material possessions, an ethical will teaches our values that we hope will live on. *Elul*, the Hebrew month before *Rosh Hashanah*, is a good time to create an ethical will because the goals of both are similar.

They both ask one to think about one's priorities. Once one deciphers what is really important to him or her, that person can begin aspiring to achieve those ideals. This can be a great motivator because, like our vows to improve in the new year, ethical wills cannot simply be lipservice. We do not have to achieve all of our goals, but we have to demonstrate that we are striving to do so.

More about ethical wills or leaving a spiritual legacy can be found in books such as, *So That Your Values Live On* by Jack Reimer and Professor Nathaniel Stampfer. Also one can find different examples of ethical wills – some going back hundreds of years – on the Internet. These are valuable for the insight they give us into the cultural and social life of the individual Jew of some particular land at some specific period.

Dear Aaron and Hanna,

*Most of all I want you to know that you and your mother are the joy of my life. All other accomplishments pale by comparison. I want you always to be good Jews because then I know you will be good, charitable, loving, disciplined, decent people. Live more for today than for tomorrow. Be forgiving to a fault. When you do something, do your very, very best. Tell many jokes both dirty and clean. Always try to have enough money so that you are never afraid to have someone else's power over you but use your money to help the powerless. Never pick a fight but if someone picks one with you never back down. If you have done someone good, see it as a small thing. If someone has done you wrong, see that as a small thing too. See the world, dance and give. Let good food, warm bread and wine grace your table. Study Torah diligently. Be welcome in each other's homes. Light a *yahrzeit* candle for your mother and me when we are gone. Most of all remember that I love you deeply and forever. Dad*

Rabbi Leder is senior rabbi of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Los Angeles.

In a similar fashion, the following *Bat Mitzvah* Blessing was bestowed upon Leia Shulamit Pfeffer, daughter of Amy Beth Kressel, M.D., and Rabbi Bruce Pfeffer.

About the Cover

"Window of the Soul – Sounds of Shabbat"

By Bruce David

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This stained glass window commissioned by Dr. Mitch Rotman of St. Louis based on Psalm 92 celebrates *Shabbat* amidst the wonders of nature, and portrays musical instruments interwoven throughout the many layers of the design, including a city composed of instruments.

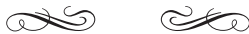
Relating to *Rosh Hashanah*, this design reminds us that this is a time to look inward and examine the deepest, most essential aspects of our lives with the hope of improving our choices and the quality of our lives in the New Year. Since the sounding of the *shofar* is to serve as a wakeup call for us at this time, several *shofars* are woven into this window. The largest one is the *shofar* flowing down the left side of the waterfalls. Its opening is situated between the upper parts of the two *Shabbat*/festival candles, found at the bottom of the waterfalls, while its body can be seen swirling upwards, ending on the left side near the trunk of the tree.

The windows are in the shape of the Ten Commandments (which *Shabbat* is an essential part of) and Hebrew letters symbolic of the Commandments are overlaid on these window/tablets. The tops of these windows also include the hidden faces of a man and a woman.

If one looks beyond the tree's branches to where they extend into the upper part (see Cover, page 3)



Bruce David



Written by Kressel, it was spoken by both parents on the pulpit of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation.

After the service, Dr. Kressel explained to me that when she was thinking of what blessings she wanted to give her daughter, she realized that she did not necessarily want to bless her with smooth sailing all the time because weathering challenges could help her grow. Like the Ethical Will above, and the Jewish person's task for *Elul*, she had to give considerable thought to what is important to her:

May Adonai bless you with long life, your strength undiminished, and your sight undimmed, like Moshe Rabeinu.

May you be blessed with health.

May you be blessed with the success you want for yourself.

May you be blessed with loving family and good friends.

May you be blessed with both the courage to take necessary risks and the wisdom not to

Inside this Issue

Editorial.....	2
About the Cover	2
Rabbi Benzion Cohen (Chassidic Rabbi).....	3
Joan Rivers.....	3
Rabbi ben Asher/Magidah Khulda bat Sarah (Gather the People).....	4
Amy Hirshberg Lederman (Jewish Educator).....	5
Rabbi Jon Adland (Shabbat Shalom).....	5
Rabbi Irwin Wiener, D.D. (Wiener's Wisdom).....	6
Rabbi Eli Mallon (Jewish Spirituality).....	7
Jim Shipley (Shipley Speaks).....	8
Rabbi Dennis and Sandy Sasso.....	8
Letter to the Editor.....	9
New Year's Calendars.....	10
Dr. Miriam Zimmerman (Holocaust Educator).....	12
Melinda Ribner (Kabbalah of the Month).....	12
Morton Gold (As I Heard It).....	14
Theater Reviews.....	15
Eliyahu McLean (Jerusalem Peacemaker).....	15
Bonnie Maurer (Book Review & excerpts).....	16
Rabbi Israel Zoberman (Book Review).....	17
Chana Tova Sokol (Book Review).....	17
Sybil Kaplan (My Kosher Kitchen).....	18
JScreen genetic screening.....	20
CNN: Auschwitz liberation.....	20

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be reckless.

May you be blessed with just enough struggle to grant you both resolve and compassion.

May you not face hardships that will break you.

May you be a blessing to your family, your people, and the world.

Kein Yi'hi Ratzon. May this be Adonai's will.

Our writers and staff at *The Jewish Post & Opinion* wish you, our dear readers, a safe and secure 5775.

Jennie Cohen, September 17, 2014 ✨

Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

Wondrous times

We are living in wondrous times. During the past 50 days the terrorists in Gaza fired about 2,500 deadly missiles at us. Miraculously no one was killed. I seriously think that this is an all time new world record for miracles.

Here is an amazing miracle that I read about. Yishai is an officer in an elite unit of paratroopers in the Israeli army. His unit was one of the first units to enter Gaza a few weeks ago.

On Friday he was told to attack a group of terrorists who were fortified in Khan Yunis.

"We quickly got organized. I took a bottle of wine to make *Kiddush*...and an extra bottle, just in case someone else might need it."

"Together with us was another unit, commanded by Nadav, a good friend of mine. Even though we had served together for many years, and had many discussions about religion, he still called himself a non-believer."

"We made final checks and began to move. All the way I prayed for success and Divine protection for all of our soldiers. The tension was great. We knew that this would not be easy."

"At one point they really opened fire on Nadav and his unit. I could hear the gunfire and explosions. Then they opened fire on us. The battle lasted an hour. Many terrorists were killed, and none of our soldiers were harmed."

"We entered one of the empty houses that we had just taken over and began to get organized for the night. I looked at my watch. It was time to make *Kiddush*. As I was making preparations, Nadav got in touch with me."

"He said: Yishai! You won't believe the miracle that I just went through! When they opened fire on us, they also threw three hand grenades at me. One fell on my right, one fell on my left, and one in front of me! All three of them blew up right near me, and I not only came out alive, but didn't even get scratched! Now I see that you are right. There really is Someone up there, and He is looking after me! By the way, I noticed that you packed up a bottle of wine. Can I come over and make *Kiddush*?"

We want *Moshiach* Now! The time of our redemption is here. Our forefathers were slaves in Egypt for many years. *Hashem* sent Moses to redeem them, and made many miracles. After the ten plagues, the Egyptians finally set them free. Now is the time of our final redemption. *Hashem* is showing us now even greater miracles and these miracles are part of our redemption.

COVER

(continued from page 2)

of the surrounding frame, they will see that the top part of the branches help to complete the Hebrew word "שלום" (*Shalom* – "peace").

Other musical instruments hidden in this composition include: a saxophone, a harmonica, trombone, French horn, flute pipe, key board, guitar, plus many harps, drums, and tambourines.

Like this stained glass window, a person's true beauty and worth, best comes through when one can see it in the light. "Window of the Soul" encourages us to open our hearts and celebrate our lives with songs and music, so that others may see and hear us as reflections of light and love.

Bruce David is a Jewish artist/educator. For more than 30 years, he has created stained glass windows, glass mosaics, metal sculpture and bronze relief for synagogues, organizations and individuals around the country (www.davidart.com). David is also known for his unique, storytelling art filled with hidden symbolism. Additionally, David heads up Light of the Nations, a non-profit Jewish Educational organization that uses art, music and creative expression to share the benefits of Judaism to people living contemporary lives (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Light-of-the-Nations/102836436454111>). ☆



Baruch Hashem we are no longer slaves to the Egyptians, but we are still in exile. We cannot always feel *Hashem*, our Father and our King. Even those who are fortunate to live in Kfar Chabad are still in exile. Here we all believe in *Hashem*, but we are not always aware of His presence. The miracles that we are witnessing help us to come closer to *Hashem*. The closer we are to *Hashem*, the less we are in exile.

For those of us who as yet don't know *Hashem*, now is a golden opportunity to look for Him and find Him. Think for a minute. If the terrorist had fired 10 deadly missiles at us and no one was killed, we could just say, "They had good fortune".

If they had fired 100 missiles at us and no one was killed, it would be harder to just ignore the miracles. However, people have their beliefs. Sometimes they have had these beliefs for many years and they are comfortable with them. For one reason or another they may be afraid to consider the possibility that there is a Creator. "If there is a Creator, then I can't decide myself any more what is right or wrong. I'll have to fulfill His 613 commandments, and maybe give up some pleasures!

In truth, it is really a pleasure that I no longer have the responsibility to decide what is right or wrong. I am happy

Joan Rivers

Much has been printed on Jewish comedienne Joan Rivers (Joan Alexandra Molinsky) who died on Sept. 4 at the age of 81. News about her graced the pages of earlier editions of this newspaper:

July 26, 1968 from the column, "The Woman's Viewpoint" by Helen Cohen, z"l, who wrote from 1946–1973 while raising eight children: One of Earl Wilson's recent Broadway columns has Joan Rivers saying she likes married life "except when my husband yells four-letter words at me like 'wash', 'cook' and 'dust'."



Rivers, 1978

May 23, 1975 from a column, "Names in the News": When Joan Rivers, the comedienne, was asked by a reporter for The Jewish Exponent why she would travel 3,000 miles from her California home to Haddonfield, N.J. where she was featured in a 30-second public service TV commercial on Tay-Sachs disease, which is fatal almost exclusively to Jewish children, she responded: "The reason I help out is because I'm a mother and because I'm Jewish and we have to take care of our own first." She added, "I was raised as a Reform Jew. Today, I have a daughter, Melissa, who is seven and a half. So the allegiances as mother and Jew combine perfectly."

The commercial featured children from five congregations playing in the background, while Naomi Weiner, four years old, runs up to Ms. Rivers and sits on her lap in the latter stages of the film. While a photograph of Danny (not his real name) appears on the commercial, taken at a hospital of the stricken Jewish child, Ms. Rivers recites: "These are the happy sounds of life...but what about the child born with Tay-Sachs Disease, the fatal genetic illness which strikes Jewish babies? There is no cure for Danny – but a recent medical breakthrough has made this tragic disease preventable. A simple test identifies carriers. Tay-Sachs kills our children. Please don't let it happen.

(see Rivers, page 4)



to leave that up to *Hashem*. When we live a life of Torah we do have to give up some physical pleasures. However, we gain tremendous spiritual pleasures. We give up one dollar to earn ten million.

We are now approaching the High Holidays. Now is the time to come closer to *Hashem*, to learn His Torah and fulfill His Mitzvahs in order to bring the complete and final redemption to ourselves and to the entire world. We want *Moshiach* now!

Rabbi Cohen lives in K'far Chabad, Israel. Email him at bzcohen@orange.net.il. ☆

Gather the People



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

The miracle of Yom Kippur

Which of the following causes us the most pain: the wrong we do directly to others and ourselves, or the emotional baggage from the spiritual alienation that follows our wrongdoing?

When we cheat others – whether we unfairly take their time, their affection, their rights, their property, or whatever – we too carry a share of the pain. Confirmation of that commonplace experience is found in the converse circumstances: when we freely give to others – whether of our time, affection, rights, property, or whatever – we too are beneficiaries of those gifts. And as ben Azzai, a second-century Palestinian scholar, said, “...One good deed [and one bad deed] draws another in its train...” In effect, the predictable consequence of wrongdoing is doing wrong more readily.

So it’s no surprise that when we fail to seek and find forgiveness throughout the year, the painful consequences of our wrongdoing pile up on us. Whether it’s as obvious as selfishness or losing one’s temper, or as subtle as cheating in business or professional practice – belittling others emotionally and psychologically or cutting corners morally and ethically – the least effect is to incrementally destroy the capacity for love and joy and contentment, not only in others, but in ourselves too.

