

Chai~Lights



October 2008

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Keys Jewish Community Center

P.O. Box 1332 • Tavernier, FL 33070 • 305-852-5235 • keysjewishcenter.com

October 2008

2 Tishrei - 2 Cheshvan

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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5	6	7	8 Erev Yom Kippur Kol Nidre	9 Yom Kippur Yizkor Service	10 <i>Gene & Mort Silverman</i>	11
12	13 Erev Sukkot	14 Sukkot	15	16	17 <i>Toby & David Goldfinger</i>	18
19	20 Hoshana Rabba	21 Shemini Atzeret	22 Simchat Torah	23	24 6:30 Service Yizkor <i>Sofy & Mark Wasser</i>	25 Bereshit
26	27	28	29 Rosh Chodesh	30	31 <i>Patty & Jeff Schocket</i>	

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President's Message Steve Steinbock



As I write this message, S'lichot is a week away. Ike passed us by with no real problems (Thank G-d). Not so for Texas & Louisiana. Carol and I traveled to a surprise birthday party in New York for a lifelong friend, where we felt the last remnants of Hanna, then came home just as Ike passed us by.

We have had no trouble making a minyan on Friday nights this summer. Soon our snowbirds will return to fill the sanctuary.

I wish to thank Alan Beth for endless work on Ritual matters, including organizing all the services during the High Holy Days. In addition, Alan has been working on programs needed to retrieve the data for our Yizkor Book and monthly Yartzeit letters, not to mention continuing work on the overall KJCC database.

Our 25-year-old building has been giving us problems: electrical, air-conditioning and various varmints seeking shelter from the heat. A hearty thanks from all of us is owed to Jim Boruszak, who shoulders the problems alone since Marty's death. He's doing an awesome job keeping things working smoothly.

Thanks also to Marc Bloom for his hard work keeping the Onegs going during the summer. We always have coffee—leaded

and unleaded—plus a nosh waiting after services. He has done a great job.

On a sad note, we lost a long-time friend, member and big supporter of KJCC with the passing of Jerry Spero. He will be missed, on many levels.

Sunday school is back in full swing. We look forward to seeing the children return.

I hope you're all enjoying the new Member Directory. If you have any corrections or changes, please send an e-mail or call and let me know if you want it sent out to all members.

We are working on this year's Yizkor Book, which will be at KJCC on Yom Kippur. If you will not be here and want a copy mailed to you, please e-mail me as soon as possible and I will have it sent when we get it.

I have an idea for an Adult Education series for our members, which could include digital photography, basic computer skills, and, if anyone is interested, Carol has volunteered to talk about powers of attorney, living wills and last wills and testaments. Please e-mail me with ideas on other subjects you would be interested in.

Steve

Kristallnacht Event

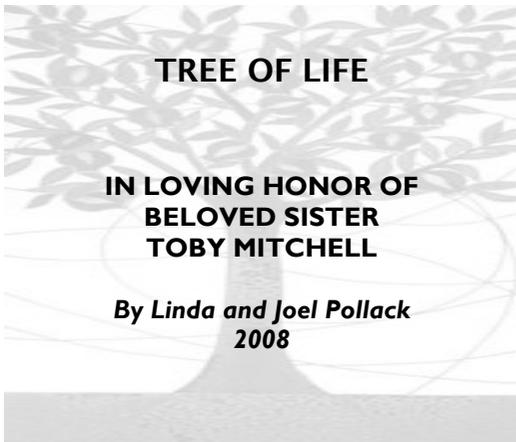
November 9th, 2008 will mark the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht, and all over the U.S. and in Europe individuals and organizations are busy preparing activities to commemorate the event.

On that night at the The Mishkenot Sha'ananim conference center, Jerusalem, Israel, which is a project of the Jerusalem Foundation, they will be lighting a symbolic artistic display resembling a destroyed synagogue, planned for 8 p.m. Israel time. The German and Austrian Ambassadors to Israel will be present, as well as Israeli V.I.P.s.

At the same time synagogues in Germany and Austria, as well as in other countries of Europe, will turn on their lights and even add extra spotlights directed at the synagogues. The synagogues will remain illuminated all night.

With the time differences, it will still be daylight in America, but the display at Mishkenot Sha'ananim will remain lit all night long and will be lit again every evening of that week, November 9-13.

The Holocaust committee is planning an event for Kristallnacht Day at the KJCC and we will try to tie it in with the activity of Mishkenot Sha'ananim in Jerusalem.



October Anniversaries

Years

2nd	Barbara and Paul Bernstein.....	14
2nd	Arlene and Jonathan Line.....	32
12th	Susan and Harvey Schwaid.....	56
15th	Toby and David Goldfinger.....	49
23rd	Suzanne and Michael Gilson.....	7
28th	Lois and David Kaufman.....	29
31st	Judith and Harvey Klein.....	54

Remembering Jerry Spero

Jerry Spero, who died in September, was a long-time member of the KJCC. In fact, he was almost an original member. Jerry was not well known by all of us as he very rarely attended services or other functions, but he was one of our most philanthropic members. Whenever we needed something, he would be there. He was always one of the first to give to any cause our synagogue needed. Jerry and his wife Arlene (who passed away several years ago) lived in Coral Harbour Club for over 25 years. Jerry was an avid fisherman and he fished three times a week on his 44-foot Cabo, named the *Ar-Jay* after his wife and himself. He and the captain of his boat, Ron Law, were two of the best reef and bottom fisherman in the Keys. It was always a treat to be invited to fish with him, as he was a gracious host. Several of our present and past members, including myself, would be his guest from time to time aboard the *Ar-Jay*. Jerry liked to dine out at the local restaurants and would always have a large group of friends with him. Those of us who knew him will miss him and those who didn't know him missed a true Keys personality.

-Jim Boruszak

Hebrew Class Reminder

The Ulpan class Level II will begin on the evening of Thursday, October 2nd. Level I Beginners will begin on the afternoon of Friday, October 3rd. Advanced Class Level III will start after Yom Kippur on Thursday, October 16th.

BOOK PLATE

In Loving Memory Of Muriel Jacobson

*By Her Husband, Children and
Four Grandchildren*

So, Where Ya From?

Chai-Lights would like to do a Thanksgiving feature in the November issue. We're looking for stories of how you or your family made the "pilgrimage" to the United States. Are you recent immigrants, or have you been here for generations? Who was the first in your family to land in the "New World?" What brought them here? It can be a story, or just a line or two. Please send any submissions to chailights@keysjewishcenter.com, or if you prefer, send it to the KJCC address, P.O. Box 1332, Tavernier, FL 33070.

YARTZEIT PLAQUE

Remembering Our Amazing Dad, Joel Cohen

Forever in our hearts
Missing your blue eyes when we said the
"Shema" each Shabbat,
Grateful for everlasting memories of you with
our children, your grandchildren,
great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and their
children.
We pray for your eternal rest with our beloved
MommaShane, Sara.
We are so very blessed to be your children.

*Sheila & Richard...
And all your Mishpucha*

Ongoing Projects

General Donations - can be earmarked to our various ongoing funds; e.g. Holocaust Education Fund, Scholarship Fund, Sara Cohen Memorial Tzedukah Fund, or General Fund. Honorarium and memorial cards can also be requested. Call Linda Pollack 852-8575.

Gift Shop - We have many lovely gift and holiday items on hand and can special order for you as well. Contact Joan Boruszak 852-0833.

Sunshine Committee - If you know of any member who should receive a get-well, congratulations or condolence card from the Center, call Rene Rose, 852-3959.

Cemetery Information - If you wish to plan for the very distant future, you can reserve space at the Kendall Mt. Nebo Cemetery in the KJCC section. Call Bea Graham, 852-0214.

Picture Postcards - We have beautiful picture postcards bearing the Millard Wells representation of the KJCC, which was commissioned by Sisterhood. Quantities can be packaged to fit your needs and mailed to you or your gift recipient. The price is \$36 per hundred but we will sell lesser quantities. Contact Joan Boruszak, 852-0833.

Oneg Shabbat Sponsor - To schedule your special date with Sisterhood, call Joyce Peckman, 451-0665. **KJCC Tree of Life Leaves and Rocks, Sanctuary Seat Plates, Yartzeit Memorial Plaques, Bookplates for Siddurim.** Call Linda Pollack to arrange your donation, 852-8575.

JNF Trees in Israel - A gift of a tree, or two or more, makes a long-remembered way to honor a loved one, a relative, a friend or an occasion. Both Israel and the KJCC benefit. Call Bea Graham, 852-0214.

Chai-Lights Mitzvah - Place a greeting or notice in Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 852-8575, to make your donation.

Advertisement in Chai-Lights - Your business ad will appear in every issue of Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 852-8575, for the low annual rates.

Call the names listed above for assistance or send your request and check to the KJCC, P.O. Box 1332, Tavernier, FL 33070. Recipients of your gifts will be notified by card and listings will appear in Chai-Lights as well.



KJCC GIFT SHOP



NEED CARDS? NEED GIFTS?

COME TO THE KJCC GIFT SHOP FOR ALL YOUR NEEDS!

WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

HOUSE GIFTS

BAR AND BAT MITZVAH GIFTS AND CARDS

WEDDING GIFTS AND CARDS

YARZEIT CANDLES-ELECTRIC AND NATURAL

plus JEWELRY, MEZUZAHS, SEDER PLATES, MATZOH SWEEPERS,

CHALLAH PLATES, CHALLAH KNIVES AND MORE

If you do not see what you want, we can order it for you. Call Joan Boruszak 852-0833

In Memoriam October 2008

In Memory Of

STEPHEN BERMAN

By Robert and Sylvia Berman

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

**GERTRUDE WIDLAN**

By Norbert Birnbaum

~~~~~

In Memory Of

MILTON BOXER

By Shirley Boxer

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

**SHAUL HADID**

By Bill and Freda Ferns

~~~~~

In Memory Of

NATALIE FIELD

By Alvan and Carol Field

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

**ARNOLD WIDRICH**

By Joseph and Susan Goldberg

~~~~~

In Memory Of

JOSEPH ELSON

By Bea Graham

In Memory Of

FANNY ELSON

By Bea Graham

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

**LILLIAN GOLDENBERG**

By Bea Graham

~~~~~

In Memory Of

PEARL W. HUROWITZ

By Melvin Jacobson

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

**STANLEY W. JACOBSON**

By Melvin Jacobson

~~~~~

In Memory Of

MURIEL JACOBSON

By Melvin Jacobson

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

**LEAH KAMELY**

By Michal Kamely

~~~~~

In Memory Of

REBEKAH LEVY

By Michal Kamely

In Memory Of

ESTER M. KLEIN

Harvey and Judith Klein

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

**ELIZA CHRISTENSEN**

By Kurt and Nancy Kluger

~~~~~

In Memory Of

FANNIE SEROTT

By David and Shifra Kossman

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

**IRENE BECKER**

By Teresa Kwalick

~~~~~

In Memory Of

JACK LIPPMAN

By Lillian Lippman

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

**REUBEN OSHINSKY**

By Gerald Oshinsky

~~~~~

In Memory Of

RANDI WITTLIN WEISS

By William and Eileen Perman

In Memoriam October 2008

In Memory Of

DAVID FRANK

By Joel and Linda Pollack

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

## ROSALYN ROSE

By Skip and Rene Rose

~~~~~

In Memory Of

BERTHA KAUFMAN

By Linda Rutkin

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

## DAVID C. STARK

By Sid Samuels

~~~~~

In Memory Of

MAURICE SINGER

By Lee Schur

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

## MORTON I. SINGER

By Mary Lee Singer

~~~~~

In Memory Of

SOLOMON FELDER

By Stuart and Geri Smith

In Memory Of

IRA BRUCE STEIN

By Irving Stein

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

## HERBERT MESSINGER

By Shelby Streaan

~~~~~

In Memory Of

ROBERT WOLF

By Edward and Sherry Turney

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

## HERBERT S. WEIHL

By Alfred and Sue Ann Weihl

~~~~~

In Memory Of

SARAH WERNICOFF

By Donald and Nancy Zinner

~~~~~

*In Memory Of*

## DORAN DAVID ZINNER

By Donald and Nancy Zinner

~~~~~

In Memory Of

LEAH KAMELY

By Michal Kamely

October Birthdays

Michael Gilson.....	2nd
Michael Krissel.....	4th
Eric Pollack.....	5th
Joel Bernard.....	6th
Dan LaGrotte.....	7th
Matthew Kaufman.....	9th
Cynthia Arsenault.....	11th
Olivia Landes.....	11th
Benay Krissel.....	12th
Salomon Terner.....	13th
Paul Friedman.....	14th
Alan Field.....	15th
Matthew A. Silverman.....	15th
Jacqlyn L. Burnett.....	16th
Ronald Kaplan.....	16th
Kiersten Persoff.....	16th
Stacey W. Seewald.....	17th
Barbara Knowles.....	20th
Alexander L. Burnett.....	21st
Sammy Knowles.....	21st
Michael J. Sundheim.....	21st
Susan Roberts.....	22nd
Marnie Gershowitz.....	24th
Stacy Temkin.....	24th
Jane B. Kwalick.....	29th
Shyella Mayk.....	29th
Adriana Sherman.....	29th
Patricia Silver.....	29th
Franklin Greenman.....	30th
Katie J. Schur.....	30th
Susan Cooper.....	31st
Brittany Schur.....	31st



Thoughts on Yom Kippur, Prayer and Changes

Our High Holidays are about prayers and praying; about *teshuvah*, repentance, *vidui*, confession, *ashma*, transgressions, *slichot*, forgiveness and atonement.

In an article in the Jerusalem Report, Dr. Jeremy Benstein of the Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership writes about Yom Kippur in Israel, about prayer and changes. He thinks that while the Yom Kippur inside an American synagogue may be similar to the Yom Kippur inside an Israeli one, the Yom Kippur outside is very different. Yom Kippur in Israel is by popular choice a "car-free day," when the entire environment is transformed, and the normally car-choked streets are returned to the people. Though only for one day, there is less pollution, less noise, and a feeling of community. The city becomes a village again, as people walk and children ride bikes, enjoying one another and their surroundings in ways that are impossible during the rest of the year.

So on Yom Kippur, says Benstein, we create an urban environment that makes us all fellow citizens: "we celebrate commonality and trust, not competition and selfish consumption." This commonality is expressed in the traditional prayers on Yom Kippur. "Despite the emphasis on personal soul-searching and *teshuvah*, the main features of the liturgy, such as the oft-repeated *vidui*, confession, and the *Avoda* service, are all phrased in the plural." One reason for this is

to reinforce our empathy for other people. Sharing our imperfect humanity with one another through collectively praying comforts us. Bernstein thinks that it also encourages us "to pardon others seeking forgiveness for their wrongs against us."

"Moreover," writes Benstein, "there are collective transgressions that require a shared process of atonement and remediation." He refers to threats to justice and well-being of our society that are the result of "environmental sins" (like over-consumption and pollution), and that need to be changed economically and through the political system.

In Benstein's opinion, the *Unetane Tokef* prayer, "with its heartrending passages on who will live and who will die, who by fire and who by water, who by hunger and thirst, and who by poverty," should move us to action to change those "fates" created by societal injustice. Prayer may not change the world, he thinks, but it can change people, who themselves change the world.

As Heschel remarked: "In a free society, only some may be guilty, but all are responsible.If you can stop your household from sinning, but do not, you are responsible for the sins of your household. If you can stop the people of your city from sinning, but do not, you are responsible for the sins of the city. If you can stop the whole world from sinning, and do not, you are responsible for the sins of the whole world" (Tractate *Shabbat* 54b).

Keys Jewish Community Center



The most celebrated musical of all time and the longest running musical worldwide, Actors' Playhouse proudly produces the first regional production of Cameron Mackintosh's 3-time Tony Award winning musical theatre masterpiece at the Miracle Theatre. Les MisÈrables is an epic saga of social injustice. Full of passion and the triumph of the human spirit, Les MisÈrables recounts the struggle of the French people during the late 1800's. No matter how many times you've seen Les MisÈrables, its heart-wrenching ballads and powerful ensemble will make for an extraordinary experience for the entire family.

Sunday, March 15, 2009 ♦ 2:00 pm

Donation \$35

Call *Bea Graham* for tickets
and information 852-0214

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



Preparing for War

Two major hospitals in Israel, Haifa's Rambam Hospital and Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv, are building underground facilities in the event of another war. Built by the British 70 years ago and situated between two naval bases, Rambam Hospital became a target for Hezbollah missile attacks during the Israeli-Hezbollah war two years ago. It had no proper bomb shelters and some 20-30 rockets landed nearby, too close for comfort. Most of the hospital wards had to be moved to an underground parking garage and some departments, including the emergency room and intensive care units, couldn't be moved at all and were left totally exposed.

Both Rambam and Ichilov plan to use their new underground facilities as parking lots in peacetime, but they can be converted to 650-bed facilities within 48 hours. (*CNSNews.com, 9-3-08*)

Ambassador Shalev

Gabriela Shalev has begun her term as Israel's first female ambassador to the United Nations. She served as a law professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and was a visiting professor at a number of international institutions, including Harvard and Boston College. Shalev succeeds Dan Gillerman, Israel's U.N. ambassador since January, 2003.

(*World Jewish Congress, 9-9-08*)

I'll Take the Cash, Thank You.

The Blumberg Family Jewish Community Services of Alabama, which was launched in June, is offering as much as \$50,000 as an incentive to Jewish families willing to relocate and help repopulate the Jewish community of Dothan. Families that stay in Dothan for five years and become active in the local

synagogue do not have to repay the grant. According to the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, southern states have seen a growth in Jewish population although recent trends are showing young people leaving small towns and moving to larger cities such as Atlanta. (*www.jta.org, 9-9-08*)

A Monument Long Overdue

After a visit to Amsterdam, where he saw a monument honoring homosexuals killed in the Holocaust, Tel Aviv city councilman Itai Pinkas contacted Ron Huldai, Tel Aviv's mayor. Pinkas was so moved by the monument that now Tel Aviv is going to have Israel's first memorial to gay victims of the Nazis.

Under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, homosexuality was outlawed in Germany in 1871. The Nazis took it one step further and, according to Yad Vashem historian Professor David Bankier, about 100,000 homosexuals were arrested and 10,000 to 15,000 were sent to concentration camps. They had to identify themselves by wearing a pink triangle. All victims were males, because at the time, legal persecution applied to gay men and not lesbians.

"In Israel the Jewish aspect [of the Holocaust] is so powerful, that other aspects have been put aside. This is a very good first step." The memorial is scheduled to go up in Gan Meir by mid-winter.

(*Jerusalem Post, 5-15-08*)

Henryk Mandelbaum

Henryk Mandelbaum, one of the last survivors of the Auschwitz "Sonderkommando"

unit, has died at the age of 85. This unit of Jewish prisoners was forced to empty the gas chambers. Mandelbaum claimed to have witnessed the killings of an estimated 300,000 Hungarian Jews over the course of only two months. After the war he gave guided tours of Auschwitz and spent decades teaching young people about what happened during the Holocaust. (*World Jewish Congress, 6-18-08*)

“For My Father”

On June 28th, the Israeli film, “For My Father,” won the People’s Choice Award at the annual Moscow Film Festival. It’s the story of a would-be Palestinian suicide bomber who falls in love with an Israeli girl, estranged from her Orthodox family. Made by Israeli filmmaker Dror Zahavi, the film is a joint Israeli-German production. The 10-day Moscow festival featured 16 films and, after the screening of each film, the audience was asked to rank the movies on a scale of 1-5. Of all the films, “For My Father” received the highest rating: 4.7. The film festival, founded in 1959, is widely considered one of the ten most important annual events in film screenings. (*www.haaretz.com, 6-29-08*)

Salonika Excavation

The remains of a historic Greek Jewish cemetery are in danger of being disturbed due to construction of a new underground train in Salonika. The cemetery dates back to 1492 when Spain expelled its Jews and 20,000 of them found refuge in Salonika, a small Greek town. The cemetery was one of Europe’s largest, with more than 300,000 graves when it was destroyed by the Nazis in 1942. During the Holocaust, most of Salonika’s Jewish population, about 50,000 Sephardim, were killed by the Nazis. (*www.jta.org, 7-1-08*)

