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AIDING TSUNAMI RELIEF—This scene in Colombo, Sri Lanka, shows Israeli military officers transferring relief supplies to Sri Lanka to aid victims of the December tsunami. (*Israel Defense Force photo*)



HAMADREGOTH—A street in the Nachlat neighborhood of Jerusalem, home to (among others) a mix of Hasidim, Israeli yuppies, Mizrahi Jews, and American transplants. *Photo by Sue Swartz*

Violence continues despite new PA leader

JERUSALEM—Terrorists showed no mercy here despite election of a new Palestinian Authority president who hopes to use diplomacy instead of weaponry to build a new nation.

An attack at a crossing that left six Israeli civilians dead set off Israeli reprisals in Gaza and brought a warning of more from Prime Minister Sharon.

The response from the Palestine Liberation Organization Executive Committee was a statement urging Palestinians to “stop all the military action that might harm our national goals and give the Israelis an excuse to obstruct Palestinian stability.”

There was speculation that the terrorist strike was done as much to undermine new PA President Mahmoud Abbas as to hurt the Israelis. Sharon cut off contacts with Abbas, who was sworn in Saturday as the successor to Yasser Arafat as head of the PA.

Sharon was quoted as telling his cabinet that the Israel Defense Forces and security forces were instructed to increase anti-terrorism operations “without restrictions. We did not give in to terrorism in the past, and we have no intention of giving in to it now,” he said.

The AP quoted an Israeli official as saying Egypt’s intelligence chief Omar Suleiman criticized Sharon for cutting off contacts with Abbas without giving Abbas more time to act. As the first Arab country to sign a peace deal with Israel, Egypt has tried to work as a go-between with the two sides to end the past four years of violence.

There also were reports in the region that, contrary to Sharon’s threats, Israel was holding back from a widespread military response in the Gaza Strip.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak asked Sharon to give Abbas more time to deal with the terror organizations.

In the past the IDF responded to similar attacks with major raids. The Israelis did use air strikes against three Qassam rocket launchers in Gaza they said were ready for launching.

Media reports said Abbas told the Japanese foreign minister at a meeting in Ramallah that Sharon was giving him enough time to act. Abbas said he was committed to enforcing the rule of law and achieving a cease-fire. He said he planned to reach an initial agreement with senior Hamas leaders on reducing violence.

A senior Israeli military officer said Palestinian security forces had done nothing to act against the firing of rockets and mortars that was taking place “right under their noses.”

Media reports are consistent that Abbas has to deal through Palestinian negotiations with violence from members of his own Fatah movement as well as from Hamas. Palestinian Foreign Minister Nabil Shaath said Abbas would try again this week to win over the groups to a truce.

Israel accused Palestinian police officers of aiding the terrorists in the most recent attack at a Gaza Strip checkpoint.

Israeli officials insist a cease-fire is not enough and that Abbas must also arrest and disarm Palestinian terrorists even if doing so sparked a civil war among Palestinians.

At his inauguration in Ramallah on Saturday, Abbas reiterated Palestinian demands for a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital but called for peace and co-existence with Israel.

Trujillo turns heads with sculptings



Story and Photos by SHOSHANA HARPER

The work of sculptress Giselle Trujillo was displayed at an opening reception on Sunday, Jan. 9, at the JCC's Art Gallery. The artist was on hand to discuss her three-dimensional works in stone, wire, fiber glass, resin, and clay. Some of the pieces are life-sized and seemed to draw viewers to them.

A native of Caracas, Venezuela, Trujillo resides in Indianapolis. Her work will be on display through the end of

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Celebrate the New Year of the Trees

By SHOSHANA HARPER

Tu B'Shvat is the new year of the trees for Jews. Jews celebrate by partaking of the various fruits and nuts of the land of Israel as well as wine or grape juice in a special seder exploring the meanings of these customs and traditions.

Join Congregation Shaarey Tefilla on Jan. 24, 5:30 p.m., for this fun tradition. Cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 6-12, \$2.50 for children 2-5, or a special \$30 family rate.

Tu B'Shvat at IHC

Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation will host an "Intergenerational Tu B'Shvat Seder and Dinner" on Sunday, Jan. 23, at 5 p.m.

During the seder participants will enjoy ceremonial foods. Dinner: adults (10+) \$6; children (2-9) \$4. Reservations (by Jan. 19): 255-6647 x 219.

Casino Night

This will be the fifth year of this annual fund-raising and "fun" raising event on Saturday, Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m. in the

BJE Auditorium.

Las Vegas-style gaming is all the rage, with cash settlements benefiting Congregation Shaarey Tefilla. (Heck, Trump has enough!)

Games include craps, blackjack, roulette, poker, and even some bingo for folks like me. And for those who enjoy a good deal, there is the very popular silent auction to bid on items ranging from jewelry to Pacers tickets.

Your \$25 advance ticket entitles you to hors d'oeuvre, beer, wine, and soft drinks. Kosher dietary laws are observed.

For more information contact 253-4591.

Camp JCC

Registration for summer camp at the JCC will take place on Sunday, Jan. 23, from 12:30 -2:30 p.m. in the Laikin Auditorium.

Since it's a big event, there will be a big kick-off, including balloon animals and cotton candy and popcorn to nosh

on. Discounted deposits of \$100 per session per camper are also available.

There will be a giant treasure chest filled with prizes, including Camp JCC lunch boxes, notebooks, T-shirts, and even a free session of camp!

Also on hand will be the JCC Scholastic Book Fair.

If you have questions, call 251-9467, ext 282.

Shrek 2 at BEZ

The Men's Club of Congregation Beth-El Zedek is sponsoring a Havdalah, Pizza and Movie Night, featuring Shrek

2, on Saturday, Jan 29, at 6:30 p.m. Contact the office for more information: 253-3441.

Peri Smilow at IHC

Singer-songwriter Peri Smilow is coming to IHC, Saturday, Feb. 5, 4 p.m.

Peri has been heard in communities throughout the United States, Canada, England, and Israel. Her recordings include "Songs of Peace," "Ashrey," and "The Freedom Music Project." The latter has been the subject of feature stories on NBC and ABC and on NPR's

Continued on page 4

Personal assistant wanted

Seeking personal assistant to help elderly woman who lives in Marten Manor. Twice a week for one to two hours. Call for details: 876-2961, Deborah Ben-ami.

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PNAI meeting was lively, informative

By SHOSHANA HARPER

The revitalized Indianapolis Chapter of Parents of North American Israelis met on Sunday, Jan. 9, at the JCC

for lunch, a talk by Assistant Professor Pierre Atlas, and a brief meeting. Rabbi Shlomo Crandall opened the meeting with a D'var Torah.

In attendance were Sylvia and Mike Blain, Esther and Joe Eptstein, Lea and Bernie Frankovitz, Bob and Harriet Goldberg, Harry Goldstein,

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Nora Goldstein, Anna Ruth Hasten, Lola Herman, Lila and Art Mirkin, Lee and Ruben Shevitz, and Bill Weinstein.

Dr. Atlas' talk was quite timely, as the Palestinian elections were taking place. One of the most interesting subjects dealt with a post-Arafat leader and his credibility and ability or interest to have peace with Israel. A lively discussion always takes place when the topic is Israel, and this was no exception.

A CD by Avraham Fleck,

of Jerusalem, the son of PNAI member Betty Fleck, of Marion, Ind., was displayed for sale at the meeting. Mr. Fleck produced this CD of Modritz music, the sacred melodies of a Polish Hasidic sect. For more information or to purchase the CD, contact Mrs. Fleck at 765-662-6234.

Anyone with children or other family members living in Israel is welcome to join the group. To learn more, contact Chapter President Sylvia Blain, 317-251-1914.

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Shoshana

Continued from page 3

"All Things Considered."

Peri has been compared to Joni Mitchell, Pete Seeger, and Joan Baez, and she's Jewish!

IHC's Chai Notes and Congregational Choir will perform with Peri at this very special

program.

Super Bowl Party

The game, the food - chili and dogs and veggie food too - alternative activities for those who want them, and a raffle for a large screen HDTV! It's all happening at Congregation B'nai Torah for Superbowl XXXIX on Feb. 6, 5:30 p.m.

The cost for dinner is \$25 for adults and includes one raffle ticket. The cost for children is \$5, and free for kids under 5 years old. Extra raffle tickets may be had at a cost of \$20 each, and you need not be present to win. Call 253-5253.

Bingo night

The PTA at the Hasten Hebrew Academy is sponsoring a late afternoon family event open to the community on Sunday, Feb. 13, beginning at 4 p.m. in the school's auditorium.

Enjoy a relaxing dinner and play a few rounds of bingo with the kids. \$15 per adult, \$8 for students, or a family cost of \$50. For more info call 251-1261.

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Posting the Past

Compiled by MATTHEW J. SILVER

From past editions of *The Indiana Jewish Post & Opinion*.

On this day in 1943, Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto put up their first resistance to the Nazis. (*The Jewish Book of Days*)

Jan. 15, 1965

Longtime community activist and widow of the chairman of H.P. Wasson & Co., Mrs. Jennie Efroymsen Wolf, died Tuesday.

In addition to her many Jewish organizational affiliations and positions, both local and national, she was also instrumental in starting the Nutrition Food Program for Undernourished Children in Public School at School No. 6 on Union St. The program developed into the National Food Program for children in public schools.

Mrs. Wolf also aided in originating the Sight & Hearing Program in the public schools in Indianapolis. She was active in the federal government's Youth Economic Council in 1940, and during World War II she was director of the Indiana Victory Gardens Program.

A daughter, Dr. Elizabeth Blitzsten, brought the first electrocardiograph to the United States from England.

Mrs. Wolf is survived by a son, Walter Wolf, and a brother, Louis Efroymsen.

Jan. 17, 1975

Over 200 people filled Broadmoor's dining room and contributed \$1.75 million to the JWF's current campaign, the largest single total ever raised at a Federation meeting and 17 percent more than was raised in last year's Yom Kippur War drive.

JWF president Irwin Katz pointed out that \$2 million, or 75 percent of the money raised in 1974, went for welfare and humanitarian purposes in Israel and to help Jews in other nations.

Newsman Bernard Kalb, coauthor of the best-selling *Kissinger*, was the principal speaker.

Jan. 23, 1985

The ADL regional office has determined that four racist and antisemitic paramilitary organizations centered in Muncie that claim to "blend Christianity and patriotism to oppose Zionism and Communism" have overlapping memberships and are all controlled by John R. Herrell, a millionaire with past ties to the KKK who has called for death

to "Niggers and Jews."

Though the 19-year-old leader of one of the groups is charged with causing the suicide of a 16-year-old Yorktown youth, the ADL and local law enforcement officials believe the groups are currently fairly inactive.

Jan. 25, 1995

By Ed Stattmann: FORT WAYNE—Louis H. Carter III, 51, is a hard-working Jewish businessman. What sets him apart is he is a Jew by choice, and he's black.

Raised Roman Catholic, he converted to Judaism while attending UCLA and became vice president of the campus Hillel House. While earning his degree in sociology, he remembers Jews as "the brightest guys in my classes" and also as people committed to advancing civil rights.

He later emigrated to Israel where he lived on a kibbutz, attended Bar-Ilan University, ran a hardware store in Ashdod for several years, and learned to speak fluent Hebrew.

He returned to America and earned a master's in education and another bachelor's, this one in computer science.

Carter says Passover, as a freedom celebration, and Yom Kippur, with its aspect of confession, became very significant to his life. "Judaism for me is a basic affirmation of evolving in life. It's my higher ground. It's made me a better person."

Carter owns and operates 40 Acres and a Mule restaurant and tavern in Fort Wayne.

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Editorial

On December 5, 2004, Dr. Judea Pearl, father of slain *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl, spoke at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis. He talked about the book *I Am Jewish: Personal Reflections Inspired by the Words of Daniel Pearl* and the Daniel Pearl Foundation, which he founded and heads.

Dr. Pearl and his wife, Ruth, quoted in their book thoughts from 147 people in 12 countries and all walks of Judaism on what it means when one says, "I am a Jew." Rabbi Sandy Sasso is one of the contributors. She and her husband, Dennis Sasso, are the senior rabbis of Beth-El Zedeck. (See her words below.)

Dr. Pearl, a native of Israel, is a professor of computer science and statistics at the University of California in Los Angeles. He is known internationally for his research on artificial intelligence, human cognition, and the philosophy of science. He has authored three books and has made valuable contributions in the service of humanity.

