

It took a move to Alaska, a moose and four years without plumbing for me to find my Jewish soul

BY LILY COHEN

PHOTOS BY JOHN HARLEY

According to family lore, my great-grandmother had three sets of dentures: One for dairy, one for meat and one for Passover. I fear she would be rolling in her grave if she knew that I lived without running water for four years. It's debatable whether I maintained one set of clean dishes; the prospect of washing two separate sets was laughable.

From 2014 to earlier this year I called Fairbanks, Alaska – a place where many residents live without plumbing to avoid dealing with pipes bursting when the temperature drops to negative 40 – home.

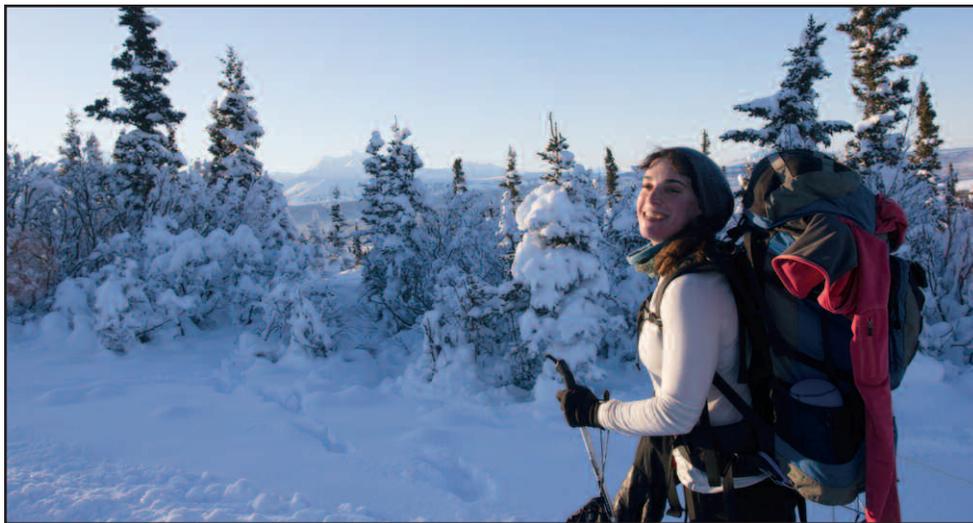
I was raised the type of East Coast Jew who loves *matzo* ball soup but absent-mindedly eats toast for breakfast the morning after Seder. We only went to *shul* if we were visiting my grandparents, though my father insisted that I have a *bat mitzva*. (This, despite the fact that he defines himself as an atheist. We've all got inconsistencies.)

I first came to Alaska for a summer job studying climate change, tromping around bogs and fixing instruments that measured greenhouse gasses. Straight out of college, I was looking for adventure. I never imagined that Fairbanks would become home.

That summer I was too infatuated with the canoe trips, wild blueberries and endless daylight to notice the lack of Jewish camaraderie. There were a handful of Jews in my social circles, but I was shocked at how little exposure some of my friends had to Judaism. While being irrationally nervous that I hadn't made enough food for a dinner party, I might mention that I learned this trait from my Jewish mother.

The conversation would abruptly stop as a friend asked "Wait, you're Jewish?" If I responded by saying that of course I was Jewish, my last name is Cohen, they would stare at me blankly – and then ask me to explain Judaism. Each time, I was left confused about why a casual reference to a stereotype completely derailed our conversation.

Yet I happily told my friends about my relationship to Judaism. I found a surprising amount of joy in sharing traditions with newcomers to Jewish holidays. When I threw my first Hanukkah party, my friends were eager to learn the stories and eat crispy latkes. A festival of lights is no joke when the sun only peeks above the horizon for three-and-a-half hours per day.



I co-hosted the first *Seder* I held at my cabin with one of my few Jewish friends. She spent much of her time guiding back-country trips, salmon fishing from her remote cabin and leading dog mushing tours, so I was lucky to catch her in town. We knew each other through an Ultimate Frisbee team; most of our guests also played. One of our teammates brought the most beautiful homemade *challah* that I have ever seen. Excited to attend his first Passover, he learned how to make it for the occasion.

Yet he was not the only source of questionable food that night. The "brisket" I had prepared was actually a moose roast. My mother assured me that moose was *kosher* because she had read so on the internet, but I had doubts. Moose have cloven hooves and chew their cud, but this moose was shot by a friend, not slaughtered according to *kosher* law. Since there are no domesticated moose, securing a *kosher* roast would first require finding a rabbi prepared to tackle a 1200-pound wild animal that can capably fend off a bear.

When *Rosh Hashanah* rolled around I pulled out the slop bucket from under my sink and we threw bits of bagels into the grey, sudsy water. (Because my cabin had no plumbing, my sink opened up to a 5 gallon bucket that I emptied into my backyard.)

Looking back at my first year in Alaska, I realized that I had never hosted so many Jewish events before. As my second winter solstice approached, I worried that if I didn't host another *Hanukkah* party there might not be one among my friends. I promptly bought a 10-pound bag of potatoes.

In the Northeast, I could afford to be lackadaisical about practicing Judaism because many other people did the work of community building, practicing traditions and teaching the next generation. Their work allowed me to drop in whenever I wanted. With so few people to hold that space for me in Fairbanks, I began to step up.

Finding a congregation seemed like an obvious place to start, and Fairbanks has a Reform synagogue that resides in a former duplex. It's too small to have a rabbi or Saturday services, but a community member leads services every Friday night. The first time I went less than ten people came, two of whom were aurora-chasing tourists.

Everyone was kind and welcoming, but it wasn't exactly a bustling community. I must admit to being put off by the shirts sold by the congregation, which proudly read "The Frozen Chosen;" the exclusionary themes of Judaism make me cringe. I only made it back for one other service.

Instead, I found other ways to integrate more Jewishness into my Alaskan life. I started learning about the role of Jews in the recent history of Alaska; I was shocked that Ernest Gruening, the Alaskan territorial governor who lobbied Congress for statehood until it passed in 1958, was born Jewish. He became a senator, and got a building named after him on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus, where I worked. I spent years walking by that building without a clue as to who he was.

I also began reaching out to my aunts and uncles who served as guardians of my family's lineages, hoping to learn more about my own family's history. For one Passover, I even imported my mother. She came armed with the *Haggadot* that her family used as a child. They literally fell apart on our plates, but they still had my grandfather's annotations.

Some of my Alaskan friends had attended colleges that had exposed them to enough Jewish holidays for them to know their favorites. Through graduate school, they found their way to Fairbanks, where they started lobbying for me to throw a *Purim* party. For over a year I ignored the lobby's demands.

While I had learned about Esther in Hebrew school, I had only ever celebrated *Purim* when my *Hasidic* uncle who lives

(see L. Cohen, page 14)

Editorial

In my editorial for our July 4th Indiana edition, I wrote about the importance of paying attention to words and how saying, hearing and even thinking them can make one feel. (See it at: <https://jewishpost-opinion.com/?p=3510>).

I gave a quote by Viktor E. Frankl's from his book, *Man's Search for Meaning: The classic tribute to hope from the Holocaust*. About his experience in a concentration camp he wrote, "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: to choose his attitude in any given set of circumstances."

I know atrocities are taking place in our world but I did not imagine there was such a ghastly situation of this nature, although smaller in scope in our country today.

Since that editorial, I saw Oprah interview Anthony Ray Hinton, author of her newest book club choice, *The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row*. The book is about his experience of being unjustly accused of murder and forced to spend 30 years on death row. He was a 29 year old black man out mowing his lawn in Birmingham, Ala., when two white policemen approached, handcuffed him and took him to jail. He never got bail or an arraignment but spent the next 30 years in prison for a crime he did not commit.

Even though he was at work when the crime was committed and his boss vouched for him, he passed his lie detector test with flying colors and a gun found at his mother's house did not match the bullets used in the crime, an innocent man was found guilty by an all white prosecutor, judge and jury.

Fourteen years into his sentence Attorney Byran Stevenson, founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Ala., took on his case but it took them 16 more years to prove his innocence.

I'm not going into the hideousness of what Hinton experienced on death row for three decades, but I want to point out that if he can come away from that experience with no bitterness, hopefully I, and the rest of us, can let go of lesser grievances. I do not mean to minimize another's challenges even though they may seem small compared to Hinton's, because each individual's struggles are difficult for him or her.

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Also one cannot compare oneself to another person because what is easy for one is difficult for another and vice versa. For example, if an introvert and an extrovert go to the same party and the introvert introduces himself and talks to only one other person that may be a huge accomplishment for him whereas if the extrovert introduces himself and talks to several people that may be no effort for him at all.

Since *Elul* begins the evening of August 11th and Jews are supposed to be thinking about forgiveness and making things right in time for *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, I am sharing an excerpt from this interview (<https://talktv.site/talktv/JOsrtnDcc98/oprah-winfrey-facebook-live-with-anthony-ray-hinton>). Hopefully this will help motivate some of us to do what we are asked to do at this time of year.

Oprah: How could you go through all this and not be angry?

Anthony Ray Hinton: They had already taken everything away from me. When you allow people to dictate your anger or your happiness, you are giving them far too much power. I was not going to give them anymore than they had already taken. I had to ask a higher power to remove the hatred from my heart.

The first three years all I thought about was revenge. I lived and breathed it, but then realized it was destroying me. This is not who I am or how I was brought up to be. I could not laugh anymore and I was the type of person who not only wanted to laugh but loved to make others laugh. I knew I had to let this hatred go.

Oprah: I think this is important revelation for anybody to realize that you don't have to be in a darkened 5 x 7 foot cell unjustly sentenced to death to be carrying revenge in your heart. If you are jealous or holding a grudge against somebody, that's killing you as much as you would want to kill them.

Hinton: Forgiveness is not about the other person. I didn't forgive them because they asked me to or so they could sleep good at night. Forgiveness has nothing to do with them, it was about me. I wanted to be as happy and as whole and complete as I could be. The only way I could do that was to forgive them, and I hope they have come to their senses and found a way to forgive themselves for what they did to me.

"Forgiveness is giving up the hope that the past could be different." This is quoted from the Oprah Winfrey book, *The Wisdom of Sundays: Life-Changing Insights from Super Soul Conversations*.

The upcoming High Holiday season prescribing *cheshbon hanefesh* (self-reflection) is a good time to examine these values mentioned above. Happy *Rosh Chodesh* for the Hebrew month of *Elul*,

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1389 W 86th St. #160

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email: jpostopinion@gmail.com

phone and fax: (317) 405-8084

website: www.jewishpostopinion.com

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and *Shana Tova* for the following new year of 5779!

Jennie Cohen, August 8, 2018 ✨

Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

B.H.

Special times

Over the years I have had many personal audiences with our spiritual leader, the Rebbe of Lubavitch. I spent hundreds of hours listening to the Rebbe talk and expound on many different *Torah* issues and *Torah* laws.

The Rebbe spoke on many occasions that we are now living in very special times. A lot of positive changes are happening. Take for example war and peace. For thousands of years our planet was plagued by one war after another. The strong countries went to war and conquered the weaker nations. Twenty-five hundred years ago the Persians ruled over most of the world. Two hundred years later the Greeks went to war and conquered the Persian empire. Two hundred years later the Romans went to war and conquered the Greeks. And in between and before and after were many big and small wars.

In recent times World Wars I and II brought terrible destruction, and death, injury and suffering to tens of millions.

However, 78 years ago, things began to change. In 1940 many countries joined together to form the United Nations. The main goal of this organization is to bring peace to the entire world.

This was a major turning point in world history. Over the years more and more countries joined the U.N. and today almost every country in the world is a member. Today almost all of the nations of the world are trying to live in peace with each other. Just recently, North Korea decided to make peace with South Korea and the rest of the world.

