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**HAPPY HANUKKAH!**

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Cover Art by Karin Foreman  
(see About the Cover, p. 3)

# Jewish Calendars: A Spiritual, Esthetic, and Historic Flight from COVID

BY ROSE KLEINER

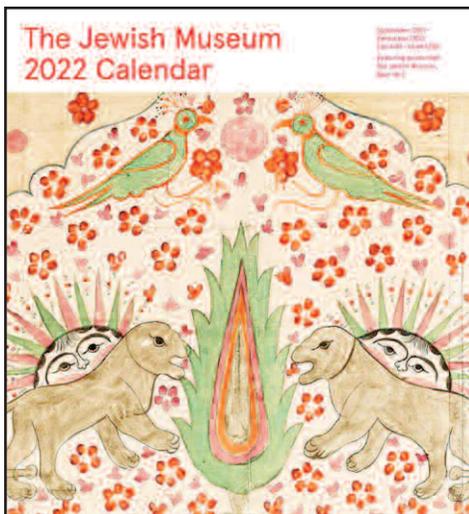
When COVID first arrived the challenge was how to deal with it in order to move forward with our daily lives. After almost 2 years of living with this pandemic, the challenge is to try and escape from it at least for a short respite, so as to rebuild our defenses and fortify our resilience. The Jewish calendar is one form of a daily defensive tool to deal with the pandemic, by escaping into a world rich in spiritual, esthetic and historic content.

The calendar's weekly guide to the *Shabbat* readings from the *Torah* and *Haftarah* (selections from the Book of Prophets), and its guide to the candle lighting times for *Shabbat* and holidays all divert our attention from the kind of days we have to contend with at present. The *Shabbat* candles light up our lives each week, and the *Torah* and *Haftarah* weekly readings invite us to explore the spiritual dimension of our life.

The calendar's illustrations of rich treasures from great museum collections take us into a world of art that is diverting, and truly uplifting. The images of objects dating back many centuries or of those created in our own time take us into the history and geography of Jewish civilization past and present.



Among this year's wall calendars, *The 2022 Jewish Calendar* (from the collection of the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam) by Universe Publishing (above) is graced with striking images. It also provides information about the Amsterdam Jewish community today, and about its Jewish Cultural Quarter. Within less than one square kilometer, the latter houses the Jewish Historical Museum, its Children's Museum, The magnificent Portuguese



Synagogue, and the National Holocaust Museum. These prominent cultural institutions accessible with a single ticket provide a unique overview of Jewish life in the Netherlands today, and in its centuries-long history.

Images of items from Amsterdam's Jewish Historical Museum dazzle the eyes with the outstanding materials used to create them, whether it is gold, silver, copper, iron, glass, or different luxurious textiles. All these were used to honor the *Torah* and the ceremonial objects which adorned the home or synagogue over the centuries. Whether we admire the stunning *Torah* crown, finials and mantles or the different *menorahs* illustrated, it sends us a message of how precious were the spiritual values which inspired the lovingly created items in this calendar.

The treasures of another great museum form the content of the *The Jewish Museum (New York) 2022 Calendar* (above), by the Pomegranate publishing house. The paintings, prints and sculptures reproduced in this calendar, and spanning more than 150 years, reveal different aspects of the Jewish cultural experience during several historical periods and in different communities.

With one of the largest Jewish art holdings in the world, New York's Jewish museum offers a uniquely fascinating world into which one can escape from the pandemic. Located in the choicest of New York neighborhoods, on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue Museum Mile in a magnificent mansion, the place merits a visit whenever one is in New York.

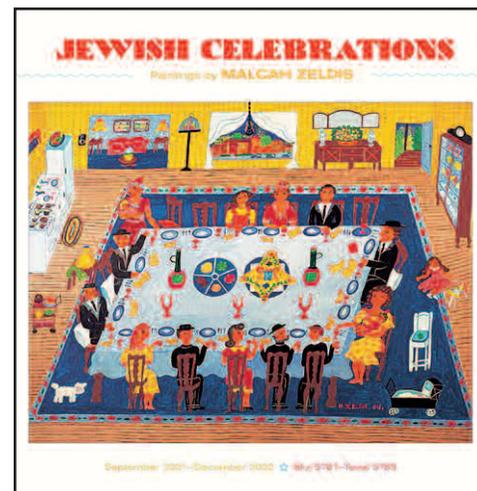
Among the objects illustrated in this calendar is a Study for *Menorah* (c. 1945-1970), by the prominent German born, American artist, Ludwig Yehuda Wolpert. The painting, *Blessing of the New Moon* (1911) is a touching work by Polish artist, Ben Zion Sokiranski. A Few Matters of Form, from the series, *The Elements of Style*, (2004), by Israeli born, American artist, Maira Kalman, is the perfectly suited, uplifting work of art for the July page of

this calendar. For a more esthetic escape from COVID, there is the illustration of the Ketubah (Marriage Contract), from Isfahan, Persia (1875).

For desk calendars, the *Universe Jewish Calendar (2021-2022)* is second to none, because of its abundant illustrations and its excellent, easy to follow guide it contains to each of the major and minor holidays, fast days, feasts, and other significant dates. Using this calendar can be a real joy throughout the entire year as it serves to enhance our Jewish lifestyle.

The objects depicted in this lovely calendar are more than a feast for the eyes. They come from so many parts of the world, and from so many different eras (Wales, 1897; Galicia, 18th/19th c.; North Africa, 19th/20th c; Philadelphia, 1874; Samarkand, 19th c.; Israel, 800 BCE; Switzerland, 20th c.; Afghanistan, 1970's; Cape Town, South Africa, 2007; Boston, 1893; Warsaw, Poland, before 1935; Baghdad, 20th c.; Amsterdam, 1739; Vienna, 1722; Lublin, Poland, 1838; Ottoman Empire, 19th c.; Rhodes, Greece, 1843; Lwow, Ukraine, 1764; Damascus, 1910).

When it comes to capturing the spirit of Jewish celebrations, Pomegranate features again, this year, the paintings by artist Malchah Zeldis (below). As in the past, she employs her trademark brilliant colors in her *Jewish Celebrations* wall calendar to focus on Judaism's timeless, family-traditions. Each of the images in the above calendar depicting various celebrations is accompanied by an explanation of the tradition portrayed.



Just as Malchah Zeldis' colorful adult calendar will appeal to children, so will the children's calendar, *My Very Own Jewish Calendar* (top of p. 4), appeal to adults. Its abundant information and trivia covers a wide range of interests and contemporary topics related to Jewish life as we know it today. And, of course, there are the historical entries that roam over different centuries, and through different lands. Some examples: In October, 2019, Sophie Wilmes became the first woman, and first Jewish  
(see Kleiner, page 4)

# Editorial

A year ago the Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis presented a Zoom interview with Dr. Ruth Westheimer, age 92. I was amazed at how much energy she had and at the same time she was not anxious about the pandemic, even before vaccines were available.

When Rabbi Sandy Sasso asked her how best to cope with the current situation she replied, "Do not lose your hope, eventually the bad times will be over, and then we are going to rejoice. I respect how difficult it is right now. The reason I don't talk about subjects like the virus is because we have to listen to the health professionals. Also when it comes to politics, I do not talk except to say how upset it makes me to see children separated from their parents because this is what happened to me."

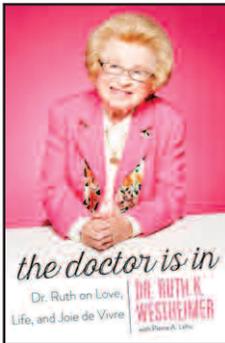
Living with her family in Germany in 1938, Karola Ruth Siegel (the future Dr. Ruth), age 10, was put on a train to Switzerland with other Jewish children where they were put in an orphanage. Two years later, when the letters stopped coming from her parents, she didn't know what happened to them. She was in a sort of limbo, an orphan who didn't quite believe her status.

The impression that her parents might someday show up haunts her still. It is not a feeling she will ever lose. And yet she hasn't clouded her life with darkness. How does she manage such emotional upheaval and stay happy? And how can you do the same with whatever terrible events fill your memory banks?

To find out, I read her autobiography, *The Doctor is In: Dr. Ruth on Love, Life, and Joie de Vivre*. I do not think I have ever read a better self-help book. Almost every page is filled with good suggestions on how to cope with difficulties and to live a happier life.

Since English is probably the fifth language that Dr. Ruth learned after German, Swiss German, Hebrew and French, I attribute the smooth and polished way the book is written to Dr. Ruth's longtime assistant Pierre A. Lehu who helped her write the book.

Before coming to America, Dr. Ruth studied psychology at Sorbonne University in Paris. That is probably when she first became fond of the phrase *joie de vivre* which in French literally means "joy of living" and is often used in English to express a



# About the Cover

**Spinning Dreidel**  
By Karin Foreman

"I wanted to wish you a very Happy Hanukkah! Please enjoy the spinning dreidel artwork that reflects the whirlwind of 2020-21."



Karin Foreman

*Karin Foreman creates artwork, graphic designs, and award-winning inspirational nature photography. She has won The Exposure Award and is featured in The Nature Collection. Her photography was honored at a private reception at the Louvre Museum in 2015. Her work was also featured at 4 Times Square in New York, the Amsterdam International Art Fair at the Beurs van Berlage, the Architectural Digest Design Show in New York, The Monaco Yacht Show, Spectrum Miami during Art Basel Miami, Artexpo New York and just recently the LA Contemporary Artshow.*

*See more of her work on her website at [www.karinforeman.com](http://www.karinforeman.com). She can be reached by email at [karin\\_foreman@yahoo.com](mailto:karin_foreman@yahoo.com). ✨*



cheerful enjoyment of life, an exultation of spirit. It "can be a joy of conversation, joy of eating, joy of anything one might do".

The book has about 200 pages with some interesting chapter titles such as, "Always Learn New Things", "Take Risks", "Recognize That It Is Never Too Late". To help answer the question of how she is able to stay happy amid unspeakable circumstances, read a few quotes below from her book.

"Focus on the present. Pay attention to the people around you. Ask questions and listen for answers. Tell everyone what happened to you during the day and make it as amusing as possible. Accentuate the positive, try to bring everyone's spirits up; by doing that, you'll find your own elevated. And by keeping your brain occupied in the present, it will force toward the back any unpleasant emotions that your past might evoke." p. 12

"One of my secrets to getting the most from life is that I naturally forget bad things that happen to me. That's not to say I don't hold grudges. However, if I've forgotten why I should be holding that grudge, it slips through my fingers, along with all the bad vibrations that come with anything negative... You can't experience *joie de vivre* if you are carrying around a huge lump of bitterness." pp. 21-22.

In the orphanage in Switzerland, "we couldn't turn to our parents so we turned to each other. We created bonds that were tough enough to last a lifetime. But when we get together, we aren't bitter. We don't cry about what happened. Instead we find ways of making each other laugh. Once

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**The Jewish  
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you learn to squeeze some fun out of what really are sour lemons, that's a skill you never lose. You learn not to dwell on what's horrible in your life ... You look for the good that life has to offer rather than make petty complaints." pp. 24-25

"I don't go around with a long face; usually I'm smiling. At what? I actually look for things to smile about. If I'm going to a concert later that night, and I start to

(see Editorial, page 4)

## EDITORIAL

(continued from page 3)

feel in a bad mood, I think about the wonderful melodies I'll be hearing later. I make a conscious effort to be positive. And if you want the most *joie de vivre* in your life, that's what you must do as well. Negative thoughts will pop into your head as they do to me and everyone. But why give in to those thoughts and allow your mood to be dragged downward? My suggestion is to fight off the temptation to go negative and work at being positive." p. 98

"When I was ten, I wanted to be doctor. Maybe at that age I didn't know exactly what that meant, but I knew I wanted to help people. The joy that one can find in giving – be it money or assistance or maybe even just your ear to someone in need of one – cannot be matched by any other means. There's the joy of sex, the joy of success, the joy of acquiring an object you desire – but the satisfaction that comes from giving is a very powerful emotion that you can't get any other way. If you want to experience *joie de vivre* you have to be open to giving of yourself." p. 101

If you are meeting a friend for lunch, read the morning paper so you are up on the latest news. If you are watching late night TV the night before and you hear a funny joke, write it down so you are prepared to repeat it at lunch. Mining the *joie de vivre* that life has to offer requires that you put some effort into what you do. ...You want the overall atmosphere to be one where you both come away from the lunch feeling good about having gotten together. If you provide interesting conversation then people will want to get together with you." p. 111

"When something bad happens, complain as loudly as you can for five minutes then put it aside. You've heard the phrase, 'Get it out of your system.' Well, I'm all for that. You're not permitted to allow small misfortunes to linger and fester – not if you want to have a life filled with joy." p. 112

"If you want to experience *joie de vivre* you have to actively combat boredom... there are plenty of activities near you that will stimulate your intellect....[Attend a performance of a local theater company.] If there's no book club near you, start one. If there are children stuck for long periods of time in a nearby hospital, go read to them. Join a local political party and stir the pot. If you think a certain corner needs a traffic signal, collect signatures on a petition. You can even take courses at major colleges online for free. By investing in yourself in all these ways you'll find the fog of boredom will lift and the bright light of *joie de vivre* will begin to light your life." p. 190

The book has many more of these

## KLEINER

(continued from page 2)

person, to be appointed Prime Minister of Belgium. A mother of four, she previously served as Belgium's Minister of Budget.

