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2016 HAROLD U. RIBALOW PRIZE: THE BOOK OF ARON
By Jim Shepard
Unsentimental yet moving and narrated by a seemingly hapless 8-year-old boy, Hadassah Magazine’s literary award winner is set in the Warsaw Ghetto and in the orphanage of Janusz Korczak.

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On the Cover
Ruth Bader Ginsburg (story on page 16) photographed by Cliff Owen/AP.

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Calendars and Candles

Hanukkah spotlights life’s duality | By Ellen Hershkin

You want it darker,” Leonard Cohen’s powerful new song, speaks of “a million candles burning for the help that never came,” a fair reflection—even not the only one—on Jewish history. But etched into our lives this time of year are eight candles that light our lives and reflect the full spectrum of our experience as a people.

Hanukkah reminds us of many things, but this year—one of the rare years when the holiday reaches from December into January—it also highlights a creative duality of our lives. Like knowing two languages, living with both calendars makes us much more agile.

All calendars call on the people who follow them to remember certain things. Living with the Hebrew and secular calendars is like having twice as many notifications programmed into our smartphones—occasionally insistent, but ultimately helpful in organizing our lives and anchoring our identities.

The High Holidays are a time of renewal; Hanukkah is a season of re-dedication. January also marks a new beginning; the lives of Israeli and Diaspora Jews alike are calibrated to both calendars. Certainly many Jews make New Year’s resolutions in December (often, perhaps, affording a second chance on resolutions from Tishrei).

Notwithstanding Leonard Cohen’s sometimes bleak vision and his honored place in our culture, these moments of renewal illuminate my memory and my path forward. Like the sacred days on our calendars, these new personal holidays stand for the candles that reward faith and action.

Hanukkah sameach to all! 🎆

LIVING WITH BOTH THE HEBREW AND SECULAR CALENDARS IS ULTIMATELY HELPFUL IN ANCHORING OUR IDENTITIES.

One was my installation in Florida, presided over by past national president Carmela Kalmanson, my mentor and role model as a Hadassah leader. Her welcoming me into office touched me deeply.

Two was cutting the ribbon on the underground, state-of-the-art operating complex at Hadassah’s Sarah Wetsman Davidson Hospital Tower in Jerusalem. Three was personal—wheeling the first patient into the operating room just a few weeks later.

Four was hosting the inaugural congressional briefing in Washington, D.C., of the Coalition for Women’s Health Equity—a national grouping of organizations launched by Hadassah to advocate for women’s health quality, awareness, funding and supplies.

Five was a series of moments—meeting and networking with Hadassah members around the country, demonstrating the incredible wealth of wisdom and dedication our organization embraces.

Six was networking on the ultimate level—at our fabulous national convention in Atlanta, where we gathered to learn from and inspire one another.

Seven was representing Hadassah at the Jewish National Fund’s 9/11 observance—on September 11 in Jerusalem’s Arazim Valley—at the site of the only memorial outside the United States that honors the nearly 3,000 victims by name; Hadassah was the only nongovernmental organization given the honor of laying a wreath. I went directly from that ceremony—from darkness to light, from commemoration to celebration—to film a Rosh Hashanah video at our medical center, where I held a newborn baby in our nursery.

Eight was taking three generations of my family to Israel, showing them the country and the Hadassah I know so well, and also seeing it through their eyes. If Hadassah has taught me to handle simultaneously the emotions of pride and humility, that trip reinforced the lesson from a new perspective.

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TREASURES TO PASS ON THIS HANUKKAH SEASON

IT’S AN OLD CHLUE THAT IT’S BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE, BUT WE know that at least sometimes, the adage is indeed true. Which is why we have filled this Hanukkah issue with special gems as a gift for you, with the hope that you, in turn, will share the gift with your family and friends.

Among the treasures you will find are a wealth of book offerings, including an excerpt from this year’s Ruba low prize winner for fiction (page 26); the latest crop of healthy eating guides (page 34); and a lively section on delightful new children’s books (page 64). A dazzling display of unique gift ideas are featured in our Hanukkah Gift Guide (page 58) and our oil-infused food column includes recipes for a favorite holiday treat—doughnuts (page 60).

Look also for a travelogue that brings a couple back to Southeast Asia 30 years after their first visit (page 52) and a feature on a Paris museum that bears witness to a noble Sephardic family whose lavish lifestyle could not protect them from the evils of the Holocaust (page 44). And be sure to read three timely essays about finding light and balance this Hanukkah season (pages 12 to 15), along with a holiday-themed crossword puzzle (page 57).

In the spirit of the new focus of Hadassah Magazine (this is just the second issue!), we present more Jewish women making their mark in the world with a stellar profile of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (page 16); a look at Emmy Award-winning Monica Piper’s Off-Broadway take on being (not that) Jewish (page 48); and a Q&A with Baz Dressinger, a prison reform advocate (page 76). We also provide an in-depth look at gender disparities in medical research and treatment, an issue in which Ha- dassah has taken the lead by launching the Coalition for Women’s Health Equity (page 20).

HELP US CONTINUE TO PROVIDE QUALITY JEWISH JOURNALISM; THERE IS NO OTHER MAGAZINE LIKE HADASSAH MAGAZINE.

We have heard from so many of you that you love the new Hadassah Magazine; thank you for your praise and your enthusiasm, along with your thoughtful comments and critiques. Now as you reflect on the Hanukkah themes of light, Jewish perseverance in the face of adversity and giving, we are asking for a gift in return: Help us continue to lead the way in providing quality Jewish journalism. There is no other magazine like Hadassah Magazine.

Although Selman & Company attempts to arrange the best insurance plans, please keep in mind that the policy terms are determined by the insurance carrier, and that the carrier makes all determinations regarding benefits, including the payment of claims. Hadassah has no control over, and accepts no responsibility for, the terms of the policy, the scope of the coverage, the administration of the policy, determination of benefits or the payment of claims.

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CULTIVATING NEW LEADERS
Uriel Heilman’s October/November article, “In Search of a New Generation of Jewish Leaders,” omitted any reference to the work of the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership.

Missing entirely from the article—and at the core of Spertus’s programming—is the recognition that Jewish leadership training must plumb the depths of our own classical sources on effective leadership. This is not a matter of superficially overlaying a verse from Torah or dressing up Jewish literacy and calling it leadership training. The corpus of Jewish sources on leadership, coupled with millennia of communal experiences, offers today’s Jewish leaders—women and men—a perspective on leading in volatile times. Contemporary Jewish leaders owe it to their communities to learn from Jewish communal leaders across time, in matters ranging from leadership ethics and humility to power sharing and collaboration.

Demographic studies and best practices are important, but no more so than the wisdom of our own tradition and historical experiences.

Dr. Hal M. Lewis
President and CEO, Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership, Chicago, Ill.

As the dean of the pluralistic David- son school at the Jewish Theological Seminary, I am pleased to see Hadassah promoting the critical issue of leadership. Investing more in identifying, recruiting and retaining the next generation of Jewish professional leadership should be among our top priorities as we seek to secure an even stronger Jewish future.

The Davidson school has been training the next generation of leaders for the past 20 years. We are proud of our 1,000 alumni who work across denominations and boundaries, reinvigorating legacy organizations and building start-ups in over 50 communities throughout North America. Last year, we brought together our various leader- ship institutes to form The Leader- ship Commons, which cultivates tal- ented thinkers, doers and visionaries to shape the Jewish future together for the common good. We are partnering with national organizations and commu- nals foundations to take on this vital challenge, because we will only succeed if we work together.

Dr. Bill Robinson
Dean, William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education
New York, N.Y. (via website)

NO DENYING
Thank you for Curt Schleier’s October/ November article “A Portrayal Both Personal and Inspired.” As a child of two Auschwitz survivors, I am truly grateful that Holocaust denial is being brought to light again. No matter how many times we say it was real, someone is always willing to say it was not.

Cheri Shiffman
Walnut Creek, Calif. (via website)

CORRECTION
The review of Irene and Abe: An Unexpected Life in the October/November issue should have stated that Irene Pollin’s parents were both immigrants from Latvia, Ukraine, formerly part of Russia.

Dr. Hal M. Lewis
President and CEO, Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership, Chicago, Ill.

Invention of the Year
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The designers of the Perfect Choice HD Ultra™ have moved the tiny but powerful speaker to the end of the hearing tube, so it is closer to the eardrum, giving you more volume and clarity. It features dual microphones that focus on voices for better conversational listening. It also automatically senses noisy or quiet environments and suppresses background noise, so sounds and conversations are easier to hear and understand.

The unit is small and lightweight enough to hide behind your ear...
Worthy and Seaworthy

The diminutive Gerda III is nowadays berthed in the friendly waters of the Long Island Sound, where it is on loan to the Mystic Seaport in Connecticut from its owner, the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. With a beam of but 12 feet at its widest and a draft of only 4 feet, this 50-foot German-built lighthouse tender is a diminutive craft compared to today’s modern ships, but it is perfectly seaworthy. She is fitted with an outboard engine, which enables her to operate with ease as a dayboat, and a bow thruster to make her easy to handle in the narrow channels and harbors of the Sound. The Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial has restored Gerda III to her original state, but the ship is open to the public only during events such as Hanukkah. The Museum of Jewish Heritage, 75 FDR Dr., New York, NY 10274; 212-366-4000; www.museumjewish.org.

Baby Dolls with Built-in Bluetooth

The must-have Hanukkah toy from the 1980s is back and more technologically sophisticated than ever, thanks to Israeli innovation.

When Cabbage Patch Kids were first mass-produced, their popularity was nothing short of phenomenal. Fast-forward 30-plus years and the brand doesn’t hold the same cachet. Wicked Cool Toys, which owns the license to market Cabbage Patch Kid dolls, hopes to revitalize their appeal with a sensor-driven doll linked via Bluetooth to an app on your phone or tablet that simulates a baby monitor. This “smart” toy was developed using IoT technology—the Internet of things—which in everyday parlance means incorporating smart technology into a physical product.

Srebs, a leading IoT company headquartered in Israel, oversaw much of the development of the “Baby So Real” infant dolls. The dolls come with LCD eyes that open, close and form 20 distinct expressions; a built-in response that simulates a baby monitor. This “smart” toy was developed using IoT technology—the Internet of things—which in everyday parlance means incorporating smart technology into a physical product.

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Wendy Magathan, a 19-year-old Henny Sinding, daughter of soap star John Sinding, was a member of the Danish resistance. She was gifted to the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial for its collection of Holocaust artifacts. She is the museum’s only seaworthy artifact.

—Judith Claman

Fake Out: Is Your Olive Oil Really Olive Oil?

It might be wise to pause before grabbing that bottle of extra-virgin olive oil to light your hanukkiah or fry your latkes—it could be fake.

Adulterated or fake olive oil is often a combination of olive oil with seed oil, a liquid-fat base or oil and rancid olive oil, all to cut costs. Besides an obvious deceit, this could impinge on Hanukkah and its traditions. The Shulhan Arukh stipulates that any oil is kosher for Hanukkah, but that olive oil is preferred for the mitzvah of lighting the hanukkiah.

“Olive oil is considered most desirable because the classically described mitzvah of Hanukkah was with olive oil,” said Joel Roth, a prominent Conservative rabbi and professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary. “That’s the kind of oil that was lit in the menorah in the Temple.”

The consequences of not using pure olive oil may extend beyond mitzvot. Olive oil has been known to benefit heart health as well as reduce the risk of certain cancers. Diluting olive oil with liquid saturated fats eliminates those benefits and adds health risks.

In order to avoid buying fake oil, Carol Freniere Anglin, author of The Passionate Olive: 101 Things to Do with Olive Oil, recommends scrutinizing labels. Multiple countries of origin most likely mean the product is fake, she says. Anglin also advises buying local, searching for seals of authenticity and checking for harvest dates for freshness. —Elana Suki

Top 10 Doughnuts

1. Glazed
2. Chocolate Frosted
3. Boston Creme
4. Jelly Filled
5. Chocolate with Sprinkles
6. Powdered
7. Maple
8. Cinnamon
9. Double Chocolate
10. Custard Filled

As ubiquitous as jelly doughnuts are during Hanukkah season, they are not a universal favorite. In fact, they are only the fourth most-popular doughnut as voted on by thousands of men and women around the world on Ranker.com, the leading online platform for collaborative voting and list-making.

Reading an Uncscrolled Torah

Thanks to technology developed by computer scientists at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, the contents of the 2,000-year-old Ein Gedi Scroll have been decoded—gently—allowing the fragile parchment to remain undisplaced 50 years after its discovery. After “virtually unwrapping” the scroll in a process similar to high-resolution MRI, scholars can now read its long-hidden written text—the first two chapters of Leviticus. The scroll was discovered during excavations of a named sixth-century synagogue in Ein Gedi, not far from the discovery site of the even older Dead Sea Scrolls.

“The data from the scroll from Ein Gedi actually really pushed us in developing some new algorithms,” said team leader Brent Seales. “What was at stake was the ability to read everything inside. It turned out to be sort of a wonderful synergy between that data and the possible discovery.”

The results also impressed biblical analysts, who determined that the Leviticus chapters were nearly identical to the Masoretic version, which is commonly used today.

“It’s really a wonderful achievement, and it gives one hope,” said Bruce Zuckerman, professor of religion at the University of Southern California. “There are other manuscripts like this among the Dead Sea Scrolls that have never been opened.”

Seales hopes that eventually the technology will benefit even more people through its possible adaptation for enhanced medical imaging. —Elana Suki

Multiculturalism in Neon Lights

The darkened winter alleys of Haifa’s lower city will once again be illuminated this month by the Holiday of Holidays festival, a celebration of the northern Israeli city’s multicultural and religious diversity now in its 24th year.

Last year’s events centered on Arab cuisine and music, with the Israeli Arab winner of the Master Chef television program making an appearance at the festival. This year, organizers at the Beit Hagefen Arab-Jewish Center (beit-hagefen.com) are supplementing the annual antiquities market and choral singing in local churches with activities themed around what planners call “urban playability.” Entitled “Play Haifa,” this year’s Holiday of Holidays (December 8 to 18) will feature multimedia installations exploring the power of the city—internationally respected for its multiculturalism—to respond in a practical and creative way to challenges and opportunities in its urban landscape. Among the highlights is a downloadable virtual-reality tour of the rough-around-the-edges Wadi Nisnas area, featuring voiceover commentary on the future of the neighborhood provided by its predominantly Arab residents. —Ilan Ben Zion
CHRISTIANE GRAUERT

Our task is to vanquish the
matized veterans, victims of sexual
cover layers of past violence—in trau-
integration of the Middle East and the
obsiders felt that goodness was tak-
ding hold in the world. But then on Sep-
ler were ancient hatreds and deeply root-
ed fears that continued to provide “rea-
sons” for war, oppression, secrecy and
tyranny.

Just as in the greater society, so, too,
do we suffer frustration, anger, despair
or pain in our personal lives. But as
those who have survived traumas
know, we must never give in to nega-
tivity or forget the accomplishments of
the past. Our tradition teaches us that
despite the darkness, light must be cul-
vated.

Hanukkah, especially, is an oppor-
tunity to renew our dedication to illu-
minating our own corners of the world,
wherever we have influence. “Light”
means honoring those who carried the
torch before us. “Light” means shar-
ing the insights from our own lives.

Our deep personal work and our
efforts for the larger world call for
torching the Hanuk-
kah candles is an act of courage and
faith, proclaiming to ourselves and
others that the light continues to pene-
trate the darkness.

The original creative utterance “Let
there be light!” resounds as we add
a candle each night of Hanukkah to
increase the light on our menorahs.

These lights we kindle for the mir-
acles and wonders, deliverances and
battles that You performed for our
ancestors in those days at this season.

Hanukkah, which begins De-
cember 24, reminds us of a
difficult historical period that,
against all odds, turned victorious. In
160 B.C.E., the Maccabee warriors re-
covered the Holy Temple in Jerusalem
from the Greek Helenists and rekind-
dled the flames of sacred worship.

