



# Being Jewish

PASSOVER 2010

Relevant Judaism for Modern Life

## in this issue:



The abundant Seder table  
Hand-In-Hand With  
God:  
Editor's Message . . . . . 2

How Have the Jews  
Survived? . . . . . 4

Pesach in Majorca . . . 6

Geferlekh Joke . . . . . 7

Molly Goldberg:  
The "Ersh" Lady of  
"Televisye" . . . . . 8

Passovers Past . . . . . 10

Modern Technology:  
Good or Bad for the  
Jewish People? . . . . . 12

This & That . . . . . 13

Ten Entertainment  
Tips . . . . . 14

Recipe:  
Orange-Almond  
Sponge Cake . . . . . 15



**HAPPY PASSOVER 5770**

From your friends at

[www.gantsehmegillah.com](http://www.gantsehmegillah.com)

Jewish ideas, resources, and  
online content since 1997.

## Being Jewish

1-1451 Rue Dorion  
Montreal, QC H2K 4A4  
beingjewishmagazine@gmail.com

Michael Hanna-Fein  
Editor and Publisher

Arnold Hanna-Fein  
Assistant Editor  
Graphics and Layout

Gil Mann  
Past Publisher

David Epstein  
Founding Publisher

Produced by  
HannaVisioN  
HannaVisioN.com

Template designed by:  
JFLMedia!

Being Jewish magazine is a cooperative effort of participating federations, synagogues, schools, JCCs, and other Jewish organizations.

Being Jewish is published in the spring, fall, and winter.

For ordering information, contact  
beingjewishmagazine@gmail.com.  
or call (514) 948-1844

Copyright ©2010. All rights reserved. Material may not be used without permission from the authors and/or publisher.

# Hand-in-Hand with God

By Michael Hanna-Fein  
Editor

We are experiencing the worst economic crisis since the great depression of the 1930s. Millions of people are being thrown out of work, some are losing their homes, and savings have been wiped out or stolen. For a very unfortunate few, entire retirement pensions have disappeared overnight. The anguish, uncertainty and fear, leaves many of us praying for a miracle.

We Jews though are a practical people. While we have faith in God's great power, and his love for us as his "chosen people," experience has taught us we don't dictate his timetable. If we wait for a miracle in a time of great need, we neglect the active role we must play in our own protection. This is not a lack of faith, it is simply assuming responsibility for ourselves, and humanity.

In our history there have been many times when we have temporarily lost faith. We began to question, or deny, God's existence. During the Exodus from slavery in Egypt, as we wandered seemingly lost in the desert, our faith wavered. We created something physical, the Golden Calf, that we could see and touch. This idol created



a temporary sense of safety.

God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, and they redirected our thinking, and restored our faith. By offering guidance, we were given the tools to help ourselves, and each other. With simple and direct laws in place, we had a roadmap for our faith.

How else but with the combination of faith in God, and positive actions on our part, could we have survived over millennia? Clearly Jews have pulled



The cover of this issue of Being Jewish magazine was created by Bobbi Phucas, a freelance artist. Her work is well known and commissioned by many connoisseurs of fine graphics. She can be reached at [abbydoodle@verizon.net](mailto:abbydoodle@verizon.net)



through the most trying times imaginable. Could we have survived the Holocaust without having faith in both God and ourselves? The Holocaust is but the most recent horrific example of a test of our faith, and it makes all other crises in our lives seem trivial.

Another aspect of our belief that helps put our lives in perspective is the concept of Tikkun Olam; repairing the earth, and healing our world. This is a personal motivation and a demonstration of faith in each other as human beings. Tikkun Olam is a commitment to preserve and protect our environment.

Each time we act or sacrifice, in order to assist the victims of natural tragedy, such as the earthquake in Haiti, or the Tzunami in the Indian Ocean, we practice Tikkun Olam. When we give blood to save lives, when our volunteer doctors, nurses and other emergency personnel rush to the scene of a disaster, we witness the man-made miracle of Tikkun Olam.