With October 10th being World Mental Health Day, this calendar goes back many centuries, to remind us that King Saul, Israel's first king, had to deal with depression and other mental challenges. Through this figure, described in the Book of Kings, the Bible confronts mental illness and introduces the concept of music therapy, today's popular treatment to calm the nerves. For it was listening to David's playing the harp that helped bring comfort to King Saul.

November, designated as National Family Caregiver Month, finds this calendar citing the Book of Ruth whose heroine is the first family caregiver in the Bible. In this time of COVID, Ruth is celebrated as the universal role model for all the hard-working, and nurturing caregivers the world over.

This pandemic year, the calendar also has an entry on handwashing, now so important in dealing with COVID, and such an integral part in Jewish law and ritual. Judaism even has a specific blessing to recite after washing one's hands. Speaking about hands, ever wonder why some tourists, after visiting Israel, come back wearing a red band around their left wrist. Associated with the *Kabbalah* (Judaism's book of mystical wisdom), this custom is said to protect one from the 'evil eye', which can bring misfortune upon a person.

The calendar also periodically takes us behind the scenes of an iconic, contemporary product, tracing its invention/creation to an enterprising Jewish person. This year's focus is on the world famous Harley-Davidson motorcycle. At age 20, in 1901, Arthur Davidson (originally Davidovich, 'son of David'), built a motorcycle with a 'new invention', a gasoline engine. He built it with his friend, William Harley, to take the hard work out of bicycle pedaling.

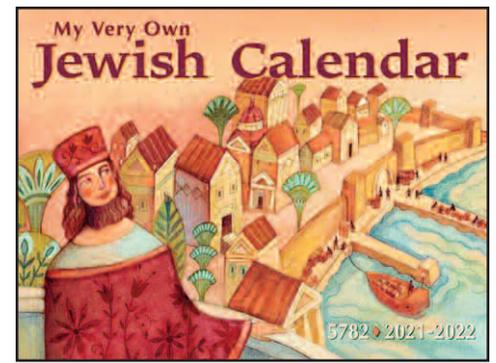
Another product, with a more universal appeal, ice cream, has been the focus of several Jewish immensely successful entrepreneurs, who raised its variety and flavors to undreamt of heights in recent years. America's first ice cream parlors were



quotes along with fascinating stories of Dr. Ruth's experiences in her professional life on radio, TV and in movies. This includes getting to meet and know all kinds of famous people such as movie stars, politicians, and musicians.

**Happy Hanukkah!**

**Jennie Cohen, December 1, 2021 ✨**



opened by Italians, but it was Reuben Mattus, a Polish Jew, who created the Nordic sounding Haagen-Dazs. Ben & Jerry's label was produced by Ben Cohen, and Jerry Greenfield. Baskin-Robbins was eventually bought by William Rosenberg, the founder of Dunkin' Donuts.

Political discussions are Israel's national sport, and the country's prime minister, Golda Meir, described it well when she met Richard Nixon, telling him, "You are the president of 150 million Americans; I am the prime minister of 3 million prime ministers."

During the 2020 Passover *seder*, as the pandemic was spreading the world over, Israelis found an original way to share at least part of the *seder* with the world outside their immediate family. Precisely at 8:30 p.m., on the night of the *seder*, Israelis went out onto their balconies, or into their gardens, and said the Four Questions together, from the northern to the southern tips of the country.

On the calendar's *Purim* page, we learn that Iranian Jews make an annual pilgrimage to the city of Hamadan in Iran to the sacred site where Mordechai and Esther are supposedly buried, paying homage to their famous matriarch and patriarch. On its August page, the calendar introduces us to *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers), a *Mishnah* tractate containing five chapters that guide Jews on how to live. It deals with how to show kindness, respecting another person's rights, respecting God, seeking peace, and avoiding transgressions.

This calendar reminds us that in Jewish tradition the month of August (precisely on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of *Av*) is a time to celebrate love. This is the annual date when Judaism's 2000-year-old festival of love is celebrated. As the owner of 700 wives, and 300 concubines, King Solomon who understood the power of words and the power of love, combined his talents to create Judaism's most powerful love poem, *The Song of Songs*, whose words are especially timely during the 15th of *Av*.

With all the above diversions, information, and esthetic images, the Jewish calendar can make life in the time of COVID a little more bearable. ✨

# Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism and Modern Jewish Identity: Is There Hope?



BY RABBI DENNIS C. SASSO

Someone suggested that had Descartes been Jewish, he would have proclaimed: “I worry, therefore I am”. Remember the quip about the quintessential Jewish telegram: “Start worrying; details to follow”.

But we cannot build a Jewish identity based on worrying, on the attitudes of others towards us. Despite rising antisemitism and anti-Zionism, we cannot affirm who we are by being “anti-anti”-Semites, or “anti-anti”-Zionists. What is it that we stand *for*? How do we model a positive, hopeful, joyful, authentic Jewish identity and lifestyle?

If “racism” is America’s original sin, “antisemitism” is the original sin of western civilization. Both are endemic and systemic viruses that resurge and mutate with variant expressions and force. Anti-Judaism began as religious prejudice that informed nascent Christianity, and later, Islam. It evolved from religious hatred to racial hatred, culminating in the lethal antisemitism of Nazi Ideology. More recently, antisemitism has mutated into anti-Zionism, denying Israel’s place among the family of nations.

After the Holocaust, the Western world felt embarrassed by antisemitism’s lethal outcome. The birth of Israel, through edict of the United Nations, helped to assuage the world’s guilty conscience. But as Israel prospered and defeated Arab aggressions, as American Jews attained economic security, social acceptance, and political influence, Jews and Israel began to lose their “victim” status. Palestinians have emerged as the new victims, while Israel’s image as a beleaguered nation has faded. Despite the vicious actions of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hizbollah, Israel is portrayed by the left as the aggressor, a symbol of Western imperialism.

Israel, like all countries, can certainly be faulted for political and social inequities, but the malicious charge that Israel is an “apartheid” state is intent on casting Israel as a racist and colonialist society. Yet, Israel is a place where Jews and Arabs, including Palestinians, receive equal excellent care at Hadassah and other hospitals; where Jewish and Arab students engage in groundbreaking university research; where Arab citizens sit as Justices on the Supreme Court, serve in the army and in the foreign diplomatic corps; where an Arab party is integral to Israel’s new

governing coalition; where a Jew can be a member of the Joint List Arab party and Arabs, members of predominantly Jewish parties; where there are Arab-Israeli beauty queens, prominent literary figures, and leading pop singers. In Israel, Arab citizens can participate in a real and contentious democracy.

Racial conflict in America has afforded both the right and the left opportunities to seize on anti-Jewish sentiment. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been conflated by many with American racial politics, the relationship of White supremacy vs. Blacks and peoples of color in our country. This inflammatory mindset drives much of current anti-Semitic and anti-Israel sentiment. For the far right, Jews are not white or Christian enough. For the far left, they are not perceived as people of color or regarded as victims enough.

Significant numbers of American Jews have bought into this egregious equation. They stand for other oppressed and marginalized peoples of the world, but distance themselves from Israel. Some even stand on synagogue pulpits proclaiming a Judaism stripped of any sense of ethnicity or peoplehood.

Jean Paul Sartre had poignantly observed that, “If the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him”. History and literature document that there is antisemitism even where there are no Jews. In her new book, *People Love Dead Jews*, Dara Horn recounts harrowing stories that highlight the world’s guilt and fascination with the Holocaust and dead Jews. Evidently, some prefer their Jews as victims than as victors.

As the parent religion of Christianity and Islam, Judaism has borne the brunt of the criticism and rejection of its daughter faiths. When all else fails, blame Mom. In correspondence with our colleague, Rabbi Richard Hirsh, we have regrettably concurred that when feminist theology surfaced in the 70’s, Jews were blamed for patriarchy. The environmentalist movement blames the “Old Testament” for climate abuse. Slavery? Well, the Jews? Homophobia? Again, the “Old Testament”. Colonialism is just the latest evil for which Jews are blamed.

So, is there room for hope? Can we trust and hope in humanity’s better nature, in the wisdom of our heritage and the genius of the Jewish people to grow and prosper, contributing to and benefiting from the best of the American democratic tradition’s, commitment to freedom, diversity and equality? Can we equally hope for a secure, democratic, and pluralistic State of Israel? I’m hopeful!

American Jews should not regard ourselves as apologists for Israel. Israel’s existence does not need to be constantly

justified. Israel is an independent, self-critical democratic nation in a region that is still a sea-bed of autocracy. Israel’s Declaration of Independence reads: “In the land of Israel, the Jewish people was born. In this land their spiritual, religious, and national character was shaped.” The modern state of Israel is the fulfillment of a historic birthright and national aspiration. But, there were and are others also living in the land. So, Israel’s Declaration of Independence further states: “The state of Israel will devote itself to develop the land for the good of all its inhabitants.” Israel should always strive to be true to its founding vision. The prophetic promise of liberty, justice and peace should be the inheritance of all, Israelis, Palestinians, Jews, Muslims and Christians alike.

Israel is both a refuge and a dream; a complex and challenging political reality. Israel’s future requires important short term sacrifices for the sake of long term benefits. While Israel’s sovereignty and security are non-negotiable, Israel serves herself and Jews around the world best as it labors to normalize coexistence with its Arab citizens its Palestinian neighbors. The Abrahamic accords pave the way. Occupation and increased settlements are not the answer.

Israel also needs to normalize its relationship with diaspora Jewry. The stranglehold of ultra-orthodoxy is not only choking of Israeli citizens, but dismissive and insulting of the majority of diaspora Jewry. Israel takes pride in the victory of Olympic gold medalist Artem Dolgopyat, yet, he cannot marry Jewishly in the state of Israel because his mother is not Jewish. Archaic understandings of Jewish religion, and civil rights are inexcusable in a democratic state.

Without minimizing their significance, antisemitism and anti-Zionism should not paralyze nor define us. We need to cultivate a Jewish identity that is not defensive. We need an informed, genuine, wholesome response to the challenges of living in a society that is becoming more and more divided and divisive, more interested in simple solutions than in the complexity and nuance of real living. We need to celebrate and proclaim a Judaism that is affirmative of individual rights while, at the same time, grounded in the ethics of group responsibility, what Mordecai Kaplan called, “The Religion of Ethical Nationhood.”

And so, we join our country’s struggle against racism and climate change because we are Jews; because our tradition demands it. If we somehow thought that we were not all in the same boat, the coronavirus has taught us otherwise. Hatred is as effective a tool as the virus for drilling a

# Chanukkah



BY MELINDA RIBNER

## Soul of Human Being is G-d's Candle in the World

The holiday of *Chanukkah* commemorates two miracles historically. One is the military victory of a small army of Jews against the power and might of the large army of Syrian/Greek Empire. The second miracle was the purification and dedication of the Holy Temple. The oil was only anticipated to be sufficient for one day, yet it burned for eight days. Eight is the signature of infinity, what is beyond the world. Light is one of God's signatures in the world.

Gazing at the light of *Chanukkah* offers each of us a unique opportunity to move towards greater freedom, love, peace and joy. I encourage everyone to take this challenge. Light the *Chanukkah menorah* every night, sit with the candles and gaze at the light for the entire time the candles are burning. If you have special oil that shines for many hours, make an effort to be with the light for at least 30 minutes.

This holy time of gazing, meditating, praying, connecting with the special Divine transmission of *Chanukkah* will transform your experience of yourself, your relationships with others and the world at large. In this time in the world, when fear and senseless hatred are increasingly pronounced, *Chanukkah* will fill you with light of love, of Oneness, of peace, of faith, of miracles. You will be peaceful regardless of what is happening around you.

We are taught that the soul of the human being is God's candle in the world. On *Chanukkah* our soul candle is lit. Because of the time spent in deep prayer and meditation on *Chanukkah* each night, the radiance of your soul will shine more brightly. Without any effort on your part, you will find yourself more peaceful and naturally will spread the peace and love to others in your orbit and to the world at large.

If you feel anxious about what is happening in the world, in your life, the light of *Chanukkah* will help you to let go of fear and be filled with faith. If you feel troubled, saddened, challenged or wounded in any way, the light of *Chanukkah* will comfort and strengthen you. Gift yourself with this experience as much as you can.

*We suffer mostly and we suffer greatly*

*in our lives when we do not experience ourselves connected to the Source of light, to God, to the True Reality.*

We try to figure out life, resolve our problems with our mind, but we remain stuck. We do not understand the whys in our lives. "Why did this happen in my life? Why did not this happen in my life?" Why is this happening in the world?, and so forth. We can't seem to think our way out of our own fear, pain and other limitations. We want to let go of our discomfort, we want to be peaceful and joyful for no other reason than the gift of being alive, but we do not know how to do that. On a deeper level, we are afraid of letting go of our limiting feelings, our negativity, because we think these feelings offer us protection and sadly enough, we identify ourselves as our feelings.

