

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

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

Volume 82, Number 5 • August 31, 2016 • 27 Av 5776

[www.jewishpostopinion.com](http://www.jewishpostopinion.com) • [www.ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/JPO](http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/JPO)

*L'shanah Tovah  
U'mitukah*



(see About the Cover, p. 2).

# Seen on the Israel Scene



BY SYBIL KAPLAN  
PHOTO BY BARRY A. KAPLAN

## Yellow dates for Rosh Hashanah

The *Torah* describes Israel as *eretz zvat chalah u' dvash*, the land flowing with milk and honey, although the honey was more than likely date honey, a custom retained by many Sephardic Jews to this day.

The word honey or *dvash* in Hebrew has the same numerical value as the words *Av Harachamim*, Father of Mercy. We hope that G-d will be merciful on *Rosh Hashanah* as He judges us for our year's deeds.

Since beekeeping is not mentioned in the Bible, some say when the Bible refers to a land of milk and honey, it is date honey. In fact, *silan* is called Biblical date honey. Middle Eastern Jews boil and press these dates which are on strings and range in color from yellow to brown, to make a date honey to use with apples for this occasion. In Israel, in the open market, one finds the strings of dates at this season.

In an article entitled "Cooking Class, It's a date, honey" by cookbook author, Faye Levy (September 17, 2011), she writes:

"For many Jews, apples are the *Rosh Hashana* fruit par excellence. For me, fresh dates are the fruit that herald the coming of the New Year. As soon as I see the bright yellow dates at the market, I begin to plan my menus.

"I've heard people say they're not fond of fresh yellow dates. I have learned to enjoy them at their [initial] *khalal* stage, when they are crunchy and less sweet, but I prefer to wait until they become honey-brown, [the] stage called *rutab*....

"The way to get *rutab* dates is to buy yellow dates and wait. With luck, they will turn to this golden-brown delight, but it seems to depend on the weather and, of course, on whether the dates were picked ripe enough....

"Several varieties of dates are grown in Israel. Most people prefer the large, soft, sweet Medjool, which are delicious and easier to find than perfectly ripened yellow dates.

"Dates have a traditional association with *Rosh Hashana*. They are one of the special foods that are blessed as part of the *Rosh Hashana* mini-Seder, which is customary in many Sephardi households and dates back to the Babylonian Talmud....

"An elaborate Maghrebi [North African made up of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya] specialty calls for nut-stuffed dates

that are used to stuff a chicken or a large fish. For *Shabbat*, cooks might add dates to *dafina* [a Sephardic meat stew cooked overnight to eat on Saurday lunch], or Moroccan *hamin* [slow cooked overnight stew for Saturday eating], to contribute a subtle sweetness that mellows the flavor of the sauce. A dish from Baghdad from the Middle Ages calls for stewing lamb with dates and sweet spices....



Yellow dates.

"Brought to Israel by Iraqi Jews, date honey is known in Israel as *silan* and in Middle Eastern markets in the US as date molasses or date syrup. Varda Shilo, author of *Kurdistani Cooking* (in Hebrew), describes how to make it from dried dates, which are simmered in water to porridge consistency. The mixture is spooned into a cloth bag, moistened with more water and squeezed to remove the juice. This juice is simmered over low heat until thickened and is kept in jars.

"Breakfast is the meal at which date honey is often enjoyed in the Mideast. People mix some *silan* with pure *tehina* paste and serve this dip with bread....

"The makers of *silan* at Kinneret Farm recommend using date honey in non-traditional ways as well – with sauteed vegetables, as a sweetener for beverages and in new creations such as sweet-potato pancakes flavored with cinnamon.

"Dates are best known for their uses in sweets. They are a favorite filling for the rich Middle Eastern cookies called *ma'amoul* and for rolled cookies resembling *rugelach* that are popular around the region....

"In Persia, wrote Reyna Simnegar, author of *Persian Food from the Non-Persian Bride*, walnut-stuffed dates are a *Rosh Hashana* treat. The stuffed dates are drizzled with a little syrup and sprinkled with cinnamon.

"Another popular way to serve dates is as a snack with tea.

"Cooks in Egypt use the firm, fresh yellow dates to make jam, wrote *Levana Zamir* in *Cooking from the Nile's Land* (in Hebrew). They also use them to make stuffed dates. First they remove the dates' very thin peel with a sharp knife and cook the dates in water until they are soft. Next, they pit the dates without cutting them in half. Instead, they push the pit out with a

## About the Cover

Arrangement and photo by Jennie Cohen.  
Design by Charlie Bunes.

To show that some New Year greetings and are as good today as they were more than 75 years ago, below is the message from the staff for our Sept. 23, 1938 edition.

### New Year Wishes from the Staff

In real gratefulness for the co-operation and staunch support of its readers, this paper and the entire staff take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and healthy New Year. May your fears vanish in a new dawn of human understanding by all peoples. May the threatening waters of the tidal wave recede before the calm winds of a new era of friendliness and co-operation and peace. May your tried souls be blessed with a new sense of security and a new hope of and faith in civilization. ✨



hairpin so that each date can be stuffed with a blanched peeled almond. Then they make a clove-and-lemon-flavored syrup from the dates' cooking liquid. One by one, the stuffed dates are carefully added to the syrup, simmered and then cooled. The sweets are served with Turkish coffee and a glass of cold water. Making them is quite an undertaking but, noted Zamir, these stuffed fresh dates are a delicacy fit for kings."

Some Moroccans dip apples in honey and serve cooked quince, which is an apple-like fruit, symbolizing a sweet future. Other Moroccans dip dates in sesame and anise seeds and powdered sugar in addition to dipping apples in honey.



"Pomegranate" oil painting by Nicole Duet.

In her book, *The Foods of Israel Today*, Joan Nathan writes about having lunch at Jerusalem's restaurant, Eucalyptus, when the owner/chef, Moshe Basson, "put a bowl of *tahina* (sesame seed paste) on the  
(see Kaplan/Israel, page 4)

# Editorial

I was at services at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck on Saturday, July 9, 2016, the first Sabbath with new Assistant Rabbi Shelley Goldman. She grew up in Oak Park, Ill., and was ordained at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College on June 5, 2016. The shooting attack on police officers in Dallas had taken place just two days before and a month prior to that was the Orlando nightclub shooting, the deadliest mass shooting in recent U.S. history.

I very much appreciated Rabbi Goldman's sermon that day. She said she was feeling sad, but also glad. She acknowledged her sadness about these shootings, but at the same time she had just graduated from rabbinical school and was finally realizing her life-long dream to become a rabbi. She was very happy about this.

In this edition, on page 20, is the story about Walter Sommers of Terre Haute, Ind., being honored by the German government. Born at the end of 1920 in Frankfort, Germany, his family businesses were destroyed on Nov. 9, 1938 during "Kristallnacht" or "Night of Broken Glass". That name comes from the shards of broken glass that littered the streets after Jewish-owned stores, buildings, and synagogues had their windows smashed. His family left for the United States in January 1939.

This reminds me of an editorial by my father, Gabriel Cohen, z"l, in our Sept. 23, 1938 edition. He was 30 years old at the time and was getting married to my mother the day before the edition came out so he had to write his editorial in advance. It starts out with: "When you read this, I shall already have been married. I wish you a Happy New Year, too."

Then in June 1939 my parents had a baby boy, the first of eight children. They didn't know then they were going to have seven more or that my father would continue to publish this Jewish newspaper weekly for 67 more years, and my mother would write a "The Woman's Viewpoint" column for 27 of those years while raising children. My mother was also very active in Hadassah and the Sisterhood of Beth-El Zedeck where they attended Saturday services every week with their growing family. By the time my father passed away in 2007, he had 25 grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren.

Nor did they know the magnitude of what was going to take place in Germany, although in my father's editorial – six weeks before Kristallnacht – he predicted there would be a wave of anti-Semitism. Below is what he wrote as his remedy for that situation on the same page 8 of the

following link: <http://indiamond6.ulib.iupui.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/JPO/id/1632/rec/24>.

"People Of The Book, Return To The Book! This paper is sure that you readers, in a message on New Year, want reassurance. Reassurance that events in Europe will revert to a better day for Jews, reassurance that the wave of awareness by non-Jews of a peculiarity in the position of Jews will disappear in a more prospering economic milieu.

This paper cannot honestly give sugar-coated pills. Advice yes, but opiate no. To Jews this paper advises for the next year a search for a more fundamental knowledge of things Jewish. A familiarity with the work and sayings of the prophets; a knowledge of the evolution of Judaism into its present high ethical status; background of Jewish history."

Although this was way before the internet bringing instant news from around the world and before the worst of the news yet to come out of Europe, my father was obviously aware of something brewing in Europe, but my parents were busy building their new lives together. My father's immediate concern had to be making a living for his growing family, and with no relatives living in Indianapolis to help my mother with her first newborn, she had her hands full. Even though tragic events were taking place in the world at this time, with their honeymoon so recent, it must have been a happy time for them.

The point I am trying to make is that, yes, this may be a turbulent time in our history, but other times have been worse. (For example, see Walter Sommers article on page 20.)

Of course, one must do as much as one can to work toward improving the injustices that are taking place, but at the same time, one can live a productive and prolific life with many happy, joyful times as well as the sorrowful ones. Good and bad circumstances are taking place simultaneously, and a lot of good is currently taking place now even though it might not be publicized in the media. This may be easier to recognize after the fact because not knowing what the future will bring can be scary.

Secondly, even at the time when big challenges are taking place, it does not mean they will last forever. Walter Sommers was in his teens when he faced

(see Editorial, page 7)

**Experienced Rabbi available via Skype**  
to help prepare students for their  
*Bar Mitzvah*, or for adults to study *Torah*,  
*Talmud*, *Trope* or *Jewish Mysticism*.  
To find out more, please contact him at:  
jliindiana@gmail.com or 317-698-6423.

# Inside this Issue

<b>Sybil Kaplan:</b> ( <i>Seen on the Israel Scene</i> )	
Yellow dates for Rosh Hashanah .....	2
About the Cover .....	2
Editorial .....	3
<b>Rabbi Irwin Wiener:</b> ( <i>Wiener's Wisdom</i> )	
Relevance .....	5
<b>Rabbi Jon Adland:</b> ( <i>Shabbat Shalom</i> )	
<i>Ekev</i> , Deuteronomy 7:12–11:25 .....	5
<b>Rabbi Sandy Sasso:</b>	
Compassion pushes back hatred .....	6
<b>Rabbi Benzion Cohen:</b> ( <i>Chassidic Rabbi</i> )	
Prophecy .....	6
<b>Amy Lederman:</b> ( <i>Jewish Educator</i> )	
Finding a path to forgiveness .....	7
<b>Rabbi Moshe ben Asher &amp; Magidah</b>	
<b>Khulda bat Sarah</b> ( <i>Gather the People</i> )	
The second day of Rosh Hashanah ....	8
<b>Melinda Ribner:</b> ( <i>Kabbalah of the Month</i> )	
Story for <i>Elul</i> .....	9
<b>Herbert Horowitz:</b>	
Rabbinic prime time .....	10
<b>Ted Roberts:</b> ( <i>Spoonful of Humor</i> ) The	
goat: <i>Yom Kippur's prima donna</i> .....	10
<b>Bernie De Koven</b> ( <i>A Playful Path</i> )	
Let us count the ways .....	11
<b>Rabbi Brian Besser</b> ( <i>High Holidays</i> )	
Don't be so afraid to admit	
when you're wrong .....	12
<b>Bruce David</b>	
<i>Kavanah</i> before shofar blowing .....	12
<b>Rabbi Stanley Halpern</b> ( <i>Yom Kippur</i> )	
See <i>Jonah</i> run .....	13
<b>Rabbi Mordechai Levin</b>	
High Holidays resolutions .....	13
<b>Julie Bloom:</b> ( <i>Book Review</i> ) <i>Fat Chance</i>	
Wonderfully humorous first novel ....	14
<i>Letter to Editor</i> .....	14
<b>Rabbi Elliot B. Gertel:</b> ( <i>Media Watch</i> )	
<i>Rush Hour</i> .....	15
<b>Arnold Ages:</b> ( <i>Book Review</i> ) <i>Maimonides</i>	
Ambitious scope: daunting .....	16
<b>Rabbi Israel Zoberman:</b> ( <i>Book Review</i> )	
<i>The Morning They Came For Us</i>	
Syria's brutal civil war .....	17
<b>Morton Gold:</b> ( <i>As I Heard It</i> )	
<i>Theodore Bikel: While I'm Here</i>	
A superb singer, guitarist, actor .....	17
<b>Walter Sommers receives</b>	
German civilian award .....	20
<b>Sybil Kaplan:</b> ( <i>The Kosher Kitchens</i> )	
Rosh Hashanah recipes .....	20

## The Jewish Post & Opinion

Jewish News and Opinion since 1935.