Likewise, in more recent person-
al, communal and world events, there
have been dark moments as well as
bright and hopeful ones. From the
movements for civil rights in the 1960s
to the liberation of Jerusalem in 1967,
the decades of intermittent Arab-Is-
raeli peace processes to the fall of the
Soviet Union in the early 1990s, many
observers felt that good had been tak-
ing hold in the world. But then on Sep-
tember 11, 2001, terrorism came to
American shores, followed by the dis-
integration of the Middle East and the
Islamic State’s barbaric assaults.

Domestically, we continue to un-
cover layers of past violence—in trau-
matized veterans, victims of sexual
abuse and persistent pockets of pov-
erty. Racism and sexism are also still
alive, despite generations of Mac-
cabean-like warriors for justice who
had spent the previous century trying
to eradicate them.

But even when catastrophes darken
lives, the lights—of hope and spiritu-
ality—are kept alive “from generation
to generation.” The Maccabean vic-
tory was a bright moment, yet it was
part of a war that lasted more than a
generation. Two centuries later, in 70
C.E., the Romans destroyed the Tem-
ple, but the rabbis ingeniously restruc-
tured Jewish life with houses of study
outside Jerusalem and rebuilt the Jew-

israeli people, guiding them through exile
from the Land of Israel.

The flux of darkness and light con-
tinued through the Middle Ages, which
was rife with war and violence but also
saw the rise of the Renaissance (15th
to 16th centuries) and later the Enlight-
enment (17th to 18th centuries), which
together brought new cultural and sci-
entific achievements.

But even in those illuminated peri-
ods, there were pockets of darkness.
Enlightenment philosophers thought
that human ill would be cured with
clear thinking, but their successors in
the human sciences discovered there
were ancient hatreds and deeply root-
ed fears that continued to provide “rea-
sons” for war, oppression, secrecy and
tyranny.

December Checklist:

✓ Make my daughter a Hadassah Life Member for Hanukkah!
✓ Book that trip to Israel!
✓ Tell Hadassah Magazine how much I love the new look!
✓ Write check to keep Hadassah Magazine going strong!

If you’re a life member, your membership covers delivery of Hadassah Magazine for an average of 5 1/2 years. After that, you’re receiving it for free. If you’re not already a donor, please consider a contribution of at least $18 to the Hadassah Magazine Circle now, to help us cover our costs.

(More is even better!)
Being Jewish at Christmas

When the December Dilemma isn’t such a dilemma

By Liz Polay-Wettengel

W

e usually think of the December holidays as a time for joy—light and love and family and tons of delicious food. But there is a tension in the air as many interfaith families face the December dilemma, that is, the debate about the role of Christmas in American house- holds with spouses and extended families of different faiths. It’s a dilemma for many outside our own families as well. Many of us want to break bread with Nana and celebrate the Festival of Lights, plus more from the traditions of my husband, Dave, and his family. But just as our Jewish traditions are important to us, so are the traditions of our interfaith families. The December dilemma is not just one that we have to decide about the December holidays. It’s also important to us as a family. It’s not just about our holiday traditions but also about how we want to celebrate Christmas in general. We want to make sure that our children are comfortable and happy no matter what faith tradition they identify with.

I decided together. That is the important part. We have conversations and make decisions about these issues that are comfortable for us both. This helps us avoid the dreaded dilemma part of the December holidays. Talking about faith alongside ritual and religious celebration is important for all aspects of being an interfaith family, not just during the December holidays.

I would urge all interfaith families to have conversations about Christmas trees and dreidels, and if you are brave enough, talk in-depth about the two holidays and their meanings in their respective religious realms. There are tools available to help guide the conversations (interfaithfamily.com offers many). Once you come to conclusions that are right for your family, the dilemma won’t seem so daunting.

Liz Polay-Wettengel is the national director of marketing and communications for InterfaithFamily, an organization that supports interfaith families exploring Jewish life.

Hanukkah at the Bedside

Finding unexpected light as a loved one nears the end

By Abigail Pogrebin

S

itting in the Chicago hospital room where my father-in-law, Milton Shapiro, has often resided since November crystallizes the meaning of Hanukkah. So many rabbinic texts have talked to me about light. And I see it there. My father-in-law, my mother-in-law Phyllis, and their twin daughters, Sharon and Bern, both of whom also live in Chicago, never leave. They just sit, read or play word games on their iPads. They worry and chat, knit and parse blood-pressure readings and di- alysis cycles. They don’t tire or grow restless; they just stay. When Dave and I fly in from New York with our chil- dren, Ben and Molly, during Hanuk- kah, we all camp out at the hospital, too. As I watch Milt battle a failing kidney in his green patient gown, all the holiday metaphors rush to mind: the miracle of the oil lasting one more day; the miracle of doctors who keep trying; the miracle of a family that nev- er leaves your side. Each person who shows up at the hospital—niece, broth- er-in-law, friend—seems like another candle, and the room grows palpably brighter with each arrival.

We add another candle to the me- norah that night, when we get home to Phyllis’s condo. I’ve read so many teachings about adding light on this chag urim (Festival of Lights), how we illuminate the darkest time of year and trust there will be a brighter day. “Jews light lights not to banish the dark- ness,” writes Rabbi Barbara Penzner in A Guide to Jewish Practice, “but to be reminded of the miracles of every- day life.” I call Rabbi Mychal Springer to ask her about Hanukkah light—specifi- cally the dispute between ancient rab- bins Hillel and Shammai over how to properly light a menorah. Hillel’s appro-ach, which virtually every Jew fol- lows today, adds one candle each night to build up to eight. Shammai’s way, by contrast, lights all eight candles the first night and decreases one each day to end up with one. “While I’ve only known the Hillel way, my beloved teacher, Rabbi Pogrebin prefers Shammai’s,” Springer reminds me that we treasure that light for as long as it remains, without needing to pretend that it’s going to last forever.” Springer says. I summon her words during Milt’s waning days.

The menorah itself offers another Milt metaphor. Jews usually light Hanukkah candles in a cluster of family or friends. A menorah gathers us. So does a sick parent. “Every night of Ha- nukkah, according to Shammai, we’re witnessing that there’s less light,” says Springer, “but the people are still to- gether, night after night, and the di- minishment of light is possible, or tolerable, because of the people being together. There’s a commitment to not walking away that brings light. As the light is dimmed, the people keep coming back.” And so we do. We keep return- ing to Milt, even when he’s moved from hospital to nursing home to hospice.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, a seminal thinker and social justice activist of the 20th century, wrote in his essay, “No Religion is an Island”: “We are called to bring together the sparks to preserve single moments of radiance and keep them alive in our lives, to defy absurdity and despair, and to wait for God to say again: Let there be light. And there will be light.” Maybe it’s because I’m watch- ing my children grow up, or seeing my father-in-law falter, but I want so much “to preserve single moments of radiance.” So I’m sappy about these holiday symbols—the enduring me- norah, the lifted darkness, the wax- ing and waning flames. Hanukkah makes me right where I am.

This piece was adapted from Abigail Pogrebin’s new book, My Jewish Year: 18 Holidays, One Wondering Jew.
Supreme Champion of Justice, Gender Rights and Inclusivity

Ruth Bader Ginsburg invokes the ‘incomparable privilege’ of serving on the Highest Court in the Land | By Rahel Musleah

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, icon and iconoclast, is not above getting starry-eyed herself. In her chambers, chock-full of photographs, artwork, awards and memorabilia, she singles out a picture of herself with Placido Domingo at Harvard University’s commencement in 2011, when they both received honorary degrees. Though she knew they would be seated next to each other, she wasn’t told that the opera superstar would be serenading her—an opera devotee—with an adaptation of Verdi’s “Celeste Aida.”

“That’s a portrait of a woman in ecstasy,” she says. On a personal level, the degree was a restitution of sorts for the Harvard diploma she gave up 57 years ago when she transferred to Columbia University in her third year of law school to be with her husband, Martin, who had taken a job as a tax attorney in New York City. On a broader level, she points to the graduation speaker seated in the first row of the photo, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, as “a sign of the changing times.”

A fierce champion of justice, gender equality, individual dignity and inclusivity, Ginsburg, 83, has vigorously shaped those changing times. As a co-founder and advocate at the American Civil Liberties Union Women’s Rights Project from 1972 to 1980, she argued six landmark cases in front of the Supreme Court, winning five. In her 23 years on the Supreme Court bench, she has issued both majority opinions as well as vehement dissents against pay, race and gender discrimination and in favor of affirmative action, voting and reproductive rights. “To be part of the decision-making of this court—that is an incomparable privilege,” she says. “It’s by far the hardest and best job I’ve ever had.”

In the preface to her new book, My Own Words, Ginsburg writes that she was fortunate to have ridden the feminist wave. The book features a selection of writings and speeches on wide-ranging topics, from gender equality and Jewish identity to law and opera, and is co-written with Mary Hartnett and Wendy Williams, law professors whose authorized biography of Ginsburg is in the works. Also forthcoming, Natalie Portman will portray her in the film On the Basis of Sex, about a 1971 case Ginsburg litigated.

Among her heroes, she counts civil rights activist and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, whose chambers she inherited. A silver mezuzah adorns her door, adjacent to a hall closet holding three robes and a collection of collars (jabots) that she varies depending on whether she votes with the majority (“appropriately glittery”) or dissents (beaded black velvet). The white one she wears most often is a gift from South African activist and jurist Albie Sachs.

Dressed in blue slacks, a blue-and-white shawl over a patterned blouse and blue stud earrings—with the legendary scrunchie holding back her hair—Ginsburg exudes a polite demeanor and diminutive appearance, which belies her strong and fearless voice on the court. In 2013, when the court struck down portions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in Shelby County v. Holder, her outspoken dissent captivated young social media activists, who posted an Instagram image captioned “Can’t Spell Truth without Ruth” and dubbed her “Notorious R.B.G.” Her reputation has spawned T-shirts and tattoos, coloring books and Halloween costumes as well as a best-selling book (Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg by Irin Carmon and Shana Knizhnik).
COURTESY OF COLLECTION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

The Justice is remeasured, she describes herself as shy and quiet, and sober on the bench. But she loves a good joke: Her husband and Supreme Court best buddy Antonin Scalia, both deceased now, were “funny fellows,” famously able to make her laugh.

She is deadly serious about the Constitution and carries a copy in her handbag. In noting that the 14th Amendment includes her favorite clause—“Nor shall any state deny to any person the equal protection of the law”—she launches into a short lecture: “We start the Constitution with the words, ‘We the people.’ Think back to who we were in the beginning. I wasn’t there. No person held in human bondage was there. Native Americans weren’t there. But the genius of the Constitution is that in over the two centuries that we’ve existed, ‘We the people’ has become more and more expansive and has come to include the left-out people, including women. So I celebrate what the Constitution has become over the years.”

Her admiration for the Bill of Rights stretches back 70 years to the first piece she ever published, in the newspaper of P.S. 38 in Brooklyn, N.Y., where she grew up. The article, which appears as she ever published, in the newspaper of P.S. 38 in Brooklyn in 1946, describes five great documents: the Ten Commandments, the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence and the United Nations Charter.

Her parents—Celia, a homemaker, and Nathan, a furrier who later worked in a men’s clothing store—were both products of immigrant families that escaped Eastern Europe. Her mother instilled in her a love of reading and saving $8,000 for her daughter’s college education.

Ginsburg’s childhood, however, was marred by loss. Her older sister, Marilyn, died of meningitis at age 6. Her mother instilled in her a love of reading and saving $8,000 for her daughter’s college education.

Though she is not religiously observant, Ginsburg stresses that Jewish values inform her identity. Several works of art in her chambers frame the biblical words, Tzedek, tzedek tirsdof (Justice, justice you shall pursue). “Being Jewish is part of what I am just as being a woman is part of what I am,” she says, adding a caveat: “I can’t say that I decide cases one way or another because of my Jewish heritage.”

She considers one of her “big achievements”—with the aid of Justice Stephen Breyer, who is also Jewish—to be getting the court not to sit on the first day of Rosh Hashanah and on Yom Kippur. “We had the great Yom Kippur conference,” she says. What persuaded former Chief Justice William Rehnquist was the contention that some of the lawyers who would come before them would have to choose between observing their religious faith and presenting the arguments they had been practicing for months.

A life member of Hadassah (a gift from her mother-in-law), Ginsburg says she wished she knew as a teenager about a letter written by Hadassah founder Henrietta Szold—one of seven daughters— to Fhyam Peretz, who offered to say Kaddish in Szold’s stead following her mother’s death. “It was a pitch-perfect pundown, but she did it so eloquently. She said, ‘I understand how kind your offer is, but my mother would want me and my sisters to say the prayer.’”

Another Jewish connection includes Ginsburg’s regular Supreme Court appearance with participants of Hadassah’s Swearing-In Program, organized for Hadassah members who are lawyers by the Center for Attorneys’ Councils.

Earlier this year, Ginsburg co-authored a feminist reading of the Passover story with Lauren Holtzblatt, associate rabbi of Adas Israel in Washington, D.C. Their interpretation highlighted the pivotal role of five brave but “invisible” women.

“Being part of a people in the shadows for so long has given her the mission to uplift and give voice to others who are downtrodden,” says Holtzblatt. “That’s an important thread for her.”

GINSBURG’S BIOGRAPHY IS REPLETE WITH “FIRSTS” AND “Fews.” First in her class at James Madison High School in Brooklyn; first at Cornell University, with a bachelor’s degree in government; one of only nine women of 300 students at Harvard Law School; first female member of Harvard Law Review; first in her class at Columbia Law School; second woman to teach law at Rutgers University in New Jersey; first female professor at Columbia Law School to earn tenure; second female and first Jewish woman on the Supreme Court. In 2013, she was the first Supreme Court justice to officiate at a same-sex wedding. Now the senior justice among the triumvirate of women, she says she plans to stay as long as she can do the job “full steam.”

Along with all her professional distinction, Ginsburg is proud of her familial ones as well. In their 56 years of marriage, she and her husband supported each other wholeheartedly, with Marty taking on all the culinary duties in the home. Early on, she helped him through law school as he overcame testicular cancer and balanced her own studies with caring for their newborn daughter, Jane, who is now a professor at Columbia Law School. Son James is founder and president of a classical music recording company in Chicago. She is now a grandmother of four.

Despite her stellar achievements, Ginsburg could not find a job upon her law school graduation in 1959. No one would overlook her triple “handicaps”: She was a woman, a mother and a Jew. Finally, Federal District Court Judge Edmund Palmieri hired her. After her two-year clerkship, she began dividing her time between New York and Sweden, which had become her second home in freeing men and women from gender roles. She learned the language fluently enough to do the research for her book Civil Procedure in Sweden in 1965.

Ginsburg served on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, appointed by Jimmy Carter in 1980, until she joined the Supreme Court.

Neither her age nor her health issues nor losing her beloved husband to cancer in 2010 has slowed her down. She herself recovered from cancer twice without missing a day of court, works twice a week in the Supreme Court gym, watches the evening news while on the elliptical and does 20 pushes a day. Her apartment at the Watergate is across from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, home to the Washington National Opera. She often visits backstage and has been onstage three times as a super, the opera equivalent of an extra.

Her portrait on the cover of My Own Words is far from the rapt “woman in ecstasy” on her mantel. Her sol- emn, penetrating demeanor befits the focus of a change-maker, one who con- tinues to deliberate the serious issues of our times.

Rahel Musleh, a regular contributor to Hadassah Magazine, also turns Jewish tours to India

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Bonnie Tucker, a middle-aged writer from Houston, has multiple sclerosis, an often debilitating disease of the central nervous system that can cause fatigue, numbness, tingling and pain. Her symptoms began when she was in her 30s, but it took almost a decade for Tucker to receive a diagnosis.

