

# THE JEWISH STAR

Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island

VOL. 9, NO. 3

JANUARY 22, 2010 | 7 SHVAT 5770

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### IN MY VIEW

## So why isn't our meat good enough, Rabbi?

Why some rabbis observe stricter personal standards than they ask of their communities

BY RABBI HARVEY BELOVSKI

A rabbi goes to heaven and is invited to sit at a banquet attended by Moses himself. He makes a discreet inquiry and discovers that the food is under divine supervision. The rabbi whispers in a waiter's ear, "I'll take the fish!"

Many people are puzzled by the suggestion that a rabbi might endorse some area of religious life but be reluctant to partake in it himself. For example, it troubles people that some rabbis won't eat from certain kosher butchers; others still won't carry on Shabbat inside an eruv. One hears the obvious concerns about inconsistency expressed in blunt terms: Is it kosher or not? If it's kosher, why won't you eat it, and if it's not kosher, why should I?



Even the word 'halacha' indicates a process rather than a rule. It is a complete system that regulates every area of life.

It is not possible to make sense of this phenomenon without examining some of the underlying principles of halachah. Jewish law is fascinating and complex. Even the word "halachah" (literally, a way to go) indicates a process rather than a ruling.

It is a complete system that regulates every area of life, from the mundane to the most profound.

Halachah cares not only how we act, but also how we think and feel about ourselves, other human beings, the world itself, and, of course, G-d. As such, it is all-encompassing in its scope and the opportunity that it gives us to maximize every instant, imbuing it with meaning and purpose. From cradle to grave, boardroom to bedroom, halachah is ever-

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Harvey Belovski is rabbi of Golders Green Synagogue



Photo by Christina Daly

Vanel Desruisseaux and Alony Robert, who work in the HAFTR elementary kitchen, both lost relatives in the Haiti earthquake.

## Haiti hits close to home

Two members of community mourn dead

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

The tragedy in Haiti hit close to home for two men who work in the Five Towns community.

Vanel Desruisseaux and Alony Robert, both employed in the kitchen at the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway Elementary School, lost family members in the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti last week.

Desruisseaux, 65, lost five cousins, three from his mother's side and two from his father's side. Robert, 38, whose family lives in a town close to Port-au-Prince, lost two cousins in the quake.

"Big problem, big problems," said Desruisseaux, a burly man who sports a trim beard flecked with gray. Neither of the men speaks English fluently and both have heavy Haitian accents. Desruisseaux has been living in America since 2003; Robert has been here since 2002. Each left Haiti on account of the dire economic situation there and has a large family back home. Desruisseaux's

wife and daughter live in Haiti as do Robert's brothers and sisters.

"Everybody comes here looking for a job," said Robert, who was waiting for a phone call with a Bluetooth headset in his ear while he was interviewed. "No jobs in my country."

The two men send a portion of their salaries to their relatives in Haiti, and they profess to loving everything about America. Desruisseaux visited his home country for a week in December for his daughter's wedding. The two men live in Brooklyn and take the Long Island Rail Road to work each morning.

Both men heard news about the earthquake through text messages last Tuesday, but were left in suspense about their relatives' situations. Desruisseaux managed to get in touch with his daughter, but could not connect to the rest of his family.

He began sobbing in the HAFTR kitchen when his brother called him on Thursday afternoon; he had thought he

See HAITI CLOSE, Page 9

## Relief effort unites Jews in common goal

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

The staggering scope of the humanitarian crisis in Haiti after the earthquake there has united groups across the Jewish spectrum in the common goal of trying to help victims and support their family and friends here in New York.

Soon after the quake hit and the extent of the damage became apparent, the Orthodox Union launched a Haiti Earthquake Disaster Fund with all proceeds going to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Rabbi Steven Weil, executive vice president of the Orthodox Union, said that the Jewish fundraising effort for Haiti was "not unique."

"This fits the context of Jewish giving and being responsible for humanity," Weil said.

"We raised funds after Hurricane Katrina; the OU raised funds for the survivors of the [South Asian] tsunami. You look at Psalm 145, verse 9; it says G-d has compassion on all creatures. We have an obligation to imitate G-d."

Rabbi Hershel Billet of the Young Israel of Woodmere sent an e-mail to shul members on Friday urging them to donate to the OU fund. For him, the disaster in Haiti brought to mind a lesson he

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Photo courtesy of the IDF

IDF medics working alongside rescue workers from around the world.

## 'Head and shoulders above'

Profile of NCSY National President Miriam Shapiro

BY DANIELLA ADLER

Miriam Shapiro, a high school senior from Great Neck who attends Yeshiva University High School for Girls, was recently chosen to be national president of the National Conference of Synagogue Youth.

As national president, Shapiro tours the country, collaborating with members of NCSY's national board and ensuring that the organization runs smoothly in its many U.S. and international regions. She is also in the process of planning a retreat for the presidents of all the NCSY regions.

Shapiro first became involved in NCSY as a freshman. She recalled being

deeply moved by the words of Charlie Harary, the chairman of Long Island NCSY, before havdalah one Shabbat.

"Look yourself in the mirror and ask yourself if you gave 100 percent of yourself that day," Shapiro recalled Harary saying. "If you did, you're great. If not, you're mediocre. Never settle for mediocre, because you can all be great."

It soon became clear to Shapiro that, in her words, "NCSY was something I could feel passionate about." She built up the small Great Neck chapter of NCSY into a thriving and sought-after one, eventually winning an award

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### Shabbat

Candlelighting: 4:42 p.m. ■ Shabbat ends 5:46 p.m.  
Torah reading: Parshat Bo

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# That's Life

Edited by Miriam L. Wallach

## Dear That's Life,

About a year ago, I was talking to the husband of someone I know, but he did not realize I was the Miriam Wallach who wrote for the paper. "I didn't realize you were funny," he said. (Thanks?) But the truth is, I'm often unsure when something I write is humorous. It's hard for me to tell if what I've written is funny or not, and I'm not really good at being funny 'on purpose.'

My sons are accustomed to wearing the big crocheted kippot that many affectionately refer to as soup bowls: the ones that really cover the entire head. It is seriously a skullcap. They make bobby pins and kippah clips obsolete

and, personally, I think they're cute. Evidently, so did the woman at the ice cream store.

My older son was wearing his khaki green soup bowl kippah with yellow lettering that reads "The Israeli Army" as we walked into the store (note: no, I didn't have any; still counting points). The woman behind the counter was completely taken with it, but not in the way I expected.

"That hat is so hot!" she exclaimed, pointing at his kippah. Luckily, there was no one else in the store when I thanked her for the compliment and luckily, my son did not correct her. She read the wording out loud and said, "I love Israel and I know a lot about it — and I love to talk about it to the Jewish people

who come in here."

Smiling and being polite, I listened on. "Oh, yes!" she continued. "And his hat is so smart because then it doesn't fly off and he doesn't have to wear a yarmulke with it, right?" So I explained that in fact it was not a hat at all but rather a really big yarmulke that serves the same purpose. "Well, I think it's hot," she said again and again. I thanked her for the compliment. I then called him by one of his nicknames so he could get his ice cream.

"Frankie?!" she said. "Your boy's name is 'FRANKIE?!' I didn't know there were Jewish boys names 'FRANKIE.'"

Still thankful the store was otherwise empty, I

explained that she misheard me as I was calling him by a nickname, but his name is really Ezra. "Oooh, I love that name!" she replied. "That name is hot." At this point, I'd had it. Getting more and more anxious to leave the store, I thanked her again and began to gather my things.

"I love biblical names," she continued. "And those prophets! I love the prophets — especially the minor ones." (It took a minute for me to get that comment but it finally processed.) When she has children one day, she continued, she's definitely going to give them biblical names. "Well, the Bible is the best baby name dictionary around," I said, to which she responded, "You're right!" and

proceeded to laugh hysterically. This was not one of those times that I was trying to be funny. Actually, I found her uproarious laughter completely disconcerting.

We headed out the store and wished her a good day.

"Come back again soon, Ezra!" she yelled after us. We'll come back, I thought, but he'll be wearing a baseball hat.

MLW

If something happened to you "that could only happen around here," you've got to share! Was it funny? Outrageous? Hopefully, it wasn't too painful. No matter what, if you type it up and sent it to [letters@thejewishstar.com](mailto:letters@thejewishstar.com) you'll have a chance to win a \$25 gift certificate to Burger's Bar on Central Avenue in Cedarhurst — in other words, you could win an outstanding meal at one of Nassau County's most popular kosher restaurants.

Submissions should include your name, your town, and your daytime and evening phone numbers. Sorry, but anonymous submissions cannot be considered. All decisions by the editors are final and all submissions become the property of The Jewish Star.

In case you were wondering, Burgers Bar is under the supervision of the Vaad Hakashrus of the Five Towns and Far Rockaway, and plays music you can find on MLW's iPod.



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I'm sure you've come to appreciate the literate and intriguing coverage of our community that is only available in the Star and that you'll continue to invite us into your home each week.

All the best,  
*Mayer Fertig*  
Mayer Fertig  
Editor & Publisher



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OPINION

THE JEWISH STAR

MAYER FERTIG  
 Publisher, Editor-in-Chief  
 MICHAEL ORBACH  
 Assistant Editor

MALKA EISENBERG, TOVA ROSS  
 Reporters

HELENE PARSONS, MAURY WARSHAUER  
 Account Executive

RABBI AVI BILLET, ALAN JAY GERBER, MICAH D. HALPERN, RABBI YAKOV HOROWITZ, ADAM NEUSTADTER, DAVID SEIDEMANN, YAFFI SPODEK, MIRIAM L. WALLACH, CHANANYA WEISSMAN

Contributors

ALYSON GOODMAN  
 Editorial Designer

The Jewish Star is an independent community newspaper. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the publisher or editorial staff.

2 Endo Blvd., Garden City, NY 11530  
 (516) 569-4000 E-mail: letters@thejewishstar.com  
 fax: (516) 569-4942

The Jewish Star is published weekly by the The Jewish Star LLC, 2 Endo Boulevard, Garden City, NY 11530. Postmaster send address changes to The Jewish Star, 2 Endo Boulevard, Garden City, NY 11530. **Subscription rates:** \$9 per quarter charged to a credit card or \$48 for 1 year, within Nassau County. All other subscriptions \$15 per quarter on a credit card or \$72 per year. Major Credit Cards accepted.

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No thanks needed

Editorial

Chesed Shel Emes work — the volunteer vocation of preparing the dead for halachically correct Jewish burial — is referred to as Chesed Shel Emes, a true good deed, because by definition there can be no gratitude forthcoming from the recipient of the service. Of course, the community is grateful but generally the volunteers do their holy work in relative anonymity — no handshake, no pat on the back for a job well done.

Israeli medical and search and rescue teams operating now in Haiti are there first and foremost to help the living, of course, but it occurs to us that they are performing a variety of true Chesed Shel Emes, nonetheless. In all likelihood, when the last survivor is pulled from the rubble and the last trauma victim is treated, Israel will be right back where it was last Monday: an international pariah, forced constantly to justify and defend its existence in a world of enemies and hypocrites.

Of course, this makes Israel's magnificent response to the earthquake, and

that of the Jewish community in general, all the more special, worthwhile, satisfying and enjoyable to watch.

"We have always looked beyond our own community to the people in need," explained Malcolm Hoenlein of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "It's not always appreciated. We don't do it for what we get for it, we do it because it's the right thing to do."

Israel is but one of many nations that have responded to the catastrophe. Hundreds of members of the Israel Defense Force, Hatzalah and ZAKA are working shoulder to shoulder with fellow professionals speaking a variety of languages in service of a common goal: saving as many lives as possible of those who were trapped beneath the rubble when the earthquake hit, and those survivors who were not trapped but were otherwise injured.

Despite the commonality of purpose,

the Israeli team distinguished itself early on. It was a wonderful irony that it was a CNN crew that first filed a report on Israel's now famous field hospital which, for a period of time over the weekend, had the lone functioning operating rooms in Port au Prince. Staffed by a medical team of 220, it comprises a tent city and some 10 tons of equipment, including state of the art medical imaging gear.

The tent city hospital that Sky News called the "Rolls Royce of Emergency Medicine" rolled into Haiti less than half a day after the quake struck. Imagine those evil Israelis going to so much trouble. Who do they think they're fooling?

Perhaps Israel's massive effort in Haiti will win some hearts and minds, perhaps just the parents of the newborn to be named "Israel," but whether or not the effort turns out to be "lishma" — with no expectation of recognition or reward — we can find a small silver lining in the cloud that is Haiti. Kol Hakavod Tzahal.

Letters

Editor's note: Our editorial questioning the relative silence over the fall from grace of conversion power broker Leib Tropper (A smart career move; Jan. 15, 2010) was picked up by the widely read news aggregator site www.vosizneias.com. Following are a selection of comments offered about the piece, its subject and the newspaper, that we thought you might enjoy. Some minor grammatical and spelling corrections have been made; mostly the comments are reproduced here as they appeared online.

"Don't attend his yeshiva. End of

story."