1427 W. 86th St. #228  
Indianapolis, IN 46260  
email: [jpostopinion@gmail.com](mailto:jpostopinion@gmail.com)  
phone and fax: (317) 405-8084  
website: [www.jewishpostopinion.com](http://www.jewishpostopinion.com)  
publisher & editor: Jennie Cohen  
graphic designer: Charlie Bunes

## KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page 2)

table and swirled in a date syrup called *silan* or *halek*, which he explained was a biblical 'honey,' one of the seven foods in the land of Canaan cited in the Book of Deuteronomy. Today, visitors can see a two-thousand-year-old date-honey press, similar to an ancient wine press but smaller, near the Dead Sea at Qumran, the sites where in 1947 a Bedouin youth found the Dead Sea Scrolls hidden in earthen jars."

Joan Nathan writes further that Benzion Israeli, one of the founders of Kibbutz Kinneret, dressed as an Arab and in 1933, he went to Iraq and smuggled 900 date saplings back to Palestine. Over the years with many trips he brought back more than 7,000 saplings from Iraq, Iran and Kurdistan. Half took root.

Shmuel Stoller later brought saplings from Egypt and Saudi Arabia. In the 1970s *mejdoul* and *deglet noor* varieties were introduced from Coachella Valley in California.

If you are wondering about dates and your health, Judy Siegel-Itzkovich wrote an article in the Jerusalem Post, May 5, 2013, titled "Local dates are best variety to fight disease."

In it she wrote: "All nine varieties of dates grown in Israel and found on any supermarket shelf have characteristics that make them better than other varieties at helping protect those who consume them against cardiovascular diseases.

"This has just been demonstrated by Prof. Michael Aviram and colleagues from Haifa's Rambam Medical Center and Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. The research was published in the prestigious *Journal of Agriculture Food Chemistry*.

"Aviram and his team, including Dr. Hamutal Borochoy-Neori of Southern Arava Research and Development, have been studying the health benefits of dates for some time.

"The most effective varieties are the yellow Barhi, Deri, Medjool and Halawi. The other date varieties are Amari, Deglet, Noor, Hadrawi and Hayani.

"There are about 20 date varieties growing in various parts of the world, including North Africa and Arizona in the US, but the Israeli varieties growing in the Jordan Valley and the Arava (and in Jericho in the Palestinian Authority) are the best, said Aviram.

"Aviram told *The Jerusalem Post* on Sunday that it doesn't matter if dates are eaten fresh or dried, but consuming *silan* – date syrup – can offer little improvement to healthy cardiovascular systems.

"As *silan* is a sweet concentrate that does not contain fibers, it is far from the real thing.

"A study the researchers published in the same journal four years ago showed that eating three dates a day does not raise blood sugar levels in healthy people, but it does reduce blood triglycerides and even 'improves the quality' of blood cholesterol by reducing its oxidation. These effects reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and other vascular diseases, they said.

"Aviram said, however, that since dates contain a lot of sugar, they are not recommended for diabetics, and that they will not reduce blood sugar levels in this group....

"In 2009 Aviram was the first to show that antioxidants from the group of polyphenols found in pomegranates, red wine and olive oil help remove plaque from inside the arteries. In the new research, the team found that dates can bring about the slowing and even regression of atherosclerosis (accumulation of fatty plaque) in the coronary arteries, and that eating one of the three specific date varieties is most effective.

"The material in dates has the clear ability to speed up the removal of excess cholesterol from endothelial cells inside blood vessels, the team said.

"Dates have been cultivated in the Middle East, North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula for more than 5,000 years, the new article states. Writings of ancient religious and traditional medicine praised dates for their health benefits but did not prove these claims.

"Nothing was known about cholesterol in ancient times, but the anti-bacterial and anti-fungal effects were noted, even though nothing was known about how this worked.

"Dates have a high sugar content, but as they are also a rich source of fiber, they attach themselves to harmful, oxygen-free radicals and remove them from the body. They also have an abundance of minerals such as potassium, zinc, magnesium and calcium.

"The Haifa researchers recommend following a Mediterranean diet – with its variety of vegetables and fruit (including dates), fish, whole grains and olive oil – rather than eating just one or two ingredients, so that a whole range of oxidative factors that cause atherosclerosis can be neutralized."

### A Yom Kippur memory

Each week when I lead the *shuk* walks in the Jewish produce market, *Machaneh Yehudah*, I pause by a café next to the pet shop. Hanging there is a toy, presumably for dogs, of a chicken's body. Seeing this I am always reminded of the year in the 1970s when I was living in Israel the first time.

*Rosh Hashanah* had passed, and the days of awe were almost over. The morning

before *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, I decided to go to *Machaneh Yehudah*, Jerusalem's dynamic, colorful outdoor Jewish produce market. It was just a few blocks from the center of town, and I wanted to do my fruit and vegetable shopping as I always did each week.

As I entered the crowded, covered overhead pathway, my ears were suddenly shattered by loud, whirring sounds. A strange smell penetrated the air. Further into the narrow alleyway, which was known as the main, walk-through market street, I walked. Under my feet, there appeared to be a carpet of feathers.

Crate upon crate of live chickens were stacked in front of every tiny butcher shop. At each shop, the scene was the same. Mobs of people stood anxiously next to the crates. A man, bearded and wearing the traditional black coat and hat, stood with a prayer book in one hand. One at a time, people pushed forward to be near him. I listened as verses from Psalm 107, verses 17–20 were read in Hebrew:

*Crazed because of the way  
of their transgression,  
And afflicted because of their iniquities –  
Their soul abhorred all manner of food,  
And they drew near unto the gates death –  
They cried unto the Lord their trouble,  
And He saved them out of their distresses;  
He sent His word, and healed them,  
And delivered them from their graves.*

Then the man continued reading, now from Job 33, verses 23–24:

*If there be for him an angel,  
And intercessor, one among a thousand,  
To vouch for a man's uprightness;  
Then He is gracious unto him, and saith:  
"Deliver him from going down to the pit,  
I have found a ransom."*

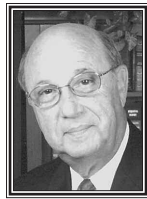
One at a time, the people would stand, while a live chicken (cock for a male and hen for a female) was held in the right hand of the black-coated man. The fowl was then waved around the head of the person standing there, three times, while the bearded man said: "*This is in exchange for me; this is instead of me, this is a ransom for me.*"

Within seconds of the verse being finished, in full view of the penitent, the bird was slaughtered and then thrust into the machine for de-feathering. The person paid for the bird and walked away holding the warm body, to give to the poor or to take home to make chicken soup for the pre-*Yom-Kippur*-fast meal.

This is the *kapparot* (expiation) ceremony whereby all sins of the individual are transferred to the fowl. The *kapparot* ceremony is derived from the time of the Temple in Jerusalem when a goat (scape-

(see Kaplan/Israel, page 5)

# Wiener's Wisdom



BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

## Relevance

Sitting with a group of people of advanced age, the subject inevitably reverts to what was with little thought to what is. Traveling the length and breadth of this wonderful Valley, I have taught and learned many things. Among them is the most important of all – “Relevance.”

Some of us think about what could have been and get stuck in the mire of things we cannot do anything about. We cannot change the past, and in some instances have no control over the future. The great statesman, Disraeli wrote that man is not the creature of circumstances. Circumstances are the creatures of men.

So here are some, in the twilight of their years still worried about what might have been or whether it could have been done better given the chance again. Actually, our concentration should be about legacy. More important, however, should be the importance of our being – our relevancy.

How many times have we participated in conversations only to discover that the subject being discussed excludes us from contributing because we are not even asked for our input? It is as though we do not even exist, an invisible being sitting in a room filled with emptiness.

We leave the room, not being missed. The impact we may have had in the past does not seem to matter. We do not seem to matter. Some of us gravitate to others experiencing the same irrelevance. Some of us escape to an inner world free from criticism or disdain. Perhaps, we should be thinking about the influence we had that still has meaning for some. Perhaps we should understand that our experiences could give more meaning to those just starting their journey.

A story is told of an elderly man kneeling in his backyard planting a tree. A neighbor asked him why he was planting the tree because it will not be possible for him to see it grow into full maturity. His reply was simple and eloquent. He remarked that the generations that preceded him had planted trees that now give him shade, fruit, and enjoyment. It was now his responsibility to plant for the next generation, as did the generations past.

Our legacy is everlasting, but more than that, relevant as a lesson for the future. All of us have purpose. Purpose does not fade with time. Purpose lasts until the very last breath, and even beyond. Sometimes we

# Shabbat Shalom



BY RABBI JON ADLAND

August 26, 2016, *Ekev*  
Deuteronomy 7:12–11:25, 22 Av 5776

I am writing this a day earlier than normal because, Friday, I will be spending the day working on our Interfaith Habitat for Humanity build and it looks like I will be on the roof putting down plywood. For anyone who has participated in a Habitat build, it is extremely rewarding. Helping a family build their own home, a place they will get to call their own, is truly doing God's work on this earth.

Our *parashah* this week, *Ekev*, includes the verse from chapter 10, “<sup>12</sup>And now, O Israel, what does *Adonai* your God demand of you? Only this: to revere *Adonai* your God, to walk only in God's paths, to love God, and to serve *Adonai* your God with all your heart and soul.” The question we all must ask ourselves is what does God demand of us?

Is God demanding that we follow the ritual *mitzvot* – observing *Shabbat* to the letter and *chagim* and the laws of *kashrut* – to the absence of the world around us? Is God demanding that we put all of our time into *Tikkun Olam* – repairing the world – without giving any time or thought or practice to the ritual aspects of Judaism? Or is God demanding a balance that includes loving God through our practice and serving God through our hands, hearts and souls? To be honest, people have to choose their own path, but for me observance of the Jewish calendar absent of *Tikkun Olam* is not what God demands of us.

I love observing *Shabbat* in the way we do it around our home and in our lives. I

(see Adland, page 9)



concentrate more on the end and not enough on today. Some are concerned about after-life, and not enough about living today.

To be relevant, one needs to get involved in everyday living, contribute to the message of life and to its significance. Then, perhaps, each day will be fulfilling, each new season will be rewarding, and each connection will bring meaning to our lives.

*Rabbi Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at [raoyitz@cox.net](mailto:raoyitz@cox.net). He is the author of two books: Living With Faith, and The Passover Haggadah. ✨*

## KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page 4)

goat) was sent from the Temple into the desert to carry with it the sins of the people. After the Romans destroyed the Second Temple, the practice of sacrificing animals came to an end, but, as a mean of substitution, the *kapparot* ceremony was introduced.

Interestingly enough, it is not mentioned in the *Torah* or the *Talmud* and is believed to have originated in the Jewish community of 9th century Babylon. Throughout Jewish history, noted rabbis opposed the practice and felt perhaps people would not truly repent if they thought their sins were really transferred to a bird.

The 13th century Spanish sage, Nachmanides, and the 15th century scholar, Rabbi Yosef Karo, who lived in Spain and compiled the *Shuchan Aruch*, guide to Jewish law, both opposed the practice. Karo opposed the idea because it might have non-Jewish origins. Forty years ago, in modern Israel, in Jerusalem, Israel's ancient and modern capital, this ceremony took place.

Does it take place today? Not in *Machaneh Yehudah*. Today, the chickens have been replaced by a bag of money.

A couple of years ago (2013), several articles appeared about this practice. The Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi called for more humane treatment of the chickens used. Animal rights group, “Let the Animals Live,” wrote him that the birds are mistreated; the rabbi responded that mistreatment would constitute a *mitzvah* performed through committing a sin. He reminded the people performing the tradition not to cause suffering to animals and to be strict in how they deal with the animals.

One has to ask whether the birds are kept crowded in baskets without food or water awaiting the ceremony.

An American professor emeritus and author of a book on Judaism and vegetarianism, wrote that there is an “inconsistency here because of Judaism's strong teaching about compassion to animals and because the rite can be carried out in a rabbinically approved way without using then slaughtering chickens.”

He concluded that the message of *kapparot* to those who take part and those who view it may be the opposite of *rachamim* (compassion) and instead impart a lesson of insensitivity to the feelings of living creatures.

*Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, and leader of weekly walks in Machaneh Yehudah, which she still loves. ✨*



# Compassion pushes back against hatred

BY RABBI SANDY E. SASSO



It is easy to lose our faith in humanity. Just open up the morning newspaper or check the latest updates of world events. Every act of violence, racially motivated or “religiously” inspired, has us questioning whether the human heart is suffering from some incurable moral sclerosis. Have conflicts, ethnic, religious and racial divisions so hardened our arteries that nothing can reduce their deleterious effects?

We all know anger and hatred. But what allows resentment to turn into uncontrollable rage, directed not at a single person or group, but against a whole range of unknown people? What allows disgust to balloon into indiscriminate violence?

The news leaves us reeling, wondering whether humanity is at its core irredeemable. The ancient rabbis record a discussion about whether man and woman should have been created. Surprisingly, they answer that it might have been better had human beings not been created, but having been created, they should examine and mend their ways. They conclude that world always totters between good and evil, survival and extinction; only compassion and grace sustain its existence.

