



The Menorah

President's Column: Joel Cohen Job Action

As I begin to write this month's column, the Chicago teachers' strike appears to be ending, and Rosh Hashanah 5773 has begun. The year 5773 perhaps will not see any more teachers' strikes, but it is likely to see some related job actions. The underlying context will be the same; the faces and signs will be different. The context is the thing.

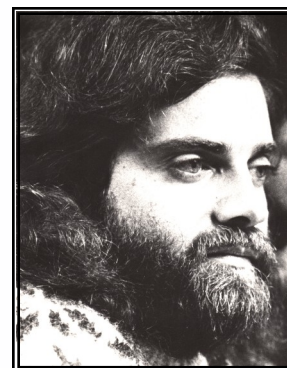
Taken out of context, taken by itself, taken as a single event, a teachers' strike may leave people of good faith on either side: Some see poor unprotected teachers, others see bad teachers who ought to be fired immediately. Some pity school children losing many days of learning because of the union, others pity teachers forced to teach to a test. Some fault the bloated bureaucracy, others fault the overpaid teachers who have a three-month vacation. There are many individual issues pushing us one way or the other.

Union Vs. Nonunion

Let's add a little more context. General Motors seems to be doing well, but not as well as some of the auto plants in the South which don't have unions. The "legacy airlines" like United and American can't keep up with the new sleek airlines, like JetBlue. The common thread, of course, is a union fighting against the non-union shops (Charter Schools, manufacturers in Right-to-work states, new airlines).

In the case of the schools, it is the state, not the school boards that have to pay the retirees' pensions. In the other cases, the older companies are being dragged down by the weight of the retirees' and future retirees' pension plans.

Now let's add the full context. Between the end of the 19th Century and about 1947, an American social contract was forged among government, business leaders and workers and their representative unions.



A Common Belief in Mutual Benefit

It was not the same social contract as those agreed to in the several European countries, but the general thrusts were the same. The underlying theme was that life would get better; that workers would help their employers produce ever better products and would be paid appropriately for their work.

That was the agreement and so it remained for more than another three decades. During this period workers became consistently more productive, and their pay increased with their productivity. The benefits expanded outward and produced the largest and most comfortable middle class in history. At the lower end, the minimum wage rose gradually, approximately meeting inflation.

But in the last 35-40 years, the social contract has been broken. Worker productivity is way up, but wages have stayed steady in real terms. The minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour) is far lower in real

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President's Column (continued)

dollars than it was in 1968 (more than \$10 per hour in 2012 dollars). Today's minimum wage has less buying power than the minimum wage did in the 1930's and 1940's. And contrary to myth, only 12% of minimum wage workers are teenagers.

Pensions which were once given in terms of a guaranteed income (the so-called defined benefit) are now given as a defined contribution - - when they are offered at all.

Another change is that more than 30% of the income gains in the period 1979-2005 went to those in the top 0.1%, those with annual incomes over \$5,600,000. And 60% of the increase went to the famous top 1%. In that period, those in the middle 20% increased their after-tax household income by about 25% (in 2005 dollars), the top

20% increased by about 65%, and the top 1% by about 175%.

In the context of this 40-year history, should we view the Chicago teachers' strike in a different light - as a rearguard action attempting to fight against increasing income inequality?

For 100 years, the Gini coefficient has been the most commonly used tool for measuring income inequality. In 2009 it measured highest here in Washington. It was lowest in Maine. One has only to think about Ward 3 versus Ward 8 to imagine the reason.

What is the Proper Jewish Response?

What should the Jewish response to income inequality be? Should there be a Jewish response? Looking at income inequality as a major cause of hunger, Jewish organizations such as Mazon view eliminating income inequality as part of its mission.

Some Jewish economists (e.g. Dean Baker, Paul Krugman, and Joseph Stiglitz) put the blame on other Jewish economists (e.g. Lawrence Summers, Robert Rubin, and Ben Bernanke) for policies which, if not causing income inequality, did nothing to mitigate it.

Does the Jewish role in economics require a Jewish response to the problem?

I have more questions than answers, but I hope this will start many of us thinking about these problems.

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New Member Shabbat

New and prospective members will be honored at Shabbat morning services on November 17.

All new members will be called to the *bimah* and welcomed into the congregation.

Please join us for a warm welcome.

Summary of TI Board of Directors Meeting August 13, 2012

Attending: Renee Brachfeld, Sharon Brown, Alice Burton, Susan Catler, Joel Cohen, Joe Davidson, Deena Dugan, Varda Fink, Esther Herman, David Levy, Paula Martin, Rabbi Sarah Meytin, Stephanie Roodman Murdock, Margie Odle, Andrew Reamer, Vivian Seidner, Jevera Temsky, Mark Verschell.

Excused: Jeff Davidson, Joanne Hovis, Cynthia Peterman, Daniel Turner, Chris Zeilinger.

Absent: Jeffrey Colman, Debbie Pomerance.

Staff: Eitan Gutin and David Zinner.

Annual Appeal, Rabbi Sarah Meytin: The annual appeal is underway. We are moving towards 100% participation. Most board members agreed to make calls for pledges, reminding congregants that dues cover only half of TI's budget.

Art Committee: The board approved the Fine Art Policies as amended.

Membership, Alice Burton: There will be a new and prospective member wine and cheese event on Aug. 19.

Administrative Committee: The Administrative Committee will oversee the office when David Zinner moves to work half-time. Besides Administrative VP Jeff Davidson, Joanne Hovis, Renee Matalon and Ray Natter are on the committee.

Ritual Committee, Jevera Temsky and Susan Catler: High Holidays Marketing: TI will be listed at Entry Point DC to get

young people 40 and under to go to services; TI has HiHoDC.Com, a streamlined website, for the holidays; and we have four flags with just the website on them outside on 16th Street

Executive Director's Report, David Zinner:

1. TI's neighbor on the southeast corner of 16th and Jonquil will allow us to use part of his yard for our sukkah.
2. Building improvements: The following items are in the works: ramp, rain garden, fence, stair treads, bathrooms, and painting and plastering in the basement.
3. HVAC analysis: We will be updating the 30-year plan for the HVAC system based on a report currently being done.