A Gift That Keeps On Giving

With Kassam rocket attacks almost a daily event, the Israeli city of Sderot, located just over half a mile from the Gaza border, is under siege. The residents of Sderot number

over 20,000, with 3,000 of them school-age children. According to recent studies, 75 percent of these children suffer from PTSD including severe anxiety, sleep disorders and nightmares, loss of appetite and trouble in school. Children in kindergarten have no outside play time because when the sirens go off, they only have 15 seconds to seek shelter. Because of this, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) is planning to build the largest indoor playground in Israel. In this all-inclusive Indoor recreational Center, children will have approximately 20,000 square feet of state-of-the-art play park equipment, interactive skill games, a small soccer field, volleyball court, and rock climbing simulation as well as three therapy rooms to help children suffering from trauma. (*www.jnf.org, 7-2-08*)

Elie Wiesel’s Day in Court

In a San Francisco hotel in February, 2007, Eric Hunt allegedly attacked and dragged Elie Wiesel out of an elevator in an effort to force the 79-year-old Nobel Peace Prize Laureate to deny the Holocaust and to declare his Holocaust memoir “Night” to be a work of fiction. Hunt was arrested at a New Jersey mental hospital after he boasted about his role in the incident on a web site. Hunt pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity to charges of attempted kidnapping, false imprisonment, battery, elder abuse, stalking and a hate crime. Wiesel took the stand and during direct examination stated, “[The Holocaust deniers] are not only unfair and unjust, but they are ugly. I don’t know how to respond to ugliness...” He went on to say, “To negate someone’s memory is a violation of that person’s humanity.” Hunt was found guilty and faces up to three years in prison. (*World Jewish Congress, 7-24-08*)

Australia’s Book of the Year

Geraldine Brooks’ “People of the Book,” a novelization of the true story of the preservation of the famed Sarajevo Haggadah, has been named Australia’s Book of the Year. Brooks, a Pulitzer Prize-winning former Middle East correspondent for the Wall Street Journal, said she was inspired to write the

novel in the aftermath of the war in Bosnia. The heroine of the book is an Australian rare books expert who is asked to conserve the 14th century manuscript, believed to be the oldest Sephardic Haggadah in the world, surviving both the Nazis and then, fifty years later, the Serbian shelling of Bosnia. On permanent display in the National Museum in Sarajevo, the Haggadah is appraised at more than \$700 million. (www.jta.org, 6-16-08)

Digitized Torah

A project to digitize the Torah as downloadable sound files was completed by a group from the Music Programming department at New York's Union of Reform Judaism just before Shavuot, the holiday celebrating the giving of the Torah to Moses at Mt. Sinai. In a few months, the project will become available, allowing people to download, for free, all 5,845 verses in the Torah to their digital music players. Twenty-three Reform cantors and cantorial students from the New York area recite all the Torah and Haftorah portions using the same musical tones, to provide listeners with a standardized version of Torah chanting. (www.jta.org, 6-13-08)

Hot "Potato"

Three weeks ago, a tiny little novel with a cute title –The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society—started storming best-seller lists, and driven largely by word of mouth and a sweet back-story, it now has over 200,000 copies in print. The novel, which follows the WWII- era exploits of a Nazi-foiling book club(!?), was begun by Mary Ann Shaffer but finished by her niece, Annie Barrows, after Shaffer got sick. Sadly, Shaffer died in February before seeing the success of her work. And now, Hollywood producer Paula Mazur and Florida bookstore owner Mitchell Kaplan, a rather unlikely partnership, have secured the movie rights. "The story is about (a book club), so it's nice to keep the movie within the family of book-sellers," Barrows says. "I hope Mary Ann is up there watching all this, and taking pleasure in it." (*Entertainment Weekly* 8-29-08)

A Polanski/Ratner Joint Production

Jewish filmmakers Brett Ratner and Roman Polanski recently embarked on a road trip through Poland, when Polanski surprised his friend Ratner by suggesting they visit the concentration camp where Polanski's mother perished during WWII.

Ratner, director of movies such as "X-Men 3" and a Miami Beach native, says, "Little did I know Roman was going to take me to Auschwitz on an incursion through his Jewish history. Roman's mother perished at Auschwitz."

Ratner assembled a photo journal of the trip to the former concentration camp, and it appears in the current issue of *Heeb* magazine, which Ratner is also guest editing. (*IMDB.com* 9/1/08)

"Adam Resurrected" To Big Screen

The acclaimed 1968 novel "Adam Resurrected" has been made into a critically praised feature film starring Jeff Goldblum.

Goldblum, who is Jewish, spent over a year researching the role of Adam Stein, a pre-war nightclub performer driven mad by the loss of his family in the Holocaust. By the time film viewers meet him in an Israeli insane asylum in the 1960s, Stein can still dazzle a crowd and can seduce a pretty nurse half his age. But he has lost nearly everything that really matters to him: his family, freedom and sanity.

Through flashbacks, we see Stein in his days as a Jewish entertainer, performing alongside his wife and daughters. They are arrested as the net closes around Germany's Jews and taken to a concentration camp, where Adam's talents catch the eye of a Nazi commandant played by Willem Dafoe.

Goldblum prepared for over a year for the role, visiting Nazi-era concentration camps and speaking to Holocaust survivors.

Goldblum said he felt a responsibility to do justice to the material, which deals heavily with "survivor guilt" experienced by many of those who survived Nazi death camps during the war.

Early reviews at the Toronto Film Festival, where "Adam Resurrected" premiered, have been overwhelmingly positive. (*Reuters* 9-11-08) ◇

Photo Gallery



Summer is a slow time at KJCC, but there's still life. For those of you not here in the summer, here's what KJCC looks like when boarded up for a hurricane, as it was for Ike. Above and left, scenes

from S'lichot, the service that begins the High Holy Day period. Bernie and Yardenia led the service, and there was pizza, too, beautifully modeled by Stuart and Muriel, and a movie. Below, Sunday School has begun. Our thanks to Richard Knowles for his professional expertise and time to take these shots.



A SPECIAL SHABBAT MOMENT

By Stuart Sax

It took us nearly five years to take a long-deserved vacation. In June, Lauren and I spent a week on the Freedom of the Seas cruise ship. It is the largest ship in the Royal Caribbean fleet and one of the largest cruise ships on the ocean. There were more than 4,000 passengers.

Why is this worth mentioning? Because, in my guess-timation and limited eyesight, I figured that of the 4,000 passengers about 5-10 percent could be Jewish. That would mean between 200 and 400 Jews on board.

Why is this worth mentioning? The day we boarded the ship we visited the library, where there was a notebook to sign up for Sabbath services, which were to be held on Friday evening in the conference room on deck two. We signed up. I even told Lauren that with our experience here at the KJCC, maybe we could help lead the service.

Each day I visited the library to see how many other Jewish passengers would be joining us for Shabbat observance. By Thursday afternoon there was only one other name in the notebook under ours.

Even with such an underwhelming response to observing the Sabbath, I was compelled to visit the conference room on deck two just to see how many Jews would show up even though they had not signed up. I arrived a few minutes early. There were about 100 chairs set up with a podium next to a long table with two large challahs, four bottles of kosher wine, and about 50 wine glasses. That would indicate that a reasonable turnout was expected by the cruise line.

Nearly ten minutes after the service was supposed to begin a woman from Colombia walked in. We spoke for a few minutes and she said that her family was back in their

stateroom and they would have their own service there. She proceeded to take half a challah, a bottle of wine, four glasses and exit the conference room.

Alone again, I decided to remain and, at least, say Kaddish when the door opened and a petite, frail woman, likely in her eighties and with a cane, entered. I said, "Good Shabbos" and she replied, in a thick eastern European accent, "Shabbat Shalom." We exchanged first names only. Hers was Sophie. We commented to each other on the more than sparse turnout but agreed that even though there were only two of us, it was still the Sabbath.

Sophie proceeded to light the Sabbath candles and recite the blessing. I read several of the prayers from the service order provided by the cruise line. We recited Kaddish together and then blessed the challah and wine and shared a bit of conversation before leaving.

Why is this worth mentioning? Sophie told me that wherever she is on Friday evening, she observes the Sabbath; be it in a synagogue or in a hotel room. She rotated her left arm and showed me the fading imprint on her arm and told me that she is a Holocaust survivor now living in Canada. She is the only remaining member of her immediate family. I then told her of our small congregation in the Florida Keys and how we came to receive our holocaust Torah from the small village of Susice in the former Czechoslovakia.

Why is this worth mentioning? Sophie told me that she was born and raised less than 100 miles from Susice. So wherever you are this evening, Sophie, thank you again for a very special moment, and from all of us at the KJCC, Shabbat Shalom. ◇

Jean Lafitte

Jewish Pirate of the Caribbean

Pirates may be all the rage lately, but you wouldn't know from the Disney blockbuster movie trilogy that many of the buccaneers were also Jewish. Hollywood past and present usually portrays pirates as rebellious English seamen, but several recent books uncover the Jewish roots of the real Pirates of the Caribbean—most notably the well known Jean Lafitte.

Even in the 1800s, Jews as pirates would have been nothing new. Jewish historian Flavius Josephus recorded that Hycanus accused Aristobulus of "acts of piracy at sea." That's pretty clean-cut!

But the number of Jewish pirates increased dramatically after Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492. In his as-yet untitled book, author Ed Kritzler states that "The Jewish pirates were Sephardic. Once they were kicked out of Spain, in 1492, the more adventurous Jews went to the New World." Later, during the Spanish Inquisition, many more Jews turned to piracy. Although some were just trying to make a better life for themselves, others were out for revenge against the Spanish. It's hard to know just how many pirates were Jewish, since many of them would have lived as "Conversos," or converts to Christianity, and would have only practiced Judaism in secret.

This was the case with Jean Lafitte. In her

book "Jews on the Frontier," author Rachele Simon cites Rabbi I. Harold Sharfman on the history of Jean Lafitte. According to Rabbi Sharfman, Jean Lafitte was a Sephardic Jew. Lafitte's grandmother had become a Converso and fled Spain after her husband was executed in the Inquisition for "Judaizing." In

1765 she fled to France with Lafitte's mother. Jean Lafitte was then born in France in 1780. During the Napoleonic period, he moved to French Santo Domingo.