"Wow, normally The Jewish Star is too left wing for my tastes — but this is emes!"

"This article is just silly. Tropper had to resign from EJF. His life as a respected person in the Jewish community is over. What else do they want? That Agudah should issue a kol korey saying that it is illegal to have extramarital relations with a goy?"

"Still, the correct response to this should not be to allow cynicism to spiral out of control, throwing away all of yiddishkeit

because of some bad apples."

"Lipa just keeps trying to make an honest living by entertaining people. Sheitel machers actually work very hard for a living. Working hard and honest, character traits which Chazal seem to value highly, as evidenced by Chazal saying that the first question the Heavenly Beis Din will ask is if you were honest in earning a living. Obviously the Heavenly Beis Din isn't on EJF's list of preferred batei din."

"The cynicism in this article, makes it seem like the author is jealous and wishes he could get

away with such aveiros without repercussions. Think about it."

"When the Gedolei Yisroel ask why people question their authority, they should hold a picture of Tropper up and understand. It is beyond me that any of our leaders can remain silent and not criticize the actions of this pervert."

"Doesn't it seem strange to anyone why the Roshei HaYeshivas have not said anything publicly against R' Leib Tropper? Maybe the answer is the tape is a phony. Today anything can be dubbed, or made voice over.

R'Leibb Tropper is not some "guy" he is a big Talmud Chacum."

"Indian hair is a halachic manner, is the writer implying that it's not a big deal? well then he could drop the word 'Jewish' from 'The Jewish Star Magazine'..."

"What a stupid article, what should be done? Stone him to death?"

"Singers and concerts, as far as the rabbi's are concerned is not appropriate for our style of living. This guy is dead meat

already, what will a kol korah help or achieve?"

"I don't know what the Gedolim are thinking. We are in a blind Gulos. Hopefully Hashem will show us some light."

"No one is doubting that R' Tropper may have done Tshuva, but that still is not a reason to let him continue serving as a rosh yeshiva. What he did was a disgrace and a massive chilul Hashem and while no one should judge him, I don't think that he should be rewarded either."

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FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BENCH

# Role reversals

The task entrusted to Moses was not an easy one. He was to use, at least initially, the power of speech to motivate both a despondent nation and a despot ruler, to change their ways. The king was used to subjugating and intimidating. The Hebrews were accustomed to being dominated. The king did not believe in any power greater than himself. The Hebrew slaves did not believe in any power greater than Pharaoh. Both had to be convinced that the king was no king.

Both had to be convinced that there was a King that ruled over Pharaoh; that Pharaoh himself had to answer to a higher authority. Both had to be convinced that this lowly nation of slaves and their G-d, a G-d they'd never met, could rule over Pharaoh. And who was sent on this mission to persuade the king that he was a slave and persuade the slaves that one day they would be kings? Who was sent to convince the parties that in the very near future the slaves would rule over the evil man that ruled over them? It was none other than a man with a speech impediment.



David Seidemann

I think we can all agree that if American Idol can select the best dancer and the best singer in the land, then G-d, even without Simon Cowell, could find the most eloquent of speakers to effectuate change in people who were resistant to change. Neither the Hebrews nor the king had any prior exposure to G-d and therefore everything hinged on the presentation of Moses. Perhaps there was a better choice.

Well, we all know that there wasn't a better choice. We all know how things turned out. We all know that G-d sent Aaron along with Moses to help deliver the message. This then begs the question, why send Moses at all; why not just send Aaron? One can spend hours upon hours immersed in the texts and commentaries on the texts as to why both Aaron and Moses were sent to turn slaves into kings and a king into a slave. One can spend hours analyzing and explaining the wisdom of sending a man with a disability on a mission to lift the disabled. One need not dig too deeply however, to understand the connection between a

broken tongue and broken spirits, and how both can find their way to redemption.

What I found interesting was that Moses never rejected the mission because he possessed a disability and therefore felt unable to undertake the mission. His only reservations were based on the fact that others might not be able to overlook his disability, in terms of being able to accept the message which Moses was attempting to deliver. Somewhere along the line Moses developed the ability to transcend his limitations, his disabilities, his perceived shortcomings. Somewhere along the line his caretakers instilled in him the notion that if one is lacking, he simply is obliged to try harder to succeed. Somewhere along the line he absorbed the message of independence.

The words and pictures out of Haiti are haunting. An underdeveloped nation with little, if any, physical, social, educational, or fiscal infrastructure was reduced to rubble. Efforts to build a progressive society have been set back decades. The lack of a physically sound infrastructure caused much greater damage than might have otherwise occurred. The lack of a sophisticated economy and other elements of an advanced society

caused a greater degree of suffering now and for the future than might have occurred in a better developed part of the world.

We cannot prevent earthquakes or other heaven-sent disasters. But we can build proper infrastructure before disaster strikes so that recovery becomes more possible.

But this lack of infrastructure is not restricted to mortar. Another fundamental lack of infrastructure is just as dangerous, here in the United States and in other seemingly developed regions of the world. It relates not to mortar but to mortals.

We continue to coddle anyone who claims to be lacking; anyone and everyone who lives in a bubble of their own self-created disability. Instead of providing those who lack with tools to help them succeed in the future, we grant them everything they desire with little or no effort to be exerted on their own behalf. We have spoiled our children and entire segments of the population by creating shortcuts to success, immediate handouts, and few if any incentives to build their own personal infrastructures.

We have created a generation of dependence and dependants. We have retarded their growth and in the process have retarded the growth of our families and our society. Charity is important but it is not the answer. Disabilities exist, but have you noticed that the more physically

disabled a person appears, the more he or she believes in him or herself? It is the people that have been handed everything on a silver platter, those with two arms, two legs, and a working mind who tend to be the ones that believe that they are disabled beyond repair and reform.

Parents, teachers, and governments are not doing themselves or the people they are entrusted to care for any favors by providing quick fix solutions to people's legitimate problems. Nor are parents, teachers and governments doing society a favor when they allow those that lack nothing but motivation, to continue to underachieve.

G-d's answer to Moses was not to stay home and collect disability. Rather G-d's response was to tell Moses that he could succeed despite his disability, and that if he needed any assistance, his brother would be there at his side. Parents and governments need to convince most of the "disabled" people or children that what they perceive as disabilities are not barriers but challenges. And for those that really are disabled, help is only a brother away.

David Seidemann is a partner with the law firm of Seidemann & Mermelstein. He can be reached at (718) 692-1013 and at ds@lawofficesm.com.



I'M THINKING

# None for all

Iranians are Persians; they are not Arabs. Iranians are Shiites; they are not Sunnis. Shiites and Sunnis have a long history of killing each other. Their conflict is far greater than we assume. Truly, the Islamic world is not united.

In March of 1972 the Organization of the Islamic Conference held its first meeting. The Organization was founded in order to foster unity between Muslims in scientific, cultural, social and



Micah D. Halpern

political arenas. It has been a colossal failure, subject to infighting and outright hostility from its inception.

Internal hatred and historical divisions are intense. If membership had been limited to Zanzibar, Senegal and Jordan there would probably have been agreement on most issues. But with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Sierra Leone — altogether 57 member nations thrown in — what unites the Organization of

Islamic Conferences more than anything else is its disunity.

The Islamic Games, under the auspices of the Islamic Conference, have been scheduled, postponed and now finally, ultimately, canceled. It was to have been the first ever publicly sanctioned games in which women were permitted to compete — many Islamic countries forbid women from participating in the Olympics. The reason for the cancellation has nothing to do with women; it has everything to do with the logo that Iran chose to display on their national Islamic Games promotional material.

Iran's logo choice was a map of the body of water that abuts their country, the body of water they call "The Persian Gulf" and everyone else in the region calls "The Arabian Gulf." Saudi Arabia, which also abuts the Gulf, refused

to allow Iran to claim ownership of something that was not theirs.

This is an issue so incendiary that it might destabilize the entire region.

In May, Saudi Arabia accepted a compromise and agreed to call the water simply, euphemistically, "The Gulf." Iran rejected that compromise outright and passed a series of policies that actually ban Iranians from ever using the term "The Gulf." The Iranian speaker of the parliament underscored how strongly Iranian leadership feels about this issue when he called other Arab nations "feeble" for trying to hold on to their past history. He said that other nations have no right and no ability to back up their shared claim to the waterway.

I do not often take Iran's side in conflicts relating to international affairs, but in this case, I must.

The Iranians are absolutely correct. Historically, the body of water in question has almost always been called "The Persian Gulf." Maps drawn and published prior to the 1960's rise of pan-Arabism called that waterway "The Persian Gulf" and only "The Persian Gulf." It was only after the rise of Arab nationalism that the seven Arab countries on the other side of the gulf began referring to it as the Arabian Gulf.

The maps of the great Greek geographer Ptolemy, a Roman citizen, were the foundation maps used by all mapmakers for centuries. On Ptolemy's maps the area is marked as "Sinus Persicus" which in Latin translates to mean "The Persian Gulf." A 9th century map in Arabic that I found reads very clearly "Bahr Fars" which, again, translates to mean "The Persian Gulf."

In 1979, following the Islamic Revolution during which Iranians officially changed the name of their country to the Islamic Republic they also considered changing the name of the Gulf to the "Islamic Gulf." This time it was Iran's neighboring nations who rejected the idea outright.

Tensions in the Muslim world are deep. Driving from the airport several days ago I asked my Egyptian Arab driver who he hated more - Israeli Jews or the Iranian Shiites. He didn't hesitate for a moment. The answer was Iranian Shiites.

Micah D. Halpern is a columnist and a social and political commentator. Read his latest book THUGS. He maintains The Micah Report at www.micahhalpern.com

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# ON THE Calendar

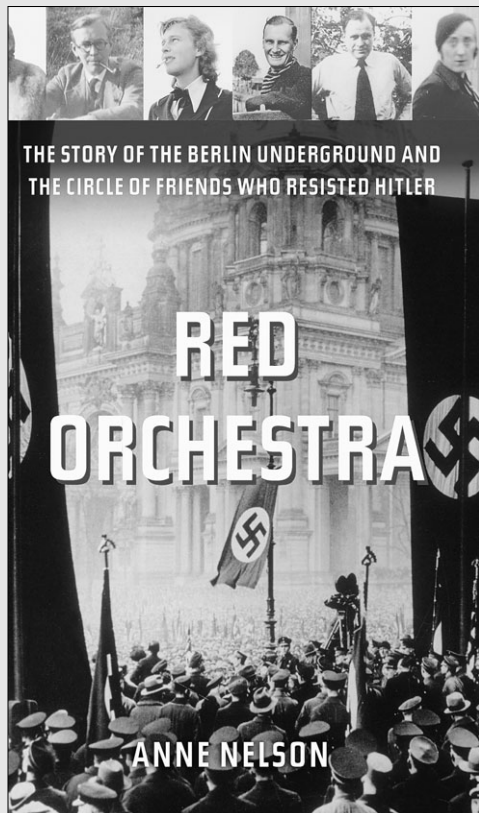
## Red Orchestra at Museum of Jewish Heritage

Red Orchestra: The Story of the Berlin Underground and the Circle of Friends Who Resisted Hitler (Random House, 2009) tells the compelling story of an intrepid band of German artists, intellectuals, and



bureaucrats and their dangerous battle to unveil the brutal secrets of their fascist employers. The book documents this riveting story through the eyes of Greta Kuckhoff, a German working mother. Author Anne Nelson (pictured above) will be speaking about her book on February 10 at 6:30 p.m. at the Museum

of Jewish Heritage with Stephen Roloff, a son of the Orchestra's last surviving members, who directed a film of the same title. Bonnie Gurewitsch, archivist and curator at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, moderates.



For a complete listing of upcoming community events, including items that didn't make it into the print edition, go to [www.thejewishstar.com](http://www.thejewishstar.com).

**New York, NY** - This February, the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, continues to present fascinating book programs with distinguished authors in Edmond J. Safra Hall. On Sunday, February 7 at 1:30 p.m. join Ari Y. Kelman as he is interviewed by editor Harry Katz about his biography of Milt Gross, the forefather of American Jewish humor, in *Is Diss A System? A Milt Gross Comic Reader* (NYU Press, 2009). On Wednesday, February 10 at 6:30 p.m., author Anne Nelson will be joined by filmmaker Stefan Roloff and Museum curator Bonnie Gurewitsch for a discussion of Nelson's book *Red Orchestra: The Story of the Berlin Underground and the Circle of Friends Who Resisted Hitler* (Random House, 2009). Tickets to these programs are each \$5, free for members and are available online at [www.mjhnyc.org](http://www.mjhnyc.org) or by calling the Museum box office at 646.437.4202.

Sessions will be held at Temple Israel in Lawrence, 140 Central Avenue, Lawrence. The fee is \$50. Pre-registration is required. For further information and/or to register please call 516-569-6733, ext. 209.