I was wondering whether grace had succumbed to an untimely death, when I recently discovered the face of compassion where I had least expected it.

One hot afternoon, I took an ill-fated walk on the Monon Trail [once railroad tracks, now a walking and biking path through Indianapolis]. Dehydrated and without a hat, I passed out, fractured my wrist and sustained a number of abrasions. Two kind women stopped, sat with me, offered me water and waited until my husband arrived. Although I assured them that they did not need to stay, that I really was fine, they insisted. When I thanked them, they said, “It’s nothing, not a problem.”

Some weeks later, I lost my cell phone. After arriving at my office, I checked the “find my phone” app on my iPad. This amazing technology indicated that my phone was lying on the ground in the lot I had just left. I immediately returned and looked near the cars where the GPS was indicating. A gracious woman, her arms filled with packages, noticed my darting in and out among the parked cars. To assure her that I had only good intentions, I informed her that I had lost my cell phone and it was somewhere nearby. The woman put down her purchases, called my phone number in hopes of hearing the ring and

## Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

### Prophecy

Today I want to share a story that happened 35 years ago. I was born and grew up in Indianapolis. I graduated Broad Ripple High School in 1967, and went to college at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. My first year in college was spent learning Hebrew, Math, Chemistry and Physics. In addition I started to learn and practice Yoga. A new chapter opened up in my life. I did meditation and spent time in nature. I realized that there was more to life than just the material and the physical. I discovered that in addition to my body, I also have a soul, and that the world has a Creator.

A year later I spent a *Shabbos* (Sabbath) with *Chabad* and was really impressed. Soon afterwards I dropped out of college and went to learn in *Yeshiva*. I entered a new and wonderful world. I learned Torah, the infinite wisdom of *Hashem* (G-d). I learned *Chassidus*, the deep inner secrets of the *Torah*. I devoted my life to fulfill the *Mitzvahs*, the commandments of *Hashem*, especially the *Mitzvah* to Love Your Neighbor.

After learning in the *Yeshiva* for nine months I traveled to 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, N.Y., to meet the Lubavitcher



when nothing worked, she got on her hands and knees and looked under the cars with me. She stayed for 15 minutes! I kept saying, “You don’t have to do this. What can I do for you?” She responded, “It’s nothing, not a problem.”

In the end, another woman discovered the phone lying next to her car and kindly brought it over to me. I could not thank her enough. She said, “It’s nothing, not a problem.”

Women, whom I did not know and who did not know me, stopped from their busy schedules to help a stranger.

Here is what I believe: Grace and compassion don’t show up from out of nowhere, but come from the hands and hearts of human beings. It is like electricity. It is always flowing through the wires, but it doesn’t work unless someone turns on the switch. Kindheartedness exists; we just need more people flipping on the switch.

*Sasso is rabbi emeritus of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck and director of the Religion, Spirituality and the Arts Initiative at Butler University, both in Indianapolis, Ind. Reprinted with permission from the Indianapolis Star, August 9, 2016. ✨*

Rebbe. This meeting gave me great strength to live a life of Torah. To live a good life, a life of *Torah*, is wonderful, but not easy. There is still a lot of evil out there, and inside of each of us. Over the years I have visited the Rebbe in 770 many times, to find inspiration and recharge my spiritual batteries.

Do yourself a big favor and go to 770. Your local Chabad Rabbi can arrange for you to spend a very special *Shabbos* with one of the Chabad families there. Thirty-five years ago I went to the Rebbe for one of the Holidays. At the end of the Holiday the Rebbe made a *Farbrengen*. Several thousands gathered together in the big *Shul* in 770, to see the Rebbe, to hear him speak, to sing together and say *l’chaim* (to life).

The Rebbe spoke for several hours and then we all prayed together *Maariv*, the evening prayers. Then the Rebbe made *Havdalah*, the blessing that we make over a cup of wine at the end of *Shabbos* and holidays.

After *Havdalah* everyone stood in line to receive a personal blessing from the Rebbe, and some wine from *Havdalah*. I waited in line, and finally my turn came, and I stood face to face in front of the Rebbe. The Rebbe looked at me and poured some wine from his cup into mine. I raised my cup and said “*l’chaim*”. The Rebbe answered “*L’chaim ulivoracha*” (To life and for blessing). I then drank a little of the wine and moved on. Two seconds later the Rebbe called me back.

The Rebbe asked me if I was planning to visit my parents. I said yes. The Rebbe then poured some more wine into my cup and said “This is for your father”. The Rebbe then poured some more wine into my cup and said “This if for your mother”.

A few days later I was in Indianapolis. I told my parents that the Rebbe sent them some wine. They were happy and made blessings and drank the Rebbe’s wine. I returned home to Israel just a little curious. This had never happened to me. What did all this mean?

Two months later I received a letter from my mother. (In those days there were no cell phones, and almost all communication between Israel and the U.S. was by mail). She wrote that the doctor had found that she had a tumor, and they were planning an operation to remove it.

A month later I received another letter informing me that they had found a tumor in my father’s throat. Both tumors were removed and treated. Even though they were malignant the disease did not spread.

Now I understood why the Rebbe sent wine and blessings to my parents. He knew that they had serious medical issues.

(see Benzion, page 7)

# Jewish Educator



BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

## Finding a path to forgiveness

On a chilly day in February over a decade ago, I drove my mother to the hospital to visit her only sister, Emily. My mother was anxious about seeing her. Not just because of her condition, which bordered on terminal, but because of their relationship, defined by years of unspoken hurt and unfinished conversations.

We both fidgeted in the elevator as we approached the room to say what we knew would be our final goodbyes. No matter how hard you try, there is no way to prepare for a moment like this. You can comfort yourself with thoughts like “She’s so sick, it’s for the best,” or “She’s lived a good life and now it’s her time.” But as we entered the room I was struck by the realization that the cadaverous shell of a woman lying in bed, the same woman who had caused my mother so much grief and pain in her youth, might never be able to speak again. And there was still so much left to say.

Her daughter greeted us at the door.

“She’s been calling for you for days,” she said softly, looking at my mother.

As if choreographed, my mother began stroking Emily’s forehead with her own tired hand. She spoke softly of their lives together as little girls, of books they had loved, of summers at the beach. A smile spread slowly across Emily’s face and for a few moments, her weary eyes focused and were young again.

My mother repeated softly, “I love you Emily.” And Emily, who had been unable to talk for days, uttered the words which helped ease my mother’s pain and teach her how to forgive: “I love you too, Elise. I have always loved you.”

Granting forgiveness to those who have hurt us is one of the most difficult things to do: it doesn’t come easily or naturally for most of us. When we are wronged, our tendency is to withdraw or retaliate. If we disengage, we often hold on to the hurt without ever having a chance to resolve it. If we respond by causing new pain, we increase hostility making resolution or forgiveness that much more difficult.

When the injury is interpersonal, we can carry the pain for years and the emotional scar tissue which forms can prevent us from ever healing. When the injury is not just against us, but against our family,

faith, or the community we care about, it can be even more difficult to find ways to “forgive and forget.”

When we love, we open ourselves up to experiencing many wonderful, intimate, nurturing and deeply gratifying feelings. We also open ourselves up to being hurt, disappointed, betrayed and abandoned. That is the nature of being in relationship – with others, with our community, our country and yes, even with God.

The *Torah* is the Jewish blueprint for living a good, compassionate and meaningful life. As Jews, we are not expected to be perfect; we are expected to be human. There will be times when we let ourselves and others down, when we hurt others through our words, actions or thoughtless deeds. Because wronging others is part of being human, Judaism provides guidance in our efforts to forgive and be forgiven.

We are taught that we can’t seek forgiveness from God for a wrong we have committed against others. For those acts, we must ask forgiveness directly from the person we have offended and, if we still are not forgiven after three attempts, our obligation is satisfied.

When someone hurts or wrongs us, the *Torah* counsels us not to take vengeance or bear a grudge. And when we are sincerely asked for our forgiveness, Judaism teaches us that we should forgive, and do it wholeheartedly.

There is much to gain, psychologically and spiritually, when we let go of past injuries. It frees up the energy we use to stay angry or disappointed for more positive things that can bring us happiness, fulfillment and love. And Judaism assures us that if we show compassion to those who offend us, God will show us compassion as well.

The High Holidays are a time when we are called upon to look deeply at our efforts during the past year to see where we have succeeded and where we have missed the mark. We are asked to make amends to those we may have hurt by going directly to them and asking for forgiveness in order to clear the slate for the new year. It may not be easy, but it is an opportunity to right the wrongs we have done and begin again, each year, with the hope that we will do better and be better in the year ahead.

I think of the years of hurt that my mother endured and of how she longed for her sister to apologize for the hurtful things she did, or at least, to talk about them. She will never have that conversation now, but what she does have is almost as good. Because she has found a path to forgiveness and a way to heal herself even though her sister is gone.

Amy Hirshberg Lederman is an author, Jewish educator, public speaker and attorney

## EDITORIAL

(continued from page 3)

unimaginable trauma. Again it is easier with hindsight to see the good outcomes that resulted, but in the 1930s and 1940s, I doubt if he was able to foresee those accomplishments. Now years later we are very grateful to be able to see an example of the possibility of the great good that one person can do after having lived through a horrific experience.

Jennie Cohen, August 31, 2016 ✨

See Historical Digital Issues of *The Jewish Post & Opinion* since 1930 at [www.ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/JPO](http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/JPO)

Read recent digital issue online at: [www.jewishpostopinion.com](http://www.jewishpostopinion.com)

Follow us on Facebook at: Jewish Post & Opinion, newspaper

Follow us on Twitter at: #JewishPostOpin

## BENZION

(continued from page 6)

Now I was sure that they would recover, and told all the family not to worry. *Baruch Hashem* both of my parents recovered from their operations and treatments and lived long and healthy lives. My father lived till the age of 98.

How did the Rebbe know? We believe that the Rebbe is a prophet. He received a message from *Hashem* that my parents were not well, and he sent his blessings.

Do you need a special blessing? Are you in doubt and need to make an important decision? Ask the Rebbe! Your local Chabad Rabbi can show you how to ask the Rebbe, or you can go to [www.igrot.com](http://www.igrot.com).

The Rebbe told us that in our generation *Moshiach* will bring the complete and final redemption. At that time there will be no more war or sickness. We will live forever. This is a prophecy, and it will surely be fulfilled. When? We don’t know. The Rebbe told us that this is dependent on us. We have to pray every day to *Hashem* to redeem us, and learn more *Torah* and do more *Mitzvahs* to bring *Moshiach* Now!

Rabbi Cohen lives in K’far Chabad, Israel. He can be reached at [bzioncohen770@gmail.com](mailto:bzioncohen770@gmail.com). ✨



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](http://amyhirshberglederman.com). Originally published in our Jan. 27, 2010 Healing section. ✨

# Gather the People

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



## The second day of Rosh Hashanah

On the first day of *Rosh Hashanah*, many of us are still trying to discover who we are, what we're to do in the services during High Holy Days, and what we really expect to get from these days – even if we've been through this cycle many times before. Our theory is that the people who don't come back for a second day weren't able to find answers to those questions.

Hopefully, by the second day those of us who have returned are ready to use the day to achieve its fundamental purposes: We come back to sum up our stocktaking, both as individuals and as members of a congregational community. We come back to decide finally how we need to change ourselves if we're to fully use the educative power of this second day. And we come back to commit ourselves to doing that, and to actually begin doing it.

We suggest that the problem Jews in modernity have with these purposes revolves around the word "suffering." To be sufficiently motivated to take such purposes seriously, one has to be suffering in some sense.

We can all understand, at least intellectually, the suffering that Holocaust victims experienced. We can understand the suffering of the victims of institutional anti-Semitism as they experienced it 75 or 100 years ago. And we can understand the suffering of living in poverty as our grandparents and great grandparents experienced it in European villages. But we find it difficult or impossible to acknowledge or admit that we're suffering – here and now, as Jews in the United States.

The suffering that follows from *spiritual* poverty is much more subtle than its physical counterpart, whether in Jerusalem a few thousand years ago or in America today. But the impoverishment of our souls is revealed in several distinctly dehumanizing symptoms:

- We lose touch with that part of ourselves that is uniquely created in the image of God, which can potentially uplift our everyday lives with inspired purpose;
- We abandon our capacity to produce our own unique brand of goodness in the world as the driving purpose of our

existence, allowing it to become an infrequent and incidental activity; and,

- And to all who are willing to examine this impoverishment close up, it's apparent that it is both caused and camouflaged by acquisitive materialism and unrestrained sensuality that has replaced spirituality as the fulcrum of our lives.

In fact, most of us are so far estranged from our moral spiritual inheritance that we're almost universally ignorant of it and alienated from its practice. Not surprisingly, the majority of American Jews are convinced of its irrelevance to the hopes and pressures of our day-to-day lives.