To the extent that we fail to challenge and reconcile these damaged and damaging parts of ourselves, we come to be joyless, loveless, and perpetually discontented. The result is not only that we internalize a punishing self-concept, but also that we reify it. That is, we come to believe implicitly that the punishing person we have become is not a “human production,” not the result of our own choices and actions which are subject to change, but permanently fixed, unchangeable, dehumanized if you will.

We’ve met many people who are so deeply mired in this spiritual rut that they’re convinced nothing short of a miracle can change the punishing quality of their lives.

This recognition brings us to *Yom Kippur* and the brief *Torah* reading from Numbers 29:7–11. It begins: “On the tenth day of the

seventh month [Yom Kippur] there shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall afflict yourselves [from the root *ayin-nun-hei*, which also has the same meaning as *tzom* [fasting]; you shall not do any work.” (Numbers 29:7) The next four verses specify the offerings that are to be brought to the Temple – to wit: *olah*, *chatat*, and *mincha*.

What purposes did these offerings serve, and what’s their relevance to finding a remedy for the spiritually painful consequences of our contemporary wrongdoing?

The *olah* (elevating offering) expressed one’s willingness to forsake moral indifference and inactivity and, instead, to energetically strive upwards to God in daily life. The offering, or the prayer we substitute for it, symbolizes our acceptance of the idea that goodness resulting from such striving is possible and essential. It reinforces our faith in the social progress that can be realized from our “doing and understanding” God’s will as revealed in the Torah.

The *chatat* (sin offering), brought for inadvertent wrongdoing, represented an acknowledgment that, once achieved, maintaining moral clarity and commitment in practice is a constant challenge. So the *chatat* offering expressed one’s rededication to holding the high ground of a day-to-day moral and spiritual existence.

The *chatat* offering was made for a particular cause, reflecting a sin committed by one person exclusively. Thus to have brought the *chatat* offering, or to articulate the prayer we substitute for it nowadays, one must be conscious of having fallen from that high ground. In ancient times the offering had no holy purpose in the hands of those who failed to acknowledge that they occupied other than the moral high ground; and, similarly, one’s contemporary prayer under such conditions of moral blindness is reasonably described as mere lip service. If one makes this offering as wholehearted prayer, however, the effect is to reacquire one’s moral self-determination, to reclaim the moral freedom of choice that is lost when we give ourselves over completely to our sensory and materialistic desires.

The *mincha* (gift offering) expressed a willingness to trust in God for one’s material existence. It didn’t mandate abandoning personal responsibility for one’s own material welfare, but that the responsibility was to be met by following the vision and path of Torah – always making observance of Torah the highest priority. With the *mincha* offering or prayer, we affirm our trust in God as the source of our material necessities and the guarantor of their righteous fulfillment in life. The assumption is that, although we’re already near to God, we’re prepared to take a final step of placing our material life under the purview of Torah. This step

RIVERS

(continued from page 3)

May 19, 1978 from the column, “Social Calendar” by Jean Herschaft, z”l, who wrote about New York’s social scene from approximately 1951 to 2001: Dr. Meyer Molinsky, 79, a prominent physician in Larchmont, father of Joan Rivers, comedian, and now turned Hollywood movie writer/producer of Rabbit Test told a reporter that Joan’s greatest trauma came last year when her mother died. Joan, who could have cancelled her opening at a theatre in NY, opted to go on the night she lost her mother, in theatrical tradition. Dr. Molinsky said that she broke down a week later. He was not critical of his daughter, who is married to businessman Edgar Rosenberg and has a ten-year-old daughter. But, he did admit the family was against her entering show biz. “Now I am a hooked fan.” Joan, by the way, is a Barnard College graduate. ★



represents a transition from the view that the world provides material goods to sustain us, to the view that we are to use God’s material gifts to sustain the world.

The tradition teaches us that if we come to synagogue on Yom Kippur prepared to dedicate ourselves to God and Torah in the same spirit appropriate to bringing the *olah*, *chatat*, and *mincha* offerings to the ancient Temple, a miracle awaits us. There’s no doubt that this miracle doesn’t come cheap, but the personal and communal struggle it entails attests all the more to its authenticity.

What exactly is the miracle of Yom Kippur?

To understand the miracle, it’s helpful to imagine what our lives would be like if the possibility of atonement did not exist, if we neither understood it theoretically nor practically. The idea that we can, once again, notwithstanding our wrongdoing, purify ourselves and be at one with *Mikoaah Yisrael* – the “(Purifying) Fount of Israel,” another name of God – is not inherent in human biology. We have no reason to believe that the benefits of atonement and forgiveness existed in the ancient world prior to *Mattan Torah*, the giving and receiving of the Torah at Mount Sinai and the teaching of it during the centuries that followed.

To imagine the absence of atonement, we have only to consider the inevitable drastic cause-and-effect consequences of wrongdoing without forgiveness. We have already pointed to the psychological, emotional, and spiritual baggage that inevitably saps our power to sustain ourselves both internally and in the external world. The more devastating effects are most apparent in instances of egregious wrong-

(see Ben Asher, page 6)



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

Rosh HaShanah: It's never too late to get it right!

How many times have you been on a car trip with a small child and a squeaky, somewhat irritable voice emerges from the back seat only to ask: "Are we *there* yet?"

From the earliest of ages, we tend to view life not so much in terms of where we are at any given moment, but where we want to be or think we *should* be. This point hit home on a trip my family made one August to San Diego. Armed with a cache of books, games, headphones and computer games, they entered the car like soldiers settling in for a siege. Silly me, I actually thought we'd use the road time to talk. But the car ride was just a means to an end; it had to be endured in order to get to sandy beaches they could barely wait to play on.

I think a lot about that trip during the closing days of August. Not because it is unbearably hot in Tucson and San Diego would be a welcome respite from the heat. But because during the month of *Elul*, the 30 days preceding *Rosh Hashanah*, we are challenged as Jews to think about where we are right now, where we have been in the past year and where we want to go in the coming year – as individuals, as a family, as a community and as members of the world.

The Jewish tradition teaches that Rosh Hashanah marks the birth of the world and the creation of humankind. But rather than being a holiday of Jewish history, it is really a holiday of personal history. Rosh Hashanah presents us with the opportunity every year of our lives to engage in meaningful questioning and introspection that can become the catalyst for personal renewal. We link ourselves to the first Creation because we are 'reborn' through the efforts we take to renew ourselves spiritually in positive ways. Rosh Hashanah tells us in no uncertain terms that for Jews, it's never too late to get it right.

Rosh Hashanah is like an annual performance review of the soul. In most jobs, performance is evaluated regularly to determine if we are eligible for a raise. During the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and *Yom Kippur*, we are asked to evaluate ourselves to see if we have met our spiritual goals, to see if we are eligible

for a 'spiritual raise.' We ask ourselves: What am I doing with my life? Am I accomplishing what I set out to do? Where have I failed, where have I succeeded? What do I want to change in the coming year? Can I be better person, a more compassionate friend, a more caring daughter, a more attentive father, a more supportive spouse? This type of hard questioning is called a *Heshbon Nefesh*, an accounting of the soul.

But here comes the trick question: Is there anything we can actually *do* to guarantee becoming a better person? Can we take steps now to get the spiritual raise we seek in the coming year?

An answer I've found that reflects the spirit of the holiday as well as the essence of Judaism itself is this: We can add a *mitzvah* (Hebrew for commandment) every year to our life.

Judaism doesn't expect us to do everything at once but encourages us to question, seek and grow throughout our lives. We can raise ourselves one step at a time if we commit to doing one of 613 commandments every Rosh Hashanah. They cover the broadest spectrum imaginable – from ritual observance to family and community relationships to business dealings – and you don't have to be 'religious' or even particularly knowledgeable to begin.

Just look around you – in your home, at your work place or with your friends – to determine what it is that you want to improve upon in the coming year. Do you want to help others more? Would you like to learn Hebrew? Do you wish you didn't gossip so much? Is there someone who is ill that you should visit?

If you have trouble choosing what *mitzvah* you want to do, consult a rabbi, teacher or respected friend or buy a good book on basic Judaism and begin to explore your options. Don't let lack of knowledge or the feeling that you won't do it right get in your way!

My family has been adding a *mitzvah* a year since our children were little. One year we decided to light candles and make *Shabbat* every Friday night. Another year we took the plunge and *kasher*ed our home. Some commitments took more time and effort but every decision we made has added to the richness of our Jewish experience and brought us closer as a family. And with each new year we hope to improve ourselves – one *mitzvah* at a time.

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



Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

Pirke Avot 2:9 – *Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai received the Torah from Hillel and from Shammai. He used to say: If you have learnt much Torah do not claim for yourself moral excellence, for to this end you were created.*

Sept. 12, 2014, *Ki Tavo*
Deuteronomy 26:1–29:8, 17 *Elul* 5774

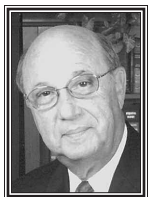
A very interesting comment is made in this verse. Just because someone may be well versed in *Torah*, doesn't give him or her the right to claim moral excellence or superiority over the person sitting next to him or her when that person's knowledge may be less or lacking. Just because you aren't the smartest person in the room doesn't mean that you are any less of a human being. At the same time, learning more *Torah* may offer you greater insights into how to live a rewarding life, but it isn't the only path.

I am blessed to be part of a congregation of learners. My emeritus, Rabbi Spitzer, created a positive climate for learning at Temple Israel and helped engage many members in *Torah Lishmah* – learning for its own sake. I am sure that many of you outside of Canton belong to congregations with the same philosophy of *Torah Lishmah*.

Whether it is studying *Torah* or *Midrash* or history or text or contemporary issues, doing so with others, being part of the give and take, sharing thoughts and insights only helps us grow toward the best human beings we can be. What it doesn't do is make us morally excellent and allow us to consider ourselves better than the next person. The rabbis of the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* understood this and I thank them for not just thinking it, but writing it down.

What isn't written down is that the person who knows the most Jewish text at the end of his or her life wins. In fact, most brilliant scholars I know tend toward humility and a realization that the more they know the less they know. As their scope of Jewish learning fills up the spaces in their minds, the more they realize how vast is the breadth of Jewish learning. Not that I am anywhere near the level of scholarship of the brilliant minds in Judaism, but I understand this concept. Even with all the books in my office and the access to much more online, just how little I've actually learned over the years is evident. And this is why I love to be part of study groups in Canton. The give and take of discussion, learning from my peers

(see Adland, page 7)



Wiener's Wisdom

By RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

Do we really know who we are?

We are constantly reminded, at this time of the year, to begin the process of self-evaluation. It is not as simple as it sounds. To look inward requires a great deal of courage. The reason is quite simple: there are things that have occurred in our lives that are better left to the past. We all have skeletons, some more painful than others. And yet, there are things that we have experienced that bring a chuckle and a smile.

What a dilemma! The things that we have enjoyed tend to be blocked because of our disappointments and regrets. How many times have we whispered to ourselves about what could have been. I would hazard a guess that they are as frequent as wishing the good moments could be relived.

Personally, I find it nerve wracking to remember my childhood. I come from a very poor beginning. My parents were as poor as synagogue mice looking for breadcrumbs on Passover. Our home was a tenement in the Bronx – 5th floor walk-up. The only thing I gained from that was strong legs, which by the way are weakening.

I probably can boast of several lives. Of course, there was the school era, military service, and then began the journey that included many painful experiences. The most prominent of these was losing a 41 year old spouse and trying to make sense of it all. My faith seemed to go on a virtual hiatus. The normal question of why seemed to dominate my thinking. All the counseling I offered others made no sense to me. My career took a nosedive and I found myself in congregation situations that gave me even more pause. Why am I here? What purpose do I serve? Who am I?

If you think it is easy to not only ask these questions, but to also try to find answers, well I have news – it certainly is not. More than that, however, is the agonizing over things that really do not matter or things we cannot control. Things happen. Our function, as I soon discovered, is not to question, but rather to learn to adjust to new situations. This was realized as I embarked on the second part of the journey.

The second part of the journey renewed my belief that goodness and mercy

followed me to discover a new beginning. If you read my book, you know that it contained a love never thought possible again. The sun seemed to rise more frequently, the brightness of life shone through the dark clouds of despair.

Thus began the third part of the journey. This was, and continues to be the most adventuresome and rewarding aspect of my personal and professional life. I believe it gave me the ability to be more effective with a sensitivity I never thought I possessed. Sure there have been bumps and detours, but who among us has had only smooth and unobstructed paths? Each of us has gone through agonies and ecstasies during the journey.