The foundation was formed in April 2002, "to further the ideals that inspired Daniel's life and work. The foundation's mission is to promote cross-cultural understanding through journalism, music, and innovative communications." It has a Web site at www.danielpearl.org.

When Judea Pearl was asked if he wanted revenge for his son's brutal murder, he said he did. He continued by saying that it was "hate" that killed his son, and therefore his goal now and for the rest of his life is to do whatever possible to eliminate hate.

The Daniel Pearl Foundation keeps his son's lifework and values alive. One way it does so is through Dr. Pearl's public dialogues with a Muslim, Akbar Ahmed. Ahmed is a leading Islamic scholar born in Pakistan.

The two of them share with their audiences what they believe are the good things about their respective religions, what bothers each of them about the other's religion, and what changes each hopes will take place within the other's religion. This dialoguing is one of the ways they hope to keep the doors of communication open and to bring about an understanding of the two different faiths to each other and the audience.

The foundation also sponsors journalism fellowships. For example, an exchange student from Pakistan had a six-month internship at a Los Angeles newspaper. After returning home, she shared what she learned and experienced with her colleagues. Also, if the newspaper in Los Angeles ever needs information about news in her area, they know someone to contact. This is another way to promote communication and understanding between the two different cultures.

The Pearl Foundation also sponsors a yearly music celebration in memory of Daniel's birthday. The week-long network of performances connects millions of people through music. Daniel played the violin, and since music was an important part of his life, and it helps bring people together, Judea Pearl was pleased to announce that this year more than 400 concerts were held in 39 countries.

He also said he hoped some members of the audience could influence the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra to join the 2005 music celebration. He said that the Indianapolis Chamber Ensemble had participated but not the Orchestra.

One of the highlights of the speech was when Dr. Pearl talked about his son's last words: "My father is Jewish, my mother is Jewish, I am Jewish." What did he mean by those 11 words?

Daniel was not an observant Jew. For him, Judaism was a language, a source of strength, an identity. What he told his captors was, "I respect Islam precisely because I am Jewish, and I expect you to respect me and my faith precisely because you are or you claim to be good Muslims." In other words he was saying, "I come from a place where one's religion is the source of one's strength, and one's strength is shown by one's capacity to accommodate others because it is only through our diversity that we can recognize our common humanity."

Rabbi Sandy Sasso's words for the book: "Our Jewish faith is what enables us, despite sunset and darkness, despite terror and war, despite uncertainty and difficulty, despite all our questions, to go on with life and redeem it. It is what enables us to live with mystery and say a blessing over it. Judaism teaches us through words and ritual to kindle the fires that will get us through the night, and to celebrate and rejoice in the new day."

Jennie Cohen

Jewish Post & Opinion

Kim's hairy problem

The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs says North Korea's dictator Kim Jong-Il may be having a hairy power struggle.

The JINSA article cites a BBC report that North Korea's government is promoting the benefits of shorter hairstyles, which might be a jab at Kim Jong-Il, who wears an odd bouffant style that commentators have said is his way of trying to look taller.

The BBC report says the campaign ties long hair to negative effects on human intelligence, reasoning that the brain and hair are commonly

nourished so that a trim might be good for the intellect.

But the campaign might really be aimed at trimming the "Dear Leader" of some of his power. Samson's problem revisited?

Anyway, if the hair length-intelligence link has any validity, just think what Albert Einstein, Ludwig Van Beethoven, Albrecht Dürer, and others throughout history might have accomplished with the proper tonsorial choice.

For JINSA's article about North Korean politics, go to: www.jinsa.org/articles/ on the Internet.



Rabbi Sandy Sasso



Dr Judea Pearl

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Prince's swastika offense resounding

LONDON—Britain's Prince Harry has apologized for wearing a Nazi uniform to a party, but the gaffe is not going away.

Harry, 20, was photographed with a swastika armband only two weeks before the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp. Newspapers all over the world ran the picture of the prince, who is third in line to the British throne.

Israeli diplomat Sylvan Shalom said the costume went beyond bad taste because

"this can encourage others to think that perhaps that period was not as bad as we teach the young generation in the free world."

The Simon Wiesenthal center invited the prince to accompany a British group on Jan. 27 to Auschwitz for a commemoration of the liberation.

Jason Pearlman, a spokesman for the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said the Prince had offended not only Jews but Britons who were affected by World War II, including the survivors of the German air attacks on London.

Drones guarding Sharon: Israeli TV report

JERUSALEM—Israel's protection of Prime Minister Sharon now includes drone aircraft, according to a television news report here.

The report said the Shin Bet security service is using the unmanned aircraft to spot potential attacks against Sharon by Jewish extremists.

Sharon's plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and four Jewish communities in the West Bank has angered citizens

there and their supporters.

The TV report said Shin Bet head Avi Dichter alluded to the drones when he told a meeting of parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee last week that the agency was using new technology to guard the prime minister.

The Shin Bet's security was ramped up after an extremist Israeli assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995.

Refusenik sergeant's penalty voided

JERUSALEM—The High Court of Justice has cancelled the punishment of a soldier who was court-martialed for trying to persuade his comrades against taking part in the planned evacuations.

Staff Sgt. Yossi Pilant had been sentenced by the military court to 28 days in

detention.

The High Court said there had been errors in the court martial and that the military could retry the sergeant if it chose to do so. The judges ruled that, among other errors, the military court had failed to state the reasoning for its verdict and punishment.

Court order delays barrier

JERUSALEM—Israel's High Court of Justice has ordered a halt to construction of large sections of the West Bank separation fence bordering Jerusalem.

The order followed a petition by Palestinian villagers

who said the fence in their area violated adjustments the International Court of Justice had ordered.

The High Court ordered the state to respond to the villagers' petition within seven days.

Catholics dispute report on Pius XII

NEW YORK—Roman Catholic officials say a *New York Times* story accusing a pope of keeping Jewish children from returning to their families after World War II was mistaken.

The *Times* ran a story about an article in an Italian newspaper that claimed to have uncovered a 1946 document

that implicates Pope Pius XII in a scheme not to return baptized Jewish children, who were hidden from the Nazis, to their parents after the war.

Catholic League president William Donohue said *The Times* failed to check the facts before it printed the story. He said in a news release that the

document in question "was unsigned, did not appear on Vatican stationery, and was written in French, not Italian."

Donohue said the original document actually says the children who were sheltered by Catholic institutions should be returned to their original Jewish families.

LePen speaks well of Nazi occupiers

PARIS—Right-wing politician Jean-Marie Le Pen, who has in the past minimized the World War II takeover of France by the Nazis, has again raised public ire with his remarks.

He was quoted as saying that the German occupation "was not particularly inhuman, even

if there were blunders." He also is appealing a conviction for "inciting racial hatred" for derogating France's Muslims in a 2003 interview with the daily *Le Monde*.

He told a radio interviewer his latest remarks about the Nazis were an exercise in express-

ing and defending freedom of thought.

Jewish organizations denounced his remarks, noting that during the war some 76,000 Jews, including 12,000 children, were deported from France, many to Auschwitz. Only 2,500 survived.

Japanese seek end to arms for neighbors

JERUSALEM—A Japanese diplomat has asked Israel to end weapons sales to Japan's neighbors and expand its cooperation with Japan.

Media here reported that Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura told a news conference that Japan wanted to play a greater role in the Middle East peace process.

Machimura told reporters he had asked Israeli Foreign Minister Sylvan Shalom to relay his request that Israel end arms sales to East Asian countries. Machimura said Japan had recently made similar requests to Russia and the European Union. He did not state which countries Japan was concerned about gaining weaponry.

The United States recently

has been criticizing Israel arrangements for selling pilotless airplanes to China.

Machimura also met with newly elected Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian Foreign Minister Nabil Shaath in Ramallah. He said Japan wanted to help bring Israel and the Palestinians back to peace negotiations.



GIVING AID—Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem has sent shipments of blankets, towels, and clothes to South Asia to tsunami-stricken regions.

Several weeks ago Asher Dayan, who runs the cast room in the Orthopedics Department, came up with the idea of collecting clothes for Hadassah employees in need.

When the tragedy in South Asia occurred, Dayan enlarged the operation, and his colleagues responded with generosity.

In addition, blankets and towels were donated by the hospital, as well as shirts from the gift shop. There are collection points in both Hadassah Ein Kerem and Hadassah University Hospital on Mt. Scopus.

Obituaries

Arthur Rosenblatt, 73, headed Holocaust Museum

NEW YORK—Arthur Rosenblatt, who helped bring about the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, has died at age 73.

Mr. Rosenblatt had headed architecture and planning at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, overseeing millions of dollars in construction and renovations.

Mr. Rosenblatt was director of the Holocaust Memorial Museum from 1986 to 1988, five

years before it opened. He was instrumental in selecting James Ingo Freed to oversee design of the museum.

He was also involved with the restoration of the New York Public Library.

With his wife, Ruth Benjamin, he wrote "Movie Song Catalog: Performers and Supporting Crew for the Songs Sung in 1,460 Musical and Nonmusical Films, 1928-1988" (McFarland, 1993).

Rabbi's son is nominee to head Homeland Security

WASHINGTON—The man who will likely head America's Department of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, is the son of a rabbi.

Chertoff, 51, is a federal judge who was the top crim-

inal justice official at the Justice Department at the time of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

News commentary has indicated his confirmation by the Senate is almost a sure thing.

Ethiopian culture seen as separate

TEL AVIV—Israel's young Ethiopians tend to cluster, avoiding other Israelis, according to a report in the *Ha'aretz* newspaper.

The report says the Ethiopians are Jews who tend to identify with American rap music and their African roots in spite of their Israeli nation-

ality - even those who have served in the Israel Defense Force.

The article quotes one of the club owners as saying Israel "is one of the most racist states in the world toward blacks" who, after being shunned, no longer want to fit in with other Israelis.

Sports

Sasha Cohen skates to No. 2 at U.S. meet

PORTLAND, Ore.—Sasha Cohen finished second in the U.S. Figure Skating Championship competition here, edging out third-place Kimmie Meissner even though Meissner became the first U.S. woman to land a triple axel in competition since Tonya Harding in 1991.

Michelle Kwan won the

event - her eighth straight and ninth overall USFC crown. It was Cohen's fourth time as runner-up at the U.S. Nationals.

Kwan, Cohen, and Meissner will represent the United States in Moscow at the World Championship competition in March.

Federal court backs science vs. religion

ATLANTA—A federal judge has ruled that a school district in suburban Atlanta must remove an evolution disclaimer inside textbooks.

The Cobb County School District inserted stickers in

its science books that said, "Evolution is a theory not a fact."

Judge Clarence Cooper's ruling said the stickers violate the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Some parents in Cobb County and the American Civil Liberties Union had challenged the stickers as being in violation of the constitutional separation of church and state.

French Shoah memorial to be Europe's largest

PARIS—A library and museum here will be Europe's largest center dedicated to information and research on the Holocaust. The Jan. 27 opening will mark the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp.

The site has been occupied by the Memorial to the Unknown Jewish Martyr. It has

been expanded by adding a new auditorium, research facility, library, multi-media center, and administrative offices.

There also will be a wall bearing the names of 76,000 Jews deported from France during the Nazi occupation between 1942 and 1944. Many of these were identified by the Center for Contempo-

rary Jewish Documentation, which will be part of the new center.

The documentation project was begun secretly in Grenoble in 1943 on the initiative of Isaac Schneersohn, who bought the site in 1956. The enlarged memorial and center will be known officially as the Shoah Memorial.

Rice has friend and foe in California delegation

WASHINGTON—California's two U.S. senators - Jewish women - are at odds about the confirmation of Condoleezza Rice, the president's nominee to replace Colin Powell as secretary of state.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the senior senator, supports fellow

Californian Rice. Sen. Barbara Boxer maintains that Rice misled the public about the war in Iraq. Feinstein has supported the war. Boxer has strongly criticized it.

Feinstein has released a statement lauding Rice as "the natural choice to be our country's next secretary of state." Boxer

has prepared remarks stating she would tell Rice, "I personally believe that your loyalty to the mission you were given overwhelmed your respect for the truth."

There has been speculation Rice might eventually run for the Senate seat Boxer holds.