Eventually, Lafitte wound up as a Pirate of the Caribbean. He operated out of a "pirate village" in the swamps around New Orleans. He didn't have just one pirate ship, but a whole fleet of them. Also known as The Corsair, Lafitte even owned his own shop in New Orleans, disguised as a blacksmith shop, to fence his pirated goods. Although his revenge against the Spanish was condoned during the War of 1812 (he even had 1,000 men serving under him during the war), he was eventually run out of post-war New Orleans as

'undesirable.' He moved his operation to the island of Galveston, Texas, then known as Campeche, and during the Mexican fight for independence from Spain was once again encouraged to attack the Spanish fleet and keep the loot.

Lafitte was one of the few Buccaneers who didn't die in battle or on the gallows. Lafitte died from fever in 1826 at the age of 47. ♦



Steve and Carol's Israel Adventure

Or, how to go visit the cradle of Jewish civilization and come home needing a vacation.

By Carol Steinbock

Unforgettable! A once-in-a-lifetime experience! A ten-day whirlwind! Steve's sister Rosemary (Ro) had decided to go to Israel this year. We were going to wait a year or so but decided to go with her. So the three of us decided on a group tour in mid-May. It seemed like a good idea at the time. But I now believe that tours are only for insomniacs, people without arthritis and people who can tirelessly walk miles every day. We got our wakeup calls by 6 a.m. Breakfast was at 7 a.m. We were on the bus at 8 a.m., and off we went, every day.

The first five days, we stayed in Jerusalem. Driving from the airport into Jerusalem, we stopped to view the city lights at night and recite the *Shehechayanu* blessing. Entering



All was smiles and anticipation on the bus the first day in Jerusalem.



Steve and Carol on a scenic overlook on Jerusalem's west side, near Yad Vashem.

the city, we went to the Western Wall where we saw throngs of people praying, singing and dancing (men and women separated, with a makeshift wall between them). We visited the Wall a number of times, and no matter when we were there, we always saw people praying, day or night. The Wall is more than just a visual icon and the constant murmur of prayers, it is a feeling that we will never forget.

We explored the Western Wall tunnels. There is a "secret passage," large halls and then a section that is on the other side of the Western Wall (underground). The passage is very long and becomes more and more narrow until it is less than four feet wide and the ceiling height drops until it is only about seven feet high. This is where I learned that I am claustrophobic. I had to turn back (Stephen stayed with me) and wait for our group to go down to the narrowest end and come back. We waited in a section that was wider, with a higher ceiling, in an area where



In a little shop on a winding street in Jerusalem's Jewish sector, Steve has tfillin laid for the first time in, oh, a while.

men, women and children regularly came and sat on two chairs that face the wall underground and prayed. Ro had no such problems and said it was great.

We visited the Jaffa Gate and walked the Old City through the winding cobblestone streets or alleys. This was on Shabbat, and we went to the Christian, Armenian and Moslem Quarters. We walked the Via Dolorosa and toured the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is said to hold the tomb where Jesus was buried. (I'd promised my mother.) Then it was on to the Tower of David, a museum and climbing the walls of the city. This was all in one day.

The next day led us to Mount Scopus to enjoy the wonderful views of Jerusalem, then back to the Old City, this time to the Jewish Quarter where we saw the excavated Roman *Cardo* and then back again to the Western Wall.

Yad Vashem:

What can one say about Israel's memorial to the Holocaust and Children's Museum? Everything about it and all it contains is a reminder of that horrible tragedy, one of the darkest periods in the history of mankind. The memorial is huge. There are audio displays, films, photos, testaments and recollections of survivors, personal artifacts, Torah scrolls, breastplates and other silver ornamentation from synagogues pillaged by the Nazis. One would have to spend days there to really take it all in. I know no words that can adequately express my feelings during my time there. The closest I can come is to say that I felt an overwhelming and profound sorrow and sense of guilt that men could do such things to men and that men would stand by and allow it to happen. When we left, we had a *Yizkor* service on the bus.

Another day, back on the bus at 8 a.m. and on to Masada and south along the Dead Sea. We stopped along the way at an animal preserve. The land is desert and hills. We were told that there are natural springs from which they pipe water to various locations to water plants and to drink. The Dead Sea is really something. Yes, it really is soooo salty you float whether you want to or not, which is quite a sensation. Even Rosemary, who can't swim and is afraid of the water, went in and, sure enough, she floated! And there were lots of people covering themselves with black mud, which is supposed to be great for the skin. Not me!

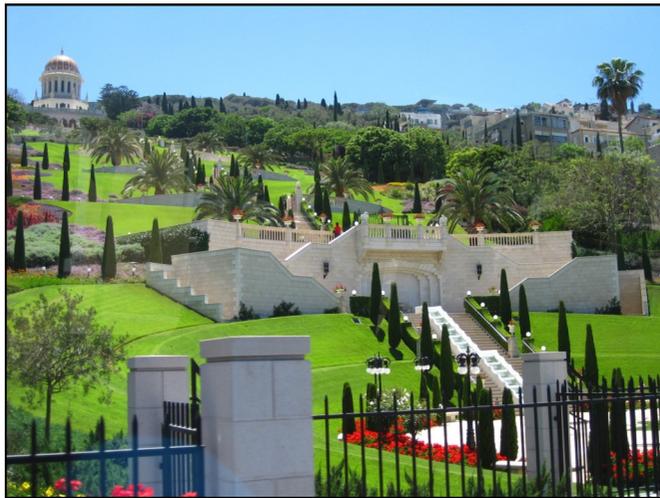
A panoramic view of the Kotel plaza.



We went to the Hadassah University Hospital synagogue to see the Chagall windows. Absolutely beautiful and lots of symbolism. We learned that a number of them were badly damaged during one of the wars and Chagall replaced them. Then it was on to an archeological

site to DIG. Yes, here we were, twenty adults, nicely attired, all on our hands and knees digging in the dirt to try to find artifacts. I know there was not one of us who did not have a great time, even though we all got filthy. We all found some kind of pottery shards or pieces of formal bric-a-brac, or as I like to call them, *chatchkas*. I only found a few small broken pieces. Steve had more luck and Ro did the best of all three of us.

Kabbalah country – Safed – is beautiful in its own way: cobblestone streets, artsy, lots of wonderful shops. I bought a rose-colored scarf and some cards; handwritten in tiny print is the story of Noah on one and the Lord is My Shepherd on the other. I took photos of Stephen wearing *tfillin*. We visited a tiny temple with magnificent torah coverings. Then off to a raft ride on the Jordon River. Lots of fun. Then on to the Golan Heights for a jeep tour. We heard about the



The world-famous Bahai Gardens in Haifa. No part-time gardeners here.

Six-Day War, and saw the line dividing Israel (green grass and trees) from Lebanon (brown dirt). Then, to a kibbutz for dinner and to hear about their daily lives.

In Tiberius, our hotel overlooked the Sea of Galilee. Lovely. There were people camping in tents or just picnicking on the shore. We went on a short boat ride.

Leaving Tiberius, we traveled northwest to Rosh HaNikra, where we took a cable car ride down to lovely grottos in the rocks on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. I could swear I heard the sighs of the young Jewish maiden who threw herself into the sea rather than be forced into an arranged marriage.

We stopped in Acre, a crusader stronghold, and then on to Haifa, where we had just a glimpse of the magnificent Bahai Gardens, which I think was Stephen the Gardener's favorite place of all.

Our last stop was Tel Aviv. At last, a day to ourselves. We decided to be lazy.

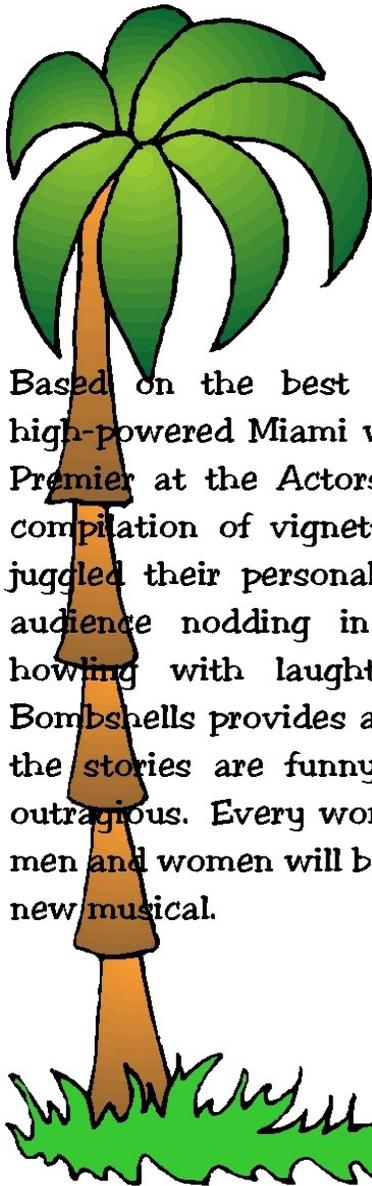
Steve, Carol and Rosemary pan for chatchkas at one of Israel's many digs.

We went to the beach, Ro and I splashing in the water, and walked along the boardwalk, people-watching and enjoying the sun. And all too soon, it was time to return home to the United States, laden with souvenirs, photos and lots of wonderful memories to cherish.

Israel is so much more than a place to visit. It is homeland. It is history, not only of the Jewish people, but also of civilization, dating back more than 10,000 years BCE. If you haven't been there, *go*. If you have, *return*. We will. Just not on a tour. ♦



Keys Jewish Community Center



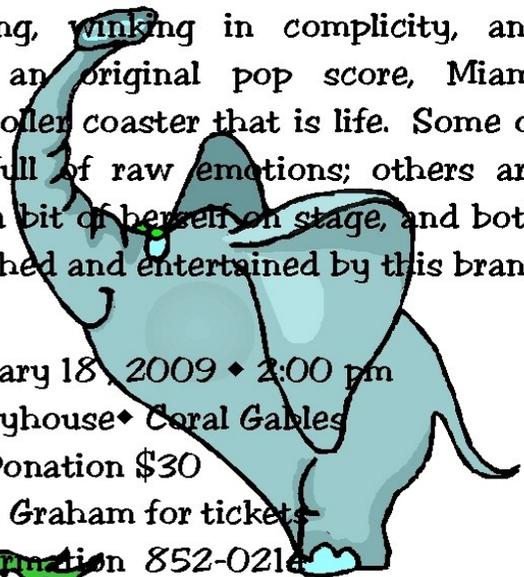
Based on the best selling book "Dish and Tell" written by 6 high-powered Miami women, Miami Bombshells celebrates its World Premier at the Actors Playhouse. The musical, like the book, is a compilation of vignettes based on the stories of how the women juggled their personal and professional lives, which will leave the audience nodding in understanding, winking in complicity, and howling with laughter. Set to an original pop score, Miami Bombshells provides a look at the roller coaster that is life. Some of the stories are funny, some are full of raw emotions; others are outrageous. Every woman will see a bit of herself on stage, and both men and women will be moved, touched and entertained by this brand new musical.