Now the stronger nations are no longer going to war to conquer the weaker nations! And even more amazing, they are doing the opposite! Now many of the stronger nations are making big efforts to really help the weaker nations, and all those in need, everywhere on our planet!

I remember growing up in Indianapolis. This was at the time of the "cold war" between the U.S. and her allies, and Russia and her allies. Many of our neighbors built bomb shelters in their basements. They were afraid that Russia might attack us with atomic bombs.

Thirty years passed and miraculously the cold war ended. Russia and the U.S. made peace with each other, without any destruction, and without a single casualty!

Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union went through amazing

changes. For 70 years the Soviet Union was ruled by a communist dictatorship that caused terrible suffering. I have heard that Stalin and his government put 50 million innocent citizens to death! And how many more were tortured in prison and sent to spend years in prison or in hard labor camps in Siberia?

Why were these people cruelly murdered? What were their "crimes"? For example, if you believed in G-d, and publicly observed His Commandments this was a terrible crime in communist Russia. Why? Because this proved that you didn't believe in Communism. Communism opposed belief in G-d and religion, calling it the "opium of the masses".

Then, in 1990, the communist dictatorship miraculously came to peaceful end. The rulers of Soviet Union themselves decided to end the communist dictatorship.

Why do we call this a miracle? The end of the communist dictatorship in Russia was a major revolution. In the past, such major revolutions involved bloody wars. In 1776 America declared independence. However, the English rule over America did not end peacefully. America had to fight and win a bloody war of independence to gain her freedom. How did the communists come to power in 1920? Also by winning a bloody civil war that lasted for years and killed many thousands.

So when communism died a peaceful death in Russia in 1990, without even one casualty, this was an amazing miracle.

All of this brought tremendous benefits to over 200 million residents of the former Soviet Union. Now they are allowed to believe in G-d and live good and happy lives. Now they do not live in fear of the government and the secret police.

And this brought great benefits to all of mankind. This brought about the end of the cold war and the arms races. From then on America and Russia stopped making new atomic bombs, and most of the older ones were dismantled. Billions of dollars that were spent on armament and defense are now diverted to peaceful and practical purposes, to help all of mankind.

What is the cause of all of these changes for the good that we see now in our world?

The Rebbe told us that our generation is the last generation of the period of exile, evil and suffering. And that soon our generation will be the first generation of a new period, the period of redemption and eternal good, happy and healthy life.

Our prophets and Rabbis call this new period the "Days of the Messiah". Open the Bible to the book of Isaiah Chapter 2, Verse 4 where he talks about a time when there will be no more war, and weapons will be converted to useful tools.

We already see the beginning of the fulfillment of this prophesy. During the

About the Cover

To Our Year

By Suzy Friedman, of blessed memory



Suzy

Judaica art was the focus of Suzy Friedman's work for many years. Her creations are a reflection of her own spirituality – born of a childhood spent gathered around the family *Shabbat* table, the familiar fragrances of chicken soup, *challah*, and candles lingering through *Shabbat* services at synagogue – the holiday songs echoing throughout each season of a celebrated heritage. These are the memories that inspired Suzy's unique Judaica art interpretations, works that are at once reminiscent of our people's sense of oneness and belonging, of survival and miracles.

Suzy began her career as a Judaica artist designing calendars, book covers, posters, and event invitations, for a variety of local Jewish organizations. Mediums included watercolor, colored inks, oils, and acrylic. As demand for Suzy's work increased, she began designing *tallit*, *atarot* and *tallit* cases in needlepoint canvas as well as
(see Cover, page 5)



past 70 years we see a steady decline in the numbers of wars and the destruction caused by them. We see almost all of the nations of the world making efforts to live in peace. We see atomic bombs dismantled, and the uranium from them is now used to produce electricity for peaceful needs.

The Rebbe spoke many times about how each and every one of us can help to bring our redemption, to bring the "Days of the Messiah". Every good deed that we do, every time that we fulfill one of G-d's commandments, we bring goodness and holiness into our world.

This goodness and holiness is added to all of the goodness and holiness that our ancestors brought into the world for thousands of years. Soon our world will be completely good and holy. How many more good deeds are needed when will we fill the quota that is necessary in order to bring our final and complete redemption? We don't know. But we do see that now we are very close to the finishing line. We see remarkable things happening in our world.

Let us all devote our lives to doing good. This will bring us much happiness and fulfillment, and hasten the time when our entire world will know only good.

We hope and pray that this will happen soon. We want *Moshiach* now!

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

Guest Blog

BY NIGEL SAVAGE

hazon
THE JEWISH LAB FOR SUSTAINABILITY



Be nice to your rabbi

From his blog at <https://hazon.org/news-musings/hazon-blog/>

Being nice includes many things. Listen to them. Encourage them. Show up. Offer support. Ask them for advice or something you wanted to understand about Jewish tradition. (Rabbis are designed and built for the asking of questions to them, and it makes them sad if you don't ask them questions.)

Perhaps it was never easy to be a rabbi, but it feels uniquely hard today. Every part of a rabbi's job has become a specialty – teacher, therapist, counselor, prayer leader, communal leader, organizational head, fundraiser, someone who is good with little kids and teens and young couples and empty nesters and disabilities and aging and end of life and death. Life cycle events. Tragedies. Interfaith. Politics. Israel.

No one person can be outstanding at all of these things – simply to be good at many of them is a great accomplishment. Our expectations of rabbis are, nominally, high. Criticism comes easily and is sometimes said to them and sometimes about them.

Just to take the topic of Israel, alone: it has now been widely described that there are rabbis who have essentially said, “I have three AIPAC activists and two J-Street activists and whatever I say they'll attack me, so nowadays I try not to talk about Israel...” This country split nearly 50/50 in the last election, as we know, and whatever the politics of an individual *shul*, the rabbi is trying to lead as a Jewish teacher, and to support those who agree with them, and to respect those who disagree with them.

There are many rabbis, I think, who are beloved by their communities, and feel loved and respected and supported. But even those, I think, have much more chucked at them behind the scenes than most of us realize. Tensions between the job and the family. Being present. Emergencies. Expectations. The possibility of offending someone with a wrongly placed word.

And those are the lucky ones. Because there are other rabbis, less beloved, who are criticized and brought down so continuously that they lose confidence and go into a downward spiral. And there's a thin line between “being supportive” and telling a rabbi how to do their job.

One part of Hazon's job is about

COVER

(continued from page 4)

painted designs on hand-dyed raw silk. Each *atarah* was created to express the essence of the individual who would wear it. Her well-renowned *ketubot* were designed and executed in much the same way to illustrate the spiritual individuality of each newlywed couple.

Later, Suzy worked in pastels and oils focusing on landscape and still life. She also created three-dimensional Giclee-process *ketubot* and other Judaic themed prints. She taught art to secular and religious school students, and she taught mosaic classes in her home studio.

Suzy Friedman received her Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from Indiana University and her Master's Degree in Art Education from IUPUI at Herron.

Suzy Friedman passed away on Feb. 24, 2017. Besides being an extraordinary artist, she was a warm, generous woman who brought out the best in her students, family and friends. Her commissioned artwork can be found in synagogues and homes throughout the country.

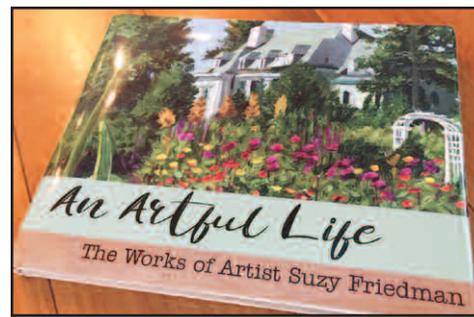


supporting rabbis. We have a retreat every year for rabbis (offering R&R and intellectual and physical and emotional sustenance), and resources for rabbis, and we try to support rabbis, directly and indirectly, in multiple ways.

But I wanted to write this email this week because I do believe that this moment – this time, this year, this era – with its fraughtness and its risks, needs rabbinical leadership more than ever. To be the best people we can be, to come together, to learn, to grow, to make a difference in the world – to do all that we need good leadership. And to have good leadership, including good rabbinical leadership, we need to support our rabbis, as strongly as we can. [And, no, that – obviously – doesn't include giving anyone a pass for unethical, inappropriate, or illegal behavior.]

In the last three months I've attended one wedding, officiated at two more, and I've been through the death of my father, his burial, *shiv'a*, and the ongoing process of saying *kaddish* every day. Despite a lifetime involved in Jewish life, and as someone who's been involved in leadership, in different ways, since my early 20s, I have continued to learn, at first hand, these last three months, just how much rabbis do, in different ways. How much is behind the scenes. How much is thrown at them. How much we take them for granted. How emotionally hard the work can be.

So... this is the week of *chesed*, and we're in a time of liberation, and this time



An Artful Life: The Works of Artist Suzy Friedman (pictured above) is available to purchase from her website (www.suzyfriedmanarts.com) as is some of her artwork. This volume is a veritable celebration of her works. Throughout her prolific career as a fine artist, Suzy displayed remarkable artistic range using oils, acrylics, pastels, watercolors, ink, pencil, cut glass and more to produce timeless works of art.

This collection showcases some of Suzy's most dazzling works, while demonstrating her uncommon ability to skillfully interpret her vision in a variety of media. Each section of the volume contains words of introduction that bring the reader closer to the artist herself and revealing how her bold evolution as an artist continued without end.

At the end of her life, Suzy was at the height of her artistic brilliance, saying in January, 2017: “I just needed to draw and paint. I needed to feel the subject...and the immediacy of the light and the textures. I loved the mixing of the paint, and understanding that I could accomplish more with less. And I learned to know when I needed to stop. I really just needed to paint...” ~ Suzy Friedman

The Indianapolis Art Center is having a fundraiser on Fri., Aug. 17th. At the same time, about 30 of Suzy's pieces of art will be on display in their library. Suzy's art will remain there until Oct. 2nd. ✨



– counting the *omer* – is when we think about how we use our freedom. We have freedom to treat rabbis badly, or neutrally, or for good. Let's use our freedoms for good.

Nigel Savage, originally from Manchester, England, founded Hazon in 2000, with a Cross-USA Jewish Environmental Bike Ride. Since then, Hazon has grown the range and impact of its work in each successive year; today it has more than 50 staff, based in New York City, at Hazon's Isabella Freedman campus, and in other locations across the country. Hazon plays a unique role in renewing American Jewish life and creating a healthier and more sustainable world for all. You can reach him at nigel@hazon.org. Reprinted with permission posted Thursday 5th of April – 5th Day of the Omer – Hod she'b'Chesed. ✨

We must learn to work together



BY RABBIS
DENNIS C. AND
SANDY E. SASSO

The Center for Interfaith Cooperation has become an important part of the religious and cultural fabric of our city and state. We are honored to be designated the 2018 Interfaith Ambassadors of the Year.

Below are excerpts of the words we spoke on the significance of interfaith at a March 18 event at Newfields (the Indianapolis Museum of Art).

Sandy Sasso: When Dennis and I were studying religion in college, the primer for interfaith was Will Herberg’s seminal book, *Protestant, Catholic and Jew*. Herberg wrote of ethnic divisions fading against a backdrop of three primary faith expressions, a “triple melting pot” that made up the American landscape. That landscape is now more textured and complicated than ever before. We are a country of multiple identities, of Christians and Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus and secularists.

Despite America being the most religiously diverse nation, we know little about each other. We live in a country, where more and more people when asked what their religion is, say, “none.” For faith traditions to be a source of strength, a resource for values, we cannot simply agree to tolerate one another, but to understand each other, not only the ways we are alike but also how we are different.

In the mid-20th century, interfaith conversations were among the like-minded. We made important contributions, standing together in national crises, building Habitat for Humanity homes; forming alliances to feed the hungry and to welcome immigrants. We worked against discriminatory legislation, prayed and celebrated together.