Jewish educator Karen Feit, 66, of Bellport, N.Y., thought her chest pains—far different from those she believed were typical of a heart attack—were caused by anxiety. Yet, recalling information from Hadassah’s heart health program, she went to the hospital and found she had suffered an acute myocardial infarction—a heart attack. These cases illustrate the continuing failure of physicians to recognize and treat illnesses in women, and the necessity for greater focus on gender medicine—the growing field of research aimed at analyzing the different medical needs of men and women. This vacuum is why Hadassah launched the Coalition for Women’s Health Equity earlier this year, gathering an array of organizations to address the issue.

“Hadassah has convened this coalition because we needed to do something about the pervasive gender disparities throughout the health care system,” says Ellen Hershkin, national president of Hadassah. “We are driven to advocate for women’s health equity with a well-coordinated and unified force that will fight for equality—from prevention and diagnosis to treatment and cure.”

Currently, there are 20 members of the coalition, including the American Association of University Women, American Heart Association, National Organization for Women, National Women’s Law Center, National Partnership for Women & Families, WomenAgainstAlzheimer’s and Black Women’s Health Imperative, among others. Coalition members share information and collaborate on advocacy efforts, and the group is planning a joint legislative agenda for 2017.

In May, a congressional briefing entitled “From Prevention to Cure: Understanding the Impact of Gender Inequity in Health” brought together coalition member organizations and women’s health experts to address risks and make recommendations for legislation surrounding women’s health equity. “Women, mothers in particular, are the cornerstone of family health,” Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) said at the event. “If we really want to improve healthy outcomes in this great country of ours, then we need to do more to achieve gender equity in health education and health research.”

Experts note that women and men can present different symptoms for the same diseases and react differently to drugs and medical devices. “Women are not just small men,” says Dr. Marek Glezerman, president of the International Society for Gender Medicine and director of the Research Center for Gender Medicine at the Rabin Medical Center in Israel. Dr. Glezerman’s book, Gender Medicine: The Groundbreaking New Science of Gender- and Sex-Based Diagnosis and Treatment, originally in Hebrew, was published in English in July.

“We find ourselves in a situation where we adopt our knowledge from half of the population to the other half,”
Working Together: The Coalition for Women’s Health Equity’s congressional briefing brought together women’s health experts and advocates, including (from right) Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla); Ellen Hershkin, Hadassah national [eml]; Dr. Monica Mallampalli, vice president of scientific affairs at the Society for Women’s Health Research; Linda Golcer Blount, head of the Black Women’s Health Imperative; Dr. Pamela Ouyang of John Hopkins Women’s Cardiovascular Health Center; and Katherine Leon, a heart attack survivor.

He says, “That may cause problems in diagnosis and treatment and may be dangerous and even sometimes fatal.”

Dr. Glezerman cites pain treatment as an example of an issue that is too often mishandled. Women are more likely than men to suffer from autoimmune diseases, frequently associated with pain, yet most pain-management drugs have been tested only on men. The result is that women can be either under- or overtreated. Similar discrepancies pertain to heart disease, which is the No. 1 killer of women in the United States. Yet today only one-third of cardiac research subjects are women.

The most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort, according to the American Heart Association. But women are more likely than men to exhibit other symptoms. “Women can experience a heart attack without chest pressure,” says Dr. Neica Goldberg, medical director for the Joan H. Tisch Center for Women’s Health at NYU Langone Medical Center in New York.

Dr. Goldberg says symptoms in women can include pain in the lower chest or upper abdomen, nausea, jaw pain, lightheadedness or fainting, upper-back pressure or extreme fatigue. “Women can experience a heart attack—and she had recently lost her job.

That July, on the way home from Hadassah’s 2014 national convention in Las Vegas, the sensations came back and, once more, she attributed them to anxiety and even post-convention exhaustion. Then Feit remembered something she had learned from Every Beat Counts: Hadassah’s Heart Health Program, that women’s heart disease symptoms differ from men’s.

Feit went to her local emergency room and, within 30 minutes, she underwent an EKG and had a stent implanted. She had, in fact, suffered a heart attack without realizing it.

Even though cardiovascular disease and stroke are the cause of one out of every three women’s deaths in the United States, women often assume the symptoms are caused by less life-threatening conditions—from acid reflux to anxiety and even normal aging. “They do this because they are scared and because they put their families first,” Dr. Goldberg says. “There are still many women who are shocked that they could be having a heart attack.”

Studies also show that medical providers are more likely to attribute women’s pain symptoms to psychological causes and men’s symptoms to physical or neurological conditions. Bonnie Tucker had repeatedly complained to medical professionals about numbness in her feet and legs—a common indicator of MS—but none of the doctors she saw had a medical explanation for her symptoms. In November 1988, Tucker’s problems worsened and her then-husband, Ed, a lawyer, called a neurologist client who ran blood tests and reported the diagnosis.

“No one ever suggested multiple sclerosis before,” Tucker says. “Doctors would say, ‘Well, you’re pregnant so you’re tired, or you have children so you’re tired.’ In fact, recalls Tucker, about a year before her diagnosis, she complained to her doctor about numbness in her legs, and he said, “Just don’t wear high heels.”

“Even though MS is such a serious condition, I was so happy to have that diagnosis because it meant I wasn’t going crazy,” says Tucker, whose disease is now under control through injections she gives herself several times a week.

Elisabeth Finch, 35, a Los Angeles-based writer for the television show Grey’s Anatomy, penned a story for Elle magazine last year about an orthopedic surgeon who dismissed the pain in her knee and joked that he “specialized in neurotic Jewish women.” Finch went to another surgeon, who operated on the cartilage in her knee and found a tumor—and then more on her spine and kidneys. Finch has been through chemothera- py and still undergoes regular check-ups to monitor a cluster of cancer cells in her spine.

Indeed, the illnesses these women are experiencing—MS, heart disease and cancer—are among the women’s health issues most critically in need of research, according to Nancy Adler, Ph.D., a social psychologist and former chair of the National Institutes of Health’s Committee on Women’s Health Research, which published the 2010 report “Women’s Health Research: Progress, Pitfalls and Promise.”

90% OF RESEARCHERS USE ONLY MALE ANIMAL TEST SUBJECTS AS THEIR NORM

THE #1 KILLER OF WOMEN

IS HEART DISEASE BUT ONLY ONE-THIRD OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS ARE WOMEN

8 OUT OF 10 AREAS OF MEDICAL RESEARCH STUDIED INCLUDED MORE MALE THAN FEMALE TEST SUBJECTS

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She also points to other research needs, including depression and auto-immune diseases such as lupus.

The National Institutes of Health first announced a policy to include more women in clinical trials in 1986. Efforts were expanded after a 1990 report by the General Accounting Office—Congress’s research arm—found little change in medical research in the previous four years. Since then, women gradually have been included in trials, and a number of offices that fund and share information on women’s health have been created at major federal agencies.

“A key reason why progress has been slow is that the male model was the default, even down to the animal research, since women’s bodies were seen to be more complex because of the menstrual cycle,” says Adler, director of the Center for Health and Medicine Research at the Jacobs Institute of Women’s Health.

Following the release of the 2010 journal editors, encouraging them to report separate data for men and women. “We got pushback on expense because of how many people would be needed,” she says. “It’s a tradeoff. It will be more expensive, but we will have more data on whether treatments work for both men and women. And we need that because we have been systematically shortchanging women.”

Even as efforts lag, newer issues have emerged, such as the specific needs of gay and transgender women, says Dr. Susan Wood, director of the Jacobs Institute of Women’s Health at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and former director of the Food and Drug Administration’s Office of Women’s Health. “We need to ask more sophisticated questions, and there is much more to be done at the clinical and policy levels,” she says.

In a 2014 article in Nature magazine, NIH head Dr. Francis Collins and Dr. Janine Clayton, head of the NIH Office of Research on Women’s Health, emphasized the value of including male and female animals in early research. They noted that including women in clinical trials had produced much-needed information, such as how preventive effects of low-dose aspirin differed depending on age and gender, and how different doses of a popular insomnia drug are used in women and men. However, Drs. Collins and Clayton wrote in the Nature article that there has “not been a corresponding revolution in experimental design and analyses in cell and animal research—despite multiple calls to action.”

To help bring about new research modalities, the NIH is requiring funding applicants to include male and female cells and lab animals in proposed pre-clinical studies, unless they can show why they are not needed.

Alina Salganicoff, vice president and director of Women’s Health Policy at the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, a health policy research and advocacy organization, says that while such evidence is critical to informing policy and clinical practice, “there is a lot more work to do.”

In January 2016, the FDA released the Women’s Health Research Roadmap. The plan outlines seven priority areas that will advance understanding of women’s health issues, from safety and clinical study design to data analysis and emerging technologies.

Drs. Collins and Clayton wrote, “The time has come to run this critical information...”

The National Institutes of Health, now known as the Health and Medicine Division of the National Institutes of Health, emphasized the value of including male and female animals in early research. They noted that including women in clinical trials had produced much-needed information, such as how preventive effects of low-dose aspirin differed depending on age and gender, and how different doses of a popular insomnia drug are used in women and men. Women’s health outcomes are different, “resulting in a 10% to 20% increase in cost of care,” she says, noting that such evidence is critical to determining insurance coverage.

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Meanwhile, Hadassah’s Coalition for Women’s Health Equity is planning a one-day conference in Washington, D.C., to coincide with National Women’s Health Week in mid-May. “We plan to hit the ground running in 2017—engaging the 115th Congress in our work to address inequities in quality of care, funding, support and gaps in women’s health research forward if it is passed. The Research for All Act of 2015 would provide statutory authorities to the NIH’s new policy on the inclusion of female cells and animals in pre-clinical research as well as mandate consistent progress reports.

The Advancing NIH Strategic Planning and Representation in Medical Research Act would support the NIH’s new pre-clinical policy, greater inclusion of women in later-stage research and increased attention to research on pregnant women and sexual minorities.

Good ideas also need to move from thinking to practice, says advocates. “We need to figure out who will be implementing the many laws that have been created to help improve women’s health equity,” says Linda Goler Blount, head of the Black Women’s Health Imperative.

Achieving equity in medicine has a long way to go, Herskjin acknowledges, “but that is why we convened the coalition—to combine our power and amplify our voices, to help us achieve more together than we could working on our own.”

Fran Kritz is a freelance writer based in Washington, D.C.
My mother and father named me Aron, but my father said they should have named me What Have You Done, and my uncle told everyone they should have called me What Were You Thinking. I broke medicine bottles by crashing them together and let the neighbors’ animals loose from pens. My mother said my father shouldn’t beat such a small boy, but my father said that one misfortune was never enough for me, and my uncle told her that my kind of craziness was like stealing from the rest of the family.

When I complained about it my mother reminded me I had only myself to blame, and that in our family the cure for a toothache was to slap the other side of your face. My mother said my father shouldn’t beat such a small boy, but my father said that one misfortune was never enough for me, and my uncle told her that my kind of craziness was like stealing from the rest of the family.

When I complained about it my mother reminded me I had only myself to blame, and that in our family the cure for a toothache was to slap the other side of your face. My older brother was always saying we all went without candles for our backsides or pillows for our heads. Why didn’t he complain some more, my mother suggested. Maybe she could light the stove with his complaints.

My uncle was my mother’s brother and he was the one they should have called Sh’maya because I did so many things that made him put his finger to his nose as a warning and say, “God has heard.” We shared a house with another family in Panevzys near the Lithuanian border. We lived in the front room with a four-paned window and a big stove with a tin sheet on top. Our father was always off looking for money. For a while he sold animal hides. Our mother wished he would do something else, but he always said the pope and the peasant each had their own work. She washed other people’s floors and when she left for the day our neighbors did whatever they wanted to us. They stole our food and threw our things into the street. Then she came home exhausted and had to fight with them about how they’d treated us, while I hid behind the rubbish pile in the courtyard.

Sh’maya only looks out for himself, my uncle always said, but I never wanted to be like that. I lectured myself on

Aron, an 8-year-old Jewish child who recently moved with his family from a small town in Poland to Warsaw, is finding his life to be the most difficult thing in the world. It’s not just the obvious problems—poverty, lack of privacy, being terrorized by older boys. It is also about Aron feeling insignificant and constantly disappointing himself.

In The Book of Aron, Jim Shepard’s poignant tale, Aron’s father, mother, brothers and uncle describe him as a selfish, mischievous klutz who can’t learn his alef-beys. They are hard-pressed to recognize any redeeming qualities in him. Ironically, it is only after the Germans bomb the city and build a ghetto around the Jews that Aron’s small size and invisibility transform him into a valuable family player who can salvage or steal the water, wood or food they need to survive. Written from a child’s simple, direct point of view, the story not only paints a child’s precious world but also the destruction of the larger community. The Book of Aron has won several awards, the most recent being the 2016 Harold U. Ribalow Prize, Hadassah Magazine’s annual literary award.

The Book of Aron
2016 Harold U. Ribalow Prize Winner
By Jim Shepard
Illustrations by Yevgenia Nayberg

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Y et when my younger brother was born, I told my mother I wanted him thrown into the chicken coop. I was glum that whole year, when I was four, because of an infected vaccination on my arm. My mother said I played alone even when other kids were about. Two years went by without my learning a thing. I didn't know how to swim or other kids were about. Two years went by without my learning a thing. I didn't know how to swim or other kids were about. Two years went by without my learning a thing. I didn't know how to swim or other kids were about. Two years went by without my learning a thing. I didn't know how to swim or other kids were about. Two years went by without my learning a thing. I didn't know how to swim or other kids were about. Two years went by without my learning a thing. I didn't know how to swim or other kids were about. Two years went by without my learning a thing. I didn't know how to swim or other kids were about. Two years went by without my learning a thing. I didn't know how to swim or other kids were about. Two years went by without my learning a thing.

I couldn't do anything at all. It was terrible to have to be the person I was. I made lists of ways I could improve. Years went by without my learning a thing. I didn't know how to swim or other kids were about. Two years went by without my learning a thing. I didn't know how to swim or other kids were about.

A nd in public school I met my first friend, whose name was Yuill. I liked him. Like me, he had no future. He was always running somewhere with his nose dripping. We made rafts to put in the river and practiced long-distance spitting. He called me Sh’maya too and I called him Puhzer. When he wasn’t well-behaved he was clever enough to keep the teacher from catching on.

That summer a card arrived for my father from his cousin in Warsaw, telling him there was work in his factory. The factory made fabric out of cotton thread. My father hitched a ride to the city in a truck full of grease and then sent for us. He moved us to 21 Zamenhofa Street, Apartment no. 6—my mother had us each memorize the address so we could find it when we got lost—and my younger brother, who had a bad lung, spent his days at the back window looking out at the garbage bins.

Because it was summer I was expected to work at the factory, so far away that we had to ride the trolley. I was shut up in a little room with no windows and four older boys and set to finishing the fabrics. The bolts had to be scraped until they acquired a grain like you found on winter stockings. Each of them took hours and someone as small as me had to lean his chest onto the blade to scrape with enough force. On hot days sweat ran off me like rain off a roof. The other boys said things like, “What a fine young man from the country we now have in our midst; he’s clearly going to be a big wheel in town,” and I thought, am I only here so they can make fun of me? And I refused to go back.

My father said he would give me such a beating that it would hurt to raise my eyebrows, but while I sat there like a mouse under the broom my mother stopped him and said there was no need to be so hard on him and that he was being mori
ing in a few weeks anyway. My father said I’d only been given a partial hiding and she told him that would do for now, and that night once they started screeching I crept to their beds and kissed her goodnight and pulled the blanket from his feet so that he’d maybe catch a chill.

Because I couldn’t sleep I helped her with the day’s first chores, and she told everyone she was lucky to have a son who didn’t mind rising so early. I worked hard and kept her company. I emptied her wash buckets and fetched hot compresses for my brother’s chest. She asked if this wasn’t much better than breaking bottles and getting into trouble, and I told her it was.

When she told my father at least now their children were better behaved he told her that not one of us looked either well-fed or good-tempered. He joked at dinner that she looked like a washerwoman. “Go to a restaurant,” she said in response. She later told me that when she was young she never complained, so her mother would always know who her best child was and keep her near. So I became myself only once the lights went out, and in the mornings went back to pretending things were okay.