Financial report, David Zinner:

1. Update on end of last year financial results: We are projecting a surplus from last fiscal year.
2. Dues abatement procedure: The new board policy is in place requiring that families present documentation when asking for a sixth year of abatement.

Donations Earmarked for Helping Hands: Susan Catler proposed creating a Helping Hands Fund so that people inside and outside the congregation can contribute to cover expenses incurred. Details will be worked out, but donations may be sent in for general "helping hands" or for specific cases.

Library News Michele Sumka

The Inventory is finished and the library has re-opened!

Thanks to the amazing efforts of Louise Kelley, together with a group of dedicated volunteers, we have inventoried all the books in the Mollie L. Berch Library!

We have over 6,000 books, in categories ranging from Anthologies through Israeli Literature, and Talmud, to Young Adult Biography, Fiction and Holocaust.

We have discovered some very interesting books in the process of doing the inventory. I will be talking about them and giving a tour of the library on **Sunday, October 14**, at 10:15 a.m.

I will also demonstrate how to find out if the library owns any specific title on Librarything.com by using our very own computer, which lives in the library.

Funeral Practices Committee Always On-Call

Chaverim of the Funeral Practices Committee are on call to provide counsel and services to synagogue members and their dependents. Prior to contacting the funeral home, please contact one of the following chaverim, Rabbi Seidel, or the TI office (202-882-1605).

Shelly Heller	h: 301-942-1836 w: 202-242-6698
Jeff Davidson	h: 301-593-1335
David (Judy) Cohen	h: 301-652-2872
Marcia Goldberg	h: 301-589-0352

Adult Education

Cynthia Peterman

SHALEM

Our *SHALEM* speaker series got off to a wonderful start in September with **Bill Galston's** presentation on Repentance, just in time for the *yamim nora'im*, the High Holiday season. The room was filled, and we had a thoughtful discussion on what helps and gets in the way of repentance.

Our next speaker will be **Howard Gleckman** on October 20. Howard, a prolific author on the subject of caring for elderly parents, will address the same issue in his talk on Shabbat after Kiddush. He will also provide tips and resources, and discuss how changes in health care affect the elderly, as well as the caregivers. Please join us in the Reamer Chapel at 1:00 p.m.

On November 17, our speaker will be **Ira Forman** on the Jewish vote in the 2012 election. Ira currently serves as National Jewish Outreach Director for the Obama campaign. He will analyze the November election and the role of both domestic and foreign policy issues as they served to attract the Jewish vote.

The Adult Education committee will soon begin to discuss a slate of speakers for the spring *SHALEM* programs. If you have names to suggest, please send them to Cynthia Peterman at cynp25@gmail.com.

Sunday Morning Talks

On Sunday, October 14, at 10:15 a.m., **Michele Sumka** will give a tour of the Mollie L. Berch library, explaining the new computerized system for locating books, as well as sharing some gems in the collection.

On Sunday, November 4, at 10:15 a.m. in the Reamer Chapel, **Marcia Goldberg** and I will present "Tales from the Attic: Archiving TI's Treasures." We will share some of the fascinating items that we have discovered in the years that we have been working up in the TI attic, cataloging the items to create an archive in preparation for the synagogue's 100th anniversary.

Multi-Session Classes

Gideon Amir will teach a four-session course on the "Biblical View on Divine Intervention and Divine Justice." Many of you know Gideon as a teacher of *Parshat haShavuah* on Mondays and as a teacher in the Chai School.

Gideon also gave the *drash* in August, and he teaches at the Saul Bendit Institute at Congregation Beth El. His class will meet on Sunday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30, beginning on October 28.

Michele Sumka and **Susan Dreiband** will offer a six-month course on "From Age-ing to Sage-ing." The course, originally developed by Rabbi Zalman Shachter-Shalomi, explores the aging process and how to live fulfilled lives through discussion, sharing personal stories, and journaling. A start date for the course has not yet been determined.

Rabbi Bob Saks will teach a four-session course on "Judaism and Homosexuality." The course will explore the subject through biblical texts, and through rulings issued by each of the four major movements.

Cathy Tuerk will join Rabbi Saks for one session to speak about her book, *Mom Knows: Reflections on Love,*

Gay Pride, and Taking Action. The course will meet on Sunday mornings from 10:15 to 11:30, beginning on October 21.

Adult Bat Mitzvah Class

Rabbi Avis Miller will again be offering an adult bat mitzvah class. This two-year class on Jewish beliefs, ethics, liturgy, holidays and life cycle, all from the perspective of Jewish women, will meet twice a month. The sign up will be on Tuesday, October 23, at 7:30 p.m.

Adult Bar Mitzvah Class

Men who are interested in an Adult Bar Mitzvah class should contact Rabbi Seidel.

Please refer to the Fall Course Catalog for all of these classes, Rabbi Seidel's classes on Talmud and Tanakh, and many more. You can pick up a copy of the catalog in the TI lobby.

You can also find the catalog online at <http://tifereth-israel.org/adult-education-and-programs>. Look at the menu labeled Programs and click on Adult Education Catalog PDF.

Do You Participate in a Book Group?

Rumor has it that there are a number of book groups out there which TI members are organizing and attending. Others may be interested in joining. If you participate in a TI book group, please send me the information (cynp25@gmail.com), so that I can compile a list for my next *Menorah* column.

Kol Nashim

Margie Odle



Hello from Kol Nashim (KN), the voice of TI's women. First, we want to welcome new members, and wish everyone all the best in the New Year. We have a number of exciting programs coming up:

Fall Foliage Hike

Co-sponsored with the Environmental Committee, the hike in Rock Creek Park will be after Kiddush on **Saturday, October 13**, at 1:15 p.m. Larry Schainker, our resident naturalist, will lead the group in enjoying, and learning about, a resource we're so fortunate to have as a neighbor.