The interfaith gatherings of this century must build bridges that are far more complex and challenging than before.

We must develop conversations between the “religious” and the “nones.” Progressives and conservatives have to figure out how to talk without demeaning the other. We can’t say, either you agree with me on everything, or you’re against me. Extremism, on the left or the right, cannot be the religious standard bearer.

Interfaith is not just about getting to know one another; it is about figuring out how to be and work together even when

Shabbat Shalom



BY RABBI JON ADLAND

Pirke Avot 3:19: Everything is foreseen, yet free will is given. The world is judged with goodness, and all is according to the majority of deeds.

July 20, 2018, *D’varim*
Deuteronomy 1:1–3:22, 8 Av 5778

This will be my last *Shabbat Shalom* for a few weeks. In three weeks, Sandy and I will be heading to a place we’ve called our home away from home – Goldman Union Camp Institute (GUCI) – for the celebration of its 60th year as a Reform Jewish camp. I spent about 30 years on faculty at this incredible camp. Sandy worked there for many years running the infirmary and eventually chaired the GUCI camp committee. We raised our two children at GUCI and last summer Rachel and Evan married on a beautiful August night at camp.

In two weeks, Sandy and I will be in Chicago visiting with Josh and Karen and Liam. I haven’t seen Liam Ezra since May and I can’t wait to snuggle and play with him.

On Sunday, I head to another magical place in my life – Marc Adams School of Woodworking. I will be taking my 12th class at this school that nurtures and advances my love of woodworking. This year the class is relief wood carving taught by accomplished carver Mary May.

The class is somewhat intimidating, but I have my tools ready to go and look forward to the 10-hour days. As everyone who knows me knows, I love woodworking. I am not great at it, but I can make some nice things. The sound of my machines or the quiet and pensiveness of drawing out a new design or the pondering of how to proceed from the first step to the last fill my soul with calm and excitement at the same time.

One of the shirts Marc Adams sells states, “Layout is everything.” This isn’t just true about woodworking or any craft hobby, but it is true about life as well. Having a plan, knowing where you are headed, and looking at the road map are good tools for life. It doesn’t mean that spontaneity shouldn’t factor in as well. Letting life take you for the ride sometimes is good, but a plan is good, too. When you work on a woodworking project, a plan is



we disagree.

Dennis Sasso: Rabbi Abraham Joshua (see Sassos, page 7)

essential. When working on life, a plan is a good thing, too.

This week we begin reading the book of Deuteronomy. Much of Deuteronomy is a roadmap for the Jewish people. Moses begins the *parashah* by reminding the people how they got to where they are now – on the east side of the Jordan River – poised to enter the Promised Land. The Israelites didn’t just appear at this point by magic. They had a journey that took them from Egypt, through the Sinai Desert to Mt. Sinai and then to the shores of the Promised Land. It wasn’t easy. Mistakes were made. (That is why you measure twice and cut once.)

Eventually, after 40 years, the people make it and now Moses wants to give them the instructions, the plan, on how to live a life of blessing and not a life of curses. Moses tells the people that God has instructed him to say that if you do these things and follow the laws, then there will be blessing. If not, then there will be consequences. There is a plan for living a “Jewish” life in the Promised Land and if you choose to follow the plan all will be okay.

The *Pirke Avot* for this week helps us understand what I’ve written. “*Everything is foreseen, yet free will is given.*” Everything foreseen is the plan, but even within the plan you need to be able to think and problem solve and make decisions. Even in woodworking, even with a plan, you may find you need to alter a cut or a joint or the design. Each step of the way you need to think three steps further down the road. So too with life.

Plans change because you can’t account for every variable. Moses did his best to lay out the plan for the Israelites, but it was the unexpected that moved our ancestors in directions unknown. Who knew Temples would be destroyed or exile would come or the rise of a competing religion? The map changed, and new plans were prepared. Today, we continue to react and respond to the ever-changing world around us.

Next week I will learn a bit about carving. We will create designs, but with every grain in the wood and every flaw discovered, “free will” will take me in a new direction. I look forward to my spiritual retreat at Marc Adams School of Woodworking and the new me that emerges.

When you light your *Shabbat* candles this week, light one for the plans we have in our lives and the hopes and dreams that go with the plans. Light the other candle for “free will.” May the ability to adjust always be a strength we possess.

Rabbi Jon Adland has been a Reform rabbi for more than 30 years with pulpits in Lexington, Ky., Indianapolis, Ind., and currently at Temple Israel in Canton, Ohio. He may be reached at jadland@gmail.com. ✦

Kabbalah of the Month



BY MELINDA RIBNER

Av – Listen and be slow to judge

We welcomed the new month of *Av* at sunset July 12. It is considered a most emotionally intense month when people are often experiencing a roller coaster of feelings. The challenge and spiritual opportunity this month is to fix our hearing. During this month we must listen to ourselves and others and be mindful to not jump to conclusions or judgments so quickly.

Misunderstanding what is said and jumping to conclusions is often the source of many problems. One must exercise extra care especially this month to not be reactive and judgmental. Physically, *Av* is one of the hottest times in Israel and in many places in the world. The heat is reflected on the emotional and spiritual planes as well. It may be helpful to know that people may be more prone to be argumentative and defensive during the first half of the month. So we need to listen carefully and demonstrate patience and compassion with ourselves and others.

The month of *Av* contains within it the lowest and most sad day of the year, *Tisha B'Av* (July 21–July 22) and it also contains within it the highest and most joyful day of the year, *Tu B'Av* (July 27–28). *Tisha B'Av* is a day of Jewish and world tragedy. It was not just that the First and Second Holy Temple in Jerusalem were destroyed on this day, but many other terrible pogroms and persecutions throughout Jewish history occurred on this day as well. World War I began with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand on this day as well. That act on *Tisha B'Av* set the stage for Hitler and the Holocaust.

“The Nine Days,” the first nine days of the month of *Av* are an auspicious time for prayer, for reflection, for feeling the brokenness of oneself and the world. This is an optimal time to slow down, reflect upon your personal losses, the lack of inner and outer harmony in your life and create opportunities to share deeply with others, speaking and listening from the heart.

Each human being is potentially a miniature Holy Temple and like the ancient Temple we all are a little broken. Too often people run away from feelings of brokenness by distracting ourselves with food, sex, television, shopping, working too hard, and so on. There is a special

invitation during the Nine Days to honor and tune into the depths of your heart and soul. The Nine Days is a time to feel the range and depth of your feelings without blaming others for what has been triggered within you. By feeling our feelings, we can release them and begin to heal. Underneath the more surface feelings of anger, sadness and hurt we will find a need and longing to be loved. If we stay with that feeling, that longing, we may find that there is a great love inside of us, wanting to be felt and expressed.

If you find yourself crying during the Nine Days, that is good. This is not the time to suppress and stifle tears. Tears can open gates of blessing in heaven and within us. There are many kinds of tears. There is unholy crying that comes from thinking negative thoughts. This crying leaves one exhausted, drained, feeling like a victim. This kind of crying is actually an expression of anger turned inward that blocks the flow of healing and blessing to oneself. We feel worse than we did before we cried.

There is however another type of crying, that I call holy crying that comes from deep in the soul. These are holy tears like a portable *mikvah* that cleanse our soul and open our heart. When they flow through us, they purify, heal and strengthen us. It is helpful to distinguish between these two styles of crying so as to facilitate a shift within oneself to holy tears that are redemptive and cleansing, releasing pain and opening the heart.

When we go deep inside the depths of our personal pain, we often see that our pain is not personal at all. We discover that the real reason we are crying is because God's Presence is not fully revealed in this world. God created this world for love but who is willing to open and receive God's love? When we feel the deep feelings within our own soul, when we feel our brokenness, when we cry for God, paradoxically, our pain is often lifted from us and we feel more whole.

The *Talmud* tells us “There is nothing more complete than a broken heart.” Out of our brokenness, we receive solace and redemption. Through our tears, we see what is essential and true. We gain clarity and vision. We are more vulnerable, open and accessible to others.

The *Talmud* tells us that in every generation that the Holy Temple is not rebuilt, it is as if we have destroyed it. This refers not merely to the physical structure of the Temple, but rather to the embodiment of the spiritual essence, what the Temple represents in our lives. We can each, in our own bodies, homes and communities, build holy sanctuaries for the indwelling of the *Shechinah*, the Divine presence.

God instructs us in the *Torah*, “Make Me

SASSO

(continued from page 6)

Heschel said: “...[R]eligion is not sentimentality. Religion is a demand [and] God is a challenge speaking to us in the language of human situations. God's voice is in the dimension of history.”

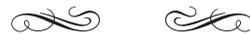
I think of religions as languages, different ways through which the spirit speaks, individually and collectively, with their own vocabulary, grammar, rhythm and prosody. Languages are meant for dialogue, not monologue; and interfaith dialogue is the conversation among religions that expands the dictionary of faith, adds new understandings, explores and pushes the horizons of God's love and justice for all.

Religions are also traditions colored by history and culture, insight and blindness, wisdom and folly, altruism and selfishness. The world's religions are collective journeys of the spirit to discern the call of the divine through history. In interfaith encounters, we are invited to participate in each other's travelogue, to go together, to learn and grow from each other's itineraries, and journey to new destinations.

We may not agree on details of doctrine; our customs and practices will differ; our holidays and life cycle observances will mirror the rhythms of our particular traditions. But in faithful encounter, we will love, care and honor one another. We build on hope, possibility and gratitude.

The rabbis taught: “The time is short; the task is great.” “It is not incumbent upon us to complete the task alone; but together, we are not free to abstain from it.” And, “If not now, when.” (*Pirkei Avot*)

Sandy Sasso is senior rabbi emerita of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck and director of the Religion, Spirituality and the Arts Initiative at Butler University in Indianapolis. **Dennis Sasso** has been senior rabbi at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis for 41 years. Reprinted with permission from The Indianapolis Star April 26, 2018. ✨



a sanctuary and I will dwell within you.” The verse does not say ‘in it’ or within or among you.” The Hebrew is clear, telling us that the purpose of the outer Temple is to experience the presence of God within it. The Temple is a vehicle for the interior experience. God wants to be known within each of us. This is a powerful affirmation to repeat until you hear these words resonate from deep inside, in the space between the breaths.

During these Nine Days, remember that the light of a candle still shines in the darkness, and darkness is a cover for an even greater light that we do not yet have the eyes to see. One light of a candle can

(see Ribner, page 8)

Spoonful of Humor



BY TED ROBERTS

A Fable: Adam sees the light

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

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

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

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

As the trees pulled more and more of the light below the horizon, Adam’s blindness increased. He chose to run to the declining sun. He must escape the danger of darkness.

But he fell over a large boulder. He rose, only to run into a tree. He resumed his running – somewhere there must be light and he must find it. He was cold and blind and fearful all at once.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jewish Educator



BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

America the beautiful

The drive from Bozeman, Montana to Yellowstone National Park is literally through Paradise – Paradise Valley, that is. The Absaroka Mountain Range rises nearly 6,000 feet above the Yellowstone River as it weaves its way through Montana and Wyoming for over 670 miles. The sky is a deep blue and cotton ball clouds litter this heavenly landscape making me feel as if I am inside a photograph. I can’t imagine a more beautiful place in the world than where I am right now until I come to the entrance of Yellowstone National Park and begin to wind my way through the mountains and valleys of this 3471 square mile national treasure.

From the valleys where literally “the deer and the antelope play,” to the thundering waterfalls, steaming geysers and bubbling mud pots, the Park overwhelms you with its primal, incessant beauty.