*Take comfort, Chanukkah is here to shine Divine light into our lives and empower us with a deeper experience of peace, freedom and joy.*

Be forewarned, gazing at the light of *Chanukkah* may not be entirely easy. You will want to read, you will want to eat, you will want to talk, you will want to close your eyes but try to keep your eyes open as much as you possibly can particularly in the beginning. Let the light fill your screen of vision. This light of *Chanukkah* has the power to purify us. We all have varying degrees of resistance to life as it is. We are frequently seeking distractions because we do not know how to be with our discomfort or resistance to what we are experiencing in the moment.

So when you are gazing at the light of *Chanukkah*, be gentle and loving with yourself, allowing space for any discomfort without running away. Just be with yourself and the light of *Chanukkah*. Remind yourself. It is safe to let go and to trust once again in life, in ourselves, in God.

Imagine you can cast into the light anything you want to be rid of. The more you are able to let go, the brighter the light. Allow yourself to be present, to let go of distractions and steadily focus on your breath. Every night the candles will dance before you to reveal something about yourself, about life, about God. Every night the candles will whisper a special and unique message for you. When our minds are quiet, we can listen to light.

*Chanukkah* provides a glimpse into the eternal light of God, the hidden light, the holy light, the light that has burned forever and will burn eternally. On *Chanukkah*, we get a glimpse of who we are on a soul level of our being, beyond our personality. That is the real gift of the holiday.

This teaching from Rabbi Nachman reveals a *Chanukkah* revelation. "Be profoundly aware that there is no reality except for

**SASSO**

(continued from page 5)

hole in the boat. Both can destroy us as a people, a democracy and a world.

One of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible is the oft-quoted: "Yea do I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil" (Ps. 23). This verse has nothing to do with "death." The mistaken translation goes back to the 17th Century King James Bible. The Hebrew means: "A valley of deep darkness." It is not about death; it is about life and its challenges. We all face illness, conflict, loss, emotional and spiritual pain. Collectively we deal with antisemitism, racism, and a world-wide pandemic. The psalm is about hope. Hope means that even if everything is not the way we want it, we can still walk through the "valley of darkness" with the support of others, the guidance of science, the wisdom of faith. David Ben Gurion, the inveterate pragmatist, said: "...[I]n order to be a realist, you must believe in miracles." *Hatikvah*, the Israeli anthem, is inspired by Jeremiah's *Haftarah* for Second Day *Rosh Hashanah* – *Yesh Tikvah* – "there is hope!" (31:17).

In 2012, Elie Wiesel speaking to a college graduating class, counselled: "Despair is never a solution. ...hatred is never an option." He said, "Hope is not a gift...from God to us; hope is a gift, an offering, that ...we human beings...give to one another."

Let hope be the gift we give each other.

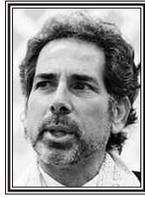
*Rabbi Dennis Sasso has been senior rabbi at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis for 44 years. (Adapted from a High Holy Days sermon and published by the Times of Israel, Sept. 22, 2021.)* ✨



God. God fills all worlds, surrounds all worlds and is within all worlds. All of creation – mineral, plant, animal, man are literally the essence of God's life force. God is hidden within every moment in the universe. The more you absorb these truths, the more your ability to rejoice in God will grow powerful and strong. This is a true joy, one without compare. *Any other happiness which isn't attached to God is not worth considering at all.*

*Melinda Ribner, L.C.S.W. is the author of Everyday Kabbalah, Kabbalah Month by Month, New Age Judaism, and The Secret Legacy of Biblical Women: Revealing the Divine Feminine. Free Jewish meditation classes are offered on zoom twice a week. Sign up for a free newsletter on the Kabbalistic energies of the months, holidays, meditation, and zoom links by emailing her at: Beitmiriam@msn.com or sign up on her Facebook pro page Melinda Ribner Spiritual Guide. Website: MelindaRibner.com.* ✨

# Cosmic Judaism



BY RABBI BARRY SILVER

## Hanukkah Celebrates the Jewish Victory of Light Over Darkness

Ancient people grew nervous when the days grew short and the sun dimmed, so they instituted festivals at the winter solstice to coax the return of the sun. Jews associated the sun's return with the Maccabean victory over the Syrian Greeks in 165 BCE when the light of freedom triumphed over the darkness of tyranny. Freedom is so ingrained in this holiday that Jews are free to spell *Hanukkah* any way we want, with no official orthography. *Hanukkah* means "dedication", and is related to the word "*chinooch*" (education) reminding us that Jews survived long centuries of persecution and exile by dedication to idealism and education, i.e. enlightenment, reflected in a vast number of Jewish Nobel prize winners in many fields of endeavor, who have brought the light of knowledge to the world.

Jews blessed humanity with ideals of hope and freedom with the immortal words of Jewish poetess Emma Lazarus enshrined on America's Statue of Liberty whose torch serves as a beacon of light for oppressed, huddled masses everywhere and the words of *Torah* on the Liberty Bell which "proclaims liberty throughout the land", (Leviticus 25:10). Moreover, the *Torah* celebrates the light of love with such maxims as love the stranger as thyself, since you were strangers in the land of Egypt and the less lofty but more well-known adage "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18), made universal by a rabbi who Christians worship as the son of God and light of the world, whose birth is celebrated on Christmas and his *bris* on the 8th day, i.e. January 1, as the start of the new year.

Ancient Jews defeated the Syrian Greeks, just as modern day Maccabees vanquished foes who sought to destroy our people in Israel. Today, the Jewish state of Israel is a bastion of light and freedom in the Middle East, leading the development of a vaccine against the coronavirus, and Jews developed the vaccine against the pandemics of ignorance, arrogance, intolerance and the worst of all because it leads to them all, indifference, with the vaccine of love and reason, reflected in prophetic visions of peace, harmony and universal wisdom.



Sadly, many people have rejected the vaccine of love and knowledge, even though it is free, available to all and 100% effective and thus become carriers of ignorance and hate.

As observed by Mark Twain and many other scholars, the Jews have outlasted all the empires that have tried to destroy us who were motivated by the love of power which is no match for the Jews' power of love. As a result for the first time in history, we have revived not only a people but a language thought dead, as the *lingua franca* of prophets and dreamers is heard once again in the vibrant Jewish homeland. Despite our small population, the Jewish people continues to have a major impact for good in the world, confirming Margaret Meade's adage "Never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world, indeed, it is the only thing that ever has". This indomitable spirit was captured by Theodore Herzl's rallying cry "If you will it, it is no dream".

Ben Gurion observed, "To be a realist in Israel, one must first believe in miracles." This belief in miracles is literally spelled out on the *dreidel* whose letters, *nun*, *gimel*, *hay*, and *shin*, are the initials for "*Nes Gadol Hayah Sham* (meaning "a great miracle happened there"). In Israel the letter *shin* is swapped for the letter *pey* for "*Po*" (here) meaning "a great miracle happened here". The letter *pey* also means that at times we must "pay" for freedom with our lives, or our votes. The letter *pey* could also signify the Hebrew word "*pnima*" meaning "within" reminding us that "a great miracle happens within" when the light of love, liberty and learning burns within us, and we imitate the *shamash* by sharing this light with others as super spreaders of love, life and liberty.

After two synagogue shootings in America, rising anti-Semitism in Europe, and the Jewish state under siege, Jews must put aside partisan divisions to unite and declare on this *Hanukkah* "*Am Yisroel Chai*", the Jewish people – the "light to the nations" – (Live!), is here to stay. As we

look back on the year 2020, when the pandemic raged and a neo-fascist led our nation, may we use 2020 hindsight to learn from our past by choosing leaders who respect the light of science, freedom and love. Let us always remember that the Jewish day begins at night to teach us that darkness is always followed by the dawn of a new day. As we spin our dreidel, may we give a new spin to our ancient heritage, interpreted uniquely by each of us in the light of reason, so that all Jews may serve as candles in the dark, offering hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Tw'as the first night of *Hanukkah*,  
In the Biden White House,  
When the *aineklach* were gathered,  
With the V.P.'s Jewish spouse.

Momala was excited  
along with her kinder,  
And Biden's Jewish grandkids were  
abuzz on Snapchat and Tinder.  
Jewish values now influence climate  
and immigration,  
As prophetic ideals guide  
our great nation.

So on Mayorkis, on Klain,  
on Bernstein, and Blinken,  
Let's restore America  
with the ideals of Lincoln.  
On Emhoff, Siegel, Haines, and Yellin,  
Where these Jews will take us, there's  
just no tellin',

With the return of science  
and the glow of its light,  
We wish all *Chag Sameach*  
and to all a good night.

**Happy Hanukkah!**

**Rabbi Barry Silver**, founder of *Cosmic Judaism*, and *Congregation L'Dor Va-Dor* unite all Jews under one link by science, reason and Jewish ideals. For more information about *Cosmic Judaism* or *Congregation L'Dor Va-Dor* contact Rabbi Silver at [barry-boca@aol.com](mailto:barry-boca@aol.com). Responses are welcome. ✨

# Chassidic Rabbi

BY RABBI BENZION COHEN

B.H.

## Successful Aging

I recently began reading a book called *Successful Aging* by Daniel J. Levitin. It tells the results of many scientific studies about growing old happily and healthy. This really interested me, as I was born more than 70 years ago, and I am beginning to feel some not pleasant changes in my life, such as memory loss, and loss of strength.

What are the recommendations? Eat healthy food in the right quantity. Get a lot of exercise. When you exercise your muscles they become stronger, even if you are 100 years old! Exercise your mind and memory, and they too will do much better. Be happy, make your life meaningful. How? Keep busy doing good deeds and helping those in need. If you help someone, that will make them happy, and you will be happy that you made someone happy. Make new friends and keep the old. Wow! Here is a scientific study, and what do they recommend? Live a life of *Torah*!

What does the *Torah* teach us? We have to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves! This of course is the surest way to make friends and keep them. I grew up with few friends. Now, Thank G-d, I have many. Just today I went upstairs, to the apartment of our daughter Mushka. She was holding Dovi, our 9 month old grandson. Dovi was happy to see me. Mushka asked Dovi if he wants to go to grandpa. Right away he held out his hands to me that I should take him! We enjoyed each other for a few precious minutes, and then I wanted to go home to write this column. His mother held out her arms to take him back. No deal! Little Dovi felt a lot of love for grandpa and from grandpa and wanted to stay with me!

What is the secret? How is it possible to love anyone, even someone that you have never met, as much as you love yourself? The answer is to be found in a very special book called *Tanya*. *Tanya* is the basic text of the teachings of *Chabad*. It was published 224 years ago by Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of the *Chabad Chassidic* movement. In chapter 32 the *Rebbe* explains that each of us has a body and a soul. Our soul gives our body its life. Our bodies are separate from each other. My body came from my parents, but your body came from your parents. When we mainly emphasize our bodies and externalities, there is separation between people. Our souls, however, are united. They all come from the same source, from G-d. The more that I connect to my soul, the more I can feel love for my fellow human.

# Jewish Educator



BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

## When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get Giving

For more than a year, COVID has limited our life choices; it has inhibited and in most cases, prevented, our prior, uninhibited ability to spend time with family, friends and colleagues. We sheltered in place while yearning for the simplest of activities: shopping, going to work, going out to dinner or the movies. We struggled to “feel” close in times of grief and sorrow as well as occasions of joy. Yet for my 95 year old mother, COVID did less to restrict her world than the years and infirmities that have accompanied nine decades of living.

Most of Mom’s friends are gone and my father, just three months shy of his 100th birthday, died two years ago. But while Mom is wheelchair bound, her mind is impressively agile. I marvel at her deep interest in politics, the books she reads and her constant contact with family. And



A life of *Torah* also involves a lot of exercise. We go to weddings and dance and dance and dance. This is a lot of exercise and a lot of happiness! On the two days of *Rosh Hashanah* we walked to a neighboring village. We went from door to door and asked people if we could blow the *shofar* for them. Many people were very happy to see us. They had not gone to *Shul* because they were afraid of the virus. Now at least they would hear the *shofar*. So on both days I walked an hour and a half. I also worked hard to blow the *shofar* hundreds of times. Again we got a lot of exercise and happiness.

Wow! I was very happy to see science recommending things that are parts of a life of *Torah*. Here we see that our world is getting better and better. Every *Mitzvah*, every good deed that we do makes our world better and better and brings us closer to the time when our world will be completely good. We hope that very soon our righteous *Moshiach* (Messiah) the Lubavitcher Rebbe will complete our true and final redemption. We want *Moshiach* now! We wish everyone a Happy *Chanukkah*!

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

while her physical mobility wanes, her capacity to offer guidance, inspiration and wisdom increases.

One such moment came when Mom confided that she wanted to make a difference in her final years. We were sitting on the couch, her fragile body leaning into mine when she told me: “I want to give more, to make a difference in this troubled world – for my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. There are so many people who desperately need our help to maintain dignity and a secure life.”

She paused for a moment and then added: “It’s part of being human, you know – to want to give from the heart. And it’s important to figure out what means the most to you and why.”