How? I watch the faces of those in pain and realize that their pain is everyone's pain. I see despair when a loved one is lost and appreciate that life is a finite experience, and a complex rendition of an unfinished symphony. I observe families at odds with each other over things that require intense understanding and imagine it is a microcosm of all human relationships. I witness unimaginable horrors brought about by hatred and indifference and conclude that living requires effort.

Then comes a holiday centered around us individually and collectively. We cannot expect change when we are stuck in the quagmire of sameness. The comfort of no change is delusional because in order to go from place to place in our desire to complete the journey we need to change direction on occasion. Sameness may feel comfortable, but in the end this comfort is short-lived due to the ever changing drama of life. We do not stay age three or four, or even 14 or 24. We cannot look into a mirror and see the same person we were just an hour ago.

This in essence is why this holiday exists. Yes, it is painful to look back, but think about the pain of the unexpected if we do not. Think of all the hurts we have encountered. Think of all the missed opportunities we let slip through our fingers. Think of the happiness we sacrificed for some illogical bigotry. Think about the closing days and wonder what we could have done differently so that outcome will hold more significance.

Do any of us really know who we are? Just as Moses requested to see God face-to-face, and was denied the possibility and could only see God passing by, we too are constantly looking for ourselves. We want so desperately to confront the real us, and we too are denied this ability, not because it is not there, but because we can never really comprehend the complexity of human existence.

Yet, we reach out to try. Perhaps, we will never arrive at our destination, but we still (see Wiener, page 7)

BEN ASHER

(continued from page 4)

doing, such as murder and manslaughter; but all unforgiven wrongdoing has similar if less obvious consequences.

As Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808–1888) explains, the ritual practices of ceasing to work and fasting on Yom Kippur remind us of the effects of losing the power to influence our existence that accompanies our failure to atone for past wrongdoing. Without atonement, bereft of the empowerment that it entails, the certain and compelling cause-and-effect consequences of wrongdoing hasten our demise and death, both spiritual and physical.

The ultimate consequences of not atoning for our wrongdoing is suggested in the Torah verse that reads, "And you shall not profane my Holy Name..." (Leviticus 22:32) *Chet-lamed-lamed* is the root of the Hebrew word for "profane," meaning to hollow out, empty, or make lifeless. In effect, by rejecting and refusing to be reconciled with God's Torah, thus continuing our wrongdoing and reinforcing our bad inclination, we replace God's will with our own, and we enervate God and the Torah, transforming them from a source of vision and inspiration into a "lifeless and powerless corpse." (Hirsch commentary on Leviticus 22:32) In so doing, we not only undermine our own lives and, not uncommonly, the lives of those around us, disempowering ourselves, particularly our ability to promote justice and kindness, but we also desecrate and thereby vitiate the Name of God among humankind.

Yet we can be reborn, completely renewed – most importantly, in our own eyes. Against all odds, we can come to believe in ourselves again as children of God, despite our persistent past wrongdoing, whatever its peculiar characteristics. The tendency of one bad deed drawing another in its train can be wiped out. The natural disempowering and deadly consequences of wrongdoing, usually so durable, can be erased. Our lives can be full of joy, love, and contentment.

As Rabbi Hirsch teaches us, Yom Kippur is a celebration of God's miracle that allows us to wipe out the destructive consequences of our misdeeds, through atonement and, thereby, to achieve spiritual, moral, and social rebirth, both within and beyond ourselves. (Hirsch commentary on Leviticus 16:23)

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



Jewish Spirituality

By RABBI ELI MALLON, M.ED., LMSW

Beginning forgiving

The month of *Elul* began on the evening of Aug. 26. "...the *midrash*...seems to characterize the entire month of *Elul* as...an opportune time and propitious opportunity in which *Hashem's* presence is particularly accessible."^[1]

Asking forgiveness of others whom we might have hurt is often cited as one of the chief features of this month – preceding *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*. Yet, the other side of this – forgiving others – while certainly implied, is not cited as explicitly. In services I've led and conversations I've had, it has been the latter, more than the former, with which people struggle.

Can I forgive? Should I forgive? How do I forgive? And so on.

In preparing this post, I looked in my personal library and online for the specifics of how we can forgive. There is more than enough material if one looks – especially online. But that very abundance can seem daunting. There are so many different aspects to forgiving, so many different things that we seem to have to do.

Don't think of "forgiving" as something you have to complete fully by *Rosh HaShanah*. Rather, "forgiving" is something we might have to *learn* to do; a skill we might have to master gradually. Some people forgive easily and slowly; some more slowly and with greater difficulty. *Elul* can be the time when we *begin* the process and take at least our first steps.

How can we begin?

We can do so by (at least) reading about forgiving. It's often said that we forgive for our own benefit first. Anger, in the form of resentment or blame, etc., causes more discomfort to *us* than it does to the people who have hurt us. If we do no more during *Elul* than become sincerely convinced that we don't want to prolong hurting *ourselves* – *dayenu!* I'd hope that reaching such a step would more or less automatically lead to asking: "How do I stop hurting myself?"

Most of the lists I looked at seem to imply that there's a linear progression in how we go about forgiving. I don't think that there is such a "line," nor did the writers who compiled the lists necessarily think so, either. Forgiveness is a process that requires multiple steps, each of which you might do in no specific sequence; or –

WEINER

(continued from page 6)

make the effort. We are built to always desire that which seems so remote, whether it be God, ourselves, or others. In the end we ask ourselves whether we really want to see God, whether we really want to see ourselves. This holiday is designed for us to keep trying. We may never know God and we may never know ourselves. This is not all bad. The significant part of the search is in trying.

Rosh Hashanah gives us a chance to change the future by remembering the past. Each of us has a story. Perhaps, a great story discussed in the *Talmud* will summarize these thoughts. In the section of the *Talmud* dealing with reward it talks about every man having three friends – his children, his money, and his good deeds. When the time comes for him to leave the world he calls upon his children, who reply, "Don't you know that no one can conquer death?" Then he calls upon his money, saying, "Day and night I have worked for you, save me now." The money replies, "Wealth cannot deliver you from death." He next calls on his good deeds and they reply, "Go in peace. By the time you arrive in the next world, we will be there before you to offer you help."

Who are we? What are we? Why are we? Only we can answer these questions. Maybe in doing so, we will find God. *Shana Tovah!*

Rabbi Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at ravayitz@cox.net. His new book Living with Faith is available on Amazon.com. ✨



in a sequence that fits you personally. You might end up repeating steps, too. The process can resemble a "spiral" more than a line, as you move through the various levels of your own feelings and interpretations of the things that happened to you and the people who did them.

Here again, reading about forgiving can be part of both the beginning and the body of the process.

Parenthetically, reading about forgiving, even if not from Jewish sources alone, parallels "*Torah* study." It involves "learning" and "doing." "Learning" inspires and informs the "doing." "Doing" culminates and fulfills the "learning."

One feature of forgiving could perhaps be considered a "criterion" for where we've come in the process. That would be: Seeing yourself and the other person differently. We can't change what happened, but we can change the way we view it, ourselves and the other.

"Forgiveness requires us to view our

ADLAND

(continued from page 5)

and my friends, is absolutely incredible.

In less than two weeks, we will celebrate our holy days with the large communal gatherings that mark these days. People will see old friends and may meet new ones. People will say to themselves that they wish to recommit themselves to coming to services and participating in Jewish life. Some of this may happen and some of it is just spoken during the excitement of the time of year. I get it, but if you truly want to engage more deeply in Jewish life, it does mean learning and understanding. It could be a study *chavurah* or coming to Stollen Moments on *Shabbat* morning to learn a bit more Torah or who knows what from the digression in our discussions. It could be finding a way to learn Hebrew or learn from our *shlichim* about Israel. There are many opportunities, but you have to make the initial effort and it will feel good.

Learning won't bring about a moral excellence, but it will encourage you to find out more about your Jewish self, our heritage and traditions, living a Jewish life and living a life as a Jew in a non-Jewish world. Learning is a road to walk with a far away destination that never really gets closer on the journey. There are twists and turns, but they eventually lead you back to the road and to the next signpost. While Torah Lishmah is learning for its own sake, this learning about Judaism is a means to an end of helping us to become the best person we can possibly be in this life. I thank my teachers in school, but I also thank all those who I have sat with and studied with over the years.

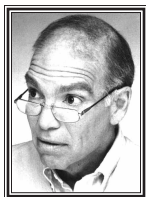
When you light your *Shabbat* candles this week, light one for Torah Lishmah and may study for its own sake always be a blessing. Light the other candle to help remind us that this journey is for a lifetime – there is always something else to learn.

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



offender not as malevolent but as confused – so much so that they would actually believe that by harming us they could somehow become happier (though they would almost certainly be incapable of articulating that as the reason). Secondly, forgiving requires us to let go – of our anger; of our desire to punish or teach a lesson; of our need to harm our harmer; of the notion that by choosing to forgive an offense we're in some way condoning an unjust action committed

(see Mallon, page 14)



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

The fire next time

Hamas won this one. The universal condemnation of Israel in almost every newspaper in the world; the thousands of people taking to the streets of major cities to protest the “senseless” killing of innocent civilians has made great fodder for the 24 hour news cycle.

Truth? Who cares about truth? Who cares to take the time to dissect the causes and the actual events on the ground? Blood and crying and mass destruction makes for great video. When people ask where is the video from Israel? Who wants to watch as the Iron Dome saved hundreds, maybe thousands of Jewish lives?

Look, the strain of anti-Semitism that runs so deep in Europe it can hardly contain itself in quiet times, finds the ideal outlet when the all-day news shows crying children with no context other than destruction and death.

Understand, Hamas and its off shoots have never stopped sending missiles into Israel. For years. Ask the citizens of Sderot which has received the brunt of these “skirmishes.” To the point where JNF had to build an indoor playground for the children of the town.

Maybe it’s time again to look into the history of this sad strip of sand on the Mediterranean. At the end of World War I, the British had a “Mandate” over all of what is now Israel and Jordan as well as parts of Egypt. When the British left in 1948, Gaza was supposedly under the Palestinian Authority. However, Egypt was in actual control with Egyptian troops and police on the ground.

A typical Egyptian tactic for keeping the peace was to leave up to five men hanging in the public square of Gaza city as a reminder as to who is really in charge. Israel took it in the 1967 war. When Begin and Sadat signed the peace accord in 1979, one of the main arguments was over Gaza. Sadat did not want it. Neither did Begin. As a part of the deal, Begin finally agreed to take Gaza – not as a part of Israel, but to leave a small military presence and allow the Palestinian Authority under Arafat to rule.

This resulted in a period of corruption and graft that makes old time Chicago and present day Russia look like paradise. Literally billions of dollars were stolen. Finally, in 2005, Sharon decided enough was enough and decided that all Jews

should leave the Strip. This included a booming greenhouse fruit and vegetable business in Northern Gaza.

Israel left the greenhouses, the electrical systems, the planted fruits and vegetables ready for the Palestinians to take over and begin their new self-government with at least one thriving industry. Instead, Hamas which took over the Strip after fighting the Palestinian Authority for control destroyed every single greenhouse, stealing the machinery and electrical equipment.

All of the Jews left. Many not peaceably for understandable reasons. They relocated grudgingly, but they left. Israel does not want to go back. Egypt does not want to go back. That leaves this bleeding sore that is an incubator for terrorism and a tempting morsel for ISIS on their quest for a new Caliphate.

What does Hamas demand? An end to the “blockade” of Gaza. “Blockade”? You mean the strict border security to prevent the Arab suicide bombers from walking across into Israel so they wouldn’t have to use the inconvenience of tunnels?

It is a basic tactic of urban warfare to hide and shoot from innocent civilian homes and alleyways. If your opponent has any of the milk of human kindness, he hesitates to shoot which is what the bad guys are hoping for. Our son was in the IDF during the first Lebanon war. His patrol was on an urban street and was fired upon. His buddy looked up at a window from which the fire was coming. He aimed, saw a child’s head pop up and lowered his gun. A sniper behind the child killed my son’s friend.

Gaza is only a warm up. Iran has packed a huge store of weapons including thousands of rockets in Lebanon. ISIS is the only extreme Muslim group to take and hold ground. Their immediate goal is to kill Christians and other Muslims in a reign of terror.

ISIS does not have the problem of financing, manpower or weaponry. They are a sophisticated movement with well-trained officers (most from Saddam’s army), money aplenty from the Iraqi banks they looted (mostly our taxpayer money). They are armed with American armor, left for them by the retreating Sunni members of the Iraqi army who decided that they do not have a dog in this fight.