But you can’t really experience the awesomeness of this place behind the steering wheel so I park my car in a pullout in the Lamar Valley just in time to see a large black bear foraging in the grass

(see Lederman, page 9)



RIBNER

(continued from page 7)

light many candles without its own light being diminished. Let’s shine our light for the world to see. Let our spiritual light remove the darkness within us and around us. Let’s commit to doing deeds of kindness and let our kind deeds remove selfishness within ourselves and others. Let’s be careful and not be judgmental but listen to ourselves and others. And then let’s get ready for the highest day of the year, *Tu B’ Av*.

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. Website: www.kabbalahoftheheart.com. Email: Beitmiriam@msn.com. ☆

LEDERMAN*(continued from page 8)*

for food. It's almost dusk and there are only a handful of tourists witnessing this sight with me. We understand the uniqueness of the moment, the treat we have been given to see a bear in nature, undisturbed and yet protected.

Jewish tradition gives us a wonderful opportunity to stop and be present to the awe and beauty of nature by reciting blessings which celebrate the natural world. Upon seeing large scale wonders like oceans, mountains, waterfalls and rivers, we say: *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, oseh maasei v'reishit.* (We praise You, God, Sovereign of the universe, Who makes the works of creation.)

On seeing smaller things such as beautiful trees, wild animals, fields of flowers and even people we are happy to see, we say: *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, shekacha lo beolamo.* (We praise You, God, Sovereign of the universe, that such as these are in Your world.)

At a time when many Americans think that so much is wrong with our country, we do well to remember the many things about our country of which we can be proud. Our National Park System, created more than 100 years ago, is certainly one of them.

The National Park System (NPS) grew out of the inspiration and dedication of leaders, artists, naturalists and philanthropists like Teddy Roosevelt, Charlie Russell, Ansel Adams, John Muir and John D. Rockefeller. In 1916, Congress created the federal agency that manages all of our national parks and monuments and is responsible for the administration, protection and use of the 394 designated sites which are included within it, of which 58 are national parks. The mission of the NPS is



to promote and regulate the use of these lands, conserve the scenery and wildlife, provide for their current enjoyment and leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. But the tension between maintaining and protecting these lands and using and enjoying them is an ongoing one that requires continuing vigilance, financial resources and commitment.

Judaism has a lot to say about establishing a balance between using the resources we have and over-using and destroying them. The Torah begins by telling us the two purposes for which man was created. In Genesis 1:28 we learn that man was put on the earth to "fill it and conquer/subdue it." In Genesis 2:15, our divine purpose is "to work it (the Garden of Eden) and to guard it." From the beginning of time, we have faced the challenge of managing these two opposing ideas: the obligation to use our environment for our own needs while preserving and protecting it.

Midrash Kohelet Rabbah on Ecclesiastes 7:13 teaches us how God cautioned Adam when He showed him the beauty of Eden: "All that I created I created for your sake. Pay heed that you do not destroy it, for if you do there is no one to repair it after you."

The *Talmud* refines this message by exploring an important principle: we can use the earth for our needs but we cannot use any resource needlessly. That maxim is helpful in analyzing environmental issues today because it demands that we ask ourselves this question: Are there alternatives to using, altering and developing our land and resources which will minimize the impact on our environment such that we don't destroy our resources unnecessarily in accomplishing our goals?

Bringing that concept into our daily lives, can we make decisions that reduce the impact on the environment in the ways we eat, drive, work, live and acquire and distribute goods and services.



The National Park System is a testimony to our commitment, as Americans, to protect and conserve hundreds of thousands of acres of national beauty and historic and cultural sites. We should be incredibly proud of what we have created and motivated to visit the many wonderful parks and monuments that exist throughout the country. But the balance between protecting and safeguarding these lands and using and regulating them for our enjoyment is one that requires our continuing dedication and support so that our children and grandchildren will be able to sing the praises of "America, the beautiful" for generations to come.

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

Holocaust Educator



By DR. MIRIAM L. ZIMMERMAN

From concerts to sidewalks: Remembering the Holocaust here and abroad

While strolling through a museum, poet W. H. Auden noticed something else the old Master painters got right. In their paintings, artists captured suffering, complete with someone looking away, ignoring the tragedy. "...[H]ow well they understood/Its human position: how it [tragedy] takes place/While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along..." from his poem, "Musée des Beaux Arts" .. The old Masters included the *bystanders* in their depictions of suffering, the people who looked away as tragedy unfolded.

San Francisco: On the evening of May 7, 2018, the San Francisco's German Consulate did not look away. In partnership with the American Jewish Committee (AJC), it presented an evening of "Music, Fellowship and Remembrance" at the German Residence in the Pacific Heights district of San Francisco.

Written by seven different composers murdered by the Nazis, surprisingly energetic and upbeat music filled the beautiful Consulate. Imagine the magnitude of these composer's collective opus had their lives not been interrupted.

At the reception prior to the concert, I spoke with Matt Kahn, regional director of the San Francisco AJC and described an upcoming program, "German Again Citizenship Workshop." The workshop would take place just a few days later.



Leah and me in front of the San Francisco German Consulate. I am holding my German passport; Leah, her Einbürgerungsurkunde, citizenship document, dated Dec. 14, 2006.



My brother, Paul Loewenstein, found a postcard picture of "Katzenstein & Co." in some of our father's papers after he died. The picture depicts the family-owned store in the early 1930s, before Aryanisation (the confiscation of Jewish-owned stores by the Nazi's) – being held up in front of that same building as it is today.

The Consulate, in partnership with the Jewish Family and Children's Services Holocaust Center, and the Peninsula Jewish Community Center, informed Jews of German descent how to reclaim citizenship. According to Vice-Consul Jakob Horn, it was the first of its kind in this country.

After so much suffering, why would a Jew want to have anything to do with Germany? The "German Again" workshop began with the eloquence of two Holocaust survivors, Chemnitz native AnneMarie Yellin, hidden in a Belgium convent; and Dresden native Ralph Samuel, saved by a Kindertransport to England. Both wrested from their parents at a young age, they movingly explained why they already regained their German citizenship.

Not all the 39 Bay Area Jews in attendance were convinced they wanted German citizenship, but all listened raptly to Vice-Consul Jakob Horn as he explained the process. Generous with his time, Herr Horn answered everyone's questions and remained afterwards to speak one-on-one with those whose families had unusual circumstances. *We remember the Holocaust by reclaiming what was lost to us, our citizenship.*

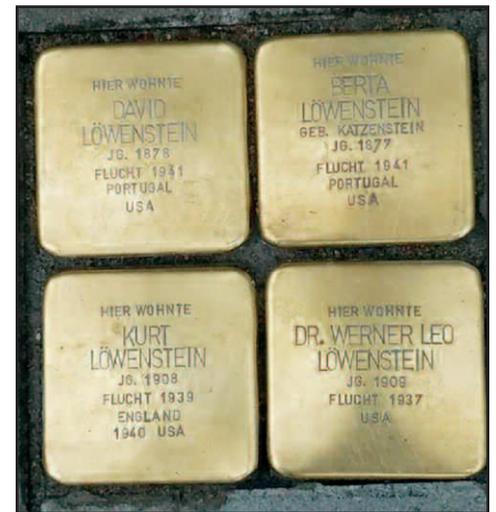
Germany: A week later, my husband Richard and I visited our daughter Leah and her family who now reside in Munich. Leah reclaimed her German citizenship in 2007 while she was working on a Ph.D. at the Technical University of Munich. As a German citizen, one automatically becomes a citizen of the European Union where higher education is practically free. Future generations might want to take advantage of such opportunity.

Leah called a few days before our trip, suggesting excitedly, "There's a new Nazi museum not far from us on the Königsplatz (plaza at a crossroads in Munich). We can go when the girls are in school."

Forget about the *Glockenspiel* (animated figurines in the main square), or the *Bier Garten* (Beer Garden); my daughter knows me. She knew I would rather go to The Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism that opened in 2015 than the usual tourist sites. The museum demonstrated that the City of Munich remembered its role in the Third Reich as the "*Hauptstadt der Bewegung*," or "Capital of the [Nazi] Movement." *They portrayed the persecutions, the book burnings of May 10, 1933 at the Königsplatz, the rallies, the suffering.*

A six-hour train ride transported Richard and me, with our daughter Leah and granddaughters Ziva, four, and Maya, two, to Essen in northwest Germany. From there, we took a taxi to the small town of Buer, the home of my dad and his family, may they all rest in peace.

On May 23, Berlin-born artist-sculptor Gunter Demnig installed four *Stolpersteine*, "stumbling stones," in front of the building (photo left) in Buer owned by my grandparents, David and Bertha Katzenstein Loewenstein, where my father Werner and his brother Kurt were born and grew up. (read more about the family on pages 10-11 of the May issue at: https://jewish-postopinion.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/NAT_5-2-18.pdf)



Stolpersteine, "stumbling stones," bearing the names, birth dates, dates of when and to where they fled for my father's parents, Bertha and David Loewenstein, my uncle, Kurt Loewenstein and my father, Werner Loewenstein.

Herr Demnig's vision can be summed up by "*ein Stein, ein Name, ein Mensch*"; One stone, one name, one person." Each stone begins with, "*Hier wohnte...*" (Here lived...) and include what happened to the victim. *Stolpersteine* remind descendants of the perpetrators and bystanders of their Nazi past. *The sidewalks of Germany remember the Holocaust.*

Andreas Jordan, a volunteer for Herr Demnig's nonprofit *Stolpersteine* organi-



From left, Matt, Mark, Marsha, Leah, and Toby, all Loewensteins; Miriam Loewenstein Zimmerman; Leah, Maya, and Ziva Sharp; Rebecca Goodman, Willy and his wife Mirjam Kurz; and Linda (Mark's wife) and Michael Loewenstein. My husband Richard is standing in the center, behind our two daughters (Leah and Rebecca), bringing the total to 15. Andreas declared he had never seen so many from one family at a Stolperstein ceremony.

zation, documented our family's history, created a Loewenstein family webpage, and served as liaison with the artist. He also coordinated the installation ceremony.

From all over the United States, Holland, and Munich, 15 of our family met at the Hotel Monopol in Buer, chosen for its proximity to Horster Straße, formerly Essener Straße. Until it was Aryanized (taken over by non-Jews), my grandparents owned the store on Essener Straße 12a, Katzenstein & Co, selling lady's hats, men's ties, and other dry goods. The family lived in the floors above.

After Herr Demnig installed the stones, Andreas' wife Heike began the ceremony by placing flowers next to the stones. She read the story of the Loewenstein family. In keeping with the artist's vision to remember names, I introduced all the descendants present by name (above).



Kurt and Werner Loewenstein at Schloss Berge, c. 1930s.

It was important to me to speak in German, despite a heavy American accent. I am grateful to German native Dr. Marion Gerlind, German teacher and poet, for translating my talk. Reclaiming the German language is a next step after obtaining citizenship. Both endeavors speak to the resilience of the German Jewish commu-

nity, twin messages that Hitler's Final Solution was not so final. *Speaking German means taking back what was rightfully mine, but denied to me through no fault of my own.*

I related a story told by Dad many times during my childhood. In a small town like Buer, everyone knew everyone else. After Hitler came to power, from one day to the next, people he had known all his life stopped talking to him. If he were walking down the sidewalk, his former friends crossed the street to avoid speaking to him.

At the end of my talk, Cantor Yuriy Zemskyi sang the *El Maleh Rachamim*, a prayer for the souls of the departed. After the *El Maleh*, my cousin Michael Loewenstein concluded the ceremony by leading us in the *Kaddish* prayer.

A lady came up to Michael and me afterward, pushing a stroller and with two other young children in tow. Her oldest, 12-year-old Asaf (not her real name), told us that she decided to write about the *Stolpersteine* ceremony for a school assignment. Asaf asked additional questions about our fathers, which Michael and I were delighted to answer. This little Kurdish girl, her family, and her classmates will remember my family because they stumbled upon a public *Stolpersteine* ceremony while walking dully along.