Faith-based grants topped \$1 billion in '03

WASHINGTON—The federal government gave more than \$1 billion in 2003 to organizations it considers "faith-based," according to the Associated Press.

The AP said some of the recipient organizations mixed religion into their services and

staffing, while some did not consider themselves religious.

Cleveland's Bellefaire, which was founded to shelter Jewish orphans of the Civil War, got a \$702,362 grant to help potential adoptive parents connect with foster children in rural Ohio. Most of the parents

and children are not Jews.

In Michigan Christian groups got the far greatest number of grants, but the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit received a \$441,263 grant to help several hundred seniors stay in their own homes by bringing services to them.

Essay contest aids interfaith learning

ATLANTA—A Christian college student has won \$25,000 of a Jewish heiress' money by writing an essay focused on interfaith understanding.

Adam Meredith-Ployd, 22, a theology graduate student at Emory University, wrote about finding found common ground in Christians' and Jews' view of time, based on the creation story in Genesis. He noted that both faiths observe a seven-day week that includes a Sabbath day.

His winner's money came from a \$100,000 fund estab-

lished by Elizabeth Goldhirsh, 25, a Harvard Divinity School graduate student and daughter of the late Bernie Goldhirsh, who founded *Inc.* magazine.

She said she created the contest for people 16 to 22 years old to promote interfaith understanding in the wake of the Mel Gibson movie "The Passion of the Christ," which has been criticized as promoting stereotypes about Jews.

The contest drew 4,000 entries, but one of the judges, the Rev. Christopher Leighton

of Baltimore, said many of the entrants - especially Christians - wrote essays aimed at persuading Jews they are wrong rather than promoting respect for differing theological viewpoints.

He said next year's contest might include Islam in the discussion.

Going beyond the essays, the Institute of Christian & Jewish Studies has designed an interfaith studies fellowship program for a dozen contest finalists. Leighton is executive director of the institute.

Tu B'Shvat

Tu B'Shvat yesterday and today

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Chamisha Asar b'Shvat, or Tu B'Shvat, the 15th of the



month of Shvat, as it is generally called, is also known as Rosh Hashanah l'ilanot, the new year of the trees. Although Tu B'Shvat is not mentioned in the Torah, the holiday makes its first appearance in the Talmud as the New Year of the trees, or Rosh Hashanah l'ilanot.

The "Tu" is an acronym for the Hebrew letters *tet*, which in the Hebrew system of counting is nine, and *vav*, which is six, thus adding up to 15. Although this holiday is not mentioned in the Torah, it is known in the Mishnah and was a day meant to link the Jew to his land.

In Eretz Yisrael, Jewish farmers in the land of Israel would estimate the obligatory tithes and other contributions which Jewish law required. Sephardic Jews were influenced by the practitioners of kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) and derived their practices from the Jewish mystics of the 16th century living in Safed, the principal town in the Upper Galilee. They would assemble and read about fruits and trees from a special book whose sources were the Bible, the Talmud, and the Zohar, the kabbalistic work by various authors.

A special *seudah*, festival meal, would accompany the all-night readings and would include partaking of no less than 15 fruits associated with the land of Israel. These customs spread to Turkey, Italy, Greece, Asia, North Africa, and even to Ashkenazi countries of Europe.

Today many Sephardim continue this custom of reading and eating all night. The home-service is called a seder and was believed to have been originally compiled by a 17th century mystic, Nathan of Gaza.

The seder consists of drinking four cups of wine to sym-

bolize the changing of seasons. In her book *The Jewish Holiday Cookbook*, Gloria Kaufer Greene suggests the first cup of wine is dry, white, and chilled to symbolize winter, which is dry and cold. The second cup of wine is very pale, such as sherry or rose, and signifies spring and

stand for the glowing splendor of G-d; the nuts represent the different types of characters among Jews (hard, medium, and soft); almonds stand for swiftness and divine retribution because they blossom quicker than other fruit trees. Figs are symbols of peace and

A special seudah, festival meal, would accompany the all-night readings and would include partaking of no less than 15 fruits associated with the land of Israel. These customs spread to Turkey, Italy, Greece, Asia, North Africa, and even to Ashkenazi countries of Europe.

the early thaw. The third cup of wine is deeply colored like a dark rose and symbolizes late spring and blooming trees. The fourth cup of wine is rich, red, and is for the fertility of summer.

In between drinking, one eats fruit in order of "ascending spirituality." After the first cup of wine one eats fruit with inedible covering, like almonds, avocado, banana, or melon, to represent the body covering the soul. After the second cup one eats edible fruit with pits such as plum, prune, date, apricot, olive, or carob to symbolize the heart being protected. After the third cup of wine, fruit which can be eaten in its entirety such as berry, apple, pear, or fig is eaten because it is closest to the pure spiritual creation.

The food customs associated with Tu B'Shvat have usually been fruits and nuts connected to Eretz Yisrael, such as the seven species mentioned in Deuteronomy 8: 7-8 - barley, wheat, figs, dates, grapes, olives, and pomegranates. It was also customary to eat apples, raisins, and carob (*charuv* in Hebrew or *bokser* in Yiddish) and dried fruit. The sweet syrup from the carob's brown leather pod is popular in baklava and other Middle Eastern desserts.

According to Theodor Gasten in *Festivals of the Jewish Year*, some of these fruits have symbolic meanings. Apples

prosperity; the carob is a mark of lowly fare and stands for humility needed for penitence.

Jews of Greece call this holiday *Las Froutas* and say a blessing over wheat kernels, fruits of the tree and vine such as raisins, pomegranate, and carob, and fruits of the earth such as carrot and melon. Children then go from house to house to receive bags of mixed fruits.

One Greek dish served on this holiday is *assure*, a Turkish word for a combination of wheat, raisins, pomegranate seeds, and honey. Rabbi Robert Sternberg, author of *The Sephardic Kitchen*, explains that *assure* is a pudding whose name comes from the Turkish word for *ten* and that the dish is popular in Turkey, Greece, and Armenia. Jews connect it with Tu B'Shvat, and their recipe contains ten ingredients, one for each of the Ten Commandments. *Assure* is eaten at the end of the Tu B'Shvat seder, a custom developed by the Jewish mystics or kabbalists of the 16th century.

According to Rabbi Sternberg, each course of fruit is accompanied by wine representing the four seasons. White wine represents winter; pink wine is spring; light red wine is late spring; and rich, red wine, eaten with the *assure*, is for summer. Dried fruits, sweet pastries, and halvah, the

Continued on page 14

Another New Year

By RABBI IRWIN WIENER

No matter how we calculate the passage of time, whether we consider the first of January or the first of Tishrei as the New Year, the beginning of a year is always a time to pause, to reflect, to contemplate.

Tishrei (Rosh Hashanah) represents a rededication of our spiritual self. January is designed to give us a chance to think of relationships. Then there is Tu B'Shvat, the New Year of the trees, Passover, the New Year of our birth as a nation and a people - our religious maturity, if you will.

All can be summed up with a favorite quote from the rabbis of Yavneh: "I am a creation of God, and my neighbor is also a creation of God; my work is in the city and his in the field; I rise early to do my work, and he rises early to do his. As he cannot do well at my work, similarly, I cannot do well at his work."

Nevertheless, if you say that I do great things and he does unimportant things, I would respond that we have learned that it does not matter if a person does much or little, but only if he directs his heart to heaven."

Perhaps what the rabbis of Yavneh were trying to say is that we need to care about each other, be concerned about one another. This is

the essence of who we are, our character, our respect for the dignity of all humankind and animals as well.

All who toil in this vineyard of caring exemplify these teachings.

How do we accomplish this in the course of everyday living? Quite simply by being who we are - human beings created to imitate the goodness of God. And each New Year that is celebrated, secular or religious, gives us the opportunity to rededicate ourselves to doing for others.

Yes, we have a New Year for trees, because we know that nature and people work together to make life livable and rewarding. Just as the trees sleep in the winter and are reborn in the spring, we too can garner our strength to bring renewal to our existence after the cold winter has passed.

A tale is told about a person deep in prayer with a plea to God to send someone to eradicate hunger and poverty and death and destruction. He shouts to God to send someone to relieve the suffering. And then there is a voice that whispers saying that someone was sent - you!

Rabbi Irwin Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz.

- What is sacred to *Roseanne* and *The Nanny*?
- How did the film *Keeping the Faith* redefine faith?
- What popular shows reinvented Jewish law and redefined the term *Mitzvah*?
- Did Woody Allen really choose Hell?
- Which are the best big and small screen depictions of Jewish beliefs and practices?

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Tu B'Shvat

Wood's resurrection – a midrash on what trees might teach us

By RABBI STEVEN M. LEAPMAN

How human, and so, how much a part of Eden's agony.



Not only did we eat the fruit, Adam and Eve saw such a meal as their right. Perhaps this theft of a tree's innocent bounty was amongst many first incidents contributing to our divorce from Nature, a realm that after expulsion we soon came to and conquered and, so, eventually left it lonely, as a lost sibling anguishes for its negligent birth partner.

Yes, we were conscious kin to the trees, yet once we were dismissed from Paradise through our own folly, these denizens of Creation fled from us too, seeking to be as angels embedded yet still in earth, seeking in height their distance, their safety from their two-legged Garden's occupants.

And so, trees grew too tall and far too quiet for Adam and Eve's children to fully see them, or hear their story, in any one generation. And so our sages supply a sacred gathering on the fifteenth day of Shevat, as winter departs, that we may return and honor our first playmates and confidants where God originally planted them, and we, by choice, exited.

As skin shields what is beneath and vital, yet not eternal,

Summer's foliage hides twig and branch,

Autumn nests are abandoned at flocks' southerly migration,

Neither frost nor harsh blasts shall savage what each aviv¹ restores.

As Tu B'Shvat² arrives, there abides a forest's resurrection, not blood or body but sap will ascend

As leaves break forth, bark with grain is reborn, when

comes 'round winter's release,

Trees' return, and so we celebrate these old friends' annual arrival.

They've towered through tests of time and all human crime, thus each spring we gladly hail them.

We move on feet, they spread vast roots; hands parallel their leaves;

Still, at this season I must confess not all trees so strongly stoke my soul.

Winter's collapse precipitates a gust of nostalgia

Yes, we were conscious kin to the trees, yet once we were dismissed from Paradise through our own folly, these denizens of Creation fled from us too, seeking to be as angels embedded yet still in earth, seeking in height their distance, their safety from their two-legged Garden's occupants.

for two arboreal ancestors, wooden witnesses,

Willing or not, to a first choice, a first vice, timbers who long ago occupied our common garden.

While amidst all daily decisions wherein we again leave Eden behind,

Somewhere deep within our child's voice still cries, "Which one will provide my shade?"

Tree of Life, planted within our world, its name concedes its role, in soil deep this side of Heaven

Where time and dimension rule, and once we're born, then to your branches we cling.

Another whose fruit births knowledge and so stands loyal to the Divine Author's aptly assigned name,

Tree of Good and Evil's Awareness, your insights breach an innocence our broken world poorly tolerates,

Its maladies and misconduct we'd prefer to restrict, wounds only authentic teshuvah³ may correct,

Or heartfelt prayer refine and so to this life, not only forests, but free will is assigned.

Roots and branches comply with our Creator's purpose, displaying a fascinating, fundamental symmetry

Regardless which side of soil's line we come to claim, in this life or where watches need no more be wound.

The trunk a pathway between pavement and possibility leaves a lasting lesson,

Life seeks itself wherever the eye may reach and perhaps yet further then, after the sun

on our years has set,

Awaiting the soul beneath all soles' three-score stance, ruach⁴ swelled by weather or One Far Wiser

Sways trees and swooshes we two-legged across grand scenery, yet when at last our days conclude,

Wood's resurrection and ours begins, a seed does sprout from how we've been and all we claim as "why"

And comes to bloom and makes its mark, where human sight has yet dared, yet surely faith redeems.

Rabbi Leapman is spiritual leader of Temple Beth-El in South Bend, Ind. A former Navy chaplain with interests in pastoral counseling and interfaith relations, he serves on the CCAR Task Force on Addictions and Recovery as well as writes creatively.

¹ aviv, or spring, in Hebrew

² Tu B'Shvat, Jewish arbor day

³ teshuvah, or repentance, in Hebrew

⁴ ruach, Hebrew for word or spirit

Jewish Theater

Clarke's remarkable vision of Toulouse-Lautrec captivates

By IRENE BACKALENICK

Director/choreographer Martha Clarke, as she is quick



to point out, is a fourth-generation American Jew. How much this has to do with her creation of "Belle Epoque" is hard to say.

