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Cover art by Jackie Olenick
(see About the Cover, p.2).



May God Bless and Keep You
May God Shine on You and Be Gracious to You
May God Shine Within You and Bring You Peace

Editorial

For this our 18th special Focus on Healing edition, I am reviewing a new CD on the topic. A joint project of the Cantor's Assembly and The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, its title describes it well. *The Spirit of Hope & Healing* is from The Spirit Series Volume 12, Voices of the Conservative Movement.

Twenty-one different songs, many familiar, are each sung by different cantors and an honorary one. They are mellow and pleasing to the ear as one would desire when not feeling well. The honorary cantor is Debbie Friedman, of blessed memory, whose *Mi Sheberach* has become an anthem of today's healing services in many synagogues and temples. This is the first song and the CD is dedicated to her.



On the insert of the CD, before the first song it is written:

"Whereas prayers for healing have an ancient Jewish history with venerable texts that extend back to the Bible, communal healing services have developed in the Jewish community only during the last three decades – coinciding with the prolific musical and liturgical career of the late singer-songwriter Debbie Friedman (1951–2011). We dedicate this album to Debbie's memory and to her legacy in our lives as Jews and as *Hazzanim*." Sam Weiss and David Propis

Also on the insert, besides listing information on the performers, arrangers and creators of each song, an explanation or summary introduces it, giving it more meaning.

Since I am not a musician, but I work words, I feel more comfortable commenting on lyrics. Several of them resonated with me but one stood out. Titled "I'll Be Here for You," it is performed and arranged by *Hazzanim* Alisa Pomerantz-Boro & Leon Sher and the music & lyrics are by David Roth.

One of the verses is: "Well, I don't really have any answers, / And I don't always know what to do. / But if shoulders were meant to be leaned upon, / Then I'm putting one out here for you." Sung with beautiful harmony, I found this especially comforting.

This reminds me of a message from Dr. Gerald Jampolsky and Diane Cirincione in the book *Change Your Mind, Change Your Life*. They found that when visiting the sick, frequently it was not necessary to say or do anything. Simply sitting with the person was all that was needed. Also in the time-honored Jewish tradition of

About the Cover

"Priestly Blessing"

By Jackie Olenick

This piece portrays the oldest recorded blessing ever found and is one of our most beloved blessings. The three-prong and four-prong "shins" in the hands remind us of the ultimate unity between man, woman and the Source of all Blessing.



Jackie Olenick

*May God Bless and Keep You
May God Shine on You
and Be Gracious to You
May God Shine Within You
and Grant You Peace.*

Jackie Olenick is a Judaic artist and jewelry designer residing in Boynton Beach, Fla. Her work can be seen on her website: www.jackieolenickart.com. ✨



Bikkur Cholim (visiting the sick), it is said when one visits someone who is ill, it takes away one sixtieth of their illness.

If loud music is what you prefer, then you might not like this CD, but it does an excellent job fulfilling its purpose. I recommend it!

The power of art therapy

In our Indiana edition of Jan. 14, 2015, we published a story titled "Herron art professor in the healing business" about a local professor who is also a licensed art therapist. Juliet King hopes to improve the lives of veterans facing emotional adjustments after their time on the battlefield.

"Art therapists...are trained to use art to help clients find ways to express things they might not be able to say with words, King said. Art therapy is an effective treatment intervention for helping anyone facing issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, which can affect not only war veterans but also victims of rape, torture, child abuse, car accidents and natural disasters, she said. (See article on our website or Facebook profile).

This reminded me of my editorial from Nov. 26, 2008. I wrote about American art educator Maureen Kushner, who spoke and presented a slide show at our annual Ann Katz Festival of Books. As part of a traveling exhibit, "Peace Through Humor," she came with artwork from Israeli children – Jewish, Arab, Bedouin, and Druze as well as Ethiopian and Russian immigrants. She had worked in 27 schools in Israel between 1992 and 1996 by invitation of the Israel Ministry of Education.

The exhibit had been to 174 cities in the United States and Canada. The murals

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The Jewish
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and paintings were on the theme of war and peace. As Kushner clicked through a slideshow of artwork, she described the experiences of the children that led to
(see Editorial, page 14)

Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

Ingathering

One aspect of the complete and final redemption is the ingathering of the exiles. *Moshiach* (our righteous Messiah), and his followers will bring all of the Jewish people to live in the land of Israel. The Lubavitcher Rebbe told us 23 years ago that this is actually happening right now. At that time a million Jews moved to Israel from the former Soviet Union. Every day many Jews move to Israel from all over the world, and recently Israel became the largest center of the Jewish population, with almost 6 million Jews.

One part of this process is that many people are discovering that they are Jewish. Here is an amazing case of this in which I was personally involved. A few years ago I flew to Brooklyn, to spend the High Holidays by the Rebbe. Together with me on the plane were another 20 men, women and children, also going to the Rebbe. We changed planes in Budapest, where we had to wait for 10 hours. We decided to visit the local Chabad House. We called them, and they gave us instructions how to get there by bus and then by subway. I was the only member of our group who spoke English, so I became the tour guide. We got off the subway and climbed the stairs up to the street.

I stopped the first passerby, showed him the address of the Chabad House, and asked him for directions. He smiled and said "*Shalom*". He looked at the address, said that it is not far from here, and kindly offered to go with us to show us the way. We started to walk. I asked him if he is Jewish. After all, he greeted us with "*Shalom*", a word in Hebrew. He said no, but recently he had found out that his grandmother was once Jewish.

He told me that he is a lawyer, and recently he had traveled to Italy. He was walking down the street, and two young men stopped him and asked him if he is Jewish. (I guess they wanted him to put on *tefillin*.) He told them no. They looked at him and said "Yes, you are Jewish!" He told them that he is sorry, but he is not Jewish.

He returned to Budapest, and mentioned this story to his family. They looked at him, and after a minute told him that they have a secret to tell him. "Your grandmother was Jewish, but she married a non Jew. After Hitler came to power and started to persecute the Jews, she arranged to have her papers changed, and be registered as not being Jewish."



Opinion

BY ARTHUR MARSHALL FELL

French government stands solidly behind Jews

There is consternation in my thinking and in the minds of many people I know in France following recent events in early January with the terrorist assassination of journalists of a humoristic political weekly and clients at a *Kosher* grocery store. The community radio station, Radio Aviva, which is in the main synagogue and where I do a weekly radio program consisting of jazz and commentary is under heavy guard by several army troopers.

The Prime Minister of France, Manuel Valls, a Socialist born in Spain and who came to France as a teenager, made a spectacular speech in the French National Assembly on Jan. 13. He said among other things: France would not be France without the Jews. His speech was a ringing defense of French values and against terrorism and anti-Semitism.

While there are enormous problems, the French government stands solidly behind universal values and is doing what it can to fight anti-Semitism. It cannot eliminate anti-Semitism with a magic wand, no one can. But to know the government stands on the right side on this question is something important in itself. When one hears how eloquently the Prime Minister asserts that policy, one cannot help but be impressed. Rarely has a major politician expressed it so forcefully.

Below is an informal translation of part of Prime Minister Emmanuel Valls' speech to the French National Assembly (Parliament) on Jan. 13, 2015. He received a standing ovation on both sides of the aisle:

"The first subject to tackle clearly is the fight against anti-Semitism. History shows that an awakening of anti-



I asked him if this grandmother was his mother's mother. He said yes. I explained to him that if so, those young men were right, and he really is Jewish. We arrived at the Chabad House. I knocked on the door. A young Rabbi opened the door, and greeted us with a hearty "*Shalom*" and a big smile. I looked at him for a few seconds. Why such a warm greeting? He said "Rabbi! Don't you remember me? I'm

(see Benzion, page 5)

Semitism is the symptom of a crisis of democracy, a crisis of the Republic. For that reason it must be met forcefully. After Ilan Halimi in 2006, after the crimes in Toulouse, anti-Semitic acts have increased intolerably...

"How can we accept that Frenchmen can be assassinated because they are Jewish?...It is not acceptable. If the nation has not reacted sufficiently up to now,... I say, we cannot accept it, that we must fight against it and make a clear diagnosis. There is an historical anti-Semitism which dates from centuries ago, but there is above all a new anti-Semitism born in our neighborhoods, relayed through Internet...and based on hate of the State of Israel and hate of Jews...It must be said and the words must be pronounced so as to combat that unacceptable type of anti-Semitism.

"As Madame Segolène Royal [a Minister in the French Government and former Socialist candidate for the Presidency of France] said in Jerusalem and I said this morning, and as Claude Lanzmann wrote in a magnificent article in *Le Monde*, yes, let's say it to the world: without Jews, France would no longer be France. We must spread this message widely and loudly to everyone...

"We have not been indigent enough. How can we accept that in certain high schools and lycées, the Shoah cannot be taught? How can we accept that a child of 7 or 8 could say, when a teacher puts a question to him 'who is your enemy' that the response is 'it is the Jew'? When attacks are made against French Jews, it is the same as attacking France, it is the same as attacking the universal conscience, and we must never forget it!"

Arthur Marshall Fell, the author of the book *Tzimmes* (see review on page 14), has worked in the family scrap business, as a waiter, in a used furniture store, in a car agency, as an agricultural worker, as a radio announcer, as a practicing lawyer in New York City, as a US Foreign Service Minister-Counselor and Mission Director posted in several African countries, and as a Principal Administrator in a Paris-based international organization. He is a decorated veteran of the US Army, a pianist, a composer, recipient of an ASCAP award, and he recorded a jazz album on the British label MacJazz with the trumpet player, David Cross. He co-authored a book about development in the Sahel region of Africa published by the OECD in Paris and has written numerous articles about law, economic development and music. He was born in Bloomington, Ind., and was admitted to the Bar in Indiana and New York. His life has obviously been a *tzimmes*, like the mixed-up dessert stew. He presently lives with his wife Teri on the southern coast of France. ✨

France loses if Jews leave



BY RABBIS
DENNIS C. AND
SANDY E. SASSO

The stunning march of a million French citizens led by dozens of world leaders was evocative of the civil rights marches led by Martin Luther King in the Untied States decades ago. Had the Civil Rights movement been unsuccessful, it would have meant a defeat not only for blacks, but also for American democracy, for the principles enshrined in the Bill of Rights. If the recent impressive response to terrorism in France is not successful, it will spell defeat of the democratic ideals of the French Republic, of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Tragically, the murderous assault on *Charlie Hebdo* and the kosher grocery in Paris were brutal attacks on basic human rights, freedom of speech and religion. For French Jews this was the most recent incident of anti-Semitic violence on places of Jewish gathering, from day schools to synagogues.

These deplorable events have led to calls for French Jews to leave France. Of course, it is up to French Jewish families to decide what is best for their own safety and security. But if the majority of the 500,000 Jews in France were to decide to leave, the loss would not only be for Jews, but for France. It would not only mean the dismantling of the second largest Diaspora community after the United States, but a weakening of French democracy. As the French prime minister stated, "France without Jews is not France."

From the time of the French Revolution in 1789, France led European countries in affirming the full citizenship of its Jews. Looking back from the 21st century, this does not seem like a revolutionary idea, but it was. Until the 18th century, Jews were not citizens of the countries in which they lived. They were a minority without civil rights, living at the pleasure of the government. They were not allowed to vote nor hold political office. They were banned from certain professions and from universities.

Then came this "radical idea" of the Enlightenment that Jews would be judged not as a group but as individuals. Jews were promised that if they would assimilate into French culture, they would be treated as equals. This ideal was tested many times, most dramatically in the

How to invite godliness into our lives

BY RABBI DENNIS C. SASSO

Dec. 29, 2014 – At this season of the year, articles about religion fill the news – from the history of the holidays to the question of whether Santa Claus, or even God, exists! Pollsters and concerned religious leaders talk about the rise of a new secularism in America. Surveys show that the fastest growing denomination in the religious landscape is the "nones."

One of the most compelling voices addressing the quest of religious and secular Americans was that of Rabbi Harold Schulweis, who passed away recently at age 89. In 1994, Schulweis



Dreyfus Affair. In 1894 Alfred Dreyfus, an assimilated Jew and an officer in the French army was falsely accused, tried and imprisoned for treason. French novelist Emile Zola wrote an open letter to the president of France accusing the army of anti-Semitism for which he also was tried and convicted. The Dreyfus affair led Theodore Herzl, an assimilated Jewish journalist, to conclude that despite the European Enlightenment, historic religious and racial anti-Semitism would hinder the integration of Jews into European society.