I told a fairy tale. He made his own barnyard noises. When my mother complained to the teacher that a classmate had called me a dirty Jew, my teacher said, “Well he is, isn’t he?” and from then on she made me take weekly baths. I stayed at that school until another teacher twisted a girl’s ear until he tore it, and then my mother moved me back to a kheyder where they also taught Polish, two trolley stops away. But I still felt stuck from following instruction like a dog from a stick. My new teacher asked my mother what anyone could do with a kid who was so full of answers. He’s like a fox, this one, he said, he’s eight going on eighty. And when she reported the meeting to my father he gave me another hiding. That night she came to my bedside and sat and asked me to explain myself and at first I couldn’t answer, and then I finally told her that I had figured out that most people didn’t under

I had figured out that most people didn’t understand me and that those who did wouldn’t help.

“See? You don’t only care about yourself,” she whis
ered when she came to wake me the next morning. She put her lips to my forehead and her hand to my cheek. When she touched me like that, it was as if the person everyone had thrown away. And while he was gone, I didn’t let her know that I was already awake.

[My brother] loved the radio and it was because of him that I first heard Janusz Korczak’s show. Thursday afternoons I had to sit with him and we could hear it through the wall, since our neighbor’s wife was hard of hearing.

The show was called The Old Doctor and I liked it because even though he complained about how alone he was, he al
ever wanted to know more about other people, especially kids. I also liked that I never knew what to expect. Some
met Lutek one evening when I sat near some kids I didn’t know and they told me to leave but I didn’t. He had a rabbit-skin cap with earflaps and when one of the kids asked where he got it he said that he’d found it between the kid’s mother’s legs, so they started pushing him around. They knocked him into me, so I shoved the kid who’d done it and he landed on his back and head on the paving stones.

The week before Passover we set giant pots of water to boil on the stove and we pushed all the bed linens and gar

tments we’d collected from her customers into two barrels with metal rims and she lathered everything with a yellow block of soap before we rinsed it all and ran it through the wringer and dragged all that wet laundry in baske
ted up to the attic, where she’d strung ropes in every direction under the rafters. Since we opened the windows for the cross-breezes, she couldn’t rest that night and whispered to me about the gange that specialized in crossing rooftops to steal laundry, so I slept up there so that she could relax.
The other kids chased us and Lutek led me into a cellarway hidden by a coal chute and they all ran by. I asked how he’d found it and he said he’d been hiding since before I was born.

My mother was happy I’d made a friend but soon upset that I was never around to watch my younger brother once Lutek took charge of my education. He showed me how to steal from the vegetable carts, and how one of us by making a commotion could hide what the other was doing, even when the peddlers were watching out for one another. With a French pamphlet he took from a bookstore I didn’t know anything about girls, and discovered I knew so little that I didn’t even know what he was talking about. After he had cursed some filthy Russians he also said I didn’t know anything about politics, which was also true.

He taught me that no one else’s problems should get in the way of my having a good time. I told him about all the trouble I’d gotten into with Yudl, including the broken school building liked the air raids except one whose mother was invaded. I didn’t believe him, so he pointed at the window, which had had an anti-aircraft battery moved onto its roof, and said, “You’ll hear it.”

There were air raid sirens at night but for a few weeks we didn’t believe him, so he pointed at the building where his apartment was, and said, “Come to the radio, you’ll hear it.”

People had spent the day before tapping up windows and running through the streets buying up food. In the morning our teacher told us that as of the next day our school, which had had an anti-aircraft battery moved onto its roof, was under military control, that we should leave our registration books to be signed, and that we would see after the war. We wanted to go to the roof to view the anti-aircraft guns but a soldier wouldn’t let us on the staircase.

My mother sat against the wall with her arms around me and whenever I stood to stretch my leg she asked where I was going. My father and brothers sat against the opposite wall. After three days things quieted and someone came down the stairs and shouted that Warsaw had surrendered. My mother told us not to leave my brothers and I climbed out into the street.

Dust and soot hung in the air. There were giant craters made by the artillery shells. Dust and soot hung in the air. There were giant craters made by the artillery shells. Dust and soot hung in the air. There were giant craters made by the artillery shells. Dust and soot hung in the air. There were giant craters made by the artillery shells. Dust and soot hung in the air. There were giant craters made by the artillery shells. Dust and soot hung in the air. There were giant craters made by the artillery shells. Dust and soot hung in the air. There were giant craters made by the artillery shells. Dust and soot hung in the air. There were giant craters made by the artillery shells.

**LUTEK TAUGHT ME THAT NO ONE ELSE’S PROBLEMS SHOULD GET IN THE WAY OF OUR HAVING A GOOD TIME.**

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Dust and soot hung in the air. There were giant craters in the intersection. The big tree on the corner had blown all apart. Our back courtyard was covered with broken glass. Down Gesia Street something was still burning.

My mother led us back up to our apartment, which only had some broken windows. She sent us out to look for planks to board them up, so I walked over to Lutek’s neighborhood. He threw his arm around me and grinned and said, “Well, we survived the war.” I told him what we were looking for and he led me to an alley fence that was blown apart. Together we brought home so many planks that my father told my mother to leave me alone whenever I wanted to go out during the day. We especially needed water since nothing came out of our faucets, and Lutek showed me how to steal from his building’s cistern.

We gathered anything we might need. Sometimes we stopped and saw many planks that my father told my mother to leave me alone whenever I wanted to go out during the day. We especially needed water since nothing came out of our faucets, and Lutek showed me how to steal from his building’s cistern.

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On the way home with my water I was stopped by a bald-headed man in a filthy green surgical apron who was carrying a little boy. The man had eyeglasses covered in dust and a yellowish goatee. “Where’s the shoe store that was here?” he asked. “There,” I told him, and pointed.

He looked at the smashed walls that had fallen in on one another. “I just found him in the street,” he said. The boy looked asleep. “He can’t walk on all this glass without our shoes. I have to carry him until I find something for his feet.”

I recognized his voice and said, “You’re the Old Doctor from the radio.”

“What would you have shoes at your house that might fit him?” he said. But then someone else called, “Pan Doctor! Pan Doctor!” and he turned and carried the boy off in that direction.

When the Germans marched in, the crowds were so quiet I could hear a fly that was bothering a woman a few feet away. Lutek said there was more noise at the parade on his street and that some people waved little flags with swastikas on them. At the market square the next day novegetable stalls were set up and instead more Germans unloaded crates from trucks. One talked to me in Polish. “Bring us something to drink,” he told me, and then he and his friends straddled the crates and waited.

Later that week they set up a soup kitchen and handed out free bread. The soldiers seemed to never be sure where they wanted everyone to line up. They enjoyed herd ing people from place to place. A little girl with big ears waited three hours in line with us and when she got her soup she hand ed it to Lutek and said she wasn’t hungry. After she left he told me she was a neighbor and that her parents and sister had been buried in their building during the bombardment. He said that when you saw the building you knew they wouldn’t be dug out until Christmas.

That night two Germans showed up at our door looking for furniture. They roamed around our apartment before deciding we had nothing they liked. They were next door to our neighbors with the radio and took two chairs and a soup tureen. The husband told us after they left that they’d pulled him around by the nose with pliers because he hadn’t said a courteous enough hello.

The next day the Polish police had taken over the soup kitchen and the soldiers were gone. Then the day after that the Polish police were gone and so was the soup kitchen.

Adapted from The Book of Aron by Jim Shepard, © 2015 by Jim Shepard. Published by arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of The Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.
In The Mind-Gut Connection: How the Hidden Conversation Within Our Bodies Impacts Our Mood, Our Choices, and Our Overall Health (HarperWave), Dr. Emeran Mayer, an authority on stress and digestive diseases, details the current rage in neurosciences: the powerful link between our brain and our digestive system, which is home to trillions of microorganisms that not only aid digestion but influence our emotions. Ever wonder where a gut feeling comes from or why we get butterflies in our stomach? It’s all part of a two-way communication system between the microbes that dwell in our digestive tract and the nerve cells in our brain. When that system is out of balance, we suffer from physical and mental illnesses.

In breaking down cutting-edge science for the lay reader, Dr. May- er, a gastroenterologist, introduces us to the complex world of gut microflora and its role in disease. He offers sensible dietary guidelines based on the Mediterranean style of eating that can enhance immunity and decrease risk for neurological diseases—like Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s. If you want to revamp your approach to food, learn the dangers of the typical North American diet and understand the way your body and mind operate in tandem, this book is for you.

On the first page of Dr. Joel Fuhrman’s Live Plan to Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease (HarperOne), he notes that heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. For the next 400 pages, he packs in everything you could possibly want to know about how proper nutrition can prevent or even reverse heart disease—including 100 or so pages of heart-protective recipes, which are heavy on whole plant foods.

A popular best-selling author, board-certified family physician and nutritional researcher, Dr. Fuhrman is a breezy, upbeat writer, and his information-laden book targets people diagnosed with a heart problem that isn’t caused by a valve malfunction or an arrhythmia. The book does not break new ground, but it is comprehensive and practical. He pays homage to the late nutritionist Nathan Pritikin and Dr. Dean Ornish, the giants who created dietary programs for heart disease, but suggests that his “nutritarian” approach is more balanced. You will learn why “processed foods, white flour products, sweets, oils and animal protein” are the demons of cardiovascular health and that you should shop primarily for heart-protective foods, known as NSAIDs.

The book also reveals the nutritional pitfalls of a gluten-free diet, which is low in fiber, iron and B vitamins. This information may give pause to those considering a gluten-free lifestyle after learning about its nutritional pros and cons.

The authors look at conditions such as celiac disease and irritable bowel syndrome, where gluten is an operating factor. People with celiac disease will learn a great deal about the source of their illness and how to cope with it. I especially liked the appendices, which review popular diets through the ages and give a comprehensive glossary—from alleles to villi—defining scientific terminology related to diet and health.

I have long been skeptical of the gluten-free obsession sweeping America. Gluten Exposed: The Science Behind the Hype and How to Navigate to a Healthy, Symptom-Free Life (William Morrow) by Dr. Peter H.R. Green and Rory Jones, M.S., affirms that my concerns are justified. Dr. Green, director of the Celiac Disease Center at Columbia University in New York, and Jones, a diet science writer, delve out lots of information in short, punchy paragraphs to explore “claims, conditions, treatments and diets to diagnose what gluten does and does not cause and cure.” Gluten Exposed debunks many of the beliefs about gluten—the storage protein of wheat—that gives a short but thorough exploration of the role of the brain-gut connection (territory covered in greater depth in The Mind-Gut Connection). The authors also look at the many elements that can cause symptoms attributed, sometimes erroneously, to gluten sensitivity. These include fructose, lactose and other food intolerances, pelvic floor dysfunction and medications such as ibuprofen and naproxen, known as NSAIDs.

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Food as a Path to Health has a long history. Throughout the ages, healers have turned to the earth’s bounty as a source for treating illness. These days we know that life is good as a path to health has understood that the nutritional content of a hamburger or a chocolate bar reg- ularly substitution of the 30-plus trillion cells in our body, influencing everything from mood and energy lev- els to brain function, even sex drive. And that knowledge has spawned an industry of health and diet books, typ- ically written by doctors or nutritionists and purportedly based on proven science. The following books, all re- leased in 2016, look critically at the gluten obsession and explain the mind- body connection—including what to eat to keep your memory sharp. They tell you more than you ever wanted to know about fat and give you practical information so you can improve your health by controlling what you put in your mouth.

In The Mind-Gut Connection: How the Hidden Conversation Within Our Bodies Impacts Our Mood, Our Choices, and Our Overall Health (HarperWave), Dr. Emeran Mayer, an authority on stress and digestive dis- eases, details the current rage in neurosciences: the powerful link between our brain and our digestive system, which is home to trillions of micro- organisms that not only aid digestion but influence our emotions. Ever wonder where a gut feeling comes from or why we get butterflies in our stom- ach? It’s all part of a two-way commu- nication system between the microbes that dwell in our digestive tract and the nerve cells in our brain. When that system is out of balance, we suffer from physical and mental illnesses.

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**Health**

Sylvia Tara, Ph.D., a biochemist who says she has battled fat all her life, wrote *The Secret Life of Fat:* The Science Behind The Body’s Least Understood Organ and What It Means for You (W.W. Norton) to learn more about her enemy. It’s not a diet book or a book about obesity per se. It’s the story of fat as an endocrine organ with specific, vital functions critical to maintaining life and health. Tara writes like a good science fiction author, sharing compelling stories about people’s struggles with uncontrollable fat, the personal journeys of researchers whose laboratories have uncovered the biology of fat and her own effort to manage her weight. She gives many tips for successful dieting and explains why women have a harder time than men staying slim. Her book is like comfort food for anyone carrying around a lifetime of guilt for eating an extra cookie.

**Diet: More Than 150 Healthy Recipes for the Proper Care and Feeding of Your Brain (New Page Books),” was inspired by their mother’s diagnosis with an early form of dementia. The opening chapters are mostly a review of research about foods and supplements that improve memory and reduce the risks of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. Still, the information makes a strong case for the axiom: You are what you eat. The book’s quick and easy recipes are based on the MIND diet and **Twins Judi and Shari Zucker** both hold degrees in ergonomics and have co-written six other popular diet books. Their latest, *The Memory Diet: More Than 150 Healthy Recipes for the Proper Care and Feeding of Your Brain* (New Page Books), was inspired by their mother’s diagnosis with an early form of dementia. The opening chapters are mostly a review of research about foods and supplements that improve memory and reduce the risks of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. Still, the information makes a strong case for the axiom: You are what you eat. The book’s quick and easy recipes are based on the MIND diet, the Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay, developed at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, essentially a plant-based regimen built around leafy green vegetables, nuts, berries, beans, whole grains and olive oil with some fish and chicken thrown in. If you’re looking to start eating more healthfully, regardless of whether you can remember the name of your first-grade teacher, this book can give you a start.

Carol Saline is a journalist, speaker and author of the photo-essay books *Sisters and Mothers & Daughters.* For recipes from some of these books, go to hadassahmagazine.org

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**Charitable Solicitation Disclosure Statements—Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc.**

A copy of Hadassah’s latest Financial Report is available from the Secretary of State. Charleston, WV 25305.

Virginia residents may obtain a summary of the registration and financial documents of Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc. by calling: (212) 355-7900. Documents and information submitted under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are also available for the cost of postage and copies, from the Maryland Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401. MI: Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc. is available by writing 40 Wall Street, New York, New York 10005, Att: Finance Dept. or by calling (313) 337-5000. Documents and information submitted under the Michigan Charitable Solicitations Act are also available for the cost of postage and copies, from the Michigan Secretary of State, 6th Floor, 12th Floor, Lansing, MI 48933.

MI: A copy of the current financial statement of Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc. is available by writing 40 Wall Street, New York, New York 10005, Att: Finance Dept. or by calling (800) 332-4483, OR 360-725-0378. The website is www.sos.wa.gov/charities.

Maryland: A copy of Hadassah’s latest Financial Report may be obtained from the Maryland Attorney General by calling toll-free within the state, 1 (800) HELP-FLA. (Maryland law does not imply endorsement of the solicitation by the District of Columbia, or by any officer or employee of the District of Columbia, or by any other officer or employee of any other state.)

WV: A copy of the official registration and financial information of Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc. may be obtained from the West Virginia Division of Social Justice, 12600 Charlestowne Dr., Ste. 200, Charleston, WV 25329. The certificate of registration number of Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc. is #40003848, which is valid for the period 9/1/2015-8/31/2017. Registration does not imply endorsement of the solicitation by the District of Columbia, or by any officer or employee of the District of Columbia, or by any officer or employee of any other state. The certificate of registration number of Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc. is #40003848, which is valid for the period 9/1/2015-8/31/2017. Registration does not imply endorsement of the solicitation by the District of Columbia, or by any officer or employee of the District of Columbia, or by any officer or employee of any other state. The certificate of registration number of Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc. is #40003848, which is valid for the period 9/1/2015-8/31/2017. Registration does not imply endorsement of the solicitation by the District of Columbia, or by any officer or employee of the District of Columbia, or by any officer or employee of any other state.