Passover is upon us. It is a time when family and loved ones gather together around their dining tables and retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The youngest person at the table traditionally asks the four questions, beginning with, "Why is this night different from all other nights?"

Each question is answered as the Haggadah is read aloud, describing the suffering of the Jewish people while slaves in Egypt, and how Moses, a human, is shown by God, how he can facilitate the freeing of our people from the shackles of slavery. We learn of how man and God worked together to achieve the goal of freedom.

The miracles performed, on our behalf by God, are met by vigorous action on the part of humankind. We begin to understand that belief in God does not exonerate us from our responsibilities; the need to act positively and responsibly so we can maximise the positive impact of the miracle. We are also called upon to offer assistance to those who are unable to help themselves. This is a key element of healing the world.

As we gather around the Seder table we must reacquaint ourselves with the story of Passover. In spite of our own fears of what may lie ahead, we must show courage as we discover new ways to ease the plight of others. By taking care of ourselves, and vigilantly pursuing solutions for the problems around us, we can achieve the goals required of us by our Jewish heritage. Only by pursuing solutions for ourselves and others will we ever truly be in the Promised Land.

I wish all of you what I wish for myself and my family; a sweet, loving, and enlightened Passover celebration.

Michael has been publishing the Gantseh Megillah online since 1997. He is also the author of the Glossary of Yiddish Words and Expressions and he publishes Being Jewish magazine. You can visit his Web site at <http://www.gantsehmegillah.com>, where you will find links to the glossary, and the weekly newsletter. If you would like to communicate with Michael, you may email him at [beingjewishmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:beingjewishmagazine@gmail.com).

## note to our readers

We want you to love Being Jewish! We hope you will look forward to each issue, no matter your age, from teen to senior, because you find it relevant, user-friendly, enjoyable, and filled with valuable information, and inspiration about the Jewish way of life.

Each article is carefully selected, and edited so that every concept is easily understood, even by those of us who left the synagogue as teenagers, and did not return for 20 years or more.

Our goal for Being Jewish is to help you find meaning, and relevance in the Jewish way of life. In every issue we will try to show you ways to access the three components of Judaism: Ethics, Spirituality, and Peoplehood (ESP).

The articles we publish are designed to help you look at your modern life, and our ancient traditions, and answer one, or all three, of these questions:



**E** How can I be a more Ethical person?

**S** How can I have a richer Jewish Spiritual life?

**P** How can I enhance my sense of belonging to the Jewish People?

Being Jewish (the magazine, and the Jewish way of life) is organized by the ESP circles, though as you can see by the diagram, and also by reading the articles, there is much potential for overlap.

For example, under Ethics, you will find sections like Working, and Being Jewish, Learning, and Being Jewish, Giving, and Being Jewish, and so on. But at the same time, you could easily find a Spiritual, or Peoplehood, dimension in each of these sections. We can also relate the Ethics, and Peoplehood circles more directly by realizing that Jewish values are the building blocks of Jewish peoplehood.

We hope we can show you ways to access each of the ESP circles, and where they overlap, so that in your modern life, you can more fully enjoy the wisdom, and beauty, of Being Jewish!

# How Have the Jews Survived?

by Gil Mann



Dear Gil:

I have a very important question for my religion class. How have Jews endured and overcome their hardships? Please write back to me ASAP, because I need my answer by tomorrow. Thank you for all your help and consideration.

T

Dear T:

BY TOMORROW!!! Boy oh boy! I get requests to do people's homework now and then — which I must decline — but I like your question enough to make it a column.

Your teacher has given you a tough assignment that has no certain or short answer. I have thought of the question many times and have come up with a scenario that I often use when I lecture that presents your question in a different light:

Imagine a Martian comes to earth and says: "We have heard of these Earthlings called the Jews. What's the deal with these people? The whole planet seems obsessed with them."

"They are an unusual people to be sure." I would reply. "There have never been many of them, but since they appeared on the Earth, the rest of the world has given them special attention."

"Unfortunately, that attention has often meant harming, persecuting and killing them over thousands of years. In fact, the first person to ever call them a people was one of their greatest enemies. His name was Pharaoh and he made them slaves."