I was stunned. Mom’s wisdom perfectly articulated the foundation of philanthropic giving: it’s all about identifying your values and priorities and wanting to make the world a better place.

In my previous work as a Legacy Consultant for the Jewish Community Foundation of Southern Arizona, I saw first-hand the impact of thoughtful philanthropic giving. I watched our Tucson community benefit from the endowments and gifts of people who cared about issues ranging from Jewish education and Israel to social justice, climate change and the arts.

But giving requires some soul searching: How much should we give? How do we prioritize our donations? Should we support Jewish organizations over secular ones? Should we give now or wait until we die?

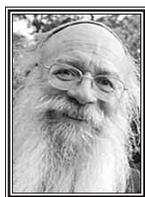
The Jewish tradition doesn’t speak in terms of charity. Rather, we take our marching orders from the *mitzvah* of *Tzedakah*, or righteousness in Hebrew. *Tzedakah* is the hand-maiden to *Tikkun Olam*, the Jewish obligation to repair the world. Together, they form a call to action, to consciously distribute a part of what we have to care for others. We don’t give because it feels good (although it does feel good.) We give because we’re Jews.

Jewish law prioritizes the poor of our own community over the poor living elsewhere, although priority is given to the poor in Israel. We give in concentric circles: starting with our own family and community and then expanding out into the larger world, which includes Jews and non-Jews alike. The *Talmud* specifically recognizes that *any* needy person who lives peacefully with us is worthy of charity.

During our lives we will undoubtedly have times when our ability to give may be restricted. And yet it is times like now – when COVID has ravaged our economy and caused a global health crisis unparalleled to anything we have ever known, that Jewish tradition requires us to step up

(see Lederman, page 9)

# Poem



BY REUVEN GOLDFARB

## Are The California Fires Out Yet?

*He makes the winds His messengers,  
the flaming fire His attendants.*

~ Psalm 104:4

I.

I stamp on the ground with my foot,  
the gray, baked ground, the hardpan,  
trodden by my boots and her delicate feet.

There's a surface of loose ash  
and a tangle of charred twigs and embers,  
still aglow on the scorched earth.

A wind could make it flare up any moment.  
I dare not leave it unattended.  
I dare not trust the elements to extinguish it.

I hardly trust myself to refrain  
from stirring it up. It slumbers,  
a swirl of flame *in potentia*,

and a world, waiting to be consumed,  
pauses, apprehensive, too early to trust,  
to relax. Fire danger, be gentle this once.

Don't bite the hand that quenches you.

II.

The wasteland starts to breathe,  
sodden by autumn rain and residents' tears,  
whose homes exploded into the sky,  
while small creatures, covered in ash,  
took refuge  
from the landlord's black tornadoes.

### Explanatory note:

*I migrated to California from New York in the summer of 1967 and subsequently lived in various San Francisco neighborhoods; in Napa County (on Dry Creek Road); in Sonoma County (at Wheeler's Ranch); settled and raised my family in Berkeley; and moved with my wife to Israel in 1999 while annually revisiting the Bay Area. This poem could have been written after almost any one of the many catastrophic fires that have occurred in this region; their similarities are that striking and depressing. In response to one of those wildfires, I wrote the first draft of "Are the California Fires Out Yet?" on December 3, 2003 – the title then was in the singular – and have tinkered with it ever since. I now find it distressingly relevant to the devastation that we recently witnessed. This year, the long-awaited rains have*

# Posting the Past



BY RABBI MICAH D. GREENSTEIN

## Hanukkah – The Strangest Miracle of History

This issue of *The Voice* arrives between Thanksgiving and *Hanukkah*, which is also a time to think about being thankful. And so I've been thinking...

I am thankful that there is an Ultimate Reality in the universe that creates and sustains life, and without which nothing else could exist. I know that the whole world could have been a gigantic accident, but that does not explain the love we know, the families we adore, and the heritage we share.

I am thankful for the people I love and who love me. I know they do not always meet my expectations, but neither do I always meet theirs. Yet they make my life so worthwhile. They inspire me and fill my life with meaning. These are no small blessings nowadays in a world where trust and comfort and inspiration and stability are so difficult to find.

I am thankful for being a Jew. Especially during this season of Christmas, I know it is not always easy or popular, but that's what makes it so special. I belong to the

*brought not only drought relief but massive flooding as well.*

### Links:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/11/us/california-fires-questions.html>  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/16/opinion/california-fires-air-quality.html>  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/09/us/california-fires-evacuations.html>  
<http://abc7news.com/napa-valley-fire-fighters-focus-on-holding-flames-at-dry-creek-road/2529788/>

*Reuven Goldfarb, writer, teacher, and rabbinic deputy, has published poetry, stories, essays, articles, and biblical commentaries in scores of periodicals and anthologies and won several awards. He co-founded and edited AGADA, the illustrated Jewish literary magazine (1981-88), and taught Freshman English at Oakland's Merritt College (1989-97). He now serves as copy editor for books and manuscripts and coordinates monthly meetings for the Upper Galilee chapter of Voices Israel. ✨*

## LEDERMAN

(continued from page 8)

and make a difference.

No matter how much or how little we have, the beauty of *tzedakah* is that it is an 'equal opportunity *mitzvah*.' As our sages taught: "To the one who is eager to give, God provides the means."

*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. ✨*



most extraordinary people the world has ever witnessed. Our very survival, which *Hanukkah* celebrates, is the strangest miracle of history. But we exist for much more than survival. We exist to perpetuate the sanctity of human existence and conscience, coupled with an obsession for goodness, justice, freedom and peace.

I am thankful for the country in which I live. America is a nation in which injustice, inequality, and insecurity still exist, but it is also a nation that will not conceal its faults. This nation was born in a vision of freedom and dignity for all people, and that ideal remains our greatest distinction as a country.

Finally, I am thankful for the big things and little things we take for granted – from cool breezes and the smile a child in our preschool just gave me, to health and simply being alive to enjoy this new day. These, along with a kind word or gentle touch, are life's greatest gift – ones you can't buy but can always give this time of year!

*Chag Hanukkah Sameach – a bright and Happy Hanukkah to you and all whose lives you touch!*

*Rabbi Greenstein has been senior rabbi of Temple Israel in Memphis for more than 30 years. (We published this from their bulletin, *The Voice*, in one of our previous Hanukkah editions.) ✨*

# Documentary Review



BY MIRIAM ZIMMERMAN, ED.D.

## The Magic of the Film on Abraham Joshua Heschel

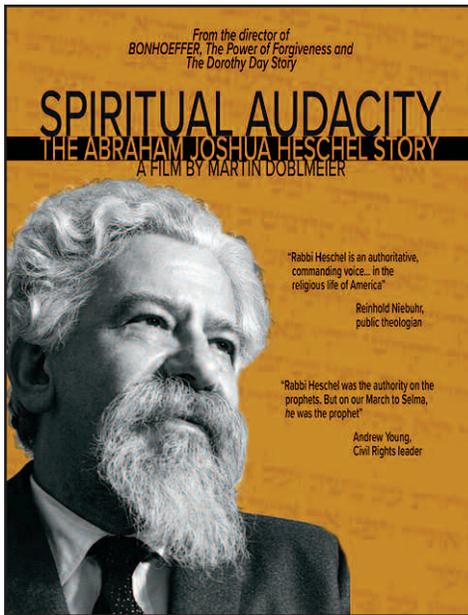
**Author's Note:** The following narrative describes the effect of this important documentary on me. I quote from Rabbi Heschel and from Dr. Susannah Heschel, his daughter; from Rabbi Heschel's colleagues and admirers, as well as from contemporary historians and rabbis, all as depicted in the documentary. The academic in me commands that I disclose not all quotes are completely verbatim, since I was writing them as I watched them spoken on my computer screen. I am grateful to publisher Jennie Cohen for sending me a link to the film and to PBS (Public Broadcasting System) for subsequently making the film available to the public, enabling me to view the film multiple times. In this article, I differentiated Rabbi Heschel from his daughter by referring only to her as "Dr. Heschel," although both hold doctorates. Unlike previous articles, I use "God" instead of "G-d" for a variety of perhaps irrelevant reasons. I also employ the gender biased "man" to include both men and women, since that is how Heschel, and my father, spoke. Both men demonstrated their support of women's equality by encouraging each of their daughters to become a *Bat Mitzvah* before it was common. Please note that in Heschel's time, the word "Negro" was an accepted and respectful term when referring to African-Americans.

It is not often that tears run down my cheeks as I watch a documentary film. The magic of filmmaker Martin Doblmeier's *Spiritual Audacity: The Abraham Joshua Heschel Story* transported me back to the formative years of my life as a student in the 1960s. As I watched, I saw many parallels between his life story and that of my family. It felt like the filmmaker made the film especially for me. The personal is powerful.



M. Doblmeier

As a college junior, I remember 1965 vividly. The film begins with those numerals filling the screen, followed by scenes from



the famous spring 1965 civil rights march in Selma, Alabama. Rabbi Dr. Abraham Joshua Heschel marches alongside the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Rabbi said it felt like "my legs were praying." The film corrects my misperception of this famous quote; it was his legs and not his feet that prayed. "The best of Judaism is fighting against racism," proclaimed Heschel.

During the summer of 1965, my father joined Catholic priests and nuns from St. Anthony's Hospital in my hometown of Terre Haute, Ind., on a peace march in Alabama. "It wasn't in Selma, but another small town in Alabama," he explained. I now wonder if Heschel had been on that later march and if the two men had met.

The film depicts African-American leaders describing the relationship between Rabbi Heschel and Reverend King as "like brothers." The filmmaker cites Rabbi Heschel's only child, Dr. Susannah Heschel, throughout the film. I met Dr. Heschel at a Holocaust conference, probably in the year 2000. I attended her presentation. Afterward, in a personal conversation with me, she explained that in the 1960s, Black leaders often visited the Heschel's New York home. Sometimes they came for Passover *Seders*; other visits might be unannounced. Once, she awoke to find Dr. King sleeping on their living room sofa, having arrived suddenly in the city with no place to stay. She also explained to me the Jewish feminist story behind putting an orange on the *Seder* plate, which has been distorted in the retelling.

From Selma, the film immediately jumps to people milling under a death camp's barbed wire fence. The narrator describes the Warsaw-born Rabbi, born to a poor *Hasidic* family and descended from a dynasty of orthodox rabbis. He was "plucked from the fire of the Holocaust that took the lives of his mother and three

sisters." The fate of his father is not included in the film. The Rabbi arrived in the United States in 1940 at the age of 33, just three years after my own father escaped the Nazi inferno in 1937, at the age of 27.

Already an ordained rabbi, Heschel left Poland to study philosophy at the University of Berlin in 1927 at the age of 20. The narrator described Germany as "a mecca for liberal education.... People came from across the world to study." My father graduated from the University of Berlin Medical School in 1934, the last year Jews were allowed to graduate. My dad must have begun his medical studies by 1930, perhaps earlier, if he had been on a six-year medical degree program after completing his *Abitur*, the equivalent of a high school education. Heschel's *New York Times* obituary stated that he received his doctorate from the University of Berlin in 1930. I concluded that the two men's university studies must have overlapped. It is a small Jewish world; their paths must have crossed.



Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (r) marching with Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (l) in Selma, Alabama in 1965.

I wondered if Rabbi Heschel belonged to the same K.C. ("Kartell-Convent") Jewish fraternity to which Dad belonged. The Kartell-Convent was actually a consortium of Jewish fraternities, established in Germany because Jews had not been permitted to join non-Jewish university social groups since the 1880s. Even before the Nazis, strict quotas for Jews ensured there would not have been many of them at any university. How could their paths not have crossed?

Quotes from the Rabbi in his own voice punctuate the film. Historian Taylor Branch described Heschel as a "theological Hemingway" who makes "short, pithy, witty statements" accessible to all. A case in point: "Remember, in a free society, some are guilty; but all are responsible." My father would have agreed, especially as applied to Holocaust bystanders. All his life, Heschel would fight to replace indifference with a philosophy of action; for Heschel, Judaism called on man to act responsibly.

"If I see something evil in another human being, it is an indication there must be something of that evil in myself and vice-

versa." My takeaway: seeing good in another enables me to see the good in myself.

The film makes clear the importance of the story of Moses to the civil rights movement. In his speeches and his teachings, Dr. King vividly connected the ancient Israelites leaving the bondage of slavery in Egypt to modern-day civil rights marchers. His brilliant oratory enabled his audiences to see it, feel it, be it – the slave in Egypt. His followers regarded Dr. King as a modern-day Moses. Heschel applauded the use of Exodus stories by Dr. King.

Dr. Heschel agreed. In the film, she describes her father as growing up in a world where Christian theologians debated throwing out the Hebrew Bible "since it was a Jewish book." Rabbi Heschel came to America and found that Blacks made the story of the Israelites and the prophets central to their teachings. "This was completely new for my father," she asserted. "My father used to say, if there is any hope for Judaism, it lies with the Black church." Why? "Because there is a piety and religiosity [in the Black church] that he remembered from growing up in Warsaw."