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**Registration Statements**

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Dr. Gielchinsky established Hadasah—Israel’s Center for Fetal Medicine five years ago, following a fellowship at King’s College London with fetal medicine trailblazer Dr. Kypros Nicolaides. Hadasah’s center is one of only a handful worldwide, a multidisciplinary unit that is leading the way in Israel to better fetal care. “Medical science has been able to diagnose problems in the fetus for some time,” says Dr. Gielchinsky. “It tested amniotic fluid for Down syndrome and looked for physical abnormalities on blurry ultrasounds. Today, with high-resolution ultrasound, more advanced imaging technologies and better understanding of what to look for, we’re able not only to identify several hundred chromosomal and genetic disorders, but also to measure blood flow and check whether the developing fetus is anemic.”

Even better, according to Dr. Gielchinsky, are the numerous ways already developed—and in development—to treat these conditions. “The majority of pregnancies are problem-free,” he says. “But in those that aren’t, there are interventions.”

“Katya” is one Hadasah patient who delivered a healthy infant after noninvasive treatment. “During a routine scan early in my pregnancy, they picked up an irregular heartbeat in my baby,” she explains. “I took medication to control his abnormal heart rhythms, a medication that passed into him through the placenta. The dose was too small to affect me, but it was enough to save his life. He was born at term, whole and perfect.”

The Doppler fetal monitor, long used to measure heartbeat, can also gauge the flow of blood through the fetus—and give timely warning if anything is amiss. “Overly rapid blood flow indicates that the blood is too dilute,” says Dr. Gielchinsky. “One likely reason is that the blood is low in hemoglobin. From its speed of flow, we can calculate the hemoglobin level and thus determine whether the fetus is anemic.”

Fetal anemia can result from an infection in the mother (Parvovirus is one well-known culprit) or when the fetus inherits from its father a type of red blood cell protein that the mother lacks—the Rhesus or Rh factor. The Rh immunoglobulin shot is preventive only; in women already sensitized to the Rh factor, it is not effective, and the mother’s immune system misidentifies this protein as an intruder, creating antibodies to destroy it and, along with it, the fetal red blood cells. “Red blood cells transport oxygen to all the body’s cells and organs,” says Dr. Gielchinsky. “If they’re inadequate, the fetal heart compensates by pumping harder, which can lead to heart failure, even brain damage. Now we can treat an anemic fetus by transfusing blood through the mother’s abdominal wall into the umbilical cord.”

If transfusing a fetus sounds futuristic, it pales in comparison with surgery inside the womb. The main surgical tool is the fetoscope—a laparoscope just millimeters thick with a fiber-optic camera and channels to insert instruments. It is slid into the uterus from a small incision in the mother’s abdomen, its camera transmitting images to the physicians. “Its most common clinical use is in a condition that affects identical twins,” says Dr. Gielchinsky. “In about one in five such pairs, the blood vessels in the shared placenta are abnormally routed and connect the circulations of the two fetuses.” Known as twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, this unique complication of monochorionic twins—twins sharing a placenta—directs volumes of blood from one fetus into the other. The “donor” twin, starved of blood, is small and less developed. The “recipient” twin is overloaded and will likely suffer congestive heart failure, trying to pump vast amounts of blood through its system.

“Medical science has been able to transplant a heart from one fetus into the other,” says Dr. Gielchinsky. “In about one in five such pairs, the blood vessels in the shared placenta are abnormally routed and connect the circulations of the two fetuses.” Known as twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, this unique complication of monochorionic twins—twins sharing a placenta—directs volumes of blood from one fetus into the other. The “donor” twin, starved of blood, is small and less developed. The “recipient” twin is overloaded and will likely suffer congestive heart failure, trying to pump vast amounts of blood through its system.

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known as CDH, affecting about one in every 2,500 babies. “CDH is a hole in the diaphragm,” explains Dr. Gielchinsky. “Stomach, spleen, liver and intestines drift up through this hole, filling the chest cavity. It’s usually repaired surgically after birth, but some affected babies won’t survive birth because their lungs are insufficiently developed. We plug the trachea or windpipe by inflating a balloon inside it—popping and removing it a few weeks later. Fluid is thus trapped inside the lungs, inflating them and staking space in which they can grow.”

CDH and twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome are life-threatening conditions. Spina bifida, a congenital disorder that occurs in one in 1,500 pregnancies, does not kill, but its impact on quality of life is devastating. When the spine fails to fuse around the spinal cord, leaving nerves exposed, infants are usually born with paralyzed lower limbs, no bladder or bowel control and, because of cerebrospinal fluid pooling in the brain, mental disabilities. Usually picked up at the 20-week scan, over 60 percent of couples choose to terminate a spina bifida pregnancy.

“Closing the spinal cord in utero can’t reverse nerve damage, but will prevent further injury and accumulation of fluid in the brain,” says Dr. Mosy Benilla, head of Hadassah Hospital’s Department of Pediatric Neurosurgery.

One way of repairing the spinal cord before birth is by opening the uterus and amniotic sac, partially extracting the fetus (kept facedown in amniotic fluid), pushing the nerve bundle back inside the vertebrae, patching the wound, replacing the fetus and closing the mother’s uterus and abdomen.

The other way is surgically more complex but far less traumatic to mother and fetus: It is keyhole surgery, performed through three fetoscopes inserted into the uterus.

“We’ve been learning the technique and will introduce it to Hadassah and Israel,” says Dr. Benilla. “Dr. Gielchinsky will get us to the fetus and its exposed spine, and I will perform the repair. It’s far from easy, but by preventing exposure of the nerves to amniotic fluid in utero and to the outer world after delivery, it gives the child a better chance of a normal IQ, better bowel and bladder control and better lower limb movement.”

With anesthesiologist Dr. Yehuda Ginosar, Drs. Benilla and Gielchinsky have traveled to São Paulo to train with one of the procedure’s pioneers, Dr. Denise Pedreira, at the Hospital Israelita Albert Einstein. São Paulo’s Jewish community established the hospital, and Hadassah International’s Brazil branch has nurtured this partnership. “Denise Pedreira has performed the operation dozens of times since bringing it to Brazil in 2013,” says Dr. Benilla. “She’ll come to Hadassah to help us launch—making Israel one of the first countries outside Brazil where it’s offered.”

Fetal medicine, like pediatric and adult medicine, already has subspecialties. Its multidisciplinary team includes anesthesiologists, neonatologists, pediatric surgeons and operating room nurses. Among key members of Hadassah’s team are Dr. Ginosar, director of Hadassah’s Mother and Child Anesthesia Unit, who performs almost all fetal anesthetics; Dr. Sma- dar Eventov-Friedman, head of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit; and operating room nurses Orna Ben-Yosef and Marina Bineashvilli.

Fetal medicine is a highly skilled multidisciplinary specialty, and Hadassah currently has staff and facilities for only one major intervention every two weeks. With a fetus increasingly treated as independent of its mother, however, fetal medicine—at Hadassah and elsewhere—will only expand.
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Compiled by Marlene Post

I know that you, as a member of Hadassah and as a loyal reader, value getting your magazine delivered to your home six times a year. We know from your responses to our reader survey earlier this year that for many, it’s the magazine you most treasure and look forward to reading.

Here at the magazine, we welcome members’ contributions—from your ideas and suggestions to your generous donations to the Hadassah Magazine Circle. If you are already a contributor to the Circle, we thank you for your continued support and ask that you consider increasing your gift this year. (See form on page 13.) If you haven’t yet joined the Circle, we would love to see your name among our annual list of supporters. Remember that every donor of $250 or more receives a copy of the Hadassah Everyday Cookbook. Please join our effort to ensure a healthy future for the magazine you love.

BMOC: BIG MAGAZINE ON CAMPUS

When Hadassah child life members and Associates turn 18, they become eligible to receive their own copy of Hadassah Magazine—just at an age when most of them head off to college. But we can send Hadassah Magazine to college-age members in their dorms and apartments! Don’t let the young people in your life miss out on our timely, fresh coverage of Israel, the American Jewish world and beyond. Please update address by emailing membership@hadassah.org.

Remembering a Great Friend

When Shimon Peres passed away on September 28 at age 93, the world lost a visionary political thinker; Israel lost one of its most enduring voices for peace; and Hadassah lost a longtime friend who had supported this organization for decades. He showed up to our events and collaborated with multiple generations of our leadership. My fellow past presidents and I had the honor of meeting with the revered statesman several times over the course of our Hadassah service. Here, I share some of my colleagues’ favorite memories of our late friend. May his memory be for a blessing.

Though I was new to the national board at the time, in 1979 Hadassah sent me to the World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem. At the meetings, Shimon Peres, always openly friendly and warm, made a point of introducing himself to me, the new girl. Among his Labor colleagues, he was the dapper cosmopolitan gentleman. Besides Peres, the only other politician I remember from that visit wearing a suit and tie was Menachem Begin, who was then the Likud prime minister.

—Carmela Kalmbanson

In the spring of 2000, I was able to make a meeting with Peres a memorable event for my grandson, Noam Aron, then a senior in a yeshiva high school, who accompanied me to a Hadassah International Conference in Jerusalem. We attended a gala dinner at which Peres was presented the Citizen of the World Award. I brought Noam over to meet the politician, and upon introducing the two, Peres turned to one of his aides and asked for a bottle of wine from his private supply. He then poured four glasses of wine—for himself, Noam, Bonnie Lipton and me—and offered a toast. Today, Noam still has the glass from which he drank that wine.

—Deborah B. Kaplan

One special memory happened a number of years ago at a Hadassah International banquet in Jerusalem. Peres arrived very late, long after dinner had been served. “What’s for dinner?” he asked, just as a waiter placed a filet of salmon in front of him. He appeared to study the fish. Wanting to make small talk, I said, “Mr. Peres, do you ever feel as if you could swim upstream?” His eyes met mine and, with a little smile, he said, “Never mind the salmon. Ayfo hayayin—where’s the wine?” We both laughed.

—Bonnie Lipton

As Hadassah international chair, like my predecessors, I was so privileged to have Peres as a cheerleader and supporter of our mission to build bridges from Israel to nations through medicine. In accepting his award in 2000, Peres remarked: “When I was asked what ministry I wanted, I said, ‘the Ministry for Nonexistent Things.’ You, too, at Hadassah are an organization for nonexistent things. You have changed them into reality. You are an army for health.”

—Nancy Falchuk

Hadassah leadership had scheduled a meeting with Peres in Israel for September 2011. National President Nancy Falchuk was set to announce that I would become the next national president of Hadassah. When we heard that his brother, Gershon Peres, had passed away, we doubted that the visit would take place as planned, but asked if we could come for a short visit to offer our condolences. Although he was not yet meeting with anyone, his response was that we could, of course, come. After all, he said, “Hadassah is part of my extended family.”

—Marcie Natan

HADASSAH HOSPITAL’S HOLIDAY COEXISTENCE

Hours after Jews light the first Hanukkah candle this year, Christians will be heading out on Christmas Eve or, as Israelis call it, Sylvester, December 31—and New Year’s off the duty rosters on their own holidays.

The real pressure this year, she says, will be at the end of Hanukkah, not the beginning. The eighth candle is lit on December 31—and New Year’s Eve or, as Israelis call it, Sylvester, is a big event for most of Israel’s ethnic groups.

As a Christian and Muslim—and, as another’s festivals—Jewish, Christian and Muslim—are sensitive to your colleagues. So “When you work as a team, it’s a team effort,” says Our hospital’s nurses—Jewish, Muslim and Christian—foster a collegial work atmosphere.

Sharing Shifts Our hospital’s nurses—Jewish, Muslim and Christian—foster a collegial work atmosphere.

While December 24 marking the start of both Hanukkah and Christmas this year, things are a little more complicated than usual for us, but we’re used to juggling schedules to accommodate everyone,” says Tal Ilar, head nurse in the Department of Internal Medicine at the Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center at Ein Kerem.

“When you work as a team, you can’t help but be culturally sensitive to your colleagues. So we raise a glass together for one another’s festivals—Jewish, Christian and Muslim—and, as far as possible, we keep people off the duty rosters on their own holidays.”

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—Wendy Tillman

HADASSAH NEWS
War and genocide are the last things that come to mind as you cross the hushed gravel courtyard of the Musée Nissim de Camondo, the Paris museum that was once the townhouse of Sephardic nobleman Count Moise de Camondo. Scion of a banking family known in the 19th century as the Rothschilds of the East, Camondo had the two requisites of a great collector—exquisite taste and vast wealth—and he deployed both in turning his mansion along Parc Monceau into a shrine to French 18th-century art and design.

But riches and social position did not spare the Camondo family the tragedies of 20th-century Europe. Though the count’s house museum flawlessly reproduces the latter and elegance of the period before World War II, it was in fact built in the shadow of World War I and opened as a museum on the eve of World War II. The illusion of the ancien régime was complete, but it was an illusion all the same. The Shoah erased the family, and all that survives is their beautiful house and the memory of their noble name.

In contrast to palatial repositories like the Louvre and Versailles, the Camondo museum is intimate, contemplative and manageable in an afternoon. A superb audio guide available in English invites you to imagine Moïse de Camondo standing at the top of the gilt-railed staircase as he waits to usher you into one of the grand public rooms on the main floor. Perhaps there would be tea in the large study, with its tall gold-framed mantel mirror flanked by a pair of gauzy Aubusson tapestries depicting rustic scenes. (Although a visitor can find a short, continuously running video in French that describes how family members were deported to Auschwitz, a Camondo family tree displayed in an upstairs bedroom; and a glossy book on the museum that includes the family history in the gift shop, the museum does not give a full accounting of the family’s fate.)

The large drawing room, which faces the garden at the back of the house, was designed around the white-and-gold oak paneling that was somehow transferred intact from a noble residence. Here hangs the collection’s most striking oil painting—a portrait of a pink-cheeked noblewoman dressed to the nines in striped satin and captured at the height of her beauty by Marie Antoinette’s court painter, Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun. In the many-windowed dining room, also overlooking the garden, a bust of a naked African woman glints on a sideboard across from the linen-draped oval table set for eight.

“He was not a maniac when it came to collecting—but close,” the museum’s chief curator, Sylvie Legrand-Rossi, said of Camondo when we sat down to chat in her surprisingly drab office on the top floor in what was once the servants’ quarters. “What’s unique about his collection is that the level of taste is so harmonious and uniformly high.”

The spirit of this great collector is most palpable in a narrow, closet-like compartment off the dining room where the incomparable collection of Buffon Sèvres dinner service is displayed in tall glass cabinets. Late in life, Camondo liked to lunch here by himself at a small round table set beside the windows. As the mood seized him, he could look out at the boxwood embroidery of his terraces that ran along the dappled park that Claude Monet so memorably paint-ed, or turn his gaze inside to row after row of porcelain plates, each precious dish and bowl painted with a different species of bird.

Though the Camondo family’s early history is unknown, they probably lived in Spain until the expulsion of 1492, then made their way east to Istanbul. The bank they founded in 1802 quickly grew to one of the largest in the Ottoman Empire, and the Camondos took their place as pillars of Istanbul’s Jewish community. But as their wealth increased, the allure of the West, with its larger prospects and more varied pleasures, proved irresistible. In 1869, when Moïse was 9, the family relocated to Paris, where he grew up in the elite Jewish circles of fin de siècle Paris.

In Paris, Camondo’s father, Nissim, and his uncle Abraham-Béhor built adjoining mansions beside Parc Monceau, which was becoming the preferred quarter for chic, deep-pocketed Jews. Though targeted for their “Oriental” opulence during the vicious outburst of anti-Semitism that followed the Dreyfus affair (1894 to 1906), the Camondo family assimilated quickly to French aristocratic culture.