Consider, for example, the *raison d'être* of our existence as a people – the covenant made at Sinai: We are to do God's will as it was revealed to us in the *Torah*. God, in turn, is to love and care for us eternally. It doesn't suggest that we're to do what the *Torah* teaches if we happen to learn something of it in passing, or if it's convenient, or if it doesn't conflict with something else we want to do, or if it doesn't make us uncomfortable. And it doesn't say that God will love us some of the time and care for us some of the time.

But in our heart of hearts, many of us simply don't believe it. We think: "that was then, this is now." Maybe God loved and protected Israel once upon a time, but today we're mostly on our own – whether as individuals or even acting together as a congregational community. We tell ourselves repeatedly, I don't have time for a day-to-day spiritual life, a continuously uplifting connection with God: first, because it's an illusion, and thus largely a waste of time; and second, because I need to focus on surviving and succeeding in the world I'm actually living in.

The *Haftarah* (prophetic reading) for the second day of *Rosh Hashanah* channels the "voice of God" to us through our prophetic tradition in a way that may help us deal with this conundrum. But let's cursorily try first to understand the life of Jeremiah, the prophet, and then to consider the relevance of what he had to say.

Jeremiah spent virtually all of his life responding to his calling. More often than not, he was preaching to people who were convinced of their own social and material success and self-ascribed high moral virtue. His mission included restoring the sanctity of the Temple. This task was resisted not only by the priesthood, which had become corrupt morally and spiritually, but the people in general. The people had come to treat the Temple – its furnishings, functionaries, and services – as if they possessed inherent magical powers capable of redeeming them from their materialism and moral indifference. Thus, not surprisingly, in their private lives they continued unabashed to practice all forms of idolatry.

So Jeremiah was opposed and attacked by the priests, the people, and the King (Zedekiah). Of course, in time his prophecy came to pass, even as he languished in prison. Jerusalem was destroyed. Withal, as the survivors were dispersed into exile, Jeremiah spoke words of encouragement to them.

How did the people feel when they were going into exile? What did they think?

By this time the ancient world had shown itself to be full of peoples and states that rose and fell, never to rise again. In their struggle for survival, why should the Jews believe their fate would be any different? But Jeremiah told them that in exile they would lay the foundation to restore their nation. And 70 years after the destruction, his prophecy was realized. Jeremiah didn't live to see the people return, or to see the physical and spiritual rebuilding work of Nehemiah and Ezra, but he was a significant prophetic influence in the redemption of the nation.

But what is "prophecy" and how does it affect the outcomes of our individual and collective lives.

The prophetic message, transmitting the word of God through a human voice, is not the result of the prophet's scholarship or *sechel* (intelligence). The prophet was not the cause of the national restoration, nor was his prophecy a prediction of the inevitable. The prophet is neither magician nor fortuneteller, neither dreamer nor dabbler in ecstatic practices; his character is marked by clarity of mind. The prophecy specifies conditions under which the people will experience blessings or curses. It all depends on what use the people make of the educative experiences they have.

What are the first words of God that we encounter in this second-day *Rosh Hashanah* prophetic reading?

*V'ahavat olam ahaavtikh...* (With an everlasting love I have loved you). And then, *od eoneikh v'ni'venit* (I shall yet rebuild you and you shall be rebuilt...). (Jeremiah 31:2-3) And *ki-fadah Adonai et-Yaakov* (For Adonai will have redeemed Jacob...) (Jeremiah 31:10) – that is, redeemed the people Israel. Not only are they to be redeemed, it goes further to say: *U'vau v'rinenu vimrom tzion...* (They will come and sing joyously on the height of Zion). (Jeremiah 31:11). The people and the nation will be restored not in sackcloth and ashes, but in joyous celebration with singing and dancing.

But how are we to understand *why* the restoration took place against all odds and historical precedents? Did the Almighty simply tire of being angry at Israel?

Near the end of this reading we find two illuminating phrases: In verse 31:16 we read: *V'yeish-tikvah l'achariteich n'um Adonai* (see ben Asher, bat Sarah page 9)



# Kabbalah of the Month



BY MELINDA RIBNER

## Story for Elul

(begins September 4, 2016)

There was once a great king who called into his presence his most loyal and trusted subject. He gave to him a dry precious vessel for a limited period of time. Over time the subject became negligent in the protection of the vessel. One day it accidentally broke. The subject was seized with anxiety.

How could he face the king! He had to restore it to its original form. He sought the counsel of the wisest people. What was he to do? They offered him no recourse other than to go to the King directly. As he was afraid to do that, he then went to the people closest to the king. Surely they could advise him. They knew the king the best. They offered him no recourse.

Desperate, it suddenly occurred to him to go to the person who manufactured the vessel. He pleaded with him to put the vessel back together, but was told that it was impossible, the vessel was unique and could not be duplicated. Anyway, the king would know the difference. There was no way of deceiving the king.

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

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

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

As in the story, we run everywhere to heal and fix our lives. Do we run to God, the One who can truly heal us? Before God, we are all broken vessels. To heal, to feel whole, we must accept our brokenness and

## BEN ASHER/BAT SARAH

(continued from page 8)

*v'shavu vanim ligvulam* (There is hope for your future, says *Adonai*, and your children will return to their border). And in the next verse we read: *yisartani va-ivaseir*. The usual English translation, however, is misleading. The Hebrew root of these two words is *yud-samach-reish*, which essentially means to impose educative discipline that reflects and sets values. So we might liberally translate these two words as: "You have disciplined me with moral education, and I have become morally educated." This is the key to understanding God's love and why the prophetic vision of the restoration was realized.

God's love and caring come to us, as ours does to our children, not only as tender kindness, but also as educative discipline for the sake of our survival. When we make use of that education, both individually and as a people, we align our lives with Divine Providence.

But none of us should be glib or sanguine about the future prospects of the Jewish people in America. The dramatic loss of moral spirituality has had devastating consequences not only on the quality of our day-to-day existence, but also on our generational demography. Too many of our fellow Jews, including members of our congregations, know the pain and disappointment of seeing their children intermarry and their grandchildren raised other than as Jews.

This *Haftarah* on the second day of *Rosh Hashanah* is calling us back. It is calling us back to put our trust in God, that our God will love and care for us if we fulfill our part of the covenant and make the *Torah* the center-point and driving force of our lives, the priority which dominates all other priorities. It's calling us to a reunion with our fellow Jews and with the spiritual legacy that has enabled us to be here today. It's a legacy that, if we reclaim it, will ensure a spiritually relevant Jewish way of life and future for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

© 2016 Moshe ben Asher & Khulda bat Sarah  
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](http://www.gatherthepeople.org)). ★



realize that we cannot be whole without God. And as it is only God who can truly heal us, we have no recourse but to go to God.

In a short amount of time, *Rosh Hashanah* will be upon us and we will be privileged to stand in community before God as the King, the beneficent, merciful and loving

## ADLAND

(continued from page 5)

love the observance and ritual of the holy days and holidays. Being in sync with the Jewish calendar year, the *Torah* readings, the moments that come around regularly enhances my Jewish life and soul. I don't care whether you are a classical Reform Jew or an Orthodox Jew, the days of the Jewish year link us to our past and give us vision for the future. At the same time, observance without participation in the world around us is incomplete. God demands of us to care for the poor, the widow and the orphan.

These classifications are just headings to remind us of the many who may not be as fortunate as we are or, as in the case of Baton Rouge right now, are suffering terribly from the effects of nature. Next week in our Temple Tidbits you will see an opportunity to support the recovery of the Jewish community in Baton Rouge – this is my wife Sandy's hometown, where we were married, and where our niece, nephew and great nephew live today.

Forty Jewish families there have lost their homes and we can help with a small or large contribution for their relief effort. *Tikkun Olam* is not always cutting roofing plywood or building walls or serving dinners. *Tikkun Olam* is repairing the world and sometimes, many times, that is writing a check to help others do the work, but when the opportunity comes to put one's hands and feet to work that is important too.

Yes! God makes demands on our lives and we need to hear the call of these demands and figure out how to make them work for us and for us to work for them. God demands of me to think about Jewish life as reflected in our observances. God demands of me to make this world a better place. Responding to these demands makes me a better person and even a better Jew.

When you light your *Shabbat* candles this week, light one for the demand of *Tikkun Olam* on our lives and act on this demand. Light the other candle for the demand of observance in our lives and act on that too.

Rabbi Adland has been a Reform rabbi for more than 30 years with pulpits in Lexington, Ky., Indianapolis, Ind., and currently at Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio. He may be reached at [j.adland@gmail.com](mailto:j.adland@gmail.com). ★



King. We have been gifted with the most beautiful prayers for the *Rosh Hashanah* service specially designed to raise our consciousness to experience directly that there is a God and that God truly loves us

(see Ribner page 11)

# High Holiday message



BY RABBI HERBERT HOROWITZ

## Rabbinic prime time

The approaching month of *Elul* brings out the “Rabbinic juices” of High Holy Day preparation. Sephardic Jews begin reciting *Slichot* (Penitential Prayers) when the month of *Elul* begins (this year Sept. 4). Ashkenazi Jews wait until a week before *Rosh Hashanah* to do the same. The *Shofar* is blown equally by both traditions at the start of *Elul*.

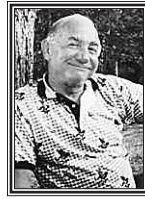
What High Holy Day message can I impart to you this year? I have given much thought about it during the last two months. A review of the year coming to an end forces a *Cheshbon HaNefesh* (Accounting of One’s Soul). What have been my accomplishments and shortcomings this year? Have I done my best in dealing with my loved ones and my community? Have world events galvanized me to have acted positively for my fellow human beings? Have I truly heard the sounds of the *Shofar*? In the coming New Year, all of us must really listen to the *Shofar* to make a difference in our lives.

This year, we blow the *Shofar* both days of *Rosh Hashanah*. The blowing of the *Shofar* consists of three major sounds: (1) *Tekiah* (2) *Shvoarim* (3) *Teruah*.

What is the focus of the *Tekiah*? The *Torah* in *Bamidbar* (Numbers) Chapter 6:7 supplies us with an answer. “*U’viahkheil Et Hakahal Titkouah*” which translates as: When you want to bring people together sound the *Tekiah*. The *Tekiah* summons us to remember that we cannot live in isolation. The essence of Jewish life is the involvement in Jewish communal affairs. Martin Buber, famous Jewish Philosopher and author of *I And Thou* reminds us, “God is found in every loving relationship”. This sound of the *Shofar* calls upon us to never take love for granted.

The *Shvoarim* echoes the broken note that lies in a thousand broken hearts. The *Shvoarim* cuts across all religious and ethnic lives. For example, the five-year-old Syrian boy battered and bloody calls out to the world for compassion and action in the face of brutality and evil; the 22 children murdered at the Kurdish wedding festivity blares forth; and the horrific use of a 12-year-old Turkish suicide bomber which caused unimaginable devastation. The *Shevarim* also reminds us of our personal and individual tragedies – death, disease

# Spoonful of Humor



BY TED ROBERTS

## The goat: Yom Kippur’s prima donna

*Rosh Hashanah* marks the birthday of the world – the anniversary of its creation. First, say our sages, the creator made heaven and earth. Now on earth’s birthday He wants a birthday gift from us. No, not the trinkets we hand each other, He wants more. He wants the gift of the heart, the gift of goodness.

Every *Rosh Hashanah* He asks us to take a self-administered test, grade ourselves and underline those areas wherein we are deficient. Lastly, we should repent and ask forgiveness so that on *Yom Kippur* our



and loss can devastate us emotionally, psychologically and physically.

The last *Shofar* sound is the *Teruah*. The *Teruah* proclaims God’s sovereignty, the ruler of the world. There are times we doubt the *Teruah*. Many people question their faith and some lose their faith when natural disasters engulf their lives. As the *U’Netane Tokef* prayer poignantly questions the frailties of life and its mortality, “*Mi Bamayim?*” (who by water?) “*Mi BaAish?*” (who by fire?) But then we learn of individual heroism and sacrifice.

We have modern heroes, Captain Khan who sacrificed his life to protect soldiers under his command, Major Klein who used his body as a human shield to save IDF soldiers from certain death. These heroes like many others heard the herald of God’s sovereignty. The call of the *Teruah* was inculcated into their *Neshamot* (Souls). Each of us has the capacity to be heroes in our own right if you heed the call of the *Teruah*.

Before the sounding of the *Shofar* we recite the prayer: “*Happy are the people who know how to hear and understand the message of the Shofar*” This *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* reflect on the meaning of the sounds of the *Shofar* and internalize them. This will bring you Divine “happiness”, you shall spend your days in the presence of God. Your love and sacrifice in serving God will transform into precious and eternal meaning.

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

personal scorebook of Life *glows with righteousness*.