"And that was just the beginning of their history. Over time, they have always known great enemies wherever they lived. They were dispersed and scattered all over the world and their neighbors blamed them for

many of the world's problems — from medical plagues to financial calamities."

"During the 20th century, in the bloodiest war that humans have ever known, one third of the Jews on the planet were murdered in death camps. But in reality this Holocaust was one of many against the Jews over the centuries."

"Wow!" Mr. Martian would say, "So are they extinct today?"

"No, somehow they are still around, though not many of them. Out of a planet of 6 billion or so people, there are only about 14 million Jews."

"Then I assume they are a downtrodden and depressed people," would say the Martian.

"Actually, no. They are among the most productive, creative, and optimistic of Earthlings. They are leaders in all that they do: art, science, medicine, literature, agriculture, business, law, education, entertainment... you will find them at the forefront of just about every kind of human achievement wherever they live. And though they are only about .3% of the world's population, they have won about 18% of the world's Nobel Prizes!"

"THAT MAKES NO SENSE! THIS DOES NOT COMPUTE!" He would exclaim. And he would be correct — that Jews have survived at all is a miracle, but that they have thrived and contribute so much to the world is beyond belief. How is this possible?

The Dalai Lama asked the same question. He wanted the answer because he is struggling to save his people who are now living in exile. He invited seven Jewish scholars to come to India so he could personally ask them. His query became a wonderful book that I suggest you read called: The Jew in The Lotus, by Roger Kamenetz.

In that book, and others like it, there are many possible explanations. Your question really can't be answered properly in just a few words, and requires serious study on your part. Still, here are some quick answers:

- I could answer because of God.
- I could answer because Jews have always emphasized the value of caring for others.
- I could answer because Jews have always emphasized learning.
- I could answer because Jews have lived by a system of laws.
- I could answer because Jews have stayed united because of anti-Semitism.
- I could answer because Jews have always emphasized family.
- I could answer because Jews have always emphasized community.
- I could answer because Jews have always aspired for peace.
- I could answer because Jews have always believed in hope.

In reality, the answer is probably a combination of these explanations and more. I'll end by again citing the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Pharaoh subjected the Jews to slavery, torture, horror, and outright murder of babies. Yet through it all, the Jews clung to the belief that they would someday be free. Was it faith in God? Was it God? Was it family and community support? The answer is yes.

And we Jews have indeed survived. This pivotal episode in Jewish history has been studied and repeated every year for thousands of years by Jews, young and old, sitting around the Passover Seder table. The lessons have sunk in deeply.

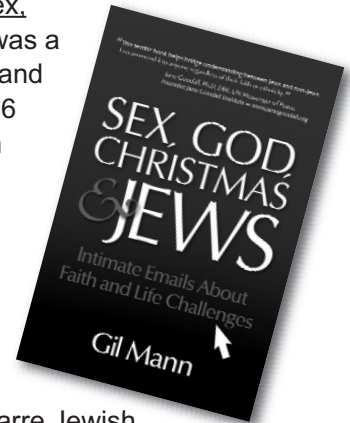
These are some ideas for you to pursue. While you are at it, keep in mind that the national anthem of Israel is "Hatikvah", which means "The Hope". This is not a coincidence.

Good Luck! Hope you get an A!  
Gil

Gil's Jewish Email columns began on his popular America Online feature called "Judaism Today: Where Do I Fit?" You can read more of his columns at [www.beingjewish.org](http://www.beingjewish.org). Gil welcomes any additional questions, or comments, about this topic, or any other Jewish issue. Email him at [GilMann@beingjewish.org](mailto:GilMann@beingjewish.org).

Gil Mann's latest book: Sex, God, Christmas & Jews, was a finalist in the Jewish Life, and Living category of the 2006 Koret International Jewish Book Awards.

The book features 18 of Gil's popular columns, in which he responds to readers' most perplexing emails, including: I am Very Angry with God!; Bizarre Jewish Sex; Body Piercing, Tattoos and More; I Will Not Circumcise My Son!; and Will Jews Burn in Hell? All names have been removed from the emails, of course!