So, it is a confusing confluence when you see ISIS with its 12th century philosophy using twitter and Facebook and web sites to promote its values. Hamas? The basic philosophy, platform and operating procedure for Hamas is the destruction of the Jewish State. How do you negotiate yourself around that?

Jim Shipley has had careers in broadcasting, distribution, advertising, and telecommunications. He began his working life in radio

Anti-Semitism rises again in Europe



BY RABBIS DENNIS C. AND SANDY E. SASSO

This summer we traveled to several European cities, including Berlin, Prague, Budapest and Vienna. We went to honor the memory of the first woman to be ordained as a rabbi in 1935. Born in Berlin, Regina Jonas was deported to Terezin concentration camp and later murdered in Auschwitz. For a long time, she was written out of history. A delegation of over 30 American rabbis and scholars came to write her back in.

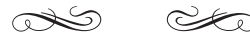
We thought we knew what to expect, but along the way there were surprises. We believed we would see only remnants of what was once a flourishing Jewish community in Europe. Instead we witnessed a renewal of Jewish life. Young, energetic and creative rabbis, many of them female, ordained by a new seminary in Berlin, are presently serving congregations throughout Eastern and Central Europe.

We also thought that the dark shadow of anti-Semitism that swept Europe in the Middle Ages through the Nazi period had been long buried, that it was no longer acceptable to voice the old prejudices in public. We were wrong. The day before we arrived in Berlin, many of the signs at a demonstration against the war in Gaza read: “Gas the Jews;” “Jews, cowardly swine.” Our young Jewish tour guide told us that she lived near the street where the protest took place. She was afraid.

The German officials with whom we spoke were shocked. The official government liaison with Jewish organizations in Germany told us that she never expected to see the blatant anti-Semitic rhetoric that is sweeping Europe in Germany. She told us that the government condemned it: “We must never forget the Shoah, the Holocaust. Only when we remember and take responsibility can we have a future.” Today there are 110,000 Jews in Germany. After WWII, the population of half a million had been reduced to 15,000.

It was reassuring to hear the government’s denunciation of hateful speech, yet its

(see Sassos, page 9)



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. Submitted Aug. 20, 2014. ✨

Letters to the Editor

Freedom of the Press – The Post & Opinion encourages readers to send letters. All letters to the editor should be addressed to The Jewish Post & Opinion, 1427W. 86th St. #228, Indianapolis, IN 46260, or by e-mail: jpostopinion@gmail.com.

In the shadow of a conflict

Your Aug. 20 issue included some gripping accounts of life in Israel during the Gaza war. The articles described how Israelis pulled together to support their troops (Rabbi Benzion Cohen), an account of the rocket attacks (Rabbi Israel Zoberman), an account of two Muslim families showing their support for the state of Israel (Sybil Kaplan), an acknowledgment of the suffering in Gaza and the need for peace and justice (Miriam Zimmerman), a judgment that the “two state solution” would be a disaster for Israel (Jim Shipley), and an account of how the Young Judea Discovery Program brought a participant closer to Judaism (Naomi Farahan). The article, “Wartime Visit to Israel” by Ariella Kattler Kupetz, described an experience quite similar to mine.

My perspective is that of an American visitor who had lived in Israel for 10 years and visited many times. At age 86, I traveled from Northern California with my daughter and two grandchildren to spend six weeks in Israel, not expecting a war. I had lived in Israel during the 1973 *Yom Kippur* War. During that war the whole country was tense. This time, the impact was more specific. It affected most deeply those in the army, their families, and those in areas under continued bombardment. Most of the people we saw appeared to be going about business as usual.

Twice while when we were in Jerusalem, sirens sounded followed by the noise of the rockets that were exploded as they were being intercepted. We were told that the rockets came from Lebanon. We were surprised that in the evening there was also the noise of explosions, this time not preceded by sirens. Instead of rockets, these were the firecrackers that signaled the end of the daily Ramadan fast! One Friday afternoon at the Western Wall, we also heard explosions. This time, we learned it was the police, who were dispersing a crowd at the El-Aqsa Mosque by using stun grenades.

As we drove about, we interacted with Arabs, both Christian and Muslim, who were attendants, auto mechanics, shop clerks and the doctor that we needed on *Shabbat*. We could see Arab families celebrating at restaurants, Arab children on school outings and Arab couples posing for wedding pictures at the Caesarea beach. Arab

children also attended the same day camp in Jerusalem that my grandchildren attended, but the Arab and Jewish children were in separate groups.

At tourist sites, our presence was especially appreciated. We were greeted with smiles and “thumbs up” when we entered the Rothschild gardens near Zichron Ya’acov. At Kibbutz Ein HaShofet, we saw large numbers of beef cattle being raised. We were surprised to learn this included cattle owned by people living in Gaza, and that there were shipments of cattle daily to Gaza, both before and during the war.

Each time I have been in Israel, there have been new developments. This time, I was particularly impressed by the projects of the Israeli Heritage Society.



Viewing the barracks at the Atlit Detention Center.

In Tel Aviv, the Palmach Museum used mannequins and movies to dramatize the establishment of a fighting force that became part of the Israeli army. Some of the men and women were trained by the British, who were preparing troops to oppose the German advance in Africa during World War II. In Atlit, on the sea coast south of Haifa, we toured a Detention Camp established by the British to hold those captured as they were trying to slip into Palestine. These people were mainly survivors of the Holocaust, embarking from Europe in various small ships. To dramatize the voyages, the Society placed a ship on land, similar to the ones that had been used. Also, barracks were restored to show how they looked when several thousand people were held there.



Using an accordion player to model life on a ship headed to Palestine.

SASSOS

(continued from page 8)

ubiquitous presence throughout Europe and other parts of the world is cause for concern. In France protesters smashed the windows of Jewish shops and threw Molotov cocktails at two synagogues. Parisian Jews, trapped inside by pro-Palestinian rioters, had to be rescued by police. In Belgium, a doctor refused to treat a Jewish woman. In Rome, anti-Semitic graffiti and fliers were found on the walls of the historic Jewish neighborhood. In Manchester, England, people in cars shouted at Jewish pedestrians, “Heil Hitler”. Recently, a Jewish couple was attacked in the Upper East Side of Manhattan. The assailants threw water at the woman and punched the man, who was wearing a *kippah* (male headcover).

In Budapest we were encouraged not to wear obvious Jewish garb, like a *kippah* or Jewish star. In Vienna we attended Friday evening services at a local synagogue. We did not need to be concerned about locating the building. We quickly recognized it by the police van parked at the street entrance, and the three security personnel who carefully examined our passports.

It is regrettable that the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has been hijacked and turned into a new expression of an old hatred. The malignancy that long afflicted Western society, which we thought had been cured, appears to have been only in remission. It has recurred and is spreading aggressively.

In a world explosive with extremism and violence, we must be ever vigilant against scapegoating and prejudice that cloud our vision and limit our capacity to solve the complex problems we face.

The first ever rabbinic couple, Rabbis Dennis and Sandy have been married 44 years, 36 of which were spent together as senior rabbis of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis, Ind. Currently, Dennis continues in that position and Sandy is director of the Religion, Spirituality and the Arts Initiative at Butler University. Reprinted with permission from The Indianapolis Star, September 2, 2014. ✪



Finally, even with the war in Gaza under way, the most relaxing and peaceful thing we did was to let a friend take us sailing off the coast of Tel Aviv. While we were sailing, our host suggested that we jump into the water, take a swim and let the boat drag us as we held on to a life preserver. It was idyllic, and it indicated to me how sheltered we were from the fighting and devastation in Gaza.

Jerry Delson, Palo Alto, Calif., j.delson@ieee.org, Sept. 7, 2014. ✪

Jewish calendars engage a people's spirit, memory and art

BY ROSE KLEINER

With the start of the New Year, the Jewish calendar transports our collective memory, as far back as 2 millennia. The calendar's listings of *Torah* readings, and *Haftarah* readings for *Shabbat*, and for the feast and fast days throughout the year, all take us back to the history and spiritual roots of our people.

The practice of decorating the calendars with beautiful illustrations, reflecting the culture of our people, give the Jewish calendar an esthetic dimension, that is enjoyed throughout the year.

Two charming wall calendars come from Pomegranate publishers this year. Their Jewish Museum Calendar 2015 features images of works from New York's Jewish Museum. Their Jewish Celebrations calendar is decorated with the paintings by artist Malcah Zeldis.

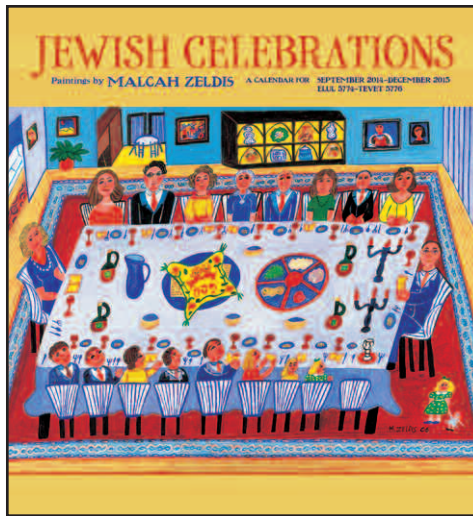
Almost every one of the lovely illustrations of the Jewish Museum Calendar depicts works that were created during the 20th century. These works originate in different parts of the world, but all express a connection to Jewish memory and tradition.

Rafael Soyfer's *Dancing Lesson* (1920) portrays the older, immigrant generation watching a young couple practice their dancing steps, movements that will help their integration into their new land. Going back, in that same calendar, to the early part of the 20th century, there is the elegant depiction of High Tea in the *Sukkah* (1906) by British artist Solomon Joseph Solomon. Austrian artist, Isidore Kaufmann's *Friday Evening* (c. 1920) is a nostalgic look at tradition which reflects very much 19th century Jewish religious life.

The calendar also contains several modernistic works, which speak of the Jewish experience even in our own day. Although created in 1928 Israeli artist, Reuven Rubin's minimalist oil on canvas, *Goldfish Vendor* appeals very much to today's generation as well. The same is true for the colorful *Esther Scroll* by Israeli artist, Yaakov Agam (1980).

Pomegranate's second wall calendar, *Jewish Celebrations* illustrated with paintings by Malcah Zeldis is replete with cheerful pictures of many different Jewish observances and customs throughout the year. Aside from scenes of holiday celebrations such as *Shavuot* or *Pesach*, there are pictures of such rituals as *Shalachmones* (gifts to friends, and the poor brought on *Purim*) or of *Havdalah* (the ceremony at the end of the Sabbath).

Each of the illustrations is accompanied



by an explanation of the tradition depicted, tracing the tie between the spiritual and the domestic that is such an integral part of Judaism.

From Universe Publishing come both a wall and desk calendar all richly illustrated with images from the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam (for the wall), and the Jewish Museum in New York (for the desk). The variety of beautiful, historical items shown in these two calendars makes for a mini catalogue of precious Judaica.

The objects portrayed in the wall calendar span several centuries, and come from countries far and wide. There is the silk and cotton tapestry (early 20th century), from Persia, decorated with the Ten Commandments and other Torah quotes.

A silver collection plate from the Netherlands dates back to the end of the 16th century. A gouache by Charlotte Salomon titled, *Life Or Theatre*, dates from 1940–42, France. A stunning 18th century Omer Calendar of wood, parchment, ink and metal, reflects the creative energy of the Netherlands Jewish artistic world. An 1850 ceramic and enamel Seder Plate from France has each of the Hebrew terms printed with a French translation underneath.

Another most interesting item from the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam illustrated in this calendar is a *Mizrach* wall plaque from Prague, dated about the last half of the 19th century. This *Mizrach* contains various Torah passages all translated into German.

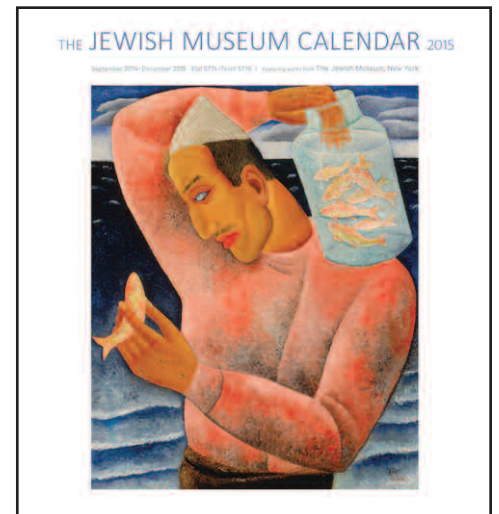
The Universe Jewish Calendar for the desk has images of a veritable treasure trove of fascinating art works. Each week on this calendar brings new objects to delight us. The countries of origin and the broad range of dates when these objects were created give us a compelling panorama of Jewish history.