Still, France continued to work toward the ideal of a nationalism that would embrace all citizens, regardless of ethnicity or religion. That ideal is once again being tested. New emerging ethnic communities are questioning this model of national identity.

The growth of separatist Islamic militant fundamentalism threatens the fabric of the French nation and many other European societies. The events of the past few weeks in Paris were not just an attack on the French Republic; they were an attack on all freedom loving people. They are a call to those who cherish civil liberties and human rights to unequivocally denounce intolerance, hatred and violence. The future of democracy depends on communities and governments educating their people for civic engagement, affirming the rights of individuals and celebrating the values of cultural diversity.

Sandy Sasso is rabbi emeritus of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis and director of Religion, Spirituality of and the Arts Initiative at Butler University. Dennis Sasso is senior rabbi at Beth-El Zedeck. Reprinted with permission from the Indianapolis Star January 19, 2015. ✨

wrote "For Those Who Can't Believe," an honest inquiry into questions of faith and disbelief among modern Americans. While much of Schulweis' writing addresses the reality and concerns of the Jewish community, his scope and outreach are universal in nature.

Schulweis was for decades the rabbi of Temple Valley Beth-Shalom in Encino, Calif., but he was a rabbis' rabbi whose innovative and transformative ideas and programs transcended his own congregation. He was an articulate orator, a sensitive pastor, a profound theologian and a progressive advocate of social justice.

Harold Schulweis was born in the Bronx in 1925 to secular Jewish parents. He earned a degree in philosophy at Yeshiva University and trained for the rabbinate at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he studied with Rabbis Mordecai M. Kaplan and Abraham J. Heschel, the two most influential thinkers of 20th century American Judaism. Schulweis internalized Kaplan's passion for reason and coherence and Heschel's sense of pathos and mystery.

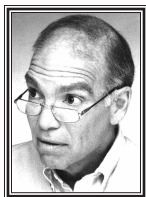
Schulweis was among the first rabbis to openly welcome gays into the congregation. He was a founder of Mazon, the flagship Jewish organization addressing the needs of the hungry across religious lines. He launched the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous to recognize the heroism of thousands of gentiles who aided and saved Jews during the Holocaust. Later, Schulweis established Jewish World Watch to monitor and counter contemporary human atrocities and genocides.

Schulweis believed that religion is as religion does. Following his mentor, Mordecai M. Kaplan, Schulweis rejected the theological supernaturalism that sees God as the "Celestial Bellhop" or "Cosmic Puppeteer" in favor of a theological humanistic naturalism that invites us to become partners of the divine in the completion of the works of creation and redemption.

Schulweis developed a religious language that he called "Predicate Theology." Rather than speaking of God as the "Subject" or "Substantive" of the sentence, e.g.: God is just"; "God is love", we should think of God as the "predicate," that is the active and feeling part of the sentence. Thus, "Justice is Godly;" "Love is Godly." We humans are called to emulate the godly attributes which qualify us as partners of God and creatures in the "divine image."

Encouraging us to think of God not in static and fixed terms, but in relational and active ways, Schulweis suggested that the theologically correct question is not "Where is God," but "When is God?" How can we invite godliness into our lives, our relationships, our world.

(see D. Sasso, page 5)



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

Tell me where can I go?

Jews spent close to two millennia away from home. When the Romans finally expelled the Jews from their land, really upset because it took so long to beat their guerilla forces, we scattered to over 50 countries.

Gone was the Second Temple, gone was our government, our army, our social structure, everything. Except us. The Jews. We scattered and as we did, we invented something uniquely Jewish: The Portable Community. We didn't have a Temple, so we built synagogues. We didn't have our social structure, so we created Jewish Community Centers, Jewish Family Services, and Jewish Social Services of all kinds.

We went north to Europe and England. England thrust us out and banned the Jews in 1290. The king at the time was in debt so he got rid of the Jews and took over the loans owed to the Jews. We were not "officially" let back in until the 1800s. We went south to Spain and Portugal. When the Moslem Caliphate took over most of the known world after defeating the Romans, they gave a special place for the Jews in their society welcoming the doctors, the philosophers, the merchants among us.

When they were defeated and the Catholic Kings took their place, things went downhill in a hurry. Spain was really cool under the Caliphate, but along came the Catholics, the Inquisition and we were on our way again, picking up our Portable Community and schlepping it to Northern Africa and to the West. But, everywhere we went, we did as much good as allowed.

In Europe, the unwelcoming Catholic Church saw to it through their puppet politicians that we were banned from most professions, not allowed to own land, pushed into our own *Shtetls* and not allowed in regular schools. But somehow we survived.

By the early 20th century Turks were the most dominant part of the Caliphate and they held sway in Israel, still at that time known as Palestine, a name of derision given to the area by the Romans. Jews were by then returning in dribbles.

The idea of return of course, was put into motion by Theodore Herzl. He saw that Europe with its Catholic religion and its hierarchy would never let the Jews live

their own lives, free and independent members of a free society. It was only natural that those without their homeland would seek to return there – especially since they were not wanted by the society in which they lived.

And so we did. Early on, the Jewish National Fund did the natural thing: They began buying the land. Most of it owned by absentee Turkish land owners. When the JNF bought land and got the proper papers of ownership, the Turks did not bother to tell the people living on that land that it had been sold to another party. So, when Jews showed up to settle there, they were not met with milk and honey.

But, here we are, some 110 years later, 67 years after independence, with our own homeland. The first settlers were those with the dream of a Jewish homeland – but for the most part driven by the problems where they lived. No one wanted them, they suffered indignities and discrimination. They were massacred. All good reasons to head to this new nation that needed people.

So, they came. From Russia, from Poland, from the Ukraine and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Some decided not to come and perished in the Holocaust. The survivors provided the impetus to make a nation of the land that was once our nation and had no indigenous government since we left.

Then the Arab nations thrust out over 700,000 Jews. Many of them came to the one place they would always be welcome. The Arab nations on the other hand did not welcome their brothers whom they had thrown into "refugee camps". Till this day.

Now it is happening again. France and Germany have huge Muslim populations, mostly from Arab countries. They fled seeking a place where they could live in peace – of course, as long as there were no Jews there.

But we are there. And it is becoming increasingly difficult to be a Jew in France. If it were not for the culture of France, there would have not been a Dreyfus Affair, no Herzl and perhaps, no Israel. So perhaps it is no surprise that the nation with the largest Muslim population is no longer a safe place for Jews. It certainly is no surprise that the largest influx of Jews coming to Israel are French.

The world is in turmoil. Muslims in Niger get mad at a French newspaper and burn down Christian churches. The man who was ready to prove that the Brazilian government was complicit in the Jewish Center bombing 20 years ago is killed and it is made to look like a suicide.

Islam is the youngest of the three major faiths in the world. God help us until they mature.

Jim Shipley has had careers in broadcasting,

BENZION

(continued from page 3)

Glen Hurwitz, from South Africa, one of your students from the *Yeshiva* in Kfar Chabad!" *Baruch Hashem*, he told me that he had married, has three children, and now he is the head of the *Yeshiva* in Budapest.

I introduced our young lawyer, who had just discovered that he is Jewish. They talked for a while, and the lawyer put on *tefillin* and said his first Jewish prayers. They exchanged addresses and telephone numbers, and agreed to keep in touch.

We believe that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is *Moshiach*, our righteous Messiah. Here is a beautiful example of the Rebbe and his followers gathering in the Jewish people.

Forty-six years ago I was in a similar situation. Though I knew that I was Jewish, it did not mean very much to me, and at one point I even considered leaving Judaism. The Rebbe and his emissaries and followers helped me to discover the wonderful treasures of our Jewish heritage. Now I also have a hand in the Rebbe's work, to gather in all of the Jewish people, to bring them back to their Judaism and to the Jewish Land.

We are now in the Hebrew month of *Shvat*. The Rebbe took upon himself to be our leader on the 10th of *Shvat*. Now is an auspicious time to strengthen our connection with the Rebbe, to take upon ourselves to join him in his work, to redeem the Jewish nation and all of the world. It is up to us to learn more *Torah* and help others to learn more *Torah* and do more *Mitzvahs* to bring *Moshiach* now.

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



D. SASSO

(continued from page 4)

We live in a world much in need of healing and repair. At this season of religious celebrations of peace and renewal, Rabbi Harold Schulweis' teaching and example invite us to translate the divine qualities of love, justice, forgiveness and peace into human attributes and attainable goals.

Rabbi Sasso has been senior rabbi at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis since 1977. Reprinted with permission from the Indianapolis Star. ★



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



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

The perfect time

My mother called when I was out. Her voice on the answering machine sounded somewhat depressed but the message belied her tone.

“Hello darling, this is mom. I’m calling with some good news. We’ve turned the clocks back an hour so there’s only a two-hour time difference between us now. Isn’t that wonderful? Call me back soon.”

Upon hearing my 89 year old mother’s words, I immediately sensed that her message was merely a cover-up for the things she couldn’t say, either because she hadn’t sufficiently put her feelings into words yet or because what she wanted to share was just too hard to talk about. I guessed it was the latter.

My mother’s sense of family has always been time-bound. When I was ten years old she told me the story about how her parents had died. She didn’t remember much about the accident because she was only two years old at the time but she did recall the exact time of day, 1:30 in the afternoon, when the policeman knocked on the door and told her family that her father had drowned. And she recalled even less about her 28-year-old mother who died from a broken heart exactly one month later giving birth to her baby sister. What she did remember was the time, 7:20 in the evening, because the nurse told her she should go to bed like a good girl.

Having lost so much, so early in life was a hardship my mother never overcame. Her best defense to the loneliness and abandonment she carried was to become the all encompassing mother. She kept track of me like a momma bear with her cubs. And when I felt smothered or overwhelmed, I tried to remember that I had been given everything that she had lost as a young child.

I didn’t recognize at the time how hard it was for her when I left home for college; that my departure was the trigger that caused her emotions to spiral downward into what I thought of as her “black hole”. Time became even more important to her after I left. Sundays at 5:00 pm were “our time.” Of course, without cell phones, it wasn’t as easy to stay in touch. But I knew my call was her touchstone and I rarely missed a Sunday throughout college.

Over the years, Mom has marked her life by the events in mine – the afternoon I graduated from law school, the evening



Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

Tu B’Shevat dazzles kids

I have two explanations that I use with my kids for the mystery of spring. Well, I used to use them on my kids. But now since my kids are old enough to drive a car and pay a house note and have kids of their own, they fully comprehend the mechanics of springtime. So, I pontificate to my grandkids. And I specifically instruct my now grown-up children – “Hey, don’t steal my thunder, don’t tell Lizzie my Tu



of my wedding, the morning when my son was born, the first time she set eyes on my daughter.

My life is much more hectic than hers and she appreciates the efforts I make to stay in touch. Gone are the once a week conversations, replaced by daily check-ins about life’s ups and downs, the books she is reading, her new favorite doctor who told her she can still drink one can of diet coke a day. Cell phones make it easier to stay connected but they also betray the tension in my voice as I rush between home and work or need to hang up because one of the kids is calling. I assure her it’s no big deal but somehow, the busy-ness of my life seems to distance us and underscores the fact that so much happens between the times we see each other.

So when my mother called last night, what she was really saying was that she feels somehow closer to me now, knowing that only two hours of daylight separates us.

If you visit my mother’s kitchen, the first thing you notice is her clocks, none of which are set at the same time. The microwave is set an hour before the antique wall clock, which reads at least a half-hour later than the digital clock radio. Yet regardless of her inability to keep track of “real” time, whenever I call, her response to my voice is always the same.

“Hello dear. I was hoping it was you. Of course I can talk. It’s the perfect 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. ✨

B’Shevat stories – wait’ll I visit. Lemme do it. Okay?”

The first story is the old Greek myth of the beautiful and radiant maiden Persephone and her capture by Hades, King of the underworld. How the earth mourned! Gray with grief, nothing bloomed. Then Hades relented, goes the story, and let Persephone take an elevator, escalator, or staircase to the upper world – but for only six months. The flowers rejoiced, clover grew green, apple trees bloomed, and sap flowed again in every living thing. Even the spirits of humanity brightened. When the captive took the “down” escalator back to the shady land that never knew the sun, the plants again were brokenhearted and died their winter death.