Truly these are the Days of Awe, but even in these ten days of tension, we need nourishment. And since we are Jewish – the People of the Kitchen as well as the People of the Book – we may as well eat with joy.

We eat sweet things with the hope that it will help to bring on a sweet year. A traditional round challah bread and sliced apples dipped in honey are served along with wishes for a sweet year. And of course we tell the story of the scapegoat.

I know the Lord loves all his children – human and animal. But I have a feeling that He has a soft part in his heart for goats. You don’t agree?

You remember it’s described in Leviticus: Aaron shall “confess” over the scapegoat all the sins of the people, symbolically transferring a load of guilt from us to the dumbfounded animal – who is then led off to the wilderness wailing over its lot with its thin, piercing, *shofar*-like voice. He is the goat who relieves us of sin on *Yom Kippur*.

Its fate was scripted on the Holyday that first day of creation when the animals were assigned their roles. This was a bid day in Eden. All the animals were assembled in the meadow by the water hole. One by one they were summoned to appear before the throne. Here, they would receive their assignments.

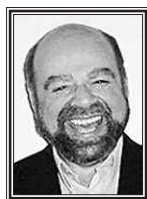
“Goat,” said the Lord, “I have chosen you – not one of my most elegant creations – to be the savior of Israel. Your swaying back shall bear the sins of the people. I shall send you with your noxious bundle far away into the forsaken lands where the sun never shines. Every year at *Yom Kippur*, the High Priest shall select one of your breed to perform the solitary mission of absolution. You, one of the lesser creations – crying as you enter the wilderness – shall bring forgiveness”

The goat listened. Fear gripped his heart and he pawed the earth. He nervously fluttered his lovely eyelids several times in succession. Even then he had long, curly lids. But the rest of him was strictly junkyard gray with a long, skinny tail like a possum that ineffectively lashed at flies that would torment him in the life to come. His ears, like the donkeys’, were outrageous. He had no horns.

So, when the goat heard his magnificent, but perilous assignment, he figured the Lord might be generous enough to improve his imperfect appearance. “Lord,” he bleated as he thoughtfully chewed his cud. “Considering the service my tribe will render to your people, could I make a few simple requests?”

And the Creator of all things from the (see Roberts, page 11)

# A Playful Path



BY BERNIE DE KOVEN

## Let us count the ways

My wife of 50 years and I were watching the last episode of a Masterpiece Theatre show called *Any Human Heart* (you can find about the show online – <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/anyhumanheart/>). In it, the main character is periodically overwhelmed by flashbacks of his wife, whom he lost years and years ago during the blitz.

After the show, we looked at each other, tears in our eyes, overwhelmed for a moment by the reality of our love and the not-totally-baseless fantasy of one of us losing the other. It moved us deeply, because, as we grow older and more profoundly precious to each other, the inevitability of losing each other grows evermore unavoidably, well, inevitable.

It struck me, for all the heartache of the moment, as kind of fun. I know, it seems almost blasphemous to use the word “fun” to describe such a delicately glorious moment of weathered love. But there was something undeniably joyous in what we were sharing together. In that teary-eyed look that we gave each other, there was a certain twinkle. We’re still alive. Still in love. The actual death of one of us, regardless of the purported inevitability, is still a fantasy. We were, in a way, playing. We also were, in another way, honoring the depth and beauty of the love we have spent the majority of our lives creating together.

Pre-grieving. Not actually grieving. Playing with the possibility, but not really facing the actuality. Facing, rather, each other, basking, once again, in the mutual delight of our still living love.

Once, for the fun of it, we decided to make a list of how we make our lives together more fun. Today, we added pre-grieving.

### Fun things we do just between us:

Paying attention to each other  
 Admiring each other’s talents  
 Accepting each other’s differences, limits  
 Listening to each other,  
 asking questions, getting clear  
 Encouraging each other to do what each of us most wants to do  
 Making each other laugh  
 Being funny  
 Doing silly things  
 Little acts of improvisation,  
 spontaneous skits

### RIBNER

(continued from page 9)

and seeks our highest good.

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

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

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

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



Generally, not keeping score  
 Appreciating each other’s success  
 Changing the rules  
 Being kind to each other  
 Whoever gets up first  
 makes breakfast in bed for the other  
 Surprising each other  
 Making meals for each other  
 Making a face out of raisins  
 and bananas  
 Appearing in an outrageous outfit  
 Buying each other something special  
 at the grocery or hardware store  
 Dancing – spontaneously, sometimes  
 without music

### ROBERTS

(continued from page 11)

moss on the tree trunk to Leviathan, nodded positively.

Now, remember that most of the other animals had already been formed, including the sheep. The goat was wary. He could just see those heavy-handed shepherds with biting shears shaving the trembling lambs.

“Please, sir,” he shrilled in his high voice, “no thick, rich fleece for me, but a nice coat of scraggly fur to keep me warm will be just fine.”

And somehow this farsighted creature knew of mutton stew supplied by fat sheep. So, he begged the Creator to make him a muscular animal with stringy flesh. “Boney will be great, please.”

Well, that took care of survival, thought the clever goat who was already envisioning a long and happy life. But hmmm, consider the broad back of the donkey. Definitely not an asset if one wanted to wander loose in the meadow without some lazy human loading you up with his paraphernalia. So, he requested a slender build and shoulders no wider than his head.

“And please, sir, a digestive system that can handle tree bark and all the litter that mankind will invent and scatter in the world to come.” Maybe, he thought, me and my clan can provide a solution to the waste storage problem that sooner or later will overwhelm mankind.

“And I almost forgot,” said the world’s first negotiator, “how ‘bout some horns instead of these embarrassing ears. There should be grandeur in my banishment to the wilderness, not burlesque.”

The Lord sighed and agreed. The bargain was struck. So, the goat had his way, which is a small price, I say, for the load of sin he carries off to the wilderness.

*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](http://www.wonderwordworks.com). Blogsite: [www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com](http://www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com). His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof can be bought at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) or [lulu.com/content/127641](http://lulu.com/content/127641). ✨*



Playing games  
 Leaving notes  
 Sharing memories  
 When one of us looks happy  
 (singing, humming or smiling),  
 it makes the other happier  
 Planning  
 Respecting each other  
 Trusting each other  
 Touching each other  
 Pre-grieving

(see De Koven page 13)

# The High Holidays



BY RABBI BRIAN BESSER

## Don't be so afraid to admit when you're wrong

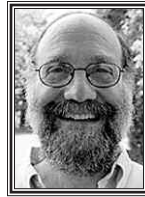
It is a peculiar trait that we Jews tend to blame ourselves for whatever befalls us. The Roman imperial army was the greatest power on Earth, Judea was a minor province in the Roman sphere, and nothing could have stopped the Romans from sacking Jerusalem. But never mind all that. The Temple was destroyed, say the Rabbis, solely because of baseless hatred among the people, internal divisions, cruel words and petty bickering.

If allowed, suffering can lead to introspection, which leads to *teshuvah*. Rabbi Alan Lew writes in *This Is Real And You Are Completed Unprepared*: "The walls of our soul begin to crumble and the first glimmerings of transformation begin to seep in. We stop blaming others. Our suffering, the unresolved elements of our lives, are also from God. They are the instruments by which we are carried back to God, to be embraced."

Think back to the last time someone let you know that you had offended her. Maybe she made you feel guilty. Maybe you started thinking of different excuses to mitigate or rationalize what you had done. Maybe you took offense yourself, because the other person was overreacting, or was taking things the wrong way, or was attempting to foist blame upon you for her own shortcomings. Whatever your reaction, I'm sure it was uncomfortable, if not painful.

The thing is, the other person was acting to your benefit. Better for him to confront you directly than nurse silent grievances and avoid you without telling you why, or – worse still – complain to others about you behind your back (which is quintessential *lashon hara*). When someone tells me that I wronged him, he's not doing me a courtesy so much as fulfilling his obligation: *lo tisna et achicha bilvavecha... velo tisa alav chet*, "you shall not hold hard feelings toward your fellow, lest you bear guilt because of him." (Leviticus 19:17) Moreover, he is giving me the opportunity to do *teshuvah*: to make amends to him, and, more importantly, to mend my ways in general. Because chances are, if I sinned against him, I sinned against others in a similar fashion. Behavioral patterns do not spring up in a vacuum.

## Kavanah before shofar blowing



BY BRUCE DAVID

*Shana Tova!* I would like to start with a quick catch-up as a way to bring us to this moment: Why are we here? To see and hear someone try to get a series of notes out of an animal part, a ram's horn? Are we here to fulfill a biblical instruction, something that has been passed along to us from generations of our ancestors, who didn't have near the scientific knowledge or technology that we do today, but said that we still need to do this?

The life-growth aspects of *Rosh Hashanah* suggest that it is to our benefit to have reviewed our efforts over the last year, with an eye for improvement; and to celebrate the opportunity we have now, that we are a year older, more experienced and hopefully wiser, to improve on our choices.

*Rosh Hashanah*, spiritually, is like the ultimate *mikvah* cleansing. We get a "do over," a chance to start again with a clean slate. We are here, now what? Are we here simply to reconnect with our family, friends and community, or are we here praying? Are we opening our hearts in the hopes of improving the quality of our lives, and those of our loved ones, Israel and the world?

If we are praying, this means we are trying to communicate with a seemingly undetectable Powerful Intelligence that we think is involved with our lives, with whom we must believe we have the ability to engage and influence. For me, it



If we protect ourselves from all criticism, if we always defend ourselves against disturbances, we won't develop, morally or spiritually. Our bad habits remain. People begin to whisper: "you know we can't mention that subject around her." We withdraw from others because we're afraid to expose our vulnerabilities.

If we mean to grow, we have to do the opposite. If people or situations try to disturb us, let them have at it! What's the worst that can happen? A blow to the ego! But you know what? In the end, it's more painful, and it certainly takes more energy, to be on constant guard against all possible agitation! Instead, try to observe with equanimity as feelings come and go, and – above all and always – treat yourself and others with compassion, and maybe a little bit of humor thrown in. *L'shanah tovah!*

Rabbi Besser has been leading Congregation Beth Shalom in Bloomington, Ind., since 2012. ★

really comes down to this. If there is a G-d – there is hope. There is a chance for a better life now and in a world to come. There is a chance for our world, for all people and all our children.

Fortunately, our tradition teaches us of the Divine Shechinah Presence, of just such a powerful Force, One interacting with and influencing our lives. Knowing this enables us to pray while being truthful to ourselves and our understanding, relating to the hope of something more beyond this life, which this offers us all.

Hearing the *shofar* is traditionally recognized as one of the main *Torah* commandments relating to *Rosh Hashanah*. Who has the most difficult challenge me, having to engage the sound vibrations in a meaningfully connecting way, or you, who has to "hear" the sound in a way that will profoundly impact your life?

It's been said that because of its unpredictable sound, *shofar* blowing can be a frustrating and challenging endeavor. And it's true. But "you," actually, have the most difficult part of this partnership, because regardless of the sounds I make, you have to be able to hear and process them in a way that will awaken and increase your awareness and advance your *kavanah*, your spiritual intention.

To draw on a line from another one of our festivals, why is this sound different from all other sounds? Because it is an opportunity for us to reconnect with the deepest part of our life and genuinely experience the wonders of this New Year! The closer this sound of sounds helps us get to our heart, the more successful the time we have spent here will be.

From our current perspective, the most important thing for us is to have our *kavanah* in the right place, because this means that our hearts and minds are in the right place, and that we will know "wholeness" in our lives. Whole – ness! Holy – ness! The fact that we are even here together to celebrate *Rosh Hashanah*, any sounds we make and share together is wonderful. Listen to the sound of the *shofar* call, the resonance of energy and vibration, past and present, manifesting the wonders of the Creative genius that influences our existence.

Bruce David is a Judaic artist and heads *Light of the Nations*, a non-profit Jewish educational outreach organization which uses art, music and other forms of creative expression to share the modern day values of Judaism to our world. He welcomes comments at: [davidart@davidart.com](mailto:davidart@davidart.com). He will be glad to share the link to *Light of the Nation's YouTube Playlist*, which includes a *Jonah* animation, for those interested in viewing samples of their art-music videos. David's art may be viewed on his own Web site at [www.davidart.com](http://www.davidart.com). ★

# Yom Kippur



BY RABBI STANLEY HALPERN

## See Jonah run

On *Yom Kippur* we read the Book of Jonah, a text that is simultaneously incredibly simple and incredibly complex. Perhaps that is why Jonah and *Yom Kippur* fit so well together.

We know the simple story of Jonah. God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh, but Jonah goes to Tarshish instead. He is swallowed by a big fish (not a whale) and ends up in Nineveh.

It's a simple story that we teach our children. Simplistic Moral: Do What God Wants You To Do.

The problem with the Book of Jonah is that there is a substantial list of perplexing questions that jump up at us throughout the story:

What is the point of the gourd at the end?

Why does the book end by mentioning cattle?

Why are the most righteous people not Israelites?