There is the gilt silver *Étrog* Container from Augsburg, Germany dating from the 1670's. Most charming are the items associated with a Jewish marriage such as the cheerfully decorated Marriage Plate

from Delft, Netherlands (18th century). A Marriage Dress, from the Ottoman Empire (later 19th century), has an absolute regal air about it, with its velvet background and gilt metallic thread embroidery. A woman's Marriage Hat embroidered with gold thread comes from 19th century Algeria.

Two marriage contracts, about three centuries apart, are each a treat for the eyes. The Marriage Contract from Hamburg, Germany (1678) is done on parchment with ink and paint. Equally striking is the Marriage Contract by American artist Ben Shahn (1961), which was done on paper with ink, watercolor, paint, and graphite.

Among the unusual objects illustrated in this calendar is a copper Hand Washing Vessel, in the shape of an animal, dating back to the late 12th century in Northern Germany. At the other extreme is an illustration of an ultra-modern Hand Washing Vessel by Israeli artist Arie Ofir made of silver and copper.



The most important part of this desk calendar is its excellent, succinct, 'flow chart', summarizing all Jewish holidays, feast days, fast days, and other celebrations, and observances, under ten headings. These columns cover such information as dates, Torah readings, customs, historical and seasonal significance, and the mood and theme of the occasions being observed. For today's busy households, this guide can be most welcome.

Another significant Jewish calendar, supposedly for the younger set, can be equally appealing to the young at heart of every age. My Very Own Jewish Calendar by Kar-Ben Publishing provides an opportunity to learn, to think, to reflect, and to get involved with one's Jewish heritage, within the context of the broader world in which we live.

This is done with all-new facts each year, anecdotes, stories, trivia, recipes and various suggested activities connected to the relevant month on the calendar where the entries are found. For example, on the

(see Kleiner, page 14)

At Magen David Adom, saving lives is what we do.



Whether the emergency is a rocket attack or a heart attack, the paramedics of Magen David Adom, Israel's emergency medical response and blood-banking agency, save lives in Israel every day. As we enter the new year hoping for peace, we must continue to prepare for routine and terror-related emergencies, replenishing supplies depleted during Operation Protective Edge. If you're looking to make a difference for Israel and secure the nation's health and safety for the coming year, there's no better way than through a gift to MDA. **Please give today. Shanah Tovah.**



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Holocaust Educator

By MIRIAM L. ZIMMERMAN

Technology can be harnessed for good or evil

“I want a baby,” I told my husband. “It’s so much easier today.” He laughed. I tried to convince him, “Look at the technology available for new parents that we did not have.” Car seats go from car to stroller or vice-versa without having to extract the child, thus allowing the child to remain asleep. In the old days, inevitably, the nap was not long enough, and the baby cried for the remainder of the trip. Today, convertible strollers open fully with the touch of a button and collapse equally easily.

Disposable diapers available for my firstborn back in 1974 were bulky, rectangular, and uncompromising: if the baby squirmed too much resulting in a loose fit, you had to start over with a new diaper because, to remove even a loose diaper, you had to tear the tapes. Today’s diapers use Velcro. Some also have a built-in litmus test. If the yellow line turns blue, you can see at a glance that the diaper is wet; no more wasting of a dry diaper by checking. In addition, today’s disposables have a wicking mechanism, unheard of back then, that keeps the baby much drier, thus mitigating diaper rash. With elastic around the legs, if s/he could talk, baby might say, “Look, Mom: no leaks!”

Each of my three adult children gifted us last fall with a baby. Since two live in the Bay Area, I’m back in the baby business. Just today, I got to babysit my youngest “triplet,” Sarah Hannah. But I was teasing my husband; grandmotherly duties satisfy my maternal yearnings.



My granddaughter, Sarah, with her first “computer.”

Each of my children utilizes an amazing array of digital and electronic aids for

childrearing purposes. Astonishing camera technology allows young parents to view their baby from a small monitor that can be carried around the house. Some connect to the Internet so that the baby can be viewed from offsite. Every week, I learn of a new device or app that helps beleaguered new parents remove a lot of guesswork from parenting.

My awareness of new technologies for parents began over three years ago, when my daughter-in-law was pregnant with my first granddaughter, Lily. I wanted to buy Lily’s mother Erin the book I cherished during my first pregnancy, *The First Nine Months of Life*. The book beautifully portrays the growth of the embryo month by month, with detailed explanations and fabulous pictures. Fortunately, I found out before I had a chance to buy the book (still available in paperback on Amazon) that she had an app that sent her weekly emails describing the growing life inside her, with pictures and explanation.

I asked my daughters to email me how they use technology as new moms. My older daughter described an app for labor: “I downloaded contraction timer, but didn’t use it. In fact, apparently I did use it on December 19 (Sarah’s birthday). It was still running! LOL!!!!”

Rebecca continued, “My fav, still using – post birth/pregnancy – is ‘Feed Baby Pro’ by Penguin Apps. The ‘Pro’ means that I paid something like \$3 for the full version.

“You can track everything from nursing (left or right side and duration), to bottles, solid foods, pee, poop, journal entries, pumping, growth, sleep, baths, etc. AND it will sync with others using the same app (with user name and log in). So Jason [her husband] can download it to his phone and see what we’ve been up to all day. Or, caregivers can download it and track feeds/food/poops throughout the day if I were at work. I think you can also pull up the data online, but I haven’t done that. I know you can export it, but also haven’t done that. I plan to, eventually, because some of the info I want for Sarah’s baby book is in the app. Not all apps share info between Android and iPhone, but this one seems to. And, as you know, I’m in an interfaith relationship with Jason – perhaps I should call it an ‘inter-tech’ relationship. :)”

My younger daughter, Leah, described her use of technology as follows: “I used an app from WebMD to track Ziva’s feeding schedule (left side, right side, plus duration; bottle plus quantity). I don’t think I was able to plot the data, but I wanted to, in order to see what sort of patterns emerged, in terms of when Ziva needed to be fed. I could have used the app, though didn’t, to track her sleep/awake times, and keep a journal with notes and pictures.



Kabbalah of the Month

By MELINDA RIBNER

Story to prepare for Rosh Hashanah

There was once a great king who called into his presence his most loyal and trusted subject. He gave to him a dry precious vessel for a limited period of time. The subject over time became negligent in the protection of the vessel. One day it accidentally broke. The subject was seized with anxiety. How could he face the king! He had to restore it to its original form. He sought the counsel of the wisest people. What was he to do?

They offered him no recourse other than to go to the King directly. As he was afraid to do that, he then went to the people closest to the king. Surely they could advise him, they knew the king the best. They offered him no recourse. Desperate, it suddenly occurred to him to go to the person who manufactured the vessel. He pleaded with him to put the vessel back together, but was told that was impossible, the vessel was unique and could not be duplicated. Anyway, the king would know the difference. There was no way of deceiving the king.

Even though he was afraid that the king would be angry, the subject realized that he had no alternative but to throw himself at mercy of the king. He meekly presented himself and the broken vessel to the king and confessed what had happened.

The King responded. “It is all right. I know how to use and fix broken vessels. I know that you sought the counsel of others, and that they advised you according to their own perspective, but it is only I who can say that I use and fix broken vessels. *Story by the Maharah of Praque.*

(see Ribner, page 19)



“I also receive (still do) weekly emails from BabyCenter.com regarding the growth and development of my baby, as well as monthly ones from Kaiser. Then, there’s just a ton of information online. So anytime I have a question or concern, I start by Googling it, to see what other people are experiencing. I, of course, take that information with a grain of salt, but often it’s reassuring. One website was actually recommended to me by my doctor: Kellymom.com, especially for breastfeeding information.”

Each daughter sent more examples, but (see Zimmerman, page 13)

ZIMMERMAN*(continued from page 12)*

I do not want this column to read like an advertisement for baby apps. As an educator, I often discuss with my students the impact of technology on behavior and challenge them to contemplate: Does technology enhance human life or detract from it? To what extent is human behavior shaped by the tools we have created? Is technology out of control?

Two peoples come to mind: the Amish, who shun the seductive lure of modern technology; and observant Jews, who just say “no” to technology during their weekly *Shabbat* observance.

My Holocaust class has just begun for the fall semester. As usual, and to my family’s chagrin, I am able to apply everyday occurrences, even a new parent’s use of technology, to events in the Holocaust. I describe the technological advances of the Nazis: in medicine, media, weaponry, and optics, to name a few.

Edwin Black, in his book, *IBM and the Holocaust*, described the alliance between that company and the Nazis. IBM provided Germany with the technology needed by German census takers to identify Jews, so important in subsequent stages of the Holocaust: Aryanization of business and industry, the selections, deportations, running the railroads, and extermination. It was all about managing the numbers, which IBM’s Hollerith punch card technology, the forerunner of computers, enabled the Nazis to do.

Auschwitz, the culmination of the “assembly-line mentality,” a modern factory of death, utilized every facet of victims’ bodies: from their energies consumed by slave labor, to their hair exploited for stuffing mattresses, to their bones transformed into fertilizer. Only Jewish voices, singing “*Ani Ma’amin*” en route to the gas chambers, escaped the Nazis.

Who were the Jews destroyed in the Holocaust? I follow the approved curriculum as taught by Yad Vashem, the Israeli institution dedicated to Holocaust memorial and education, and endorsed by the National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education at Seton Hill University. This is important because I teach at a Catholic University. I tell students it is not just about the numbers (six million dead Jews); we need to understand Jews as a people. And so a crash course in “Judaism 101” ensures that my almost exclusively non-Jewish students understand who was lost in the Holocaust. We discuss Jewish holidays, life-cycle events, and sacred texts; and contrast and compare such beliefs as sin, redemption, messiah, resurrection, creation, prayer, free will, and G-d.

I make sure students understand the difference between the Jewish *Moshiach* and the Christian Messiah. In Judaism, we must prepare the world to make it ready to accept *Moshiach*. In contrast, many Christian denominations teach that the worse the world becomes – global conflagration, famine, war, collapse of economies – the more likely the Messiah will come again. *Tikkun olam*, repair of the world, is a term unfamiliar to such Christians.

Numbers matter. Because of official Church-sanctioned anti-Judaism, Jews in the world today are significantly fewer than if there had not been the Crusades, blame for the Black Death, the Inquisition, and pogroms. The Jew became an all-purpose, useful scapegoat throughout this unfortunate history, sanctioned by the Catholic Church whose “Teaching of Contempt” branded the Jew as deserving of such treatment for the sin of killing Jesus.

Words matter. I use what might be considered a politically correct term, “anti-Judaism” and not “anti-Semitism,” in describing historical Church attitudes of the Jews. Officially, the Church was not anti-Semitic; that term would be appropriate later to describe Nazi ideology, which “racialized” the traditional anti-Judaism of the Church.

Back to numbers. Professor Sergio DellaPergola of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, a leading scholar of Jewish demographics, asserted that in the First Century BCE, there were about 4.5 million Jews, constituting about 9 to 10% of the ancient world. Today, we are a scant .02% of the general population in contrast to ancient Persian and Roman Empires, in which one in ten persons was a Jew.

At the conclusion of the Holocaust in 1945, there were only 11 million Jews left in the world. The good news is that in 2012, we were 13.7 million; thus, we Jews have replenished our pre-Holocaust numbers. The bad news is that in 1945, there were 4.75 Jews per 1,000 of the general population; in 2012, we were down to 1.94. Our numbers have not remained the same relative to the growing numbers of our neighbors. I am delighted that (finally) my children are contributing to the numbers of Jewish children in the world.

The professor’s 77 page report, “World Jewish Population, 2012,” is available online at this link: <http://www.jewishdatabank.org/studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=2941>. His tables are augmented by fascinating analyses; it is not just about the numbers.

But I digress, momentarily distracted by a scholarly work that deserves further reflection. I feel a great deal of responsibility for teaching this history of hatred to a generation of post-Vatican II Catholics, in

a Catholic setting replete with crosses on the walls in my classroom. Despite negative stereotypes of Jews of which they are well aware, my students claim only friendship with them. Some are dating Jews, a primary reason they cite for taking this class.

Technology and the Holocaust is an ongoing *leitmotiv* in my class. The Germans were very efficient in their exterminations, utilizing the most advanced technology available, in whatever endeavor necessary, to achieve their goals. Should we become more like the Amish? Absolutely not; 70 years after the Holocaust, we have technology in the service of parenting.

My older daughter is part of a Jewish mom’s group. The Jewish Baby Network connected her with the parents of other Jewish babies Sarah’s age. Sponsored by two local synagogues and funded by the Jewish Community Federation, the organization gives each mother a “*shalom bag*” of goodies and provides other Jewish resources.