The second story...the one we believe today, though more scientific is far less poetic. Two spherical bodies, the earth and the sun, each weighing billions of tons hang in an infinite void – at this point my curious grandson interrupts to ask “what holds them up?” “Gravity,” I confidently answer. A word that only represents our infinite ignorance – another myth, but one with a scientific tone. He’s not grown up so he doesn’t know my answer is only a word that masks our ignorance, but he’s old enough to know that this might be interesting, so why not let Pop continue.

Spring, the awakening of the plants that dwell in the backyard, is also an awakening to the young mind that only knows what it sees. In November it noticed that the apple tree was leafless and dead. In May it’s alive with cotton candy blossoms. And there’s talk around the house of apple cider, and apple pie. Not to mention a fresh apple with your school lunch.

And what happened to the swathe of dirt along the back yard fence? It’s now a yellow jonquil fresco by Degas. More springtime magic.

And kids love stories about trees. So, on this holiday tell them about the acorn that turned into a 40-ton tree that shaded six year old Melinda’s house; an easy-going tree that allowed them to tie a swing on his lower branches. Tell them how that old Oak tree will patiently serve Melinda and her children and her children’s children for three to four generations of humankind. Remind them that 80 years from now some child, now patiently waiting in the womb of infinity, will thank her unknown grandmother, Melinda, for shade and a nice swing.

Kids love Tu B’Shevat – because, like grown-ups they love miracles. And they see clearer than us the transformation in the green family of trees.

My grandson, Jonah, turned five the other day. His parents gave him a party.

They even hired a magician fully dressed in cape and hat. The kids went wild. The magic man hid things and he transformed things. He violated the laws of gravity. But he couldn't make a tree.

I asked him, "Hey, *Tu B'Shevat's* coming – make a tree". Instead, he pulled a quarter out of Jonah's ear. Big deal.

Every year on *Tu B'Shevat* I tour our back yard with one grandchild after another. "See that stick standing in the ground, Jonah? Well, in a couple of weeks it'll sprout some leaves. And by the end of summer, it'll be a miniature, two-foot tree."

Kids love miracles like they love magic. One spring day a few years back Jonah, the birthday boy, and I were touring the yard. "Jonah, hey look. See that stick poking up out of the ground?" Actually, the "stick" was the product of four seeds planted last fall. Since I'm not a certified plantologist, I attribute my success to the reward of my impeccable, ethical behavior during the winter. Usually, from four seeds I get two sticks. Once, I got *four* sticks because from October to April never, not once, did I raise my voice to my wife's relatives. They visit frequently at mealtime. This time, however, I got only one stick. It was a tough year for me and my in-laws.

"So Jonah – see the stick?"

"Sure."

"Well, wanta see a super trick?"

"You're gonna turn it into a candy bar like the magician at my birthday party?"

"Nope – a lot better than that. I am going to say the magic word – which is '*Tu B'Shevat*'. I am going to wave my magic handkerchief over the stick. And you and I, in five years, will come back to this stick, which will turn into an apple tree. We'll sit in the shade and eat apples. Then, you can climb up to the top of the tree. Is that a trick or what?"

The normal five year old grandchild says thank you; then tries to get a handle on the concept of time: How is five years different from next Wednesday? But this one, with a few ragged DNA threads from my in-laws in his bloodstream, complained about waiting so long for his magic trick. That's when I went from Oak trees to bean vines. Plant them in April and by July you've got yards and yards of vines decorated with bean blossoms.

Remember what Steve Jobs said: "Fortunes are made by fools like me – but only G-d can make a tree". Something like that.

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



Kabbalah of the Month

BY MELINDA RIBNER

Tu B'Shevat – a joyous day

Shevat began after sunset on Jan. 20. It may still be the heart of winter in many places, but the month of *Shevat* marks a hidden and mystical time of new beginnings and rebirth. This month is a time of new inspiration and creativity. It is a time when it is easy to come close to God. The first part of the month may still feel harsh energetically but that changes after the 15th of the month, on *Tu B'Shevat*, the time of the full moon.

The renewal in *Shevat* is not yet manifest on the physical plane, but the process has begun, occurring first on the inner planes. We may have lived through a cold and challenging winter this year, but spring is coming. Know that something new is going to come forth within you. Believe that you will bear new fruit and you will. This month of renewal is the time to go deep inside and contact the creative energies within you. Open to a new beginning. Say "Yes!" to newness of life once again and allow the potential within you to come forth. As you read this, take a minute to close your eyes, open your heart, and literally say silently and out loud "Yes!"

This month of *Shevat* is an optimal time to conceive new projects and to be open to newness in your life in general. Breathe out the old and breathe in the new. It may not be clear what is the new for you, but simply agree to be open to renewal in your life. Give yourself time to relax, let go and be open to inspiration. There is much blessing available this month.

The energy of the month is best represented by the holiday of *Tu B'Shevat*, the 15th of the month, the time of the full moon. This is one of the most spiritual and joyous days of the year. At this time, though the trees may be barren, we are told that the sap begins to flow on *Tu B'Shevat* and we once again trust in the cycle of life to produce new leaves, fruits, and flowers. Like the sap of the trees, our creative juices begin flowing on *Tu B'Shevat* and we too will bear new fruit and flowers this year.

The fixing of the month is eating. Pay close attention to what you take into your body, mind and soul. Eating is not just physical food. What we do for recreation, friendships, work, everything we take

into ourselves is food and has the ability to strengthen or weaken ourselves and others. Make a conscious effort to eat in a way that is strengthening and nurturing. The "food" we eat is an expression of who we are and our relationship to the Divine.

As I write this, we are all still shaken by what happened in Paris during the month of *Tevet*. Staff at *Charlie Hebdo*, the satirical cartoon magazine were murdered for posting anti-Mohammed cartoons and Jews in the kosher marketplace were murdered simply because they were Jews. The world seems to be more concerned about the death of journalists than those of Jews or Christians.

Now that a great number of Jews are planning to leave France as a result of this massacre, at least the French prime minister finally acknowledged the rampant anti-Semitism in his country. France will miss its Jews who have been replaced by Moslems. The very week this tragedy took place in Paris, over 2,000 Nigerian Christians were slaughtered by a militant Moslem group. Where is the world concern for the thousands of Christians being slaughtered? It barely got any media coverage.

Hopefully as the world experiences more terrorism at the hands of Islamic extremists as they have promised, the world will finally connect the dots and realize that Israel has also been combating Islamic extremism since before its existence. Islamic extremism has many names and forms but it is the same thing, whether it is in Pakistan, Nigeria, France, or Israel. Rather than continuing to demonize Israel with lies, may the world finally realize that Israel can lead them out of the darkness and into the light of peace and unity.

May all the good people in the world unite to do good and build an energetic wall of protection and blessing around the world. The battle we are facing with Islamic extremism must be fought on many levels, internally and externally.

"Giving creates bonding. It is important for Jews as well as for all people in the world to give to others, for no reason than to express love and unity with them..." Esther, from my book, *The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women*.

Melinda Ribner L.C.S. W. is also the author of *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. ✨



Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Hadassah-Israel helps Hadassah make miracles

A few blocks from the foot of the BenYehudah Mall, parallel to Jaffa Road is Hanevim Street. Perpendicular to Hanevim is a one-way, winding, narrow street called Ethiopia Street, named for the church built there in 1892 by the Ethiopian royal dynasty. The street has unique houses built in the 1880s.

One home, which is a combination of three, was built by an Arab contractor but has always been lived in by Jews. It is the home, for the past 24 years, of American businessman, Martin Gerstel, his wife, Shoshana (a former physical therapist at Hadassah hospital) and their teenage son, Gil. From the beautiful high ceilings, enhanced by sconces, past the arches, down to the tiled floors, one is overwhelmed by the beauty of the home and the Gerstel's art and decorative art collection.

(Gerstel was previously CEO of Alza Corp., a pharmaceutical and medical system company bought by Johnson & Johnson. Today, he is chairman of the Israeli company, Compugen, a drug discovery company; he also serves on the board of governors of the Weizmann Institute of Science and the Hebrew University; and the board of the Israel-US Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation.)

Recently the Gerstel home was the venue for Hadassah-Israel's largest fundraiser of the year, a Special Gifts Event, to benefit Hadassah-Israel's project, the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Hadassah Hospital, Ein Karem. The Pediatric Intensive Care Unit treats children from newborn through age 14 suffering from life-threatening issues.

Hadassah-Israel was established in 1983 with Hebrew and English-speaking chapters throughout the country and is its own organization which raises its own operating expenses, and has its own projects. It shares some of the goals as Hadassah US but is technically not part of it.

Anne Rothenberg who divides her time between Albany, New York and Jerusalem, was this year's Special Events Chair. Featured performer was Yonatan Razel, a New York-born *haredi* (ultra-religious)

singer, writer, composer, music arranger and conductor. He narrated the story of his daughter in between singing some of his special compositions.

He related how five years before, while watching fireworks for Israel Independence day, his then 4-1/2 year old daughter, fell off a roof and landed on her head. The Pediatric Intensive Care Unit became their home for many weeks of operations and rehabilitation before she was moved to a children's hospital. Now, as a 9-1/2 year old, she is back in her school and people who do not know her story do not notice anything different about her. To her family and those who know her story, she is a miracle.

The program also included remarks by the Hadassah-Israel National President, Rachel Oran; the CEO of Hadassah Medical Organization, Professor Tamar Peretz; the current Hadassah Medical Organization director, Dr. Yuval Weiss, and director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Dr. Jacques Braun.

A certificate of recognition was presented to Gabby Yatziv, widow of the former director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, in memory of her husband, Dr. Ido Yatziv (z"l) who channeled his energy to the unit for ten years but did not live to see the new facility.

Hadassah Physicians Inform Hadassah-Israel Members – Heart Disease, Breast Cancer Awareness, Plastic/Reconstructive Surgery

Once a year, members of Hadassah-Israel venture to Hadassah Hospital Ein Karem for "Mediscope," a day of learning from physicians.

After a greeting by Professor Tamar Peretz, general manager of HMO, Professor Philip Toltzis, director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Hadassah-Israel's 2014 quota project, explained their focus on cardiac surgery and children's cancer, as well as their position as a front runner in trauma for children. He particularly stressed the exemplary dedication of the nurses and doctors.

Cardiovascular Wellness Center

Dr. Osnat Keider, director of the Linda Joy Pollin Cardiovascular Wellness Center, introduced this innovative center to combat the number one killer of women worldwide – heart disease. The Center was created with a \$10 million dollar grant from Irene Pollin in memory of her daughter. Dr. Keider explained that heart disease affects women differently and impacts on women differently.

The six major risk factors are: high blood pressure, smoking, obesity, diabetes, sedentary lifestyle and bad cholesterol. What are the symptoms of heart attacks

On this date in Jewish history

On January 28, 1949

Great Britain recognizes the State of Israel.

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

for women? pain in the chest; pain in the jaw, arms, back, neck and upper abdomen which increases with exercise and decreases with rest; shortness of breath; cold sweat; nausea and vomiting; dizziness; unusual fatigue.

Besides eating fruit, vegetables, whole grain products, olive oil, and low-fat dairy products, 150 minutes of moderate exercise is recommended each week. This activity reduces the heart disease risk factors 30–50%.

Breast Cancer Center

Dr. Tamar Sela is director of the Marlene Greenebaum Diagnostic Breast Imaging Cancer Center, dedicated in April of 2011, and created with the \$1.4 million dollar donation from the Greenebaum family. Dr. Sela emphasized issues relating to breast cancer in Israel, where 90% of those diagnosed are cured. The key is "Early Detection Saves Lives." Mammography," the examination that can save your life," is the only screening exam proven to reduce mortality. Ultra sound is an adjunct to a mammogram but not to be done instead. "Breast cancer awareness is a personal responsibility," and it is up to women to know their breasts and be aware of changes.

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Dr. Michael Ickson, senior plastic surgeon in the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery emphasized the extensive training of their department's physicians and then elaborated on the wide variety of reconstructive and aesthetic surgeries which they perform including malformations, body parts, wound closures, burn treatments, skin cancer, micro surgery and limb salvage as well as face surgeries (such as skin, eyebrows, eyelids, lips, cheeks, nose top and chins); breasts (reduction, enhancement, reconstruction, etc.) and body surgeries.