According to Rabbi Heschel, "The biggest message of the Bible is that God takes man seriously." Scholar and Rabbi Shai Held expounded on this teaching. "The core idea of the Hebrew Bible is that God cares."... "God is moved by people's suffering and God is offended by oppression and degradation." Heschel came to call this aspect of God as the "Divine Pathos." Rabbi Held connects Heschel's "Divine Pathos" to how the prophets spoke to Heschel. A prophet "is so taken by the Divine Pathos, so identified with God's pathos, that it takes him over. Prophets are overcome by God."

An "Old Testament" scholar (what many Christians still call Hebrew Scriptures) and Protestant theologian Walter Brueggemann asserted that "this poetic testimony by the prophets is the truth of who God is." Another commentator clarified that a prophet is not someone who predicts the future. The Hebrew word for prophet means "a truth teller." A prophet speaks truth to power. "Prophets are not popular."

Walking around Berlin, Heschel is not your typical graduate student. He sees a sunset and feels, as a Jew, he is compelled to pray. He feels that Jews have to be a *part* of the world; we cannot be *apart* from the world. He turns to the prophets for his doctoral dissertation, prophets who taught how humans should be in this world.

The film documents Hitler's rise to power and the concomitant rise in antisemitism with an impressively brief number of strategic scenes. As a Holocaust educator, I appreciated the observation that the Nazis stoked the ever-present anti-Judaism of the times with the new idea of hatred



*Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel with his daughter, Dr. Susannah Heschel, c. 1970.*

for the Jews as a *people* and as a *race*.

In March 1940, Rabbi Julian Morgenstern, the president of the reform Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Cincinnati, obtained visas for Heschel and four other scholars to teach at HUC. There, Heschel found that most students and their professors were not interested in *Hassidic* piety or *mitzvot* (commandments). There was no kosher food in the cafeteria. Heschel went from discussions about Goethe, Hegel, and Kant in Germany to talk about television, automobiles, and homes in the U.S. He found American conversation to be "spiritually vacuous." "Man...feels, acts, and thinks as if the sole purpose of the universe were to satisfy his needs," he observed.

In the United States, Heschel was forced to watch as his entire world – the world he grew up in, his family, teachers, culture, "all of it was obliterated while the [rest of the] world essentially sat silently by. He had an incredibly keen, almost excruciating sense of the moral consequences of indifference," Rabbi Held pointed out. "The Jews were murdered; no one did anything."

Rabbi Held continued, "So he saw his own war on indifference as a kind of reaction to living in a world where indifference was rampant." To people who asked, "Where was God?" Heschel responded, "Why are you bringing that question to God? God should bring that question to you. God should answer, 'Well, where were you?'"

My father explained to me in our discussions about Judaism and the Holocaust, "For God to be perfect, man has to be perfect." Dad would continue, "One should ask, 'Where was Man?' not 'Where was God?'" The Holocaust happened because humans made bad choices, or worse, no choices at all, facilitating genocide. After viewing this documentary, it became clear to me that Dad derived his ideas from this great Rabbi. But as a result, I was always able to believe in God, despite what happened to my family in Germany.

Heschel expressed it better: "I am an *optimist against my better judgment...I believe in God.*" When I heard Heschel speak these words in the film, it hit me. I

have chosen to believe in God. Just as God chose humans to be equal partners, God needs Man to make right choices; there is always choice. Unconsciously, I acted on that choice.

At a social gathering in Cincinnati, Rabbi Heschel met and fell in love with his future wife, Sylvia Straus, from California. She was a gifted pianist. But she returned to California. Later, they both moved independently to New York, where they reconnected and subsequently married. Dr. Heschel described the ironic compatibility of her parents. Her mother awakened; all she wanted to do was play the piano for hours. He awakened, and all he wanted to do was work at his desk for hours.

In the film, by 1945, Heschel had left HUC to join the faculty of the conservative Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), on New York's upper west side. He became a professor of Jewish Ethics and Mysticism. His peers felt that the last thing they needed was a professor of Jewish mysticism. Their ambition was to be serious scholars, "the Harvard of the Jewish world." Yet, Heschel, by bringing scholarly rigor to the study of mysticism, ultimately served this goal. At JTS, Heschel was able to assess the state of Judaism in the U.S. He wrote, "Has the synagogue become the graveyard where prayer is buried?"

In 1948, the State of Israel was created. Heschel insisted, "Israel is not atonement" and "to call it [the State of Israel] compensation [for the Holocaust] would be blasphemy."... "We do not worship the soil. Instead, Israel is endowed with the power to inspire moments in which God's presence is palpable."

In 1951, Heschel began a prolific period of publishing, beginning with the book, *Man is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion*. In the book, he explored humanity's responses of "wonder, awe, and radical amazement" to the world. The alternative to wonder, for Heschel, is "expediency." Expediency means to ask how the world can serve man; how to exploit the world for man's benefit. Although not used, the word "materialistic" came to my mind. In contrast, "wonder" involves a sense of gratitude, of indebtedness; a sense that something is asked of us, that we are asked to serve.

America's leading Protestant theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, of Union Theological Seminary, wrote a glowing review of *Man is Not Alone*. In his review, Niebuhr accurately predicted that Heschel would "become a commanding and authoritative voice not only in the Jewish community, but in the religious life of America." The two formed a lifelong, scholarly relationship of mutual respect. I remember having to read Niebuhr in my Man and Religion class at Northwestern University. Niebuhr's

(see Zimmerman, page 12)

ZIMMERMAN

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thinking was a struggle for me to understand.

The film continues to analyze the impact of Heschel's oeuvre not just on the Jewish community, but on the wider community as well. For example, his book on the Sabbath titled, *The Sabbath*, touched so many. The Sabbath is not just Jewish, but human, Heschel believed. He taught that the meaning of Sabbath "is to celebrate time, not space;" the Sabbath is "a cathedral that enables humans to connect with creation." The film describes each of Heschel's major works in turn by moving tributes from scholars, theologians, his daughter, and Black civil rights leaders.

In 1962, Heschel translated and expanded his doctoral dissertation into one of his most famous books, *The Prophets*, highly regarded as "a masterpiece of biblical scholarship." According to Black civil rights leader Andrew Young, every Black leader had a copy. "Dr. King's was heavily underlined. It was almost as though he had memorized it." Today's scholars regard Rabbi Heschel as a modern-day prophet; in the film, one of his admirers describes him as "a prophet's prophet."

Also in 1962, Pope John XXIII summoned Catholic leaders to Rome to update Church teachings and bring it into the modern world. The resulting Second Vatican Council became known as "Vatican II." The Pope charged German scholar, Cardinal Augustin Bea, with writing a treatise on what the Church's relationship with non-Christian people should be. The Jewish community regarded Cardinal Bea with suspicion; after all, he had lived in Germany during the Holocaust. The Pope invited a delegation from the American Jewish Committee to attend. Mark Tannenbaum, head of the delegation, wanted Rabbi Heschel to be included, knowing that the famous author and scholar would be trusted by the Jewish community.

Rabbi Heschel and Cardinal Bea developed a rapport that deepened as the two men worked together on these complex issues. Dr. Heschel explained that it was important to her father that the Council change Church teachings on converting the Jews and, of course, reject antisemitism. In addition, he wanted the Church to create institutions that would foster understanding of Judaism and encourage working together.

The film cites Mary C. Boys on these issues, without explaining that she is a Roman Catholic nun who has written numerous books on Jewish-Christian relations, including *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding*. I had the privilege of hearing Sister Boys speak at several conferences at the National Catholic Center for Holocaust

Education, at Seton Hill University in Pennsylvania. Seeing her in this film was like watching an old friend.

One statement that emerged from Vatican II was the famous "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," known more familiarly by its first two words, in Latin, *Nostra Aetate*. The phrase translates as "In Our Time." It changed forever Roman Catholic teachings about the Jews. Unfortunately, the second draft contained the statement, "...the union of the Jewish people with the Church is a part of the Christian hope," according to Dr. Heschel.

That "hope" was for the eventual conversion of the Jews. Her father, very upset about it, flew back to Rome to plead directly with the Pope. He called it "spiritual fratricide." Rabbi Heschel rebuked the statement by declaring, "I would rather go to Auschwitz than give up my religion." In the fall of 1965, after four years of intense debate, the document was passed by the Council, largely following Rabbi Heschel's admonitions and omitting the call to conversion. In my 35 years of teaching in Catholic universities, no one has ever tried to convert me.

That same fall, my father called me at my college dorm. Had I heard about Vatican II? Since I had not, he explained that the Church officially declared Jews were not responsible for the death of Jesus. I still hear the excitement in his voice as he added, "If that had happened earlier, there never would have been the Holocaust."

Back in the United States, Heschel was invited to speak at a ground-breaking conference on religion and race in Chicago, where he met Martin Luther King, Jr., for the first time. Rabbi Heschel was the son and grandson of *Hassidic* rabbis; Rev. King was the son and grandson of Black Baptist preachers. Heschel noted, "It was easier for the Israelites to cross the Red Sea than it is for a Negro to cross some campuses in the South."

That Chicago gathering prompted President John Kennedy to bring the Religion and Race Conference to the White House. He invited Heschel to speak, hoping to derail a planned summer march in Washington. Heschel replied in a telegram, as cited by Dr. Heschel, that ended with the title of this film. "I propose that you, Mr. President, declare a state of moral emergency. The hour calls for moral grandeur and spiritual audacity." For Heschel, racism was Satanism.

According to Rabbi Held, Heschel "came to think that religious diversity was God's will, that God wanted to be worshiped in a variety of ways, in a range of ways, in different languages, in different religious images." The film then depicts Heschel's anti-war stance regarding the Vietnam War and his support of Soviet Jewry, even

after a life-threatening heart attack.

Warsaw-born Holocaust survivor, rabbi, author, scholar, philosopher, civil rights activist, "a prophet's prophet", father of illustrious feminist Dr. Susannah Heschel, and a behind-the-scenes player at the Second Vatican Council which changed forever the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish people, filmmaker Martin Doblmeier captured it all in his 57-minute documentary. I realized that Rabbi Heschel's life story wove together a tapestry of many of the themes I have written about for the last 36 years in this publication, themes that have played out in my own life, albeit on a much smaller scale.

The documentary does justice to the life of this amazing rabbi. Rabbi Heschel comes through as a vibrant, relevant figure, speaking truth to power throughout his life. Unfortunately, Rabbi Heschel's civil rights activism is all too sorely needed right now, in our own beleaguered country. The film convinced me that if he were alive today, Heschel would be able to lead us out of the cultural and religious morass into which our country has sunk. The United States sorely needs a modern-day prophet.

My tears as I watched the film speak to its artistry that permitted Rabbi Heschel to touch his viewers. I felt as if every word of this great man had been uttered for my benefit. Somehow, despite being in my familiar office, on my tired computer, surrounded by artifacts that anyone else might label as "clutter," Heschel, as prophet, spoke to me. I felt called upon, that despite my age and known limitations, I can still make a difference in this life. I can serve. I must serve; God is calling on me to do so. Heschel as prophet is a mediator; the voice of God continues to speak through him. Thanks to the film, we all can hear God's voice. I felt motivated, energized, transformed. Isn't this what prophecy is supposed to do?

One night, Rabbi Heschel came home very tired. The next morning, his wife could not awaken him. Dr. Heschel spoke softly, "People say in Jewish tradition to die in your sleep, especially on the Sabbath, is a kiss from God." On Dec. 23, 1972, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel died in his sleep at the age of 65 – on *Shabbat*.

*Dr. Miriam Zimmerman is professor emerita at Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) in Belmont, Calif., where she taught the Holocaust course for 25 years. She can be reached at [mimzim@aol.com](mailto:mimzim@aol.com). One can read many of her columns in the JPO going back to 1985 by searching her name at this link: <https://go.usa.gov/xn7ay>.*

*The film first aired on PBS in May 2021 for Jewish American Heritage Month and can now be view at: [pbs.org/video/spiritual-](https://pbs.org/video/spiritual-)*

*(see Zimmerman, page 13)*

## Book Review

REVIEWED BY SIDNEY MISHKIN, z"l



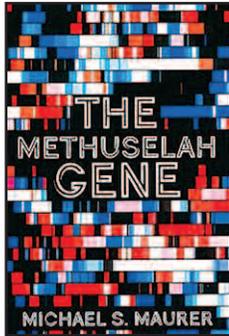
### When a Doctor Attempts to Play God

*The Methuselah Gene.* By Michael S. Maurer. Published by IBJ Publishing. Indianapolis. 2021. 201 pps. Hardcover \$24.95. Paperback \$19.95.

Michael "Mickey" Maurer's first work of fiction is an enjoyable and informative read. Most of the novel is set in Indianapolis, Carmel, and Bloomington, Ind. The book is actually two books. Both books deal with a doctor who attempts to play God and who thereby pushes up against a violation of the criminal law. He succeeds in that attempt in the first book.



What this Reviewer considers the first book deals with Progeria and its scientific but nevertheless fictional cure of the disease. Progeria is accelerated aging that usually kills people who have the gene by their mid-teens. An Indiana kid named "Jimmy" suffers from the disease, and Maurer's hero tries to save him as he seeks a cure for Progeria for everyone. This doctor is a brilliant, but stiff-necked person who believes that the end justifies the means. Jimmy's life is put at risk as a result.