**Bellmore** - Yiddish theater is coming to Bellmore. The Hazak Chapter of the Bellmore Jewish Center has announced that it is bringing to Bellmore The Folksbiene Theatre's Traveling Troupe for a performance of "Mama's Loshn Kugel," a Yiddish musical revue with English supertitles, on Sunday, April 18, 2010, at 3 PM. A limited number of seats are available. Tickets are on sale now - \$18 adults, \$12 children 10-16 years old. Call Ruthe at (516) 221-8570 or Bill at (516) 221-2056.

**New York City** - Celebrate Jewish Heritage Night with the New York Knicks. Tuesday, February 9th, Knicks vs. the Kings. Tickets are \$36 for seating in the 300 level and include a Hebrew Knicks item. Visit [tinyurl.com/jcrcJHN2010](http://tinyurl.com/jcrcJHN2010) and enter promo code: JCRC. For more information contact Seth Bettan at 212.465.6516 or email [seth.bettan@thegarden.com](mailto:seth.bettan@thegarden.com)

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**Cedarhurst** - The Beis Medrash of Cedarhurst holds a Flexible Morning Learning Program Mon. to Thurs. from 10:30 a.m. until 12:45 p.m. There are shiurim and chavrusas in Chumash, Gemara, Halacha and Chovos Halevavos. Learners may come and go as they please. The Beis Medrash of Cedarhurst is located at 504 W. Broadway (off the corner of W. Broadway and Cedarhurst Ave.) Contact Rabbi Moshe Kaufman at (718) 471-2780 [moshekaufman@gmail.com](mailto:moshekaufman@gmail.com).

**Cedarhurst** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns has scheduled a support group, "Single and Strong," for women who are divorced or separated going through tough economic times. The group meets Thursday mornings, from 10-11:00 a.m., at the JCC. Pre-registration is required. For further information and/or to register please call 569-6733, ext. 213. This program is funded by Connect to Care, a UJA-Federation of NY initiative.

**Cedarhurst** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns introduces a new program, "Pizza Pals," a social skills program for children with autism, 6th to 8th grade (ages 12-14). For further information please call 569-6733.

**Cedarhurst** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns "Senior Choir" meets Tuesday mornings, at the JCC, from September through June, at 11 a.m., with Choir Master Zvi Klein. Songs are in English, Hebrew and Yiddish. Men and women over age 60 are invited to participate. For further information and/or to arrange an audition please call the JCC at 569-6733, ext. 222. This program is funded in part by the William Petschek Fund through the UJA Federation of NY.

### ONGOING EVENTS

**Far Rockaway** - Rabbi Eytan Feiner's Machshavah Shiur in Sifrei Maharal on Chumash and Mo'adim for men and women has resumed. Tuesday evenings from 8:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. at Congregation Kneseth Israel, 728 Empire Ave., Far Rockaway. For more information call (718) 327-0500 or [www.whiteshul.com](http://www.whiteshul.com).

**Cedarhurst** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns offers "Kids Corner," a program for special needs children, on Sundays, from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. A light lunch is provided. For further information please call 516-569-6733, ext. 205.

**Stony Brook** - Sexual abuse and abduction prevention educational workshops. Parents for Megan's Law and The Crime Victims Center now offer age-appropriate sexual

**East Meadow** - Join the East Meadow Simcha Chapter of Hadassah for an enjoyable and beneficial afternoon. Howard Newman, comedian, fitness guru and Certified Personal Trainer will make working out fun for everyone. The event takes place at the East Meadow Public Library, 1886 Front Street, on Monday, January 18, at 12:45 PM. Please call 516-481-1294 for further information.

**Cedarhurst** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns is beginning a New Bereavement Support Group scheduled for eight consecutive Mondays, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., starting February 1, 2010. Sessions will be held at Temple Israel in Lawrence, 140 Central Avenue, Lawrence. The fee is \$50.

**Cedarhurst** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns is beginning a New Bereavement Support Group scheduled for eight consecutive Mondays, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., starting February 1, 2010.

### CALENDAR POLICY

The Jewish Star welcomes submissions to our calendar and makes every effort to help interested parties take advantage of this free community service. Submissions are most welcome by e-mail to [jcalendar@thejewishstar.com](mailto:jcalendar@thejewishstar.com) and should be received 2-3 weeks prior to the event. Calendar items appear only as space permits and no guarantees can be made. Items received shortly before deadline on Monday afternoon or Tuesday are unlikely to appear in that week's issue. The Jewish Star reserves the right to decline any particular submission.



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# Israel sets Mondrowitz free

Assessing blame, further options in notorious case

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

Avrohom Mondrowitz will not be extradited to New York to be tried on multiple counts of child sexual abuse, Israel's Supreme Court has decided. His attorney says the Brooklyn District Attorney's office is to blame but even one of the DA's harshest critics calls that "preposterous."

Mondrowitz, a charismatic, self-styled rabbi who faked his psychology credentials, was indicted for sexually abusing several Brooklyn boys a month after he fled to Israel in 1984. He is widely suspected of molesting dozens of boys, many of whom, twenty years later, are still unwilling to come forward.

The case is more involved than that of a single individual accused of committing serious crimes. The social service agency Ohel has vigorously denied having referred clients to Mondrowitz for counseling; and leaders of the frum community, specifically the Council of Jewish Organizations of Borough Park, were thought to have warned him of his impending arrest.

Elizabeth Holtzman, Brooklyn's district attorney at the time, sought Mondrowitz's extradition. However, the charges against him were not extraditable under the treaty between Israel and the United States in force at the time. That changed in 1988, but the next district attorney, Charles Hynes, chose to not pursue the case until 2007 when the treaty changed again. Hynes has been accused of sitting on the case under pressure from the same Borough Park communal leaders. After a renewed interest in the case, extradition proceedings began in earnest in 2007. Mondrowitz appealed and in a decision issued by the Israeli Supreme Court on Jan. 14, his appeal was sustained.

"The delay in the appellant's

extradition process — currently measured at 23 years — which could have been prevented by an earlier amendment of the extradition agreement, places a legal and ethical obstacle before the completion of the extradition," wrote Justice Ayala Procaccia.

Eitan Moaz, Mondrowitz's lawyer, attributed the defense's success to inaction by the district attorney.

"In 1988 the law was amended in a way that the route to extradition was open and the district attorney was notified," he explained. "But they did not do anything until 2007, when they decided to apply."

"I'm not saying it was his fault, it was his decision," he added. "This case was buried under ground."

Moaz praised the judge's decision, calling it "brave," especially in light of the relationship between the United States and Israel.

Hynes is currently also fighting a Freedom of Information Act request by attorney Michael Leshner, concerning the DA's conduct in the Mondrowitz case. On Nov. 23, 2009, a judge ordered Hynes to turn over to Leshner all of the documents concerning the district attorney's handling of Mondrowitz.

"If the District Attorney has been telling the truth about his role in the attempted Mondrowitz extradition, he has nothing to hide; if he has not been telling the truth, he has no right to hide," Leshner wrote in his affidavit.

Reached by phone on the day of the Israeli Supreme Court decision, Leshner became Hynes' unlikely defender.

"It's preposterous to blame the DA for the fact that Israel and America simply did not negotiate a new extradition treaty fast enough. I don't say that as a defender of Hynes — he did

plenty to bury the case — but it isn't his fault that the extradition treaty didn't change sooner."

"It was the wrong decision and protects a man whose crimes extend ... far beyond him," he said about the decision. "If prosecuted it [the case] would reveal so much about the corrupt underside of the society he comes from. All we ever wanted was simply for him to come to trial like others accused of such crimes. If he did come to trial we would learn a lot of unpleasant things, but invaluable things. I think there were a lot of people who didn't want that to happen."

Leshner added that said he believed the court's decision had been made for "political considerations."

Jerry Schmetterer, a spokesperson for the DA said that they were "disappointed" by the Israeli decision.

"We're working with the [U.S.] Department of Justice and the [Israeli] Ministry of Justice to see what remedies are available," he said.

If there is any further recourse that could see Mondrowitz brought back to New York, it's a long shot, at best, according to his attorney, Moaz, who believes that Israel's Supreme Court would need to call a new session with a panel of seven judges.

The decision to set Mondrowitz free "raise[s] troubling questions," according to Ben Hirsch, president of Survivors for Justice, an advocacy organization for victims of sexual abuse inside the Jewish community.

"We are working with counsel to determine what can be done to help bring Mondrowitz to the U.S. to face trial for the terrible crimes [of which] he stands accused. We are saddened that Mondrowitz's victims have been deprived of this important



photo by Daniel Bar On

Avrohom Mondrowitz on his way to a court hearing. He was in prison for two years awaiting extradition.

step towards closure and we will not rest until every possible legal means to bring this matter to the close it deserves have been exhausted," he said via email.

The question now becomes what will happen to Mondrowitz. He remains under house arrest after being moved from the prison where he spent the last two years. He is set to go free on bail in ten days. Documents Michael Leshner provided to the Jewish Star indicate that as recently as 2006 Mondrowitz was actively counseling adolescents under the same false credentials he used in the United States 20 years ago.

In an evaluation of a boy named Eliyahu, who engaged in "improper behaviors with his peers," Mondrowitz wrote that the boy's experimentation was "normal."

"They form close relation-

ships with peers and may experiment with them, or sometimes with somewhat younger peers, usually to satisfy curiosity. This quite normal experimentation phase usually fades and disappears," Mondrowitz wrote.

Eliyahu would "benefit" from close interaction with a knowledgeable mashgiach or other Torah-true guidance figure," Mondrowitz recommended.

"An adult supporting figure could teach and encourage Eliyahu that, like hunger, thirst, or other basic needs, other desires must be controlled, channeled and satisfied in the proper time, place and manner."

In another set of documents, a Jerusalem City Council member, Shlomo Rozenshtein, responded to Mondrowitz's pitch to develop a "Spiritual Centre" near the Kotel, cc'ing then-Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski

on the e-mail.

"The City of Jerusalem and the State of Israel have a deep interest in an idea as beautiful and challenging as your 'Spiritual Centre,'" he wrote.

At the Mondrowitz residence in Jerusalem a woman who answered the phone wouldn't put Mondrowitz on the phone to speak with a reporter.

"Sorry," she said before hanging up.

For at least one of Mondrowitz's alleged victims, his freedom and the judge's verdict are frightening.

"It's not about vengeance. It's about getting him off the street. I think the world is a less safe place because he's out and feels empowered," said Mark Weiss. "It's pitiful, is what it is. I think humanity has dropped the ball."

## IN MY VIEW

Continued from Page One

present, allowing every moment to be experienced through the lens of the Divine.

Yet the comprehensive nature of halachah should not be confused with the desire to create a monolithic society in which everyone behaves identically. Indeed, disagreeing is the halachists' favorite pursuit: unresolved arguments appear on each page of the Talmud and halachic code; in fact, there is only one chapter (in over 500) in the entire Mishnah that doesn't contain a disagreement.

While there are, naturally, established processes by which practical decisions are made, halachah might best be described as "organized disorder," a vast array of disagreements built on earlier disagreements. Some view this as an insanely unworkable system; others, me included, consider it to be one of Judaism's greatest strengths. Disorder and multiplicity indicate range and diversity and are actually powerful tools that allow halachah to be applied in a responsive and case-driven manner, rather than as a blunt, insensitive instrument.

For example, there is an ancient dispute between major kashrut authorities concerning the pulmonary condition of cattle. While some overlook certain lesions of the lung, others (notably Rabbi Yosef Caro, author of the Shulchan Aruch) are of the opinion that animals with such lesions are forbidden. This unresolved disagreement broadly manifests itself in a disparity of practice between Ashkenazim (lenient) and Sephardim (stringent). Yet, understandably, many Ashkenazim choose to be stringent.

Another example of this phenomenon is the medieval dispute about the distinction between a private domain, where one may construct an eruv, and a public domain,



Kosher? Sure. But your rabbi might still choose to abstain. Don't take it personally.

where one may not. This disagreement resurfaces throughout halachic literature and influences the approaches of modern experts as to where and how one may create an eruv.

Although there are well-established community norms in almost every area of law, halachah does not offer a single answer to any legal issue, but an array of possibilities within a carefully defined framework. Because of this, halachah is able to deal not just with regular circumstances, but is flexible enough to accommodate emergency shortages, unexpected financial hardship and the needs of the spiritually sensitive.

Despite the intricacies involved, Jewish life is greatly enriched by this multiplicity. Talmudic sources conflict about whether the halachist should incline to leniency or stringency: "the power of leniency is preferable" (Berahot 60a) appears to be contradicted by any number of Talmudic statements. Yet there really is no argument, as it is a given that the rabbi is to be lenient when ruling for others, yet stringent for himself and those striving for spiritual perfection.

After all, his job is to make Jewish life as manageable, enjoyable and uplifting as possible. This demands leniency, where possible, especially when nurturing the spiritual needs of a disparate community. While there are many complex factors, inclu-

sivism seems to me to be critical: given the constituents of a community, a ruling (certainly always based on proper sources and expert advice) must enable as many people as possible to observe their Judaism and feel comfortable within it.