Why is the big fish masculine in one part of the story and feminine in another?

And more.

However, while the answers to these are worthy of exploring at perhaps another time, for me the most perplexing question of all is why Jonah runs in the first place. Certainly, as a prophet Jonah knows that he cannot go where God is not. Why would Jonah do what he did at all – such an utterly futile act?

The answer, I would suggest, is found in Newton's Third Law. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. However, we need to understand what the action is and what the reaction is, and whose action and reaction these are.

The answer comes after Nineveh is saved, when Jonah vents his frustration towards God. Jonah almost shouts at God that he knew from the very beginning that God would not destroy the city. "You are a merciful and compassionate God – I knew you could not do it. All Nineveh had to do was say 'Sorry'".

God's saving of Nineveh was the action. Jonah's anger over the lack of justice (retribution) by God was the reaction.

Jonah is angry with God – so angry that he does not even want to talk to God. God tells him to go to Nineveh, but because he is angry, Jonah instead goes to Tarshish. God produces the storm, and Jonah ignores the storm by sleeping in the bot-

## DE KOVEN

(continued from page 11)

### Fun things we do between us and the world:

- Learning something new together
- Experimenting
- Trying new spices, fruits, foods, etc.
- Trying out new restaurants, stores, parks, neighborhoods to visit, roads to travel
- Solving household dilemmas
- Inventing new ways to "make do"
- New uses for common objects
- Being kind to others to other people (family, friends, strangers)
- Being kind to animals, insects, plants
- Pointing out things to each other that we think the other would enjoy
- Bringing new people into each other's lives
- Pretending
- Speaking in accents
- Pretend conversations as we walk by people, e.g.: "Where did we leave that body?"
- Walking together
- Exploring different paths
- Walking and talking
- Building junk sculptures on our walks
- Noticing, smelling and touching flowers
- Listening to bird songs, trying to sing along
- Sharing chores – keeping things fair, in balance
- Being with the kids and grandkids
- Helping together
- Deciding together about how to spend and save

I hope you appreciate these items on our list. In reflecting on the past year and preparing for what you might do to make improvements in the New Year, get together with one or more loved ones and both of you make a list of what you will do to keep your relationship alive, whole, and joyous.

*Bernie De Koven, is the author of The Well-Played Game, A Playful Path and Junkyard Sports. A Playful Path is available here: <http://www.aplayfulpath.com/the-book/> where one can also purchase the paper or download the electronic version for free. Bernie can be found on the Internet at his two main websites: <http://deepfun.com> and <http://aplayfulpath.com>. ✨*



tom of the boat. Jonah ends up inside the fish and says nothing to God for three days. Finally, Jonah confronts God. He demands of God an accounting for God's lack of justice.

And so here we come to the reason Jonah and *Yom Kippur* fit so well together. We want God to show compassion for us, for our loved ones and for our community.

## High Holidays resolutions



BY RABBI MORDECHAI LEVIN

Jewish people across the world are engaged in preparations for *Rosh Hashanah* – one of the most important times in the Hebrew calendar. *Rosh Hashanah* has deep significance in that it marks the beginning of a process of reflection and self-examination that culminates in *Yom Kippur*. The High Holidays are our chance to start again, renew ourselves and renew our lives.

Rabbi Abraham J. Heschel, a Conservative rabbi and theologian, wrote a book titled, *The Sabbath*, in which he explored the importance of time in Judaism.

Heschel wrote that Judaism teaches us to be attached to holiness in time, to be attached to sacred events, to learn how to consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of a year. The *Sabbaths* are our great cathedrals, and our Holy of Holies is *Yom Kippur*.

Heschel said that Judaism is a religion that aims to sanctify time. For some people, time is unvaried, homogenous. To them, every day is like every other day and every hour is like every other hour. But no two days or hours are alike. Each hour is unique and the only one given at that moment, exclusive and endlessly precious. If before going to bed every night, we would tear a page from the calendar and say, "There goes another day of my life, never to return," we might become aware of the value of time. Time is life. Therefore, if we waste our time we waste our life.

The sounding of the *shofar* calls us to examine our lives: "Awake, you sleepers, and ponder your deeds; remember your Creator, forsake your evil ways, and return to God!"

Therefore on these High Holidays, let us resolve to live a good life, a life of commitment and purpose.

Let us find the time to be grateful for the daily blessings that we are given. The blessing of life itself and the opportunity to enjoy our lives in the time we have.

Let us resolve to tell the people we love that we love them, to reach out to those who need us, to make amends with those who have hurt us and whom we have hurt. (see Levin page 15)



But at the same time we want God to mete out justice to all those would harm us.

Compassion for us? Justice for them?

Maybe that's not how it works.

*Rabbi Stanley Halpern serves Congregation Beth Shalom in Carmel, Ind. ✨*

# Book Review

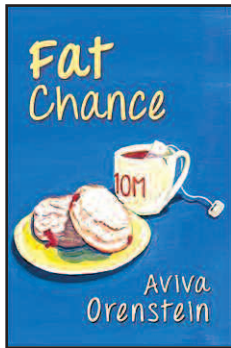


REVIEWED BY JULIE BLOOM

## Wonderfully humorous first novel

**Fat Chance.** By Aviva Orenstein. Quid Pro Books. Feb. 2016. 234 pgs. \$18.99 paperback.

Aviva Orenstein, Indiana University Professor of Law and Val Nolan Faculty Fellow, has written her first novel, *Fat Chance*, a wonderfully humorous portrait of a middle-aged woman's struggle for self acceptance. We see ourselves in Orenstein's protagonist Claire as she confronts the familiar issues of body image, parenting, sex and love.



Orenstein uses humor and pathos as she introduces the heroine, Claire, a donut loving, five foot three inch, 40-year old divorced mom and lawyer who's stuffed into a 1X pantyhose and a size-16 navy blue suit. Having just lost her father to a massive heart attack, she sits *shiva* at his Boca Raton condo reflecting on the cool, detached relationship between them, the disapproval, perfectionism, the criticisms of her physical self, and wonders why she isn't feeling anything at the loss.

Her father's death and the turbulent flight back home extract from Claire the resolution to take more control over her life, her compulsive eating, and her body. She returns home and with the loving support of her best friend Joanie, signs up for an exercise class at her local gym. This is where she meets Rob, her exercise partner "a furry teddy bear with an ironic, knowing smile" who, unlike her ex-husband Jeremy, listens to and enjoys her as she is. Friendship turns into a romantic attraction and despite the impossibility of it all, Claire and Rob find themselves crossing boundaries neither imagined.

Orenstein uses Claire and Rob's relationship as an exploration of Claire's concerns about her body, her desirability, her feelings about parenting her teenage son Sam with whom she struggles to connect and appreciate, and her Jewishness. Rob, though not altogether forthcoming, is affirming, thoughtful,

knowledgeable, neurotic, and (not least) finds Claire sexy. What develops between them I will leave unspoiled to the reader.

Orenstein provides us with twists and turns throughout the book touching upon spousal abuse, adultery, friendship, religious observance, adolescence, and self acceptance. Her characters are archetypes of someone, anyone you have undoubtedly met and embody the struggles and life experiences that make us human. With humor and insight she moves the reader from crisis to resolution, from self deprecation to self worth.

When Claire's coworker Teresa regularly calls in sick each Monday, Claire thinks she might have a drinking problem.

"How could anyone call in so many Mondays? Also, the woman was accident prone. In the past six months alone she had dislocated her elbow, smashed her thumb, and tripped, bumping her head... She dressed very fashionably and always wore a ton of makeup. I marveled at these women who considered their faces canvases on which to paint a beautiful, flawless, but to me, eerily inhuman mask."

What she discovers, however, is that Teresa is being physically abused by her husband. Orenstein creates mystery and suspense as the reader wonders if Teresa will escape the next blows and whether she has the strength and support to make a life for herself on her own. Orenstein handles this with sensitivity and the seriousness it deserves.

Curiosity is piqued, too, about the relationship between Claire and Rob, their sexual attraction to one another, whether this attraction will be actualized, and if it is, what changes in their and the lives of others will materialize. This relationship, it turns out, is a complex one on many levels, and it's also the relationship that helps Claire see herself as worthy of love and respect. Rob, no matter how the reader feels about him, is a catalyst for Claire's transformation. And transform she does.

"Whatever happened, I felt poised for a good new year. I would deepen my friendships. I'd try to get along better with my rotten kid. My house would become a home I could feel proud of. And, perhaps for the first time, I would enjoy a sense of comfort and contentment in my own ample skin."

*Fat Chance* is a fun, quick read about the messiness of real life. It's an entertaining book that doesn't neglect the hard truths and struggles common to the human condition or the will to face them head on, and it is written with laugh-out-loud humor and down-to-earth compassion.

Julie Bloom is a contributor to The Jewish Post & Opinion and a member of the Jewish Renewal Minyan at Congregation Beth Shalom in Bloomington, Ind. ✨

# Letter to the Editor

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

Dear Editor:

After reading the tributes in your July 15, 2016 edition, I cannot resist the temptation to add some details about Elie Wiesel whose life touched so many individuals on this continent as well as in France and in Europe and Israel.

My contact with Wiesel began in the early 1970s when I began to review his books in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. I was privileged to obtain advanced copies of many of them in the original French editions in which he wrote them and hence I was able to review them ahead of the reviews which appeared in the English language newspapers. Several of those early reviews appeared in *The Post & Opinion*.



In the 1980s I decided to give a course in French at Toronto's Beth Tzedec Synagogue on L'Oeuvre d'Elie Wiesel – The Works of Elie Wiesel. I was happy to welcome 22 members of Toronto's French-speaking community to the 10-lecture series. During the course I had the bold idea of inviting Wiesel to speak to one of the sessions of the class in French and he immediately agreed. Because of his busy lecturing activities he could not come to the class while the course was being given but suggested that I assemble the group at our home and he would make time later to come and speak to the students.

True to his word, he contacted me and arranged to come to our house during one of his major speaking tours of Toronto. I got in touch with the students and they all came to our house (in addition to several people who heard about his French presentation) and we ended up with about 30 people. His French was magisterial and all present were blown away by his eloquence and elegance of speech. His talk was not restricted to his literary works; he touched as well on the important political issues that were resonating in the late 1980s. While he was with us, I asked him if he would be kind enough to autograph all the original first editions in French of his novels and nonfiction works which I had collected. He did so immediately and with enthusiasm!

Over the years my wife and I retained  
(see Letter, page 15)

# Media Watch



BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

## Rush Hour

On August 6, the CBS series, *Rush Hour*, aired an episode, "O Hostage! My Hostage!" written by Brian Chamberlayne. It starts with Captain Lindsay Cole (Wendie Malick) bragging that she is going out on date to a concert with a distinguished physician. The renowned – and, as it turns out, boastful – doctor has a very Jewish-sounding name.

Soon we see the captain confiding to a bar tender that she is so unimpressed with her date that she can't even muster any feelings for him. Right then, the doctor returns and cockily says, "Did you miss me?" She reflexively retorts: "You've only been gone for three minutes." He takes the opportunity to brag about his cross fitness routine even though she is the ace markswoman and expert at self-defense.

Soon the building, which happens to be the famous Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles designed by Frank Gehry, is invaded by angry masked men, who hold many hostages after some attendees escape. The captain is able to take a gun away from one of the perpetrators, but the others overpower her and hold her with the rest of the hostages. I found it unrealistic, by the way, that the kidnappers would allow a known police officer to sit right next to their sole target.

For most of the hour, the police team surrounding the building tries to figure out whom the angry aggressors are trying to kidnap. This is made difficult because some leaders in the police investigation are stubbornly taking the gunmen's words at face value. The two hero cops, Det. James Carter (Justin Hires) and Det. Yan Naing Lee (Jon Foo) are intent on cutting through all the rivalry and red tape and to plant themselves into the concert hall where they can aid the hostages, especially their captain and the person whom they determine to be the real target of this crime.

Yes, there are suspenseful moments and good action scenes. But I found the episode obnoxious because its one goal was to focus on the Jewish doctor as a bragging coward. One moment he tells the captain that he would "kill those bastards" if they put a finger on her, and the next moment he literally genuflects to them, apologizing for appearing to cross them and adding: "By the way, you guys are doing a terrific job." Later, at a critical moment when the saving of lives should

come first, the doctor demands that his hands be untied before the police rescue other hostages in imminent danger. Fortunately, no one pays attention to him since time is of the essence.

At the end of the ordeal, the doctor has the nerve to tell the captain: "They say that nothing brings people together like a tragedy. You know, I learned a few things today. You are a stone-cold fox." Yet even he realizes the lameness of his pick-up line in the wake of the let-down of his cowardly conduct. When she replies, "Get out of my way, Mel," he has no choice but to say, "Totally understandable." Obviously, he is not clueless, only gutless and graceless.