Is it her Jewish soul that fuels this dark, moody, and captivating piece? Does that make her sympathetic to the outcast Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, whom she chooses to make her centerpiece of the show? Does her fascination with a European era relate to her own historic antecedents?

Whatever murky depths Martha Clarke reaches into to create this piece, she comes up with a rich, fascinating work of art. Mood is her forte. She has always used imagery, choreography, sets, and especially lighting to create a special ambience. Thus, once again, her "Belle Epoque," now on the Mitzi Newhouse Stage at Lincoln Center, captures the feel of an era.

It is turn-of-the-century Paris, and mood is everything. It is the world of Henri Toulouse-Lautrec. In a dark, gritty bistro where tragedy lurks just beneath the surface gaiety, anything goes. Its denizens dance wildly, sing soulfully, offer love for sale, and struggle to survive. Decadence and the creative arts flourish side by side.

In such a world all kinds

are tolerated: blacks, whites, straights, gays, freaks, clowns – a home where the dwarf Toulouse-Lautrec could comfortably exist. The artist, in fact, embodied both strains of the times – the freakishness and the artistic creativity.

Toulouse-Lautrec, who was only four feet, 11 inches in height, is played by Mark Povinelli, an excellent actor of equal height. Numerous other players and musicians comprise this fine ensemble, with Clarke firmly in command.

So much for mood, brilliantly evoked by Clarke, and for performances. But what this dance piece lacks is a story line. Charles Mee's book does not give it shape. Moreover, Mee's text is disappointingly pedestrian, as Toulouse-Lautrec recalls the history of his early years (the influence of his mother) and his adult life (the woman he has loved and lost).

Of course Toulouse-Lautrec cavorts about, part of the inside group, flirts, loves, sketches, suffers, makes great paintings, and ultimately dies. But there is no story arc, no sense of a relentless forward movement.

No matter. It is what it is – Martha Clarke's remarkable vision of a memorable artist and a world gone by. And if one puts these disappointments aside and sinks into the mood, "Belle Epoque" is indeed an experience to be cherished.

Theater critic Irene Backalenick covers theater for national and regional publications. She has a Ph.D. in theater criticism from City University Graduate Center. Her book "East Side Story – Ten Years with the Jewish Repertory Theatre" won a first-place national book award in history. She welcomes comments at: IreneBack@aol.com.

Thoughts

Who is wise? One who learns from all people. Who is mighty? One who subdues one's passions. Who is rich? One who rejoices in one's portion. Who is honored? One who honors others.

—Pirke Avot

Opinion

Deciphering Mahmoud Abbas

By DANIEL PIPES

There's some puzzlement about Mahmoud Abbas, the



new chairman of the Palestinian Authority. Does he accept Israel's existence or want to destroy it?

Matthew Kalman of Canada's *Globe and Mail* discerns "an apparent campaign flip-flop" in this regard. A *Jewish Exponent* story is titled "He Wants It Both Ways: Palestinian front-runner: Anti-terror, but pro-'return'." An Australia Broadcast Corporation title acknowledges its mystification, writing that "Abbas's election tactics confuse analysts."

The media dwell on the same apparent contradiction: one moment Abbas demands that Palestinian terrorists stop their attacks on Israel and the next he (literally) embraces them, calling them "heroes fighting for freedom." Also, he talks of both stopping the violence and of the "right of return" for over four million Palestinians to Israel, a well-known way of calling indirectly for the elimination of the Jewish state.

What gives?

Actually, there is no contradiction. By insisting on a "right of return," Abbas signals that he, like Yasir Arafat and most Palestinians, intends to undo the events of 1948; that he rejects the very legitimacy of a Jewish state and will strive for its disappearance. But he differs from Arafat in being able to imagine more than one way of achieving this goal.

No matter what the circumstances, Arafat persisted from 1965 to 2004 to rely on terrorism. He never took seriously his many agreements with Israel, seeing these rather as a means to enhance his ability to murder Israelis. Arafat's diplomacy culminated in September 2000 with the unleashing of his terror war against Israel; then, no matter how evident its failure, it went on until his death

in November 2004.

In contrast, Abbas publicly recognized in September 2002 that terror had come to harm Palestinians more than Israel. Intended to prompt demoralization and flight from Israel, this tactic in fact brought together a hitherto fractured body politic, while nearly destroying the Palestinian Authority and prostrating its population. Abbas correctly concluded that "it was a mistake to use arms during the intifada and to carry out attacks inside Israel."

Abbas shows tactical flexibility. Unlike Arafat, who could never let go of the terrorist tool that had brought him wealth, power, and glory, Abbas sees the situation more cogently. If stopping the violence against Israel best serves his goal of eliminating the sovereign Jewish state, that is his program.

He no more accepts what he so charmingly the other day called the "Zionist enemy" any more than Arafat did (or Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad), but he is open to a multiplicity of means to destroy it. As he announced after his electoral victory this week, "the lesser *jihad* [holy war] is over, and the greater *jihad* is ahead." The form of *jihad* must change from violent to non-violent, but the *jihad* continues.

And count the many ways to undo the Jewish state: nuclear weaponry, invading armies, mega-terrorism, plain old terrorism, Palestinian demographic fertility, the "right of return," or confusing Israelis to the point that post-Zionist leftists cause the population unilaterally to crumble and accept a *dhimmi* (subservient) status within "Palestine."

For an instructive parallel to Abbas having concluded that violence is inappropriate, consider Stalin in the decade before World War II. Aware of his weakness, he announced in 1930 an intent for the Soviet Union to be a good international citizen:

"Our policy is a policy of peace and of increasing trade connections with all countries. A result of this policy is an improvement in our relations with a number of countries and the conclusion of a number of agreements for trade, technical assistance, and so forth. ... We

No time for self-flagellation

By MORRIS J. AMITAY

Holding elections to choose a successor to a late and unlamented terrorist chieftain was really anticlimactic since the outcome was assured. While it was orderly enough, it was essentially a sham contest which drew a swarm of international monitors with really nothing to do.

Such travesties are the way Arab dictatorships such as Egypt and Syria perpetuate themselves. Those Arab countries ruled by hereditary monarchs don't even have to bother going through the motions. So actually the Palestinian election, by comparison, was a step in the right direction.

The question now, with the selection of the great moderate hope, Mahmoud Abbas, is what should we expect? The short answer, unfortunately, is — not much. In fact, the results of the elections were met in Israel with a big yawn, with President Bush's invitation to Abbas receiving the most attention.

Given that new *rais'* own words on the coronation trail the past few weeks (when he should ostensibly have been on his best behavior) were indica-

shall continue to pursue this policy of peace with all our might and with all the means at our disposal. We do not want a single foot of foreign territory."

These were not empty words; Stalin did largely keep to this program until 1939, when he felt strong enough to go on the offensive, at which point he initiated an unparalleled half century's campaign of aggression which ended only with the Soviet state's collapse.

For Abbas, it is 1930; he understands the need to cool things down. As someone who can realistically appraise circumstances and quietly respond to them, he is potentially a far more formidable enemy to Israel than the one-note, blindly violent, and flamboyantly evil Arafat.

Daniel Pipes (www.DanielPipes.org) is director of the Middle East Forum and author of "Miniatures" (Transaction Publishers).

tions of where he is headed, we can be quite certain we will not see any significant movement toward genuine peacemaking. Abbas made it clear that he will not use force against fellow Palestinians to halt terror attacks against Israel. His only criticism of armed attacks against Israel was that the timing was wrong and made for bad PR.

No doubt, however, Abu Mazen presents a kinder and gentler face to the world, as opposed to his predecessor, whose visage only a (nearsighted) mother could have loved. But it is highly doubtful that this Abu will be able to temper the Palestinians' maximalist demands and their penchant for terrorism to achieve their goals.

Ignoring the experience of the past 10 years of "peace processing," the danger to Israel is that even a well-meaning American administration will attempt to bolster Abu Mazen's stature and authority by pressing Israel for further unilateral concessions. The question, however, is to what end?

The Palestinians have become masters at using their weakness and victimology to gain economic and political support. And even in Israel there are still a sizable number who, when it comes to dealing with the Palestinians, fit into Churchill's description of entering into a second marriage — "the triumph of hope over experience." Despite their numerous solemn assurances to oppose terror and end incitement, good faith efforts by Palestinian leadership have been abysmally lacking.

But for the so-called "peace camp" in Israel, hope always springs eternal, despite the reality of having to coexist with an entire generation of Palestinians nurtured on the hatred of Israel and Jews. No one personifies the tenaciousness of this forlorn hope more than the 81-year-old comeback kid, Shimon Peres.

A chance meeting with Peres earlier this week in Tel-Aviv found the new deputy prime minister looking healthier and sounding confident and more optimistic than ever that peace was at hand. For Peres, it seems peace is always just around the corner, if only Israel would just try a bit harder and be willing

to give away more.

Most of the commentary here in Washington on what is universally described as a window of opportunity has been focused on what Israel must do, since expectations about changes in Palestinian behavior are so low. There has been much talk about the advisability of an imposed settlement on both sides. But we have seen how such an agreement would invariably be based on Palestinian assurances that they would either be unwilling or unable to fulfill.

The two most notable proponents recently of a get-tough approach with Israel have been Brent Scowcroft and Zbigniew Brzezinski. As former national security advisers to Bush Senior and Jimmy Carter, respectively, they have bipartisan appeal. This duo has been appearing together to publicly put the onus on Israel not only for being insufficiently forthcoming, but for dragging us into the war in Iraq.

Scowcroft recently publicly proclaimed that "Ariel Sharon has him [President Bush] wrapped around his finger." And Brzezinski, appearing with his new buddy on CNN's "Late Edition," endorsed this view and charged that going to war in Iraq was pushed by "a bunch of fanatics" whom he described as "people who either for religious or strategic reasons have a very one-sided view of Iraq and of the Middle East."

When pressed by the show's host, Wolf Blitzer, if Brzezinski was obviously talking about Jews here, Brzezinski, realizing he was getting mired too deep in overt antisemitism, demurred. But this unmistakable reference here to those neocon Jews dragging us into war in Iraq in order to help Israel is being increasingly echoed by the likes of Pat Buchanan and other Jew-haters who are finding it easier to crawl out of the woodwork.

Only a week later the same pair appeared together at the "New American Foundation" where Brzezinski described the war in Iraq as a moral, political, and military failure. Parenthetically, one notes that as Carter's national security adviser, "Zbig" should know a great deal about all manner

Continued on page 14

Hollywood goes Ka-ballistic

By RABBI DENNIS C. SASSO

So, Madonna is into Kabbalah. The "Material" girl is getting "spiritual." She performs wearing *tefillin*, Hebrew letters flashing across the screen. She is not Jewish but has adopted Esther as her Hebrew name.

Madonna's infatuation with Kabbalah (like that of other Hollywood celebrities) is fostered by the Los Angeles Kabbalah Center. The Center (with locations around the United States, Israel, and other countries) makes a mockery of Judaism. It peddles bottles of Kabbalah mountain spring water, blessed face cream, and red string bracelets to ward off the evil eye. It promises inner peace, better sex, and reduced stress.

What is this fascination with pop Kabbalah? What is Kabbalah? How can each one of us become more attentive to the spiritual dimension of our lives?

Kabbalah means "received tradition." It is the name for a sophisticated heritage of Jewish mysticism, rooted in biblical and talmudic sources, that developed in the 12th and 13th centuries in the Provence and northern Spain.

In the Middle Ages, Kabbalah flourished in the Galilee among exiles from Spain. In the 18th century, Hasidism popularized its teachings in the shtetls of Eastern Europe. With the birth of the Enlightenment and the age of reason, Kabbalah became dormant, but now has received attention from a new generation of spiritual seekers; some serious and diligent, others mere cultic charlatans.

The most important Kabbalistic text is *The Zohar*, or *The Book of Splendor*. It is a 13th century biblical commentary attributed to Rabbi Moses de Leon of Spain. *The Zohar* is a complex, difficult work, written in Aramaic. It presents the world as a mysterious outward symbol of God's inner reality and seeks to interpret the world's hidden meanings by unraveling the secrets behind every word and commandment in the Torah.