This doesn't always mean being lenient: a stricter ruling will sometimes be more inclusive, but responsible rabbinical leadership must always incline to leniency when regulating public religious services such as butchers' shops. Ill-conceived stringency could result in price increases, restricted availability and fewer people observing kashrut.

The same applies to building an eruv: the advantages of a community eruv are so clear that they outweigh the need to accommodate every halachic view, which might result in not building it at all.

Well-founded leniencies are squarely within the boundaries of halachah; yet this does not mean that everyone will want to rely on them. Halachah accommodates (and even celebrates) a range of practices for different circumstances and there have always been individuals who have elected to follow stringent practices. Yet while it is entirely reasonable for rabbis to adopt personal stringencies, they certainly ought to explain what they are doing and why.

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## Clothes for the road

Before the instruction of "Hachodesh hazeh lachem" established the calendar for the Israelite nation, G-d told Moshe, "Now speak to the people discreetly and let each man request from his friend gold and silver articles. Let every woman make [the same] request of her friends." (11:2)

This instruction follows the assurance G-d made to Moshe at the burning bush (3:21-22), and the promise G-d made to Avraham in Bereishit 15:14.

From the text in our Torah portion, it does not seem that the Israelites acted upon these instructions until later, after the plague of the Death of the Firstborns had taken its toll.

In 12:29-32, the plague takes place, the quite-defeated Paroh locates Moshe to tell him to take all his people and animals and to go worship their G-d as they had been requesting.

In 12:33, the Egyptian people seem to chase the Israelites with an unspoken

"good riddance," with the hope that the source of their misery — the Israelite/Hebrew slaves and their G-d — might not return.

The following verses detail the last things they did before leaving: 34 "The people took their dough before it could rise. Their leftover dough was wrapped in their robes [and placed] on their shoulders." 35 "The Israelites [also] did as Moses had said. They requested silver and gold articles and clothing from the Egyptians." 36 "G-d made the Egyptians respect the people, and they granted their request. [The Israelites] thus drained Egypt of its wealth."

If we look back at the quote from 11:2 (first paragraph above), we see they were not commanded to request clothing. G-d only mentioned gold and silver articles, so how could 12:35 suggest they did as Moshe had told them?



Rabbi Avi Billet

Toldot Yitzchak warns us not to bring proofs from 3:22 when G-d indicated they will be leaving with clothing as well, because that was more of a strategy G-d was aware of than a commandment, the people would ask for clothing to give them more of a chance to delay the Exodus until the morning, rather than be forced to leave at night.

When 12:35 says, "the Israelites did as Moshe had said," Toldot Yitzchak explains, this refers not to their borrowing of items but to the more important command of not leaving their homes until the morning (12:22). Just because Paroh had come out to see Moshe does not mean the danger had passed and that people could come outside.

If their "fulfillment of Moshe's instruction" consisted of staying indoors, where did they get the idea to request clothing? As far as we can tell, the people were never

instructed to request anything other than silver and gold. [Interestingly, Targum Yonatan leaves out the request for clothing in his interpretation of the verse.]

Toldot Yitzchak says there were two groups — "ha'am" — the masses who were unaware of proper protocol and left their homes in the night time when the Egyptians forced them out (12:33), and the "Bnei Yisrael" proper, who knew the rules, and would not budge from their homes until morning came. But as they were being prodded, they began requesting that clothing be brought to them, insisting they could not leave without proper attire.

Thus, those who asked for clothes were not following specific instructions to load up their suitcases, but were using delay tactics to stall until the morning when all of the people would leave together.

How long does it take to decide which jewelry you want to borrow? Not very long. Most people think, "If it is expensive, I'll take it."

Clothing is a different matter. Many people will only take clothing that looks nice on them, no matter how nice the clothing may be. Clothing is more a matter of personal taste than is jewelry.

Now we are left to understand the nature of the requests for the items in question. Commentaries differ, and provide an entire range of interpretations as to whether the Israelites were requesting or "borrowing," seeking compensation or a severance package, taking booty from their defeated enemies, accepting a peace offering for the G-d who defeated Egypt, or even giving cause to be chased after for the final pounding in the Red Sea.

No matter the specific interpretation, it is hard to imagine the word "she'eilah," meaning, "borrow," in this context. In many places in the Bible, a "she'eilah" is a flat out request with no intent to return anything. And in the context of freeing slaves (Bereishit 31, Devarim 15 and Devarim 23), rather than leav-

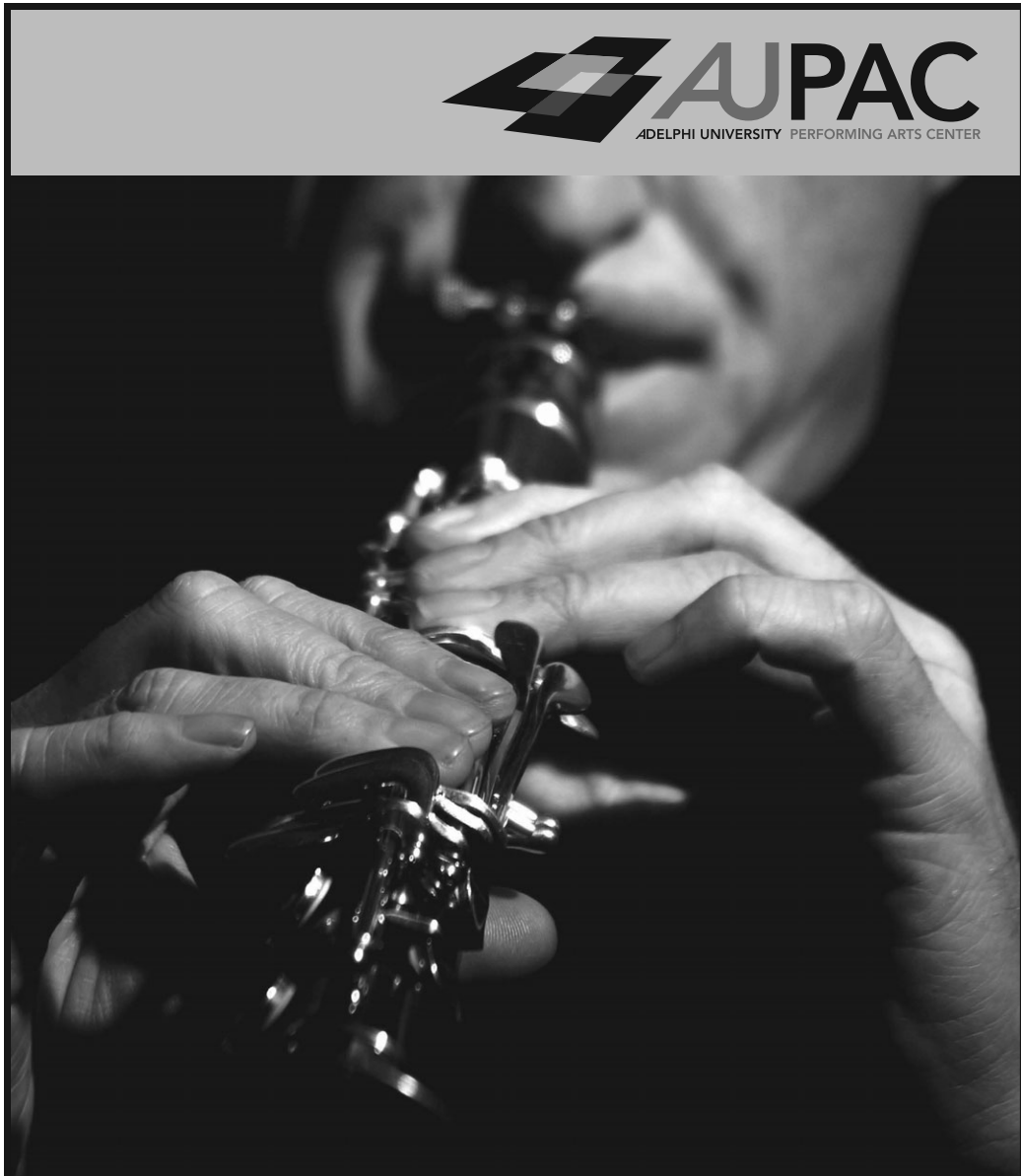
ing empty-handed, a slave is supposed to be let free with compensation for years of labor or toil, minimally with the means to make good on his own in the short-term.

For slaves with meager possessions, wealth is certainly warranted. To provide a sense of dignity, proper clothing is essential. While I don't know what happens in real life, I've seen films in which "rehabilitated" prisoners are release from prison with a business suit to give them a sense of dignity, so they can begin to make a go of their new lives looking like a mentch.

If the clothes really do "make the man" (or woman), then having and wearing nice clothing is an important step in achieving emancipation.

And when those same garments are flattering, yet modest (says Jewish tradition), they certainly help bring out the essence of the person wearing them.

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## Burglary at Chabad of the Five Towns

Chabad of the Five Towns on 74 Maple Avenue was burglarized on Jan. 2, according to police officials who said the burglary occurred sometime during the day. An unknown suspect broke into the building through a rear window and took \$13,000 in cash from desk drawers and \$150 in loose change from a file cabinet.

The investigation is ongoing, according to Detective



Rabbi Zalman Wolowik

Sergeant John Harvey of the Fourth Precinct.

Rabbi Zalman Wolowik, the Chabad shliach said, "despite everything, we are in a wonderful community."

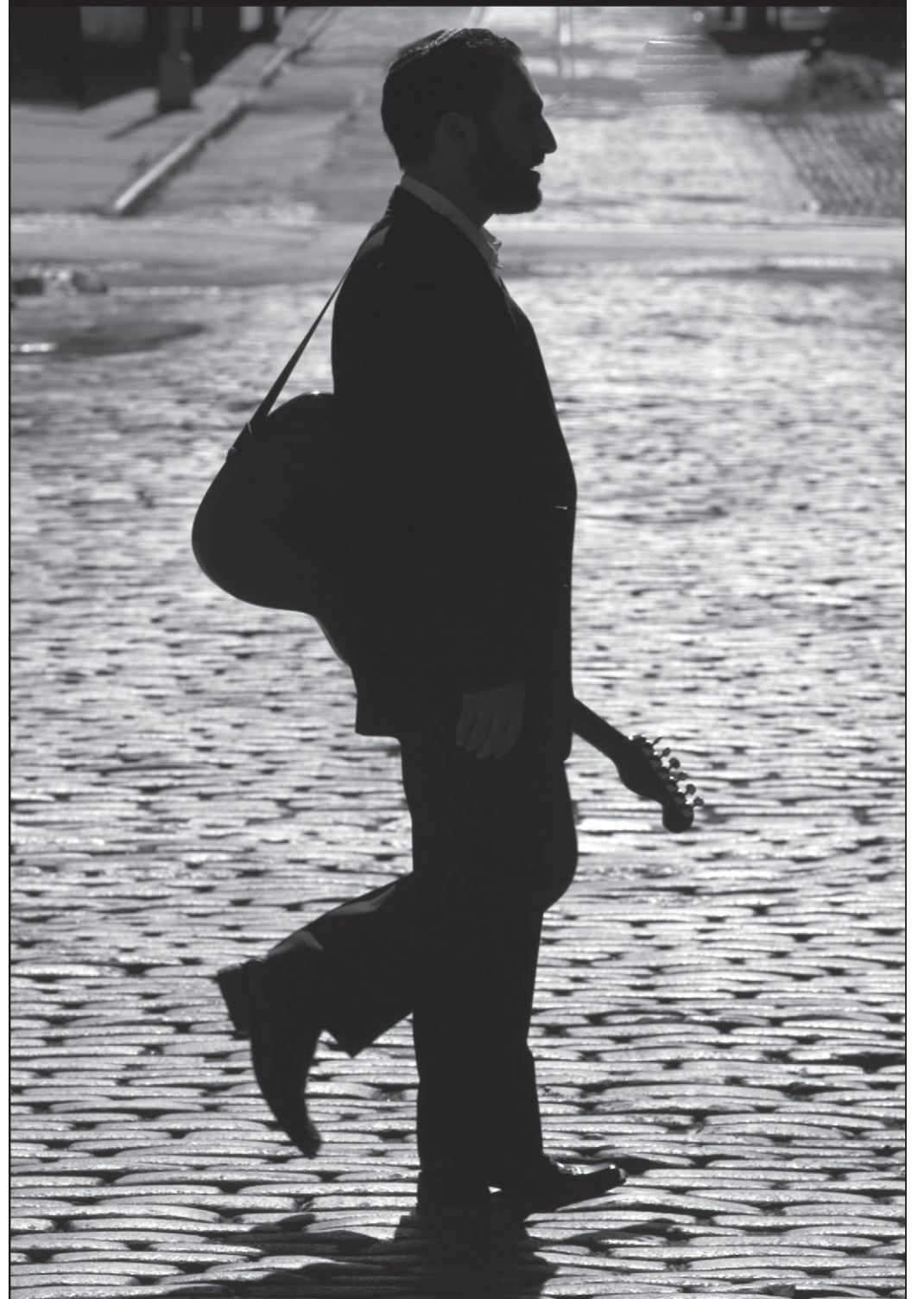
"We were always taught to counteract negative acts with acts of kindness and add light when it seems dark," he said.