To avoid skin damage, he advised avoiding sun exposure, smoking and use of chemicals and to wear sunscreen at least SPF 30, repeating its use after a few hours.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, lecturer and cookbook author. She also leads walks through Machaneh Yehudah, the Jewish produce market in English. ✪



Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Looking backward – Looking forward

As we look backward to our lives, our country, our world in 2014, what can we look forward to? It seems to me and many of the people that I talk to that we live in disorder, perhaps chaotic times. There is hardly a minute to catch your breath with a world at war against disease, threatened by radical groups that we did not see while they were becoming factors in our world.

Some years back we talked about the unsettling fact that things were changing too quickly to give us the chance to fix it. On a regular basis now, I am told by repairmen that the cost of fixing anything is too high. Just throw it away and get something better. I wonder on those occasions how we feel about becoming obsolete.

There was a time, not long ago, when I was very sensitive to any sign of ageism especially as it applied to me. But the truth is that the more mechanized our society becomes, the necessity is to be more facile. There is no question but that we have to adapt, but I am happy to be beyond feeling bad about it.

We have grandchildren who want to help, and who can and will teach you how to use "Apple 6." They are of a generation who, when fixing things, begin with "You Tube," and watch one of master chefs showing you how to do anything, for example making a Turducken for Thanksgiving, and you can run it again and again.

Trying to make sense out of politics here or in Israel, is even more complicated when we know that we don't have a complete set of facts, and that we will have to wait a few years to really understand the world we are living in. And so I can't swear to the truth of the list I am going to offer you, but it is what I believe today.

1) Close to home, a brute, a Detroit Lion lineman purposely and repeatedly stepped on the ankle of my star Green Bay quarterback, Aaron Rodgers. They have suspended him for one game, hopefully, maybe. We have a "sport" based on hurting your opponents, which can as we have seen move over to family life, of brutality to women, children and pets. Where did we go wrong?

2) An Indonesian Plane was lost yesterday with 162 passengers and crew lost. But the answer is and has been available to help at least in the finding their location and saving some of the

suffering – at \$20,000 per plane – and is tied up in bureaucratic wrangling. To the question asked, is it ever really safe to fly in this intemperate zone? No, but.

3) In the recent tragedy in Har Nof, and the senseless and brutal slaying of religious men at prayer, we talked to our two children about what they planned for the next day. The answer: Get up, get the kids ready for school, drive the carpools and go to work.

After all this happens in large parts of the world every day.

4) When we look at the recent epidemic of Ebola, there is recognition that although over 8,000 people died, it was well managed in the U.S. and the rest of world. Do we really want to live in a world where life is that cheap, and the decision is based on whether it happened to you.

5) It would seem that if you were going to relocate to a foreign country that works, economically and politically, you would have to consider Germany, and give credit to Angela Merkel.

6) It appears that the only reason Benyomin Netanyahu is still prime minister, is that no one else believes they could keep the government which they could win, together.

7) We have \$2.00 gasoline, and we are beginning to read articles that it is not good for the economy as a whole. As an economy of one, I am celebrating it. I paid \$2.09 a gallon this week, but in St. Louis, my daughter paid \$1.87.

8) It may be that cheap gas and a high flying stock market may change peoples' attitude about President Obama's presidency, especially if the Republicans and Democrats don't destroy the country.

9) My father taught me to respect policemen. If the last two national fatalities' fathers had taught them the same lesson, we might have two court cases, rather than two funerals. Is there racism in America? "Yes," but you don't have to become a poster boy. If you rob a store, they will call the police, and if you choose to walk down the middle of the street, in the same neighborhood, the police will come. We need to spend our energy on the right incidents, and there are many.

10) If you ask people about their number one macro-wish for the coming year, world hunger will come up the majority of the time. In every class I teach on Jewish Values, I find a way to allow that to happen. And in 99 percent of the classes, I find that only one percent of the respondents have given a single cent to the agencies who are trying. Isn't that fascinating?

11) We have a great deal to do in 2015 to re-right the world. We can't possibly do it by ourselves, but if we begin to "walk our talk," we have a chance of making a difference.

Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

Righteousness

The Scriptures are filled with anecdotes describing acts of one human being toward another to enhance their values and encourage humanities call for good. Having written that (which is a mouth-full), let's try to understand exactly what that means. There are so many ways to accomplish benevolence and consideration. Perhaps the greatest of these is what is written in the *Talmud*, "Out of consideration for human dignity, you are not obligated to carry out negative commandments in the *Torah*."

Hopefully, during our journey we will encounter individuals who personify the essence of dignified human behavior. I was thinking of this as I watched a movie entitled, *St. Vincent*. The two main characters in the movie attracted me to it, Melissa McCarthy and Bill Murray. I expected to laugh myself silly, but instead I left with a better understanding of the goodness of people and how they are overlooked at times because they do not create sensationalism – the key ingredient in selling newspapers or encouraging people to watch newscasters.

We find a grumpy old man, dissatisfied with life, unable to cope with everyday living and resentful of people in general. The storyline is interesting because, in my experience, it could be depicting one of us. How many times, I wonder, do we feel frustrated and disappointed with people to the extent that we want to "stop the world, and get off?" There are those of us who fall into despair and feel as though we are in a dark tunnel with no light to guide us out. There are those who can snap out of these depressive moods and rejoin the living. Such is the journey.

Then we come across someone who will light up our lives, bring meaning to our experiences and lead us into a new understanding that there is goodness in this world. We are so accustomed to hearing about the ugly side of life we forget that there are two sides to every encounter. Perhaps there are even more times we see kindness, but we ignore it because we are programmed to believe that there is no mercy or forgiveness.

Many times I am asked about the hereafter. (see Wiener, page 13)



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Gather the People



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

Birkat Hamazon to arouse our spirit

The *Birkat Hamazon* (blessing of the food), known in Yiddish as *benching* (from the Latin *benedicere* – “bless”), is the three- to five-minute prayer service we commonly refer to in English as the Grace after Meals.

It’s probably true that most Jews, possibly even most of those who would describe themselves as religious, would *not* describe the *Birkat Hamazon* as a “prayer service.” This wouldn’t be surprising, because it’s common during the *Birkat* prayers and blessings in some synagogues for individuals to engage in loud talk, to walk about visiting with other people in the room, or to help themselves to more food in the buffet line. But nonetheless, the *Birkat* is unmistakably a prayer service.

The fact that the Grace after Meals is recited separately from other synagogue services, or recited in the home, makes it no less of a prayer service. A prayer service may be conducted any time or almost anywhere (except in places where idolatry or sexual lewdness is practiced, where there are foul odors, or where excrement can be seen). In fact, the home is the preferred place for Jewish prayer outside of the synagogue. And, of course, many prayers and blessings are said at home, with none prescribed more frequently than those connected with eating, whenever that occurs.

Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin (1928–1982), in his classic guide, *To Pray As A Jew*, teaches that, “Among the many blessings that we recite in the fulfillment of our religious duties, the only ones that Scripture explicitly required us to say are those that we say *after* we eat....And though the specific wording of the Grace after Meals did not begin to take shape until the time of Ezra, the Scribe, and was not totally crystallized even by the *Talmudic* period, to say blessings of thanksgiving after eating was prescribed by the *Torah*: ‘When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you’ (Deut. 8:10).”

But what, precisely, does it mean here to bless God?

The *Sefer haHinnuch*, dating from the 13th century, notes: “...when we say continually, ‘Blessed are You, *Adonai*’... the meaning is evidently not to add blessing to One who has no need of any addition, perish the thought.” Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch teaches that to bless God means, instead, “to further God’s purposes and wishes for which the free-willed acts of human beings are responsible, or to vow, to promise to do so.”

So “blessing” God by reciting the *Birkat* is the way in which we proclaim our intention – “a reminder to arouse our spirit with the words of our mouth” (*Sefer haHinnuch*) – to actually *do* the will of God.

In effect, because we have used the sustenance from God to strengthen ourselves, to replenish the energy required by our bodies and minds, we are in God’s debt for the restoration of our strength; and, since we are indebted to God for our continued existence, a decent consideration in return demands that we dedicate ourselves to *practical action* that will fulfill and realize God’s will on earth. Therefore, the recitation of the *Birkat* without action that serves God in our daily life is nothing more than “lip service.” So we are to prime ourselves consciously for such action when we recite the *Birkat*.

The *Birkat Hamazon* incorporates four foundational blessings: The *Talmud* teaches us that Moses first made a blessing for food in thanks for the manna that the Israelites received in the desert; that Joshua added a blessing for the land after the Israelites had entered into *Eretz Yisrael*; that King David introduced the blessing for Jerusalem after he established it as the capital of the country, and that his son, Solomon, the builder of the First Temple, expanded upon the blessing by expressing his thanks to God for the “great and holy house.” Following the destruction of the Second Temple, when the survival of the Jewish people was in doubt, the Sages added a fourth blessing to emphasize the eternal quality of God’s goodness.

But what have these blessings from our history got to do with us – here and now?

First, we are ultimately as dependent on God for our sustenance today as were the Israelites in the desert who, according to the *Torah*, survived on the *manna* from heaven. When we wipe away the scales of self-importance from our eyes, we can see that our bread doesn’t come from the supermarket or the bakery or the farmer – the seeds of life are gifts from the Creator.

Second, that we were promised a land, *Eretz Yisrael*, one we could sanctify, and thereby become a light to the nations, has throughout the ages been a spur to our moral vision and action.

Third, we were blessed as a people with the inheritance of Jerusalem as our capital,

always holding out before us the ideal of *shalom* – not peace per se, but constant striving for unity with the Holy One – and we were blessed in the city with the Temple, a place of assembly for the people to strengthen themselves in their holy purposes and pursuits as a community.

And fourth, we have been blessed – witness our historic and historically improbable survival and success as a nation – by God’s compassion and mercy toward us.

Why would we *not* be grateful for these blessings, even today?

Over the centuries, thanksgiving prayers for many other blessings were integrated into the first three benedictions. These additional blessings encompass the *Torah*, the covenant of Abraham (*brit milah*, i.e., ritual circumcision), and David’s dynasty, from which the Messiah is to descend.

Would any of us trade the *Torah* for some other vision and path to a good life? With what would we replace the available power of *brit milah* to foster responsibility among families and communities for the moral careers of our sons? And what vision of the future would we prefer to Days of *Mashiach*?

At the end of the Grace, we make several petitions, each beginning with the word “*Harakhaman*” (“May the Merciful One...”). These are not a part of the obligatory *Birkat Hamazon* but were added over the centuries, and other petitions may be added now for special occasions.

Why should the obligation to thank God for these blessings be greater after we eat than before? Possibly because after eating we are more likely to forget our dependence on God’s goodness and, instead, to delude ourselves that we are entirely in control of our own fate. This self-delusion, not acknowledging the goodness God creates and sets to work in the world, leaves us vulnerable to experiences that shatter our morale – we fail to see and rely on the goodness implanted all around us by the Creator.

The Sages decreed, “since bread is the accepted basis of a meal, the full grace must be said only if bread is eaten,” but in an amount as small as an egg or even an olive, notwithstanding the Scriptural commandment to say *Birkat Hamazon* only when one is sated from eating. (*Berakhot* 45a)

Rabbi Avira taught that because of this self-imposed stringency, God showed favoritism to the Jewish people: “The ministering angels said to the Holy One, blessed be He: Master of the universe, it is written in Your *Torah* that ‘You show no favor or take bribes’ (Deuteronomy 10:17). Aren’t You showing favor to Israel, for it says, ‘God bestows favor upon you?’ (Numbers 6:26). Replied God: Why shouldn’t I show favor to Israel! Look, I

★ A FOCUS ON HEALING ★

Prayers for healing



BY ALDEN SOLOVY

Quick Prayer for Healing

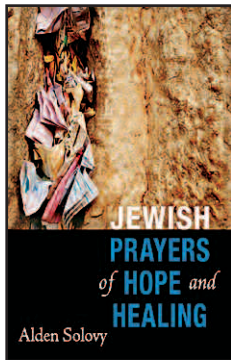
G-d of love,
Cast the light of health and well-being
On the injured, the infirm and the insecure,
All who yearn for Your healing hand.
Bless them with healing of body
Healing of soul
And healing of spirit.
Grant all in need a full
and complete recovery.
Blessed are You, *Adonai* our G-d,
Source of Life.