The Kabbalist yearns to know the inner life of God in an intimate, direct, intense, and intuitive way that transcends reason and intellect. According to *Zohar*, what takes place in this earthly, human realm also occurs in the heavenly divine realm. All separations are illusory. God and the universe are One.

And so, *The Zohar* and other mystical texts seek to understand how a God who is beyond the created order relates to the physical universe. The quest for God becomes also a search for the inner self. There is in each of us a part of God, a divine spark, that longs for oneness with its divine source. Through mystical study, practice, and meditation that inner soul is drawn forth from its hiding place.

Kabbalah has an elaborate theory about the origins and structure of the universe. God's ultimate reality is called the *Ein Sof* – the "Endless," the "Infinite," or the "No-Thing." But out of love God gives birth to the universe through a process of emanations known as *Sephirot*.

The first is *Keter*, or Crown. It is also called *Eheye*, the name God reveals to Moses at the Burning Bush. *Eheye*, "I shall become," is in the future tense. God is process, constantly unfolding. And so from *Eheye* emerge the stirrings of creation that yield nine other *Sephirot*.

Each of the *Sephirot* manifests different qualities of divinity, some masculine, some feminine: *Hochma* (Wisdom); *Binah* (Understanding); *Hesed* (Mercy); *Din* or *Gevurah* (Judgment or Power). *Tiferet* (Beauty) is the element of harmony, the synthesis. From it flow *Netzah* (Eternity) and *Hod* (Majesty). These give birth to *Yesod* (Foundation), from which

emerges, finally, *Shekhinah*, God's felt presence in the world. Kabbalistic practice aims to restore *Shekhinah*, the immanent, indwelling God, to the *Ein Sof*, God's most transcendent, distant reality.

In addition to the 10 *Sephirot*, Kabbalah speaks of four *Olamot*, or "Worlds," that represent various levels of spiritual consciousness and point to our evolving understanding and relationship with God. In significant ways they describe where each one of us may find him or herself spiritually:

1. The lowest world is *Asiyah* (Doing). Here we labor under the false assumption that we are each distinct, separate selves. We perceive God as "King" – a power that rules over us.

2. In the next stage of *Yetzirah* (Formation), separateness begins to slip away as we acknowledge deeper rungs of reality and relationships. God is now "Parent" – closer to us, but yet "other."

3. At the third level, *Beriah* (Creativity), we glimpse a deeper vision of intimacy. We are one with God, and God is one with all. Here God is "Lover," as in the medieval Shabbat hymn *Yedid Nefesh*:

You who love my soul...

Sweeter in your love
than honey from the comb...

...

(my soul is faint for love of you.)

...

Disclose yourself to me...

Hurry, lover – time has come

be gracious to me

as once you were.

(Eliezer Hazikri)

4. But there is still a higher world: *Atzilut* (Flow), where the lines between human *self* and divine *Self* no longer exist. Now we don't even speak of the love *between* God and self, because there is no longer a *between*. A stage of spiritual euphoria and altered consciousness is reached, where, in mystical union, all is one. *Ehad!*

Where do you see yourself in this spiritual continuum? How do you relate to God? As a ruling Power above; a loving Parent at our side; an intimate Beloved; or as the "No-thing" which is "Every-thing," an oceanic feeling of dissolving into oneness with all creation.

Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi (in the 16th c.) taught that in order to create the world, God, whose presence filled the universe, had to contract or compress. This act is called *Tzimtzum*. God's first act of love was to make space for the world, even as a parent gives space to his/her child to grow.

But, as divine creative light began to flow into primordial space, some of the vessels intended to encase the divine light burst. Divine sparks flew in disarray. This event, known as *Shevirat Hakelim*, the "bursting of the vessels," brought chaos and evil to the world.

And this is where we humans come in. It is in our power to effect *Tikkun Olam*, to mend or restore the world to its intended wholeness – to reunite the *Shekhinah* with the *Ein Sof*, to make God One and make ourselves whole. How? By the performance of *mitzvot* with *Kavanah* or proper spiritual intention.

These teachings were dangerously exploited by Messianic charlatans, such as Shabetai Tzvi, who in the 18th century advocated that we unify God not only by doing good deeds, *mitzvot*, but by engag-

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Israel: As I See It

A better new year

By SAMSON KRUPNICK
We ended the past calendar year with the worst nature ca-



lamity since the biblical flood. The casualties have reached 160,000, and many thousands are still missing. The huge earthquake in the Indian Ocean brought a series of tsunamis that destroyed everything within this mammoth surge of waves in South Asia. Millions are homeless and in danger of fatal infections.

Many nations have responded with assistance and pledges of many millions of dollars. It is a great show of unity in the face of a severe calamity.

Israel sent a delegation of doctors and nurses with medical supplies. Israel is well experienced in dealing with sudden catastrophes from wars and from nature and are called upon frequently.

This grave event diverted some attention from the ongoing battle in Iraq. To date the United States has suffered a loss of some 1,250, and the war goes on. Iraqis are killing Iraqis. The Shiites are ruling and, with elections Jan. 30, hope to establish a democracy in Iraq.

At this writing the bodies of 18 Shiite teenagers between the ages of 14 and 20 were found with arms tied, executed by the Sunnis.

The "insurgents" are well equipped. It is reported that the former Saddam Hussein generals are directing and supplying arms from offices in Syria. Their "army" of insurgents numbers some 30,000. The financings are unlimited, all from Arab and Muslims countries.

This continues to be an integral part of the war against terror, including the al Qaida terrorists worldwide. Their objective remains the destruction of the United States and of Israel. This reality should be the guide for the Israel military and political policies.

The election of Abu Mazen

as chairman of the Palestine Authority is considered a step in the direction of democracy among the Palestinians. The pre-election program of Abu Mazen is no different than was the program of Yasser Arafat, namely the destruction of the State of Israel through the 4.3 million "refugees" to be admitted to Israel.

As to the continuing intifada

wisely. There are also no army tactics in a democracy.

Our prime minister is accused of being a dictator, using every rough trick to form a government to back him in removing by force the 8,000 Jews in Gush Katif. We proposed alternative peaceful moving of the Gush Katif as one unit to another location, possibly in Maale Adumim. He has not

At home we have major problems. Our prime minister has gone overboard on his disengagement program. Together with his Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz he has enlisted the army to destroy outposts. The IDF is the army to fight against our enemies, not other Jews. If having outposts that help the defense in the Shomron and Judea is a crime; then police should be involved after proper notice.

and terror attacks by PA's Fatah and Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Abu Mazen declared, "We are not going to shoot our people." He insists upon 1949 borders and a state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Abu Mazen is no more a partner for peace than was Yasser Arafat except that he wears a shirt, tie, and jacket. Time will quickly tell if he lives. His first Gaza trip cost him two bodyguards killed. There is not much to negotiate, because he does not have the power to back him up, even if his desire is a true peace.

At home we have major problems. Our prime minister has gone overboard on his disengagement program. Together with his Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz he has enlisted the army to destroy outposts. The IDF is the army to fight against our enemies, not other Jews. If having outposts that help the defense in the Shomron and Judea is a crime, then police should be involved after proper notice.

There is no democracy in an army. There is a command, and it must be obeyed. It is left to the officers to use their soldiers

reacted to it, but he is planning this method in Samaria.

The United Torah Judaism with its five Knesset members complete the government with a promise of \$290 million for its independent school system and a promise not to force a vote for his disengagement plan if Sharon has a majority without them. Their 15 rabbinical advisers voted three for the plan, three against, and nine abstentions, despite much pressure against their sacrificing Gush Katif for the money assignment. They are on a 70-day test period. Sharon will do all in his power to get Gush Katif out in that period.

The prime minister has split his Likud Party. He has brought on a civil dispute unnecessarily. He continues to employ force rather than sitting down for friendly discussions.

He and his defense minister have been accused by the *Hatzofeh* newspaper that they have failed to attack with power to destroy Kassem missiles being fired daily at Gush Katif (now numbering 5,100) in order to force the Gush Katif to surrender under heavy fire. They insist that being so, both Sharon

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and Mofaz should resign.

Another dangerous activity of Sharon was his rush to Yitzhar after the destruction of the nearby outpost. He came to shake hands with the soldiers who chopped the caravans, hit a few people on their heads, and dragged out a few more. The odd part is that the settler leaders offered to remove the outpost, but the prime minister refused. He wanted to use violence and to have it televised around the world.

Settler leader Pinhas Wallerstein, whom we met recently, was much concerned about the attitude of the prime minister and his continued use of force, creating a "civil war" in Israel. He feared that Sharon would use "administrative arrests" of settler leaders.

This is an amazing turn-about of the Ariel Sharon that we knew well in his Shlomzion Party. We even flew up with

him to save the Golan Heights. We are extremely disappointed at his present damaging image. We pray for a better year and hope for miracles to solve our many problems.

Samson Krupnick may be reached at 22 Pinsker, Jerusalem 92228, Israel; krup@012.net.il.

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Musings

We're in big trouble

By BATYA MEDAD

"It's hard to beat a person who never gives up." —Babe



Ruth

There's a lot of wisdom in sports, sportsmanship, and sportsmen. Babe Ruth was right. Our politicians have given up, so we're in big trouble.

If our politicians are leading us anywhere, it's not where I want to be. That's for sure.

Recently I was at the Begin Heritage Center for the Begin Prize Ceremony. It was a very inspiring evening. The winners were all people who had done something above the norm.

Nefesh B'Nefesh, a very organization that facilitates *aliyah*

from North America, doing what the Jewish Agency and Israeli government should be doing, won the Begin Prize. The initiators of that organization had a dream to help North American Jews make *aliyah*. They didn't give up, and today hundreds of Jews are successfully living in Israel due to their assistance.

Special recognition was also given to two extraordinary people. The first was a man who has captured the hearts of many by his rare and remarkable generosity: Eric Swim, an American, who donated one of his kidneys to Moshiko Sharon, an Israeli boy.

Little Moshiko was dying. The call went out throughout the world that Moshiko needed a kidney. Rationally and logically there was very little chance that a kidney would be found, certainly not from a live man. But they had a dream, and reality caught up with the dream. They didn't give up.

And what a donor! When Mr. Swim spoke to the crowd,

it was clear that he had no idea why we all found him so admirable. He spoke with simple faith and ended his words with a chapter of *T'hilim*, Psalms, in Hebrew. As he struggled reading a language he barely knows, most of the crowd recited along with him, and the rest wept.

The final recipient was Israel's top female athlete, Keren Leibowitz, the winner of seven medals, including five gold ones, at the Olympics for the physically handicapped. Giving up, even after being seriously injured in the army, is not in her vocabulary.

One of the speakers, Salai Meridor, chairman of the Jewish Agency, quoted Herzl as he spoke about the recipients to the crowded auditorium. "*Im tirtzu, ain zu agadah*," "If you truly wish it, it's not make-believe." And right before our eyes we saw people whose dreams became real life.

There are people in our very special country who have the strength to dream and make

their dreams come true. That's why it's so disturbing that our government is filled with weak, faithless people. How can it be? Even those who seemed strong and idealistic before assuming office changed and lost their faith and confidence.

I wonder if it's like what we see on television. There's the old comedy "Yes, Minister," the British TV show that depicted the behind the scenes workings of the British government, run by the civil servants, the unseen clerks, and secretaries. But I have trouble believing that Arik Sharon could be manipulated and controlled by some civil servants.

Then there's another TV show, "The Agency," that depicts the inner workings of the American CIA. This program features technology that seems more science fiction than reality, even in the 21st century.

One memorable scene showed a clandestine medical exam of a foreign visitor while he was meeting a CIA official. Somehow, as he sat in the com-

fortable, innocent-looking office chair, all of his vital signs were measured, and if I'm not mistaken, he was also x-rayed. All of this while he believed that he was just talking.

Is someone zapping our politicians' brains? Are they being controlled? This is starting to get very spooky.

Or are our politicians just burned-out, like many professionals? Are they tired of bucking the world? Are they looking for praise from those who had previously rejected them?

In that sense the two who made the most radical changes, Menachem Begin and Arik Sharon, have the most in common. They were the most reviled by the media and international leaders before becoming prime minister, and then, all of a sudden, they proposed policies that they had been totally against previously.