"It's sad that it happens, and I'm sure all those who burglarize will be brought to justice."

— Michael Orbach

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# HAITI CLOSE TO HOME

Continued from Page One

was killed in the disaster. One of Desruisseaux's cousins wasn't as lucky. She had been rescued from the rubble, but succumbed to her injuries after doctors were forced to amputate her legs.

They have been glued to CNN since the earthquake.

"My family in Haiti," Desruisseaux said, "No food, no water, no house to sleep in."

On Monday, at HAFTR's annual Siddur Chagigat, where kindergartners are each presented with their first Siddur, Rabbi David Liebttag, the principal, made an impassioned appeal on behalf of the two men and the situation in Haiti.

"The men are so sweet and kind, they are outstanding gentlemen," Rabbi Liebttag explained later in a telephone interview. "One of the things we teach in HAFTR is to emulate the characteristics of G-d we see throughout the Torah. G-d is benevolent and the world was created on the foundation

of righteousness. It's an intuitive response, we don't need a Talmudic explanation for it."

Rabbi Liebttag said they hope to collect money for the church the men belong to, which in turn will donate the money to the Haitian relief effort. A shoe drive is being planned in the school and the monthly charity that the school collects will go to aid Haiti as well.

"It's an axiomatic past and present Jewish teaching," he said.

In the kitchen Tuesday morning, a week after the earthquake, Desruisseaux and Robert were back at work — Desruisseaux slicing a purple head of cabbage and Robert warming up lasagna for the day's lunch. A makeshift pushka fashioned from a plastic container was at the kitchen window with a sign taped to it asking for loose change.

Email comments or questions: [newsroom@thejewishstar.com](mailto:newsroom@thejewishstar.com)



Photo by Christina Daly

Vanel Desruisseaux serves lunch in the cafeteria at Hebrew Academy of The Five Towns and Rockaway on Tuesday.



Working behind the counter, Alony Robert (left) waited for a phone call from relatives in Haiti.

# Doing a mitzvah for a Bat Mitzvah

Forty girls and their families along with the staff of the JCC of the Greater Five Towns gathered to celebrate Emily Wanderer's Bat Mitzvah. As part of UJA-Federation of New York's Give a Mitzvah, Do a Mitzvah campaign, the family organized a basketball tournament at Life

Fitness in Lawrence. Emily's friends were asked to contribute \$36 towards the tournament which was matched by the Wanderer family with all proceeds donated to the UJA-Federation of New York and the JCC of the Greater Five Towns' programs for children with special needs.



The Wanderer family. From left, Mrs. Wanderer, Leslie Wanderer, Emily Wanderer, Jason Wanderer and Josh Wanderer



JCC of the Greater Five Towns Executive Director Rina Shkolnik addresses the crowd.

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TIME FLIES

Tech turns the tables Digital readers, online research and Shabbos clocks

We parents have the difficult responsibility to educate our children, but recently I have noticed the tables have turned. Although we still give advice and direction, both solicited and not, to our nearly grown up children, it has become obvious that I am now learning so much from them.



Miriam Bradman Abraham

I've heard about writers and artists enjoying salons or soirees, inviting their peers to discuss each other's work, give and get critiques, explore ideas, and to become inspired. A similar thing has developed in our home when our young adults gather with their friends. Whether they hang out and jam, share their books, or talk about their professors and assignments, fresh ideas are tossed about quickly and easily. I can barely keep up with the speedy banter, techno speak and slang as well as political and social commentary. I wonder how and why some speak so fast, and how they multi-multi task? Sometimes being slow to understand it all causes me to retreat as I remember my age, but I have found my kids to be fairly patient as they fill in the gaps in my knowledge. They are excited to discover and share the wealth of new ideas and I get the benefit.

I remember studying computer science in the late 70's. Dinosaur age information now, but at the time it was cutting edge (with jobs available for all). I'd come home late at night after spending hours loading giant reels, punching cards and reading printouts in the computer room with my bleary eyed fellow programmers. When I explained to my dad the intricacies and logic of PL/1, Cobol and Assembly language, he was all ears and it was mutually fun to share my new world with him. Today my dad is computer illiterate, leaving my mom to do the emailing and Googling. He decided virtual contact is beyond him since he won't pursue something he can't understand. He still thinks fondly of his old typewriter and I'm so grateful that my dad agreed to use a cell phone before giving up on new technology. His generation has lived through so many big and small changes that we take for granted: television, frequent flying, ATM banking, etc... I wonder about the constant onslaught of

new innovations. At what point will my generation decide we cannot absorb any more newness?

Not so long ago, I couldn't picture having the generation gap with my kids that I had with my parents. My parents are immigrants from Cuba, and their parents were immigrants to Cuba and the U.S. from Poland, so the three generations had significant clashes of culture and of the different historical times. Having grown up in New York like my kids I didn't anticipate any cause for real adversity, other than disliking some of the noise, er, music that they enjoy. But now I begin to see that at some point it will be rapid technological advances that will cause the gap. I depend on Google, Wikipedia and MapQuest for answers, Facebook for some social networking, and e-mailing is a huge part of my life, but I don't know if I'll ever adjust to reading digital books (I still haven't heard an audio book), and all the upcoming technologies we can't even begin to imagine.

In the meantime, I'll continue to listen closely to my kids as they explain what they're thinking and learning and accept the good. I will, as my parents do, exercise my right to respectfully comment or even disagree. I fervently wish to continue a life-long vibrant discourse with the next generation. I hope that will keep me young and inspired and prevent me from falling into the gap.

Miriam Bradman Abraham is Cuban born and Brooklyn bred. Currently writing her immigrant father's memoirs, she is a reviewer for Jewish Book World and chairs Hadassah Nassau Region One Region/One Book, in addition to serving as Hewlett Hadassah editor, webmaster and Book Fair Coordinator.

The Jewish people have been referred to as the people of the Book not just because of their dedication to Torah study but for other reasons as well. It has often been reported that Israel publishes more books per capita than virtually every other nation. Book publishing and the high literacy rate among Jews are often cited as reasons for the



Michael J. Salamon

growth of technology in Israel and the large number of Jewish Nobel Prize winners. Yet, the publishing world in general is changing and it is no longer considered a growth industry. Except for some limited areas and topics, book sales are flat at best. There are important new trends taking place in book publishing, however. The Hachette group, for example, has a wildly selling series of fiction on the topic of vampires. They recently announced an initiative to use more recycled paper, to help conserve as many as 275,000 trees.

Amazon.com, which now owns and markets the Kindle digital reader, does not announce exact sales figures for this relatively new device but there are strong market indicators that sales are higher than anticipated. Sony has introduced a new digital reader similar to the Kindle. Sales are not as high as the Kindle but the growth of its market share seems to be a given. Many people received one of these devices last month as a Chanukah gift. And why not? You can download an entire text, including Hebrew, on to one of these readers in just a few seconds for as little as one third the cost of purchasing an actual book and there is no worry about killing trees or storing books or filling large bookshelves that take over a room.

During my graduate years I was trained to do in depth research and library research was included in that. There was something special about going to the stacks to search out rare references, finding the appropriate microfiche and collecting the information. The University library had rare books, old journals and stacks of information that could take hours to get through, even with the aid of a librarian or two. I know that I am dating myself but I miss that just a little. When I need to do this type of detailed archival research now, I do it digitally. I have been working on a research paper for a professional journal and need some highly specialized references. In just a few minutes online I can access the University library and all the affiliated libraries, and for a small yearly fee I have access to Journals, books, research and position papers and dissertations going back, in some cases, over 70 years. Google.com is attempting to put all books online and even now there are many that can be accessed.

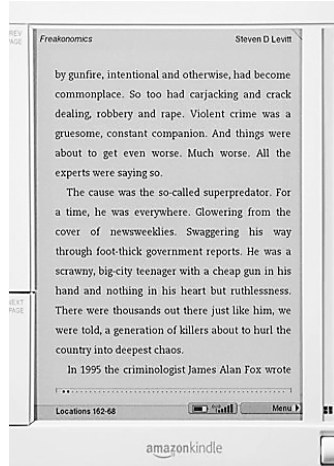
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device. If I sound excited it is because I am and I do not even have one of these new devices yet. I am waiting for the next generation device, which will likely have a foldable screen and fit easily in my pocket, and have a larger choice of crisper fonts, so that I do not have to wear my reading glasses.

There are also negative aspects to all technological advances. In an article in The Atlantic in 2008 writer Nicholas Carr made a strong case that the use of the Internet, particularly Google-type search engines, is making us stupid. What he is really suggesting is true and that is that this new technology is causing us to view symbols, particularly the symbols we use to read and reason with, in new ways, which may be "dumbing us down." The actual activity of doing archival research caused our brains to create new neural pathways. This no longer happen when the same material can be accessed online with a few keystrokes. This activity is isolating. The social environment becomes increasingly restricted if we use our keyboards, smart phones and readers to find our way in the world. But the technology is here and we will adapt, just like the world adapted to electricity and motorized vehicles.

There is one additional area that I wonder about. When all books are available on line or in reader formats the technology will come up hard against Halacha. Will we find a way to use a "Shabbos clock" to activate our Kindles or will we have to download everything in advance for days when such devices are off limits? I can't wait to see.

Dr. Michael Salamon, a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, is the founder and director of the ADC Psychological Services in Hewlett, NY. His recent books include Every Pot Has a Cover: A Proven Guide to Finding, Keeping and Enhancing the Ideal Relationship, published by Rowman & Littlefield.





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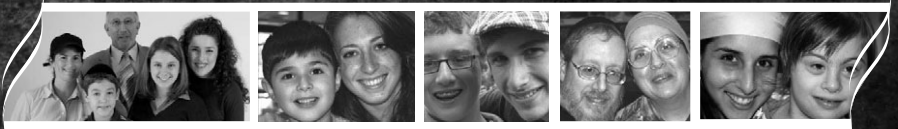
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## RELIEF EFFORT UNITES JEWS IN COMMON GOAL

Continued from Page One

learned from his rebbe, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, at Yeshiva University. In 1967, a tribe in the southwestern province of Nigeria seceded to form the independent Republic of Biafra. What followed was a devastating civil war that left three million Nigerians dead. Under the tutelage of Rav Lichtenstein, Rabbi Billet recalled a morning spent at the Isaiah Wall near the United Nations, at a protest rally in support of Biafra.

"[Rav Lichtenstein] said we have to go to the rally," Rabbi Billet explained by phone. "It was the dead of winter; we davened vasikin [prayed at sunrise]; we ate breakfast; we had shiur from eight-thirty to ten-thirty and then we traveled down to the UN."

"The demonstration was not a very successful one. But the memory of it lingers with

me," Rabbi Billet recalled in his email to shul members. "Rav Lichtenstein impressed upon our impressionable souls that a Jew must care about all of mankind and must reach out to help those who are suffering regardless of race or religion. The Jewish people should know better than anyone about the deafening silence of the world during the terrible times of Jewish suffering."

According to Michael Geller, media relations manager at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the total effort has raised over \$1.5 million for Haiti relief so far. The funds will be used to purchase medical supplies and equipment such as infant incubators for the Israel Defense Force (IDF) units in Haiti who set up the first functioning field hospital there after the earthquake, including operation rooms and sophisticated medical imaging. The JDC funds will

also be used to buy medical supplies for the non-government organization, Heart to Heart. The Joint will also work with the Afya Foundation to supply basic necessities like mattresses and sleeping bags.

"Since the beginning of JDC's history it's been involved in relieving humanitarian crisis; Jewish tradition especially tikkun olam continues to guide the work we do today," Geller said.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice president of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, also was raising funds for the JDC.

"It comes from our tradition we have always looked beyond our own community to the people in need. There is a long historical precedent for it. It's not always appreciated. We don't do it for what we get for it, we do it because it's the right thing to do," Hoenlein said.

The crisis has also prompted a strong response in more right-of-center Orthodox communities in Flatbush, Borough Park, Crown Heights and Monsey, all near or next door to neighborhoods with large Haitian populations.

On Wednesday, the day after the earthquake, Agudath Israel of America sent an email to its members exhorting them to donate to the relief effort.

"Jews are rachmonim (merciful), and so we feel for the suffering of others. And so it is only natural that Jews should want to do something to try to ease the suffering of survivors of natural disasters," explained Rabbi Avi Shafran, Agudath Israel's director of public affairs.

He also stressed a lesson to be learned from the tragedy.

"Even more important is that we react with personal introspection and determination to be better people ourselves. In 1923, when there was a large earthquake in Japan, no less a personage than the Chofetz Chaim reacted with visible shock, undertook to fast and insisted that the tragedy should spur all Jews to repentance."



Photo by Catherine Laine

Emergency workers treat an earthquake survivor at a makeshift aid center in Haiti.