Sunday, January 18, 2009 ♦ 2:00 pm

Actors Playhouse ♦ Coral Gables

Donation \$30

Call Bea Graham for tickets
and information 852-0216



Yom Kippur and Sukkot

The last two holidays of the Jewish year, just before *Bereshit*, are rich in tradition and stories. Our section last month was so well received, and there is such a rich trove of information, that we decided to fill you up. You'll be fasting soon enough.

All original line art courtesy of Gloria Avner

The following was adapted from a posting by Ozzie Nogg on the United Jewish Communities web site, ujc.org.

Is Rosh Hashanah really the birthday of the world? Well, the Hebrew letters in the word *Bereshit* -- In the Beginning -- can be rearranged to make the words 1 Tishri -- the date of Rosh Hashanah -- so who needs more proof?!

Then again, another Midrash says the world was created on 25 Elul, making Rosh Hashanah/1 Tishri fall on the sixth day of Creation -- the day God made man. The logic being that the beginning of humanity marked the real beginning of Creation. Nice thought!

Did you know the zodiac sign for Tishri is the scales? Makes sense, since Tishri is the month when all our deed are weighed up there in The Big Court.

Now, we can't discuss the New Year without discussing the shofar -- that prayer without words -- said to echo the conscious-stricken human voice. Think about it. *Tekiah* is a deep moan. *Teruah*, a wavering sob. And *Shevarim*, a broken groan. These different sounds, according to folklore, are tenderly carried to God by special angels.

Getting even a few squeaks out of the shofar (let alone the regulation one hundred) isn't easy, and an accomplished Ba'al Tekiah (the ones who do the tooting) is a treasure. The less skilled sometimes put a trumpet mouthpiece into the shofar, but such brazen chutzpah deserves no further discussion.

By the way, the shofar is curved, according to the sages, to symbolize the bent back of the humble penitent. Very poetic, those sages.

At the main Rosh Hashanah meal, serve the head of a fish to the head of the household as a symbol of his/her leadership and wisdom. In some communities they go for broke and serve up the head of a sheep! (I dare you...)

Don't eat nuts on Rosh Hashanah. Why? Because the Hebrew word for nuts -- through some Gematric trickery -- has the same numerological value as the Hebrew word for sin.

And why apples and honey and not mangoes and honey? Because God's presence, according to the Zohar, is like an apple orchard.

When making *tzimmiss*, cut the carrots in rounds so they look like coins. That will bring a sweet year and a prosperous year, as well.

The challah should be round, too, so your year will roll 'round smoothly with no unhappy bumps. Some of the challah can be shaped like birds to symbolize God's sheltering protection. Top others with winged figures to symbolize our hopes to be more like angels. Or decorate your challah with ladders to help your prayers reach heaven. And as a reminder that this year God will raise some men up and lower others. A sobering thought, surely...

In the



shtetl, the highlight of the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur was Shabbat Shuvah -- the Sabbath of return. That's when the rabbi gave THE SERMON, a scathing harangue during which he mercilessly berated the congregation for their sins. The rabbi wept. The people wept. The sermon took HOURS, and why not? Back then, the Rabbi spoke (get this!) only twice a year (at Passover and on Shabbat Shuvah) so he had to make up for lost time, after all.

To give tzedakah before a holiday is important.

To give tzedakah before Yom Kippur is imperative. Charity, along with prayer and repentance, is central to Yom Kippur. So pick your favorite cause and send them a check.

In the olden days, people were flogged on the day before Yom Kippur. That custom, happily, has been abolished.

In the olden days, people paid their synagogue dues IN FULL on the day before Yom Kippur. That custom we should bring back! [Somewhere Linda is nodding - ed.]

Remember, if a person comes to you before Yom Kippur and apologizes for a wrong he committed against you, you must forgive him. Don't keep grudges. And don't seek vengeance. If you don't forgive those who did you wrong, your prayers will not be heard on Yom Kippur. According to tradition, only one who forgives will have his own sins forgiven.

And you can ask forgiveness even of the dead. Just go with ten men to the grave of the injured party and ask forgiveness while you walk around the grave three times -- bare-footed, preferably. If the grave is too far away for you to visit, you may send others to offer your apology. All of which proves it's never too late to make peace with neighbors and family.

Now, for any of you unfamiliar with schlogging *kappores*, here's the simple formula. On the day before Yom Kippur, swing a live hen or rooster around your head three times while saying, "This is my substitute, my atonement. This bird will die but I will live a long, pleasant and peaceful life." Having thus transferred your sins to the fowl, you slaughter the traumatized bird and give its meat to

the poor. The Hebrew word, *gever*, means both rooster and man, so the fowl does seem a logical scapegoat, though it is rumored the rich performed *kappores* using a ram or a lamb or a goat, which is truly mind-boggling.

The *kappores* ceremony appealed greatly to the masses, but many rabbis, not surprisingly, were appalled by it, calling the ritual as bad as idol worship or, more succinctly, stupid.

Today, charity money wrapped in a handkerchief is commonly used instead of the rooster, but without the feathers flying the whole ceremony loses most of its charm, if you ask me.

The Talmud says, "Just as it is a mitzvah to fast on Yom Kippur, so it is a mitzvah to

The Talmud on Repentance:

One cannot atone via an act which is, itself, sinful: *Temurah 20b*

Repentance was created before the universe: *Pesachim 54a; Nedarim 39b*

Repentance is considered to be an act of wisdom: *Nedarim 32b*

Repentance is always possible, even until death: *Berachot 10a-b*

There is always hope, even for the fully evil: *Eruvin 21a-b*

One should repent daily, because it may be your last day: *Shabbat 153a*

Repentance brings the Redemption: *Yuma 86b*

Repentance brings physical rejuvenation: *Yuma 86a*

Repentance is more effective than [100 sets of] whippings: *Berachot 7a*

Repentance of an individual Causes Forgiveness for the World: *Yuma 86b*

Repentance Extends Life: *Yuma 86b*

Repentance is preferable to the punishment of the wicked: *Berachot 10a*

eat well on the day before." Especially kreplach! Why? Because the meat signifies stern judgment, but the dough in which the meat is wrapped represents the softness of God's mercy and justice. (Some Midrashim are a bit of a stretch, aren't they?)

Important! Make sure this meal is easy to digest and not salty -- so you don't get too thirsty during the fast. And eat early enough so you have time to get to *Kol Nidre*, which, according to tradition, is repeated three times, to make sure it's heard even by late-comers.

As to *Kol Nidre* -- The prayer that stirs our souls and psyches is really just a legal statement releasing us -- as you know -- from all vows and obligations made from this Yom Kippur to the next. What you may not know is that rabbis long debated the merits of *Kol Nidre*, feeling its intent can be misunderstood by Jew and non-Jew alike.

Does *Kol Nidre* allow us to blithely make promises we don't intend to keep? Do the words mean Jews can't be trusted? How can we vow "unwittingly" and how can *Kol Nidre* cancel vows made to this One but not to that one? There are rabbinic explanations for all of this, of course, but maybe we should just follow the advice of the Talmud and not vow at all.

Meanwhile, some Reform congregations start their Yom Kippur services not with *Kol Nidre* but with Psalm 130, as did the Jews of ancient Palestine. It's

chanted to the traditional *Kol Nidre* melody, though, so old customs, apparently, die hard.

Al Chet -- For the Sins -- is one of the most important prayers of Yom Kippur. Interestingly enough, the word *chet* doesn't mean sin, but "to miss the mark." In other words, we're not wicked. We're just a bit off target.

Bathing for pleasure on Yom Kippur is traditionally forbidden, but the Code of Jew-

ish Law says it's okay for a new bride to wash her face "so that she becomes not repulsive to her husband." And how about the face of the husband, one wonders...



One last thing! It's customary to start building your Sukkah immediately after you get home from Yom Kippur services. Just hammer in one nail. It shows that our devotion to God never stops and that our observance of His mitzvot is continuous. How continuous? The day after Yom Kippur it's customary to get up earlier than usual to go to services so Satan can't say to God, "Look! Yom Kippur is barely over and already Your people are too lazy to get up for morning minyan." (Those Talmudists thought of everything.)

There's an amazing discussion in the *Talmud*. It's one of those Hillel and Shammai

disagreements. For two and a half years *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* argued over the following issue: *Beit Shammai* saying, "It would have been better for humanity had we not been created, rather than being created." And these *Beit Hillel* saying, "It is better for humanity that we were created, rather than not having been created."

The Schools of Hillel and Shammai are not debating here about some prosaic *halakhic* matter or some esoteric theological point. They know suffering--no less than we know suffering.

They know despair--no less than we know despair. For two and a half years they debate the awesome question: Would it have been better if we had not been created? And finally, both schools together came to a final decision: "It would have been better for humanity had we not been created, rather than being created."

It's amazing! How can they conclude that

*It's customary to
start building
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Yom Kippur
services.*

way? How can our spiritual leaders leave us with such a despairing conclusion about life? But that's not the final line in their discussion. Here's the next line: "Now, since we have been created, we should examine our deeds." It might have been preferable that we had never been created--and yet we *were* created. It might have been preferable that the world, with all of its imperfections, had never been created--and yet it *was* created. Like it or not, we're here. Whether life is predictable or not, we're here. Whether life is easy or not, we're here.

And our existence does matter. And the way we live our lives does matter.

Ultimately, we can't predict the way our lives will unfold. We can neither predict, nor prevent, suffering in life. Ultimately, there is one measure of control that we can exert in a world in which we have so little control. We can decide how we are going to live our lives. We can decide how much meaning we are going to try to inject into our lives. We can decide whether we will fill our lives with *mitzvot*—with assertion of meaning—or with despair. We can decide whether we are going to connect ourselves to God—and that includes doubting God, struggling with God, shaking our fists at God—whether we're going to derive guidance and support from God to see us through our struggles, or whether we're going to go it alone. No one suffered more than Job, who probably never existed. There's one opinion in the Talmud that the Book of Job is only a fiction, a parable about human suffering. Job didn't really exist, but he does really exist: Each of us is Job, in a way. Each of us suffers more than we think we should.