“Moïse de Camondo’s assimilation took the form of a passion for French creations, particularly during the reigns of Louis XV and XVI. When he inherited the family’s mansion after his mother’s death in 1910, he decided to replace it with an airy, delicate townhouse that would not only display but also reflect the style of his ever-expanding collections. Designed by fashionable French architect René Sergent in the spirit of Marie Antoinette’s Petit Trianon at Versailles, the house was ready in 1914. Camondo’s term of happiness was brief. His marriage to French socialite Irène Cahen d’Anvers ended in divorce shortly after their two children—son and heir Nissim (named after his grandfather) and daughter Béatrice—were born. In 1917, Nissim was killed in the Great War at the...
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cence you’re familiar with the name Camondo, you’ll notice it popping up in a

That it once belonged to Marie Antoinette and is thus one of the museum’s prized possessions.

More intriguing to my untrained eye were the bathrooms and kitchens. Though the count insisted on period authenticity in his public rooms, he had his architect equip kitchen and bath with the latest modern conveniences. The black-and-white tiled kitchen puts Downton Abbey’s downstairs to shame. Even the servants dined on linen, and the ovens and rostisseries look big enough to smelt steel girders. As for the bathrooms, each is adorned with a separate tub, bidet and footbath, to say nothing of sinks and toilets, all tiled in gleaming white.

age of 25 while flying a mission for the fledgling French Air Force. Devoted as a branch of the Musée d’Orsay, Isaac de Camondo, Moïse’s first cousin, had a matchless collection of Impressionist paintings that are on display there. His name is listed as donor on many of the masterpieces—Edouard Manet’s The Fife Player, The Ballet Class by Edgar Degas, Monet’s Rouen Cathedral series. Monet’s Rouen Cathedral series. Though the count insisted on period authenticity in his public rooms, he had his architect equip kitchen and bath with the latest modern conveniences. The black-and-white tiled kitchen puts Downton Abbey’s downstairs to shame. Even the servants dined on linen, and the ovens and rostisseries look big enough to smelt steel girders. As for the bathrooms, each is adorned with a separate tub, bidet and footbath, to say nothing of sinks and toilets, all tiled in gleaming white.

a terrible end. Apparently, Camondo never considered passing the townhouse and collections to his daughter, Béatrice, who, like her mother, preferred hunting to art. Béatrice married Leon Reinach, a Jewish musician from a scholarly family (they later divorced), and bore two children, Fanny and Bertrand. Edouard Roditi, whose family was distantly related to the Camondos and moved in their social milieu, wrote in a reminiscence called Camondo’s Way that Béatrice “remained very foolishly” in Paris during the German occupation and rode in the Bois de Boulogne every day with her obligatory Star of David. “Because she had hunted some years earlier with Goering, she was quite sure that she and her family would never be molested.” She was wrong. The Gestapo hauled the family to Drancy, the concentration camp outside of Paris, and tortured them, in Roditi’s words, “to extract money and information.”

On November 20, 1943, Leon Reinach and his children were sent to Auschwitz on convoy 62. Béatrice remained at Drancy until March 4, 1944, when she was transported to Auschwitz with convoy 69. They were all murdered at Auschwitz.

During the war, the Camondo collections were transferred with those of Versailles, the Louvre and other national museums to the Loire castles. They remained there during the entire war and returned to Paris when the Musée Nissim de Camondo reopened in 1946.

It is a cruel irony that the Camondos’ house and collections survived the war intact because they belonged to France, while the family, who, as French aristocrats believed themselves safe, vanished without a trace in the Shoah, thus ending their noble lineage.


Formal Elegance Where the family dined.

The Ballet Class by Edgar Degas, Monet’s Rouen Cathedral series. Though the count insisted on period authenticity in his public rooms, he had his architect equip kitchen and bath with the latest modern conveniences. The black-and-white tiled kitchen puts Downton Abbey’s downstairs to shame. Even the servants dined on linen, and the ovens and rostisseries look big enough to smelt steel girders. As for the bathrooms, each is adorned with a separate tub, bidet and footbath, to say nothing of sinks and toilets, all tiled in gleaming white.

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It is a cruel irony that the Camondos’ house and collections survived the war intact because they belonged to France, while the family, who, as French aristocrats believed themselves safe, vanished without a trace in the Shoah, thus ending their noble lineage. David Laskin, a Seattle-based writer, is the author of The Family: A Journey Into the Heart of the 20th Century. He is the author of The Family: A Journey Into the Heart of the 20th Century.
Scripting a Jewish Heart—and Heartburn

Comedian Monica Piper brings her life story to the stage  
By Rahel Musleah

AS THE LIGHTS COME UP ON Not That Jewish, a one-woman Off-Broadway show, Emmy-award winning writer and comedian Monica Piper turns to face the audience from a bench on the stage, ostentatiously a synagogue pew. “It’s Rosh Hashanah. Now I’m here. I’m not entirely, exactly sure why,” she confides. “Every now and then I need to feel more Jewish, to be more Jewish.”

Soon, she segues into childhood memories, delivered with a comic punch. Growing up in a nonreligious show-business family in the Bronx, her mother made her dress up on the High Holidays and stand in front of their apartment building as if just returning from services. But 7-year-old neighbor Carol Bengelsdorf wasn’t buying it: “If you don’t go to temple on Rosh Hashanah,” Piper intones haughtily as Carol, “you’re not that Jewish!”

Despite its title, Not That Jewish was commissioned by the Jewish Women’s Theatre (jewishwomenstheatre.org), founded in Santa Monica in 2008. Ronda Spinak, 58, the group’s co-founder and artistic director, met Piper through a friend and approached her to create a short piece. “I immediately thought of women in babushkas dancing the hora in the street,” Piper says. But Spinak’s goal was the opposite: She had created Jewish Women’s Theatre as a place for Jewish women to send their stories. She began developing shows—each bound by a theme—that are performed by professional actors in home settings. “This was a way to revive a tradition that started in the Age of Enlightenment,” Spinak says, “when Jewish women were hosting literary, art and music salons.”

Still, Piper hesitated: “I said, Ronda, I’m not that Jewish!” Spinak responded, “Just create from the heart.” Spinak commissioned several pieces. A Shayna Meydele, about Piper’s grandmother, fit the theme of Jewish beauty. To Piper, beauty was the sound of her grandmother’s “funny, rhythmic” Yiddish words and the tolerance her grandmother modeled as she stood up for a gay couple in a bakery. For a show on gratitude, Piper felt it was important to raise Jake as a Jew and enrolled him in Hebrew school. By the end of the play, Jake gives her news that turns her world upside down—and she is forced to decide what being Jewish really means. Not That Jewish exemplifies the nonjudgmental perspective Spinak’s theater group espouses. “The only way Judaism will survive is if we look to what unifies rather than divides us,” she says.

Not That Jewish is a 90-minute exploration of what it means to be Jewish. The show, previously performed in Los Angeles, runs through January 2017 at New World Stages in Manhattan. Piper, a Santa Monica, Calif., resident who gives her age as “somewhere between Clearasil and Porcelana” and whose credits include writing for television shows Roseanne and Mad About You, says that homemaking in on herself was “thrilling and freeing.” The process helped her resolve conflicts about being a “Jew-ish” sort of woman. In the play, she reveals the complex track of her life: two failed marriages, her mother’s Alzheimer’s disease, her father’s death, her own breast cancer and becoming a mother after adopting her son.

Piper felt it was important to give Jewish women a voice that has culminated in 30 hour-long shows, each comprised of a dozen short pieces. Themes for 2017 include the power of food and acts of courage. She has also staged the stories of female rabbis and partnered with the Jewish Women’s Archive (jwa.org) to make them accessible online. “I love a show where Orthodox women are sitting next to Persian women who are sitting next to Reform women,” says Spinak. “There’s nothing better than that.”

Ronda Spinak, a regular contributor to Hadassah Magazine, also runs Jewish tours to India (explorejewishindia.com). For a longer version of this article, go to hadassahmagazine.org.

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Old-New Sound
By Alan M. Tigay

Sales and Daoud al-Kuwaiti were superstars of Iraqi music in the 1930s and 1940s, when their songs beamed from radio stations in Baghdad, Beirut and Cairo. But with state-sanctioned anti-Semitism on the rise, the al-Kuwaiti brothers joined the mass exodus of Iraq’s Jews to Israel in 1951. As the new nation forged a Hebrew-speaking society, there was little space for the music of immigrant communities. The al-Kuwaitis played at clubs and on Israel’s Arabic radio station, but they never again found a mass audience. Citing his disappointment, Daoud advised his children not to become musicians.

Nonetheless, Daoud’s namesake grandson, Dudu Tassa—born in 1977, a few months after his grandfather died—became one of Israel’s leading rock performers and composers. In 2009, half a dozen albums into his career, Tassa attended the dedication of Tel Aviv’s Al Kuwaiti neighborhood, honoring his grandfather. To pay homage to his career, Tassa attended the dedication of Tel Aviv’s Al Kuwaiti neighborhood, honoring his grandfather, Tassa attended the dedication of Tel Aviv’s Al Kuwaiti neighborhood, honoring his grandfather.

Daoud, who curried the brilliance of writing, directing, performance and producing (“Picture a People”) and how television approached anti-Semitism (“Some of My Best Friends”), further instills in the series are in the works. —Rahel Musleah

Advertising American Jewish Culture

Comedian Gilda Radner models skintight, lilac-toned “Jewess Jeans”; an African-American boy munches happily on Levy’s Rye Bread, and a man sips tea while floating on the waters of the Dead Sea (right). These are three of the images in the one-room exhibition, “You Don’t Have to Be Jewish,” on display at New York’s Jewish Museum through February 12, 2017 (thejewishmuseum.org). The exhibit explores commercials produced with Jewish content and features both video and print campaigns, many using humor to attract a diverse audience. A seven-minute compilation video includes the Radner spoof from Saturday Night Live! satirizing ads for Jordache Jeans; three 1960s commercials for Manischewitz wine (one with Sammy Davis Jr.) and more.

The show is the third installation in the ongoing series The Television Project, assembled from the museum’s National Jewish Archive of Broadcast Advertising, a collection of more than 4,000 radio and television recordings dating back to the 1930s and the largest collection of broadcast material on 20th-century American Jewish culture in the United States.

“The programs in the NJAB constitute an important record of how Jews have been portrayed or portrayed themselves,” says Jaron Gandelman, who curated the current exhibition. They reflect “how the mass media has addressed issues of diversity, ethnicity and religion.”

The two previous exhibitions featured the brilliance of writing, directing, performance and producing (“Picture a People”) and how television approached anti-Semitism (“Some of My Best Friends”). Further installments in the series are in the works. —Rahel Musleah
Return Trip to Southeast Asia

An itinerary rich with exotic sights and surprising moments of Jewish connection

By Joyce Eisenberg

Return Trip to Southeast Asia

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he dates, flights and hotels for a six-week trip through Asia with my husband, Ted, were plotted on my Excel spreadsheet. We would check out the main attractions: the immense and impressive Noryangjin Fish Market in Seoul; the ancient coins at the Islam

ic Arts Museum in Kuala Lumpur; a handful of the 2,000 Buddhist temples in Bagan, Myanmar (formerly Burma); and Angkor Wat, a Buddhist religious site originally built for the Hindu god Vishnu that is the world’s largest religious monument, in Siem Reap, Cambodia. And when it came time to fill in the blanks on the itinerary, I would look for Jewish sights.

This was Asia, Part II. In 1982, before children and in between Ted’s surgical residencies, we spent three months backpacking from Kashmir to Kyoto. Now with the kids out of the house, it was time to see the places we had missed. We would be taking half the time and twice as much luggage. We had more medicine and fewer paperback guidebooks, but we were just as excited.

YANGON

On TripAdvisor.com’s list of top 10 things to see in Yangon, Myanmar’s capital, I struck gold: Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue, “the country’s only synagogue, a gem hiding in plain sight.” After flying all day and all night, we arrived in Yangon mid-morning on Saturday. We checked into our hotel, then rushed out to see the synagogue before it closed at noon.

Our taxi driver dropped us off at a busy downtown intersection and pointed toward a crowded, narrow street. We walked back and forth past stalls brimming with motorcycle parts and patterned longys, the sa
go

corn-like garment worn by both men and women. No luck. We showed the synagogue name and address—written in Burmese—to people squatting in front of their stores. They shook their heads no. The synagogue was not hiding in plain sight. We found help, in English, at The Strand, a landmark colonial hotel. The concierge called the synagogue; the caretaker agreed to wait for us.

And there it was—behind black- and gold wrought-iron gates, its name spelled out in block letters below a gold mosaic menorah. Musmeah Yeshua’s caretaker, Jolly Albert, told us he had been there but little else. He handed Ted a kippah and escorted us into the white stone building that was built in 1896, a two-story Sephardic beauty with stained-glass windows, a central bimah and a women’s gallery.

Albert conducted his tour mostly by pointing: He showed us two Iraqi silver Torah scrolls and a newspaper clipping of David Ben-Gurion’s 1961 visit with U Ba Swe, the second prime minister of Burma; both were leaders of countries that gained their independence from Britain in 1948. Musmeah Yeshua at one time boasted 126 Torah scrolls, brought by Jews who came to Burma during the British colonial era to work in the teakwood trade. Once there were 3,000 Jews, a Jewish mayor of Rangoon (Yangon’s former name) and a Jewish school. Today, fewer than 20 Jews remain.

PHNOM PENH

When I had realized we would be in Phnom Penh on Erev Rosh Hashana last year, I googled “Cambodian Jews.” Two clicks later, I had signed up for Chabad’s evening service and New Year’s dinner. Fast-forward two weeks: Our itinerary for September 13 read “The Killing Fields and Rosh Hashanah dinner.”

I know a good deal about the Holocaust, having edited the auto

biographies of two male survivors in their 80s. But I knew little about the Cambodian genocide and was curious about the similarities between the two atrocities. My curiosity was answered at the Choeung Ek Genocidal Center, nine miles outside of Phnom Penh, one of Cambodia’s infamous killing fields and a mass grave to thousands.

Between 1975 and 1979, under Pol Pot’s brutal Khmer Rouge regime, about 25 percent of Cambodia’s seven million people died from torture, starvation, slave labor, disease or murder as the dictator set about to create a pure agrarian society.

Ted and I walked along paths past the executioner’s office and a stor

age room for killing tools as we listened on our headsets to survivors’ heartbreaking stories—the murder of Pol Pot’s brutal Khmer Rouge regime, about 25 percent of Cambodia’s seven million people died from torture, starvation, slave labor, disease or murder as the dictator set about to create a pure agrarian society.

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Cambodian genocide and was curious about the similarities between the two atrocities. My curiosity was answered at the Choeung Ek Genocidal Center, nine miles outside of Phnom Penh, one of Cambodia’s infamous killing fields and a mass grave to thousands.

Between 1975 and 1979, under Pol Pot’s brutal Khmer Rouge regime, about 25 percent of Cambodia’s seven million people died from torture, starvation, slave labor, disease or murder as the dictator set about to create a pure agrarian society.

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**WHAT TO SEE**

**MYANMAR**

Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue

With its black-and-white checkered marble floor, blue-tipped columns and arches, crystal memorial lamps and wooden benches with rattan backs, the synagogue in Yangon is striking. Since his father, Moses, died, Sammy Samuel has moved back to Yangon from New York City to help revitalize the community (myanmarmarshalo.com). For Hanukkah, he expects 180 guests at the synagogue—Jews and non-Jews, leaders from Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Bahá’í and Buddhist faiths.

Shwedagon Pagoda

Allow 2 to 3 hours to see this stunning, 2,500-year-old golden Buddhist pagoda in Yangon (shwedagonpagoda.com), the world’s oldest. Licensed guides are available at the site. Dress modestly and be prepared to walk barefoot here and at all Buddhist temples.

Bagan Archaeological Zone

Between the 11th and 13th centuries, the kings of then Pagan built over 10,000 Buddhist temples on this 26-square-mile plain; more than 2,200 remain. Though you can take tours (visit-bagan.com) and be prepared to walk barefoot, there is striking. Since his father, Moses, died, Sammy Samuel has moved back to Yangon from New York City to help revitalize the community (myanmarmarshalo.com). For Hanukkah, he expects 180 guests at the synagogue—Jews and non-Jews, leaders from Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Bahá’í and Buddhist faiths.