In a meeting between Jewish and Haitian community leaders in Brooklyn ten computers were presented for use by the Haitian community to respond to the disaster, as well as communication equipment such as satellite phones, according to Chaskel Bennett, a member of Agudath Israel's board of directors. Other pledges of clothing and goods are forthcoming as well, he said.

The event was spearheaded

by Assemblyman Dov Hikind and Congresswoman Yvette Clark.

"The Jewish response to the pain of others is legendary and today's gathering is a continuation of the special heart the Jewish community always shows in times of crisis," Clark said at the gathering.

Hamodia, a daily newspaper that is a strong voice in the Charedi community, offered \$10,000 worth of free advertising to the relief effort.

Yosef Rapaport, the newspaper's director of political and community affairs, said that it was a decision made by the publisher, Ruth Lichtenstein, who lost relatives in the Holocaust.

"Tragedy and suffering hurts," he said. "I'm thinking we don't have any excess space to splurge around but it seems so obvious and poshut (simple); the Jewish thing to do in such a time."



Photo courtesy IDF

Lt. Col. Dr. Avi Abergel, the Israeli medical team's gynecologist, holds a newborn delivered in Israel's mobile field hospital in Port au Prince.

### How to help Haiti

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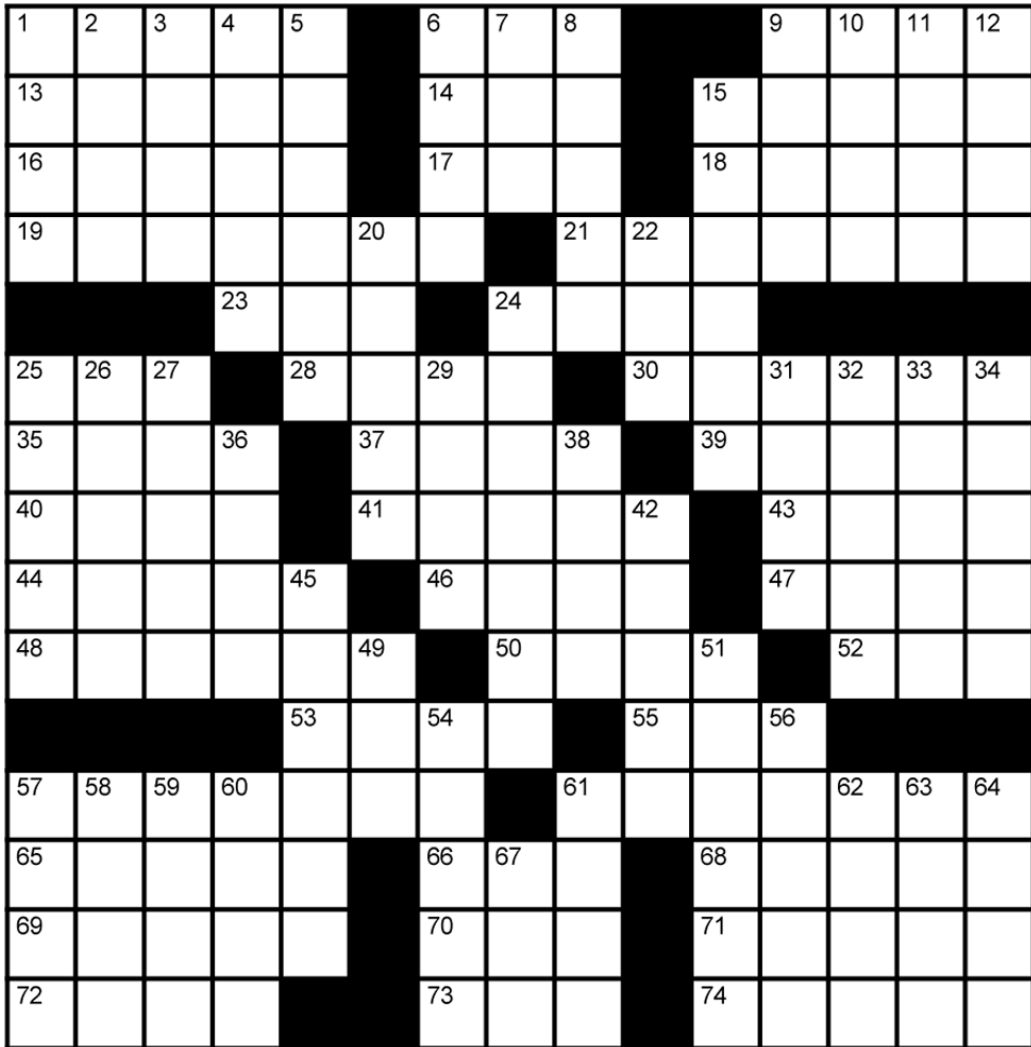
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# The Jerusalem Post Crossword Puzzle



BY DAVID BENKOF

### Across

1. Novelist Jong
6. Federations org.
9. Talon
13. Showing fidelity
14. Friday night candles number, often
15. 1990s movie star Pauly
16. Put off
17. Point an Uzi
18. Patriarchs' living quarters
19. German-Jewish Nobel laureate Paul
21. Blonde movie star of "I'm no Angel" (1933)
23. \_\_\_ of Galilee
24. He wrote about Augie
25. Many Holocaust survivors
28. One way to show displeasure
30. Pituitary and adrenal
35. Steve Israel (D-N.Y.) and Sander Levin (D-Mich.)
37. Journalist Frey
39. Talmudic opinion-holder
40. Second in a blessing
41. "\_\_\_ round" (game show segment)
43. Hitler quality
44. New York Times, MSNBC and others
46. Romantic comedy screen-

- writer Ephron
47. \_\_\_ Schechter (JTS branch in Israel)
  48. Philosopher Hannah ("Eichmann in Jerusalem")
  50. Blacklisted comic Mostel
  52. NYC neighborhood where the Tenement Museum is located
  53. Moses Isserles of Cracow
  55. Rainbow shape
  57. Jewish legal tradition outside the Mishnah
  61. Calculates
  65. Comedian Lenny ("Dig: I'm Jewish.")
  66. Chicken \_\_\_ King
  68. Heavens location
  69. Archaeologist Yigael
  70. Permit
  71. Month before 3-Down
  72. "The Mummy" actor Fehr
  73. First lady
  74. Smell

### Down

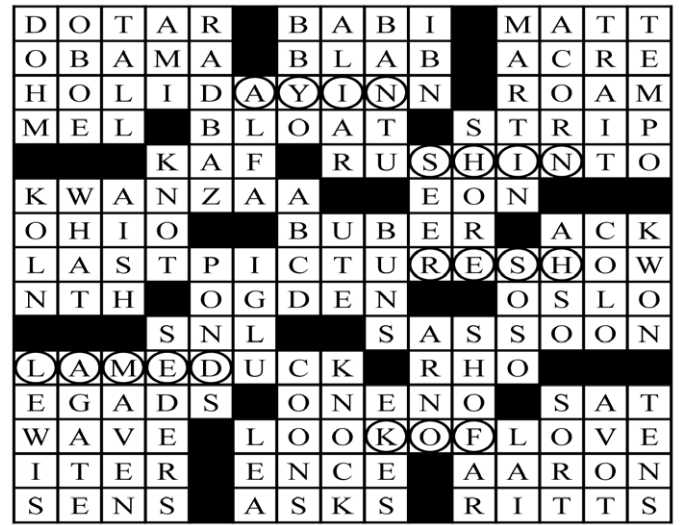
1. Otherwise
  2. "Goodbye Columbus" writer
  3. See 71-Across
  4. Reads the Bingo numbers
  5. Iran and Syria, e.g.
  6. Provo state
  7. Formerly BBW
  8. Pause
  9. \_\_\_ the scenery
  10. Like the star on Texas's flag (or Israel's)
  11. Acting and painting
  12. "Go \_\_\_ , young man!"
  15. The \_\_\_ Adler Studio of Act-
20. One of the Biblical "spies"
  22. Mo. that often overlaps with Elul
  24. Philosopher Benedict (Baruch)
  25. Wendy Wasserstein specialty
  26. "Cosmic '60s" artist Max
  27. It keeps four diamonds from being a flush
  29. Synagogue ark
  31. Word of agreement after a blessing
  32. "The Yiddish Policemen's Union," e.g.
  33. Get-go
  34. Specials at Neiman's
  36. Shalom starter
  38. "Susan G. Komen for the \_\_\_"
  42. Abram's wife
  45. "The Pianist" actor Brody
  49. Ninth in a series
  51. Features of many Reform temples
  54. \_\_\_ Adumim
  56. Three-dimensional
  57. AZA plus BBG
  58. City on the border of the Negev and Judean deserts
  59. Insulting
  60. Amino \_\_\_
  61. It may be tempted
  62. "A \_\_\_ is a..." (Gertrude Stein quote)
  63. Jaron Lowenstein's twin brother
  64. Dispatched
  67. Russian-Jewish author Levanda

Answers will appear next week

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| W H H S        | 0  | 12 | .000  |

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|             |   |    |      |
|-------------|---|----|------|
| FLATBUSH    | 9 | 2  | .818 |
| M T A       | 9 | 2  | .818 |
| HESCHEL     | 7 | 4  | .636 |
| MAGEN DAVID | 6 | 4  | .600 |
| SHAARE T    | 5 | 6  | .455 |
| OHR HATORAH | 2 | 10 | .167 |
| T A B       | 0 | 10 | .000 |

### WEST DIVISION

|               |   |   |      |
|---------------|---|---|------|
| RAMAZ         | 9 | 1 | .900 |
| FRISCH        | 8 | 1 | .889 |
| R T M A (JEC) | 6 | 3 | .667 |
| HILLEL        | 5 | 4 | .556 |
| KUSHNER       | 2 | 7 | .222 |
| S A R         | 1 | 7 | .125 |
| T A B C       | 1 | 9 | .100 |

### GIRLS VARSITY A

#### EAST DIVISION

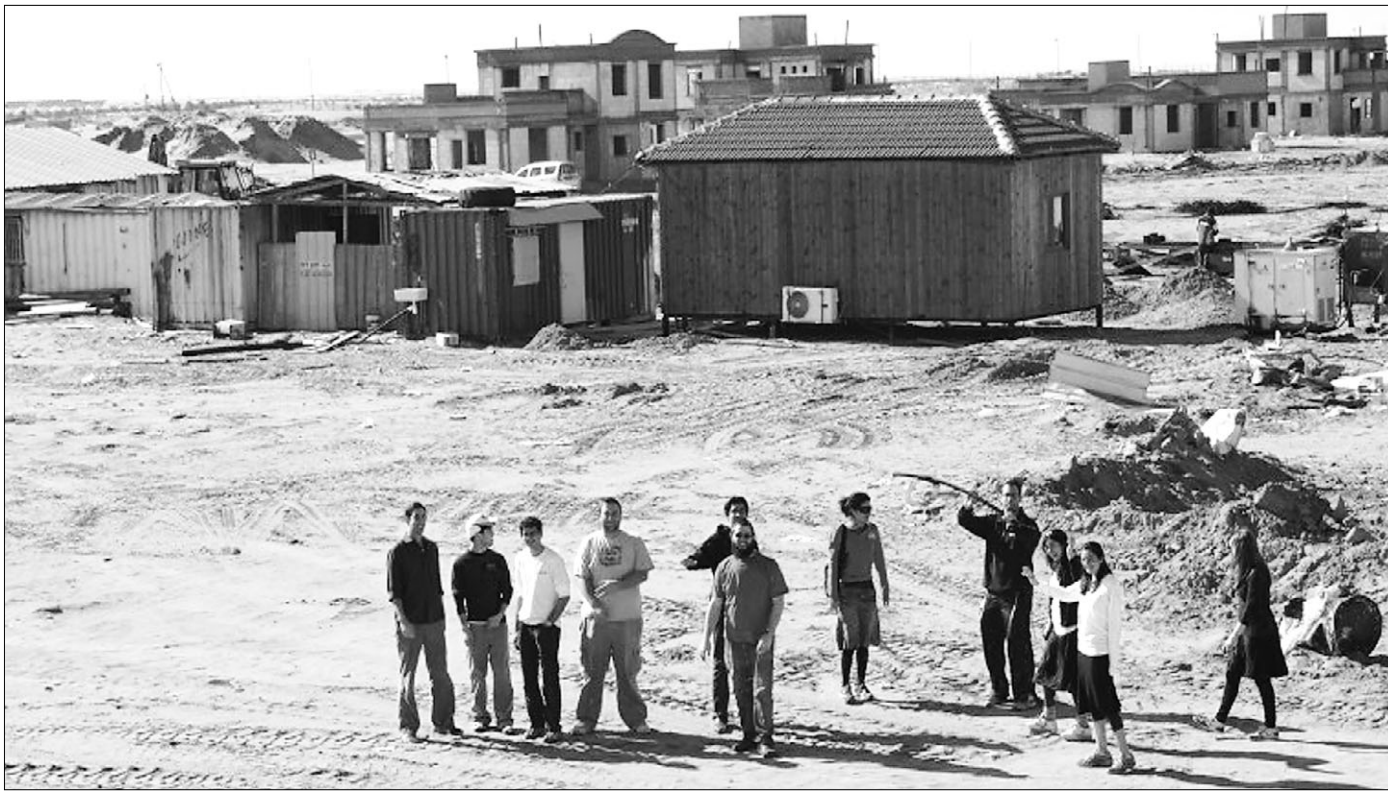
|             |   |    |       |
|-------------|---|----|-------|
| HAFTR       | 9 | 0  | 1.000 |
| NORTH SHORE | 6 | 2  | .750  |
| HESCHEL     | 6 | 3  | .667  |
| FLATBUSH    | 5 | 4  | .556  |
| CENTRAL     | 2 | 8  | .200  |
| H A N C     | 0 | 11 | .000  |

#### WEST DIVISION

|          |    |   |       |
|----------|----|---|-------|
| S A R    | 10 | 0 | 1.000 |
| KUSHNER  | 6  | 3 | .667  |
| MAAYANOT | 4  | 5 | .444  |
| RAMAZ    | 3  | 4 | .429  |
| BRURIAH  | 3  | 5 | .375  |
| FRISCH   | 2  | 4 | .333  |
| HILLEL   | 0  | 7 | .000  |

### GIRLS VARSITY B

|             |   |    |      |
|-------------|---|----|------|
| BRURIAH     | 7 | 1  | .875 |
| S K A       | 6 | 1  | .857 |
| MAGEN DAVID | 6 | 3  | .667 |
| I L A N     | 7 | 4  | .636 |
| MAYHS       | 4 | 7  | .464 |
| SHULAMITH   | 3 | 7  | .300 |
| BAT TORAH   | 0 | 10 | .000 |



Photos courtesy Yeshiva University

Quest participants toured Israel for a week after the more academic portion of the leadership development program.