R'fuat HaNefesh

G-d of the spirit,
G-d of the soul, the breath and the wind,
Look with kindness and favor on
_____, (name)
My [father /mother / sister / brother / son /
daughter / friend / husband / wife / partner]
Whose heart aches,
Crushed and fallow,
Whose heart yearns,
Empty and broken.
G-d of the *nefesh*, *ruach* and *neshama*,
Guide his / her soul
Back to wonder and mystery,
Sacred moments and glorious days,
So that he /she knows the power of Your love
And the wisdom of Your word.
May his / her soul shine,
A light and blessing
For our people Israel.

"Quick Prayer for Healing" and "R'fuat HaNefesh" are ©Jewish Prayers of Hope and Healing, Alden Solovy and tobendlight.com. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

Alden Solovy spreads joy and excitement for prayer. A poet and liturgist, his work has been used by people of all faiths throughout the world, in private prayer and public ceremonies. He's written nearly 500 pieces of new liturgy, offering a fresh new Jewish voice, challenging the boundaries between poetry, meditation, personal growth and prayer. He's a teacher, a writing coach and an award-winning essayist and journalist. Solovy has



Two great tribes



BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

There are two great tribes in the world – the sick and the well. This is why I think spirit unites both.

A faint dark scar runs down my arm. It is a reminder of the day the chemo line split and the poison ran free.

Sitting in the chair at the center I was constantly struck by the radical break between our sense of ourselves as bodies and our sense of ourselves as spirits. The cancer was, after all, my own cells multiplying inside myself, as if seized by a wild urge to grow beyond my own bounds. So it would seem to be all about the body. And yet illness often spurs us to consider our souls, as if in the act of being sick the body becomes somehow less important. As my hair fell out and the weight slid off, I felt more like a spirit than sinew, essence overriding anatomy.

I prayed but for strength. I've never been one to believe in the magic potency of prayer, as though mouthing certain formulas spares you from tragedy and the poor guy in the hospital in bed six, who neglects to say anything, is swept away. Rather, prayer for me is what was beautifully described by the 17th-century rabbi Leona Medina: If you watch a man out on a boat grab a rope and pull his boat to shore, you might think that he was really pulling the shore to his boat. People have the same confusion about spiritual

been named 5th Liturgist-in-Residence at the National Havurah Committee's Summer Institute 2015 taking place August 3–9, at Franklin Pierce University in Rindge, New Hampshire. Go to: <http://havurah.org/institute>.

Originally from Chicago, Alden has led writing workshops for adults, teens and pastoral care counselors in the United States and in Israel. He would love to come to your synagogue. For more information, check out his website: www.tobendlight.com.

Also join the To Bend Light Facebook page and follow To Bend Light on Twitter to get announcements about new prayers and stories posted, as well as (almost) daily mini-prayers. Here's a link to find out more about his book, *Jewish Prayers of Hope and Healing*: <http://tobendlight.com/book-jewish-prayers-of-hope-and-healing>. (Watch for JPO's upcoming review of this book.) ★

weight and motion. In prayer, some believe that you are pulling God closer to you. But in fact, Modena taught that prayer pulls you closer to God.

However you conceive of God, in sickness God can be thought of as the source of that strength that helps you endure. There is more to the trial than pain and fear. Sickness brings with it boredom, the condescension and confusion of others and the indignities of a thousand pokes and prods. The sameness of each day is allied to its uncertainty. You need to be as strong for the mundane as you do for the moments of drama.

I have undergone two neurosurgeries (for a brain tumor and then to fix a problem with the original surgery, six years later) and chemotherapy for lymphoma. This is what I have learned: There are two great tribes in the world, the sick and the well. We cannot completely understand each other. Each has its frustrations and fears. But for moments, in meditation, in prayer, in tears, we can join across the divide and see that each is part of the inevitable human fate. We have all been well and will all be sick. A universal cord binds us all, and sickness' twitch upon that string ripples through the whole. One more thing I have learned: The wretchedness of the body need not lead to impoverishment of the spirit.

So in prayer, in fellowship, in friendship, in community and in self-realization, sickness carries its blessings. They are blessings we do not choose, blessings we would not choose. But there are human angels of healing and large-hearted people whose empathy and goodness renew one's faith in our ability to transcend division. There are resources in the soul – in your soul – that you cannot begin to imagine if you have not been seriously ill. But we are more than we imagine.

Whether we call it God, Spirit, Oneness, what you will, we can reach beyond ourselves to whatever exists. If we are blessed on our journey we will grow closer to others, to what is best in ourselves and to whatever mystery rolls through the universe, touching our lives in scary yet sacred moments.

Voted #1 rabbi in America by Newsweek (2012) and named one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world by The Jerusalem Post (2012), Rabbi David Wolpe is the senior rabbi of Temple Sinai in Los Angeles and author of several books including most recently *David: The Divided Heart*. From *Reimagine, The Magazine*: <https://reimagine.me/magazine/> March 26, 2014. More by him at www.facebook.com/RabbiWolpe. ★

Our health, our future



BY LISA E. HARRIS, M.D.

The following is an excerpt of a speech given from the pulpit of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis on Sept. 6, 2014 at the Bat Mitzvah of Ella Eskenazi.

I have always admired the Jewish tradition for its focus on social responsibility, for the deep sense of personal obligation and humanity's shared responsibility, encompassed in the Hebrew phrase *Tikkun olam*, to heal, repair and transform the world, leaving it a better place for our brief presence in it.

So, though I had certainly heard the rhetoric – “if not us, who, if not now, when,” – I wasn't surprised to learn from the Rabbis Dennis and Sandy Sasso that it originated with Hillel the Elder, one of the most important leaders in Jewish history, who put it like this:

“If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am for myself alone, what am I? And if not now, when?”

When Rabbi Dennis Sasso spoke these words as he and Sandy explained to me how the *Bat Mitzvah* signals the age of moral discernment and therefore moral responsibility – of higher obligation and accountability for one's actions – he sent chills up my spine.

These words resonate powerfully with me from many perspectives. The one I want to focus on this morning, though, is not only the notion of personal responsibility for one's own health, but our responsibility for the health and vitality of all those living within our community – and the good that can transpire from taking on that responsibility.

Because good health provides the foundation for everything else we aspire to individually and collectively.

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

The notion of personal responsibility for health and the powerful impact that personal decisions and behaviors have on health and wellbeing is at the core of our approach to care at Eskenazi Health. Because we know that if we wait until the point at which we're treating chronic disease, we have only a 10% opportunity to reduce the risk of premature death.

That's right. 10%.

The biggest opportunity, 50%, lies in personal lifestyle – good nutrition, and regular physical activity, but also connection to nature, social connection, and strong ties to family, friends and community.

Another 20% lies in the environment – clean air and water, certainly, but also safe workplaces, homes and roads, a built environment that enables good health behaviors, for example, easy access to healthful foods and sidewalks that are in good repair.

The remaining risk lies in the genetic blueprint we're born with. However, only about 2 percent of deaths in the US can be attributed to purely genetic disease and even for a problem like obesity, for which almost two-thirds of the risk may be genetic, the risk is almost entirely controllable by lifestyle choices.

So close to 90% of the responsibility for health is on us. The biggest opportunity for living a long, vibrant life lies in our daily habits.

And to give you a sense of the power that lies with the personal choices we make:

A while back we were part of a national study that randomly assigned half of a group of patients to 30 minutes of daily exercise and a low-fat diet and the other half to a drug used to treat diabetes, to see which approach was most effective in reducing the risk of diabetes. The study was stopped early because it would have been unethical to continue, given that the participants receiving the medication were not benefitting from the dramatically better outcome experienced by the group receiving the lifestyle intervention: exercise and diet reduced the risk of developing diabetes by 60%!

“The biggest opportunity for living a long, vibrant life lies in our daily habits...good nutrition, and regular physical activity, but also connection to nature, social connection, and strong ties to family, friends and community.”

There really isn't much we can do in terms of treating disease that has anything close to this powerful an effect.

This is why we see it as our responsibility not just to take care of you when you're sick or injured, but to do everything we can to help you stay well in the first place. And it's why we spend a lot of time working to help create and support the kind of environment here in Indianapolis that makes good health possible for everyone living in our community.

It's why we offer free personalized health coaching throughout our primary care practices and it's why, within a few months, we'll have the capacity to download the data from personal fitness tracking devices right into our patients' medical records, so that physicians can monitor not only the usual weight, blood pressure and heart rate, but also physical activity, one of the most important contributors to health.

But it isn't only about being active and

eating right, it's about connection to nature, a rich cultural and spiritual life and, perhaps most important, social connection – caring for each other.

To have the kind of effect we need, though, if we're going to have a community that supports the quality of life we all want, that connection, that caring, has to extend beyond the familiar network of family and friends, it has to reach across the breadth of our community.

“If I am for myself alone, what am I?”

We are also responsible for the well-being of our neighbors.

Over the past several decades, though, there's been a widening gulf between the “haves” and the “have not's.”

And that's a big problem, not only for those who are left behind, but for everyone living within our community, because we are all affected by the consequences of poverty; increasing crime, resources directed toward a growing burden of chronic disease and away from education and creating the kind of environment that enhances quality of life for all.

Rather than allowing the social separation that can come with widening income inequality, we need to stick together, engaged in dialogue, reaching across social and economic divides in the interest of greater mutual understanding and support. We can't very well repair the world if we're oblivious to where it's broken.

By way of example, let me tell you what played out at Eskenazi Health: Blackburn, one of our inner-city health centers, a couple of weeks ago.

It was 7:00 in the evening; everyone had left for the day, when the burglar alarm went off. One of our security guards responded, finding a young black male with a tablet computer under his arm at the back door.

As he approached the young man, an older brother ran out of a house across the street, accompanied by several of his friends.

There was a lot of posturing.

Our officer called for back-up, and soon there was quite an assembly. Tensions were high in that parking lot.

This could have gotten ugly, and if it had, you likely would already have heard the story. But that's not what happened. As it turned out, one of the individuals responding to the call for back-up was Kelley Hayworth, a member of our security staff, who was on his way home when he got the call. He recalls that the thought on his mind, as he turned his car around was: “this can't go bad.”

It didn't.

What ensued was an interaction between Kelley and the young man's older brother, in which Kelley worked first to defuse the tension and then orchestrated

a dialogue that acknowledged mutual concern for the safety and well-being of those living in the neighborhood, appreciation and respect for all those working in the interest of the neighborhood and the need to understand the importance of the roles each played. Eventually, everyone went home.

And what do you think the young man was doing with a tablet computer outside our health center?

His homework.

His home didn't have internet access, so he was tapping into our wi-fi. (We're working to amp up the signal so it reaches a little farther.)

Kelley and I talked about this after I'd heard the story several days later. One of his main reasons for wanting to make sure things went well is that he didn't want anyone in the neighborhood surrounding Blackburn to feel as though they couldn't turn to us in the future for care and understanding. I love how, as a security guard, he unassumingly embodies the most important values we hold as an organization.

This capacity for compassion and understanding is especially important to us because of one of the singular roles we play in our community. Yes, we care for faculty members and their families, business leaders and philanthropists. But, as a level 1 trauma center, we also care for victims of violent crime.

And, in the past, it was the case that if an individual survived being shot or stabbed the first time (as most do), there was a 32% chance that they would return within 2 years, again a victim.

We thought it was a problem that these individuals were on first-name basis with our trauma surgeons, so we started Project Prescription for Hope, hiring a couple of individuals, who had themselves at one time been caught up in the web of violence, but who had done the hard work of putting themselves on another path.

They began working with these victims in the context of their social milieu, their families, their gangs, to address the factors that got them headed down this self-and-community-destructive path and, within a couple of years, we had reduced the rate of violence recidivism from over 30% to less than 5%.

The program has many components, one of which is a group-based anger management program similar to the alcoholics anonymous sponsorship approach. When the first group of individuals had managed 9 months without an outburst of violence among them, we asked them what they wanted to do to celebrate. Within reason, pretty much anything was on the table.

What did they want to do? They wanted to go to King's Island.

They're not thugs. They're kids.

They don't need to be locked away. They need our understanding and our help "If not now, when."

Well, getting back to the notion of personal responsibility for health, Ella, for you and all of your friends, though it's never too late, now is the best time to establish those daily habits.

Eat your fruits and veggies, stay away from the junk (you know what that is!) – get moving! Find ways to get out into nature – spend time with your family and friends, get these habits set now and they will help you all through your life.