Our greatest biblical leaders, Moshe Rabenu and Shmuel HaNavi (Samuel the Prophet), also had trouble with

Continued on page 15

Digest of the Yiddish Press

36 to count on

By RABBI SAMUEL SILVER

The editor of the *Yiddish Forward* (*Forverts*), Boris Sandler,



grew-up in Bessarabia, a one-time Rumanian province that was seized by Soviet Russia. Although Judaism and Jews had a bad time in Communist areas, Yiddish culture did comparatively well in Bessarabia. Sandler left it, spent time in Israel, and then came to the U.S. to edit the newspaper.

He has written a book about *Lamed Vavnikes*, the mythical

36 righteous Jews who help Judaism stay alive. The book is reviewed in the *Forward* by Michael Kruitkov, of Ann Arbor, Mich. The review relays little about the novel's plot, but it expresses joy that some Yiddishkeit did survive the Soviet persecution.

Weather postcasters differ

William Safire, the *New York Times'* columnist, once wrote a book about the biblical Job. In a recent column he asks, "Why does a good and all-powerful God permit such evil as the tsunami?" The column's title: "Where was God?"

In the *Algemeiner Journal*, Orthodox Rabbi David Hollander answers the question. To him the Asian upheaval was God's way of punishing the countries, mostly Muslim, for their antisemitism.

2 parties, one book

Two recent electees to the House of Representatives insisted on having a Jewish Bible to be sworn in to office. The Speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, didn't have one.

But Rep. Gary Ackerman, of New York, provided one. So two new representatives, Democrat Debbie Wasserman Schultz, of Florida, and Republican Allyson Schwartz, of Pennsylvania, were sworn in on the Tanach.

Ackerman is going to give the House speaker a Jewish Bible for future use. (*Forward*)

A guten tog, y'all

Deep in the heart of Texas Yiddish courses are offered. The University of Texas in Austin has 50,000 students. Five thousand are Jewish. And for many years Yiddish courses have been offered—in the arts, in literature, and in journalism.

(*Forward*)

Israelis caught by tsunami

There are few Jewish residents of the countries smitten by the tsunami disaster. But, we are reminded by the *Algemeiner Journal*, there were Jewish vacationers who were there when the waves struck.

One Israeli woman told reporters that she had been caught by the waves on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. She cried out: "Sh'ma Yisrael," and two women rescued her.

Israel has sent doctors and rescue personnel to the area. Even though Sri Lanka normally forbids Israelis to enter the land, they made an exception and permitted one group to head for the area.

King aids Rabin Center

Larry King, of broadcasting fame, was master of ceremonies at Manhattan's Hotel

Pierre dinner in honor of the American Friends of the Rabin Center. At one point, he cried out, "Remember, Catholics, we gave you our Lord."

Remembering Herzl

Many Jewish organizations are commemorating the 100th *yahrzeit* of Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism. He felt that the world did not honor Jews because the Jewish people had no homeland. Let them have a country of their own, then they will be respected.

At one gathering at the Park Avenue Synagogue in Manhattan, Arye Mekel, Israel's ambassador, announced that a street in Vienna has been named after Herzl. Herzl was born in Hungary, but he spent time in Austria. (*Algemeiner Journal*)

A lot of class

Have you ever heard of a
Continued on page 15

Book Reviews

A gripping story is reissued

By MORTON I. TEICHER

The Fugu Plan. By Marvin Tokayer and Mary Swartz. Jerusalem and New York: Gefen Publishing House, 2004. 304 pages. \$15.95.

Originally published in 1979, this unusual book tells the fascinating story of how the Japanese dealt with Jews before and during World War II. The senior author, Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, gathered all the data and then turned to Mary Swartz, a professional writer, for help in putting the manuscript together.

Tokayer was an Air Force chaplain in Korea and Japan whose interest in the Far East led him to accept a position at the Jewish Center in Tokyo. From 1968 until 1976 he served as the rabbi of the Jewish community of Japan.

When his congregants shared their stories with him, he became increasingly intrigued with the history of Jewish-Japanese relations, including especially the *fugu* plan and the heroic efforts of Chiune Sugihara to save thousands of Jews.

The book sets forth his absorbing findings.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Japan declared war on Russia in an attempt to seize Manchuria, then part of the tsar's empire. Needing money to wage the war, the Japanese borrowed millions from Jacob Schiff, an American Jew who was a partner in Kuhn-Loeb, a powerful investment bank, and who hated the Russians for having perpetrated the Kishinev pogroms.

The Japanese saw their eventual victory as based, in part, on Schiff's help. Knowing that he was a Jew, they equated being a Jew with control of vast sums of money. Years later, when Japanese soldiers fought alongside the White Russians against the Communists, they were exposed to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which confirmed their image of Jews as wealthy and powerful.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry and the military studied the Jews and eventually came up with the idea of getting Jews to settle in Manchukuo, where they hoped that Jewish skills and Jewish money would facilitate growth and progress.

The plan was compared to the *fugu*, the Japanese blowfish

whose deadly poison had to be removed before it became a tasty dish. Similarly, if the negative traits attributed to the Jews by the *Protocols* were eliminated, then the full development of Manchuria could blossom.

There were already some Russian Jews in Manchuria, but by the mid-1930s many of them had left for Shanghai or other Chinese cities. The Japanese tried to reverse this exodus and to lure more Jewish settlers, in accordance with the *fugu* plan. However, they were also becoming closer to the German Nazis, although they resisted Nazi efforts to persuade them to apply the "final solution."

Instead, for a time, they permitted Jewish refugees from Poland to travel across Siberia to Manchuria, Japan, and Shanghai. Some victims of Nazi persecution had managed to flee to Lithuania where Sugihara, the Japanese consul, issued transit visas. From November 1939 to September 1940 he enabled thousands of Jews, including the 300 students and rabbis of the Mir Yeshiva, to escape from the Nazis.

The saga of these exciting developments is told through the eyes of nine fictional characters, representing those Jewish refugees who wound up in Shanghai and whose experiences have been condensed into a composite of what happened to them. Their stories alternate in the book with accounts of events among the Japanese.

Perceptions and actions of Consul Sugihara are described on the basis of Tokayer's interview with him as well as the stories told by the refugees and books and articles about him. He is honored by Yad Vashem as among the "Righteous of the Nations."

Tokayer and Swartz have told a gripping and stimulating story that received only marginal attention when their book was first published 25 years ago. The Gefen Publishing House deserves credit for reissuing the book and, hopefully, it will attract the wider readership that it fully deserves.

Rogov's Guide To Israeli Wines 2005. New Milford, Conn.: The Toby Press, 2004. 279 pages. \$14.95.

Oenophile is a ten-dollar word for wine lover. It seems somewhat affected and showy, matching some of those who flaunt their knowledge of wine.

A recent movie, "Sideways," deftly satirized oenophiles who try to outdo each other as they comment on a glass of wine. Their pretentious language ascribes special meanings to ordinary words.

Examples of this usage include: charm, generous, finish, length, little, complex, stingy, etc. These terms all appear in the many wine guides that help connoisseurs to select wines where they have esoteric connotations only understood by those who are privy to the language of the oenophile.

Daniel Rogov is perhaps the foremost wine critic in Israel. He writes a weekly column on wine and restaurants for the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. In addition, he has his own Web site, Rogov's Ramblings, where he indulges his passions for wine and gastronomy.

Rogov's new guide is meant to be the first in an annual series. One need not be an expert on wine to appreciate the value of this book, even though the author makes full use of the wine lover's singular jargon. The book begins with a fascinating history of wine making in Israel, going back to the ancient times and bringing it up to the present day when Israel is "producing wines of world-class quality."

Rogov then discusses the regions of Israel where grapes are grown, describing the varieties found in each area. He offers an interesting explanation of what makes a wine kosher and, later in the book, when he comments on individual wines, he indicates whether or not they are kosher.

Rogov concludes his introduction by bemoaning the fact that Israelis do not consume nearly as much wine per capita as in other parts of the world. However, he takes comfort from the statistics he cites which show that there is an increase in wine drinking among Israelis.

Most of the book is devoted to an individual consideration of more than a thousand wines that "include only those I have tasted." This feat should not be surprising, since Rogov claims

Shoah victim's letter inspiring

By RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Fate Did Not Let Me Go (A Mother's Farewell Letter). Forward by Stephen A. Ollendorff. Pelican Publishing Company, 2003.

This brief volume without numbered pages, accompanied by photos of tender family portraits, stark Holocaust reminders, and foreshadowing natural sights, is a timeless piece of penetrating poetic prose.

It revolves around a remarkable letter written on Aug. 24, 1942, in Rothenberg, Germany, by Valli Ollendorff to her beloved son Ulrich in New York, which he received late via a 43-year detour in South America in the safe of the daughter of Valli's sister Ella.

By then Ulrich was already a 79-year-old retired ophthalmologist

from a very prominent practice in upper Manhattan. Dr. Ulrich Ollendorff lives on through special projects at the Eye Institute of Columbia University.

Ulrich, his wife, Anne, and their infant son Stephen were fortunate to make it out of Germany on Nov. 11, 1938, just one day after the harrowing events of Kristallnacht.

Ulrich's father, Dr. Arthur Ollendorff, a doctor, dentist, and businessman, came from a long line of physicians in Breslau and served in the German military during World War I with the rank of colonel. He died of a heart attack prior to his wife, Valli's, incarceration in the Theresienstadt concentration camp where she died along with her sister Ella, whose faithfulness was the likely reason for not leaving Germany in time.

Arthur and Valli's eldest son, Gerhard, vanished in 1939, a victim of Nazism as well. The youngest son, Wolfgang, was killed in Mauthausen while trying to flee. He was initially captured in Holland as an underground member and tortured for his refusal to cooperate.

Ulrich's son Stephen, who wrote the book's foreword, is a successful New York lawyer and president of The Ollendorff Center for Religious and Human Understanding Inc., which is the designated benefactor of the book's sole royalties.

Stephen's brother David is a Chicago physician, and Stephens son Arthur, named for his great-grandfather, is in medicine at the University of Cincinnati, keeping alive a noble family profession and the memory of an inspiring ancestry.

Valli's letter, originally written in German and translated into English by Ulrich, was kept private. It was read at Ulrich's funeral in 1998 by Rabbi Jack Bemprorad when the extraordinary letter's public value was realized.

A film that appeared on public television bearing the book's name, with narration by Martin Sheen and Liv Ullman, is available on VHS and DVD from Terra Entertainment, along with a thorough discussion guide and lesson

Continued on page 14

to taste more than 1,500 wines a month.

He includes a useful note on "how I do my wine tastings," and, for good measure, he throws in instructions for hosting a wine tasting party. The guide itself, which takes up most of the book, is presented by winery, commenting on the wines produced by each one. The wineries have been divided into three categories: large, medium-sized, and small.

There are five large wineries, 11 medium-sized ones, and 82 small ones. For each Rogov provides useful information before listing and discussing the wines they produce. He rates each winery on a one to five star system, and he scores the wines by assigning a number up to a maximum of 100 points.

Although other critics also use the 100-point system, Rogov warns his readers that different critics use different criteria for expressing their judgments.

Wine mavens will find this book to be an indispensable guide to Israeli wines. Other readers will find it to be a helpful introduction to the world of the oenophile. And, Jewish readers will be pleased to learn that Israel is rapidly becoming a significant wine producer on the world scene.

Dr. Teicher is the founding dean of the Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University, and dean emeritus, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Book Review

A refreshing addition to children's books

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Grandpa and Me on Tu B'Shevat. By Marji E. Gold-



Yukson. Kar-Ben Publishing. 32 pages. \$6.95.

It isn't often that someone writes a book about Tu B'Shvat, and this one is a particularly good one to read to children ages 3 to 8 with a 'dor v'dor (generation to generation) theme.

Much like the Passover song about the kid the father bought, this story starts with

"This is the shovel, shiny and new, that Grandpa and I used on Tu B'Shevat" and grows by successive additions into a very beautifully crafted story.

A brief explanation of the holiday introduces the book; 10 ways to celebrate Tu B'Shvat conclude the book.

Marji Gold-Yukson has written a number of children's books for Kar-Ben, and it is refreshing that she has written this book for a holiday that often gets neglected in children's books.

Leslie Evans, an illustrator and printer of books from her own letterpress studio, contributes colorful woodcuts to illustrate the book.

Sybil Kaplan is a book reviewer, journalist, synagogue public relations/publicity specialist, synagogue librarian, and cookbook author from Overland Park, Kansas.