# Rebuilding Gush Katif

YU leadership trainees raise \$22,000

BY THE JEWISH STAR STAFF

13 college students raised over \$22,000 for Gush Katif.

The students were part of the Quest fellowship program run by Yeshiva University over two college semesters with the goal of training the next generation of Jewish leaders. The first semester of the program was devoted to helping students gain a broader understanding of Jewish leadership. Students learned how to give speeches and learned about teamwork from an ex-NFL star.

During the second semester the students were given a far harder task: become a Jewish leader by raising over \$20,000 for the Jewish National Fund (JNF).

The students were divided into two groups. The first ran a comedy night at the Schottenstein Cultural Center which raised over \$4,000 for the JNF. When a second event, a battle of the bands, among high school students failed to pan out, the second group turned to individual fundraising.

"It became a little scary," explained Sippy Laster, a Queens College alumni who joined the fellowship. "But as we progressed we kept on building up the numbers. It was a lot of connections; Facebook was utilized, we had a webiste that tracked our number; it became half-collaborative."

After the money was collected, the group decided to give the money to Shulamit, an undeveloped town that is part of the Chalutza collective com-



Members of Quest work the soil. From left: Yoni Reisman, Reuven Turgel and Sippy Laster.

posed of Gush Katif refugees.

"In ten years it'll be a community," said Laster.

Afterward the program ended the group spent a week in Israel visiting different cities and towns far off the usual tourist stretch, including Sderot, Yeruchan, and Be'er Sheba.

In Be'er Sheba the group painted the wall of an apartment building; in Sderot, the

group toured the indoor playground.

"We planted a garden for kindergarten kids, we cleared fields and picked peppers for charity," explained Sammy Steiner, a junior at Yeshiva University from Lawrence. "We met the people with the vision and the drive to make that miracle happen, and their example will continue to inspire me."

# 'HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE'

Continued from Page One

for Chapter of the Year. Her house was constantly bustling with high schoolers congregating for a Friday night meal or a Saturday oneg.

Nowadays, Shapiro is often away at NCSY shabbatons. Despite increasing involvement in NCSY, and moving from Chapter President to Vice President of Education for Long Island NCSY, she still keeps up with her many other extracurriculars, such as her positions as captain of the college bowl team and section editor of her school newspaper. Shapiro has a lot on her plate, but she's used to being busy. "I'm involved in everything. I've the vice president of the honor society, and I try to be involved in as many things as possible," Shapiro explained. "People know they can count on me."



Miriam Shapiro

about simple things like washing before eating to complex issues like shomer negiyah and how you define who is Jewish, and, thanks to NCSY, I was prepared to give answers," Shapiro said.

Shapiro wants to pursue a career as a Judaic Studies teacher, enabling her to share her love of Torah Judaism and passion for kiruv with others. Rabbi Steven Burg, National Director of NCSY, has worked with Shapiro for three years, and said that she "was head and shoulders above everyone else" who attended the annual Leadership Boot Camp retreat. Shapiro won the respect and admiration of her peers and NCSY staff, who chose her to be National President. "She's a pleasure, a real leader and a total role model," Burg said. "As a passionate young Jewish woman, she's second to none."

Shapiro credits her success to her parents, who were both heavily involved in USY when they were young. They pushed Shapiro to get involved in NCSY and go after leadership positions. "Without them as my role models, I wouldn't have been able to get to the point where I am right now," said Shapiro.

Her favorite part of traveling is witnessing the different approaches that each region takes toward its programming. The highlight of her travels was attending Yarchei Kallah, an annual public school shabbaton in which five days of winter vacation is spent learning and having fun. "Every single person was connecting to Judaism and Hashem, and that was inspiring to me," said Shapiro. "I was fortunate to see that, especially because I come from a yeshiva."

On Friday night, Shapiro visited each region and introduced herself, getting "nothing but a warm welcome."

NCSY has been good training for further work in kiruv for Shapiro. As a participant in Write On for Israel, a program that trains high school students to be activists for Israel on college campuses, Shapiro found herself answering questions about Orthodox Judaism posed by her peers. "At every meal they would sit and ask questions

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SLICE OF LIFE

# Pomegranates

BY EILEEN GOLTZ

Let me get this out of the way before I go any further: pomegranates, while delicious, good for you in so many ways, and truly a wonderful addition to any dish, can really be a pain in the posterior to peel. Ok, not really technically difficult, mind you, just a pain or should I say, stain. There, I said it, now I can get on with the rest of the column.

This time of year is prime time for utilizing the ruby red, jeweled pomegranate front and center on all your menus. This kind of ugly looking fruit (before it's peeled) is native to Persia (Iran to the modern minded), and is considered one of the oldest fruits known to man.

Once you get past the bazillion seeds and weird white membrane that holds them together you have beautiful seeds that produce a tangy, sweet, full flavored juice that becomes the basis for sauces and marinades and drinks and desserts and anything else you can think of to add them to. It is equally at home with sweet and savory flavors and is just about perfect as an accent or garnish on salads or main courses.

When choosing your pomegranate pick one that seems heavy for its size; you want it to be approximately the size of a large softball. Pomegranates' color ranges from reddish yellow to a deep dark red. The color and blemishes on the skin aren't an indication of the freshness or sweetness of the fruit; it just looks that way. Pomegranates will stay fresh for up to a week if left out on the counter or for up to three months if you refrigerate them.

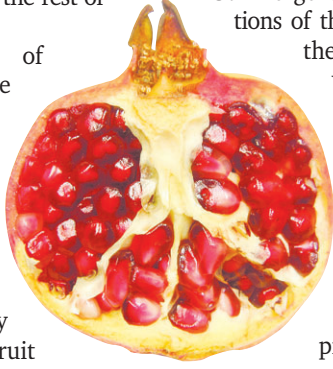
Peeling a pomegranate isn't rocket science but it does take some prior planning. To get the seeds out you will need a sharp knife and a large bowl of cold water. First slice off the top and the bottom of the pomegranate. You can either score the skin as you would an orange before you peel it or cut it into quarters (be careful of the juice; it stains).

Submerge the whole or sections of the pomegranate in the bowl of cold water and peel away rind or gently pull the seeds out of the sections while it's underwater. Break into sections, and pull seeds from the pith with your fingers. Drain seeds in a sieve and throw away the pith. Be sure to drain well.

Some recipes call for pomegranate molasses or pomegranate syrup. The molasses is just a cooked down, thicker version of the syrup. This stuff is really first-rate foodstuff, as pomegranate juice contains vitamin C, A, E, folic acid and is full of anti-oxidants. It's yummy and oh, so good for you. For your culinary convenience you can buy the fresh fruit, juice, syrup and/or molasses in most grocery stores these days. If you can't find the molasses you can substitute the syrup.

And finally, I can answer the age-old questions: to spit or not to spit, and do you eat the seed inside or spit it out? Well, the truth of the matter is that it doesn't matter; you choose. Know, however, most of the fiber associated with the fruit comes from the seed. It won't hurt you and you'll hardly even know it's there.

One medium pomegranate should yield 1/2 to 3/4 cup of whole seed pips or 1/2 cup juice.



## SALMON WITH POMEGRANATE (fish)

- 2 teaspoons coriander
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- Salt, as needed
- 1 pomegranate, seeded
- 1/2 cup sliced green onion
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped jalapeno pepper or to taste
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 avocados, diced
- 1 head hearts of Romaine, about 7 ounces
- 4 center-cut Salmon fillets the same thickness, 6 to 7 ounces each
- 1 lime, cut in eighths for garnish

In a bowl combine the coriander, sugar, and 1 teaspoon salt and set it aside. Up to 4 hours before serving, in a bowl combine the pomegranate seeds, onion, lime juice, jalapeno, and garlic. Mix to combine and gently fold in the diced avocado. Cover with plastic wrap, making sure it's tight against the surface of the salsa to prevent discoloration of the avocado and store in the refrigerator. Remove about 30 minutes before serving.

Separate the romaine leaves; wash, then dry thoroughly. Reserve 4 of the most attractive leaves for garnish. Slice the remaining leaves crosswise in thin shreds; reserve.

Preheat oven to 500. To prepare the salmon, rub a generous teaspoon of the seasoning mixture over each piece. Arrange the salmon on a baking sheet, skin-side down. Roast for about 11 minutes for medium rare (salmon should be spongy when pressed with a finger at its thickest part) and 13 minutes for medium-well (salmon should be just firm when pressed with a finger at its thickest part).

While the salmon cooks, mound 1/4 of the shredded romaine on each of 4 serving plates. Top with 1/2 cup salsa. When salmon is done, let it cool slightly - it should be warm but not hot. Put a piece of salmon on each plate; garnish each with a reserved romaine leaf and 2 lime wedges. Makes 4 servings.

Modified from Pomegranate

Council web site

## POMEGRANATE PEARS (pareve or dairy)

- 3 firm pears, peeled, cored and cut in half
- 1 cup pomegranate juice
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- Vanilla ice cream or whipped cream (optional)

Preheat oven to 350. Arrange the pears, cut side down, in a 9x13 glass baking dish. In a saucepan combine the pomegranate juice, water, lemon juice, cinnamon, and cloves. Heat to a simmer and then pour the mixture over the pears. Bake, basting frequently for 35 to 45 minutes or until pears are tender. Serve the warm pears with ice cream or whipped cream, drizzling the sauce over the top. Serves 6.

## POMEGRANATE MARINATED LAMB KABOBS (meat)

- 1 cup pomegranate juice
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons oil
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 1/2 lbs. boneless lamb shoulder cut into 1-1/2 inch cubes
- 4 skewers
- cooked rice or couscous
- pomegranate seeds

In large bowl, stir together pomegranate syrup, oil, lemon juice, salt, pepper and garlic. Add lamb and stir to coat. Cover and refrigerate at least 6 hours.

Drain the marinade from the meat (reserve the marinade) and then divide the meat equally between the 4 skewers. Preheat the oven to broil. Thread meat equally on skewers. Place the skewers on a broiler pan. Cook, turning often every 5 minutes, and basting with marinade until meat is well browned, about 10 to 15 minutes. Serve on a bed of rice or couscous and garnish with the pomegranate seeds. Serves 4



Submitted by Conrad and Lisa Braxton Toronto Canada

## APPLE AND POMEGRANATE SALAD (pareve)

- 1 pomegranate, seeded
- 2 apples, chopped
- 2/3 cups chopped pecans
- 3 cups shredded romaine lettuce
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 small red onion diced
- 2 tablespoons of orange juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 tablespoons oil

In a salad bowl combine the pomegranate, apples, red onion, pecans, lettuce and celery. In another bowl combine the orange juice, oil and honey and whisk them together. Drizzle the dressing on salad and toss to coat. Serves 4

## POMEGRANATE WALNUT CHICKEN (meat)

- 4 chicken breasts bone-in, skin removed
- 1/4 cup pomegranate syrup or juice
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 cup panko bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup finely chopped walnuts
- salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a baking sheet with sides. In a bowl combine the pomegranate syrup with the cinnamon, ginger

and cumin. Marinate the breasts in the liquid for 10 to 15 minutes. In a bowl combine the breadcrumbs, walnuts, salt and pepper. Press the breasts into the panko mixture and then place them on the greased cookie sheet. Drizzle a little of the syrup on top of each breast and bake for 40 to 45 minutes. Serves 4.