Maurer tells us the difficulty of finding a cure for Progeria and other genetic defects is compounded by the fact that before the responsible gene can be neutralized it must be identified, and there are 50,000 genes in the human body. There are in addition, 100 million cells. A scientist could spend several lifetimes in the quest for the rogue gene without some considerable skill and a lot of luck. Maurer's doctor hero, fortunately, has a lot of both and he is fortunate to have a likeable young Pakistan-trained doctor to help him try to find a cure for Progeria.

But the quest for a cure is far from over after the problem gene is identified. A means must be found to transport the material that neutralizes the affected cells. Maurer is at his best when he writes about this subject. He has a sure understanding of the subject matter and writes about it in gripping manner.

## ZIMMERMAN

(continued from page 12)

*audacity-the-abraham-joshua-heschel-story-i3ptfo/* The film has inspired different discussions by scholars of religion and race and some of those can be seen on YouTube. Some of those also include input from the filmmaker and Heschel's daughter.

**Editor's note:** I was first introduced to the film followed by Q&A with Filmmaker Martin Doblmeier and Dr. Susannah Heschel at our local JCC's "Virtual Ann Katz Festival of Books & Arts" opening event on Oct. 25, 2021. Afterward, I was thrilled to be able to inform Dr. Zimmerman about it. See more about the film at: [journeyfilms.com](http://journeyfilms.com). J.C. ✨



Maurer's protagonist decides to use a virus to neutralize the Progeria cells. Maurer tells us that there are more viruses on earth than there are stars in the Milky Way. Which virus to use and what to do ethically if the virus produces a potentially fatal illness are interesting subjects Maurer explores. Medical treatment of the virus will destroy the material that is intended to neutralize Jimmy's affected cells. Failure to treat the virus could be fatal to Jimmy.

In Book 2 the author builds on the fictional successful cure of Progeria and explores the use of similar techniques to prolong human life. Maurer thoroughly explores the subject from all angles.

He writes "Ageism is as pervasive as sexism and racism." That will probably surprise younger readers but older readers know whereof he speaks. What effect will a prolongation of life have on ageism? Maurer deals with a host of questions as he explores the pros and cons of the prevention of aging.

How will we deal with the overpopulation that results from prolonged life for everyone? How will we share resources? Will we win a biological victory or cause the death knell of the human race? If elders can't reproduce, will there be too few young people to care for elderly? What will happen to our health care system if an aging population becomes a decrepit population? Can society afford a substantially longer life for all of the inhabitants of earth who want it? What are the risks to the individual who seeks longer life?

These questions are important, but equally important is the question of how do we test the anti-aging cocktail. The author provides one answer to this question which has devastating and far-reaching consequences. Perhaps it's a warning of what can happen when we try to play God.

*The Methuselah Gene* is a good read. Let's hope it isn't Maurer's only book of fiction, scientific or otherwise.

## Music Review

REVIEWED BY

CANTOR JANICE ROGER



### A Tzimmes of Culture, Language, Rhythm, and Tune

Fans of Tzimmes take note – Moshe Denburg and his family of musicians have released their first album in 23 years. *The Road Never Travelled* is their latest album, two compact discs filled with music old and new.

For those readers who are not familiar with the group, Tzimmes has been performing since 1986. "Tzimmes" is



an apt name for the ensemble. Why? As the liner notes explain, "Tzimmes: Noun, from Yiddish – A sweet, cooked dish of mixed vegetables and fruits; a mash up." That definition describes both the band and the new album.

Moshe Denburg's philosophy is that music can unite the world and *The Road Never Travelled* connects Jewish music old and new in a variety of styles and languages. It is a well-blended collection which is sensitively spiced with touches

(see Roger, page 14)



**Reviewer's Note:** This reviewer is one of many people who consider Mickey Maurer a friend. This review has not been influenced in any way by that friendship.

**Sidney Mishkin** was a retired Indianapolis lawyer. He authored two books, *The Unvarnished Torah: Observations, Questions and Answers of a Jewish Lawyer and Memories of Donora: Growing Up Jewish in a Western Pennsylvania Steel Town.* (This review was received on October 15, 2021, 14 days before Sid passed away.)

Michael (Mickey) S. Maurer has authored six other books besides *The Methuselah Gene* which is available on Amazon or by contacting him at [mmaurer@ibj.com](mailto:mmaurer@ibj.com). In 1967, Mickey graduated from Indiana University School of Law, now named Indiana University Maurer School of Law. In 2001, Mickey established "Mickey's Camp," that has raised more than \$3 million for charity. In 2006 he was appointed Indiana Secretary of Commerce. He served in this capacity for \$1.00 per year. In 2008 Mickey won an Emmy for "Mickey's Corner" in which he interviewed Indiana luminaries. Mickey is married to Janie Maurer. They have three children and nine grandchildren. ✨

# One Candle

BY SUSAN WEINTROB

I received an email *Chanukah* card today from a long-time friend. It is always special when my non-Jewish friends take the time to send me *Chanukah* cards rather than “holiday” cards with mistletoe or Christmas trees or a Santa. “Janice” and I have had many conversations about our different faiths and she has asked thoughtful questions about Judaism.

But it was not always this way.

Janice and I had become fast friends, our husbands both university professors and professional musicians. She ran a business and I was in graduate school. Despite the small Jewish population, I loved living in a Midwestern university town and raising my children there. We were always doing each other favors and one day, after I had helped Janice, she called me to thank me.

“You were great to help me out, Susan. That was such a Christian thing to do,” she told me. I felt an icy depth in my gut. Making some non-committal remark, I quickly got off the phone. I paced back and forth. I was furious. We were friends. She knew I was Jewish. How could she think you had to be Christian to do a good deed?

I knew we would no longer be friends. I was never going to speak to her again.

When my husband came home, I poured out the entire story to him, my anger evident with every word. He was thoughtful for a few moments. “You’ve been good friends with Janice, and I think you should give her another chance.”

“No way!” I felt my blood boiling. “How can I forget what she said?”

“Oh, I wasn’t saying that. Call her and tell her how you feel.” I shook my head. “She deserves that and so do you.”

“What do you mean?” I couldn’t figure out why my husband was taking her side.

“Janice should have a chance to explain herself and so should you. You might be surprised how this turns out.”

“I’ll think about it.” Janice had betrayed me and I felt put down. Deep down, I didn’t want to admit I was scared to call.

The next morning, I was still nervous. My husband gave me a hug as he left for work. “You’ll do the right thing.”

I decided to call before I left for class. My hands were sweaty and my mouth felt dry. Finally, I picked up the phone. Janice answered right away. “Susan! So nice to hear from you.” She didn’t have a clue how I felt, I could tell. It was hard to open my mouth.

“Janice.” I cleared my throat. “Yesterday when we were talking, you hurt my feelings.”

“Susan – I am so sorry. What did I say?”

Here was my chance. I took a deep

breath. “Do you remember when you thanked me for helping you?”

“Of course,” she responded, a bit puzzled.

“You said it was a Christian thing to do.”

“Yes,” she replied, still uncertain about what I meant.

“Don’t you think I can be Jewish and do something good? Do you think only Christians can do good things?” I had finally said what bothered me.

“Why it’s just an expression.” She paused. I could almost hear her thoughts. “Oh, Susan.” She stopped, clearly not knowing what to say. “Of course, I think you can be Jewish and do good things. It’s something I have always said. I didn’t think how you might feel or about what you might think. It’s just what we say.” I remained silent. “I guess I was pretty thoughtless. Will you forgive me?” I of course forgave her, not knowing that this was not the end of this episode.

Janice began asking me about Judaism. We invited her to our synagogue and to many *Shabbat* meals. She asked me to recommend books on Judaism and read novels with Jewish characters. More than that, we talked about Judaism, our traditions and holidays. She watched us light candles on *Chanukah* and came to Passover meals and ate *matzah*. We visited her house to see its Christmas decorations and heard about her family traditions growing up.

Our friendship not only continued but strengthened. Now even though we are now many miles apart, I wasn’t surprised to see a *Chanukah* card from Janice. Every *Rosh Hashanah*, *Chanukah*, and Passover, we hear from her in a card, an email or phone call. And I send her Christmas and Easter cards or give her a call.

We do more than respect the other’s religious choices. We gain from knowing each other and our diverse religious traditions.

While I wasn’t surprised to see Janice’s *Chanukah* card, I was pleased. It reminded me of what we had learned in our journey together over the decades. My husband had been right when he said I might be surprised how my conversation with Janice would turn out.

Our sages teach us that even one candle can dispel the darkness. Friendship is also like a candle, spreading its light in joyous as well as dark times. Janice lit a candle for me that day, allowing me to see past my fears and continue a valued friendship, from which both of us learned and grew. Friendship, like *Chanukah*, grows from just one light.

Weintrob is a retired educator who writes full time in Charleston, S.C. She can be reached at [srweintrob@gmail.com](mailto:srweintrob@gmail.com). She wrote a regular column for The Jewish Post & Opinion from 1995–2002. ✨

ROGER

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from a variety of cultures that Denburg and his musical family have experienced.

The first disc features folk and secular music. It begins with Sephardic songs “*Cuando El Rey Nimrod*” and “*Ahavat Hadassah*” and moves to “*Oyfn Veg*,” from the Ashkenazic repertoire. These selections use fresh harmonies and instrumentations, mixing the culture of the songs with other cultures that Denburg has encountered through his education and travels. The next two cuts feature songs that Denburg composed, “*The Road Never Travelled*” and “*Sweet Melissa*.”

Denburg composed nine of the 18 selections on the discs. He is a talented composer who keeps the listener thinking because of his use of rhythm and lyrics. “*Moishe’s Freylakh*,” another of Denburg’s tunes, has the style and spirit of traditional klezmer. Saul Berson, clarinet, improvises brilliantly.

The second CD, “*Liturgy Lane*,” has nine songs from Jewish liturgy. Denburg created original melodies for the *Shabbat* candle blessing (“*L’hadlik Ner*”) and “*Shalom Aleichem*.” I hope these are published, as they would be great additions to the congregational repertoire. “*Adon Olam*” is another *Shabbat* text, this time set by Tzimmes musician Myrna Rabinowitz. It is beautiful and original with its blending of verses 2/3 and 4/5 sung together as counter melodies. Portions of psalms 16 and 121 were set to music by Denburg and are fresh approaches to very old texts. “*Vechitetu*” is a text from Isaiah and was originally recorded in 1993 and remixed this year. It features the late Adel Awad on the *daf* (a type of drum).

The last selection on both discs is The Beatles’ “*In My Life*.” On the second CD it is sung in Hebrew. Denburg explains in the liner notes that it is a song which Tzimmes uses to close their live performances. By the way, the liner notes are excellent and are filled not only with explanations, but also with pictures of members of Tzimmes past and present.

Though many of us listen to our music from streaming services or on our phones, it is well worth the effort to find a CD player and get *The Road Never Travelled*. The music is a real *tzimmes* of culture, language, rhythm and tune – and a well-seasoned one at that.

*Janice Roger is the Cantor Emerita of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, which she served from 1979 until 2017. Now retired, she serves as chaplain for Jewish Family Services and volunteers with Indiana Reading and Information Services (IRIS), The Great American Songbook Foundation, and Classical Music Indy. She is married to Brandon Roger and they have two sons, Eddie and Miles. ✨*

# Media Watch



BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

## The New TV Season (So Far)

**Law and Order: S.V.U. and FBI: Most Wanted**

The *Law and Order*/FBI TV conglomerate, which extends from NBC to CBS, had Jews – American and Israeli – on the mind in the season debut of two of its series.



On the two-hour season premier of *Law and Order, Special Victims Unit*, a Congressman Howard takes advantage of young mothers who fall behind in their rent, and “parties” with high school girls under the pretext of “mentoring” them. But he is hardly the episode’s worst villain. His attorney and political consultant or “bulldog,” one Myron Gold (Glenn Fleshler) is not only the congressman’s enabler but his fixer.

Gold is a slick and glib lawyer. He is also a big guy and physically menacing. After the congressman incriminates himself and then threatens the assistant district attorney and a sergeant with losing their jobs should they seek to prosecute him, Gold takes him outside and slaps him, threatening, “Shut up, you idiot.”

In the second hour we learn that Gold arranged an abortion after Howard impregnated a teenage summer intern, and without telling Howard who says he is “against abortion.” Gold also arranged hits on four witnesses. He is devious. Sergeant Olivia Benson (Mariska Hargitay) observes: “Gold is smart. We raided his office and we will be digging through encrypted files for months. His finances are a maze of campaign contributions, Howard Family Trust, pacs with anonymous donors, holding companies within holding companies.”

Once the authorities close in on Gold, he braggingly bargains. “I know where a lot of bodies are buried.” ADA Carisi rightly replies, “Because you buried them.” Without flinching, Gold goes on to say



that he could offer up an ex-president and family, Hollywood royalty, real royalty and Silicon Valley billionaires. In the end, the political elites in New York and Washington decline to prosecute him or even make a deal with him in exchange for information. So he literally gets away with murder because of their fear of scandal and punishment.