While the episode mocks the Jewish doctor, it also singles out an Israeli violinist to identify him as "worth six to ten million dollars." It does, however, offer a back-handed compliment to another Jew, architect Gehry, when Det. Lee clearly remembers a certain stairway which he "saw...in blueprints of the building years ago" because Gehry is his "favorite architect."

Someone connected with this series had Jews on mind and the results were gratuitous and insulting. The series had, however, been cancelled, and the remaining episodes were, as it happened, remaindered over the summer. So, fortunately, what was on mind on this show will now forever be out of sight and out of mind for the general TV audience.

### A look back at the 2015–2016 TV Season *Blackish*:

The Christmas episode of the popular family sitcom, *Blackish*, challenged the stubborn traditions of the family's dad, Andre Johnson (Anthony Anderson) to limit gifts to one per person and to celebrate the holiday with a take-out order of cheap fried chicken.

Writer Gail Lerner informs us that there is a passive-aggressive reason for those traditions, which are in reaction to Dad's parents. But the "moral" seems to be that growth comes when traditions are rethought – or, perhaps, analyzed and junked.

When Dad's co-workers converge on the family home, a crabby guest refers to a Jewish staff member as boring, but insists that she didn't know beforehand that the "boring" person was Jewish. While probably not intended, this juxtaposition of themes could lead to an associative syllogism of sorts: Jews are associated with traditions, but here traditions are bad or at least boring, so does it follow that Jews are boring?

### Judge Judy:

I happened to catch an episode of *Judge Judy* in which Judge Judy Sheindlin said to a litigant with a very Jewish-sounding name, "Yes or no. Don't give me a *geschichte* [long history]." I was impressed. That was

### LEVIN

(continued from page 13)

Let us find the time to make a new Jewish beginning for ourselves and our families.

Let us resolve to study more *Torah*, to speak kindness and love, and to live a life permeated with *mitzvot*.

My best wishes for a year of life, health, fulfillment, justice and peace. *Shanah Tovah!*

Rabbi Levin has led Congregation Beth Israel in Munster, Ind., since 2013. He received his rabbinic ordination from the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary, and is a member of the Rabbinical Assembly. In 2010, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City for his years of dedicated service to the Conservative movement and the Jewish community. ★



### LETTER

(continued from page 14)

contact with Wiesel and met him on several occasions in Florida and New York City. We used the opportunity to query him about the books and projects he was working on and we used the information to publicize his literary and other activities in various Canadian and American publications. My wife, who is the co-founder of the Agnon Group in Toronto, discovered that he was a great admirer of the Israeli novelist Agnon and she used the opportunity to invite him to re-visit our home for a lecture on the Nobel Prize winning writer. He agreed and confirmed his acceptance of the invitation on several occasions but alas his schedule and later his illness made it impossible for him to follow through.

Our hearts were saddened by the news of his passing. Elie Wiesel was the conscience of humankind. He was the personification of the word *mensch*. May his memory be a blessing for all of us.

Arnold Ages

**Photo Credit:** <http://www.chicagogmag.com/Chicago-Magazine/C-Notes/November-2012/Elie-Wiesel-Gives-a-Few-More-Hints-on-His-Book-with-Barack-Obama/> ★



very sophisticated and literate use of the Yiddish language which is usually tied to vulgarities when employed in popular media.

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. ★

# Book Review



REVIEWED BY  
PROFESSOR ARNOLD AGES

## Ambitious scope can be daunting and enlightening

*Maimonides and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon.* By James A. Diamond. Cambridge University Press. 2014. 319 pages.

The word polemics in Judaism is usually used to describe the arguments between Judaism and Christianity engaged in by defenders of each faith, primarily during the medieval period. It is also used to characterize the much more modest exchanges between Judaism and Islam. Some scholars have noted that this literary-religious genre is among the most arid of the literature of the Middle Ages because of the repetitiveness of the arguments and the depth of the vituperation hovering over them.

Within one sector of Judaism, however, polemics of a philosophical nature, have punctuated Jewish thought from the moment that the 'great eagle,' Maimonides (the Rambam), published his famous yet controversial *Guide to the Perplexed* (1190). Written in Judeo-Arabic presumably because Hebrew did not possess the necessary vocabulary to express subtle philosophical concepts, *The Guide* immediately inspired a fire storm of comment and criticism which has engaged some of the best minds in Judaism across the centuries – even up to yesterday.

Now a Canadian scholar, James A. Diamond of the University of Waterloo has published a comprehensive survey of the major trends historically in the responses offered to Maimonides by focusing on twelve of the most learned opponents and supporters of his views representing rabbinic, philosophical, and literary points of view. The author has buttressed his analysis with panoply of scholarly sources including a list of 250 bibliographical titles as well as a footnote apparatus of almost 1400 footnotes containing illuminating notations drawn from the author's extensive range of scholarship in the field. His purpose, a

daring attempt to show how the dialectic of the responses to Maimonides, aided in the creation of the structure (canon) of Jewish belief.

The first 70 pages of this volume pivot on a close reading and exegesis of Maimonides' displeasure with anthropomorphic (describing the Divine having human form and behavior) readings of the Bible (because of its uncomfortable association with pagan religions), and his various disquisitions on the way to understand the love of God in philosophical parlance as expressed especially in the Song of Songs. Diamond also explores the Maimonidean attempt to collapse the distinction between rational (*mishpatim*) and non rational (*chukim*) laws in the *Torah* as well as his resistance to the idea of angels 'which Maimonides drains of any ontological reality' (the nature of being) and 'substitutes for simply nature and natural causation.' The author has much to say as well about the 'esotericism' of the Rambam's philosophical ideas.

In the following 205 pages of this challenging work the author pits a dozen luminaries against each other as they reflect diverse Jewish reactions to Maimonides over the centuries. Some of Diamond's choices are obvious, others quite surprising. In a review it is possible, of course, to list only a small sample of the learned objections and agreements with the intellectual primacy nay, even sacrosanctity, which Maimonides acquired. But beginning with Nahmanides (1195–1270) the voice of the opposition begins to be heard by a man whose mystical predilections and Kabbalistic sentiments moved him to reject what he felt was the sterility of the God image in Maimonides as well as his theoretical hypotheses about creation – which tend to negate actual creation and which Nahmanides saw as the subject matter of all of Genesis.

In his tabulation of the critical voices Diamond introduces the 'Ritva', Yom Tov Abraham Ishbili – (1260s–1320s), a name which even the cognoscenti would not necessarily know as one of the unique interlocutors in the above debate. Ostensibly seen as a partisan of Nahmanides, Ishbili actually demolished the latter's approach by slyly suggesting that he merely wanted to ameliorate and fine-tune Nahmanides' arguments. However, the full effect of his contribution was to establish the unique importance of Maimonides as one worthy of the crown of Moses, a clear message that the logic of philosophy outranks mysticism. Ishbili also voices dissatisfaction with Nahmanides' lack of philosophical rigor in his depiction of the creation saga.

Abarbanel (1437–1508) also had problems with Maimonides' reputation but recognized the philosophical genius of the colossus

that bestrode Jewish thinking and he, Abarbanel, displayed a respectful ambivalence in contesting the new Moses' Biblical interpretations. This can be seen in Diamond's thoughtful but very complicated comparison of the differences between their respective understandings of the Akedah, the binding of Isaac. On the issue of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, justified by Maimonides' apologia on behalf of sublime faith commingled with fear, Abarbanel dissents by exploring the 'erasure of the future' implied in Abraham's faithful gesture.

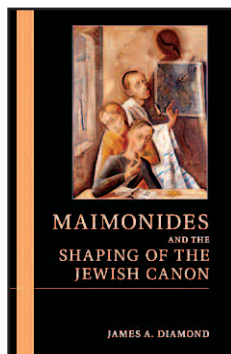
One of the most interesting challenges to Maimonides' centrality in Jewish thought comes from the 16th century sage Ibn Gabbai (1480–1540) who's *Avodat Hakodesh* is a fierce refutation of both *The Guide* and the *Mishna Torah*. Ibn Gabbai takes on Maimonides and his war against anthropomorphism by offering a *Kabbalistic* vocabulary which infuses the *Torah* with a deeper meaning than that inherent in the Maimonidean narrative. The latter is fearless in rejecting Maimonides 'philosophically verifiably knowledge' and chooses the wisdom of the tradition as a superior mode in interpreting the *Torah*.

The second half of Diamond's survey of thinkers who intersected Maimonides includes Spinoza, Buber, Hermann Cohen, Naphtali Yehuda Berlin and Abraham Isaac Kook, all of whom recognized the need to confront the looming giant of Jewish philosophy but who were radically different in their approaches to him. Both Spinoza and Buber, as ardent students of the Hebrew Bible, wrestled with Maimonides' definition of words such as '*ruach*' (wind, spirit, essence?) and the "spokenness" of the Bible and the understanding of those terms in grasping the will of God.

Diamond's emplacement of Hermann Cohen, the 19th century German-Jewish philosopher of reason, as a worthy companion to Maimonides, is justified by a look at the "Jewishness" of their intellectual endeavors. As for the coupling of Berlin (the head of the 19th century Volozhin Yeshiva) and Kook (the first Chief Rabbi of pre-State Israel) in the final section of his study, the author links them to Maimonides because of a certain tolerance they exhibited towards nontraditional belief and practices and their use of *Kabbalistic* modes of *Torah* interpretations.

The very ambitious scope of James Diamond's book can be daunting but an investment in a careful reading of his text can yield both enlightenment and pleasure.

Arnold Ages is "Distinguished Emeritus Professor" University of Waterloo (Ontario, Canada) and the "Scholar-in-Residence" at the Beth Tzedec Synagogue (Toronto, Canada). ★





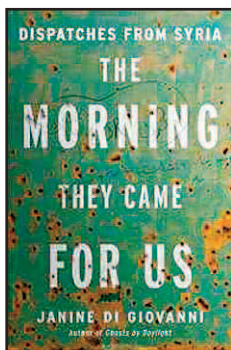
# Book Review



REVIEWED BY  
RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

## Syria's brutal civil war

*The Morning They Came For Us (Dispatches From Syria)*. By Janine Di Giovanni. New York: Liveright Publishing. 2016. Pp. 206. \$25.95.



*The Morning They Came For Us* is an important book with lasting consequence by author Janine Di Giovanni, award-winning (including two Amnesty International Awards) foreign correspondent and Newsweek's Middle East editor. She expertly captures the near indescribable pain of Syria's tragic, by now five year old, brutal civil war with its immense toll of millions of innocent human lives violated, murdered, displaced and driven away. After all, Syria is a significant Middle Eastern country which until recently kept together its religiously and ethnically diverse Arab population.

The book, written in a conversational style with stark realism, is an irresistible yet gut-wrenching read stirring our conscience, of a bitter conflict erupting following the 2011 Arab Spring, with a heroic call by common Syrian citizens for a new democratic Syria replacing an authoritarian regime. President Bashar al-Assad was not about to let go of his consolidated power in the hands of the Muslim Alawite sect, a minority within the Shia and comprising just 12 percent of the Syrian population with its Sunni majority.

The author's prior extensive experience of covering other troubled spots such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda and East Timor, is surely an asset, as she penetrates Syria's surreal reality with persistence and compassion having gained an invaluable perspective as well as the tough endurance skills to contend with the high risks of reporting from the front lines of lethal fighting. Being a woman, and a Western one, are added liabilities. Di Giovanni tries to be fair in pointing out the atrocities committed by all concerned. However, there is a danger that too neutral an attitude protects the original overpowering aggressor, and not the

victims. Assad's superior military forces with outside help have indiscriminately attacked the rebels, civilians, residential neighborhoods, hospitals and schools, even using dropped barrel bombs and chemical weapons.

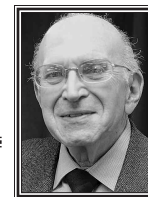
She speaks of the grief of mothers on both sides, depicting and embracing ordinary Syrians who courageously attempt to lead normal lives in the midst of war's chaos. This loving mother of a young son feels so keenly the suffering of children and their agonizing mothers and often lost fathers under harrowing circumstances of a deteriorated human and physical environment. She and her two women companions caringly buy a pair of shoes to a needy child in Aleppo, mindful of the many barefoot children in Syria's cold winter. In divided Aleppo which she describes with an eye to history as "the Leningrad of the Syrian War" (p.124), painfully watching with shocked parents and a helpless medical team the death of a sick baby in a hospital deprived of essential medications; the old man digging for food in a heap of garbage, and who wouldn't also weep for 32 year old desperate Carla living with her traumatized children in an unfit structure across from a bombed out church in Homs.

Throughout the book which is mainly focused on the author's Syrian encounters in 2012, her concern for violated women is evident. How painful it was for 25 year old Nada, an opposition supporter in Latakia, who was raped and tortured in a Syrian prison during eight months and three days while her parents were told she was dead. The consequences for a raped woman is most critical in the Muslim world where virginity is expected at marriage, otherwise the entire family is burdened with shame in the strict honor code. As in the Bosnia war, rape is used as a humiliating weapon.