Modified from about.com

## CHICKEN AND POMEGRANATE COUSCOUS (meat)

- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup couscous
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons chopped pistachios
- 1/4 cup pomegranate seeds
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cups cooked chicken, cut into bite sized pieces (great use for leftovers)

■ 1 cup canned garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed  
■ salt and pepper to taste  
Boil the water and add the cinnamon, olive oil and salt. Stir in the couscous, cover and remove from the heat. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes. Place the couscous in a large bowl and fluff it with a fork. Add the parsley, pistachios, chicken, garbanzo beans, lemon zest and pomegranate seeds. Mix to combine and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serves 4 to 6.

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The North Shore Hebrew Academy High School semi-finalists, from left: Allen Sachs, director of research and special academic programs; Solomon Swartz, Sarah Ditchek, and Joshua Pfeffer.

## Three Intel semifinalists for North Shore Hebrew Academy

BY JEWISH STAR STAFF

Three seniors at North Shore Hebrew Academy High School are semifinalists in the 2010 Intel Science Talent Search competition. Sarah Ditchek, Joshua Pfeffer, and Solomon Swartz were all winners in the prestigious competition that is open to high school seniors across the country. The contest draws over 1500 applicants for 300 slots. This year only two other regional yeshivot placed in the competition: Ramaz in Manhattan, and Ma'ayanot in Teaneck, NJ, each had one apiece.

"We're right up there all with the top Long Island research programs," said Allen Sachs, North Shore Hebrew Academy High School's director of research and special academic programs.

Ditchek developed a new method of measuring hurricane recurvature, which determines the path a hurricane will take. Her interest in extreme weather began when she was a kindergartener watching the Weather Channel, she said.

"By high school, my interest in hurricanes became a passion," she explained via email.

She spent eighteen months studying 58 years of hurricane data to develop a more reliable way of predicting hurricanes. She hopes that the new method will help to save lives and admits she was "speechless" to learn that she is a semifinalist.

"I was elated that I had made a significant contribution to the scientific community," she said.

Pfeffer won for his work on the Kahler-Ricci flow, a theoretical mathematics concept used in String Theory, whose complexity is far beyond the scope of this article. Swartz developed a thermal responsive hydro gel that could be used in breast reconstructive surgery after lumpectomies.

Swartz said that the goal of his project was to develop a gel whose molecular structure would be altered via radiation so that the gel would solidify during chemotherapy. The project is still in the "in vitro" stage and will be followed by more testing before it can be readily available.

Swartz said he was "very optimistic" about the possibilities for the gel.

Each semifinalist won \$1,000 with North Shore Hebrew Academy High School receiving a matching grant. This is the first time that North Shore has had more than one semifinalist. In two weeks, the semifinalists will be whittled down to 40 finalists who will present their research in Washington, DC for a chance to win over \$630,000 in prize money.

Ditchek has been accepted early decision into Yale University and plans to major in earth science and meteorology. Swartz will be attending the eight-year medical program at Brown University and Pfeffer is currently undecided, but plans to enter the field of mathematics research.

Most of the research for the student projects was completed over the last two summers.

"Instead of summer camp and having a good time they go to university and have their fun doing incredible science research," said Sachs.

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# New commentaries on the Book of Exodus

As in past years, a number of high quality new commentaries and translations are newly available on the Book of Exodus. I will attempt to briefly describe two works that deserve your immediate attention because of their unique manner, style and importance.



Alan Jay Gerber

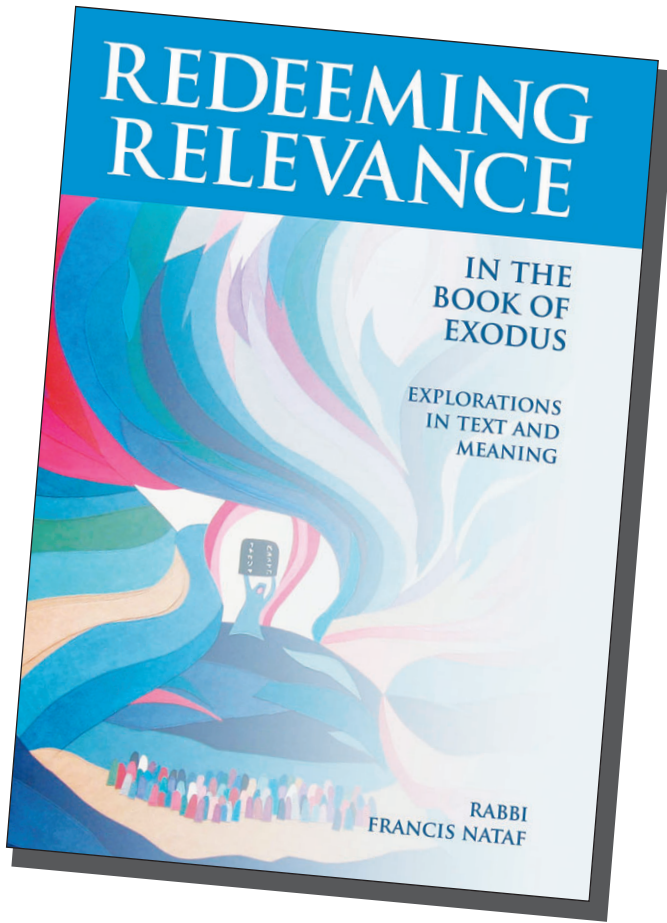
"Redeeming Relevance In The Book Of Exodus" [Urim Publications, 2010] by Rabbi Dr. Francis Nataf is the second of a projected five-volume series on the Chumash. Consisting of an introduction and seven in-depth essays that are thematically linked to the various episodes in the Biblical text, Dr. Nataf successfully explains the events, locales and personalities of the Exodus experiences with sophisticated detail that treats the engaged reader with respect.

The introduction, entitled "The Conversation with G-d," sets the tone for the entire book. Dr. Nataf recreates the mindset of the Exodus experi-

ence, and the reality of the Egyptian civilization within the historical context of the Jewish people's spiritual existence. He seriously considers the impact of Egyptian thought and mores upon the Jews' worldview. This fac-

tor was to play itself out in the numerous lapses that the Jewish people experienced during the desert journey, all attributed to the pagan influence of Egyptian culture. Other essays deal with the meaning of Egypt as the crucible and cradle of Jewish nationhood and the influence it had in nurturing Moshe's leadership skills as the Jewish people evolved from pagan slavery to monotheistic-based freedom.

One very unique chapter in this book deals with the family relationships that Moshe enjoyed with his siblings. This nurturing family experience was in marked contrast to the experiences of the patriarchs Yitzchok, Yaakov, and Yosef, whose sibling hostilities dominated the



early chapters of the Bible. This relationship is enhanced by Nataf's treatment of Moshe's father-in-law, Yitro,

who had a prominent role in assisting Moshe in his governance of the people. Daunting as this experience was for the

untutored Moshe, Yitro's advice was crucial in making Moshe's leadership effective for the remainder of the most difficult 40 years ahead.

Rabbi Nataf is the educational director of Jerusalem's famed David Cardozo Academy and he is a musmach of Yeshiva University. Dr. Nataf is a proud ba'al teshuva, a fact that he deals with at some length within the context of this volume. In the chapter dealing with exile, alienation and the Jewish mission, Nataf states in rather sharp tones the way that religious Jews regard those who come to religious observance later in life. This segment deserves careful reading by all who hold dear the concepts of ahavat Yisrael, and achdut Yisrael, for within these two concepts lie the integrity and future of the entire Jewish people.

Rabbi Nataf has delivered in this slim volume a most eloquent, traditional, yet modern, Bible commentary. He clearly defines and expounds upon the communication between man and G-d as an

essential component to our physical and spiritual existence.

Another commentary series that is progressing this year is Rabbi Avraham Davis's historic translation of the Sifsei Chachomim, the classic supra-commentary on Rashi. As noted in previous reviews, Rabbi Davis is a special treasure within our community and we should appreciate his continued presence among us, especially within the Shor Yeshuv yeshiva community.

On a personal note, my friend and neighbor, Eli Singer, sponsored this particular Chumash, partially in honor of his father, Rabbi Dovid Singer of blessed memory, the late Rav of the First Congregation Anshei Sfard of Borough Park. Rav Singer was a dear and long-time friend of mine, a close civic supporter of my efforts of many years on behalf of yeshiva parents and children, as well as of frum public school staff in south-western Brooklyn. His faithful chizuk was crucial and his memory is deeply cherished by me. T'hei Zichro Boruch.

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### Letter to the Editor

#### Open Letter to New York's Jewish Community

To the Editor:

On behalf of the Gift of Life Bone Marrow Foundation, we thank you for supporting our efforts to find a match for Alan Cohen. When word went out that Alan was battling leukemia and needed a bone marrow transplant, the Jewish community responded in force. Alan's friends, family, and complete strangers around the world, more than 25,000 strong, answered the call and marched to

his rescue by joining the Gift of Life registry. Each donor was hoping to be the miracle match he needed.

Unfortunately, no match was found. Alan lost his fight with leukemia at the end of December. No words can adequately convey our sincerest condolences to Alan's loved ones, friends and colleagues. We hope cherished memories of Alan will sustain and support them during this difficult period. Over time they should find comfort knowing that one of Alan's legacies will be the lives saved as a result of the thousands of people tested during his struggle. At this time, eleven matches have already been

found for patients in need. And, we are confident that many more patients will benefit from the donors who registered on behalf of Alan Cohen.

The Gift of Life's vision is simple: a match anytime, anywhere for anyone. If you were not able to attend one of the recruitment drives, please honor Alan's memory by joining the Gift of Life Registry at [www.giftoflife.org](http://www.giftoflife.org).

Thank you for continued support and helping us save lives.

JAY FEINBERG  
Staff & Volunteers

Gift of Life Bone Marrow Foundation

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**Nine brides,  
nine grooms**

*Claire Kamhi Hachnassat Kallah Fund gears up for busy few months*

BY MAYER FERTIG

Nicole Gleitman is not a caterer but between now and April 11, she plans to make nine weddings. Three will be in Israel.

In her sister's memory, she runs The Claire Kamhi Hachnassat Kallah Fund, which used to operate the Claire's Treasures thrift shop in the Five Towns.

After a two-year hiatus from fundraising during which she relied on private donors, Gleitman is looking for assistance to share her mitzvah of preparing deserving young couples to build a Jewish home together.

"Due to these difficult economic times, the number of young couples in our community who are in need of financial support has increased dramatically," she wrote in a fund raising e-mail last week.

To help a couple marry, including the wedding and setting them up in an apartment furnished with necessities, "soup to nuts," is \$15,000 to \$20,000 — "and that's not a lot of money," Gleitman said.

With that said, she is very careful not to spend scarce Tzedakah dollars on couples that are looking for help with extra materialism, as she put it.

"The fund helps people who truly need the help," she stressed.

An important exception is providing a nice hotel room for newlyweds to spend their wedding night. Gleitman considers that a priority, when possible.

"To me, on the first night of your marriage, you have to really feel good about the step that you took, and if you walk into a yucky apartment, you can't feel good about a good start," she explained.

The Moroccan-born, Paris-raised Gleitman speaks perfect French, so it was not difficult for her to strike up a conversation with Isabelle, the young Frenchwoman who did her hair in a Miami salon several



Isabelle plans to marry in Israel in early February.

months ago.

Gleitman invited her to dinner and heard her story about the boy in Israel who she broke up with over distance, despite both feeling a connection.

The next week she paid for the young woman to accompany her to Israel where the couple became engaged by the following weekend. Gleitman plans to make their wedding at David's Citadel Hotel on Feb. 7, one of three weddings she plans to make during the trip.

Six weddings being assisted by the Claire Kamhi Hachnassat Kallah fund will take place locally over the next few months.

One will take place at the Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst with the assistance of young men and women who attend the Davis-Renov-Stahler Yeshiva High School for Boys (DRS) and Stella K. Abraham Yeshiva High School for Girls (SKA).

The girls will make a Shabbos Kallah, a shower and a sheva brachot, as well as build the chupah and print the invitations. The boys will be the wait staff (catering by Mauzone) and will arrange music, flowers and photography.

"We just have a lot of weddings and no money," Gleitman laments.

Mail tax-deductible checks to Claire's Treasures at 128 Willow Road, Woodsburgh, NY 11598. E-mail or call: [gleitmom@aol.com](mailto:gleitmom@aol.com) or (516) 650-0498.



Photos courtesy Nicole Gleitman

Rabbi Dovid Pinto (right) will perform Eric and Isabelle's wedding Feb. 7

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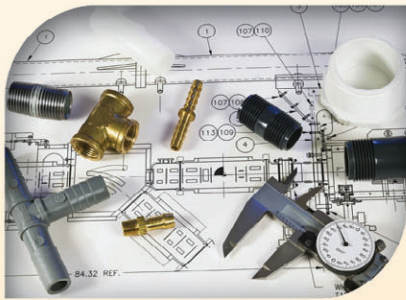
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