The book (including shipping) is available at a discount to Being Jewish readers for just \$13. To order the book, call 800-304-9925 or go to [www.BeingJewish.org](http://www.BeingJewish.org).



## FREE for Internet Users!!!

If you like Being Jewish, formerly published by Gil Mann, then you will love Gil's book:

Now you can download Gil's entire book for free! Just go to [www.beingjewish.org/freebook](http://www.beingjewish.org/freebook).



If you'd like to order a printed copy (\$10 + \$3 shipping) email [leopublish@aol.com](mailto:leopublish@aol.com) or call 800-304-9925.





In the spring of 2009, I was privileged to spend Pesach with four friends from New York at a kosher hotel in Majorca, Spain. My trip from Montreal to the island was somewhat convoluted owing to scheduling problems – Montreal to Amsterdam, Amsterdam to Madrid, Madrid to Palma. However, I timed my arrival in Madrid to coincide with that of my New York friends and we were ferried from the airport in Majorca by shuttle bus to our beautiful hotel on the other side of the island.

Most of the other guests hailed from the UK or France – we met only one woman and her daughter from North America. The hotel in which we stayed, the Green Garden, was located in a resort by the name of Cala Ratjada on the southwest shore of the island of Majorca. We stayed in suites with a comfortably furnished bedroom, an adjoining living room and a balcony. Some of the suites had views looking onto the swimming pool and gardens.

The hotel prepared everything for observant Jews. The kitchen replaced the cooking pots, utensils, dishes and cutlery for the festival. All surfaces, indeed the entire hotel, were thoroughly cleaned so no crumbs were left of foods usually eaten. Ingredients permitted in a kosher home during the rest of the year are forbidden and all bread is forbidden and replaced by matzah.

On the first two evenings of the Passover, families and friends gather to celebrate the 'Seder' (Hebrew for 'order'), which consists of recounting the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt after 200

years of slavery, and their journey to Israel. Several symbolic foods are tasted, including 'charoseth', a delicious blend of sweet wine, nuts, dates and raisins, representing the mortar used by the Israelite slaves to bind bricks together, and horseradish, representing slavery with its bitter taste. Also, four cups of wine are drunk in the course of the proceedings.

The food was fabulous, varied and copious and wine was also served at dinner, all kosher for Pesach. There was a chazzan-in-residence (cantor) who also acted as a rabbi. He conducted services during the two days of the chag (festival) at the beginning and end of the holiday.

During chol hamo'ed, the intervening days, guided tours were organized to other parts of the island, including the capital, Palma, a very sophisticated Spanish city. The highlight was a trip by luxury coach on a beautiful sunny day up and across the high mountain range on the west side of Majorca to a picturesque, tiny port on the east side of the island where we ate our packed lunch; then by boat along the coast to a larger town with a marina at which many luxurious yachts were moored. We traveled a few kilometers inland by a tramway to a medieval neighbourhood of the town. There, we had free time to roam around, admire the cathedral and stroll in the boutiques. Our return trip was on a small train that wound its way up and across the mountain range, offering some magnificent views to the outskirts of Palma, where we boarded a bus to take us back to the hotel. This trip included every mode of land transportation except bicycle, horse and elephant!

The hotel also provided evening entertainment. To be honest, it was not the greatest and catered largely to the kids. However, it enabled people to get together, shmooze and sometimes, mildly complain, a 3000-year-old tradition enjoyed by our people.

The village of Cala Ratjada itself is interesting. It is built around an old harbour for fishing boats. On each side of the harbour a boardwalk extends several kilometers with wonderful views of the sea and the coast. Close to the harbour there is an array of restaurants, out-of-bounds to us as Jewish tourists owing to the dietary requirements for Pesach, but nevertheless amusing to watch people watching people. The hotel where we stayed also offered bicycles, ideal for exploring the coast, the boardwalk and the environs.