Book Group

We're excited to announce that KN is sponsoring a monthly book group, suggested (and organized) by

member Jessica Weissman. The first meeting will be on **Tuesday, October 16**, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Pearl and Larry Schainker.

Jessica presented a list of possible "first books" to the KN board and we selected *A Pigeon and a Boy, A Novel* by Meir Shalev for the October book. We selected the third Tuesday of each month for the meeting. The process for the selection of each month's book will be decided by the group. Please let Jessica know that you're interested. Send her an email at KNBook@Tifereth-Israel.org. More information is available on a flyer in the TI lobby, and at [wttp://tifereth-israel.org/ti-book-club](http://tifereth-israel.org/ti-book-club).

General Membership Meeting

Because KN is delighted to already have a number of new members this

fall, we decided to have a general membership meeting, a "Schmoozathon" for new, current, and prospective KN members, on **Sunday, November 4**, from 4 to 6 p.m., at my home, 1301 Geranium St. NW. It will be a wine and cheese to get to know each other better, and share ideas about getting involved.

Mitzvah Knitting

We continue to sponsor Mitzvah Knitting. The next meeting is **Tuesday, October 23**, 7-9 p.m., at TI.

Programs in Coming Months

We have a number of other programs "in the works." Details will follow in future newsletters and email announcements:

Early December: Hanukkah Boutique

December: Carla Ellern will give a Sunday morning talk on Rain Gardens, including information about TI's plan.

February: Game Night

March: Maxine Grossman will give a Sunday morning talk, topic to be announced.

In the planning stage: a trip to Arlington Cemetery; a program at the Zenith Gallery.

It's going to be an exciting year!

Goldberg Commemoration Cleanup a Success

Marcia Goldberg

As usual, TI'ers came through to help make the Goldberg Commemoration Cleanup Day(s) a success. We were greatly limited on the first Sunday, September 9, because there was another Shabbat service before Rosh Hashanah and we had to leave the sanctuary and auditorium prior to the church service and karate program.

Carla Ellern worked alone on the grounds doing a fantastic job of weeding and making the appearance presentable. Inside, Pearl Schainker, Ellen Kramerow, Eli Cohen and Eli Mayer labored away.

The rest of the force appeared on Sunday, September 16, to have everything ready by the time the holiday started that evening.

Thanks go to: Jeffrey Colman, Rachel Tickner, Brenda Footer, Susan Vitale, Susan Catler, Audrey Smith, Andrew Reamer, Howard Gleckman, Myrna Goldman, Sheridan and Dana Neimark, Laura Rappaport, Jevera Temsky, Mariama Lantner, Desiree Douglas, Alan Landay, Daniel Handwerker, Shira Jones, Tobi McFarland, Hannah Garelick and return participation by Ellen Kramarow and Eli Mayer.

If I missed you -- particularly if you were working elsewhere and I didn't see you -- my apologies.

Not to miss the obvious, we couldn't have done our part without the help of David Zinner, Sheri Blonder, Steve Ross and the behind-the-scenes efforts of others on the staff.

Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers

Barbara Raimondo

Life Does Exist in the Midwest

The **Kefers** went on a road trip to the Upper Midwest, logging nearly 5,000 miles in two weeks. Their two children never even asked "are we there yet?" They were both thrilled with their souvenirs: a Sturgis t-shirt, a free Geico Gecko from a fair, a 25-cent rubber ball from a machine at the Mall of America, and a plastic Twins cap from a ball game. Sounds like the price was right!

They visited South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota and a bit of Illinois and Indiana. Highlights included four national parks (Badlands, Teddy Roosevelt, Wind Cave and Mount Rushmore), Custer State Park, the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally (the "world's largest motorcycle rally" with 500,000 bikes ... not including the Kefers!), and the Illinois AND Indiana state fairs (home of the famous "fried bubble gum").

They also enjoyed a boat trip in Duluth, an outdoor musical in Medora, ND, a shootout, a tour of a gold mine, swimming in one of Minnesota's 15,000 lakes, a bike ride along the Paul Bunyan State Trail, a rollercoaster, the world's largest teddy bear collection, the Corn Palace, Wall Drug, Bear Country USA, Story Book Island in SD, an alpine slide, and the presidential wax museum.

Despite all of these adventures, the boys continue to insist that the hour they spent at the Flintstones Theme Park was the single best part of the trip.

Larry and Melanie Greenfield had a wonderful trip to Alaska in July. They cruised the Inside Passage and then went inland to Denali National Park and Fairbanks. They met lovely people, danced every night, saw

breathtaking scenery, photographed amazing flowers and saw much wildlife, including whales, bears, and a lynx. No word about the Flintstones.

Note to Self: Don't Forget the Fur Hat Thingee

Myrna Goldman and her usual travel companion, her sister, **Harriet Ainbinder**, went to Finland, Estonia, and Russia in late August and early September. It was a wonderful trip, and the weather was considerably cooler than in DC. Highlights included a visit to a shul in Helsinki (complete with a bar mitzvah), a Jewish tour of Moscow, the Faberge eggs at the Armory Museum in Moscow, and the Hermitage Museum and Peterhof Palace in St. Petersburg.

The Russia part of the tour was a river trip on a small ship, which stopped in a number of interesting places between the two major cities. Myrna met some Goldmans on the ship, who are probably not related but told her that she looked just like their 95-year old aunt. Uh . . . thanks . . .

Closer to home (sorta) **Brenda Footer** will be presenting at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) annual conference in Atlanta this November. Her topic is "Practicing What We Preach: Using Best Practices with Adult Learners."

And **Bruce Berger** announces that he has published his latest story collection, *Dear Grandpa and Other Stories*, for Amazon/Kindle. The stories revolve around the life of a recent widower, who must decide whether to live or die. Sounds cheery!