The following day, the family dispersed. Mark and Linda took a train to Berlin; Willy and Mirjam drove back to their Holland home, and Richard with Leah and the children returned to Munich. The remaining seven of us embarked on an ancestral tour of the small towns where our ancestors dwelt. Building on Dad's genealogical research, Michael set up an itinerary, encompassing villages where our ancestors lived. He traced our family back to 1766.

Michael's daughter Marsha masterfully drove the rental van on Autobahns and country roads alike, with skill and speed. FBI trained, Marsha knew how to handle a car at 100+ miles per hour, a skill I experienced years ago when she drove me from Terre Haute to Indianapolis to catch a plane, a white-knuckled ride. But I made my flight.

First stop, Brilon, current population 26,000. Suddenly, I was alone in front of our inn, the Hotel Starke. The others went shopping, or looked for ice cream, or dealt with the luggage. The interesting building across the street called to me, the Museum Haus Hövener. I explained to museum staff member Carsten Schlömer in halting German that I was interested in researching my Opa (grandpa), David Loewenstein, who was born in Brilon.

Herr Schlömer's eyes lit up. He returned to his computer and started pulling up files. He had pages and pages of information about the Loewensteins in Brilon. "My



Memorial to the Brilon synagogue, destroyed on Reichspogromnacht, the night of Nov. 9-10, 1938, also known as Kristallnacht.

students did a report on your family," he explained, in near-perfect English. I called to Michael, now in the courtyard, to round up the troops and bring them to the museum.

Carsten took us to an electrified model of the town, which filled most of a room. He lit up one street, explaining that it was where, historically, most of the Jews in Brilon had lived. He also lit up four homes where our family had lived. By now, it was past closing time. Museum archivist Winfried Dickel promised to open the museum an hour early for us the next day, and give us a private tour. It was a deal.

Herr Dickel took us on a *Stolpersteine* walking tour of Brilon that included the four Loewenstein homes. He thoughtfully printed out pictures of the buildings in their original state so we could compare then and now.

Back at the museum, Winfried gifted Michael and me with books about Brilon Jews during the Nazi era. Generous with
(see Zimmerman, page 13)



Miriam standing in front of the memorial to the synagogue in my dad's hometown of Buer. The synagogue was destroyed on Reichspogromnacht, what we call Kristallnacht, which began the night of Nov. 9, 1938, and continued through to the next morning. The memorial is at the actual site where the synagogue stood, and where my family belonged. "Mein Haus ist ein Haus der Gebete für alle volker" is from Isaiah 56:7 – "My house is a house of prayer for all people." "Spruch am Eingang der zerstörten Synagoge" translates as "Sentence at the entrance of the destroyed synagogue."

Greater Indianapolis gathers in solidarity against anti-Semitic graffiti vandalism at synagogue

Congregation Shaarey Tefilla (CST) in Carmel, Ind., a suburb of Indianapolis, suffered anti-Semitic vandalism when large Nazi flags with a swastika and Iron Crosses were spray painted on its structure adjacent to the synagogue. The damage was done overnight on July 27th, and was discovered after Saturday morning services.

The synagogue in conjunction with the local Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) held a solidarity gathering at CST on July 30th. The sanctuary and adjoining social hall were overflowing with well over 1,000 people of all ages and faiths from throughout the area.

Local clergy of many different faiths, community leaders, and the mayor of Carmel gave inspiring speeches that demonstrated their support to the local Jewish community. Each speaker shared messages in condemnation of the act and of complete solidarity, peace, love, and support vowing to stand shoulder to shoulder against all forms of hatred, bigotry, and intolerance. Many other government officials, or their representatives, and local rabbis were present to add their support.

This incident inspired Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb to call on lawmakers to pass (see **Solidarity**, page 13)



A massive gathering fills Congregation Shaarey Tefilla in solidarity with the synagogue.



The structure behind the synagogue where the vandals painted the graffiti. Ed. note: Images of the uncovered symbols of hate are pervasive in the media. JP&O has deliberately elected not to further propagate those images.



Standing room only as CST overflows with support.



Billboards of support in Indiana displayed by Lamar Advertising.



Supporters arrive at the solidarity gathering.



Rabbi Benjamin Sendrow of Congregation Shaarey Tefilla address the gathering.

- Speakers/organization**
Rabbi Benjamin Sendrow, Congregation Shaarey Tefilla
Mayor James Brainard, Mayor, Carmel Indiana
Rabbi Shelley Goldman, Chair of the Indiana Board of Rabbis and Assistant Rabbi at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, Indianapolis
Emily Schwartz, B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO), Indianapolis Chapter President (B'yachad SG BBG N'siah)
Ashhar Madni, Carmel Interfaith Alliance (Board of Directors), Al Salam Foundation (Board of Trustees)
Charlie Wiles, Center for Interfaith Cooperation, Executive Director
Lori Bievenour, Senior Pastor, St. Peter's United Church of Christ, Carmel
Aliya Amin, Muslim Alliance of Indiana, Executive Director
Angie Martinez, IndyPride, President
Adrienne Slash, Board Member and President of the Exchange at the Indianapolis Urban League
The Rev. Bruce W. Gray, Rector, Holy Family Episcopal Church, Fishers
Dr. Anita Joshi, Hindu Temple of Central Indiana
Chris Paulsen, Indiana Youth Group, Executive Director
KP Singh, Sikh Satsang of Indianapolis
Ruth Ellen Homer, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Annette Gross, Vice President, Indianapolis PFLAG
Maria Pimantel-Ganon, Local Advocate and Member of both the Hispanic/Latino & Catholic Community
Greg Maurer, Board Member, Anti-Defamation League
Lindsey Mintz, JCRC Executive Director
Corey Freedman, Congregation Shaarey Tefilla, Board President

ZIMMERMAN*(continued from page 11)*

resources, we received pages of printouts about our family and packets of picture postcards. We learned that we had cousins about whom we had no prior knowledge.

Winfried called a friend of his in Assinghausen, population 700, our next stop. His friend took us to Hauptstraße 37, the site of a house where Loewensteins had lived. Like Winfried, he gave us a picture of the house in the time of our forebears. At our feet, more Loewenstein *Stolpersteine*. I had no idea I had so many relatives *ermordet* (murdered) in Auschwitz, as the stones depicted.

Less than 70 kilometers to the south, we found ourselves in Frankenberg, current population 19,000. The locked gate of Frankenberg's Jewish cemetery did not deter us; we helped each other scale the waist-high fence. I imagined the headline if we were caught – "Seven American Jews break into tiny Jewish cemetery in rural Germany." In our defense, we were unable to find the government office that the sign promised would have the key. We found the final resting place of about a half dozen of our relatives and placed pebbles on their gravestones.

Next stop: Abterode, the birthplace of our matriarch and my Oma (grandma), Bertha Katzenstein Loewenstein. Now Meissner-Abterode, the locked gate of its large Jewish cemetery succeeded in keeping us out because the fence was too high for us to climb. The office that housed the key closed hours earlier.

Ironically, Michael knew exactly where the graves of our ancestors lay thanks to an online plot map of the cemetery. We were unable to put pebbles on the gravestones of our Abterode ancestors. My solace lay in my memories of putting stones on Oma's gravestone in the Jewish section of Highland Lawn Cemetery in Terre Haute, where she died on Sept. 30, 1953.

The next day, the towns of Harmthsachsen, Diemerode, and Rhina melded together. In Rhina, we found another commemorative plaque on a building that proclaimed that a Jewish synagogue once occupied this site, torched on Reichspogromnacht like the others. It was our fourth such memorial in as many cities.

Little did we know, as Marsha drove those last 204 kilometers through verdant landscapes, punctuated with picturesque villages, and ubiquitous solar panels, that the United States was separating immigrant children from their parents. The stories of Ralph Samuel and AnneMarie Yellin come to mind, similarly torn from their parents at a young age.

The drama unfolded in the headlines and on social media as I wrote these



Behind Rabbi Corey Helfand of Peninsula Sinai Congregation is a wire cage with young women holding dolls to their breasts.

pages. *Like the bystanders in the paintings who averted their eyes, I have been eating and sleeping and writing, and just walking dully along.*

Redwood City, Calif.: On June 26, Richard and I attended a San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meeting to support a Deportation Defense Fund. The fund would provide legal services to local immigrants in danger of being deported. Afterward, Rabbi Corey Helfand of Peninsula Sinai Congregation in Foster City eloquently spoke at a press conference and rally, organized by the Faith in Action Bay Area network, a consortium of churches and synagogues.

Rabbi Helfand quoted Rabbi Dr. Joachim Prinz, who spoke just before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his "I have a dream speech" in August 1963.

Rabbi Prinz declared, "When I was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime, I learned many things...bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problem. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence. A great people, which had created a great civilization, had become a nation of silent onlookers. They remained silent in the face of hate, in the face of brutality and in the face of mass murder. [We] must not become a [people] of onlookers. [We] must not remain silent...."

Rabbi Helfand (above right) concluded by sounding the *shofar*, creating a hush and an opportunity for reflection and silent prayer.

During my moment of reflection, I realized that in today's world, art, ritual, memorials, or museums are not enough to remember the Holocaust and honor the persecuted. Action is called for. One must call out misogyny, bullying, and prejudice as they occur. The fight for social justice is ongoing. We pay homage to the memory of our families brutally murdered in the Holocaust when we protest brutality today. We cannot be silent onlookers.

Germany has learned this lesson: how not to be a bystander. There are Holocaust

SOLIDARITY*(continued from page 12)*

a hate crimes law in the next state legislative session. Indiana is one of only five states that do not have such a law. Also, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) announced that it was offering \$2,500 in exchange for information relating to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators of this act. Greg Maurer of the ADL stated that a 57% increase over the previous year of anti-Semitic acts have been documented in 2017. Congregation Shaarey Tefilla is working with local law enforcement and the FBI in their investigation. Work to remove the graffiti began Aug. 1st.

In another act of support, on August 2nd, twelve billboards of "LOVE" with a Star of David were installed from South Bend to Mooresville, Ind (see photo p. 12). *The Jewish Post & Opinion* spoke to Chris Iverson, Vice President and General Manager of Lamar Advertising, the company responsible for designing and installing the billboards. We asked him if someone had approached him and asked him to do this.

He responded "no", the company did this on its own initiative. They wanted to counteract the hateful images that the vandals had made at the synagogue. He said their job is to tell a story with images and pictures. After considering several designs, they picked this image to let the vandals and other like-minded people know that what was done is unacceptable in our community and elsewhere. They reached out to Outfront Media and Fairway Outdoor Advertising to help them accomplish their mission. Another report on this supportive act can be found at: <https://www.wishtv.com/news/local-news/billboard-shows-support-for-vandalized-carmel-synagogue/1339991382> ★



memorials and museums in every major city, and in small towns, too. Alone among the international community, since 2015, Germany has taken in a significant number of refugees, about 890,000. *If Germany can take action, so, too, can each of us. The memory of our ancestors deserves no less.* We must cry out until we transform the phrase, "Never again!" from slogan to reality, for all people, everywhere.

Dr. Miriam Zimmerman is professor emerita at Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) in Belmont, Calif., where she continues to teach the Holocaust course. She can be reached at mzimmerman@ndnu.edu. A much longer version of her trip is at: <https://jewishpostopinion.com/?p=3508>

Photos by Toby Loewenstein, Leah Loewenstein, Rebecca Goodman, and Richard Zimmerman. ★

Wiener's Wisdom



BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

God knows

Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906), American Women's Rights Advocate, wrote, "I distrust those people who know so well what God wants them to do, because I notice it always coincides with their own desires." I think of this every time I read or hear about someone pontificating on what God wants from us and for us. It amuses me that there are those who proclaim to be in direct contact with God, and it is because of this so-called connection, they attempt to control our every thought and action.