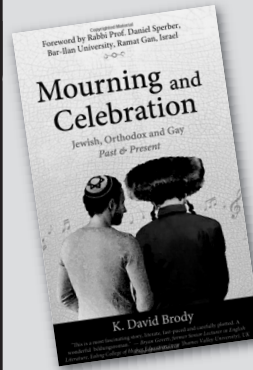
Swimming either in the hotel pool or at the beach was not possible since the weather was too cool. However, it was far more comfortable than in New York or Montreal at that time of year, and fortunately, in spite of one or two cloudy days, it never rained.

On the Shabbat afternoon, I took a walk with a friend to an old fortress, built on a hill, outside the town. The view from the top was very impressive, but since there was an entry charge on our day of rest when we are not permitted to carry money, we were unable to see the inside.

This year, my friends and I have booked rooms for Pesach in a hotel near Venice, Italy, run by the same organization. As was the case last year, the cost to value ratio is excellent, especially considering that the price includes everything – accommodations, food and gratuities. The only extra charge is for excursions. Naturally, though, we must pay our own airfare to the destination.

Between now and then, our main task will be to pray for good weather and a stay in Italy as enjoyable as that which we experienced last year in Spain.

**K. David Brody**  
was born in London, UK  
and graduated from  
Edinburgh University,  
Scotland, too long ago.



He worked for Radio-Canada in Montreal, Canada where he still lives, and is an Orthodox Jew. His retirement project was to write a book. You can read all about it, and purchase your own copy by visiting his web-site: [www.mourningandcelebration.com](http://www.mourningandcelebration.com)

### ALTEH GEFERLEKH JEWISH JOKE

A daughter is watching her young Jewish mother preparing the Seder brisket. She notices her mother slices off the ends before placing the brisket in the roasting pan. The young girl asks her mother why she does this, and the mother pauses for a moment and then says:

"I am not sure.....this is the way my mother always prepared the Seder brisket. Let's ask Grandma."

The grandmother is summoned to the kitchen and asked why they always slice the ends off the brisket before roasting. The Grandmother thinks for a moment and then says:

"That was the way MY mother always prepared the Seder brisket."

Now the two women are very curious, so they go to the living room where the great-grandmother is holding court.

"You know when we make the Seder brisket," they ask, "why do we always slice off the ends before roasting?"

"I don't know why you do it" says the wise old woman, "but I never had a pan that was large enough!"



## The "Ersh" Lady of "Televisye"

(The first lady of television)

By Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe

For millions of Americans, listening to "The Goldbergs" has been similar to slipping on a "por" (pair) of comfortable "alt" (old) shoes that never seem to wear out. The Goldbergs were regarded by the press as the first "human interest" program - an early derivation of the soap opera. One Jewish educator said, "This series has done more to set us Jews right with the 'goyim' than all the sermons preached by the Rabbis."

Everyone knows that when Molly leans out of her tenement window to greet her imaginary neighbor, she says, "Yoo-hoo, Mrs. Bloom." It was used whenever Molly had something juicy to spread, which was quite regularly. It became a national catchphrase.

Starting in 1949, I watched The Goldbergs on my parents' Dumont TV set. We lived in Rockaway Beach, New York. To this day, I can still recite these Mollypropisms:  
"It's late, Jake, and time to expire."  
"Enter whoever. If it's nobody, I'll call back."  
"Throw an eye in the refrigerator."

Later in life I found that Gertrude Berg was the antithesis of the soft-hearted character she played on "televisye." Her own family were not observant Jews. In fact, in the 1950s interview on the Ed Sullivan TV show, she announced that her family had a Hanukkah bush.

Berg was a sophisticated, well-spoken lady who loved "antiks" (antiques), fine art, diamonds, and mink coats. She dressed from "kop" (head) to "der finger fun fus" (toe) in Hattie Carnegie clothing.



In 1933, the height of the "depresye," (depression), an estimated 12 to 15 "milyon" Americans were out of work. The Goldbergs were a middle-class Jewish family with middle-class problems. They offered words of "khokhme" (wisdom) and a sense of hope amid "di oremkayt" (the poverty) and anguish.