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Petronas Twin Towers

The view from the couple’s hotel (theangkorguide.net) in Siem Reap stretch over 150 square miles; the main attractions are Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Bayon Temple and Ta Prohm. Passes are available for one, three and seven days (tourismcambodia.com), a soccer-field sized area that was once an orchard. The Choeung Ek Genocidal Center

Thousands of Cambodians were buried in mass graves at Choeung Ek (cekillingsfield.org), a soccer-field sized area that was once an orchard.

Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum

Rooms in this former prison (tuolslenggencidumuseum.com) are lined floor to ceiling with black-and-white mug shots of prisoners.

**VIETNAM**

Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum

In Hanoi you’ll find all things Vietnam from the Fairy Spring and Mai Chau Valley to the Hanoi Opera House and a Boston judge who were serving cases against former leaders of the Cambodian war crimes tribunal, which had just begun hearing its first cases against former leaders of the Khmer Rouge.

A young woman in her 20s who had learned Khmer and translated the poetry of Cambodian refugees during the war, was serving in Phnom Penh and worked for the Cambodia Times. A businessman who had sold his pet food company to Nestlé was exploring new Cambodian-based opportunities, including a competitor mechanic, was kept alive because he could repair the typewriters his torturers used to record forced confessions. Artist Bou Meng, 75, painted life-like portraits of Pol Pot from photographs.

Buddhist pagoda in Yangon

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TRAVEL

for Sriracha, the Thai hot sauce, as well as a new pharmaceutical use for silkworms.

HANOI

With its tangle of 13th-century streets lined with stores selling silks, spices and bamboo mats, Hanoi fit our mental picture of a Southeast Asian city. Nguyen Hong Phuong, a tour guide who goes by the name of Smiley, took us to the city’s must-see sight, Ho Chi Minh’s home and museum.

We ate local for lunch: big bowls of pho served with guai (crispy donuts) for dipping or banh mi sandwiches. Each lunch for two cost 56,000 dong, or $2.50. We had planned to stick with the eminently affordable and delicious Vietnamese food—until we saw an advertisement for Daluva (daluva.com), a restaurant owned by an Israeli transplant.

A few questions later, and Ted discovered that the restaurateur’s dad was Freddy Lubin, a classmate at Overbrook High School. A small world after all.

There were many extraordinary sights on our trip. Yangon’s gilded Shwedagon Pagoda, home to eight strands of a Buddha’s hair, was topped with a crown of thousands of rubies and diamonds. The nighttime view from our hotel window of Kuala Lumpur’s Petronas Twin Towers was stunning—the two giants seemed to belong on another planet.

But what moved us the most were the extraordinary personal connections, Jewish and non-Jewish. [1]

Joyce Eisenberg is the co-author, with Ellen Scolnic, of The Whole Spiel: Funny essays about digital nudniks, seder selfies and chicken soup memories.
The Festival of Lights

By Jonathan Schmalzbach

ACROSS
1. What LBJ declared war on
8. “Dear” ones
12. “60 Minutes” network
15. Pa’s maw
16. Smoking gun
18. Derby, for one
19. With 74-across, what the letters on 58-across stand for outside Israel
21. Days of
22. Impose, as a tax
23. “All kidding ___”
25. “The Power and the Glory” novelist
28. What parents give kids for eating too much chocolate during 66-across?
31. Construction girder
33. Moab’s local
34. Holler
35. Picnic side dishes
36. Shammash’s place
39. Henna, for one
40. Hockey star Pavel
41. Capone and Capp
42. “How ya doin’?”
44. Hebrew translation of 19-across and 74-across
58. Where to find a nun
61. Nike alternatives
62. ___ room
64. If all ___ fails
65. Scorched
66. Festival of Lights
68. What John and Joel play
71. “___deal?” (are we on or off?)
72. Pirate played by Laughton
73. “___ la vie”
74. See 19-across
83. Jacob, to Esau, for short
84. Month after Adar
85. Surprise winner
86. “The Waste Land” monogram
87. Tears
88. Kind of strength

DOWN
1. Duffer’s grp.
2. Dot follower, at times
3. Alt. spelling
4. Vane reading
5. Biochemistry abbr.
6. Duke or Earl
7. Aden’s land
8. Limber
9. Author Levin
10. “Arabian Nights” menace
11. Costa del ___
12. Led a meeting
13. In a ribald manner
14. Church part
17. Accomplishment
20. “___ fallen, and I can’t...”
24. Chester White’s home
25. They may be engaged
26. Steak tartare topper
27. Dash lengths
28. “Little” car of song
29. Ring bearer, maybe
30. ___ Apso
31. Library ID
32. Down in the dumps
33. Expose to the sun
36. ___ jacket
37. Pipe bend
38. “Come again?”
39. False start?
40. Dull ending
46. Yankee star Jeter
47. Wall Street grp.
48. Deborah’s “The King and I” co-star
49. Rich soil component
50. Iran-Turkey border river
51. “For ___ a jolly...”
52. Coll. senior’s test
53. Sun Devils’ sch.
54. Continental currency
55. Duke’s grp.
57. ___ Kabibble
58. Menace
59. Car frame
60. ___ Kabibble
61. Calphalon product
63. “For shame!”
67. Architect Louis
68. What Delilah fastened Samson’s hair with
69. That is, in Latin
70. Befuddle
72. Some male dolls
75. Walking on ___
76. Telekinesis, e.g.
77. Drivel
78. Commandment number
79. “For ___ a jolly...”
80. It’s left of center
81. Judaism, for one: abbr.
82. Before, poetically

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Festival of Color and Design

Judica and other creations by these contemporary designers are global and vibrant, innovative and inclusive. For additional information, and more items, go to hadassahmagazine.org.

HANUKKAH IN 3D
Utilizing 3D printing for machinery parts or prosthetics has become an almost commonplace miracle today. It’s therefore hardly surprising that Judica designers are using 3D printers and 3D printing marketplaces, too. The Matryoshka dreidels by the Israel-based Studio Armadillo (studioarmadillo.com), a set of three nesting tops, come in an assortment of bright colors, from fuchsia and blue to orange. They can be purchased, starting at $63, from Shapeways, a sort of Etsy for 3D printing that has over 500 designers from Israel at its online marketplace; search for Studio Armadillo at shapeways.com.

THROUGH A PRISM
The minimalist acrylic Apeloig Mezuzah comes in a bright array of colors and three sizes. Medium (left) from $85 (apeloigcollection.com).

JEWEL TONES
Globetrotting designer Sylvie Boksnbaum uses sun-drenched colors in her surprisingly light hand-crocheted jewelry. Check out her cuff bracelets, from $325, and necklaces, from $630 (boksandbaum.com).

HOW SWEET IT IS
Luxury candymaker Maayan Zilberman’s company, Sweet Saba, is named in honor of her Israeli grandfather. Try her gold-flecked evil eye candy, from $30, sweetsaba.com.

KEEPING THE FAITH
Faithhaus appeals to spiritual and religious groups—by meeting their material needs. The online retailer is organized by faith and showcases a modern approach to ritual items. This delicate hamsa anklet (above left, from $31) shows up under both the Jewish and Islamic collections. The Shabbat Set includes a mahogany candleholder and a Kiddush cup crafted from a wine bottle, from $68 (faithhaus.com).

TOP THIS
Second-generation ceramicist Eran Grebler specializes in dreidels—all kinds of dreidels. He features more than 800 types of handmade ceramic spinners in his Tel Aviv gallery and shop, The Draydel House, including this dreidel with different blessings (above, right). Dreidels range from $20 to $100 (draydelhouse.com).

ISRAEL, IN A BOX
Think of this curated boxed collection, The Desert and the Cities Sing, as a sampler of Israeli culture, from fashion to technology to food. Among the goodies are a limited-edition scarf, a documentary on Israel’s food scene and stunning landscape prints, from $125 (chroniclebooks.com).

Festival of Color and Design

Judaica and other creations by these contemporary designers are global and vibrant, innovative and inclusive. For additional information, and more items, go to hadassahmagazine.org.
UrScheftraveledtheworldinsearchofbreadandfoundcommunity

WHENHEFINALLYSETOUT
towriteacookbook,UrSchefthasetaken
theeasywayout.Thtounderof
Israel’ssuccessfulLehamim(breads)
bakeryminichainandinitsthreeNew
Yorkspinoffs,eachcalledBreads
Bakery,Schettthadplentyofgreatest-
hitsrecipesalreadycommittedtopa-
perandreadytogo.

Buthathadsomethingelsein
mind. “The idea was to not simply
takethebake-lineupanddohome
versions,”Schett,53,saidoverlunch
atTheJohnDoryrestaurantinNew
York.Cityinearlyautumn.“Iknow
thatthiswouldbemorethanacook-
book;itwouldbeajourney.”

BorninIsraeltoDanishparents,
hgebungupinthesuburbofRa’anana
beforehisfamilymovedbacktoDen-
markwhenhewas10.Itwashere
thathefirstbeganbaking,develop-
ingaloveofmarzipanthatpersists
tothisday—andshowsupoftenbothin
thebookandonhisbakerymenus.

Asateenager,hisfamilyreturned
toIsrael.Aftercompletinghisarmy
service,Schettbegantravelingthe
worldandstudiedpastymakingin
Denmark.Eventually,herounded
outhisexperienceundermasterslike
France’sEricKayser.
Theresultsofalifetimeofformal
trainingandflour-dustedwanderlust
areondisplayintherecentlyreleased
BreakingBreads:ANewWorldof
IsraeliBaking,co-authoredwith
award-winningfoodwriterandcook-
bookauthorRaquelPelea.Itspages,
gorgeouslyphotographedby
ConPoulos,serveasbothacareer
monographandamasterclassthat
expandsthereader’sunderstanding
ofIsraelibakingandbeyond.

SCHETT,WHO DIVIDESHIS TIME
betweenTelAvivandNew
York,haslongenjoyedgreat re-
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nity,whereshisadmiredforperfecting
thesweetspotbetweenbusinessex-
pansionandanunrelentingfocuson
quality.Hisolivesourdoughloaves,
flakycheesesticks,seededfoccacias
andalmondcroissants—nottoten-
tionseasonaldelicacieslikesufganyot
andhamantash—areasdelaicious
astheyaretecthnicallyperfect.

In2013,withlittefanfare,he
co-openedhisfirstBreadsBakery,
inManhattansUnionSquare
(breadsbakery.com).Almostimme-
diately, the bakery became a cult des-
tination, in large part thanks to his
babka. Calledkrann(a variation
ontheword“ crunch”)inIsrael,Schett’s
babka incorporates a light, buttery
yeastdoughwithaNutellafilling.
HisversionearnedNewYorkmag-
azine’s “best-of” distinction mere
months after its statewide debut.
(Find the complete step-by-step babka
recipe athadassahmagazine.org.)

Schett’spublisheratArtisans,Lia
Ronnen,wasanearyoungsupporter
inNewYork.“Heisunlikenyother
baker, in Israel or elsewhere,”

EXCERPTEDfrom
BREAKINGBREADS: A NEW WORLD OF ISRAELI BAKING
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CON POULOS

Moroccan Sfinge
Makes 18 to 20 doughnuts

2 cups (scant) cold water
1 teaspoon active dry yeast
5 1/4 cups cake flour, sifted
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon
granulated sugar
1 teaspoon fine salt
4 1/2 cups or more vegetable oil,
for frying

Granulated sugar for
finishing the doughnuts

1. Pour the water into the bowl
of a stand mixer fitted with the
dough hook. Whisk the yeast
into the water. Add the flour,
sugar and salt and mix on low
speed until the ingredients come
together, about 30 seconds (the
mixture will be very loose, sticky
and runny). Grease a large bowl
with a drop of oil and use a plastic
dough scraper to transfer the very
sticky and loose batter to the oiled
bowl. Cover the bowl with plastic
wrap and set it aside at room
temperature for 30 minutes (the
batter should just about double in
volume).

2. Remove the plastic wrap, wet
your hands and flop one side of
the batter over on top of itself.
The batter will be very loose and
sticky, so just do the best you can.
Give the bowl a quarter turn and
flop the next side over. Repeat
till all 4 sides of the batter have
been folded over; then repeat 3
times more so you have folded
each quarter of the batter over 4
times. Cover the bowl with plastic
wrap and set it aside at room
temperature for 30 minutes.

3. Heat the oil in a medium or
large saucepan over high heat
until it reaches 350°F on an
instant-read thermometer.
Reduce the heat to medium.
Set the bowl of batter to one side
of the saucepan and place a
paper towel-lined plate on the
other side.

4. Fill a medium bowl with water.
Dip your hands in and then break
off a fistful of the batter, and
force your thumb through the
center of the mass. Gently use
both hands to pull the dough
into a rough doughnut shape
(volume).

5. Fry the doughnuts until they
are golden brown on both sides,
using a slotted spoon or frying
spider to turn them often so both
sides cook evenly. Once both sides
are golden brown, after 2 to 3
minutes, transfer the doughnuts
topaper towel-lined plate and
repeat with more batter.

6. While the next batch fries,
roll the still-warm doughnuts in
granulated sugar. Serve warm or
within 1 hour of frying.
Sufganiyot
Makes 25 doughnuts

2 1/4 teaspoons active dry yeast
2 tablespoons warm water
3 - 4 cups all-purpose flour, sifted, plus more for kneading and rolling
1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
2 large egg yolks
1 large egg
1/2 cup warm whole milk
1/2 teaspoon fine salt
1 tablespoon brandy (optional)
Pinch grated orange zest
2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
6 tablespoons unsalted butter
8 cups or more vegetable oil, for frying
1/2 cup warm whole milk
Pinch grated orange zest

Make the dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer, use your fingers to dissolve the yeast into the warm water. Stir in 1 tablespoon of sugar, 1 tablespoon of flour, and 1/2 teaspoon of salt, and cover with a kitchen towel. Let the yeast mixture rise for about 1 hour. (At this point, after rising, the dough can be refrigerated for up to 3 hours before frying.)

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and fold the dough until it tears, then fold it back down onto the top of the remaining dough. Give the dough a quarter turn and repeat: tearing and folding, adding more flour as needed, until the dough isn’t sticky, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured bowl, sprinkle the top with flour and cover with plastic wrap. Let rise in a warm and draft-free spot at room temperature until nearly doubled in volume, 40 to 50 minutes. (At this point, after rising, the dough can be refrigerated for up to 3 hours before frying.)

Cover the dough with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight until it’s cold. Remove the dough from the refrigerator and leave at room temperature until it’s warm to the touch, about 1 hour.

Divide the 1-1/2-pound dough in half. Roll each half into a 1/2-inch-thick sheet. Use a 2 1/2-inch round cookie cutter to stamp out rounds of dough as close together as possible to minimize the amount of scraps; after pressing the cutter into the dough, twist it to form a row before putting it out of the sheet. Gently press the scraps, press them together and roll them for 5 minutes, covered; gently roll them to stamp out a few more sufganiyot.

Place the dough rounds on a lightly greased (use a little oil) parchment paper-lined sheet pan. Let the doughnuts cool completely before filling them.

Celebrate Hanukkah with Judaica and gifts for all ages!

Hanukkah PJ set by Sara’s Prints; sizes available: 12 months – 14 years.

Apatosaurus Dinosaur Menorah by American Artworks; 9 inches tall; $49.95.

Shtick. Purchases support the Jewish Museum.

Shop the Jewish Museum.

The Jewish Museum is under the auspices of The Jewish Theological Seminary.

Photo: Liz Ligon

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Stories for Children to Celebrate and Commemorate

By Gloria Goldreich

A n exciting array of new Jewish titles geared to children ages 2 and up is available this holiday season. Gaily illustrated picture books will delight the eye and their sweet narratives will ignite the imagination. Probing novels, dramatic biographies and literary excursions into diverse chapters of Jewish history will inspire and inform. Happy reading!