Some Folks Never Leave

"What are you still doing here?" is the most frequent question asked of the **Levone** family of late. Some TI'ers were surprised to see them still here after it was announced they might be moving out of the area as of September. Turns out the move has been delayed a bit. **Wylie** will be leaving this month and **Kim** and the kids (**Allegra**, **Raviv**, **Liat** and **Boaz**) will follow in January, after Allegra's bat mitzvah.

The family is headed to Rio de Janeiro for a three-year stint. Wylie will be helping to open a local office for his law firm, Hogan Lovells, and Kim will be gathering bits for a comedy routine as she navigates the country in several languages she doesn't speak. Sounds fun! Feel free to wish them a *Boa Viagem*.

Rona Fields' latest book, *Against Violence Against Women*, published by Palgrave-MacMillan (a branch of St. Martin's Press), is due out in February or early March. It focuses on sanctioned violence against women that is incorporated into politicized religious extremism.

Sad News

Betty Jane Ehudin, mother-in-law of **David Zinner**, TI Executive Director, passed away peacefully on August 30. She is survived by three daughters, **Eileen Ehudin Beard**, **Roslyn Zinner** and **Lori Hagedorn**; two other sons-in-law, **Michael Beard** and **Douglas Hagedorn**; and five grandchildren. Her husband, **Herman Ehudin**, predeceased her. Burial was in Baltimore. Memorial contributions may be made to the Re-elect Obama Campaign or the American Lung Association.

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Of Jesus, Satan and Dogma

Frank Solomon

In the last issue of *The Menorah*, TI President Joel Cohen raised questions on Jesus and Satan. Rabbi Seidel is starting a course that provides a Jewish perspective of Christianity. It would be fun to stir the pot further.

It is often suggested there is a "schism" between Judaism and Christianity. This presupposes that the only problem between the two religions is schism, because most people think that schism can be healed. Thus, we find all kinds of interfaith dialogue and cooperation between Jewish and Christian groups, albeit most of them are on work projects rather than theological dialogue.

Schism or Antithesis?

However, schism assumes an underlying unity which is broken by "schismatics." If this were true, are the schismatics those who reject Jesus or those who leave Judaism? I think a better question is whether the Judeo-Christian relationship is one of schismatics or one of unrelieved antithesis.

To find out whether the two faiths' relationship is merely schismatic or antithetical, one has to recognize the two religions' basic characteristics. Most Jews would probably consider Judaism as primarily concerned with the "way to live," or *halakhic*, and Christianity as mostly concerned with the way to believe, with the proper creedal structure.

Core Beliefs But Not Dogma

In a certain sense, however, Judaism does demand certain beliefs. We can find a kerygmatic core in the Old Testament, such as the Exodus, and the Shema. Nonetheless, the essential demand of Judaism is obedience to the Torah and the observance of *mitzvot*.

The anathemas in the Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10, are almost haphazard and far from being dogmatic pronouncements backed up with the full authority of some anointed leaders of the faith. They are not given any prominence in religious proclamations.

Instead of dogma of belief, the most important element in Judaism is "tradition." It's tradition that has kept Judaism alive. It's the way of doing things, the way of baking bread, sewing clothes, slaughtering animals, keeping the house clean. No one knows who initiated this tradition. Nevertheless, most Jews live by it without much questioning.

Jews' primary concern is not the understanding of tradition, not formulating it by doctrine and dogma, even though Jews are probably the most inquisitive people of all faiths. The heart of Judaism is living it, observing it, with joy and trust in God.

Furthermore, "belief" in Judaism can range at will. While there are certain implicit and, sometimes, explicit basic principles which we typically follow, one would be hard-pressed to find consensus among Jews on any one "doctrine," certainly not about the Messiah, not about Satan. It is fair to say that Judaism gives its adherents a multiplicity of opinions, but no theology.

Opinions, Not Theology

At any one time on any particular issue, the rabbis provide "individual" opinions. They might consider their opinions as theological, but they are not systematic theologians in any sense. Few rabbis would pronounce their opinion as definitive, final and infallible. It is not orthodoxy but orthopraxy that marks Judaism.

In this sense, Judaism is *pan-halakhic*. It's safe to argue that the dominant religious position of Jews is that opinion, doctrine or dogma matter much less than practice, observances and trust in God. The real genius of Judaism is expressed not in creeds, like the Nicene or the

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Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers (continued)

Susanne Spellberg, mother of **Philip (Dianne) Spellberg**, and grandmother of **Claire** and **Jack Spellberg**, also passed away. The funeral was in Skokie, Illinois.

And **Adele Mildred "Milly" Koss**, mother of **Shannah Renbaum Koss (Jay Renbaum)**, and grandmother of **Justine Koss-McCallum** and **Daniel Renbaum-Koss**, died recently. The funeral was in Boston.

May all who have lost loved ones be comforted.

And now for the meaning of last month's word, *rapporteur*: "a person who gives reports." (Merriam-Webster Online)

Thanks to all who sent me news, sent me to others who sent me news, or otherwise helped sniff it out. Please send information for next time to baraimondo@gmail.com, with "Nayes un Mekhayes" in the heading, or to P.O. Box 466, Washington Grove, MD 20880. This brings to a close a titivated edition of Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers.

Of Jesus, Satan and Dogma (continued)

Chalcedonian in Christianity, but in the law book, the Mishnah.

While some Christian scholars and clergy claim that it is impossible to completely separate Christianity from Judaism because many Christians also believe in "the way to live," -- they also follow the Ten Commandments and do good deeds -- over the last two millennia, Christianity did develop into a dogmatic system of belief. It's probably because without the benefit of a full-blooded, unshakable firewall such as the Torah, Christianity needed to define itself over against the various forces that threatened it.

Orthodoxy and Dogma

Over time, Christianity became Hellenized. With Hellenization came orthodoxy, which culminated in those great dogmatic statements of the Councils. Thus beliefs, not *halakhah*, became paramount. The Church had to impose a meaning, a creed, a dogma on meaninglessness in a way that the more rooted Judaism could afford to ignore.