Winter thaw

By RABBI MIRA WASSERMAN

Rabbi Yohanan b. Zakkaï used to say: "If you have a sapling in your hand and are told, 'Look, the Messiah is here,' you should first plant the sapling and then go out to welcome the Messiah." (Avot DeRabbi Natan B 31)

Each year I marvel at the timing of Tu B'Shvat, the mid-winter date that our ancient sages designated as the New Year of the Trees. How strange to celebrate fruit trees in the season when their limbs are bare, when growing things are lying dormant, when cold temperatures keep us huddled indoors.

In designating a date from which to calculate the age of fruit trees (an important designation since the fruit of such trees was subject to taxes beginning in the trees' third year), the rabbis sought to identify a moment of turning: when does one cycle end and

another begin?

They opted not for the dramatic, outward changes that we generally associate with seasonal change - budding flowers, ripening fruit, falling leaves - but for invisible internal change. Tu B'Shvat was thought to be the time when the sap began rising in the trees.

The timing of Tu B'Shvat bears its own subtle teaching: In nature, change is constant. Every season has its purpose, so that times of dormancy bring on periods of renewal and growth.

As Jews we are trained to remark upon the turn of the day at sun-up and at nightfall, and so we sometimes forget that the earth is always turning.

Wintertime is a good time to remember the slow, undramatic changes that happen, even when we are not paying attention. Some changes you don't

Kosher Kuisine

From my kosher kitchen: apples of gold

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Someone has said the apples of gold mentioned in Proverbs and Song of Songs were really oranges. Somehow, although carob, almonds, figs, and dates are usual fruits and nuts for Tu B'Shvat, oranges would also be appropriate.

Orange Soufflé

2 navel oranges
peel from 1 orange to equal 4 teaspoons
juice of an orange with water to make 1/2 cup
2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
6 eggs
1 cup sugar
1 six-ounce can concentrated frozen orange juice
2 T lemon juice
1-1/2 cups whipping cream
1/4 cup orange-flavored liqueur

1/2 cup whipping cream
Prepare a six-cup soufflé dish. Cut one orange into thin slices and arrange against the side of the dish. Chill.

Grate peel to measure four teaspoons into a bowl. In a saucepan, squeeze juice and add water to make one-half cup. Sprinkle gelatin over

orange juice and let stand 5 minutes.

Heat on low heat until gelatin is dissolved.

Beat eggs and sugar in a bowl until thick and light. Whip 1-1/2 cups whipping cream and refrigerate.

Combine orange peel, orange juice concentrate, lemon juice, liqueur, and gelatin. Pour into egg mixture and beat until blended. Chill 5 minutes by placing bowl into a larger bowl filled with ice, stirring often.

Fold 1-1/2 cups whipped cream into chilled mixture. Pour into soufflé dish over the orange slices. Refrigerate about 4 hours.

Garnish with remaining 1/2 cup whipped cream.

Sabra Orange Cake

2/3 cup margarine
1 cup sugar
4 eggs
2 cups flour
6 T orange juice
1/2 tsp orange peel
2 T Sabra liqueur
2 T grated semi-sweet chocolate
2 T chopped nuts
Preheat oven to 350°F. Cream margarine and sugar in a bowl. Add eggs.

Blend in flour, orange juice, orange peel, and Sabra. Pour into a greased cake pan.

Combine grated chocolate and nuts. Sprinkle on top. Bake in preheated oven 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Easy Orange Marmalade

4 oranges
1 cup sugar
2 cups water
Cut oranges in thin slices and place in a pot with water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 45 minutes. Drain and save 3/4 cup juice.

Add sugar. Puree and blend in batches and return to pot with juice. Simmer 15 minutes. Pour into jars.

Roast Chicken with Orange Sauce

(6 servings)

1 3-pound chicken
1 orange, cut into quarters
1 small halved onion
1 bay leaf
3 sprigs parsley
peel of 2 oranges
juice of 2 oranges
1 cup dry white wine
salt and pepper to taste
1/4 tsp ginger

Preheat oven to 350°F. Stuff cavity of chicken with one orange cut into quarters. Add onion, bay leaf, and parsley. Tuck wings behind body. Put in roasting pan. Place in oven and roast 45 minutes.

Remove peel from two oranges. Cut into julienne strips. Heat water in a saucepan and, when boiling, drop in strips and cook for one minute. Drain. Juice the oranges and set aside.

Remove fat from roasting pan. Place juices in a saucepan and add wine. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat and add orange juice and ginger and julienne orange peel. Heat until warm and serve with chicken.

Sybil Kaplan is a book reviewer, journalist, synagogue public relations/publicity specialist, synagogue librarian, and cookbook author from Overland Park, Kansas.

have to work at. In our own lives, as in nature, the process of renewal is constant. Can the same be said for politics?

This month the inaugurations of a new governor and of a second term for President Bush signal changes that caught many of us by surprise. The political ground has shifted, and some values that the liberals among us took for granted are now subject to debate: separation of church and state, environmental protection, and reproductive rights are all in dispute and open to re-evaluation.

No doubt these changes have been gathering over time, while I was not paying attention. Suddenly I've come out of hibernation and realized that the aspects of American life that are most precious to me can no longer be taken for granted. I no longer feel I can quietly wait out another season

and see what happens.

Jewish teaching suggests that changes that are worth waiting for are worth waiting for. The convergence of Tu B'Shvat with the Martin Luther King Celebration this month is an invitation to wonder at cosmic forces that are beyond us, even as we rise to challenges that are within our human power to overcome.

Rabbi Mira Wasserman serves Congregation Beth Shalom in Bloomington, Ind.



Sasso

Continued from page 9
ing in sinful acts, because those acts would redeem the divine sparks inherent in evil.

There are elements in Kabbalah that reflect pre-modern understandings of the world, e.g.: numerology, magical reliance on divine names, amulets, beliefs in reincarnation and the evil eye. The ancient rabbis sensed the dangers of these teachings and feared their potential for simplistic, superstitious religiosity. Hence they prescribed that Kabbalah initiates had to be learned in Torah, mature (40 years or older), and married.

Various Kabbalistic traditions are woven into traditional Jewish custom and ceremony. When we sing "L'cha Dodi" to welcome the Shabbat bride and queen as a symbol of messianic redemption, we are engaging in a Kabbalistic ritual. The enjoyment of conjugal relations on the Sabbath eve draws on Kabbalistic inspiration.

Today, in the open market of new-age spirituality, the teachings of Kabbalah are often dumbed-down, prostituted, and peddled as one of many recipes for self-gratification and vanity. Kabbalah's language of intimacy and ecstasy appeals to those who, though disconnected from tradition and community, yearn for meaning and grounding.

But pulling threads out of a rich religious tradition for self-serving purposes ignores the anchors of community, observance, and obligation that are essential to sacred living. There is an attraction to quick spiritual fixes, to simple answers to life's deepest questions.

And so, religious charlatans will peddle holiness like any other consumer good, whether from the TV screen or the Hollywood scene. There is always someone ready to take advantage of those whose lives may be filled with fame and fortune but lack deeper purpose and direction. But the spiritual search requires a more arduous route.

The renewal of interest in Kabbalah today points to a deep seated spiritual quest in an age of uncertainty and insecurity. It offers promise and it poses dangers. It is good to see among some a return to the study of ancient sources



Rabbi Dennis Sasso

and the awakening of spiritual consciousness. Yet, the power of mysticism and spirituality as a panacea is very real. Its seductiveness can numb critical thought at time when we need reason, common sense, and realism, especially in politics, faith, and the pursuit of peace.

Kabbalistic lore, properly understood, offers us a treasure chest of profound and beautiful spiritual insights:

- it invites us to stand in radical amazement before a universe that we still seek to understand;
- it inspires us to search for purpose and meaning in life's journey;
- its meditation and contemplative traditions call us to pay attention to each present moment, to slow down our hectic pace;
- a thoughtful and reflective spirituality reminds us that truth can be found not only in books or somebody else's words, but also deep within our own hearts and souls.

Kabbalah teaches us that in order to be in touch with God "out there," we need to be in touch with God "in here." But it also warns us that we are not solitary seekers looking for our own personal fulfillment. We are part of a continuum, a puzzle:

Each lifetime is the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

But.... No one has within himself or herself

All the pieces to the puzzle.

Everyone carries at least one and probably

Many pieces to someone else's puzzle.

Sometimes they know it. Sometimes they don't.

And when you present your piece

Which is worthless to you,

To another, whether you know it or not,

Whether they know it or not,

You are a messenger from the Most High.

(Lawrence Kushner)

In the year ahead, let us rediscover the power and beauty of Jewish spirituality, a spirituality that is inner directed but not self-absorbed; not escapist of the world's social problems, but committed to *Tikkun Olam*. Let us, by our words and our deeds, become Partners of God in restoring Oneness, wholeness, and harmony to our lives and relationships. Then each of us will be a Kabbalist, and the world a better place.

(In the preparation of this sermon, I am indebted to the writings of Rabbis Arthur Green and Lawrence Kushner).

Rabbi Sasso serves Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis.

Kaplan

Continued from page 5

confection made from ground sesame seeds and honey, are popular for this event.

According to the cookbook *Traditions*, compiled by Sonia Levy, Jews of Zimbabwe follow the custom of eating of obtainable fruits which were associated with the Holy Land, such as carob and nuts. Jews whose ancestors came from the Island of Rhodes celebrated by having their children wear little bags of 15 dried fruits and nuts. Friends and families would also exchange platters delivered by the children which held marzipan or fruit or fish roe.

Tu B'Shvat was also meant to link the Jew to his land, since on this date in the time of the Second Temple, Jewish farmers in the land of Israel would estimate the obligatory tithes for tax collectors and other contributions which Jewish law required. In effect, Tu B'Shvat was the beginning of a new fiscal year.

The Mishnah's specific citing of this festival also related to Jewish law. In order to observe certain mitzvot, one had to know how old a tree was. The fruit from last year could

not be used for this year's tithes; tithes had to be from new fruit. By designating Tu B'Shvat as a deadline date, fruit gathered up to this date would be considered last year's crop, and fruit picked after was part of the new crop and the new income.

Another point of Jewish law related to age of trees as well. Fruit cannot be eaten from a fruit tree during the first three years of the tree's bearing fruit. Only in the fourth year could that fruit be eaten. Jewish literature of the sixth to 11th centuries identifies this holiday as one on which the fate of the trees and fruit is decided, hence the name, Rosh Hashanah l'ilanot.

The date was chosen when the rabbinic schools of Hillel and Shammai (from the time of the Second Temple) argued about the dates. Hillel said it fell on the 15th of Shvat; Shammai said it began the first of Shvat. Hillel's opinion prevailed because it was thought that the winter rains in Israel were almost over.

The idea of a Tu B'Shvat seder has been revived by families, organizations, and synagogues today. Included is the drinking of four cups of wine to symbolize the changing of seasons. Today in addition to the seder, families serve fresh fruits and dry fruits indigenous to Israel, such as dates, figs, carob, and almonds.

The planting of trees affirms our attachment to Israel which, from the early days, the Zionist pioneers started. The Talmud reports that in the time of the Second Temple it was customary to plant a tree on Tu B'Shvat for every child born - a cedar for a boy because of its height and a cypress for a girl because of its fragrance. When the children grew up and married, the *chuppah* (wedding canopy) poles were constructed from the branches of their trees.

Sybil Kaplan is a book reviewer, journalist, lecturer, synagogue public relations specialist, and synagogue librarian from Overland Park, Ks.

Zoberman

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plans for teaching purposes. Contact 1-800-723-9479.

Valli's fateful letter and last communication before her arrival in Theresienstadt is a mother's unadulterated and heartfelt loving message to her son against the backdrop of untold suffering. It is a lasting tribute to the human spirit with the power to endure.

Rabbi Zoberman, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, is a son of Polish Holocaust survivors.

Amitay

Continued from page 7
of failure.

Given this anti-war, anti-Israel mindset, it is not surprising that they are openly advocating a U.S. peace plan to be imposed on Israel. As Scowcroft bluntly put it, "We have got to say this is it...we are the ones that have to impose it."