To ascribe this to arrogance would be to underestimate the detriment to which they affect our lives. Perhaps we could describe these people as sanctimonious. The clear indication is that there are people who think they are better than others and use God as the justification for their feelings.

Perhaps we should attempt to understand the purpose for which faith was installed in our psyche. Faith, to me, is synonymous with hope. Each gives us the opportunity to make sense of our lives, no matter what direction is followed. That is exactly what Scripture is intended to inculcate in us. The words found in these various writings are there to help us understand human nature and the various relationships we discover as time progresses.

Whether one believes that these words are inspired or the result of revelations, does not alter the fact that human behavior is dictated by moral responsibility and the attitude of right and wrong. These are the fundamentals of a civilized society as dictated by God. Still, we are just human. To me, this gives us an added responsibility. To attain a level of attempting to emulate God is not an easy task. We are so fragile, and susceptible to so many distortions.

The Prophets attempted to reinforce this concept of goodness by illustrating what can become of us if we destroy the very fabric of our existence. They illustrate in prose the things we are capable of doing to ourselves and can surely be inherited by those who follow. When Scripture talks about the sins of the fathers carrying forward to our progeny, it is describing what can result if we do not realize the harm of not recognizing the path of destruction. It is not a curse, but rather a warning.

L. COHEN

(continued from page 2)

in Israel dispatched one of his stateside children to pay us a visit. My cousin would show up in our kitchen with a *Purim* basket, *groggers* and a child or three in tow. I would sit on my mom's lap getting increasingly fidgety while my cousin chanted the entire *Megillah*.

When I learned that *Purim* was only two days before Pi Day, though, I succumbed to the wishes of the people and threw a joint Pi(e) and *Purim* celebration. The dining room table overflowed with pie and *hamantaschan* (see photo) while



Those who proclaim to know what God wants and needs, lead us in the path of destruction. Their literal interpretation of Scripture is also a clear sign of ignorance. We were all created with the ability to think and reason. Scripture was, and is designed to teach us to use these tools to enhance life, not inhibit it. Every time we open a page in the Bible we learn something different because the words are a living testament to the universality of God and the gifts given to us by God to understand life a little better.

Closed minds lead to closed thoughts, and, in turn, to dogmatic approaches to our existence. Living life with no peripheral vision is tantamount to walking around with a blindfold, cutting off not only vision, but light as well. Think of it as walking into a dark room, feeling our way, groping for support, and only realizing redemption when a light appears.

Being judgmental or critical is a form of abuse and is contrary to what faith is intended to accomplish. Acceptance and encouragement are what is needed if we are to find fulfillment. Jealousy leads to contempt. Satisfaction with our lot eliminates frustration. Gratitude gives us the ability to accept what is, with an eye toward what could be, if we try.

Perhaps Susan B. Anthony was attempting to teach us these very things. Perhaps Scripture can instill in us the understanding that we are responsible for our actions because they affect not only ourselves, but those around us as well.

Perhaps we can and should feel better, not because we followed some prescribed order or spoke words that are lost as they are uttered, but rather because we have a clearer picture of our purpose – not because someone told us to, but because we know full well the impact we have on our lives, and because we can come together in the one place designed to help us understand a little better – our houses of worship – and to understand that

(see Wiener, page 15)



we read a Dr. Suess-inspired abbreviation of the *Megillah*. A whopping four Jews were in attendance that night. It ended up being the crowning achievement of my Jewish tenure in Alaska before I returned to the East Coast.

The process of deciding to leave Alaska took me over a year and required many forms of heartbreak. One of the forces that pulled me back home was the hope of finding a Jewish community that would teach me some of the many traditions that my halfhearted Jewish upbringing missed.

After cramming my car full to the brim, I left Fairbanks on a brisk negative-20 degree morning. Some might say that February was not the best time to drive a low clearance two-wheel drive vehicle out of Alaska. I would say that if I wanted to make it to Passover with my family and have time to explore the Southwest along the way, then February was the perfect time.

For almost two months I meandered my way through snow storms, three weeks of camping in below-freezing temperatures and visits to the newest toddling members of my Midwestern family. When I finally arrived back home, I found myself dumbstruck by the vast array of matzo options in the grocery store. They took up so much shelf space that I could not fit them inside the frame of one photo.

In the produce section there was no horseradish to be found, but I did encounter an elderly woman berating an employee: "I was here yesterday and they said there would be horseradish tomorrow, and now I'm here and there is still no horseradish!"

"Ma'am," he responded, "I'm not the produce manager."

Hoping to diffuse the tension, I cut into their conversation and cried, "it's a Passover tragedy!" Both of them chuckled. It felt good to be home.

Lily Cohen is a writer and scientist based in the northeast. You can follow her on twitter @lilyofthepingo or view her website <https://lilycohen.weebly.com/> She is the granddaughter of this publication's founder, Gabriel Cohen (1908–2007). Originally posted on The Jewish Daily Forward at forward.com June 12, 2018. ✨

Book Review

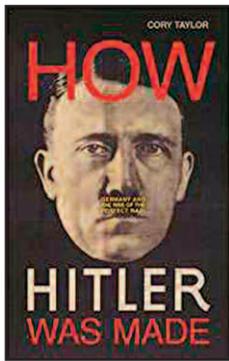


REVIEWED BY
PROFESSOR ARNOLD AGES

Unravels history of the Nazi party and Hitler's role in it

How Hitler was Made: Germany and the Rise of the Perfect Nazi. By Cory Taylor. Prometheus Books. Amherst, NY, 2018, Pp 295.

The number of books on Nazi Germany continues to rise 73 years after the demise of the Third Reich, as historians, philosophers and journalists continue to probe the reasons how Germany, one of the most advanced cultural and scientific nations in world, descended into Stygian darkness in 1933 with the coming to power of Adolf Hitler.



Now it has taken a producer of television documentaries, Cory Taylor, to produce an uncomplicated scenario to shed new light on a scenario that so many researchers have trod before and only Taylor, in my opinion, has succeeded in unraveling the tattered history of the Nazi Party and Hitler's diabolical role in its development.

This reviewer has been trying to understand how Cory Taylor, active in the medium of television, has been able to reduce the Hitler story to digestible factors despite the complexities of the saga. Let no one say that he has minimized the requisite research. His bibliography contains almost 60 pages of source materials, acknowledgements, and notes – culled from the written record, interviews and references to reputable scholars, researchers and diverse historians. But what he has done with this material is extract what the 16th century French writer Rabelais called “the substantific marrow” of the story and unfold it into a narrative which is original, lively and thought provoking – the kind of thing that mesmerizes television viewers – and this, via a book.

Here are some of the insights which Taylor offers his readers. One cannot understand the rise of Nazism without appreciating the savagery of World War I, which cost the lives of millions of combatants and civilians. On the German side the author contrasts the elite generals of the German

war machine, who sought to blame the 1918 armistice on “a stab in the back” treachery of a band of inauthentic Germans – with members of the German army who were horrified and humbled by what they saw and endured in the assault on Verdun especially. After the war many of the disenchanted German soldiers moved to the left politically and were active in extreme expressions of that coalition.

Taylor says that Hitler, an Austrian national, served as a runner behind the lines in the German army, was proud of Germany's warfare and although not involved in contact with the enemy directly, suffered psychological damage (a temporary loss of vision) and ended the war in a military hospital facility. Taylor notes surprisingly that Hitler did not manifest any overt anti-Semitic sentiments either during the war or immediately after it. In fact, Taylor has uncovered a photograph of Hitler walking in the funeral procession for Kurt Eisner, a Jew who had been elected Minister-President of the Bavarian State just after the war and who was assassinated by Count Arco-Valley, a right wing fanatic (whom Taylor says was partially tainted by Jewish blood and thus excluded from the Nazi Party).

The author notes that all ambiguities in the Hitler background including photographs such as the one referred to above, were removed from the official Nazi record. Within two years of the end of the war, Hitler began to construct his anti-Semitism into an explosive mixture which, says the author, differentiated him from the run of the mill right wing zealots. In Bavaria Hitler had to confront Catholicism, which while unsympathetic towards Jews, was uncomfortable with the intensity of Jew hatred incarnated in Hitler. He therefore took up the prevailing view that there were good and bad Jews just as there were good and bad Germans. Hitler tried successfully to counter this argument by saying that Jews had never created anything and that they were instruments of their blood lines and genetically programmed to do evil.

One of the most important parts of this book describes the coalition of right wing fanatics who flourished in the 1920s and how Hitler became their disciple and whom he nonetheless used to extract political support as well as financial assistance – even to the point of accepting their money to outfit him with more acceptable clothes. His supporters were also responsible for the purchase of what became the Nazis major newspaper, the *Volkischer Beobachter*. As for the rhetorical power which Hitler possessed in the German language, Taylor observes that he did much more than culture his voice. He would always study the architecture of the

WIENER

(continued from page 14)

our lives were placed in *our* hands, not someone else's.

Rabbi Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at ravyitz@cox.net. He is the author of two books: Living With Faith, and a modern and contemporary interpretation of the Passover Haggadah titled, Why is This Night Different? ☆



beer hall or stadium where he was to speak; he always arrived late to increase the tension of his listeners. He studied the way in which entertainers dealt with the noises of the beer halls and learned how to project vocally despite ambient noises.

In the rogues gallery of Nazis and sympathizers with which Taylor decorates this book two are of special interest because although they are mentioned in most of the other histories of the Third Reich, their portraits here serve to enlarge and explain more fully their roles in the Hitler-Dante circle of hell.

One is Ernst Hanfstaegel, a Harvard graduate, whose family became very close to Hitler in the 1930s and whose wife Helene, was very friendly with the dictator. Hanfstaegel apparently tried to straighten Hitler out on the subject of American military might and also tried to moderate some of his braggadocio. In the end Hanfstaegel barely escaped with his life when the Nazis tried to arrange his death in an airplane crash. He survived but Goering sent Hanfstaegel a note indicating that the whole thing was a joke and that no plot was carried out.

Finally Ernst Rohm, the head of the SA – storm troopers, the private personal army of Hitler is well known as one of the victims in the late 1930s of the Night of the Long Knives when Rohm and many of his followers were killed for reasons that need not be elaborated. What is quite surprising in the Taylor book is that Rohm was not only an early faithful follower of Hitler but on at least one occasion actually saved his life. When push came to shove in the 1930s Hitler showed his true colors and conveniently forget the service which Rohm had done for him.

Cory Taylor deserves a resounding congratulation for this highly original account of Nazi Germany. I cannot wait for the television documentary on this subject.

Professor Arnold Ages is “Distinguished Emeritus Professor” University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario Canada and “Scholar-in-Residence” Beth Tzedec Synagogue Toronto, Canada. ☆

Media Watch



BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

Ethical problems in recent “Jewish” relationship films

Two recent films identified protagonists as Jews while raising ethical questions about relationships that the filmmakers appeared to be glorifying.

Luca Guadagnino’s *Call Me By Your Name*, based on Andre Aciman’s novel, sets out straightaway to establish Jewish bona fides. Prof. Perlman (Michael Stuhlbarg), an American Jewish archeologist of Greco-Roman sculptures, living in Italy in the early 1980s, calls his 17-year-old son “Eliyahu” (Hebrew for Elijah). The son’s Italian name is “Elio,” derived from Elijah. Dad declares that “we’re a Jewish French Italian mix.”

Soon we meet the professor’s latest graduate student assistant, 24-year-old Oliver Perlman (Armand Hammer), who shares that he’s from a small New England town and knows what it’s like to be “odd Jew out.” Oliver proudly sports a Star of David pendant.