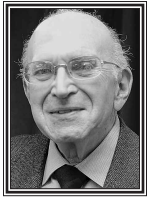
The Jewish Baby Network tailgating at the first Stanford game of the fall 2014 season; Sarah sits bottom right.

Obviously, technology can be harnessed for good or for evil. Thanks to war technology, people now enjoy microwaves, the Boeing 747, bar codes, and even the Internet itself, originally developed by the military.

Historically, humanity has created technology in the service of war; it is too bad it has not yet developed or utilized technology in the service of peace. Until there is as much profit to be gained from peace as from war, I am not optimistic that humanity will devote its efforts for that goal.

Truly, humanity is collectively behaving like Christians and not like Jews as we anticipate the Messiah – waiting for him to rescue us from global chaos. My hope is that the next generation, represented by these beautiful babies, will adopt the Jewish view of *Tikkun olam*, to hasten the arrival of the Messiah.

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



As I Heard It

By MORTON GOLD

Opinion

I am guilty....of not sending any columns to the *P & O* these past few months. To bring my readers up to date who may have wondered what I was up to (e.g. if I was still breathing) please read on.

Since I have made it known that I am a composer (What songs have you written?) I have given two recitals of my music this year. The first, given last November took place at Temple Beth El (in Portland, Maine) consisted mostly of my vocal and sacred music. The second given last May at the Historical Museum in Springvale, Maine consisted mostly of instrumental compositions, including my Flute and Horn concerti with myself as piano accompanist.

The Stratford Wind Symphony (New Hampshire) gave a performance of my Saxophone Concerto last May as well. I have also (sort of) carved out a new (unpaid) career as a critic attending concerts and shows in Portland and in York County (Maine) and reviewing them in the *Biddeford (Maine) Journal Tribune*. This is the good news.

On the debit side I am saddened and disappointed that my *Yizkor* Service which I composed two years ago is collecting dust in my cellar. I have been told that it is too long to be performed as part of a normal service, uses an organ and makes too many demands on a mixed choir.

To my way of thinking, there is no reason why an organ should not be employed other than the reactionary custom of ignoring most music for the Conservative temples in the 20th century. The use of a mixed choir? Okay. I did not intend performances in an Orthodox *shul* although musically, nothing in it would preclude that. As for the time involved (I estimate about a half hour), an excerpt or two might be used as part of a temple service. Better still, a separate *Yizkor* service or concert performance would be an effective possibility.

The cantors I know (knew) are now retired and while many might recognize my name, given the reality of present day usages of the most tawdry communal ditties, something that may only involve communal reading is a custom whose time has not yet come to most of the brethren with the title of *Hazzan*.

While I am stating misgivings (*kvetching*) has anyone looked carefully at the 2nd paragraph of the *Aleinu* prayer?

MALLON

(continued from page 7)

against us or committing an injustice ourselves; of the need for an apology; and of the need for our harmer to change. For in forgiving another's transgression against us, we're ultimately seeking to free ourselves." [2]

The *Talmud* says:

"All who overlook what's owed to them, Heaven overlooks their sins in return." [3]

One might say that the *Talmud* is noting that one who forgives is rewarded (so to speak) with a peace of mind far greater than revenge can provide.

We can begin by at least reading – becoming more informed – about why and how to forgive.

[1] http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2000/moadim/rros_elul.html

[2] <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/happiness-in-world/201002/how-for-give-others>

[3] Rosh HaShanah 17a

Rabbi Mallon has taught people of all ages as a bar/bat mitzvah instructor, Hebrew school teacher, cantor, pastoral counselor and rabbi, in addition to his work in public education. He resides in New City, NY. View other works by him at: <http://rabbielli.mallon.wordpress.com>. Posted 8-30-14. ✨



I will refrain from commenting on the pastiche of Ukrainian (Russian, Polish, Croatian?) styled tunes currently being sung here. Do we really want "every knee to bend, every back to bow?" It seems to me that the Moslems (ISIS) (Shiite and Sunni) want the same thing. They are too happy not only killing each other but also Christians, Jews and anyone else who does not believe as they do. The Catholic Church (15–19th centuries) as well as the Protestant denominations wanted (still want?) the same thing.

Am I really a heretic because I could not care less where people of either gender sit during a service? Yes, I agree that it would be ideal if the whole world worshipped *HaShem*. However I part company with anyone who wants to force anyone else to do so. I believe that a Jew is a Jew regardless of the length of his (her) tallit or if the stripes are blue and not black. (Oh boy! *Gevalt!*)

I am going to stop here, not because I am ahead but because I believe that this is an argument for the sake of heaven. I will leave it for others to question the cost of temple memberships, or the price of *kosher* meat, etc. And so dear readers, from one Jew to another, I hope that the coming new year will bring peace and continued good health to you and your

(see Gold, page 16)

KLEINER

(continued from page 10)

September page the month of *Rosh Hashanah*, there is an entry on Getting Ready for the New Year. It speaks of the daily *shofar* blowing at the morning service, of the *Selichot* services, and of the practice of wishing each other a Happy New Year, from the start of the month of *Elul*.

This page also has an entry on the meaning of Labor Day, and the Jewish contribution to bettering the lives of workers. Each calendar page contains a very easy recipe that parents as much as their youngsters will find useful. For *Sukkot* the calendar explains the prayer for rain, and the three kinds of rain that we pray for (giving the Hebrew terms for each and their meaning).

In its entry on blessings, the calendar cites Maimonides' comments on the three types of blessings in Jewish life – blessings of enjoyment (before eating food), blessings before doing a *mitzvah* (lighting candles, etc.), and blessings of praise and gratitude (when putting on new clothes, seeing a rainbow, or being in the presence of a king).

With regard to the latter, we learn that when Israeli writer S.Y. Agnon won the Nobel Prize, he recited the appropriate blessing, in the presence of the king of Sweden.

Another entry tells us that the original headquarters of the Girl Scouts of America. was located a few blocks from the third oldest synagogue in the U.S. in Savannah, Ga. That synagogue was home to three of the first five Girl Scout Troop leaders.

Another Jewish contribution to life on the continent recalled by this calendar is the invention of the crock pot, created by an engineer who remembered his *Bubbe* making *cholent* in Lithuania, and having to carry it to the town's bakery to cook it overnight.

To simplify life and *kosher* living in particular, the calendar also presents the mini-kitchen, which is hidden away in an armoire and contains a refrigerator, oven, dishwasher, and storage space for holiday foods. Thanks to this new product, next Pesach instead of changing dishes, one can simply change kitchens.

A lesson in geography is provided by an entry about the Jews of Alaska. They number about 6,000, refer to themselves as the Frozen Chosen, and live mostly in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau. In 1939 President Roosevelt's Interior Secretary proposed that Europe's Jewish refugees be resettled in Alaska, where they could bypass the usual immigration quotas. If only some action had been taken... This calendar gives candle lighting times for major North American cities including Montreal and Toronto. ✨

King Lear, The Philadelphia Story and A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur

REVIEW BY HAROLD JACOBSON AND ROSE KLEINER

All theatre-goers are painfully aware of Shakespeare's malignantly brilliant anti-Semitic *The Merchant of Venice*. No amount of mental somersaulting or literary acrobatics summoned forth by well intentioned critics can de-fang the virulent Jew hatred which is at the core of the play. No matter how sympathetic Shylock is portrayed whether by Dustan Hoffman on the Broadway stage or by Al Pacino in film, there is no way to sanitize or neutralize its poetic diabolism where Jews are concerned. It is no accident that *The Merchant of Venice* was the favorite play offered to audiences during the Third Reich in Germany.

However, this reviewer recently discovered at the famous Stratford Canada Shakespearean Festival that there is a second play by the bard which richly explores a Jewish theme without explicitly mentioning Jews. *King Lear* has been so warmly embraced by sold out performances in the 1800 seat Festival Theatre that the Stratford administration has twice extended the closing date to mid October 2014. At the performance in early August something unprecedented occurred – a raucous standing ovation, not at the end of the play, but at the end of the first act. No wonder.

The reason was quite simple. Colm Feore having returned from the United States after various stints on television and films delivered probably the most powerful depiction of a king driven half mad by two of his daughters – ever shown on a North American stage. Feore's physical energy, the vibrating mutations in his voice, the presence he imposed on the stage, the commanding hypnotism of his harangues and dirges – all these drew the audience to his beckon call.

And how was this play reminiscent of Jewish concerns. In the Book of Deuteronomy, the daughters of Zelaphchad approach Moses and complain that on the occasion of their father's death they have been dispossessed of their inheritance because their mother has predeceased the father and the *yerusha*, the inheritance, by Biblical law, goes only to male heirs but there are none. Moses consults with the Lord and announces to the daughters that they will share in their father's estate providing they marry within the tribal unit to which they belong. In Jewish history,



Colm Feore as King Lear.

after the dissolution of the tribal structures, the transmission of inheritances was often arranged through equitable "gifts" to female children mandated in a will.

It is doubtful whether Shakespeare was inspired by this episode in the Hebrew Bible (his plays are relatively free of Biblical materials), but the narrative he provides about two of his three daughters, the treacherous Goneril and Regan and the redemptive character of his third daughter, Cordelia sound a great deal like the plaintive cries of the pain ridden letter writers to the *Jewish Daily Forward's* "Bintel Brief" column in the early part of the 20th century. It is no accident, moreover, that a Jewish language version of Lear was among the first renderings of Shakespeare in Yiddish.

And at that other center of Canadian drama *Two American playwrights featured*

Niagara-on-the Lake (Canada): As fall colors begin to invade that other Canadian drama Mecca, the Shaw Festival, the works of two brilliant American playwrights, Philip Barry and Tennessee Williams were on display and rapturously greeted by admiring audiences (including the writers). It's not surprising; an actual audit of the licence plates parked at the area's most prestigious hotel, The Prince of Wales, revealed an 80% plurality of American states – Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and New York – over Canadian provinces.

Philip Barry's 1938 masterpiece, *The Philadelphia Story* was originally a spectacular Broadway play, thereafter a brilliant film vehicle for Katherine Hepburn, Van Heflin and Cary Grant, and latterly has been transplanted to the verdant topography of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. This version faithfully conveys Barry's story of a Philadelphia aristocrat played with grace and tempestuous charm by Moya O'Connell who is faced with a delicious and unique conundrum – which of three potential candidates is she going to marry on the following day?

Barry's inspired dialogues, monologues and verbal exchanges among the cast
(see Jacobson/Kleiner, page 19)



Jerusalem Peacemaker

BY ELIYAHU MCLEAN

Successful Abrahamic Reunion interfaith journey

On the bus from Jerusalem (Sept. 14), we were 40 Palestinians – including Sheikh Jamal al-Din, and women and children from Wadi Joz, Ras al-Amud, Beit Haninah, Beit Iqsa, and 15 Israeli Jews. At the Moddin checkpoint, the soldiers stopped us in suspicion, then pleasant shock that Jews and Arabs would be making such a journey at this time.

Arriving in Faradis we were welcomed by Ibtisam Mahamid at her center "the Tent of Hagar and Sarah" where another 15 Israeli Jews joined us. Sheikh Ghassan Manasra opened the morning, breaking us into groups with study sheets of sources from Islamic and Jewish tradition on *teshuva* (repentance).

Elana Rozenman closed the session with a blessing, before we proceeded to Zichron Yaakov, crossing the new bridge from Faradis for a hummus lunch in a local park, accompanied by song from musician RebbeSoul asking God, *Harachaman* to bless Isaac and Ishmael. After a guided tour of Zichron, we traveled to Haifa where we met Bahai leaders and descended the stairs through the stunning Bahai gardens, stopping for a group prayer for peace.

Next at Elijah's Cave, ultra-Orthodox Rabbi Eliyahu Kaufman spoke about the meaning of Eliyahu (Elijah) in the Bible and Jewish tradition and the history of Jews, Muslims, Christians and Druze praying side by side here in the cave during the Ottoman era. In Elijah's Cave we did a shared chant of 'Allah' and 'Ana Elna Rafanala', praying for the healing of Abraham's Family and a prayer for two leading religious peacemakers from the Haifa area that are very ill now: Druze Sheikh Hussein Abu Rukkun from Isafiya and Shear Yashuv HaCohen, Chief Rabbi of Haifa. The guard of Elijah's Cave said later, in 27 years he had never seen such a group come to pray together there.