(That's not to say, though, that you all shouldn't enjoy the Candy Bar at the Children's Museum tonight – a party, after all, is a party!)

For that notion of our broader responsibility, there's a sense of urgency.

We're faced with an epidemic of obesity and related chronic illness that's consuming enormous resources, resources that could otherwise be spent on education, on investment in the public infrastructure that enhances life for all of us. Just this week, the IJB reported that Indiana is spending \$585 more per person annually on health care than is spent, on average, across the US.

Indianapolis was recently ranked #2, behind Seattle, among US cities in terms of cultural activities and attractions per capita, but everything we've achieved in recent years is at risk because of the alarming upsurge in violence that has its roots in poverty, lack of investment in early education, and the social support necessary throughout childhood and adolescence, without which the result is social drop-out.

At the same time, though, positive momentum builds within our city.

Think of the cultural trail, all the yellow bikes out there, the urban agriculture initiative. You have a great example, Ella, at the Legacy Center where the Patatruck is based. What a great opportunity the Patatruck project and the urban gardens that are springing up around Indianapolis offer for bringing us together in the interest of broader engagement and understanding across the breadth of our community.

Who knows where what you're doing to help the children there might lead?

The SkyFarm on top of our outpatient care center, where we're now harvesting over 100 pounds of produce a week, had its roots in a greenspace on our old campus where employees tended small plots of ground. Who would have imagined?

We developed our entire campus to contribute to the positive momentum growing within our community.

Because we believe that our campus,

with patients, staff, faculty and medical students coming from all corners of the globe and all walks of life, represents one of our community's most diverse intersections. So we developed the Commonground at the heart of our campus as a space where all are welcome and all are celebrated, a space that increase the likelihood of coming together across the broad social landscape.

And we are grateful to your family and so many others across our community for the generous gifts that allow us to carry on our long legacy of caring for everyone within our community, and now in an environment deliberately designed to lift the spirits both of our patients and those who care for them.

Central to this healing environment is a public art program, one of my favorite pieces of which is a sculpture comprised of intertwining ladders made of Indiana maple. The artist, Aaron Stephan, named it "Paths Crossed," for the ways our lives intersect on our various paths from health to the challenges of illness and back to health again.

The message that Aaron is conveying with his art is the same message that Kelley delivered in the parking lot behind Blackburn: the business of caring and support doesn't go just one way – we all bring resources to the mix – we all have something to give and to learn.

Ella, you come from a religious tradition that asks big questions, questions that are as important today as they were nearly 2,000 years ago.

"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am for myself alone, what am I? And if not now, when?"

And you are fortunate to come from a family that strives to live by example the answers to those questions.

Take good care of yourself. Figure out what you can do to take good care of your world and do it. It's waiting for you.

Dedicating her career to improving health care for vulnerable and underserved populations, Lisa E. Harris, M.D., has practiced medicine for 30 years at nationally recognized Eskenazi Health (formerly Wishard Health Services). Today, Dr. Harris serves as Eskenazi Health's chief executive officer (CEO). In addition, Dr. Harris is engaged in research and teaching as the John F. Williams, Jr., M.D. scholar; associate professor of medicine; and associate dean for the IU School of Medicine.

Annabella Morris Eskenazi (Ella) is the daughter of David and Julie Eskenazi, and the granddaughter of Sidney and Lois Eskenazi and Sally and Jerry Sussman. In June 2011 Sidney and Lois Eskenazi provided a \$40 million gift to the Eskenazi Health Foundation to build new hospital facilities in downtown Indianapolis. ✨

Vital Conversations

By DENNIS ROSEN, M.D.

Excerpt from Vital Conversations: Improving Communications Between Doctors and Patients



I was about three hours into call at the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in Kaplan Hospital, Rehovot, Israel, when my pager went off. Marina, the obstetrics resident covering the delivery room, was calling to let me know that there was a twenty-five-year-old woman who was six months pregnant with twins and now in active labor who would probably deliver within the next hour.

"You'd better call your attending at home and tell her to come in," she said. "I'm sorry, Dennis. You're not going to get much sleep tonight."

She was right.

Forty minutes later my attending and I received the twins, immediately inserting straw-sized endotracheal tubes into their windpipes right there in the delivery suite, and spraying surfactant into their immature lungs to help them breathe. We then placed them inside the pre-warmed incubators and rolled them back to the NICU for further care. After we had transferred the babies to the open-air incubators in the NICU, we worked on stabilizing them for the next ninety minutes or so, until I felt comfortable stepping away to provide an update to the family waiting outside.

Stepping through the accordion-like partition that served as the door between the NICU and the Newborn Unit, I saw about fifteen people. Half a dozen men were deep in conversation, their *tzitziyot* (ritually prescribed fringes) dangling down from under their white shirts and the black velvet *kippot* (yarmulkes) on their heads identifying them as orthodox Jews. On the other side sat a group of women engaged in animated conversation about their own birth experiences and about whether or not they'd be able to celebrate a *brit mila* for the boy in eight days.

"Heenay hadoktor higi'a! [The doctor has arrived!]," exclaimed one of the women, and then, all at once, three of them stood up and made their way toward me. The other women and the men followed, forming a half-circle around me. A midsize woman who looked to be in her mid-forties wearing a dark kerchief on her

head, a red cardigan, and long patterned skirt (the twins' grandmother, it turned out) took center position, and asked me how the babies were.

It felt really good, standing there and telling them about all that my attending and I had done for the infants. I described how we had received the babies, intubated and ventilated them, and stabilized their breathing. I explained how we had given them medicines to keep their blood pressures steady. I reviewed with satisfaction the head ultrasounds we'd done, which did not show evidence of bleeding. I informed them that the girl had a heart murmur and that while we'd get an ECHO cardiogram to confirm, it was likely the result of a blood vessel that might close on its own, and that if it didn't, we might need to give her medicine to do that or even consider surgery. I felt so smart and important standing there and was really enjoying showing off my command of medicine to these people whose newest family members my attending and I had just saved.

For at least ten seconds after I finished speaking, they all just stood there, staring at me silently with unreadable expressions on their faces. Even now, I'm not sure what I was expecting to hear from them. Fawning admiration? A grudging concession that science was more powerful than religion, that Fanaroff's neonatology textbook trumped the Talmud? Applause? Whatever it might have been, that wasn't what I got. I was completely taken aback by the grandmother's next question:

"Aval doktor, kama hem shoklim? [But doctor, how much do they weigh?]"

The more time I've spent with patients and their families, the more I understand what it says about much of the "dialogue of the deaf" that all too often passes for communication between physicians and patients. These people weren't stupid or disengaged from the modern world surrounding them. However, they were in no position to make sense out of the myriad data and facts I had just bombarded them with. The one measure of the newborns' well-being that they could relate to, the single most important piece of information they needed in order to contextualize the infants' condition within their personal and collective experiences and that they could share with others, was exactly that which I had neglected to provide them with: the infants' birth weight. If the babies weighed less than four pounds – and in fact, they weighed less than two pounds each – the *brit mila* would need to be postponed. All the rest could have been science fiction as far as they were concerned.

Dennis Rosen, M.D. is a pediatric pulmonologist practicing in Boston, and



Psalm 23

By REB ZALMAN SCHACHTER-SHALOMI, z"l

A David Song

Yah, my shepherd, you supply my needs; I don't ever feel deprived.

You feed me in the meadows; I am led to quench my thirst by a quiet stream.

You stir my soul and guide me gently through the thicket of right action; such is Your Fame.

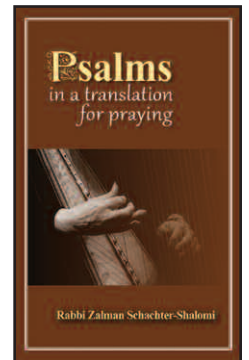
At times, I must make my way through dark and dangerous gullies, but because You are with me, I won't panic if I have to face evil.

Both Your rebuke and Your bracing support give me comfort.

In the presence of adversity, You set me a feast at which my anxious head is soothed and my thirst is amply slaked.

[Because You have invited me,] I affirm that only goodness and graciousness will manifest for the rest of my life, in which I will be always at home with You.

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author of *Vital Conversations: Improving Communication Between Doctors and Patients*. This excerpt is from pages 155–159. Copyright (c) 2014 Dennis Rosen. Used by arrangement with Columbia University Press. All rights reserved. ✨

wrote in the Torah, 'When you eat and are satisfied, you must bless God your Lord' (Deuteronomy 8:10) but they are so stringent that even when they eat as little as the size of an olive or an egg [they say Grace]." (*Berakhot* 20b)

The naturalistic lesson of the story is that constantly reminding ourselves to do the will of God – following the *Torah's* vision and path – is likely to bring down greater blessings upon ourselves.

Here are some basic guidelines:

When three or more males over the age of 13 eat together at the same table, traditionally they are obligated to recite the *Birkat* as a unit in which one leads and the others respond (*Berakhot* 49b).

The convening of all who are present to recite the *Birkat* is called *zimun* (invite). The leader of the service extends an invitation to bench with the words "*rabotai nevareikh*" ("gentlemen, let us bless"). But the salutation *khaverai* (i.e., friends) may be substituted for *rabotai*. Those present respond, "Let the name of *Adonai* be blessed from now and for ever more." The formula of *zimun* may also be used when three or more women are dining together (*Berakhot* 45b). *Rabotai* (gentlemen) would be replaced by *g'virotai* (ladies) or *khaverotai*.

The *Talmud* also teaches us that the honor of leading should be offered to a guest, to ensure that the guest may bless the host through the *harakhaman* to "...bless the host and hostess and all who are seated around the table..."

Withal, we are called to *act as a community*. The *Chofetz Chayim* (Rabbi Israel Meir Hakohen Kagan, 1838–1933) teaches that when many of us unite to serve God, each of us reaches higher than if acting alone. The effect of the *mitzvah* performed by many of us is much greater than one performed by a few. With many more of us investing in the *mitzvah's* power, we can mutually inspire one another to far more significant action.

We have much to gain by sharing our table, reciting the *Birkat* together and, when doing so, sharing our day-to-day hopes and pressures. It can be a first step to make the *Shekhina* more palpable in our day-to-day lives. The next step is to do something together about the threats to our families and our community that we uncover in that sharing.

Let's arouse our spirit for this service to the Creator by singing the *Birkat* "in a voice of a great noise, mighty and powerful!"

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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). ✨



Shabbat Shalom

BY RABBI JON ADLAND

January 23, 2015, Bo
 Exodus 10:1–13:16, 4 *Sh'vat* 5775

Pirke Avot 3:1 – Akavya ben Mahalalel said: Reflect upon three things and you will not come to sin. Know from where you came and where you are going and before whom you are destined to give account and reckoning. From where have you come? – from a putrid drop. Where are you going? – to the place of dust, worm, and maggot. Before whom are you destined to give account and reckoning? – before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

"Then Adonai said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh. For I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his courtiers, in order that I may display these My signs among them..." (Exodus 10:1)

I will be honest, one of the issues I have always had with the Exodus story is the concept that Pharaoh didn't harden his own heart, but that God did it to him. Many of us think that Moses goes to Pharaoh and says "Let my people go," but Pharaoh says "No" because he has a hardened heart against the Israelite people. This is not so if you read the story. God hardens Pharaoh's heart from the beginning. These plagues were going to rain down on the Egyptians regardless of Pharaoh. God wasn't going to let Pharaoh say "yes" even if he wanted to do so. God had a plan and part of that plan was to display God's might and power over the Egyptian ruler who believed himself a god.

See, this bothers me slightly. It isn't as we always think. Moses says that it is time to leave. Pharaoh says, no it isn't, and Pharaoh's heart is hardened. Sometimes he says yes then no with the same outcome. In this case, Pharaoh wasn't in control and no matter what he said or did God would harden Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh would say that this people can't go anywhere. There is no free will in this story. God is all-powerful and in control and we aren't, nor is Pharaoh.

For all those, like me, who believe in the concept of free will, no one really questions the lack of it in this story and I am okay with that, but at least it should be noted. The story of the Exodus of our people from slavery to freedom, the beautiful notion of God's redemption of the Jewish people, is one of omnipotence

and even omniscience. Though I personally struggle with an all-powerful God controlling everything, I somehow overlook it here. Maybe because our ancestors were weakened from the years of slavery. Maybe because the battle of will and wits going on here is one of such a magnitude of power that it is better to stay out of its way.