Ages 2 to 9
Kar-Ben Publishing has an outpouring of well-told tales for tots to grade-school youngsters (most are 32 pp. $17.99 hardcover, $7.99 paperback). Special emphasis is given to Jewish holidays, with each story told with verve and enhanced by charming drawings.

In A Hanukkah With Mazal by Joel Edward Stein (illustrated by Elisav Vavouri), the spirit of Hanukkah is aglow when Misha, a poor artist, shares the holiday with a stray cat, offering the hungry animal half of his latkes. Because Misha is too poor to buy candles, he fulfills the mitzvah of lighting the hanukkiyah by painting potatoes (a new tradition). Unfortunately, the illustrations by Alex Steele-Morgan are dark, the text too striving and the riddles obscure. Hopefully, the potatoes saved the day.

The appropriately titled Not for All the Hamantaschen in Town by Laura Aron Milhander (illustrated by Inna Chernyak) is about the Three Little Pigs—Rishon, Sheni and Shlishi, Hebrew for first, second and third—who are so excited by the festive Purim carnival they even take the Big Bad Wolf with them to the fair to eat the Purim delicacy—because wolves should also have a happy holiday!

Eric A. Kimmel tells a tale of tzedakah in Gabriel’s Horn (illustrated by Maria Surducan), which is resonant with mystery about a tarnished musical instrument that grows brighter and brighter, mitzvah by mitzvah.

Shalom Everbodeee! Grover’s Adventures in Israel by Tilda Balsley and Ellen Fischer (illustrated by Tom Leigh; this one is 24 pp. $16.99 hardcover, $7.99 paperback) finds Grover taking a trip to Israel, where he celebrates Shabbat in Jerusalem. He also participates in an archaeological dig, eats falafel, volunteers on a kibbutz and climbs Masada. Lucky Grover and lucky young readers who share his happy adventures.

CHARMING CHEWABLES
Kar-Ben Publishing once again offers board books for the tiniest book lovers, all priced at $5.99. The self-explanatory books include One Fine Shabbat by Chris Barash (illustrated by Tatjana Mai-Wyss); Rash Hashanah Is Coming! by Tracy Newman (illustrated by Viviana Gandolfo); Shh...Shh...Shabbat by Linda Eludtz Marshall (illustrated by Evgenia Golubeva); and Hanukkah Delight by Lesléa Newman (illustrated by Amy Husband).
Ages 5 to 10
In *On One Foot* by Linda Glaser (illustrated by Nuria Balaguer; Kar-Ben Publishing, 32 pp. $17.99 hardcover, $7.99 paperback), a young seeker of Torah wisdom learns an important lesson from Rabbi Hillel and repeats it while standing on one foot: “Do not do unto others what you do not want them to do to you.”

In *An After Bedtime Story* (Abrams Books for Young Readers, 48 pp. $16.95), Israeli author Shoshan Smith, translator Annette Appel and illustrator Einat Tsarfati tell the universal story of toddlers reluctant to surrender to sleep and the loving family that tolerates nocturnal antics.

The chestnut tree that stood in an Amsterdam courtyard offered hope and beauty to Anne Frank as she filled the pages of her red-and-white diary in hiding. In *The Tree in the Courtyard: Looking Through Anne Frank’s Window* (illustrated by Peter McCarty; Knopf Books for Young Readers, 40 pp. $17.99), Jeff Gottesfeld relates how the tree survived a terrible war but, sadly, the girl who had delighted in it died a sad, painful death. Finally, the lovely tree also “passed into history,” but like Anne’s words, it lives on through its saplings that grow throughout the world and continue to delight children.

There’s a multitude of animals in Noah’s ark—and a multitude of meals for Noah and his wife, Naama, to prepare. The daunting task is made even more difficult by the hungry chameleons, who are picky eaters.
That problem is solved in *The Chameleon That Saved Noah’s Ark* when enterprising Israeli author Yael Molchadsky and artist Orit Bergman (Nancy Paulsen Books/Penguin Young Readers, 32 pp. $16.99) employ lilting words and enchanting drawings that ultimately satisfy the culinary demands of those pesky chameleons. A holiday story by Rochelle Kochin, *The Little Esrog* (illustrated by Janice Hechter; Merkos L’inyonei Chinuch, 36 pp. $14.95), is as delightful as its central character. The little esrog’s friends tease him saying, “Who would want you for the mitzvah when they can have a big beautiful esrog?” The little esrog fears he is too small to be selected for the blessing. But when calamity strikes and his “big beautiful” companions lose the precious tip (pitom) that makes them kosher—making them only good for jam—the little esrog is held reverently by the congregants as his fragrance graces their holiday.

**Ages 8 to 12**

Becky Laff wrote and illustrated the graphic novel *Joseph the Dreamer* (Kar-Ben Publishing, 48 pp. $16.99 hardcovers, $7.99 paperback), which re-creates the biblical story in whimsical cartoons as brightly imagined as the hero’s coat of many colors. In *My Aunt Manya* (illustrated by Patricia Drew; Troubador Publishing, 77 pp. $9.99), José Patterson introduces us to 10-year-old Sarah, who travels alone to America to escape the harsh anti-Semitism of Czarist Russia. In letters to her Aunt Manya, Sarah, an engaging and spunky heroine, recounts her adventures—and, as her Aunt Manya would say, her mazal! **Ages 11 to 15**

In Janet Ruth Heller’s *The Passover Surprise* (illustrated by Ronald Kaufman; Fictive Press, 48 pp. $11), Jewish traditions, stamp collecting, sibling rivalry and familial affection are all part of the story of Lisa, who craves a “big blue stamp album” as a gift for finding the afikoman. Readers will root for Lisa and a happy holiday.

The fictional story of Sophie and Rose, teenage sisters who support their sick mother by working in a Toronto sweatshop during the Great Depression, re-creates the immigrant experience with tender observation and graphic detail. *44 Hours or Strike!* (Second Story Press, 136 pp. $11.95) by Anne Dublin is about the historic struggle for social justice typified by the famous Toronto Dressmakers Strike of 1944, which provides the narrative with dramatic momentum. Sophie and Rose courageously join the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union and endure the hardships of a windowswep picker line, anti-Semitic taunts, physical assaults and even the horror of imprisonment. Their romantic involvements, their commitment to Judaism and their amazing tenacity invigorate the story. Dublin, a compassionate writer and diligent researcher, enhanced her work with photographs of the strikers and the urban landscape of their lives.
TELLING DIFFICULT STORIES
New books about the Holocaust, both fiction and nonfiction as well as outstanding reprints on Holocaust themes, offer sensitive insights and unique perspectives into that dark era of Jewish history. Stories of courage and kindness provide young readers with role models whose idealism defied evil and affirmed human goodness.

 Bjørn’s Gift
by Sandy Brehl

In this sequel to her earlier work, Odin’s Promise, Brehl continues the story of Mari, a Norwegian girl who endures the cruelty of Nazi occupation and the betrayal of classmates seduced by Nazi ideology. Mari courageously allies herself with her brother Bjørn’s resistance operations. The rescue of a Jewish family imbues Mari with the determination to fight the pro-Nazi Quisling regime until, she says, “Norway is finally ours again. The truth will be stronger than all the Nazi lies.” Brehl’s recounting of a little-known chapter of World War II history is both gripping and informative. Ages 8 to 12.

Paper Hearts
by Meg Wiviott

(Margaret K. McElderry Books for Young Readers/Simon & Schuster, 352 pp. $17.99)

Wiviott uses poetry in her fictional account of an actual paper heart crafted in Auschwitz by a young girl named Zlata for her friend Fania. In alternating chapters of linear verses that both sing and count of a little-known chapter of Jewish history. Stories of human goodness, courage and kindness provide young mates seduced by Nazi ideology.

Order these books directly through the Hadassah Magazine website! Just go to www.hadassahmagazine.org and click on The Guide to Jewish Literature.

The Deadliest Hate
June Top

Experience Jewish life during the first century CE as a Minim but has tracer of the link of a alchemi- cal secret in Roman Caesarea while Juden terrorists target her for assassina- tion. But who is really trying to kill Mari? The Credulous Hate won honorable mention for fiction at the 2016 New York Book Festival. 4.8 of 5 stars on Amazon.

Paperback ($13.99) and Kindle e-book ($6.99) on Amazon.

Food, Family and Traditions: Hungarian Kosher Family Recipes and Remembrances
Lynn Kirsche Shapiro

Award Winner for Best Historical Recipes in the USA. This cookbook/memoir brings to life the cul- ture of Eastern European Jewry and celebrates the complex affairs and a world of crisis bring confl icts and remembrances—sweet, bitter and bittersweet—of love, betrayal and unforeseen commitments. A young charismatic nurse lives and works by her own code of honor in a strict Orthodox hospital—until one day a married doctor emerges with a campaign of seduction that could endanger her livelihood, reputation and self-respect... “A power- ful first-hand look at what everyday life was like in Israel when most Americans were watching Shock and Awe on the 24-hour news channel...” —Arike Ball, Emma Bombeck award-winning author.


Dealing with the Deadliest Hate
Michelle Dan-St-Pierre

In Tel Aviv, under daily missile attack during Operation Desert Storm, when every heart seeks comfort and companionship, the truth will be stronger than all the Nazi lies.” Brehl’s recounting of a little-known chapter of World War II history is both gripping and informative. Ages 8 to 12.

Food, Family and Traditions: Hungarian Kosher Family Recipes and Remembrances
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Gourmet World Cookbook Award Winner for Best Historical Recipes in the USA.

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Seth B. Goldsmith
Kirkus Reviews: “An accomplished debut novel.”
“Goldsmith’s ear for dialogue is superb.” - Payroll is smoothly and confidently orchestrated.
A young female rabbi starting a Jewish community in Alaska encounters a vibrant egocentric and narcissistic, recently-yawled Miami Beach cosmetic surgeon who, together with his troubled son, finds redemption and a path back to Judaism, love and amongst the Terror-Chosen. Other reviews on Amazon.

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Deby Eisenberg
“Compelling, engaging...a moving family saga.”
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*Book and e-book available on Amazon.com.*
The Art of Hanukkah
By Nancy M. Berman
(University Press, 120 pp. $24.95)

The elaborate gold- and silver menorah gracing the cover is from early 19th-century Ukraine. Its architectural shape is based on East European wooden synagogues and is replete with traditional icons—the tablets of the Law, Lions of Judah, the Star of David and pomegranate trees. Berman includes 48 other examples of menorahs and other Hanukkah art—with full-page commentaries.

Anna and the Swallow Man
by Gavriel Savit
(Knopf Books for Young Readers, 240 pp. $17.99)

Mystery and miracles accompany 7-year-old Anna on her tumultuous odyssey to survival guided by “the swallow man.” This stirring tale combines whimsical fantasy with harsh reality as the small girl and her strange companion—who can summon a swallow at will—traverse Nazi-occupied Poland, evading bombs, escaping danger and extracting shreds of humanity from inhuman soldiers. Poetry informs the prose of this young author, whose vividly drawn characters move with odd grace through the mists of madness.

Esfir Is Alive
by Andrea Simon
(Esder Ink Publishing, 275 pp. $13.95)

Esfir Manevici was 12 in 1944, when 50,000 Belarusian Jews were massacred. Miraculously, Esfir survived and found refuge in a convent, masquerading as a non-Jew. Andrea Simon fictionalizes the drama of her early childhood in Occupied Poland, evading bombs, escaping danger and extracting shreds of humanity from inhuman soldiers. Poetry informs the prose of this young author, whose vividly drawn characters move with odd grace through the mists of madness.

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G R A N N I E P R O O F H A T
A G R E A T M I R A C L E A W E
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T S E R I P S T E N S I L E

The book toggles between times, starting out when Silverman was a worrywart child—perhaps caused by the death of her brother as a baby or by her parents’ fractious marriage—and moving into the present as a wife and mother, trying to fulfill her childhood dream of a blended family. “Mommy, when I grow up I want to adopt a hundred children, one from every country,” she recalled saying as a young girl.

Silverman and her husband chose to adopt from Ethiopia because it spoke to them—Abramowitz had been active in bringing the country’s Jews to Israel. After they adopted their second son, in 2006, the family of seven, originally based in the Boston area, moved to Kibbutz Kenura in the south of Israel, a stone’s throw from the actual, original Mount Sinai.

“Life in suburban Boston had been wonderful in many ways. But it had been like the tablets without words [the first tablets that Moses broke because of the Israelites’ idol worship]—missing the kind of relationship with God that allowed for worship]—missing the kind of relationship with God that allowed for worship.”

“Life in suburban Boston had been wonderful in many ways. But it had been like the tablets without words [the first tablets that Moses broke because of the Israelites’ idol worship]—missing the kind of relationship with God that allowed for worship.”

Amy Klein
Amy Klein is a freelance writer based in Manhattan.
Baz Dreisinger
From hip-hop infatuation to prison reform advocacy | By Amy Klein

The first time Baz Dreisinger taught a class at a prison, she thought, “there is something dramatically and insanely wrong here.” The 40-year-old professor at City University of New York’s John Jay College of Criminal Justice grew up in a Modern Orthodox home in the Bronx, the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors. She was attracted to hip-hop culture at a young age and has spent her career exploring issues surrounding race and prisons. The author of Near Black: White-to-Black Passing in American Culture and Incarceration Nations: A Journey to Justice in Prisons Around the World, she now describes herself as a secular Jew. In 2011, she founded the New York State Prison-to-College Pipeline, which funnels incarcerated and previously incarcerated men into the CUNY system. This interview was edited for brevity and clarity.

What about black culture and Caribbean culture in particular attracted you?

There was something in Caribbean culture very similar to Jewishness, a sense of mourning and great tragedy and loss—over slavery, attempted genocide, colonialism—but at the same time there was a celebration of life and joy, particularly in Jamaican culture, that wasn’t true about Jewish culture. I grew up with the Holocaust and the sense of loss and rage around it, so this was enlightening to me.

How did you get from the Caribbean world to the prison world?

As a student at Columbia University, I was writing journalism articles about hip-hop and race and I got letters from people in prison. I started visiting someone in prison, and I became an educational volunteer in a prison in upstate New York. The first time I taught a class there, I thought: ‘These are some of the best and the brightest men, and we’re housing them away.’ These things did not sit right in my soul.

To South Africa. What did you learn?

I don’t think we give people enough credit. We assume they want revenge all the time, but healing does not come from revenge, it comes from restitution, conciliation. It’s about repairing harm and not punishing those who do harm per se. It shows you what’s possible when you have a justice system that’s not only about hate and revenge.

Do you believe white privilege exists?

A lot of people still prefer to talk about individual racism, individual acts of discrimination, as opposed to institutional racism—housing discrimination, job discrimination, discrimination against those with criminal histories. Those are a lot more complicated, also more nefarious. Whether you consider yourself racist or not, if you have white skin in this country, you are benefiting every day from a privilege that you may not have asked for but it’s a reality.

What should whites do about that privilege?

We need to recognize it, accept it and respect the frustration on the part of others. A lot of the things I’ve managed to achieve came from the advantages I had as a white person in this country.

There’s a wonderful book, How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America, that outlines the ways Jews were absorbed into the white race—not just theoretically, but in terms of where they were allowed to live, the jobs they were given access to. It wasn’t just a matter of us “picking ourselves up by our bootstraps,” but rather giving the Jews the opportunity to have the advantages.

What do your parents think of your work?

My mother’s a social worker and educator, and my father’s a psychologist; he did a lot of work with the prison system. Growing up, we would talk about what is justice; we had serious discussions about redemption and reconciliation. I learned Talmud and had debates and arguments. The High Holidays were deeply influential in my thinking around forgiveness and revenge and what it means to come clean and what it means to say sorry, to commit wrongdoing and to be someone who makes amends for that.

Amy Klein is a freelance writer based in Manhattan. For a longer version of this interview, go to hadassahmagazine.org.
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— Mimi Miller, White Plains, New York

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