Judaism, like most great religions, began after there was a people

(believers). Christianity, on the other hand, came from the imaginings of creative thinkers rather than the natural path of men in search of God. Here came a religion that first was formulated, and then afterwards its disciples had to find believers. Thus began the God in search of men.

It's from this need to create a dogma and impose a systematic theology that Christianity formulated the concepts of "sin" -- probably derived from the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament -- and the finality of Christ -- from the reference to the Messiah in the Old Testament. It is this finality of Christ that Christianity believes replaces the Torah, the law that makes the two faiths unrelieved antithetical.

Christian Selectivity

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and the emergency of the Church are expressed as the fulfillment of the Old Testament. However, while the New Testament writers drew upon the Hebrew Bible to create the new religion in the Gospels, they did not draw on all the Old Testament indiscriminately. They ignored some

prophecies and modified others. Through creative selection, in painting a picture of their Lord they did not use all the colors found in the Hebrew Bible. They rejected some colors and used others to depict Jesus, the Christ, whom they saw as the Messiah, the Savior.

A New Doctrine Emerges

Given this Christian selectivity, the imaginings of Paul and the disciples, the lack of understanding of the Old Testament and, ultimately, subsequent Christian scholars' and believers' lack of knowledge of the Old Testament's original language, it was not difficult to come up with a new doctrine and dogma. Nevertheless, while Christians may find the Christological principle of interpretation convincing it is not surprising that inquisitive scholars such as Joel Cohen would raise questions about the Christian version of the Messiah and Satan.

Interested in more schism or antithesis between Judaism and Christianity? Join Rabbi Seidel's course.

Shepherd Elementary School Tutoring

For some 13 years, adults and teenagers from Tifereth Israel and Shepherd Park have tutored students from our local public elementary school. Each tutor is paired with a young student in grades 2-5 for the school year.

The pair meets for one hour every Sunday at the synagogue when school is in session, from 5 to 6 p.m. They read, practice math skills, or review homework.

The weekly hour can make a tremendous difference in the academic performance of participating students by boosting their self-confidence and strengthening skills learned in school. This is a very high rate of return on volunteer service.

This year's program is already underway. If you are interested in tutoring, contact Dan Nathan at (202) 746-2680 or at shepherd_tutoringprogram@gmail.com.

Tot Shabbat Service

On Saturday, October 20, at 11:10 a.m., join other families with children age 5 and under.

Tot Shabbat is parent-led activity, which includes *tefillah* (prayer), songs, Shabbat stories, Torah parade and a mini-kiddush. Then stay for Kiddush with the rest of the congregation.

Rosh Hashanah Collectibles

Simcha Kuritzky

We all know about Hanukkah *gelt* and *Shalah Manot* for Purim, but what about presents for the New Year of the World?

There is no precedent in traditional Jewish practice, but in the 19th Century gentile Germans began the custom of sending New Year cards to family and friends. These were secular, usually portraying lucky symbols such as horseshoes and mushrooms, with inscriptions such as *Prosit Neu Jahr*, or wishing good luck. This is probably the source of the Jewish custom of sending cards for Rosh Hashanah.

One can find Jewish New Year cards going back over a century. Many early ones were manufactured in Germany. Some were post cards made up of tinted photographs with Yiddish inscriptions added. A popular version evolved shortly before World War I and involved die cuts of various scenes set in a card. One common scene shows a woman personifying Bat Zion waving a version of the Zionist flag with *L'Shana Tovah Tikateivu* written on it.



Sometimes more elaborate gifts were given. I have two 19th Century medals, used perhaps as a watch fob or bracelet charm.

A silver medal, slightly larger than a quarter, has *L'Shanah Tovah Tikateivu* in Hebrew inscribed on what looks like a blank prepared to be used as a music award medal. Another has initials, *L'Shanah Tovah Tikateiv* (singular masculine form), and the dual year 5654/1893 engraved on a \$2.50 gold piece.



In Israel, *Shanah Tovah* cards are very common, and older ones can be found at antique stores and bazaars. The inscriptions often vary from the traditional, to forms like *Shanah Shefa V'Hatzlahah* (prosperous year), or *Shanat Shalom U'Bitahon* (peaceful and secure year).

A 1950's card shows immigrants arriving in Israel. Most of these are unused excess stock, but sometimes one can find cards with handwritten good wishes in Hebrew, German, Polish, or other languages.



While most charities sold stamp receipts year round, or especially to buy matzah for Pesah, the United Charity Institutions of New York issued stamps as part of a High Holiday appeal, probably in the 1930's. There are undoubtedly other charitable receipts out there for donations to synagogues and charities.

(Continued on page 10)

Synagogue Archiving: What is Trash and What is a Treasure?

Cynthia Peterman

Anyone who has ever cleaned out an attic or basement knows well the dilemma of sorting through boxes of papers and memorabilia. How do you decide between what is really important and what is probably just junk that has lost its inherent value over the years and should be tossed?

Imagine doing this for an institution that is approaching its 100th anniversary!

Did you know that one level above the school wing lies the TI attic? It contains old furniture, filing cabinets, and many, many boxes of papers going back decades in our history. I have been assisting Marcia Goldberg to go through these papers and organize them to create the TI archive.

What have we found? Photos of the groundbreaking of our current building in 1956, photos of the synagogue leadership in the previous building (14th and Euclid Streets), the synagogue constitution in Yiddish, and many other interesting items. Of course, we also found many boxes of receipts, bills, copies of letters, and other items that we had to decide whether or not to keep.

What to do? Thankfully, there are professional archivists to lend advice.

With the support of the synagogue, in August I was able to attend a national conference on synagogue archiving at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives. More than 30 people attended, representing synagogues from all over the country, some large, some small.

There were many useful workshops on how to create and maintain

synagogue archives, how to determine the value of items in a collection, and how to archive for the future.

The tools which I gained at the conference will help Marcia and me as we continue to create the TI Archive and as we look beyond to celebrating TI's 100th anniversary in 2016.

If you are interested in learning more about what treasures we have unearthed in the TI attic, come to "Tales from the TI Attic: Archiving TI's Treasures" on Sunday, November 4 at 10:15 a.m. in the Reamer Chapel.