Yom Kippur in the Warsaw Ghetto

From the book "Reut" (Friendship) compiled by Ehud Manor, a story of Yom Kippur during the Holocaust, told by Moshe Prager. It has been translated from the Hebrew by Yardena Kamely.

Each of us suffers more than we think we should.

The young Partisan was remembering:

I am a Partisan from the Warsaw Ghetto. I had the opportunity to fight in a battle against the Nazis twice. I took part in both revolts of the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto. The second revolt, the last, was on *Pesach* (1943), and the bat-

tle went on till the last bullet we had in our hands. When there were no bullets left, I managed to hide in the sewer canal and to pass from there to the Aryan part of the city.

In 1944, when the general revolt of Christian Warsaw finally began, I went to war against the Nazis again. We fought alongside the Polish people, although many of them were not treating us better than the Nazis did. But at that time we forgot all [*cheshbonot*, accounts] with the Polish. We knew that the war against the Nazis was something we all had in common. In the beginning the Polish fighters received us nicely. But later, when they had many losses and great difficulties, they started to blame us, the Jews. During those days, when we had to watch out for bullets from the Nazis on one side, and the bullets of our Polish comrades

from the other, suddenly one of the Jewish fighters remembered that Yom Kippur had come. There was a great will to gather and to pray together.

We gathered in the attic of one of the hospitals for *Kol Nidrei* prayer. One by one they came, young men, the last remnants of the Jewish community of Great Poland, to the prayer that unites the Jews all over the world. But we had no *machzor* or *siddur* [prayer book] in our possession, and none of the young men knew the prayer by heart. We didn't know what to do. Finally, we decided that each of us should write on a notepaper the [pasuk or psukim] chapter or verses from Yom Kippur prayers that he remembered. We collected all the notes and our cantor started to read.

"And we will forgive the whole congregation of *B'nei Yisrael*
[*Ashamnu. Bagadn. Gazaln. Dibarnu Dofi.....*]
We have trespassed, we have dealt treacherously, we have robbed, we have spoken slander.....[*Al Chet Sh'chatanu Lefanecha....*]
For the sin which we have committed before Thee.....[*Shmah koleinu Adonai Eloheinu*]
Heavenly Father, heed our cry....."

We prayed, and we felt that these fragments of prayer, from the last Jews in Warsaw, were in fact the complete prayer of "*Kol Nidrei*."

wisdom to the next generation from mouth to ear. We often tell our truths through stories. The Jewish people have good memories, strong intent, and a flair for the dramatic. The best and most loved Jewish teachers throughout the ages have transmitted history, values, ethics, and worldview not through cold, rigid lecture but through very human stories. They make us laugh and cry and fear and think and learn.

I was mailing a storybook to our "talmidim" last week, for them to hear and discuss before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. As I addressed the package, I thought: why should our children be the only ones to enjoy this most loved story of the *Baal Shem Tov*? The man who is re-telling the story, Eric Kimmel, heard it first from his grandmother when he was six years old. None of us are too old to be told not to sweep our misdeeds under a rug (or down basement steps), or how our misdeeds can haunt us. None of us are so pure as to not need a reminder of the true nature of T'shuvah. As you read this story, hear the voice of a beloved grandparent telling it to you, or better yet, hear your own voice telling it to a grandchild. It is a gift to all of us as we contemplate the "Days of Awe." You may well want to buy the book. The pictures are exquisite. We now have a copy in our KJCC library.

-Gloria



On Teaching, Learning, and Telling Stories

Before there were schools and books and alphabets, there was still a need to share, to impart. There was no Torah to study for the children of Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca and Leah. For millennia, in every culture in the most remote parts of the world, elders passed

Gerшон's Monster

Retold by Eric Kimmel

The city of Costantsa stands on the shores of the Black Sea. Many years ago, a man named Gerшон and his wife, Fayga, lived there.

No, Gerшон was not always the best person he could be. True, the mistakes he made were not huge. They were common, ordinary things: a broken promise, a temper lost for no reason, a little untruth told here and

there. But unlike most people, Gershon never regretted what he did. He never apologized or asked anyone's forgiveness.

This way of behaving becomes a habit. Gershon paid no attention to how he treated others and he didn't care. For he could shed his mistakes and thoughtless acts like a dog sheds hair. Every Friday, Gershon swept them up and tossed them into the cellar.

Then, once a year on Rosh Hashanah, he stuffed them into a sack, dragged the enormous bundle down to the sea, and tossed it in.

*“Foolish man.
I will do what
you ask, but
you will
regret it.”*

But selfishness and thoughtless deeds are never disposed of so easily. There is always a price to pay, as Gershon was about to

learn.

Now Gershon was a baker, an important man in town. But he and his wife were childless. They wanted a child more than anything in the world.

One day, Gershon's wife heard of a *tzaddik*, a wonder rabbi, who lived in the town of Kuty. Perhaps the *tzaddik* can give us a child," Fayga said to her husband.

"I will go to Kuty and see," Gershon answered. So Gershon harnessed his horse to the wagon and set out.

The journey took many days. Gershon asked a stranger how to get to the *tzaddik's* house. Of course, he didn't say, "thank you."

When Gershon arrived, he barged through the door without knocking. The *tzaddik* frowned and said, "One does not buy children the way one buys chickens. But your wife is a good woman. For her sake, I will see if any-

thing can be done."

The *tzaddik* closed his eyes his began to pray. Gershon fidgeted impatiently. The clock on the wall ticked away the minutes. At last, the *tzaddik* opened his eyes.

"Be thankful for all that you have. Do not ask for more."

"What kind of answer is that?" Gershon cried. "If God cannot give me a child, at least tell me the reason why!"

The *tzaddik's* eyes searched the depths of Gershon's soul. "Did you think you could live so thoughtlessly forever? The sea cried out because you have polluted her waters. God is angry with you. Accept God's judgment. Your recklessness will bring your children more sorrow than you can imagine.

"I will take that risk," Gershon said selfishly.

"Foolish man. I will do what you ask, but you will regret it."

The *tzaddik* took a piece of parchment and wrote upon it with a quill pen. After the ink dried, he folded the parchment in half and gave it to Gershon. "Have your wife wear this around her neck. In one year's time she

*“If something
is going to harm
my children, tell
me now so I can
protect them.”*

will give birth to twins, a boy and a girl. They will be all you desire. They will be with you for five years."

"And then?" Gershon asked. "What strange prophecy is this? If something is going to harm my children, tell me now so I can protect them."

"You cannot protect them," the *tzaddik*

said. "On the morning of their fifth birthday, they will go down to the sea." He paused. "Enjoy your precious children while you can. Do not ask for more."

Gershon threw himself at the *tzaddik's* feet. "What will happen at the sea?" Gershon pleaded. "At least give me a sign!"

The *tzaddik* spoke with a steady voice. "The day you put two stockings on one foot and storm around the house looking for the missing stocking is the day your children will . . . enough! I can say no more!"

Gershon kissed the *tzaddik's* hand. "Holy man, you have saved my children's lives. I will remember your words and be watchful. Furthermore, I will repent for all my wrongdoings."

The *tzaddik* shook his head. "You will forget everything as soon as you return home. Go now, unhappy man. I can do nothing for you."

Gershon returned home. Just as the *tzaddik* predicted, he soon forgot everything except the promise of children. Fayga wore the charm faithfully. In a year's time she gave birth to twins. They were the most beautiful children Gershon had ever seen. They named the boy Joseph and the girl Sarah. The twins grew up healthy and strong. They spent whole summers at the beach, running on the sand and swimming in the sparkling water.

And Gershon went on behaving as recklessly as ever, sweeping his thoughtless acts into the

cellar. And once a year, he stuffed them into a sack and dragged them down to the sea.

Five years passed. One August morning, Gershon awoke with the sun pouring in his window. It was scarcely eight o'clock, yet the air hung heavy with heat. Gershon reached for his clothes. He pulled on his shirt, then his trousers, and finally his left stocking. The heat made his head swim. He sat down on

the bed to collect himself, and without thinking, took his right stocking and drew it over his left foot. Then he started to put on his shoes. "Where is my other stocking?" Gershon grumbled when he noticed that his right foot was bare. "Who has taken it?" he roared as he stormed through the house.

Fayga laughed. "No one has taken your stocking. Look at your feet. You have put two stockings on one foot."

Gershon's face suddenly turned pale as he remembered the *tzaddik's* prophecy. "Where are the children?" He cried frantically.

"At the seashore, where they always are."

As soon as Gershon heard the words "at the seashore," he ran out the door.

"Come back!" Fayga cried. "You forgot your shoes!"

But Gershon had no time for shoes. He tore down the path to the beach. "Dear God", he cried, "let me not be too



Yom Kippur being a day of worship and fasting, it's good to set aside some time to pray and meditate alone. Read Rebbe Nachmann of Bratslav's prayer and think about the ways in which you are part of the natural world that surrounds you. Contemplate in what ways you can contribute to preserve and enhance the beauty of the world? How can you be of assistance to the world?

Rebbe Nachmann's Prayer:

Master of the Universe, grant me the ability to be alone.
May it be my custom to go outdoors each day among the trees and grasses,
Among all growing things,
There to be alone and enter into prayer.
There may I express all that is in my heart,
Talking with Him to whom I belong.
And may all grasses, trees, and plants
Awake at my coming.
Send the power of their life into my prayer,
Making whole my heart and my speech through the life and spirit of growing things,
Made whole by their transcendent Source.
Oh! That they would enter my prayer!
Then would I fully open my heart in prayer, supplication, and holy speech;
Then, O God, would I pour out the words of my heart before Your Presence.

late.”

And then he saw them, Sarah and Joseph, playing at the water’s edge. Gershon cupped his hands to his mouth and shouted, “Come away from there!” But he was out of breath, and his voice did not carry far. The children waved and went back to their play. Sarah chased Joseph into the water.

All at once, the sky grew dark, as if a cloud had covered the sun. But it was no cloud. Gershon saw it rising from the sea: an immense black monster covered with scales like iron plates. On each scale was written one of Gershon’s misdeeds. “Father! Save us!” the children cried out as the monster came toward them.

Gershon ran as he had never run before. He pushed the children aside and threw himself down before the monster. Looking up into the creature’s glittering eyes, he pleaded for forgiveness.