While the term “Jew” is not used here, the bad guy’s name and the casting and a reference to Jeffrey Epstein make it all too clear that writers Warren Leight, Julie Martin, and Bryan Goloboff felt comfortable starting the season with a Jewish arch-villain.

CBS’s *FBI: Most Wanted*, a relatively new link in the *Law and Order* production fanbelt, began its third season by reveling in the premise of mercenary Israeli ex-Mossad hit men. This year’s premier episode was part of a trilogy, together with the original *FBI* series and the newly-introduced *FBI: International*, all of which constitute CBS’s Tuesday night prime time line-up.



In this episode, written by David Hodgkins and Elizabeth Rinehart with lead producer Dick Wolf, an armed bearded assassin murders a billionaire and a 15-year-old girl in New York City. After he flees into a subway car, the FBI officers wait for him to get out at his stop in order to avoid endangering passengers. When he emerges from the subway, the suspect, realizing that he is being followed by law officers, starts firing at them and then grabs an innocent hostage. Obviously, he has no concern for collateral damage.

This dastardly villain is shot and killed, and identified as one Efraim Amit, age 43, who was recruited by Mossad after his service in the Israeli Army, for missions in Africa and Eastern Europe. It is suggested that other ex-Mossad operatives are doing the bidding of a billionaire who has been

running a vicious and deadly sex trafficking operation of which super-wealthy, famous and powerful men gladly avail themselves. These thugs murder teenage girls, as young as 13 years old, who run afoul of, or are no longer useful to, their ruthless boss. It is suggested that Amit was flying in girls from other countries for the pleasure of American billionaires. He was also paid to kill anyone who might expose the boss’s lucrative blackmail operation.

Another suggested Jewish name, Anita Hoffman, is brought into this episode. She is identified as “the widow of Ira Hoffman, owner of a boat,” who allowed the ruthless blackmailer to use that boat, on which the bodies of four young girls were found.

All this culminated in the debut episode of *FBI: International*, where there was no longer any mention of ex-Mossad mercenaries. So what was the point of gratuitously – and momentarily – singling out the State of Israel as the spawner of renegades who advance horrific sex-trafficking?



### Blue Bloods Hate

The long-running CBS police/district attorney family drama, *Blue Bloods*, began the season with an episode titled “Hate Is Hate,” written by series stalwart Siobhan Byrne O’Connor. It begins with *yeshiva* boys in a school bus debating the relative talents of Michael Jordan and LeBron James. An enraged man driving a car alongside the bus pulls out a gun and shoots inside, killing one of the *talmidim* and seriously injuring another. Next we hear a reporter asking: “Were the victims targeted because they’re Jewish?”

The episode soon offers up a deranged, angry road-rage shooter with multiple biases and mental health issues. Police Chief Frank Reagan (Tom Selleck) opines: “All crimes are hate crimes. No such thing as a love crime.” But the anti-Jewish hate crime issue turns out to be a big tease here.

The episode ends, by the way, with the Orthodox Jewish mother praying with folded hands (?) alongside her boy’s *yarmulke*-covered head. The writer and producers do not even pretend to depict Jewish practices authentically, though they have often through this series’s 12 years paid detailed attention to the Reagans’ Catholic faith.

Through the years I have found that *Blue* (see Gertel, page 17)

# Book Review

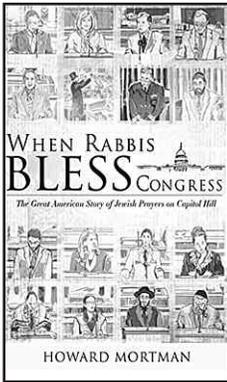


REVIEWED BY  
RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

## Astonishing Facts, Enthralling Stories

*When Rabbis Bless Congress (The Great American Story of Jewish Prayers on Capitol Hill)*. By Howard Mortman. Boston: Cherry Orchard Books. 2020. Pp. 331.

The author of this unique publication enriching American Jewish history, Howard Mortman, is C-SPAN's communications director covering the U.S. Congress, and a graduate of the University of Maryland. His family belongs to Temple Rodef Shalom in Falls Church, Va. In his relevant introduction, Mortman concludes in a tongue in cheek style, "So, want to hear rabbis cite Moses and Scripture and *Torah* and *Talmud* and *Mishnah* to legislators and the public? Don't turn to Jerusalem – the Knesset does not open with prayer (although, arguably, who in the Knesset isn't a rabbi?). Instead tune into Washington, where Israel's chief rabbis can and have served as guest chaplains in Congress, just like hundreds of others" (p.12).



While both the House and the Senate of the U.S. Congress have full-time clergy chaplains, there is a long-standing tradition of guest chaplains for a day which amounts to offering a brief prayer at the opening session of each chamber. Instructions are provided by both chaplains' offices for the Invocation's length and content and is submitted ahead of time. C-Span provides live coverage, and the prayer is printed in the Congressional Record – which began operating in 1873 – on the day of delivery. The guest chaplain is ordinarily recommended by the clergy-person's Representative and Senator and it is truly a memorable experience to be invited for such an honor. A certificate and photo op are included.

I have had the privilege to offer the Invocation, so far, twice in each chamber, vividly recalling the accompanied solemnity with the opportunity to *schmooze* with present members of the august bodies though most members are usually not present in person. They are watching from

the screens in their offices the offered prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the session's agenda, unless there is a vote to take place on the floor. I watched from home on TV the deadly attack on Congress on Jan. 6, 2021, with the defiled desecration of both chambers and the rest of that magnificent and historic citadel of democracy known the world over. To witness it, though from a distance, was painfully shocking and beyond unfathomable with alarming ramifications for American democracy and the Jewish community.

As the book's title reflects, there is much expressed pride in Jewish clergy representing a minority participating as co-equal with other religious figures in what some regard as violation of constitutional church and state separation, though upheld by the Supreme Court in 1983. The book's impressive treasure trove collection of a myriad of fascinating and intriguing items with sprinkled humor is grouped into two parts, including nine sections. Part One: Who They Are is made up of Section 1: Setting the Scene: A Congress at Pray. Section II: Who Are These Rabbis? Section III: Media Portrayal. Part Two: What They Say. Section IV: Religious Awareness. Section V: Policy and Politics. Section VI: War, Evil, Terror. Section VII: Congress Institutions. Section VIII: America the Exceptional! Section IX: Diversity: Including the Christians.

Given the close proximity of Washington Hebrew Congregation, the oldest synagogue in the capital since 1852 and chartered in 1856 by a Congressional act, it holds the record of guest chaplains. Its Rabbi Solomon Landsberg was invited to be the first rabbi to offer a prayer in Congress. Since his English was not yet fluent as his native German, the honor went to the eloquent Sweden-born Rev. Dr. Morris Jacob Raphall of New York's Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, who delivered in the House on February 1, 1860.

Both his message and traditional garb were generally well received but reportedly along with some discriminatory comments. Professor Jonathan Sarna of Brandeis University refers to an unofficial Episcopal publication claiming, "no less than the official rejection of Christianity by the Legislature of the country" (p.17). Historian Rabbi Dr. Bertram Korn is quoted, "In more than a theoretical sense, therefore this was the initial recognition by the House of Representatives of the equal standing of Judaism, with Christianity, as an American faith" (p.16). Of note, on that historic date the House elected its first Republican Speaker, New Jersey's William Pennigton, which was acknowledged in Raphall's prayer. The U.S. President then was James Buchanan.

Rabbi Edward Calisch of Congregation

Beth Ahavah in Richmond, Va., was the first American-born rabbi to offer a prayer in the House on April 6, 1892. The iconic Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise was the first rabbi to offer a prayer in the Senate on May 21, 1870. His biennial birth was recognized with a special resolution in the Senate on April 4, 2019. Rabbi Sally Priesand of New York's Steven Wise Free Synagogue was the first woman and first female rabbi to invoke in the House on Oct. 23, 1973, which was somehow missed by the New York Times. Her sponsor was the fiery Congresswoman Bella Abzug. In the Senate, the first woman there was Rev. Wilmina Roland Smith, a Presbyterian minister, on July 8, 1971. The first woman rabbi blessing the Senate was Rabbi Dena Feingold on April 20, 1994, sponsored by her brother, Democratic Senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin.

Though the Jews make up only 2.2 percent of the American populace, 35 rabbis out of 527 House guest chaplains participated from September 2006 to September 2016. 441 rabbis delivered prayers up to February 2020 with an average rate of 7.5 percent since WWII, and 11 percent respectively in 2018 and 2019. In Spring 2018 the number of rabbinic invocations was 613 which is symbolically significant, Mortman points out, given the traditional number of *Mitzvot*. Conservative Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff, a former Navy chaplain and earlier a line officer during the Vietnam War, holds the record with 16 offered prayers. The C-SPAN Video Library allows access to House prayers since 1979 and to Senate prayers beginning in 1986.

The book's invaluable Index of Names (Pp.320-331) highlights 347 rabbis offering Congressional prayers. Rabbi Dr. Gary P. Zola, Executive Director of the American Jewish Archives and Professor of the American Jewish Experience at the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati campus, offered one prayer in each chamber. He is among those at the volume's end who glowingly and justifiably endorse the book, "Howard Mortman's extensively researched volume is jam-packed with astonishing facts and enthralling stories. His book is likely to become the final word on this subject. Once you begin to read Mortman's captivating story of Jewish prayers on Capitol Hill you will not want to put it down."

*Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman is the founder and spiritual leader of Temple Lev Tikvah and Honorary Senior Rabbi Scholar at Eastern Shore Chapel Episcopal Church in Virginia Beach, Va. He is the son of Holocaust survivors from Sarny, Ukraine, Sarnik, Belarus and Zamosc, Poland. He and his family were in the Wetzlar, Germany Displaced Persons Camp from 1947-1949. He grew up in Haifa, Israel. ✨*

**GERTEL***(continued from page 15)*

*Bloods* painted Jews as either obnoxious or nasty – and sometimes as victims. (I have been collecting material for more comprehensive articles on these aspects of the show.) In the past I would have decried the gratuitous display of Jews, especially Jewish youth, as gun targets, as dangerous and as possibly giving ideas to haters. But since the attacks in Pittsburgh and Poway, deadly “ideas” have become realities and, tragically, depicting such horrors is now part of accepted social narrative. Sadly, for this show, the victim option is the least offensive way it has portrayed Jews.

**Name Games?**

Sometimes I wonder whether TV writers and producers sneak in Jewish surnames as villains just for their own amusement. In the series premier episode of *CSI: Vegas*, written by Jason Tracey, mention is made of an Ellis Vitner who killed his girlfriend back in 1996 over a “busted hand of black-jack.” Though he died in prison, this Vitner guy left money to a sociopath who kills cops – the evil that keeps on giving?

Also, on the *Law and Order: SVU* season debut (9-30-2021) a Russian mafia villain, Anton Popkov, comes between old colleagues Sergeant Olivia Benson (Mariska Hargitay) and Elliot Stabler (Christopher Meloni). Writer Bryan Goluboff depicts Popkov as so evil that Benson has to back off of capturing an evil rapist lesser mobster just to capture the arch villain. Is the last name a wink reference to a Jewish Russian mafia?

On related show, *Law and Order: Organized Crime* (10-14-2021), writer Juliet Lashinsky Revene profiles a billionaire named Ross who hosts charity events that auction off sex-trafficked girls. We are told that Ross’s wife Jennifer Berlanski (or Berlinski?) Ross is the daughter of a real estate developer who helped his son-in-law get into business. While there are no explicit Jewish references, I wondered whether this was all a veiled reference to the Jeffrey Epstein-Ghislaine Maxwell connection. Am I being over-sensitive?

**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.* ✨

**KAPLAN/IS***(continued from page 20)*

classic injected with strawberry jelly and dusted with confectioners’ sugar. An ad for that bakery detailed the other variations that are growing in popularity: **Chocobo** has Belgian chocolate mousse; **Nutella** has Nutella cream; **Ferrero Rocher** is filled with sour cream, milk chocolate, and sugared hazelnut shards; **Pistachio kadaif** has pistachio patissiere, cream crown, shards, and *kadaif*; **Napoleon** has French crême patissiere; Strawberry cream has strawberry confiture; **Milky** has milk chocolate and chocolate ganache; **Sprinkles** is frosted with ganache and candy sprinkles; **Mozart** has nougat-flavored whipping cream and a Mozart cream crown; **Oreo Cheese** is frosted with Oreo crumbs; **Crumb Cheesecake** has a cream cheese crown and cheese inside; **Mekupelet** is whipping cream filled with Mekupelet milk frosting; and **Dulce de leche** has a caramel flavor.

(In case some of these are unfamiliar: **Nutella** is sweetened palm oil spread flavored with hazelnut and cocoa solids, manufactured in Italy; **Patissiere** is a thick, creamy custard; **Kadaif**, or angel hair, are shredded dough noodles used in Middle Eastern desserts; **Confiture** is fruit stewed in thick syrup like jam or jelly; **Genache** is whipped chocolate and cream; **Mekupelet** is an Israeli bar of milk chocolate; and **Dulce de leche** is heated sweet milk which changes color and looks and tastes like caramel.)