Cynthia Peterman and Marcia Goldberg in TI Attic

Rosh Hashanah Collectibles (continued)



Some Jewish collectibles closely resembled their Christian counterparts. Christians printed New Year/Christmas cards which looked like a check good for 365 good days.

I found a check from the Bank of the Gates of Heaven good for 365 fortunate days (despite the fact that Jewish years have 353, 354, 355, or, in leap years, 383, 384, or 385 days). Perhaps to emphasize the connection to the solar calendar, the check shows in the background the 12 signs of the zodiac, which is also a traditional good luck (*mazal*) symbol.

NH Congregation's Yiddish Culture Weekend An Unqualified Success, a TI Connection

Martin Kessel

As several of you at TI know, Gail and I are also members of the Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation, located in a small town in Northern New Hampshire. We recently concluded a highly successful Yiddish Culture Weekend at BHC and I wanted to share with TI members the highlights of this event.

We were especially pleased to have Esther and Gene Herman from TI join us for YCW. Over the past few years several other TI members have visited the unique synagogue here in Bethlehem, including Margie and Carl Bergman and Ettie and Paul Bardack (Paul's grandfather actually officiated as a cantor at BHC in the 1920's). We also hosted Carolivia Herron for a very successful Literary Weekend devoted to her writing.

Yiddish Music in America

The Yiddish Culture Weekend opened on Friday afternoon with a presentation by Professor Mark Slobin on Yiddish Music in America. This dramatization described the successes and rivalries of America's early 20th century Yiddish musical theater personalities, Sigmund Mogulesko and Abraham Goldfaben. Slobin was ably supported by actors Cantor Marlena Fuerstman and Professor Edwin Seroussi of the Hebrew University, both from BHC.

An American scholar and ethnomusicologist, Slobin has authored and edited over fourteen books which focus on Jewish music. He has served as president of both the Society for Ethnomusicology and the Society for Asian Music.

Everyone then enjoyed a lively musical Kabbalat Shabbat and Friday night service conducted by Rabbi

Shira Shazeer and Cantor Ken Richmond from Temple Israel in Boston. Over 50 people attended an excellent Shabbat dinner in our social hall catered by local Chef Joe.

Educational ... Stimulating ... I learned a lot about Yiddish culture... [It] brings people together -- feelings of solidarity of the community... It had a little of everything - and was extremely interesting. Of course, the Klezmatics were fabulous -- they were the topping to the cake. Thank you for all your hard work. It was quite successful.

Following dinner, we were treated to a Broadway-caliber performance of "An Evening With Molly Picon." This lively musical tribute to the famous Yiddish singer and actor, Molly Picon, was written and performed by Professor Diane Cypkin of Pace University.

Cypkin captivated the audience with her infectious personality and beautiful voice as she brought Molly to life for us all. Henry Danaher of Dartmouth College accompanied Cypkin on the piano. Cypkin is the cousin of BHC member Dorothy Goldstone.

S h a b b a t
m o r n i n g

services again featured Shira and Ken leading us in prayer and song followed by a leisurely Shabbat lunch.

Shabbat afternoon was devoted to a paper-cutting workshop led by Tine Kindermann, a well-known media artist from NYC. Tine is the wife of Klezmatics band leader, Frank London. The workshop, held at WREN (W o m e n s R u r a l Entrepreneurial Network), drew several people from the Bethlehem community in addition to the Yiddish Weekend participants.

Klesmatics a Highlight

The highlight of the weekend was an outstanding live performance Saturday night by the Klezmatics to a full house at the Colonial Theatre in Bethlehem. This stellar evening began with a reception on the patio of the Colonial Theatre where Yiddish Culture Weekend participants mingled with the large crowd who had come from near and far for the Klezmatics concert.



Esther and Gene Herman with Martin Kessel

(Continued on page 12)

NH Congregation's Yiddish Culture Weekend (continued)

The Klezmatics, one of the top klezmer ensembles anywhere in the world, got off to a rollicking start which never let up the entire evening. The area in front of the stage was taken over by an energetic group of enthusiastic dancers from the audience while others joined in with joyful hand-clapping and foot-stomping.

Havdalah At Intermission

A *havdalah* service -- the beloved ceremony to bid farewell to the Sabbath and welcome the new week -- was held on the patio during the concert intermission to the delight of those in the audience and to the great interest of many other Colonial patrons.

Events resumed on Sunday morning with a bagel and lox nosh and the last event on the program, "Reclaiming Yiddishkeit," organized by Rita Farrell and Jack Karp. Each has a strong Yiddish heritage as evidenced by the stories they told.

Preceding them, the audience welcomed Emma Morgenstern, a delightful intern from the Yiddish Book Center, Amherst, MA. She told the story of the beginnings and growth of the Yiddish Book Center since its inception in the late 1970s, when Aaron Lansky decided "to save the world's Yiddish books" during his years as a graduate student.

Since then, the Yiddish book collection has grown to 1.5 million

volumes saved from extinction. [The full story is told in Aaron Lansky's "Outwitting History," Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill: Chapel Hill, NC, 2004.]

The weekend ended with participants realizing a renewed interest in Yiddish culture and many new friendships. The Yiddish Culture Weekend was made possible by the support of the Tharice Foundation of Basel, Switzerland. BHC members were delighted to welcome foundation representative, Ueli Aebi of Bern, Switzerland.

Conceived by Marlena Fuerstman, Martin Kessel, and Edwin Seroussi the Yiddish Culture Weekend was a highlight of the BHC summer season. Eileen Regen coordinated publicity efforts.