Oliver takes an immediate interest in the quirky, multitalented Elio (Timothée Chalamet), who is a gifted pianist among many talents. Elio admires Oliver’s open identification as a Jew, and cites his mother to the effect that “we are Jews of discretion.”

It becomes clear that, at first, Oliver avoids bonding with Elio because Oliver has a sexual interest in the high school student. But the more Oliver sees of Elio’s talent and precociousness, the more he convinces himself that Elio is mature enough for a sexual encounter. Oliver invokes Jewish associations in his efforts to seduce Elio. It is not made clear whether he senses Elio’s interest in things Jewish, or is simply himself comfortable with Jewish vocabulary. Oliver massages Elio’s foot, telling him: “My *bubbe* used to do this when we were sick.” Then he kisses it.

Are common Jewish identity, and feeling out of place in a non-Jewish society, natural promptings of a bond between the two, or is Oliver, or are both, using the “Jewish connection” for sexual experimentation, or at least adapting it as a metaphor for a homosexual romance? Elio starts wearing a Star of David like Oliver’s.

Everyone smokes in this family; Elio’s parents encourage him to smoke. But they seem to encourage him tacitly to do other



things. Dad speaks of the “ageless ambiguity” of his Greco-Roman statues, “as if they dare you to adore them.” Surely, the parents hear the sounds of the sexual intercourse that ensues. Mom even suggests that it would be nice for Elio and Oliver to “get away for a few days.” Is homosexuality treated like a smoking habit, a trend, an impulse to be indulged?

All the while, Elio is pursuing a classmate, Marzia (Esther Garrel), who senses that he is exploiting her in some way. She tells him: “I think you’re trying to hurt me. I don’t want to be hurt.” Yet she declares to him that she forgives him. Does she give him a pass because she suspects that he is gay? Ironically, the film depicts his relationship with Marzia as deeper and more intimate than his bond with Oliver. Why?

“Over-compensation” due to denial of homosexuality has been documented as a cause of teenage pregnancies. While no pregnancy occurs here, Elio is certainly left to that risk through utter lack of parental guidance. The filmmakers leave no doubt that the parents, especially Dad, encourage any kind of sexual experimentation as “natural.” At the end, when Elio is hurt by Oliver who returns to the States to become engaged to a woman, Dad observes, in a father-son conversation: “When you least expect it, nature has ways of finding our weakest spot. Just remember I’m here.”

But Dad goes farther: “What you two had was...good. You were both lucky to have found each other.” And then farther still, adding that he never had what Elio and Oliver had. Of his own wife he says: “Something always stood in the way. Our hearts and our bodies are given to us only once. To make yourself feel nothing, so as not to feel anything, is a waste.” Dad ends by warning that one should take advantage of opportunities to have sex while one’s body is still considered attractive.

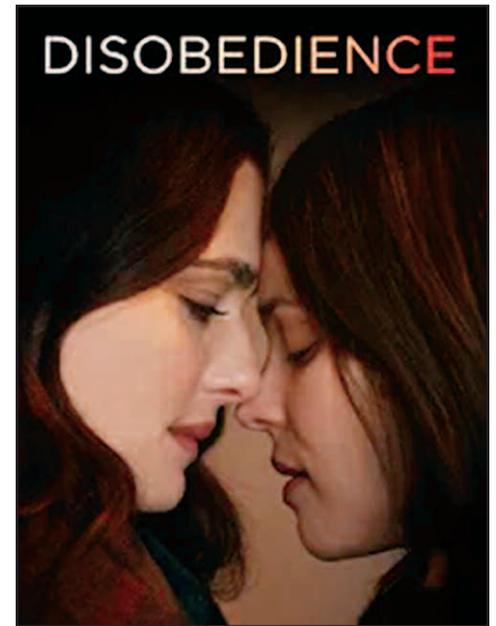
Does he garner this “morality” from the Greek statues he studies? Consistent in

their “Jewish” allusions, the filmmakers have Elio learn of Oliver’s plans on *Chanukah*. The parents wish Oliver a “*mazal tov*” and a “Happy *Chanukah*” to all. But does this movie wish Hellenic values to win out over Jewish values, or to combine them? Or does it suggest that in the era depicted, they had yet to be fully combined?

By film’s end, a 17-year-old male has been exploited by his parents and by someone in the charge of his father, and then congratulated by his father for the “luck” of the liaison. Then the father consoles the son by congratulating himself for fostering the scenario, which, he suggests, grew out of his own incompatibility with his wife. How does this bolster ethics and dignity in any kind of relationship?

Disobedience

Based on Naomi Alderman’s novel, *Disobedience* begins with an aged rabbi preaching about the difference between man and beast, about being able to overcome one’s *yetzer ha-ra*, evil inclination, destructive impulse, through choices. The rabbi collapses and dies as he concludes his remarks.



Then we see a woman, whom we soon learn to be his daughter, Ronit (Rachel Weisz), a New York photographer, acting on what appears to be a sexual addiction before catching a plane to the *shiva* in England. There she finds the young Rabbi Dovid Kuperman (Alessandro Nivola), a protégé of her late father, who, somehow anticipating or knowing her unbridled passions, her lack of control, reminds her that *kavod* (honor) must be paramount during the memorial week.

Is Ronit out of control or are the power of love and the lure of sex too overwhelming? Even Rabbi Kuperman must study the passionate Song of Songs with his

(see Gertel, page 17)

News from Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT)

BY LAURENCE A. BOLOTIN

At ZBT International Headquarters, we just wrapped up our 2018 International Convention in Los Angeles complete with networking, awards and great educational programming.

We had a special moment at our convention through our partnership with Gift of Life Marrow Registry. Gift of Life finds many bone marrow donors through our partnership and many brothers and friends of ZBT have saved lives. At our 2018 International Convention, one of our brothers was able to meet the woman whose life he saved. It was an emotional moment and there wasn't a dry eye in the room. Watch it at the following link: <https://ktla.com/2018/07/14/woman-who-battled-potentially-fatal-leukemia-introduced-to-man-who-saved-her-life-at-convention-in-la/>

Gift of Life Marrow Registry (<https://www.giftoflife.org>) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Boca Raton, Fla. The organization is dedicated to saving lives and facilitating bone marrow and blood stem cell transplants for patients with leukemia, lymphoma, and other blood-related diseases.

ZBT partner Hillel International receives 2018 Gottheil Award

Senior Rabbinic Scholar, Rabbi Sherre Hirsch accepted the award on behalf of Hillel International on July 14, 2018, at the 2018 International Convention in Los Angeles.

"Hillel International thanks ZBT brothers for helping to create a world of compassion, security, and peace – the holy world that God imagines for us," Hirsch said.

The Gottheil Award, named in honor of the founder of Zeta Beta Tau, was created to honor a person or organization that exhibits great service to mankind, for humanitarian services and activities that best promote better understanding in relationships among all people.

For nearly a century, Hillel's network of dedicated student leaders, professionals and volunteers have encouraged generations of young adults to celebrate Jewish learning and living, pursue social justice and connect to their peers and the global Jewish people.

By participating in life-changing trips and campus initiatives, students learn to make a meaningful impact on the future of the Jewish people and the world while they grow intellectually, socially and spiritually.

Past recipients include Felix Warburg, Franklin Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, Morris Abram, Doctors Without Borders,

GERTEL

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students, and must field their questions and, the scene implies, their desires.

Ronit is quickly reunited with Esti (Rachel McAdams), whom, she learns, has become Dovid's wife. The three had developed a bond in her father's home. We learn that Esti and Ronit had had a lesbian relationship, of which Dovid has been aware. The old rabbi thought he was fostering community for a new generation loyal to strict observance of the traditions. "All he did was stay here all day and read the commentaries on the *Torah* and the notes on the commentaries and the debates on the notes," Ronit recalls. While he studied, however, the young females did what they wanted. When he walked in on Ronit and Esti, all he could say was "*Hashem* strike me dead."

What could be said after such a statement? Indeed, there are a lot of dialogue-stoppers among the utterances and reactions of the Jews here. At *shiva* they greet one another with, "May you live a long life," a mantra which, in the context of this film, comes across as discouraging expression of emotions or communication. Passive-aggressive conversation-stoppers pop up regularly in this Jewish circle. During a *Shabbat* dinner at Ronit's uncle's home, Esti shocks with her observation that in marriage, "Women change their names and their history is gone." Does she want to resume her history with Ronit? Before long, that uncle cruelly wounds Ronit by declaring, "It must be very painful to you not to have received the *rav's* (rabbi's) forgiveness."

Such dialogue, or lack of it, highlights the claustrophobic atmosphere depicted in this Jewish community. It doesn't take long for Ronit and Esti to renew their physical relationship and to raise suspicion in the neighborhood. So they make their escape to a hotel in London. The city is, of course, depicted as anonymous, open and vibrant.

Discovering the betrayal, Dovid, who is about to assume religious leadership in the community, is angry and resentful at the breach in the house to which he has invited Ronit as a guest. "This is my house," he says. "I keep it in order." But of course the forces raging within Esti and Ronit are too powerful for him to control.

Esti learns that she is pregnant, and Dovid is filled with joy. Esti wants her



Special Olympics International, Coca-Cola Foundation, Jewish Federations of North America, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals and the USO.

Bolotin is National CEO of ZBT. His email is lbolotin@zbtnational.org. ✨

freedom; she inclines toward taking the child away, toward running away with Ronit, and letting "the child decide." Dovid does everything he can to woo her back.

At this point, the film is strung with suspense, but not so much over what Esti will decide to do. We are distracted from that question by how Rabbi Kuperman will handle the memorial service for Ronit's father. Will he dissemble? At the *hesped* (eulogy), the young rabbi announces to the congregation that he cannot accept the post, that he doesn't possess sufficient understanding. "Please forgive me," he pleads before rushing out.

After this poignant scene, the three hug outside the *shul*. There is an unspoken pact between them, but what form will it take? Is it a moment of revelation for Esti, Ronit, Dovid? The film depicts that moment as somehow liberating, fulfilling the dead rabbi's sermonic charge, "You are free."

Ronit finds a way to memorialize her father that is true to her *métier*. As for Esti, she chooses to stay in the community. Has she found a freedom from her passion for Ronit through a need for community? Has Dovid won her over by giving up the mantle of spiritual leadership and settling for uncertainties, if not doubts, regarding religious authority? Has Esti decided to choose to live according to the deceased rabbi's conception of freedom, or at least to identify with the *rav* who took her in?

As in *Call Me By Your Name*, there is a new covenant of sorts created here. But what sort of covenant is it? Is there a tacit admission here that Esti should have somehow restrained herself in her relationship with Ronit? Do the three silently resolve to avoid passive aggressive and other kinds of conversation-stopping phrases, and to accept the status quo ante – with a kind of obedience?

"Disobedience" is a seductive term. "Obedience" is not a popular word. Still, I can't help thinking of Abraham Heschel's observation, "The loss of the sense of significant being is due to the loss of the commandment of being. Being is obedience, a response." (*Who Is Man?*, p. 98) Of course, *Disobedience* does not preach this, and its failure to do so may be viewed as an act of disobedience. But it does leave the door open to obedience as an option, religiously and communally speaking. Is it saying that obedience is acceptable if it is not spoken, imposed, or praised?

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

Group to travel to U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in September

Marking 25th Anniversary and opening of New Exhibition

CHICAGO – After a successful June group trip with 115 Midwesterners, including Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) Midwest Office announces a new group trip in September.

The trip September 12–13 marks the Museum’s 25th anniversary, the opening of the new Shapell Family Collections, Conservation and Research Center, and the opening of the new special exhibition, *Americans and the Holocaust*. Five years in the making, the new exhibition presents a portrait of 1930s and 1940s America and the nation’s response to Nazism and the Holocaust.