“I know what you are. You are my pride and selfishness coming back to me, just as the *tzaddik* foretold. Please have mercy. Spare my children. Why punish them for my thoughtless deeds? Take me instead.”

For the first time in his life, Gershon truly felt sorry for all of his wrongdoings. Heartbroken, he kneeled before the monster and awaited his end.

But it never came. The monster rose into the air like a great cloud. Its scales melted into raindrops that fell like a summer shower, cleansing the sea.

Gershon carried Sarah and Joseph home to breakfast. The whole family blessed their food and offered thanks for God’s mercy.

Then Gershon went down into his cellar and scrubbed each crack and corner until every trace of his old ways was gone. He scrubbed his soul, too, until it shined like a pair of Sabbath candlesticks. Never again did he throw another bundle into the sea. And never again did he see the monster.

When Joseph and Sarah grew up, they made sure to tell this story to their children every Yom Kippur, as I am now telling it to you. Remember it. For if you keep your soul clean, your best self will always shine through as surely as raindrops cleanse the sea.

Yom Kippur and *Hitchadshut*

by Yardena Kamely

The Hebrew word *Hitchadshut* comes from the root (*shoresh*) *ch’d’sh’*, which builds words that have something to do with “new”, and means renewal. Usually *Hitchadshut* involves changes, new beginnings, making choices and decisions. *Yamim Nora’im* (High Holidays) give us a time for meditation, a time to think about our spiritual life. We can take the time to meditate on renovating our souls, and as with other renewals we need to think of a renovation project. To complete our project, we must first start with a vision, a plan. A vision of where we are heading and what we would like the renewed model of ourselves to resemble.

Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) was an influential 20th-century German-Jewish existentialist thinker and Jewish educator. Rosenzweig’s parents belonged to an assimilated Jewish family with little attachment to Judaism or Jewish life. He himself, although extremely well educated in general German culture and especially proficient in the classics of philosophy, had, at first, hardly any Jewish knowledge. A cousin who had become a Christian urged Rosenzweig to take the same step. The story has often been told of how Rosenzweig felt that if he was to be converted to Christianity he ought to do so as a Jew, moving, as he saw it at the time, from a lower to a higher form of religion. While contemplating his conversion, he attended an Orthodox synagogue in Berlin on *Yom Kippur*. There he was so profoundly overcome by the devotion of the worshippers as they sought forgiveness from the God of their fathers that he realized there was no need for him to find his salvation outside his ancestral faith.

Berlin, Germany, Yom Kippur, October 11, 1913:

This will be my last *Yom Kippur* before I become a Christian, thought Franz

Rosenzweig as he entered an Orthodox synagogue on *Yom Kippur*. He cast curious glances at the men sitting around him, each clad in a *Kittel* – the white ceremonial garment that symbolizes purity, holiness, and new beginnings. Franz had never seen anything like this, and he marveled at the sea of whiteness that surrounded him. The congregants smiled politely, but they remained aloof from the young stranger who, they noticed, frequently fumbled with his *Machzor* (High Holidays prayer book) while looking for the page.

These pious Jews could never understand the religious doubts that have tortured me, Franz thought, nor would they have tolerated the endless discussions about Jesus I've had with my cousin Hans, who converted to Christianity. "Judaism is a relic of the past," Hans had insisted. Ultimately, Franz agreed, but because he vowed to enter the church as a Jew – like Christianity's earliest founders – he decided to stand one last time with the Jewish people....at least, that's what he intended.

"*Avinu Malkeinu, chaneinu v'aneinu,*" pleaded the exhausted congregation as it stood in the evening twilight at *Yom Kippur's* end. "God, be gracious and answer us!" The gates of *Teshuvah* were closing, and Franz felt as if he alone were standing before the Divine Judge. At this moment, he realized, he felt as close to God as humanity can ever be.

After his *Hitchadshut*, Franz Rosenzweig devoted himself to Judaism and Jewish studies, and in 1920 established in Berlin the *Lehrhaus*, where Jewish teachers of high renown lectured on many aspects of Jewish life and thought. This remarkable institution provided German Jews with opportunities to follow Rosenzweig in the quest for a Judaism that spoke to their condition and would be authentic for them. Towards the end of his short life, Rosenzweig was afflicted with a severe form of paralysis, but he continued working and writing heroically. Together with Martin Buber, he translated the Hebrew Bible into German.

Shanah Tovah and G'mar Chatimah Tovah
May you have a meaningful fast and
may you be sealed in the Book of Life
—Yardena

Sukkot



B'Sha'ah Tovah

To and Through Sukkot: A Fitting Conclusion to a Ceremonial Cycle

by Gloria Avner

For years I thought that *Yom Kippur* was a kind of grand finale. Didn't it bring to completion the forty days of introspection, the ten Days of Awe, our *Rosh Hashanah* prayers, our sincere inner repentance, and our outer acts of *tzedakah*? Haven't we listened to the *shofar's* wake-up call, cast our sins into the water (or onto a runaway goat or into a chicken swung around one's head which then becomes a needy person's dinner), and asked both God and man for forgiveness? We've eaten honeyed apples to invoke a sweet year. We've fasted for twenty-four hours to deepen our focus and sincerity.

Humble and spent, we are at last written into the "Book" for another year of life. We then do as Jews have always done. We come together, cleansed, renewed, meaningfully connected, and we eat. But is our fate actually sealed?

I was wrong about the finale. The lady has not sung yet. Jewish ceremonial journeys are nothing if not complex. They are also very rich and generous. It turns out that the seal is not fully sealed until the last day of *Sukkot*.

After sorrow comes joy. Yes, the "break-the-fast" is joyful. But now, after all the inwardness, we have a different focus. We honor the earth, we talk of fire and wind. We pray for the dew and the rain, acknowledging the goodness of our creator's gifts. We go back to our wandering roots and for seven

days we live under the sky.

We act as if our makeshift shelter were our true residence. Observing the *mitzvot*, we eat, drink, and sleep in our lovingly decorated Sukkot. We are hospitable to *Ushpizim*, whether the guests are friends and family or, as tradition tells us, the seven shepherds of Israel—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David, one visiting on each day.

We are asking, through the *Hosannot*, to be saved and, in the process, we recite all the attributes of God. The liturgy in the *Sukkot* service is extremely moving.

I have just finished reading a dozen Chasidic tales about *Sukkot*. I like them. Filled with ordinary people and revered rebbes, they inspire by example, making sure we know the names and towns from which the characters come so we know the stories are true. One of the most frequent themes is whole-hearted *zedakah*. The other is the power of joy.

A man takes boards from his own roof to give to a destitute man who otherwise could not build a Sukkah. Another, on his way to buy an especially fine *etrog*, gives the money he has saved to a crying man who has just seen his horse, his only means of livelihood, collapse in front of him. The man is so grateful he can only express his gratitude by cracking his whip three times, and it is that sound that moves the angels to save the Jews that year. A rebbe sits in his Sukkah during a rainstorm singing God's praises so passionately that the sun appears. These people, and we as well, as we observe the *mitzvot*, are the ones that will be visited by the seven *Ushpizim* in our *Sukkot*. These are the ones whose *etrogs*, no matter how inexpensive, will smell so sweet that a rabbi will stop his discourse to discover who is the owner.

This holiday is full of generosity, not only from us and to us, but also to the world. Another teaching new to me is that the sacrifices made in Jerusalem's Temple during the week of *Sukkot* were actually offered on behalf of the gentile nations. The understanding is that if those nations had any idea of the

great benefit they were deriving from the Jews' efforts on their behalf, they would send legions to surround Jerusalem and guard it. I don't fully understand this teaching, but it makes me smile.

Best of these new insights is that, even if you have not fully repented by the end of *Yom Kippur*, it is not too late. This is not license to procrastinate, but generosity in the extreme. Sincerity of prayer, repentance and *zedakah* can still influence divine judgment up until and through *Sukkot*. Sincerity can be rewarded both with inclusion in the book of life and with opportunity for a joyful week of harvest celebration in the Sukkah. We can all sing.



The Lulav and the Etrog: Water, Rain, Unity, and Joy

by Gloria Avner

For *Sukkot*, the Torah instructs us to collect "*arba minim*," four species, including the *etrog* (a citron), and the *lulav*, a bouquet of tree branches—palm, myrtle and willow. It does not really specify what to do with them.

Jewish tradition, hundreds of years old, inspired the Sages to have us shake them towards the four cardinal directions and towards heaven and earth. I am struck by the similarities between this ancient tradition of ours and all early, even aboriginal, earth-based cultures. Unspoken is the seventh sacred direction--within--as we stand in the center, holding the *minim*, doing the shaking.

In the shapes of the "four kinds," we also have explicit symbols of the masculine and feminine, the tall erect species coupled with the rounded womblike citron, united as one as are all parts of the Jewish world as we perform the *mitzvah* of living as our ancestors did, on the earth and under the sky, in total trust. We can have more space above us than substance (as we are instructed to in making the roof of our shelter), because in our *sukkah* we are living within the embrace of *Shekhina*, the divine presence.

The most intuitive explanation of *lulav* and *etrog* though, relates to water—a central theme of *Sukkot*. The rainy season in Israel begins at *Sukkot* time. This is when we start saying the sentence in the prayer book that asks for rain. In Temple days, one of the most important ceremonies observed on *Sukkot* was "water drawing," in which the altar and its surrounds were splashed with water. Unlike all other holidays when libations offered were wine, on *Sukkot* the libations were water.

In each of the four species there are differing degrees of moisture. The palm core is on the dry end of the scale, the willow is water needy (and withers over the course of the week), the myrtle holds its water well, retaining its fresh appearance all week, and the aromatic *etrog* is the ultimate fruity reservoir of moisture.

When the *lulav* is shaken, its rustling

makes the sound of rain. Perhaps the waving ceremony is meant as a sympathetic ritual of power, inspiring the urge to rain, from the sky to the earth, filling well, rivers, and lakes, allowing fertility and assuring the abundance necessary for survival.

It is especially propitious if you do not get rained on while you are living in your *Sukkah*, but it is the best of all worlds if rains begin right afterwards. Apparently, we are to be joyous in our outdoor dwelling, and discomfort hampers joy. Asked the question how much rain must fall before we can leave the *Sukkah* and go inside, the teaching responds "when your cereal gets soggy."