For me though, free will is something I need in my life and something I need to believe in. Though I don't always make the right decision, at least I know that I have the ability to be in control of my choices. Here is where God and I intersect in a profound and eternal way – I believe that the source of my choices, the truth in my choices starts with a good, compassionate, loving, merciful God. I embrace this God in my life and hopefully listen closely enough to that inner voice to make the best choice for me. When I realize or learn that my action or decision wasn't the best or right or correct, I hope that God will forgive me and that next time I will listen more closely. Free will is like a double-edged sword as it is something we all feel that we want, but it means that we are responsible for our actions.

We don't want to live under a dictatorship or in a fascist system where we have to do what we are told. We want to wake up each day and think about the possibilities or know that each day there are endless roads to travel. I know that not every person has this blessing, but it is a dream for all to aspire towards.

So let the God of the Exodus story battle with the god of the Egyptians. Let God harden Pharaoh's heart until our leaving our state of slavery for the freedom on the other side of the sea is a reality. As we know that once we crossed the sea God did step back a little and let us wander and act on our free will. It took 40 years because we took two steps forward and one step back a whole lot of times under the actions we determined, but we finally made it to the Promised Land. We learned what having free will meant and we learned and continue to learn that there are consequences – both positive and negative – for the choices we make. I am okay with that as long as I get to make the choices.

When you light your *Shabbat* candles this week, light one in thanks to God for giving us the ability to choose. Light the other candle and let it always remind us that there are consequences to our actions, but with the right choices these consequences can be a blessing.

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. ✨



Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Two new TV series address old wrongs done to Jews

Scorpion

Scorpion is a sweet charmer of a series about a group of misfit geniuses who are recruited by U.S. Homeland security. The characters are quirky in an engaging sort of way and likable even when ornery or whiny.

Scorpion is loosely biographical of super-I.Q. holder Walter O'Brien, who is played by Elyes Gabel. A touching aspect of the series is the relationship that develops between Walter and a waitress and her genius son. The boy connects with Walter and his friends who recognize and appreciate his talents. Walter invites the socially adept waitress, Paige (Katharine McPhee), to join the Scorpion team as a translator/interpreter, as it were, between them and the "normal" world.

In an episode entitled "True Colors," written by Rob Pearlstein, a painting by an artist named Franz Biermann is stolen from an art gallery. We learn that, in 1936, the painting had been directly purchased from the artist by a Jewish shoemaker in Warsaw. In 1942 the Nazis stole the painting from its owner and sent him to Auschwitz, where he was murdered. Three generations of the family have tried unsuccessfully to get the painting back.

Walter feels deep empathy for the family of the Holocaust survivors, and finds a way to return the painting to them. The Holocaust is not invoked gratuitously here. The episode educates its audience in all-to-frequent Nazi thefts, and does so organically, while developing the series' own characters and their relationships, and in keeping with its structure, themes, and plots. There are some asides here on color blindness and the value of art which provide fine humor and are even thought-provoking.

NCIS: New Orleans

Jewish efforts during the Civil Rights Movement are treated in an episode of *NCIS New Orleans*, "Chasing Ghosts," written by Jonathan I. Kidd and Sonya Winton.

It seems that Chief Petty Officer Jacob Tarlow was murdered 40 years ago while engaged in recruiting African Americans for the Navy. When his gun is discovered

in the stash of a burglar who fell to his death, the owner of the place from which the gun is stolen is suspected of being the good ole boy who lynched Tarlow and kept the gun as a souvenir of his vigilante Confederate Brigade organization's "victories." The evidence even points Agent Dwayne Pride (Scott Bakula) in the direction of the father of his formidable nemesis, Councilman Douglas Hamilton (Steven Weber). We are thus reminded of the cozy relationship between the police and hate groups in certain communities and eras.

African American Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Loretta Wade (C. C. H. Pounder) has made it her personal mission to solve this cold case, both out of gratitude to Jacob for his efforts in behalf of the black community and out of friendship and respect for his widow, Hannah and Jacob's daughter, Miriam.

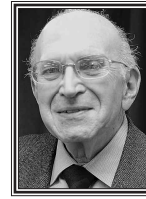
The long grieving family members appear to be devoted and cultured Jews, with fine and beautiful fixtures and art in their townhouse, some pieces with Judaic themes. One wishes that the writers carried such culture into their dialogue instead of using the verb "hung" instead of the proper form "hanged" when having their characters discuss the lynching.

Indeed, the writers disappoint in a far more alarming way. For most of the hour the story appeared to be shaping into a worthy history lesson about Jews and Blacks in the concluding years of the classic civil rights era. There are references here to attacks on both Black churches and civil rights advocating synagogues. The choice of the 70s rather than the 60s is clearly intended to teach viewers that lynchings continued into later years more than generally believed.

But in the end the writers decide to attribute the murder to indiscretions on the part of the Jewish widow, Hannah. ("I made a mistake that deprived me of so much") Perhaps they think that this makes her an authentically complex woman by 21st century standards, human and credible. But by old moral standards that still matter to many people, this is insulting to the theme of the episode and to Jewish women.

This was the Thanksgiving episode. The writers had Loretta observe that "love done right can change the world." That reinforces all the more the impression that Hannah, the Jewish widow, was guilty of love done wrong. The writers create a nice sense of community at the Thanksgiving dinner. But when *Kaddish* is recited as Jacob Tarlow's body is reinterred without a *minyan*, the suggestion is of an absence of community among Jews, even in an historic Jewish community like New Orleans.

The writers have Loretta observe, (see Gertel, page 15)



As I Heard It

BY MORTON GOLD

Gifted, talented musicians

The new release (October, 2014) by Cedille Records is titled *As Dreams Fall Apart*. After listening to the two CD's and reading the excellent program notes by Philip V. Bohlman, one cannot quarrel with this title. However, appended to this title is the phrase *The Golden Age of Jewish Stage and Film Music 1925-1955*. While a few songs by composers for the Jewish stage in New York during this time frame were included, they were taken from films and not shows.

No songs were included by the principal composers of music for the Jewish Theater in New York such as Joseph Rumshinsky, Sholom Secunda or Alexander Olshanetsky, for example. (By writing "Jewish Theater in New York City" one implies the United States by extension.) I suspect these composers were not included because for the most part their songs did not fit into the theme of this collection, which emphasized composers from Austria and Germany that were active during this time frame and whose music fit the theme of this collection.

The two songs by Abraham Ellstein were taken from films as was the sole song by Boris Thomashefsky. (Both composed a large body of songs for the stage.) On the other hand the composers whose works were selected for inclusion were from Austria and Germany and taken from films. A significant musical inclusion in this CD is two songs by Viktor Ullman, who perished during the Holocaust. His premature death at the hand of the Nazis deprived the world of other contributions by a major talent. These songs are a testament to his talent.

Some of the composers whose works are included in this collection include on Disc 1: A. Ellstein, A. Perlmutter, E. Kalman, E.W. Korngold, P. Abraham, (3 songs by) H. Leopoldi, L. Strauss, and V. Ullman. On Disc 2: (5 songs by) H. Leopoldi, S. Shmulowitz, B. Thomashefsky, (5 songs by) H. Eisler, A. Brudno, and (3 songs by) F. Hollander. As an aside I recall hearing



(see Gold, page 14)



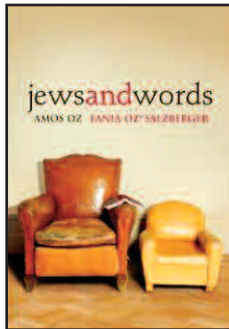
Book Review

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Intellectually reinvigorating essay

Jews and Words. By Amos Oz and Fania Oz-Salzberger. Yale University Press. 2012. Paperback 2014. Pp. 232.

Jews and Words is not an ordinary book. It is the enchanting outcome of a unique collaborative conversation between a remarkable couple of father and daughter. Amos Oz and Fania Oz-Salzberger, both



well known figures with the edge to the world renowned Israeli author Amos Oz, professor of literature at Be'er Sheva's Ben-Gurion University and a center-left political activist. His daughter Fania, who is an author in her own right, serves at Haifa University's Faculty of Law as a history professor. She also taught at Australia's Monash University, holding the Leon Liberman Chair in Modern Israel Studies and was as well at Princeton University sponsored by the Laurance S. Rockefeller Professorship for Distinguished Teaching.

The book is defined as an essay by its authors who ordinarily write in their native Hebrew. This gem of a brilliant essay explores the long and intimate bond of a genuine love affair between the Jewish people and language that has proudly defined them as "The People of the Book". It reflects their ownership of the Hebrew Scriptures along with their passion, to the level of sanctification, of the literary enterprise in general. The point is humbly made that "The point of our book is not that Jews were any better than others, but that Jews had a special way with words. Words became texts. The published became perennial." (p. 89).

Staunchly defending Jewish identity and describing themselves as "secular Jewish Israelis," who do not believe in God, the authors' overriding and underlying thesis is that looking at the historical Jewish experience through secular Jewish lenses is no less authentic, particularly in the current political and social climate in Israel where the religious Orthodox perspective hovers over the cultural

conversation with the liberal persuasion in retreat. Yet, the authors face the ultra-Orthodox world head on regarding it as a "museum civilization" which lost touch with a changed world while it is solely committed to perpetuating a lost past.

The Oz pair calls to replace it with a "living civilization," one willing to confront and challenge. "A living civilization is a perpetual drama of struggle between interpretations, outside influences and emphases, an unrelenting struggle over what is wheat and what is chaff. Rebellion for the sake of innovation. Dismantling for the purpose of reassembling differently. And even putting things in storage to clear the stage for experiment and for new creativity." (pp. 201–202). However, has not ultra-Orthodoxy proven quite resilient?

The authors find the Jewish encounter with Western humanism to be a fateful one, unlike its other experienced encounters in history, for Western humanism contains "Jewish genes" (p. 203) and consequently has an understandable and undeniable appeal to Jews with all that implies, positively and negatively. A significant by-product of the book's inquiry is the Ozs' assertion that the claim by the Palestinians and others that the concept of a Jewish state is a late development, has no legs to stand on given the Biblical heritage of words affirming an already early Jewish sovereignty. At the same time, the Ozs' unequivocally call for recognizing Palestinian pain of loss, disavowing the rigid ideology of a Greater Land of Israel.

Throughout this intellectually reinvigorating essay from an unabashedly proud liberal perspective, we find incisive and insightful use of words – living up to the book's title—such as, "Ours is not a bloodline but a text line," "At its best, Jewish reverence has an irreverent edge," "In Jewish tradition every reader is a proof-reader, every student a critic, and every writer, including the Author of the universe, begs a great many questions," "Jewish continuity was always paved with words" (page X of the preface), "Genesis, Isaiah and Proverbs are our pyramids, our Chinese Wall, and Gothic Cathedrals. They stand undemolished in the flow of time." (p. 113).

The book is also enhanced by the authors' mixing of profound reflection with biting humor, such as with their defining of the perennial issue of who is a Jew. "Here is our personal definition: any human being crazy enough to call himself a Jew is a Jew. Is he or she a good or a bad Jew? This is up to the next Jew to say." (p. 203).

This original volume is divided into four challenging chapters: "Continuity," "Vocal Women," "Time and Timelessness" and

(see Zoberman, page 15)

WIENER

(continued from page 9)

In our faith the hereafter is an afterthought. We are taught that our concentration needs to be devoted to here and now. Again, the *Talmud* helps us understand this with the pronouncement that we are to live by the commandments, not die by them. This is simple and yet profound. To live for death is contrary to the intent of the Creator. We were not created to die, but rather to live. Death is part of living, not the end of living. We are also taught that love is the one essential ingredient in this journey of "life." In fact, it is the fundamental aspect of Jewish understanding.

What about the hereafter? We also learn from Scripture that our deeds are the only passport to eternity – eternal life – rebirth. Life is evolutionary as is our world. The world was not created to disappear, but rather change with time and adjust to a new period in its existence. We too follow that same pattern. While we may disagree with Darwin, there are some concepts that can find solidarity with faith in God. The evolution of man in that we are constantly taking on new looks, new abilities, new designs to continue energizing life and making it more enjoyable.

The people who make a difference in our lives epitomize another concept in the *Talmud*, "Deeds of kindness are equal in weight to all the commandments." How can we exist without connection to each other? If we lived in a vacuum, our lives would be meaningless. Talking to ourselves, doing for ourselves, leads us nowhere. It is a circle with no beginning and no end. It is the dog chasing his tail. No rhyme or reason, just an exercise to reduce the boredom.