Upcoming Friday Night Minyan Assignments

October 5

Joseph & Rachel Firschein
Paul & Susan Fischer
David & Patricia Fisher
Paula Flicker
James & Carla Flug
Claude Fontheim & Orit Frenkel
Brenda & Lee Footer
Ira Forman & Caryn Pass
Henry Fox & Sarah Kagan
Bruce Friedland & Jenny Bryant

October 19

Naomi Friedman
Judy Galat
William & Miriam Galston
Stephen Garber & Lynne Snyder
Jared Garelick & Ellen Kramarow
Seth Glabman & Martha Hare
Rick Glaser & Sheryl Gross-Glaser
Howard Gleckman & Ann Kline

October 25

John & Marcia Goggin
Marcia Goldberg
Joseph & Dody Goldberg
Traci Kammer Goldberg & Eliot Goldberg
Joshua & Sara Goldberg
Myrna Goldman
Paul Goldman & Debbie Pomerance
Tom & Lisa Goldring
David Goldstein
George & Marjorie Greenberg

November 2

Larry & Melanie Greenfield
Abraham & Dena Greenstein
Seth Grimes & Franca Brilliant
Richard Gryziak & Sandi Verbois
Stefan Gunther & Lisa Goldberg
Jonathan Halpern
Daniel & Elizabeth Handwerker
Elliot Harrison & Wendy Coleman
David Hart & Lois Frankel
Stephen & Shelley Heller

November 16

Matt & Linda Heller
Bruce Heppen & Bonnie Suchman
Eugene & Esther Herman
Mitchell & Patti Herman
Carolivia Herron
James & Annie Hershberg
Judith Herzog
Seth Himelhoch & Sheila Jelen
William & Nira Hodos
Robert & Helen Hovis

November 23

Hedy Howard
Anita Isicson
Verne & Abby Jacobs
William & Marissa Jacobson
Leonard Jewler & Andrea Rosen
Harvey Kabaker & Andrea Kline
Steven Kalish & Anita Bollt
David Kass & Iris Amdur
Joshua & Jennifer Kefer
Kenneth & Nina Bronk Kellner

Faith, Agnosticism and Certainty

Ethan Seidel

Editor's Note: The following are excerpts from Rabbi Seidel's sermon on the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

What is faith in God? And why might faith be important for us? Today I want to differentiate faith from two more common attitudes. On the one side, agnosticism, on the other, certainty. In between agnosticism and certainty, stands, uneasily, unsure of itself, faith. I want to persuade you that having faith makes more sense than agnosticism. And I want to convince you that the person with just faith is closer to God than the person who is certain of God....

...Faith is not absolute *confidence* that things are going to be all right.... You can have *certainty* without doubt – that's the definition of certainty. But *faith* without doubt? Isn't that just certainty?

Does Faith Lead to Uncertainty?

There are many – Jews and non-Jews alike – who seem to feel that ... if faith isn't the *same* as certainty, at least it inevitably *leads* to certainty. I'm not so sure....Ok, maybe certainty *can* be born of faith. But is that even a good thing? Certainty, I've come to believe, is less about God, than about the believer. Certainty cannot entertain doubt, and so is by its very nature defensive, and closed, and inflexible, even dangerous....

[T]his is a problem with all adult conversation in general. We tend to focus on getting our message out there, as opposed to listening to the other....For when we are desperately trying to get our message across, the conversation is closed, predictable, anxious. But if we can replace our certainty in our own message with

faith, with the faith that our human companion is a creation of God, and as such has something important to share – well *then* the conversation has a chance to become open, unpredictable, holy.

Faith Less Painful than Certainty

So with all this in mind, I've backed down a little from certainty, towards mere faith....I've found that living with a faith riddled by doubt is actually less painful than living with certainty....

...Abraham and Isaac in today's Torah portion...walk towards *their* destiny.... Somehow Abraham is able to hear God's messenger, and realize, albeit at the last minute, that sacrificing his son is *not* the right thing to do. What is it that opens Abraham's heart? And how could we open *our* hearts to God in a similar manner, and avoid dangerous certainty in our own lives?

Maybe the secret of Abraham's openness is the way he walks with his son Isaac... [T]he Torah repeats a phrase in this story...: *Vayeilkhu sh'neihem yahdav*. The two of them walked on, together, *yahdav*. From the same root as *ehad*, meaning "one." It's unusual for a story as terse as this one to repeat a phrase. So, what...is this phrase...trying to get across?

Listening Leads to Doubt

...[T]he second use of this phrase occurs just after Abraham has listened to his child's concerns. Isaac asks: "Uh, Dad, I see we've brought fire and wood; but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?" Now...I wonder if Abraham is himself having doubts about the mission [and is now]... a little less sure of himself. Maybe,

after listening to Isaac's voice, Abraham is now thinking...: "Hmm, is this really what God wants?..."

Maybe this walk with his son has changed Abraham for the better. Maybe Abraham has exchanged the certainty with which he began this story, the certainty that God wanted him to sacrifice Isaac, with doubt. And it is that doubt that opens Abraham up to the possibility of faith. "I hope that God will provide the lamb, my son."

This story is famous in our tradition for the *hineni* Abraham says when God first calls him. *Hineni* meaning..."here I am God, ready to do whatever you ask." ...But there is another *hineni* in this story.... I wonder if maybe the [second] *hineni* ...is Abraham's real heroic moment – the real example for us, today. Abraham says: *hineni, v'ni*, "here I am, my son."

Hineni is Attentiveness

The real *hineni* is that attitude of attentiveness when another human being is calling you out of the depths of their anxiety—can you listen to that, can you put your own agenda aside for a second, and hear the question? Can you prepare to abandon all your God-given certainty, and just listen. Can you just be there, and say *hineni*, my son, and nothing more. Because if you can do that, then maybe, just maybe you will get a glimpse of heaven.

It's not easy, listening. It's possible that it's a little harder for men than women, on average. And it's even harder via the telephone, or texting, or email. It usually takes face time, lots of it. A long walk is good. With Abraham and Isaac, it took three

(Continued on page 14)

Faith, Agnosticism and Certainty (continued)

days of physical togetherness before the important conversation happened, before Isaac sensed that he could air his fears, *and* that those fears might be heard.