So far, however, there is no indication that the second Bush administration is in any hurry to pursue this path. The president has said he will be looking to see what changes there will be in Palestinian behavior. But having to deal in the next six months with elections in Iraq and their aftermath along with Iran's pursuit of nukes (and its own "elections" in June) could forestall any great attention with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

What happens between now and the end of the summer may well determine the shape of the Middle East for years to come. For a president who has expressed the desire to tackle domestic problems in his second term, it looks like developments overseas will dominate his agenda. And we have not even cited other problem areas in the Middle East - such as Saudi Arabia or Syria - and the various terrorist organizations.

Unfortunately, much of the reporting and analysis we will be receiving in the days ahead will be filtered through our media, which, with some notable exceptions (e.g. Fox News and *The Wall Street Journal*) reflects the "blame America

first," "cycle of violence," and "both sides" mentalities when it comes to viewing the Middle East.

So it is important not to lose sight of the big picture which has Israel continuing its quest for peace and accommodation, while facing Arab rejectionism and violence. But as long as a Tom Friedman can equate Arab terrorists with Israeli "settlers" lawfully opposing the disengagement plan, as he recently did, and still receive generous honoraria from Jewish audiences, it is obvious that many Jewish Americans professing to be supporters of Israel don't really get it.

There may not be much good news in the months ahead as a number of grim scenarios unfold. But self-doubt (and self-flagellation) are poor substitutes for demonstrating pride in what two nations, the United States and Israel, will be trying to achieve during this gloomy period.

Morrie Amitay is a former executive director of AIPAC and founder of the pro-Israel Washington PAC (www.washingtonpac.com).

Medad

Continued from page 11

the pressures of trying to get public support. They both complained to G-d about the difficulties in leading the Jewish People, but in the end they prevailed. Moshe led us to the Land of Israel, and Shmuel crowned our first two kings, Saul and David.

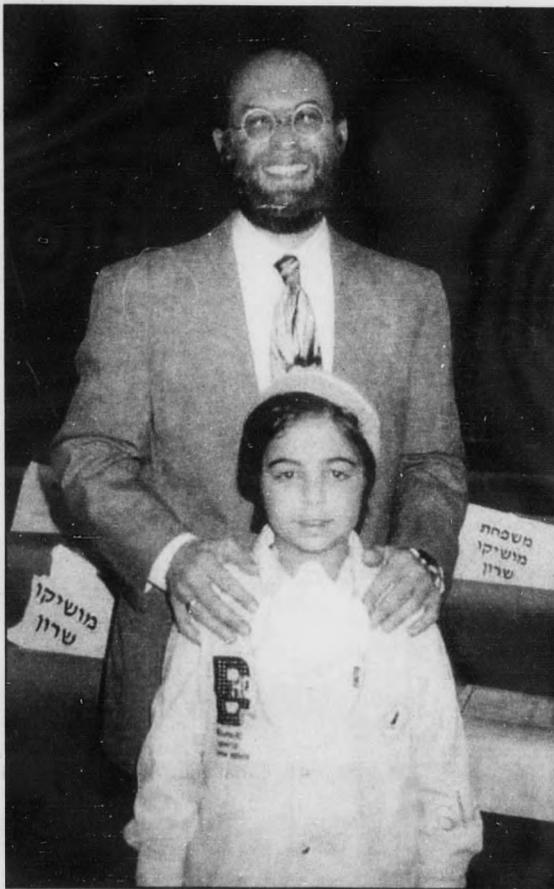
I have a little advice for our politicians: "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen."

Donors

*I began my writing career
writing to donors
and would be
could be
hope you'll be
donors*

*we wanted money
nothing else
neither blood nor soul*

*a couple of times a year
someone sent
five dollars*



Eric Swim and Moshiko Sharon

*and
I honored him
with a letter
neither shorter
nor cheaper
than
the big donors
who then
gave a hundred*

*we had dreams
that one day
we'd discover
that he'd been
testing us*

*that he was
one of those
hidden millionaires*

*to this day
I don't know*

*But
recently
I heard of different donors
who didn't give money
they gave more*

*G-d gave them two
and they gave
one away*

to strangers

*I met one last night
and the recipient
a pair so different
but
with
matching kidneys*

*a man
not born Jewish
gave a little Jewish boy
his kidney*

*and then he read to us
a psalm
in Hebrew
and those who could
recited with him
the others
cried*

Batya Medad lives in Shiloh, Israel. Her "Musings" started as "a therapeutic response to the terror that has been plaguing Israel." She welcomes comments at: shilohmuse@yahoo.com; <http://shilohmusings.blogspot.com>; <http://me-ander.blogspot.com>.

A comprehensive look at klezmer

By RABBI SAMUEL SILVER

The Book of Klezmer: The History, the Music, the Folklore. By Yale Strom. Chicago: Capella Books. 384 pages.

From the moment the Jew discovered God, he sang. It was an index of his joy at being the recipient of the Lord's creations.

A printed copy of the Hebrew Pentateuch has two sets of marks: one, for vowels; the other, musical notes (cantillation). The Jewish biblical chant influenced Pope Gregory who fashioned the "Gregorian chant" for Roman Catholics.

The observance of Jewish holidays calls for melodic prayers. The Talmudic sages forbade the use of musical instruments in worship because we are lamenting the destruction of the Temple, but chanting prevailed.

Around the 14th century, instrumental musical groups were formed to celebrate weddings and festivals. The groups appeared first in Eastern Europe and later elsewhere. The language of the compositions was Yiddish.

The groups, or troupes,

were named klezmer, from the Hebrew *klay (orkli) zemer*, instruments of song. The music was called klezmer and the performer as well.

In this book the author, a musician himself, exhaustively chronicles the klezmer and the klezmerim. Biographical sketches of the performers are frequently joined by statements addressed to the author.

Over the centuries klezmer music waxed and sometimes waned. After periods of diminished popularity, revivals occurred. Klezmer schools were founded. Alas, the Nazis did in multitudes of the klezmerim.

When Jews by the hundreds of thousands came to the United States, many brought klezmer with them. Some became itinerant troupes, going from city to city singing their folk music and juicing up weddings, bar mitzvahs, and *l'havdil*, funerals. Some entertained in tenement courtyards, gratefully accepting the coins tossed through windows by admiring women.

Klezmerim followed the Jews to the Catskills, the so-called Jewish Alps. Klezkamps were created. Some performers mixed their selections with jazz. Hence the term "jazzmer."

Beginning in the 1970s klezmer enjoyed a new surge of popularity. Hence this fine book will find a good readership.

The author talks about notable musicians like violinists Jascha Heifetz and Mischa Elman. Entertainers like Leonard Nimoy were klezmer alumni. Fiddlers are often joined in klezmer troupes with performers on the following instruments: flute, guitar, dulcimer, oboe, drums, mandolin, cornet, ukulele, trombone, trumpet, etc.

The book contains not only a huge bibliography but a pictography (a list of klezmer collections) and a helpful glossary. It'll have you jumping (and brushing up on your Yiddish). One word play: the Hebrew for instrument, or vessel, is *kli*. That stands for the three types of Jews: *cohanim, l'v'e-eem*, and *yisraelim*. Get it?

How the Bible Became a Book. By William H. Schniedewind. Cambridge University Press. 257 pages.

Silver

Continued from page 11

gathering that involved 70 classes? That's how many were present recently in Austin, Texas, where the Jewish Community Association offered its third annual "Tapestry of Jewish Learning." One course was titled "Honk If You Like Bumper Stickers." Another: "Israel Politics, a History Through Pop Culture."

Keynote speaker was that remarkable Aaron Lansky, who has collected thousands of Jewish books and has distributed them throughout the world. He heads the National Book Center at Amherst, Mass. (*Forward*)

Hand to mouth help

Free dental treatment was offered to the Jews of Israel's city Kfar Saba. Donors of their professional service were a group of dentists from Columbus, Ohio, led by Dr. Moshe Mizrach. (*Algemeiner Journal*)

Sam Silver may be reached at 2730 NW Timberlake Circle, Boca Raton, FL 33431.

Science

JERUSALEM—A Hadassah University Medical Center research team has developed a vaccine that significantly strengthens the body's immune system against the autoimmune pathological conditions resulting from HIV infection, a breakthrough that could have a dramatic and positive impact on the treatment of AIDS patients.

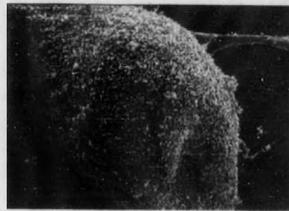
The results of this study were published in the latest issue of the *Journal of Clinical Virology*.

HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus, causes damage several ways. First, it attacks and destroys white blood cells called CD4, which are an integral component of the body's immune system. Second, it confuses the autoimmune system so that, even after the cocktail of drugs commonly used to kill the virus does its job, the immune system turns inward against itself.

Newly recruited "killer cells" continue to do damage by destroying more CD4 cells, leaving patients prone to additional infections, the worst stage of which is AIDS.

Hadassah scientists have successfully identified the "killer cells" as CD8 white blood cells. Researchers remove them, reproduce them in large numbers in the lab, kill them, and finally re-inject them as a vaccine that will stimulate the immune system to destroy the remaining "killer cells" in the blood stream.

The research group is headed by Dr. Rivka Abulafia-Lapid and assisted by Yael Keren-Zur,



CD4 cell

at the Human Biology Research Center, directed by Prof. Henri Atlan, who is also associated with the Department of Biophysics and Nuclear Medicine, Ein Kerem, Jerusalem.

This study was done in collaboration with Prof. Zvi Bentwich and Prof. Irun Cohen from the Weizmann Institute of Science.

Seven patients were treated with the new therapeutic vaccine. Each received between three and four injections over a six-month period. Following treatment, the patients' CD4 cell count was monitored for another two years. In five of the seven vaccinated patients, the CD4 cells increased by more than 50 percent.

Said Dr. Rivka Abulafia-Lapid: "Our aim was to strengthen the immune system. The vaccination treatment complements the antiviral by stopping the body from continuing to destroy itself."

Researchers are continuing their development of the vaccine funded by a grant from Hadasit, the Hadassah subsidiary that promotes and commercializes the intellectual properties generated at Hadassah and by the Center for the Study of Emerging Diseases.

Letters

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS — The Post and Opinion encourages readers to send letters. All letters to the editor should be addressed to The Jewish Post and Opinion, 238 S. Meridian St., Suite 502, Indianapolis, IN 46225, or by e-mail: jpost@jewishpostopinion.com.

Dear editor,

Many contemporary Jews look on Tu B'Shvat (Jan. 24-25 this year) as a Jewish "Earth Day" and use Tu B'Shvat seders as occasions to discuss how Jewish values can be applied to reduce many of today's ecological threats.

This is more important than ever in view of the many environmental threats currently facing our planet.

While Judaism teaches that "The Earth is the Lord's" (Psalms 24:1) and that we are to be partners with God in preserving the environment, there are daily news reports about water shortages, air and water pollution, the effects of global climate change, and soil erosion and depletion.

Tu B'Shvat is the New Year for Trees, the date on which the fate of trees is decided for

the coming year. Hence, it is an ideal time to consider the rapid destruction of tropical rain forests and other valuable habitats.

While Israel has made remarkable progress in many areas, it faces recurrent droughts, very badly polluted rivers, severe air pollution in its major cities and industrial areas, rapidly declining open space, congested roads, and an inadequate mass transit system.

In view of the above and much more, I urge Jews to use Tu B'Shvat and activities related to this increasingly important holiday as occasions to start to make *tikkun olam*, the repair and healing of the planet, a central focus in Jewish life today.

Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D.
Staten Island, N.Y.

Silver

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The Bible is often called a holy book. It looks like a book. But it is a collection of documents written over the course of hundreds of years by writers, some known and others unknown. The material was collected and composed by scribes. The collection was assembled between the 8th and the 6th centuries BCE.

The author, who heads the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University at Los Angeles, makes frequent use of the term "orality." That reminds us that the narratives of Scripture were originally spoken. Gradually the oral contents were what he called "textualized."

Originally, of course, the contents of the Bible were written on scrolls. Then "odex," that is, pagination on paper, occurred. So we have the contents of the Bible in book form. But, bear in mind, the author notes that the term *Bible* derives from the word *biblia*, meaning documents, that is, plural.

Two Judean kings inspired the creation of biblical narratives and the gathering together of what were originally oral traditions. They were Hezekiah (720-692 BCE) and Josiah (640-609 BCE). A number of kings in our history were mediocrities. Those two were enlightened and creative.

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