We closed with a magical evening of a sunset walk and prayers (and swimming for the kids) on the waves of Jizr il-Zarka beach with Jizr activists sharing their work for community empowerment in one of the poorest towns in Israel. All left
(see McLean, page 19)



Book Review

REVIEW BY BONNIE MAURER

Guide for times we seek presence of mind and heart

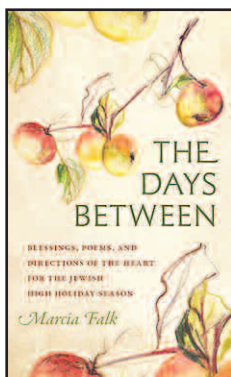
The Days Between: Blessings, Poems, and Directions of the Heart. By Marcia Falk. Brandeis University Press. 2014. Pages 260. \$24.95.

If you are new to Marcia Falk's book you may find as I have, that it will be your inseparable guide to an insightful life, one more engaged and present in mind and heart.

In fact, Marcia Falk, poet and scholar, claims her book is a companion for all of us "seeking to participate in Jewish civilization and culture without compromising intellectual and spiritual integrity." Falk focuses on core elements in the *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* services recasting them in fresh and accessible versions. There is no mention of "God" in her pages, but every page evokes the sacred. In each of the four sections, she explains the service and provides a basis and understanding of her re-visioning. Her blessings, hymns and poems are translated into Hebrew, as well.

My favorite poem in the Rosh Hashanah service is her abecedarian, a popular form of liturgical poetry composed for the High Holidays. "May It Be So" is Falk's version. In her poem, her blessings express optimism: "May the year bring... beauty, creativity, delight..." She continues with hope for the future: "May we be infused with joy.//May we know intimacy and kindness,..." "May we be inspired with vision and wonder..." And for the world: "May we find peace within ourselves//and help peace emerge in the world..." This abecedarian is one we can read for inspiration, not just on Rosh Hashanah, but with our morning orange juice every day. The poem offers a boost to our better selves, to a life well-intentioned. She ends: "May we merit these blessings// and may they come to be. May it be so."

Falk revises the *Tashlikh* ritual. Instead of asking God to purge us of our sins,



Falk encourages us to "free ourselves from whatever impedes our journey into the new year with clarity, lightness and hope."

Part Two: "Window, Bird, Sky" is the section where Falk offers daily psalms and meditations of the heart to augment our contemplation during those ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. These thoughtful pieces filled with the universal language of nature can (and should be) read and discussed any time and especially with our families to support feelings, from sadness to gratitude, from silence to celebration.

Section 3: Yom Kippur contains even more thoughtful and provocative direction. The traditional confession of sins, for example, is replaced by a "call to self-accounting." As Falk escorts us through the *Yizkor* service, she offers "'Passageways of Grieving" and encourages remembering shared "moments in the current of time—." Falk acknowledges that this service can also be used as a memorial ceremony other times of the year.

Throughout this sacred time of the High Holidays, Falk's goal seems to be for each of us to accept our mortality and find a deeper sense of self in the "greater whole." Her modern approach provides a guide for this time and for the many times in our lives we seek enrichment and presence of mind and heart.

Falk's hope is for this book to be used in the synagogue seat, on a hike, at the dining room table or at the kitchen window. May it be so.

Bonnie Maurer earned an MFA in poetry from Indiana University. She is the author of four small-press chapbooks: *The Reconfigured Goddess*, *Finishing Line Press*, 2009, *poems of a breast cancer survivor*" (currently for sale, contact Maurer's email below); *Ms Lily Jane Babbitt before the Ten O'clock Bus from Memphis Ran Over Her*, *Raintree Press and Ink Press*, 2nd edition; *Old 37: The Mason Cows*, *Barnwood Press*; and *Bloodletting: A Ritual Poem for Women's Voices*, *Ink Press*.

She has conducted creative writing/healing workshops for the homeless in recovery, for the HIV+/AIDS affected/infected population, for *The Cancer Support Community* and for "Honoring the Sacred Feminine" conferences, celebrating women's wisdom and spirituality.

Maurer grew up in Indianapolis where she continues to live and work as a poet for Arts for Learning, as a copy editor for the Indianapolis Business Journal and as an *Ai Chi* (aquatic flowing energy) instructor at the JCC. Email: bmaurer@ibj.com. ★



Marcia Falk

Poems from *The Days Between* by Marcia Falk

The Gift

Sitting before a window, with no desire but to see with the heart, clearly:

you watch the shadows come and go,

you let yourself be forgiven.

Clouds cross the sky, mending the roughened edges here and there,

part way through your life.

Morning Minyan

A quorum of small black birds settles on the birch outside the window:

ten of them, enough to pray the most sacred prayers.

Whom do they beseech, for what do they pray

with their *too-toos* and *dee-dee-dees*?

Do they ask for grace? Cannot be. They already have it.

Do they seek forgiveness? For what? They cannot help but do what birds do.

Do they need healing? Perhaps one of them has broken a wing?

Or are they singing praises of the Creator? Of the creation? Of the many ilks and varieties of bird?

You would like to stay and find out but you have no time this morning.

No time no time no time chants our species. ★



GOLD

(continued from page 14)

loved ones, whether you subscribe to my opinions or not.

Dr. Gold is a composer, conductor, reviewer. He won second place for his review of a PSO performance, in the critic's award category of the Maine Press Association Better Newspaper Contest 2014. He is the recipient of the Kavod Award given to him by the Cantors Assembly of North America. He may be reached at: drmortongold@gmail.com. ★



Book Review

REVIEW BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Uncle Sam allowed Nazi scientists entry at end of WWII

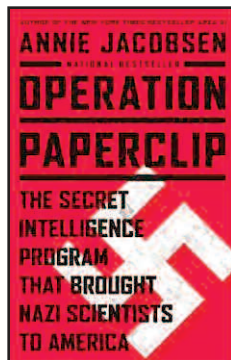
Operation Paperclip (The Secret Intelligence Program That Brought Nazi Scientists to America). By Annie Jacobsen. New York: Little, Brown and Company. 2014. Pages 575. \$30.

Author Annie Jacobsen, a Princeton University graduate already proved her superb investigative and writing skills in her New York Times bestseller, *Area 51*. Her latest book, *Operation Paperclip* ought to be a bestseller as well and required reading. It focuses on a top secret U.S. government operation begun in May 1945 allowing U.S. entry of no

less than hundreds of Nazi scientists at the end of WWII. This is likely the most controversial exposed U.S. government program whose full dimensions Jacobsen masterfully presents in a chilling read that leaves no stone unturned and material previously undisclosed.

We penetrate the shadowy Cold War world and the attempt at moral compromise to gain superiority over the competing and crafty Soviets. After all, the U.S. intelligence expectation was for an all-out-war between the two superpowers by 1952. At stake were those elite Nazi scientists who facilitated Hitler's war machine of weapons of mass destruction with mass crimes against humanity.

The book highlights 21 of those scientists, now deceased, deemed indispensable to American security and even survival. Eight of those – Dr. Otto Ambrose, Dr. Theodor Benzinger, Dr. Kurt Blome, Major General Walter Domberger, Colonel Siegfried Knemeyer, Major General Dr. Walter Schreiber, Dr. Walter Schieber, Dr. Wernher von Braun – were close to the highest Nazi leadership of Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler and Herman Goring. Fifteen were full-fledged Nazi Party members with ten members of the notorious SA and SS. Six faced trial at Nuremberg.



The most famous of them, von Braun rose to direct the Marshall Space Center and was the Saturn V launch vehicle's chief architect, making possible the moon landing. With his star celebrity status in the Space Age, he was enabled by his employers, U.S. Army and NASA, to conceal his Nazi past till 1985 (!) and almost awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Ford, though he did receive the Medal of Science. Von Braun joined a SS cavalry unit as early as 1933 becoming a proud SS officer. The V-2 rockets whose development he supervised, rained death and terror on 3,000 cities, and slave laborers were forced to work inhumanly at the Nordhausen underground complex which was liberated on April 11, 1945 by the Timberwolves of the 104th Infantry Division.

Rabbi Steven S. Wise, president of the American Jewish Congress, charged, "As long as we reward former servants of Hitler, while leaving his victims in D.P. camps we cannot even pretend that we are making any real effort to achieve the aims we fought for." (p. 250).

Eleanor Roosevelt sponsored a conference at the Waldorf Astoria drawing attention to *Paperclip*, calling for preventing Germans from entering the U.S. for twelve years. Her guest of honor, Albert Einstein the world's most renowned scientist who fled to the U.S. in 1933, alerted President Truman of the danger of accepting those who served Hitler. Perhaps the most poignant words came from The Society for the Prevention of WWII with its thousands of intellectual members, including William L. Shirer and Daryl Zanuk, "These German 'experts' performed wonders for the German war effort. Can one forget their gas chambers, their skill in cremation, their meticulous methods used to extract gold from the teeth of their victims, their wizardry in looting and thieving?" (p. 25)

A host of critical issues are raised in the wake of this most comprehensive landmark study that is bound to disturb our conscience with questions that can only be pondered and debated but perhaps without clear resolution: Are there no moral constraints to government programs deemed essential for national security? Do all means justify certain ends? Who should be entrusted with weighing the ethical component of a given operation? Are there any regrets, no regrets, lessons for the future?

Rabbi Israel Zoberman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach. Son of Polish Holocaust survivors, he spent his childhood in Kazakhstan, Poland, Austria, Germany and Israel. He and his family were in Germany's Wetzlar camp, 1947–1949. ★



Book Review

REVIEW BY CHANA TOVA SOKOL

A refreshing look at Jerusalem

Welcome to Jerusalem, Adventures of a Newcomer. By Cyrelle Simon. 2014. Soft cover, 182 pages.

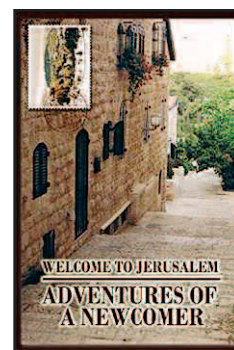
Come along with Cyrelle Simon, as she leaves her productive life, her many friends and her comfortable suburban home in small town, USA, to move into the Bayit Vegan, ultra-Orthodox section of Jerusalem. Join her as she, describes the pre-Sabbath hustling of the neighborhood residents, the same beggars who have staked out their territory and return each week and the sudden flower vendors who sprout up on each corner on Friday mornings.

Continue to enjoy her adjustment as she gains kindness and contributes kindness to the neighborhood. Be aware of the first time the author sees a prominent sign in the early spring hanging from the first blossoming of fruit trees. The sign posts the blessing to be uttered upon viewing that tree. Continue to remember current events such as the freeing of captured soldier, Gilad Shalit after five years in captivity. The author writes, "My great niece joined the throngs of young people who are celebrating the memorable occasion."

Travel to Hebron to see where our forefather Abraham negotiated for the sale of his wife Sarah's grave. Delight in the fresh healing air in the area of the Dead Sea. Learn about the "archeologist's Disney Land" in Ein Gedi, the only existing inhabited botanical garden in the world. Explore the world renowned underwater aquarium where the viewer descends to the fish's milieu.

No book about Jerusalem would be complete without a description of the Old City with its unique character. Often on Thursday nights, there is an informal "jam session" in the Jewish Quarter across from the *Kotel*. There, one evening, *yeshiva* student musicians comprising eight guitars, two bongos, three violins,

(see Sokol, page 19)





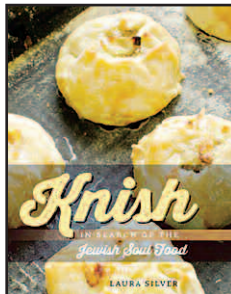
My Kosher Kitchen

REVIEW BY SYBIL KAPLAN

All about knishes

Knish. By Laura Silver. Brandeis University Press. May 2014. 281 pages, \$24.95 hardcover. 300 pages, \$22.99 ebook.

When I lived in New York for 10 years in the 1960s, going to the Lower East Side was a very regular part of my Sunday routine. However, while the name, Yonah Schimmel, sounds familiar, regrettably, Mrs. Stahl never crossed my path. Maybe that's because knishes were not part of my regular eating regimen.



That said, being a food writer and cookbook author, reading *Knish* was a fascinating experience – not just to learn more about the “pillow of filling tucked into a skin of dough” – but because when Laura Silver's favorite source of knishes, Mrs. Stahl's (Brighton Beach, Brooklyn) went out of business, her form of mourning took on new meanings. And as her subtitle says, she went “in search of the Jewish soul food.”

Laura Silver has written for the *New York Times* and the *Forward* on food and culture, and now she is author of what her publisher calls “the one and only absolutely definitive biography of the knish,” making her the world authority on the knish.