So, what is that glimpse of heaven Abraham gets? Abraham gets to hear the angel saying he doesn't have to sacrifice his son. Which, I think, is a pretty big reward. Call it the reward of clarity. This is what the person of faith can hope for – a moment of clarity. Not certainty. You don't want that. But a moment of clarity – that is divine.

Faith and Agnosticism

So this morning I differentiate faith from certainty. But I also want to differentiate faith from the other side. Just as I think faith is better than certainty, I also believe faith is more healthy than agnosticism.

I worry we've lapsed, we Modern American Conservative Jews, into a lazy agnosticism....I worry that we think that there are only two options with regards to belief in God, namely, certainty and agnosticism. And since we're very uncomfortable with certainty, we choose what we believe to be the only other option.

So let me speak to those of you who think you are agnostics. Are you *really* agnostic? Some parts of God you're fine with. For example, you're OK with the God of meaning – *that* you can live with, *that* aspect of God you even celebrate.

You sense a purpose to life, even if you profess no belief in God at all. You feel that we have been given a job to do, that we are responsible for repairing at least some little piece of this damaged world....[W]e're here, at least in part, to make a difference for good.

Now, you may not think that it is God who sent us on our mission – maybe you think it is the Jewish Tradition... or just common sense that gives us our charge to do good.... I am...going to call that force which calls us to do good, God....[A] huge part of what it means to be a Jew is about being burdened with this [force]...even if we wouldn't all feel equally comfortable calling it God. So we're really not agnostics, most of us, I don't think.

Anyway, my bigger question today is: is that *all* of God? Is God just a God of demands and requirements? Is that all we can bring ourselves to believe in? Or are there other sides to God as well, other aspects that might be helpful in our lives? Because if God is just about demands, well, isn't that a pretty tough God? All work, and no reward. All demands, and no love.

Who wants that kind of God, always *schreiing* about what you haven't done, but never appreciative of the work you *have* accomplished?...I wonder. Could we non-Orthodox Jews ever have faith in a God that loves us, in a God that not only commands but also rewards? Could we believe even in a God that comforts us, as well as challenges us? Because if we cannot, if we can only believe in a God of endless demands, then these High Holidays will not be the Days of Awe, as much as the Days of Anxiety....

A God Who Is Good to Us

Today, I talk about faith in a God who is not just strict with us, but is also good to us. Now I realize that this is problematic. Too many bad things happen to too many good people for us to think that God is good in any simple way we can be comfortable with.

All I'm saying is that sometimes, God gives us gifts. Gifts of clarity. Which is, of course, not as much as might be wished. It's not *long* life, or even a *healthy* life, or, as I mentioned before, certainty. It's just clarity. Don't think this is nothing. It saved Abraham's son, and thus our entire people. It saves lives every day. This clarity gives us strength in difficult times, it helps us endure tragedy and disappointment....

Faith and Faithfulness

But maybe the word "faith" is putting you off. It somehow doesn't feel Jewish, you think....[L]et me try to address this concern. It turns out that the Hebrew word for faith, *emunah*,means not just faith, but also faithfulness....Faith, which is just about belief, seems somehow very theoretical....But faithfulness – that's really about actions, it's a quality... that describes a set of actions, or a person who did some particular deeds.

Maybe you, like me, feel a little funny aspiring to be a man of faith. But a man faithful to God's word – that I'm perfectly fine shooting for. And I could be faithful to God's commands, even when my faith in God sometimes wavers.

Which is not to undercut what I've said so far this morning. We do need faith....We need faith that we have a mission. We need faith that we can carry out at least a piece of that mission. We need faith that our mission is not just a self-deluded attempt to get attention. We need faith that we aren't completely deceiving ourselves today. We need to believe that we are able, however imperfectly, to evaluate our own actions, and make changes when needed.

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October Highlights at Tifereth Israel

October 1	Sukkot I Services, 9 a.m., followed by Sukkah Walk
October 2	Sukkot II Services, 9 a.m.
October 7	Hoshanah Rabbah Services, 9 a.m. (Note later time)
October 8	Sh'mini Atzeret (Yizkor) Services, 9 a.m. Erev Simhat Torah, Evening Services, 7 p.m.
October 9	Simhat Torah Services, 9 a.m.
October 13	Fall Foliage Hike, 1:15 p.m.
October 14	Michele Sumka tour of Mollie Berch Library, 10:15 a.m.
October 15, 22 29	Monday Learning <i>Parashat HaShavuah</i> , 11 a.m. Job Club, 1 p.m.
October 16	Kol Nashim Book Group, 7:30 p.m., at Schainkers
October 20	Tot Shabbat Service, 11:10 a.m. SHALEM, Howard Gleckman, Caring for Aging Parents, Following Kiddush
October 21	Rabbi Bob Saks, first of four sessions on Judaism and Homosexuality, 10:15-11:30 a.m.
October 28	Gideon Amir, first of four sessions on Divine Intervention and Divine Justice, 7-8:30 p.m.

Faith, Agnosticism and Certainty (continued)

There are those who say such change isn't really possible. That's not what we believe. We have faith in the possibility of change, in the possibility that we humans can be, at least occasionally, open to a different way of looking at things, a different way of doing things. We cannot live on rationality alone. We need God's help.

Psalm 27, the psalm for this season, ends on just this note, [best translated as]...:"If I had not believed that I surely shall see God's

goodness in the land of the living..." This psalmist is not an agnostic, he's not indifferent. He doesn't throw up his hands, and say, well, maybe there's a God, maybe there's not, whatever. It's a matter of life of death for him. If I hadn't believed, at least some of the time, that there was goodness in this world...who knows how I would have endured....

Faith Brings Us Closer to God

If you are hoping for closeness to God, it may be that certainty is an

unhelpful attitude. Better than certainty, if you want to experience God, might be faith. A faith that there is a bit of God in everyone. A faith that, the more you listen, the more open you are to God's creatures, the better glimpse you will have of our crowd-sourced God.

God will be with you in your uncertainty – in fact, it is *only* in your uncertainty, that you can be faithful to God's unpredictable presence.

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