Jewish law does not prescribe any special feasting or elaborate meal for *Chanukkah* as it does for other holidays. Maybe this is because the origin of *Chanukkah* is not in the Bible but in the Apocrypha, the books of literature written between the second century BCE and the second century CE that were not incorporated into the Hebrew Bible.

The Books of Maccabees, of which there are actually four separate books, only say that the hero, Judah, “ordained that the days of dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days from the first and twentieth day of the month *Kislev*, with mirth and gladness.”

So where do we get all the food we eat? It is in the *Talmud* where the so-called miracle of the oil burning for eight days is written which was inserted to de-emphasize the miracle of military triumph and replace it with a more palatable idea, that of the intervention of G-d, which somehow would seem more a miracle of man against man, according to the sages of the time.

By the way, it is only within the past few years that children’s books about *Chanukkah* dare say the oil story is a legend or a myth.

Practically every ethnic group has the custom of making and eating a form of food prepared in oil as a reminder of the so-called miracle of the jar of oil.

Gil Marks (ז”ל), in *The World of Jewish Desserts*, wrote that doughnuts fried in oil, *ponchikot* (which are ball-shaped or resemble a doughnut hole) were adopted by Polish Jews for *Chanukkah*. The name is taken from the Polish word, *paczki* [poochkey] which led to the nickname, *ponchiks*, the Polish name for jelly doughnuts.

*Poonchkey*, similar to jelly doughnuts only larger and more rich tasting, are traditionally served on Shrove Tuesday, the day before, the predominately Catholic observance of Lent, before Easter. They were made to use up shortening and eggs which were prohibited during Lent.

*Sufganiyot* have a more interesting history. In *The Jewish Holiday Kitchen*, Joan Nathan, noted cookbook author and *maven* of American Jewish cooking, said she learned the origins of *sufganiyot* from Dov Noy, dean of Israel folklorists.

Noy relates a Bukharian fable, which says the first *sufganiya* was a sweet given to Adam and Eve as compensation after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. He says the word *sufganiya* comes from the Hebrew word, *sof* (meaning *end*), *gan* (meaning *garden*) and *Ya* (meaning *G-d*). Thus the word means, *the end of G-d’s garden*. According to Noy, this fable was created at the beginning of the 20th century, since *sufganiya* is a new Hebrew word coined by Israeli pioneers.

Some say *sufganiyot*, which means *sponge like*, are reminiscent of the sweet, spongy cookie popular along the Mediterranean since the time of the Maccabees. Hebrew dictionaries say the word actually comes from the Greek word, *sufgan*, meaning *puffed and fried*.

John Cooper, author of *Eat and Be Satisfied: A Social History of Jewish Food*, has another theory. He says Christians in Europe ate deep-fried pastries on New Year’s Eve, and Christians in Berlin ate jelly doughnuts. From them, German Jews started eating apricot-filled doughnuts. When they immigrated to Palestine in the 1930s, they encouraged the population to eat the jelly doughnuts for *Chanukkah*.

One of my favorite pieces of research is the characteristics which *sufganiyot* are said to have: 1) they are round like the wheel of fortune; 2) they have to be looked at for what is inside, not for their external qualities; and 3) they cannot be enjoyed the same way twice.

Sources on the internet shows the calories for one *sufganiya* vary from 93 to 276 and gluten-free with rice flour is 166 calories.

Whatever their origin, sample the real thing and you won’t forget it! *Chag Chanukkah Sameach* from Jerusalem! ✨

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*The Jewish Post & Opinion* since 1930  
at <https://go.usa.gov/xn7ay>,

**KAPLAN/RECIPES**

(continued from page 20)

sweet basil, and radishes. Gondi can also be served as a soup.

- 1 medium onion
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled (optional)
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp. ground coriander
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 pound ground chicken (preferably organic)
- 1-1/2 cups chickpea flour

**Soup Broth:**

- 6 cups chicken or vegetable stock (or broth)
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric

Place the onion and garlic in a food processor and process until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and stir in the oil, egg, salt, turmeric, cumin, coriander, and pepper. Add the ground chicken and chickpea flour and stir gently. In a large pot bring the stock to a simmer, then add salt and turmeric and bring to a boil. Form the Gondi mixture into 3-inch balls and drop them into the broth. Return to a boil, reduce the heat, cover the pot, and cook until the Gondi is tender, about 1 hour. Serve warm, with or without the broth.

**Olovieh Salad (potato salad)**

(Serves 4)

This is a popular salad that can be served as an appetizer or as a sandwich. Some cooks add cooked chicken to their Olovieh salad. This is a vegetarian version. If you don't like to use mayonnaise, smashed avocado is a great alternative. Loaded with heart-healthy monounsaturated fatty acids and fiber, avocados have more potassium than bananas.



- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and cooked
- 2 eggs, hardboiled, room temperature
- 2 large pickles, chopped
- 6 ounces cooked or canned green peas
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tbsp. mayonnaise (or smashed avocado)
- Cherry tomatoes and red radishes (optional, for garnish)

Once cooked, peel the potatoes and mash them in a bowl. Peel the eggs and chop or smash them into 1-inch pieces. Add to the potatoes. Add the pickles and the peas to the bowl. Add the mayonnaise and mix the salad well. Top with tomatoes, sliced radishes, or pickles. Serve with crackers, pita, or lavash bread.

**Chocolate Chunk Cashew Cake**

I made this cake using leftover cashew and date pulp when I made cashew milk. Cashews are rich in vitamin E. They are a good source of minerals, especially magnesium, zinc, and selenium. You can control the amount and type of sugar as well as the kind of flour you use in this recipe. You can substitute coconut milk or almond milk for the orange juice. You can also use coconut oil or avocado oil instead of butter for a non-dairy alternative.



- 2 cups flour (or 2 cups gluten-free flour)
- 3/4 cup sugar (or 3/4 cup brown or Turbinado sugar)
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 6 ounces dark or semisweet chocolate chunks (or chocolate chips)
- 1 stick (4 ounces) unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 cup fresh orange juice (or coconut milk or almond milk)
- 1 tsp. orange zest
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup cashew and date pulp (or leftover almond pulp from almond milk recipe)
- 2 eggs, room temperature

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine the dry ingredients (flour, sugar, baking soda, salt,

and the chocolate) in a large bowl or a stand mixer and whisk. In another large bowl mix the melted butter (or oil), fresh juice (or coconut milk or cashew milk), orange zest, the leftover pulp, and vanilla extract. Add the mixture to the dry ingredients. Add the eggs. Do not overmix. Pour the batter into a greased cake or Bundt pan. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes.

Angela Cohan moved from Tehran, Iran to southern California in 1979, where she continued her early education. She attended UCLA, where she studied psychology and achieved Masters' degrees in Journalism and Mass Communications. She formerly worked as editor for *The Iranian Jewish Chronicle* and is currently a contributing writer for *Cultural Weekly*. Angela is a member of PEN USA, an organization that defends and promotes freedom of expression domestically and internationally.

She is a mentor at Young Story Tellers Foundation and a member of the National Honor Society. Angela's award-winning work has been featured in *Wildbound PR*, *The Jewish Journal*, *Public Poetry Series*, *I'll Have Wednesday*, *FR&D*, and *OnTheBus* literary journals. This is her first cookbook. Her website is [angelacohan.com](http://angelacohan.com).

*Persian Delicacies* covers a full spectrum of recipes for any type of meal and occasion such as: Avocado and Spinach Hummus; Pistachio Pesto; Aashé Anar (Pomegranate Soup); *Ltkas*; *Tahchin* with Saffron, Barberries and Pistachios; *Dolmeh* (Stuffed Peppers); Paneer (Cheese); *Joojeh Bademjan* (Chicken with Eggplant); Chicken with Dried Apricots and Prunes; *Ghormé Sabzi* (Braised Beef with Herbs); *Khoreshé Beh* (Quince Stew); Salmon with Saffron Garnish; Baklava; and Fig Cake and *Doogh* (Yogurt Beverage).

*Sybil Kaplan* is a journalist, lecturer, book reviewer, food writer and author (Witness to History: Ten Years as a Woman Journalist in Israel), nine cookbooks (including What's Cooking at Hadassah College.) She lived in Israel from 1970-1980; she and her late husband, Barry, came to live in Jerusalem in 2008, where she works as a foreign correspondent for North American Jewish publications; lectures to senior citizen residences; leads walks in English in Machaneh Yehudah, the Jewish produce market; and wrote stories about kosher restaurants on [Janglo.net](http://Janglo.net) from 2014 to 2020 for which Barry photographed. She has written book reviews exclusively on Jewish books for more than 40 years. ✨

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Photo by Kobi Gideon / FLASH90

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In fact, this past year Magen David Adom's 30,000 EMTs and paramedics have been on the front lines in the fight against coronavirus while also contending with terrorist and rocket attacks, riots, car accidents, and other threats to Israeli lives.

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# Seen on the Israel Scene

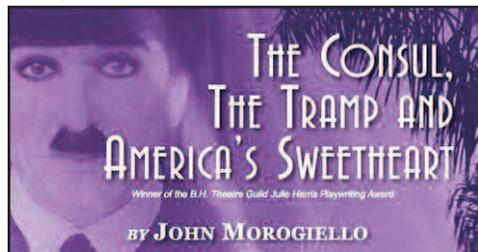


BY SYBIL KAPLAN

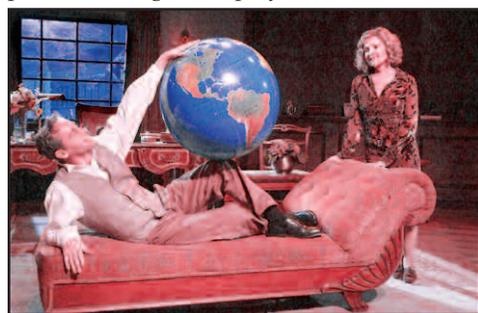
## At Chanukkah in Jerusalem

Theatre in English...Ben Bard operated an acting school and theater company in Hollywood from 1930 to 1970. Graduates of the school included Alan Ladd, Jack Carson, Shirley Temple, Gower Champion, Angie Dickinson, Cliff Robertson, and Gig Young.

His son, Barak, producer/director and documentary film maker, created the Ben Bard Players in Jerusalem, an English-language theatre company in memory of his father. During *Chanukkah*, the company is giving eight performances at the Kahn Theater of John Morogiello's award-winning, one-act play, *The Consul, the Tramp, and America's Sweetheart*.



In 1939, Charlie Chaplin, then 50 years old, was working on his first "talkie" film, *The Great Dictator*, to poke fun at Adolf Hitler. The German Consul in Hollywood, Calif., Georg Gyssling, was instructed to prevent the film's production. To attempt to do so, he met with Mary Pickford, then 47 years old, co-founder and chief executive at United Artists. This forms the plot of Morogiello's play.



Brian Stanton, as Charlie Chaplin, and Melanie Chartoff, as Mary Pickford, from a 2016 production of *The Consul, The Tramp, and America's Sweetheart* at Theatre 40 in Beverly Hills, Calif. Photo by Ed Krieger.

It's *Chanukkah*...and that means that a favorite holiday treat of *Sufganiyot* (jelly-filled doughnuts), just lightly fried in oil of

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## My Kosher Kitchen

REVIEWED BY SYBIL KAPLAN

### Evolution of Persian Recipes

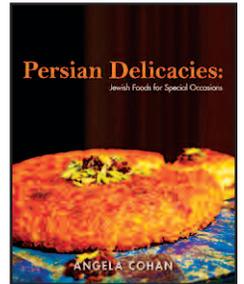
*Persian Delicacies: Jewish Foods for Special Occasions.* By Angela Cohen. Clyde Publishing Inc. \$35 hardcover, September 2021

"I was inspired to compile the specialty recipes of my mother, my late grandmothers, other family members, and friends in this cookbook," Angela explains. "This book is as much theirs as it is mine. It is a tribute to my heritage as a Persian Jewish woman as well as an evolution of recipes since living and cooking in the United States for the past three decades."



A. Cohen

Fruits, spices, and herbs are used prominently in Persian cuisine. Angela uses fresh and organic products in her recipes representing a fusion of traditional foods with a healthy, modern approach. Typical Iranian main dishes are combinations of rice, meat, vegetables, and nuts.



Although kabobs are always on the menu at Persian restaurants, they represent only a small sampling of the dishes Persians eat at home. Many of the recipes in the book can be prepared as vegetarian.

"To accommodate the different tastes and lifestyle choices of my readers, I present vegetarian and vegan alternatives to dishes that are traditionally cooked with meat. In addition, I offer many gluten-free and dairy-free options for readers who have food sensitivities or diet restrictions."

course, have been appearing throughout Israel for weeks. One well-known Israeli bakery has 14 different kinds! Salty seems to be all the rage this year. I bought two traditional with jelly inside and scraped away the jelly for a little less sweet taste.

In recent years in Israel, *Sufganiyot* have gone through a major revolution from its



(see Kaplan/IS, page 17)



**Gondi (meatballs)**  
(Serves 8)

Jewish Persian Americans serve Gondi (chickpea flour meatballs) on Friday nights for Shabbat dinner. Most of my family members eat Gondi as an appetizer by making a Gondi sandwich with lavash or pita bread,

(see Kaplan/recipes, page 18)