Di Giovanni extensively interviewed raped Syrian women scattered in the region in various settings, including refugee camps and safe houses. She was employed by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in parts of 2013-2014 in Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon, concerning the sexual vulnerability of Syrian women refugees with children but without husbands. She notes the mass rapes of Yazidi women by ISIS (The Islamic State) fighters.

Di Giovanni bemoans the United Nations' failure in Syria, in spite of past painful mistakes elsewhere, allowing the tragic events to continue and sharing a sense of guilt that she and her fellow journalists could not make a difference. Her following personal reflection is revealing of her stature, "How different my life would have been had I never seen a mass grave or a truck with bodies, all

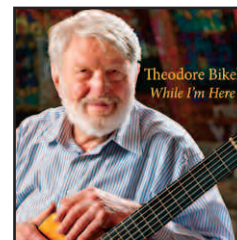
# As I Heard It



REVIEWED BY MORTON GOLD

## A superb singer, guitarist and actor

A two CD set called *Theodore Bikel: While I'm Here* produced by Red House Records will be released on Sept. 16, 2016. The first CD contains 16 tracks with Bikel's recollection of various events in his life and the second CD contains 17 tracks of him singing songs with various ensembles or with Bikel accompanying himself on the guitar. (He was a superb performer on the guitar.)



As Shakespeare observed, each person plays many parts during the course of his lifetime. During the 70 years as a performer, as an actor, Bikel appeared on the legitimate stage in London (*A Streetcar Named Desire* as Stanley Kowalski opposite Vivian Leigh), on Broadway (*Captain von Trapp* for two years in *The Sound of Music*; and for over 2000 performances as Tevye in *Fiddler On The Roof*) or in Hollywood films (*African Queen*). He was a folk singer who made over 20 recordings, one of the founders of the Newport Jazz Festival, having been a mentor to Judy Collins and Peter Yarrow. He was president of Actor's Equity, a human rights activist, an ardent supporter of the use of the Yiddish language and a staunch supporter of the State of Israel.

I do not know which I enjoyed more: listening to him share stories and anecdotes on the first CD or him singing on the second. Among various stories on the first, he recalls meeting David Ben Gurion at a dinner in London. BG asked him to sing a Yiddish song and he did. This (see Gold, page 18)



dead, piled one on top of the other, their skin changing from the softness of the living to the leathery skin of the dead. Or a torture cell with the incarcerated's dying wish and last words of love to his family." (p.171).

*Dr. Israel Zoberman, founding rabbi of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, is the son of Polish Holocaust survivors. He spent his early childhood in Displaced Persons Camps in Austria and Germany. ★*

**GOLD**

(continued from page 17)

was noteworthy because the future prime minister of Israel practically banned the use of Yiddish in the Jewish State. At a memorial service at BG's grave years later, he sang that same Yiddish song...."things come full circle."

Another episode he recalled was being invited to speak at the Parliament in Vienna, Austria, the country where he and his parents fled in 1938. He sang two Yiddish songs there, the second the Partisan Song (*Zol Nit keyn mol a du geyst dem lest'n veg*) and he mentioned that it was customary to stand while it was sung and the entire parliament including the premier rose! He then donned a tallit and recited *Kaddish*. What a moment that must have been!

There were also several humorous stories, but I believe that I have written enough to let the reader know that just listening to him recall these events is worth the purchase of the set. The second CD, while a joy, is pure gravy!

Among the many performances, three stand out in my mind. One is the superb performance of *Erev Shel Shoshanim*, with words by Moshe Dor and music by Joseph Hadar. He is joined here with (Cantor) Mike Stein, viola and guitar and Jeff Stern, percussion. It is ironic that this love song very appropriate as a wedding processional is now frequently used as a melody for *Mi Chamocha* in the *Musaf K'dusha*. (In my view not at all appropriate.) It is the only track where no date or recording source is given. I suspect it is somewhere between 2014 and 2015.

It is not generally known that the song *Edelweiss* was not part of the original score in the *Sound of Music*. It was written by Rodgers and Hammerstein specifically for Bikel in a Boston hotel room. In this recording made in 2006, the resonant baritone of his earlier years is not there. What remains, and wonderfully at that, is his artistry and musicality which shine as brightly as ever.

There are songs in several languages in many styles and they are all a joy to hear. Many were performed at a concert given at Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles in 1965 and we are grateful that they were recorded and allowed to be used in this CD. I suggest that the last song, *When I'm Gone*, written by Phil Ochs, will bring a tear to even one with a hardened heart. It was recorded in 2014 at a concert at his 90th birthday celebration in Saban Theatre in Beverly Hills. He passed away, all too soon, the following year. The CD's have the number: RHR CD286. Highly recommended.

*Dr. Gold is a composer, conductor, retired educator and a reviewer for the Post & Opinion.* ✨

**KAPLAN/RECIPES**

(continued from page 20)

- 1 Tbsp. coriander
- 2 Tbsp. pomegranate seeds
- 1 tsp. honey
- 1/2 crushed garlic clove
- Thyme
- Ground dried "Shata" chili pepper
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- Salt
- Ground black pepper
- Apple 'fan' for garnish
- Mint leaves in ice water

*Acorn Squash Preparation:*

Pre-heat oven to 345°F. Peel and cut the acorn squash in half, clean out the seeds and slice into thin half-moon shapes. Mix the olive oil, honey, garlic, thyme, salt and ground black pepper in a bowl. Once marinade is ready, place the acorn squash slices in the bowl and let sit for a few minutes. Place the slices on a baking tray with parchment paper and bake in the pre-heated oven for 10 minutes, or until soft on the inside and crispy on the outside.

*Quinoa Preparation:*

Boil 1-1/2 cups of water and 1 cup of quinoa, while stirring, for about 15 minutes. Drain the water and let cool.

*Plating Suggestion:*

Mix all ingredients, but the acorn squash, in a bowl. Season with olive oil, lemon juice, salt, ground black pepper and ground dried "Shata" chili pepper. Place the salad in a high martini glass and garnish with mint leaves and apple fan.

**Two Layer Apple-Honey Cake**

- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp. ground cloves
- 3/4 cup sugar or sugar substitute
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 3/4 cup canola oil
- 1/3 non-dairy creamer
- 1/2 cup honey or honey substitute\*
- 3 cups grated apples

**Frosting**

- 2 cups tofu cream cheese
- 1/2 cup unsalted pareve margarine
- 1 tsp. grated orange peel
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup honey (or honey substitute\*)

*\*To make cake diabetic, use sugar substitute and sugar-free imitation honey.*

Preheat oven to 325°F. Spray vegetable spray on 2 (9-inch) cake pans. Place flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves,

**SOMMERS**

(continued from page 20)

standing over isolationism." This spirit is the gift that Sommers has given to his family and the community, she said.

Born and raised in Frankfort, Germany on Dec. 29, 1920, Sommers was a teenage apprentice there when Nazi sympathizers destroyed his family's businesses on "Kristallnacht" or "Night of Broken Glass" which took place on Nov. 9, 1938. His father was taken to Buchenwald concentration camp and released after one month. Nazi officials promised the family that they could leave Germany if they sold their businesses and turned the money over to the government. His parents agreed and left for the United States with Walter and his sister, Lore, in January 1939.

In 1942, Sommers entered the U.S. Army's 306th Field Artillery Battalion, 77th Infantry Division, and fought in three major engagements in the Pacific. In the decades following the war, he became a successful businessman, helping Meis Department Stores grow from one store in Terre Haute into 10 stores in Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky. Sommers and his wife Louise raised two children and remained active in the Terre Haute community, devoting many hours to a variety of community services.

Now at age 95, Sommers still speaks at churches, schools, and community organizations. He shares his personal story and his vast understanding of European history with visitors at CANDLES. Through these activities he helps to repair the world and make it a more respectful and humane place for everyone.

*Information for this article came from the Terre Haute Tribune-Star by reporters Dianne Frances D. Powell and Jim Avelis (also photo credit). More information about the museum is available online at [www.candleholocaustmuseum.org](http://www.candleholocaustmuseum.org).* ✨



and sugar or sugar substitute in a large bowl and mix. Add vanilla, eggs, oil, non-dairy creamer and honey. Mix then add apples. Place half of the batter in each baking pan. Bake in preheated oven about 45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool. Beat cream cheese and margarine in a bowl until fluffy. Add orange peel, confectioners' sugar and vanilla and blend. Add honey. Chill until firm enough to spread. Place one cake on a serving dish. Spread with 1 cup frosting. Top with second cake and spread remaining frosting on top and sides.

*Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, book reviewer, food writer and cookbook author who lives in Jerusalem.* ✨

# Millions of Israelis depend on MDA's fast response. And we're depending on you.



Your support provides Magen David Adom with the equipment, medical supplies, paramedic training, ambulances, and Medicycles needed to save lives in Israel every day. More than 8.5 million Israelis are counting on MDA's fast response — for every thing from heart attacks to terror attacks.

**Your support saves lives.**

**AFMDA Midwest Region**  
3175 Commercial Avenue, Suite 101  
Northbrook, IL 60062  
Toll-Free 888.674.4871 • [midwest@afmda.org](mailto:midwest@afmda.org)  
[www.afmda.org](http://www.afmda.org)



AMERICAN FRIENDS OF  
MAGEN DAVID ADOM

**SAVING LIVES IN ISRAEL**

## Walter Sommers receives German civilian award

On Aug. 6, Holocaust survivor Walter Sommers (below) of Terre Haute, Ind., received the highest civilian award from the German Consul General Herbert Quell at the CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center there. In



the presence of family, friends, community leaders and local and regional media, the docent and long-time supporter of the museum received the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. Presented on behalf of German President Joachim Gauck, it is the highest tribute that Germany bestows on individuals – Germans and foreigners – for social, political, economic, charitable or philanthropic services to its nation.

The crowd at the museum gave Sommers a standing ovation after receiving the medal and shaking the hand of Quell, who had said that Sommers was chosen for the award because of his outstanding contribution to German-American relations and his life of volunteerism and reconciliation with his country of birth.

Quell, who traveled from Chicago for the ceremony, told the *Tribune-Star* that he believes Sommers is the only Order of Merit recipient in the Terre Haute area and one of a few in Indiana, but hundreds have been given the award globally in the last year.

Sommers' daughter, Nancy, said her dad taught his children to live each day with optimism. She said Saturday's celebration was about celebrating her father's spirit.

"He has chosen optimism over pessimism," she said. "He has chosen hope over fear. He has chosen education over ignorance. He has chosen cultural under-

(see Sommers, page 18)

# The Jewish Post & Opinion

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

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
INDIANAPOLIS, IN  
PERMIT NO. 1321

## The Kosher Kitchens



BY SYBIL KAPLAN

### Rosh Hashanah recipes

A few years ago I wrote a column in which I interviewed chefs and found it quite fascinating. For *Rosh Hashanah*, I am including recipes of two chefs, Chef Nir Elkayam of the Inbal Hotel in Jerusalem whom we have met and interviewed and Chef Alon Hirtenstein from the InterContinental David, Tel Aviv. I also include a *Rosh Hashanah* favorite.

#### Festive Holiday Lamb

Submitted by: Chef Nir Elkayam,  
Executive Chef, The Inbal Jerusalem Hotel



1 lamb shoulder on the bone  
2 Tbsp. olive oil

#### Marinade ingredients:

20 small red onions  
20 garlic cloves  
30 pitted dates  
1 bottle of semi-sweet red wine  
1 ginger root  
1 pod of cardamom  
1 stem of thyme  
1 cup of olive oil

Sear all sides of the lamb with the olive oil. In a stockpot, pour the marinade ingredients into the pot and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and let cool. In a large deep roasting pan, pour half of the marinade in, add the lamb, then add the remainder of the marinade over the lamb. Wrap the pot tightly in parchment paper and then in aluminum foil. Place in the refrigerator for about 12 hours. Pre-heat the oven to 280°F. Remove 2/3 of the liquid and pour into a stock pot, simmer until the sauce is reduced to a thick consistency (thick enough to coat the lamb and not too runny). Remove foil and parchment paper and place the pot in oven for about 1 hour or until the lamb is soft and nearly falling off the bone. Raise the temperature to 325°F until the lamb turns a golden brown. Once the sauce has reached the correct consistency, using a hand blender, blend the marinade with the dates, onion and garlic from the lamb pot to create the sauce for the lamb.

#### Quinoa and roasted

#### Acorn Squash Salad (Serves: 2)

Submitted by: Chef Alon Hirtenstein,  
Aubergine at the InterContinental David,  
Tel Aviv



1 cup quinoa  
1 acorn squash, roasted and sliced into thin half-moon shapes  
1 Tbsp. chopped cranberries  
1 Tbsp. diced fresh fruit (persimmon, kiwi, nectarine or fruit of your choice)  
1 Tbsp. chopped caramelized hazelnuts  
1 Tbsp. parsley

(see Kaplan/recipes, page 18)