The group will have an opportunity to also visit the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for a performance by world-renowned pianist Mona Golabek.

“I’m so proud of the role that the community continues to play in the future of this Museum,” says Jill Weinberg, director of the Museum’s Midwest Regional Office in Illinois.

This group trip to D.C. is \$175. Fees include program materials, Museum and behind-the-scenes tours, as well as select meals and ground transfers. Travel, lodging, and Kennedy Center tickets are additional. This trip is co-led by hosts Hal and Diane Gershowitz and Ted and Annette Lerner. To register, visit: www.ushmm.org/online/calendar/ ★

KAPLAN/RECIPES

(continued from page 19)

advance; reheat to serve. **Equipment:** Measuring cups and spoons, vegetable peeler, cutting board, knife, stand mixer without attachment, plastic wrap, large frying pan, wooden spoon, silicone spatula, cookie sheet or jelly roll pan, parchment or silicone baking mat, wire cooling rack.

Dough:

- 1/2 cup (65g) plus 2 tablespoons (15g) all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1/2 cup (65g) white whole-wheat flour
- 1/2 cup (65g) whole-wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup (60ml) sunflower or safflower oil
- 1/2 cup (120ml) water
- Honey to drizzle over the strudel (optional)

Place the all-purpose flour, white whole-wheat flour, whole-wheat flour, sugar, salt, oil, and water into the bowl of a stand mixer and mix with a dough hook attachment, or by hand, until it comes



Another delicious dish, Israeli Herb & Almond Salad – find it on page 3 of this cookbook.

together into a ball. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let it rest for 1 to 2 hours at room temperature.

Filling:

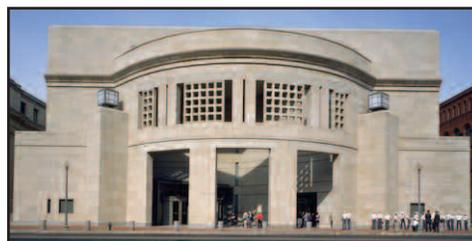
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1/4 cup (55g) light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 4 Gala apples, peeled, cored, and sliced into 1/2-inch (12-mm) slices
- 3 tablespoons ground almonds

Heat a large frying pan over medium heat and add the coconut oil, brown sugar, sugar, and cinnamon, and stir. Add the apples to the pan and cook them, stirring often, for about 6 to 8 minutes, until the apples are fork-tender. Place the mixture into a bowl and let it cool for 10 minutes. Add the ground almonds and mix well.

When the dough is ready, preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Divide the dough into 3 pieces. Cut off a large piece of parchment paper and sprinkle it with some all-purpose flour. Roll out a piece of dough into a rectangle about 8 x 14 inches (20 x 36cm), lifting the dough a few times to add more flour underneath it. Place a third of the filling down the length of the dough, 2 inches from the edge. Fold in the right and left sides (the short sides) about 1 inch from the edge. Roll the long end of the dough (with the filling), into a tight, long log. Place it on a cookie sheet or jelly roll pan lined with parchment or a silicone baking mat. Repeat the same steps to make 2 other logs.

Bake the strudel for 30 to 40 minutes, or until it is lightly browned, and transfer to a wire cooling rack. Serve warm or at room temperature with a drizzle of honey over the top, if desired.

Sybil Kaplan is a foreign correspondent, book reviewer, food writer and lecturer. She has compiled and edited nine cookbooks; she writes the food column for The National Jewish Post & Opinion; she created and leads weekly walks in English in Jerusalem’s Jewish food market, Machaneh Yehudah; and writes the restaurant features (photographs by her husband, Barry) for the website Janglo. They live in Jerusalem. ★



US Holocaust Memorial Museum before the opening circa 1993. Photo credit Timothy Hursley, provided by USHMM Midwest Office and Carl Cox Photography, Inc.



Chicago area delegates at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

My Kosher Kitchen



REVIEWED BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Healthier Jewish recipes

The Healthy Jewish Kitchen. By Paula Shoyer. Sterling Epicure Publishers. \$24.95 hardcover. Nov. 2017.

How many of these ingredients are part of your natural cooking: avocado oil, faro, cilantro, quinoa, whole wheat flour, chick pea flour, tamari soy sauce, whole wheat pasta, buckwheat flour, spelt flour? Then this is the cookbook for you.

When Paula's publisher came to her and asked if she would write this cookbook, she said, "My goal was to create recipes that use only natural ingredients," she writes.



She includes Jewish classics made healthier and updated for the modern table (like Modern Borscht, Cheese-filled Buckwheat Blintzes and Potato and Scallion Latkes) and American (like Peas and Carrots Reinvented, Granola Bars and Fruit Cobbler) and international recipes (like Hawaiian Tuna Poke, Cambodian Spring Rolls, and Vietnamese Chicken Noodle Soup) that reflect food trends beyond the Jewish culinary world.

There are 73 recipes plus 40 others for fillings, toppings and extras as part of recipes divided into appetizers and salads, soups, meat main dishes, fish-vegetarian-dairy main dishes, side dishes and desserts and breads. There are 60 full pages of color photographs and small photos as well.

Many recipe pages have useful tips such as cleaning Brussels sprouts, thawing frozen meat and turkey, melting chocolate, entertaining with ease and cooking for 1 or 2 people or for the elderly.

Don't expect margarine, frozen puff pastry, soup stocks and powders and most jarred sauces; forget fried foods and a lot of sugar and salt.

Recipes are labeled Dairy, Meat, *Pareve*, Vegan, Vegetarians or Gluten Free.

To add something special, each recipe has an introduction, preparation time, cooking time, advance preparation, and equipment to use.

A graduate of the Ritz Escoffier in Paris, Shoyer is author of *The Holiday Kosher Baker*, *The Kosher Baker* and *The New*

KAPLAN/ISRAEL

(continued from page 20)

a reminder of G-d and his commandments (Numbers 15:37).

When the Romans took over in the 7th century, ownership of the dyes was even a crime punishable by death, according to Dr. Baruch Serman, a physicist who helped develop the modern techniques for dyeing.

With the decline of the blue and purple dye industry, the skill required to produce these dyes was lost and forgotten. In recent years, the origins were traced to murex snails indigenous to the Mediterranean Sea.

Members of the foreign press were recently invited to an amazing tour of the exhibition led by the three curators. In addition, the press watched a demonstration by Dr. Baruch Serman, co-founder in 1991 of Ptil Yekhelet, located in Kfar Adumim, to promote and produce *tekhelet* strings for *tzitsit*. The company also provides educational programming and resources pertaining to *tekhelet*. During the press conference, Dr. Serman gave the history of the dyes produced 4,000 years ago used on the garments of the High Priest and then commanded to be on the garments of others.

In front of our eyes, he showed how the crushed glands of the murex snails were



Woolen fleeces dyed in different shades with dye from murex snails.

placed in a beaker of boiling water but did not dissolve until chemicals were added. When cotton was placed in the beaker and the beaker placed into the sun, the yellow color soon turned to blue providing an amazing chemistry.

Dr. Serman and his wife, Judy Taubes Serman, have written "the remarkable story of an ancient color lost to history and rediscovered," in their book, *The Rarest Blue*, published by Lyons Press and subsequently published by Ptil Tekhelet. Yehuda Kaplan, Oree Meiri and Yigal Bloch, curators, guided journalists through the exhibition.

One panel states that "the earliest archaeological evidence for the purple dye industry is the 15th century BCE. This industry flourished on the coast of Lebanon and also spread to the coast of Israel. Another exhibit shows the murex snails (each journalist was given a banded murex snail in a tiny net bag). It takes 1,000 to 10,000 snails to produce one kilo (2.2 pounds) of blue wool.

Among the amazing more contemporary exhibits with the blue used in Israeli flags are: the Israeli flag placed aboard the Apollo space craft in 1975 and the flag raised at the United Nations when Israel was declared a state in 1948.

Passover Menu.

If you are serving healthy dishes and just need new ideas, here is the cookbook for you. If you are looking to change your cooking style and serve healthier dishes, here is the cookbook for you. If you know someone who uses all or some of the list at the beginning, here is the cookbook to give as a gift.

Caramelized Apple Strudel

Parve, Vegan (Serves 10-12)



Apple strudel is one of those Old-World desserts that few people bake from scratch anymore. The whole-grain dough in this recipe is very easy to make and roll out. I like to rewarm the strudel after the first day.

Prep Time: 20 minutes; dough rises 1 to 2 hours. **Bake Time:** 30 to 40 minutes. **Advance Prep:** May be made 2 days in (see Kaplan/recipes, page 18)



The flag aboard the Apollo space craft 1975.

Anyone coming to Jerusalem in the next year should be sure to visit this fascinating exhibition. The Museum is located opposite the Israel Museum and is open Sun.–Thurs., 9:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.; Wed. 9:30 a.m.–9:30 p.m.; Fri., Sat. and holiday eves, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. ✨

Seen on the Israel Scene

BY SYBIL KAPLAN
PHOTOS BY BARRY A. KAPLAN



The Jewish Post & Opinion

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Indianapolis, IN 46260

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US Embassy and tekhelet

Has moving the US Embassy impacted our lives?

After living three years on a busy street in the southern part of Jerusalem, six years ago friends suggested we move further south and walking distance to our synagogue. The upscale neighborhood was Arnona.

According to a memo on February 23 from Heather Nauert, Department Spokesperson of the US Department of State in Washington, DC, “in May, the United States plans to open a new U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. The opening will coincide with Israel’s 70th anniversary. The Embassy will initially be located in the Arnona neighborhood, in a modern building that now houses consular operations of U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem.

“Those consular operations, including American citizen and visa services, will continue at the Arnona facility without interruption, as part of the Embassy. Consulate General Jerusalem will continue to operate as an independent mission with an unchanged mandate, from its historic Agron Road location.

“Initially, the interim Embassy in Arnona will contain office space for the Ambassador and a small staff. By the end of next year, we intend to open a new Embassy Jerusalem annex on the Arnona compound that will provide the Ambassador and his team with expanded interim office space. In parallel, we have started the search for a site for our permanent



Tekhelet

Did you ever wonder about the origin of the blue thread on the corner of a *talit* or *tzitzit* (the four-corned garment worn by religious Jewish men daily)? What about the origin of the blue stripes on the Israeli flag? Could it be that a color so important had been lost?

Why did it take so long for the information about the colors to surface?

These questions are answered in a new exhibition, “Out of the Blue,” that opened June 1 for a year, in honor of Israel’s 70th anniversary, at the Bible Lands Museum, revealing the secrets of the *tekhelet*, the precious blue color, and the argaman, the purple color, known thousands of years ago.



Tzitzit using the tekhelet blue.



Embassy to Israel, the planning and construction of which will be a longer-term undertaking.

“We are excited about taking this historic step, and look forward with anticipation to the May opening.”

And as we drove around our neighborhood, seeing people snapping photographs of the compound and the surrounding streets, we were as excited as Heather.

After living in Arnona now for six years, we wonder how having the US Embassy a 10-minute walk away will impact us. From a purely political view, we are as excited as the DC press woman about this historic step. We waited too many years for this to happen.

We are told that additional roads will be built near the compound and surrounding area, and a street and a roundabout will be named for President Trump.

Consulate and Embassy people are not allowed to ride local buses, so the biggest change we can think of is: traffic is bound to be heavier.

As leader of the weekly English-language walks in *Machaneh Yehudah*, the Jewish produce market, I hope it will bring me more business. I have had individuals from the US Consulate and organized groups come on my walk and they are lovely people.

Some say property will go up, but that would depend whether the workers want to live near the Embassy. Most of the Consulate workers I have met did not live in our neighborhood. The banners with American and Israeli flags on the block away from us and posters are very thrilling.

(see Kaplan/Israel, page 19)