May each of us experience every level of joy and blessing as we break bread together and wave the four species in our *Sukkot*.



Sukkot Celebrations Far Away

What to do with a leftover etrog

Slice the *etrog* after *Sukkot* and put the slices into a bottle of vodka. Store the bottle in the freezer until the following *Sukkot* and use it to make a "l'chaim" toast in your *Sukkah*.

Jews have dwelt in the mountainous regions of the Caucasus, now part of Russia, since ancient times. They say their ancestors came to live there after the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes (Israel) was destroyed in 722 B.C.E. by Sargon II, King of Assyria. (But it took them ten years, and he was two kings removed from the one who originally attacked.) In the

last hundred years they have been joined by a small number of European Jews, including Chasidim. About twenty-five thousand of them live in the small Jewish towns of Kutais and Tiflis.

The Jews here are too poor to be able to afford a *lulav* and *etrog* for each family. So they have a "communal" *lulav* for each synagogue. It is usually brought in from nearby

Persia. The *etrog* is brought into the synagogue with great respect and love. It is placed on a shiny brass tray, and everyone in turn takes the *lulav* and *etrog* and kisses it lovingly, then makes the blessing, waves it, kisses it again and puts it down for the next fellow-Jew to do the same. Before long the *etrog* can hardly be recognized from so much handling and kissing.

Lulav and Etrog in Folklore

If you want to have a baby:

Put the *lulav* under your bed with the top pointing towards the head of the bed. Some say bite the *pitom* off the *etrog*. Some say eat the *etrog* (make it into jam or candy or put it on your salad).

If you are expecting a baby:

Bite the *pitom* off the *etrog* if you want a baby boy. Save the *etrog* and bring it with you to the hospital when you go into labor. Having an *etrog* with you during labor is supposed to make it less painful.

An Etrog From Eden

A Sukkot story found for us by Gloria Avner.

It was the first day of *Sukkot*, and all the congregants in the shul of Rabbi Elimelech of Lisensk were in a festive mood. One could feel the *Yom-Tov* spirit in the atmosphere.

As Rabbi Elimelech began reciting Hallel, all eyes turned upon him. There was something unusual in his manner this *Sukkot*.

Why did he put aside the *etrog* and *lulav* in his hands to sniff the air? And why did he not go through the service in his usual leisurely manner? It was evident that something was on his mind!

The minute the *davening* was over, Rabbi Elimelech hurried to where his brother Rabbi Zusia was standing, and said to him eagerly: "Come and help me find the *etrog* which is permeating the whole shul with the fragrance of the Garden of Eden!"

And so together they went from person to person until they reached the far corner of the shul where a quiet-looking individual was standing.

"This is the one," called out Rabbi Elimelech delightedly. "Please, friend, tell me where you obtained this wonderful *etrog*?"

"My name," began the quiet-looking man, "is Uri, and I come from Strelisk. I have always regarded *etrog bentschen* as one of my favorite *mitzvot*. I am employed as melamed (teacher) in the village of Yanev. One half of my earnings I use for our needs and with the other half I buy an *etrog* in Lemberg.

"This year, during the Ten Days of Repentance, I was making my way on foot as usual, with fifty gulden in my wallet with which to buy an *etrog*, when on the road to Lemberg I passed through a forest. It was time for *minchah* so I stood in a corner and *davened*.

I was in the middle of *shemone esrei* when I heard a terrible sound of moaning and groaning, as of one in great anguish.

"As I turned towards a man who was in obvious distress, I beheld a man dressed in peasant garb with a whip in his hands, pouring out his troubles to the inn-keeper.

"I managed to gather that the man was a poor Jew who earned his living as a *baal agallah* (owner of a horse and cart for carting purposes). He had a wife and several children and barely managed to earn enough to make ends meet. And now, a terrible calamity had befallen him. His horse had suddenly collapsed in the forest not far from the inn.

The inn-keeper was saying to the *baal agallah*: "I'll sell you another horse for fifty gulden, although I assure you he is worth at least eighty, but just to help you out in your

difficulty!"

"I haven't even fifty cents, and you tell me I can buy a horse for fifty gulden!"

I felt I could not keep my *etrog* money when here was a man in such desperate plight that his very life and that of his family depended upon a horse.

So I said to the inn-keeper: "Tell me what is the lowest price you would take for your horse?"

The inn-keeper turned to me in surprise. "If you pay me cash, I will take forty-five gulden, but absolutely not a cent less. I am selling my horse at a loss as it is!"

I immediately took out my wallet and handed him forty-five gulden, the *baal agallah* looking on, his eyes nearly bulging out of their sockets in astonishment.

"Now you see that the Almighty can help you, even when the position appears to you to be entirely hopeless!" I said to him as he hurried off with the innkeeper to harness the newly-bought horse.

"I eventually reached Lemberg with the remaining five gulden in my pocket, and naturally had to content myself with buying a very ordinary-looking but kosher *etrog!* My original intention had been to spend fifty gulden for an *etrog* as I do every year.

"Usually my *etrog* is the best in Yanev, and everyone used to come and *bentsch* with it, but this year I was ashamed to return home with such a poor-looking specimen, so my wife agreed that I could come here to Lisensk, where nobody knew me."

"But my dear Rabbi Uri," cried out Rabbi Elimelech, "yours is indeed an exceptional *etrog!* Now I realize why your *etrog* has the fragrance of the Garden of Eden! Let me tell you the sequel to your story!"

"When the *baal agallah* whom you saved thought about his unexpected good fortune, he decided that you must have been none other than the Prophet Elijah whom the Almighty had sent to help him in his desperation. Having come to this conclusion, the happy *baal agallah* looked for a way of expressing his gratitude to the Almighty, but the poor man knew not a Hebrew word, nor could he say any prayers. He racked his sim-

ple brain for the best way of thanksgiving.

"Suddenly his face lit up. He took his whip and lashed it into the air with all his might, crying out with all his being: 'Dear Father in Heaven, I love you very much! What can I do to convince you of my love for you? Let me crack my whip for you!' Saying which, the *baal agallah* cracked his whip into the air three times.

"On the eve of Yom Kippur the Almighty up above was seated on His 'Seat of judgment,' listening to the first prayers of the Day of Atonement. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, who was acting as the Counsel for Defense on behalf of his fellow Jews, was pushing a wagon full of Jewish *mitzvot* to the Gates of Heaven, when Satan appeared and obstructed his path with piles of Jewish sins. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak just got stuck there. My brother Rabbi Zusia and I added our strength to help him move his wagon forward, but all our combined efforts proved fruitless.

"Suddenly there came the sound of the cracking of a whip, causing a blinding ray of light to appear, lighting up the whole universe, right up to the very heavens! There we saw the angels and all the Righteous seated in a circle, singing G-d's praise. On hearing the *baal agallah's* words as he cracked his whip in ecstasy, they responded:

"Happy is the King who is thus praised!"

"All at once, the Angel Michael appeared, leading a horse, followed by the *baal agallah* with whip in hand. The Angel Michael harnessed this horse to the wagon of *mitzvot*, and the *baal agallah* cracked his whip. Suddenly the wagon gave a lurch forward, flattened out the Jewish sins that had been obstructing the way, and drove smoothly and easily right up to the Throne of Honor. There the King of Kings received it most graciously and, rising from the Seat of Judgment, went over and seated Himself on the Seat of Mercy. A happy New Year was assured.

"And now, dear Rabbi Uri," concluded Rabbi Elimelech, "you see that all this came about through your noble action!" ◇



HIGH HOLIDAYS SYNAGOGUE SEATING REQUEST FORM

During the last holiday season, many individuals expressed concern over the synagogue seating arrangements. In order for us to place you in a suitable seat, we ask you to complete the following questionnaire and return it to the office as soon as possible.

1. I would prefer to sit in the ... (Check one)

- Talking section
- No-talking section

2. If talking, which category do you prefer? (indicate order of interest)

- Stock market
- Sports
- Medicine
- Congregates secret medical tragedies
- General gossip
- Specific gossip (choose)
- The cantor
- The cantor's voice
- The cantor's "secretary"
- Fashion news
- What others are wearing
- Why they look awful
- Your neighbors
- President Bush
- Sex (Preference: _____)
- Who's having an affair with whom

3. Which of the following would you like to be near for free professional advice?

- Doctor
- Dentist
- Nutritionist
- Psychiatrist
- Mother-in-law
- Podiatrist
- Chiropractor
- Stockbroker
- Accountant

- Lawyer
- Criminal
- Real estate agent
- Plumber
- Sexologist
- Golf pro (tentative: we're still trying to find a Jewish one)

4. I want to be seated (Indicate order of priority)

- On the aisle
- Near the exit
- Near the window
- In Monte Carlo
- Near the bathroom
- Near my in-laws
- As far away from my in-laws as possible
- As far away from my ex in-laws as possible
- Near the pulpit
- Near the Kiddush table
- Near single men
- Near available women
- Near anyone who's available - I'm bisexual or just not particular

- Where no one on the Bimah can see/hear me talking during services
- Where no one will notice me sleeping during services
- Where I can sleep during the rabbi's sermon (Additional Charge)

5. Orthodox only - I would like a seat where:

- I can see my spouse over the mechitza
- I cannot see my spouse over the mechitza
- I can see my friend's spouse over the mechitza
- My spouse cannot see me looking at my friend's spouse over the mechitza

6. Please do not place me anywhere near the following people: (limit of 6: if you require more space, you may wish to consider joining another congregation) _____

Your name; _____

Building fund pledge: _____
(Thanks to David Kaufman for this submission.)

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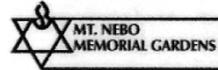
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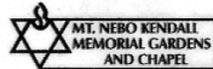
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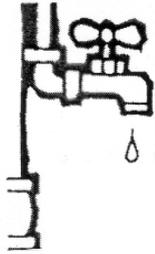
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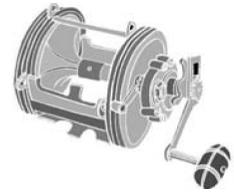
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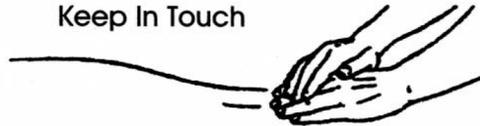
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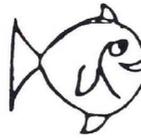


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