Mrs. Stahl's produced “baked round mounts, each plump with a stuffing, savory or sweet. Each piece – the size of a fist or just bigger – revealed a hint of filling on the top, a bald spot, as if for a *yarmulke*...if you cut the knish in half, the cross-section revealed a membrane of dough that split the innards into chambers, like those of the human heart.”

From this, we divert to two of the strong influences in Silver's life – her Riga-born grandmother who arrived in New York in 1906 and their relationship until her death as well as the 2005 closing (after 70 years) of the infamous Mrs. Stahl's which started her on the journey since “knishes were my family's religion.”

Beginning with the Brighton Beach Neighborhood Association, Silver investigates many New York connections to the knish; she travels to Israel, to Paris,

Warsaw, Bialystok and Knyszyn, Poland where she found her own family's roots. She goes to Banff, Canada; St. Paul, Minnesota where seniors make knishes; and San Francisco where she meets Mts. Stahl's granddaughter.

Closing her book, she lists where to get good knishes – New York, Michigan, Baltimore, Boston, Florida, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Minnesota; she acknowledges all those who helped her produce the book; has many pages of interesting notes; an extensive bibliography and an index.

In between are tidbits like visiting the Pasta Factory in Vineland, N.J., which purchased Mrs. Stahl's bakery knish recipes. Then there is Gussie Schwebel, a New York knish maker, who learned Eleanor Roosevelt was going to be in New York (c. 1942) and wanted to introduce her to the knish, which were dispatched at 5 p.m. on January 27 to her home.

Even if you've never eaten a lot of knishes in your life, this is an utterly charming book to read of a bygone world and Ms Silver's hope for a revitalization of the once well-known “Jewish soul food.”

In San Francisco, Laura Silver met Toby Engelberg, Mrs. Stahl's granddaughter and here is the family recipe.

Toby Engelberg's Potato Knishes

(Makes about 16-18 knishes)

Dough:

- 3-1/4 cups flour
- 1 Tbs. sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup lukewarm water

Turn oven on low until dough is ready. Mix flour, sugar and salt. Add oil and water. Mix with a spoon until the dough pulls together, or use a food processor or stand mixer (with a dough hook). Turn out on board and knead, incorporating all pieces. Knead until dough is one piece and is smooth and glossy. Turn off oven. Oil dough and place in oiled, covered bowl. Place in oven until ready to use. Let rest at least 2 hours; the dough should barely rise if at all. Keeping the dough overnight in the refrigerator is fine. Bring back to room temperature before use.

Potato filling:

- 6 lbs. russet or new potatoes
- 1 cup oil
- 1/4 cup salt, or to taste
- 1-1/2 tsp. pepper
- 8 cups raw thinly sliced onions

Scrub potatoes and peel except if the new potatoes have very thin, unblemished skins. Boil about 20 minutes until knife tender and drain. Mash with a potato

JSCREEN

(continued from page 20)

JScreen also has a unique offering which allows giving the gift of genetic screening – anybody can cover the cost of a friend or loved one's JScreen test by ordering a gift card (www.jscreen.org/gift).

With the High Holidays and New Year approaching, perhaps the most important and pertinent resolution one can make is a resolution they know they can keep. If you can keep your resolution, honor your past, tend to your future and do it affordably, conveniently and easily...well, that might just be a resolution revolution worth its weight in *gelt*. For more information, visit www.jscreen.org or call JScreen at (404) 778-8640. ✨



masher. Add oil, salt (not adding all at once and tasting as you add) and pepper and mix. Stir in the onion.

Assembling and baking:

Vegetable oil and flour as needed

Preheat oven to 450°. Roll out about half the dough on a lightly floured counter or table top. Roll with handle-less, rod-style rolling pin out from the center until dough is thin enough to see through, about 1/16-inch thick.

Oil top edge of dough with a pastry brush. Place 2-inch diameter line of filling about 2 inches from top edge. Pick up top edge and drape over filling. Brush oil on dough in a 2-inch strip on the bottom edge of the filling. Pick up the dough with filling and roll again onto the oiled dough, compressing the filled dough as you turn it. Repeat until the dough covers filling three to four times, being sure to always brush oil on the dough first. Cut to separate the filled potato knish log from the remaining dough. Cut off edges of filled dough. Cut the filled roll into pieces about 6- to 8-inches long and coil like a snail, tucking last end under the coil.

Alternatively, place roll onto ungreased cookie sheet, and slash with a knife cross-wise every 2 inches. Either rolls or snails should be placed on the pan with an inch of space between. Repeat with remaining dough on countertop. When that is used up, repeat with reserved dough.

Bake 20–25 minutes until knish wrapping is browned and knishes are cooked through. Start knishes on lowest oven rack and raise to top rack after about 10–12 minutes. Cool in pan. If cooked in rolls, cut into serving pieces. Knishes can be reheated in the oven or in a skillet on the stove top.

Sybil is a food writer and cookbook author who leads weekly walks in English in
(see Kaplan, page 19)

RIBNER*(continued from page 12)*

If we are honest with ourselves, we will acknowledge that we are all broken. Another year has gone by quickly. What did we accomplish? In reflecting on the year, many of us will feel regret, sadness and all kinds of limiting feelings such as anger and resentment over events that have taken place in the last year. In the quiet places in our souls, we wonder if we really have the capacity to change, to be truly happy and better than we were before. Will the coming year be happier, healthier, more abundant, more meaningful?

As in the story, we run everywhere to heal and fix our lives. Do we run to God, the One who can truly heal us? Before God, we are all broken vessels. To heal, to feel whole, we must accept our brokenness and realize that we cannot be whole without God. And as it is only God who can truly heal us, we have no recourse but to go to God.

In a short amount of time *Rosh Hashanah* will be upon us, and we will be privileged to stand in community before God as the King, the beneficent, merciful and loving King. We have been gifted with the most beautiful prayers for the Rosh Hashanah service specially designed to raise our consciousness to experience directly that there is a God and that God truly loves us and seeks our highest good.

For two days, we bathe in this increased awareness of the awesomeness, kindness, and love of God. We are so blessed to come close to and be in a special and personal relationship with God. We may have looked for our healing in other places during the year but on Rosh Hashanah we know that it is really only God who has the power to heal and transform us. All that we must do is to wake up, attune and open our awareness to this greater truth, the reality of God's existence and Kingship.

Our ticket to greater and everlasting joy and blessing in our lives asks that we let go of illusion, fantasy, lies and falsehoods we have told ourselves that have kept us feeling limited, helpless, unforgiving, judgmental, reactive and out of control and be open to the experience of joy, love, the magnificence of our own souls and the glory of God. Sounds like a good exchange, a deal we should not refuse?

In the days before Rosh Hashanah, prepare yourself for this extraordinary encounter with the Creator, with the King, with the Infinite Holy One who loves you and wants you to be who you really are and do everything you came into this world to do. On Rosh Hashanah, we receive inspiration, guidance and blessing. May we each be blessed with a sweet new year of health, love, joy and knowing and living our purpose.

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

**JACOBSON/KLEINER***(continued from page 15)*

capture the last years of America's innocence, its preoccupations and class fixated society (at least the Philadelphia incarnation thereof) before World War II. Barry caught the zeitgeist of that period, preserved it in dramatic amber and the Shaw Repertory group through the indefatigable energies of Moya O'Connell and some very talented actor partners brought it back to life.

Tennessee Williams' *A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur*, a one hour masterpiece is undoubtedly the sleeper success at the Shaw Festival. There is some of the well known melancholy in this Williams' gem but it is tempered by an odd kind of humor as it records the anxiety, hopes, frustrations and disappointments of a high school civics teacher duped by the false marriage hopes offered by the principal of her high school.

Creve Coeur, the sight of a picnic locale, means heart break in French and this theme unconsciously hovers over Deborah Hay who plays the female lead with eye movements and facial gestures that are truly astounding. This is done as Tennessee Williams, the word magician par excellence, exposes us with consummate skill to the travail of ordinary people. ✨

**MCLEAN***(continued from page 15)*

inspired and motivated by this work of bridge-building at this challenging time. Thanks to the Rising Tide International and German Global Hope Fund for their support to make this day happen.

Eliyahu McLean is director of Jerusalem Peacemakers. www.jerusalempeacemakers.org. ✨

**KAPLAN***(continued from page 18)*

Machaneh Yehudah market in Jerusalem and is co-president of one of the English-speaking chapters of Hadassah-Israel. ✨

SOKOL*(continued from page 17)*

and three flutes played impromptu popular Jewish melodies. Simon reminds us that there are street musicians in the center of the city, who do expect donations for their performances.

Learn about the significance of the differences and symbolism in Chassidic garb. Gain insight into the details of life in the different style *Yeshivot*. Understand the customs of the devout as they travel to Mt. Meron to the caves of the Tzadikim and to participate in the ritual of shearing the locks of their three year old boys.

The reader can accompany the author as she treads the streets of Jerusalem with their evocative names of major scholars such as Rambam (Maimonides) or the founder of the modern State, Theodore Herzl (Boulevard) or Eliezer Ben Yehudah (pedestrian mall) the man who first introduced spoken Hebrew or Ha Chida, a famous Sephardic Talmudic redactor.

Feel the spunk, power and excitement as Simon relates her new experiences with amazing insights. Treasure the nuances and fascinating variations of Jewish life. Travel the length and breadth of Israel and return home to the author's beloved Jerusalem.

Cyrelle Simon lived in West Lafayette, Ind., for over 45 years where she and her late husband, Purdue Biology Professor Edward H. Simon held many volunteer leadership positions in the Jewish community. She also taught Hebrew classes and gave piano lessons while contributing a regular column titled, "Lafayette Chit Chat" to *The Indiana Jewish Post & Opinion*. Throughout the years her husband wrote numerous *Haggadah* reviews and as well articles of general interest for the *Post & Opinion*. The Simons' two sons are Orthodox rabbis and their two daughters are married to Orthodox rabbis.

After making *aliyah* seven years ago, in an effort to maintain contact with her friends in the Sons of Abraham *shul* in Lafayette, Ind., and to share her enthusiasm about her new life in Jerusalem, Simon began writing a monthly "Letter from Jerusalem". This material was collected and edited to form this first book which includes an elaborate Yiddish/Hebrew/English glossary. It can be ordered from Amazon.com or in Israel by contacting simonec@smile.net.il.

Chana Tova Sokol is a resident of Jerusalem, giving classes and storytelling to young and old about the Holy Land of Israel and other topics. She was a teacher in New York and Israel, teaching English and history. Mrs. Sokol writes lyrics and composes music, performing in a woman's band. Email: chanatova2000@gmail.com. ✨

5775: The Year of Do-Right, not Do-Overs

As we are preparing to say goodbye to 5774, we celebrate the New Year 5775. Though the High Holidays provide us a time to celebrate with family, friends and loved ones, they also provide us an opportunity for reflection. We are thankful for the opportunity to start fresh and promise that *this* is the year we'll stick to our resolutions. *This* is the year we'll go to the gym for more than two weeks. *This* is the year we'll call that friend or loved one more often. And *this* is the year that we'll take more time to appreciate what we have.

The fact is, keeping resolutions can be difficult. As much as we make these promises to ourselves, sometimes life gets in the way. The resolution to ensure the health and wellness of your future family can seem complex, expensive and difficult. However, **JScreen** has made it easy to make that resolution and, more importantly, has made it an easy one to keep.

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Department of Human Genetics, JScreen is a non-profit genetic screening initiative that brings the innovative technology of genetic screening and peace of mind it can provide to your front door and even the comfort of your couch. JScreen can test for 80 different genetic disease and their new Jewish panel screens for over 40 diseases that are common amongst people of Jewish ancestry. Even more, JScreen provides results to you by way of a certified genetic counselor, so you can ask questions, better know what your results mean and talk through all of your options to help ensure you or your loved one has a healthy and happy baby.

The process is easy. First, visit www.jscreen.org and request an at-home saliva-based test kit. The kit is mailed to your door. After providing a saliva sample in the included test tube, mail it back in the pre-paid mailer. It's that easy! In a matter of weeks, a genetic counselor will reach out to discuss your results and options. The technological advancements of JScreen have made the test more accessible than ever and its \$99 price tag (with insurance) extends that accessibility even further, allowing those interested in starting families to screen their genes without breaking the bank.

(see JScreen, page 18)

CNN to air documentary on the 70th anniversary of Auschwitz liberation

Wolf Blitzer, CNN news anchor and reporter, with Eva Kor, Holocaust survivor and founder of C.A.N.D.L.E.S. Museum in Terre Haute, Ind., at Auschwitz for filming of documentary airing in January 2015.