We are all products of our environment. Some of us are trapped by them and some are able to break loose and change what is deemed unfit. That is progress and it is also evolution. In *Midrash Rabbah* we are taught that God does not care for what our ancestors did, but what we do at this time. While Scripture may talk about the sins of the past generations carrying forward to the next, it is not a signal that all is hopeless, rather it is an indication that if we do not change our ways, in some respects, we are destined to repeat the bad and thereby condemn ourselves to a life of pain and misery.

Let us not ignore the goodness that is found deep down in our very soul. Let us not dismiss the values we are capable of. Let us not discard those who epitomize these virtues. Let us, instead, honor them.

Rabbi Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at ravyitz@cox.net. His new book *Living with Faith* can be obtained on Amazon.com. ★



Book Review

REVIEWED BY RIVKA SARAH HOROWITZ

Light, sweet and humorous

Tzimmes: (and don't forget the cheesecake and the strudel). By Arthur Marshall Fell. 2014. 84 pages. \$4.99. E-book kindle or nook only at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.

Like the dish, whether a side or a dessert, Arthur Fell's book is a sweet confection. *Tzimmes* is a treat – and with the right combination of ingredients becomes ambrosia. The book is lighter than the dish can sometimes be, not cloying, but unrealistically sweet in some respects. The title seems to represent the idea of a *tzimmes* (stew) metaphorically as well, since another use of the term means to get into a mess or to have a problem.

The book is meant to be a comedy with a central focus on the workings of synagogue boards of directors, how decisions are reached, and what can happen when a stalemate is reached.

The protagonist, Sam is a very likable character, who seems to get along with most people. The novel is short so not a lot of time is taken to develop the characters or really get to know many of them, but what little we learn about them is familiar. We seem to find people like them in many communities, and the dilemma they face happens in congregations the world over. Is there ever a way to keep everyone happy?

After finally getting off his synagogue's board of directors, Sam is thrilled and ready for a trouble free existence. He's put in his time, but then is brought back to solve a problem. When the congregation loses their rabbi, it is up to the board to hire a new one. Not wanting to offend anyone or lose business for his photography shop, one of the committee members refuses to choose between the two main candidates, causing the board to reach a standstill.

Their former rabbi was very traditional, but the congregation was not affiliated with any denomination. This is rare nowadays, and possibly also at that time, whenever

EDITORIAL

(continued from page 2)

their creative works of art.

After listening to the presentation and seeing the artwork, I could see their paintings were like art therapy. Later she affirmed what I thought when she said that doing the artwork is cathartic for the children. It gives them an opportunity to talk about upsetting experiences while they are working. Here is one example of the stories she told.

Georgie, a four-year-old Armenian boy from Jerusalem was brought to Kushner to see if she could help him. He was catatonic. He had stopped speaking after he witnessed a grenade explode near him and saw some children he knew blown up. He was practically motionless and he was



that time was. No exact references to dates were included, nor were any world history or current events to help the reader decipher when the story takes place, with the exception that it is after women started to be ordained as rabbis and when a woman rabbi was not commonplace.

Something of a comedy of errors takes place, and also distrust on the part of some of the board members because the protagonist gets in the middle as a "neutral facilitator." Though he doesn't want to get involved, Sam agrees and does a good job of getting everyone to reach an agreement in a very ingenious way.

I enjoyed the book and would recommend it to those looking for a light, happy read that will take them back on a trip down memory lane, or for younger folks, to help them understand their parents or grandparents, and what the world was like for Jews at that time. The book provides information and some nice teachings about Judaism and life in general.

The book uses a lot of Hebrew and Yiddish terms, most of which can be found in the glossary at the back, but are generally explained in the text or are clear from the context. This sweet, humorous novel will delight Jewish readers, particularly middle-aged and older Midwesterners from traditional or Conservative type backgrounds, and those who know people from that era, or who want to learn more about it. *Tzimmes* is a light, quick read, and will leave readers smiling.

Rivka Sarah (Riki) Horowitz is a holistic healer, writer and educator. Her workshops focus on Kabbalah, Jewish Meditation and healing. For more information see her website at www.rivkasarah.com. Her first book, The Messiah Chronicles, Book 1, Have You Seen The Signs, is available at www.themessiahchronicles.com, or through online booksellers. ☆

simply looking down with his mouth open. His mother told Kushner that before the bombing, he had enjoyed painting. The other children in the room with him were his age and they were all busy painting.

On the first day Kushner put some beautiful colors of paints in front of him with a blank piece of paper. After an hour he gradually started putting his fingers in the paint and then putting them onto the page. He painted a grenade that filled the page and all around it were body parts. Through the artwork he was able to express himself and the next day he painted again, but this time the grenade was much smaller and flowers were around it. After that Kushner said he was running around making as much noise as the other children.

This story demonstrates how powerful art therapy can be in healing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other conditions. I applaud art therapist Julie King and others who do this kind of work.

Jennie Cohen, January 28, 2015 ☆



GOLD

(continued from page 12)

"A Letter from Mother" by Shmulowitz sung by various artists including my father Leon Gold into the mid 1940s.

Accompanying the CD's in the fact filled and well written booklet is the "Historical Counterpoints of Traum and Trauma" of the time frame of the music selected. Other releases by Cedille Records (pronounced Say-dee!) and previously reviewed by me in this publication include: *Dancing on the Edge of a Volcano* and *Jewish Cabaret in Exile*.

The performers on these discs known as the New Budapest Orpheum Society include: Julia Bentley, mezzo soprano; Philip V. Bohlman, artistic director/narrator; Stewart Figa, baritone; Danny Howard, percussion; Iordanka Kissiova, violin; Ilya Levinson, music director/arranger/piano; Mark Sonksen (string) bass and Don Stile, piano and accordion.

These performers are a gifted group of talented musicians. They sang and played well individually as well as collectively. The arrangements were effective and contributed to the high level of worth to the music performed. To order the CD's on line: www.cedillerecords.org. They may also be reached at: Cedille Records, 1205 W. Balmoral Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640 or by phone at: 773-989-2515.

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. ☆



My Kosher Kitchen

BY SYBIL KAPLAN
PHOTOS BY BARRY A. KAPLAN

Oranges for Chamisha Asar B'Shvat

Tu B'shvat comes Feb. 3-4 and the fruits that are now in season in Israel are apples, persimmons, some strawberries (although beautiful, they are expensive) and several varieties of oranges. One usually thinks of dates, figs, and carob for *Tu B'shvat*, the fruits of *Eretz Yisrael* but, for variety, here are some recipes using oranges.

Nectarine Spice Cake*

6 seeded, peeled cut-up nectarines
1/3 cup canola oil
3 eggs
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 tsp. ginger
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. vanilla
1-3/4 cups flour
1-1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 cup non-dairy creamer



Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a cake pan, two loaf pans or place mini papers in a mini-muffin pan and spray with vegetable spray. Place nectarine pieces, oil, eggs and brown sugar in a mixer or food processor and blend a few seconds. Add ginger, cinnamon, vanilla, flour, baking powder and non-dairy creamer and blend. Spoon into baking pans. Bake in preheated oven 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

*For larger quantity, double recipe

Orange Drop Cookies

(about 3 dozen)

1 cup sugar
2/3 cup unsalted *pareve* margarine
2 eggs

Kidney still needed for Drew

Drew, age 11, a Jewish child in Indianapolis, has been suffering from a very rare disease Alport's Syndrome, which causes hearing loss and kidney failure, along with eye problems, since age six. She attended the Hasten Hebrew Academy until she was too weak to complete full school days. Her condition worsened earlier this summer requiring her to start daily dialysis.

A transplant team is actively searching for a live kidney donor. If you have type "O" blood and would like to be considered, please ask for Kelly at (317) 944-4370. See www.facebook.com/kidneydrew and ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-1081282. ★



1/2 cup orange juice
1 Tbsp. grated orange peel
2-1/4 cps flour
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 cup chopped nuts

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease cookie sheets. Cream sugar and margarine with eggs. Stir in orange juice and orange peel. Add flour, baking soda and nuts and mix well. Drop by teaspoon onto cookie sheets. Bake in preheated oven 10 minutes or until golden brown.

Syrian Orange Chicken

(4 servings)

1 Tbsp. margarine
1 Tbsp. oil
1 cut-up chicken
1/2 cup orange juice
1 cup chicken soup
1-1/2 tsp. corn starch
1/2 chopped onion
juice of 1/2 lemon
6-9 halved, pitted dates
orange slices

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a baking dish. Heat margarine and oil in a frying pan and brown chicken. Place in a baking dish. Add orange juice, chicken soup, corn starch, onion and lemon juice to frying pan and cook, stirring, until sauce thickens. Pour over chicken. Cover and bake in preheated oven 45 minutes. Garnish with dates and orange slices, cover, and bake at least 15 minutes or until chicken is done. Good served with rice.

Orange Juice Salad Dressing

3/4 cup oil
6 Tbsp. orange juice
1/2 tsp. sugar
pinch dry mustard

GERTEL

(continued from page 12)

"Sometimes hate has nothing to do with color." And sometimes plot twists have nothing to do with the themes on which TV writers purport to educate.

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

ZOBERMAN

(continued from page 13)

"Each Person Has a Name; or, Do Jews Need Judaism?" It is the brainchild of Felix Posen, providing for a unique contribution to the distinguished ten volume in-the-making Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization. The Posen Library's challenging and most welcome mandate is to embrace Jewish history in its wider context with all its intriguing complexities and connecting crossroads, which the Ozs so ably probe and explore with lingering delight.

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

MCLEAN

(continued from page 16)

Yeshiva hosted by the rabbis and students. They will lead a *Tu B'shvat Seder* ritual celebrating the new year of the trees. Then after a *kosher* hummus lunch we will ascend Mt. Tabor for its stunning views and visit the Franciscan monastery and Church of Transfiguration, meeting with the monks there. Later we will have a fascinating visit with the Circassian Muslim community in their village of Kfar Kama on the slopes of Mt. Tabor, finishing the day with a relaxing visit to either the hot springs or boardwalk in Tiberius on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

This event is part of the World Interfaith Harmony Week that takes place, Feb. 1-7: <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/>

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

Combine oil, orange juice, sugar and mustard in a jar. Shake well. Good on salad with lettuce, avocado, and grapefruit.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food and feature writer, and author of nine kosher cookbooks. ★

70th Anniversary Events for the Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau

The Jewish Post & Opinion

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

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KROKÓW, POLAND, JAN. 26 – The World Jewish Congress and the USC Shoah Foundation held a special reception today at the Holiday Inn Kraków for 100 Auschwitz survivors who arrived in Poland from at least 19 countries to participate in tomorrow’s observance of the 70th anniversary of the camp’s liberation, for International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Joining the survivors at the event



Surrounded by 100 Auschwitz survivors, (in the very center of fourth row from left to right) Ronald S. Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress; David Zaslav, president and CEO of Discovery Communications, and film director Steven Spielberg, founding chair of the USC Shoah Foundation. Photo credit: Shahar Azran.

were Ronald S. Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress; film director Steven Spielberg, founding chair of the USC Shoah Foundation; and David Zaslav, president and CEO of Discovery Communications.

“Their testimonies give each survivor everlasting life and give all of us everlasting value,” said Spielberg at tonight’s

reception. “We need to be preserving places like Auschwitz so people can see for themselves how evil ideologies can become tangible acts of murder. My hope for tomorrow’s commemoration is that the survivors will feel confident that we are renewing their call to remember. We will make sure the lessons of the past remain with us in the present so that we can now

and forever find humanitarian ways to fight the inhumanity.”

“I believe that you don’t just represent survivors,” Lauder told the 100 Auschwitz survivors at the reception. “All of you here tonight represent one the greatest forces of light over darkness. And for that we are not just grateful, we are in awe of you. You inspire us all.” ✨



Jerusalem Peacemaker

BY ELIYAHU MCLEAN

Tu B’shvat Seder in Galilee

Please plan to join us on Feb. 4, in person or with your prayers, for a special interfaith journey to the Galilee. Two buses of Israelis and Palestinians from East Jerusalem and the West Bank will, God willing, start the day at Ma’ale Gilboa (see McLean, page 15)



Abrahamic Reunion will host interfaith trip for peace and understanding to the Galilee.