Berg's writing career spanned over half a century. She wrote 12,000 scripts for the show. In an interview with Edward R. Murrow, she says that she spent more time researching, writing, and playing Molly than being "zikh" (herself). After Eleanor Roosevelt, Gertrude Berg was the "tsveyter" (second) most popular woman in the U.S.

Glenn D. Smith wrote, "Listeners, many foreign born or first-genera-





tion urban Americans, heard a voice that sounded like them and probably looked like them, too, a woman who identified with their grief and struggle, even if her creator could not."

"*Mishn zikh*" is the Yiddish word meaning "to meddle"...and Molly was a benevolent meddler. Her "*harts*" (heart) bleeds for every "*nit khasene gehat*" (unmarried girl) and starving "*katsev*" (butcher). She's always concocting ideas to make a "*shidekh*" between eligible men and women.

When "*tokhter*" (daughter), Rosalie, became a "*tsenerlingn*" (teenager), Molly would probably ask her to adhere to today's advice from Rabbi Shmuley Boteach: "No *chuppah*, no *shtuppa*." And if Rosalie got married this year, Molly would give her a "*k'nippel*" (money tied in the corner of a handkerchief). On second thought, she'd place a VISA credit card in the "*k'nippel*."

There's a Yiddish proverb that goes, "*Ven es gait gleich, vert men reich*." (When things go right, you become rich.) In 1937, Berg's contract with Proctor and Gamble resulted in a five-year, million dollar deal. By decade's end, she was earning an estimated \$7,500 a week as producer, director, writer, and star of her own show.

In January, 1949, the entire Goldberg clan moved from radio to TV. The Goldbergs' lived at 1030 Tremont Avenue, apartment 3B, in the Bronx. At one point the rent was \$78 a month.

Jake was in the clothing business. Later they moved to the suburbs--a fictitious community named Haverville, and Jake establishes a wedding gown factory.



Many episodes centered on Jewish holidays. During Hitler's rise in 1933, "*radio*" (radio) audiences listened to the real rabbi that Berg invited onto her show as he performed an authentic Seder. After the *Kristallnacht* rampage in Germany in November, 1938, Berg aired an episode for the next Passover in which a rock is thrown through the window during the Goldbergs' Seder. Molly calms the family so the ceremony can proceed.

The family celebrated Passover on the TV program, too. According to columnist, Jeanette Rach-

muth, Jake (Philip Loeb) rendered the *Kiddish* and the performance was authentic to a degree where the Matzo and wine viewed on the telecast was "strictly kosher for Passover."

Gertrude Berg was described as "*hart*" (tough), sophisticated, demanding and shrewd, a woman always in control of the situation. She met with her set designer to discuss every detail, even the pots and pans used in "*di kikh*" (the kitchen). A Newsweek writer said, "She lets no one forget she is boss."

In 1955, The Molly Goldberg Cookbook was published. It contained 320 pages of recipes for chicken,

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 11**

# Passovers Past

By Rosalie Avigdor

Having not been brought up in a traditional Jewish family, celebrating the holidays became the most important part of our get-togethers; not necessarily because of religion, but as a meaningful way to connect with each other.

My aunt, who was the matriarch of the family, would gather everyone on the first Seder night at her home, for the Passover dinner. We were about eighteen people squished into her dining room, gathered around her extended table, which was laden with all the goodies it could hold.

In the early years we would do the whole Seder service. The Four Questions were asked and following the lead of my uncle's beautiful cantorial voice, the youngsters would sing in unison.

After my aunt passed away, the family had many discussions over who would host the first Seder. Because each member thought the first Seder was the most important, the location became an annual issue. Somehow we lost the actual beauty of the Seder and the warmth of the get-together. With every passing year, immediate relatives and their extended families grew increasingly apart, and with in-laws thrown into the mix, there were more and more relatives to please. Traditions seemed to disappear in the blink of an eye.

My own holiday focus changed when my mother moved in with me for many years during which she developed Alzheimer's. My family Seders, as well as other holidays, became more of a burden as we tried to explain to mother why we were all getting together. She wondered why we had to sit through a Seder, which by that time, had diminished into a small service followed by a simple chicken dinner with soup and salad.

Later, I attended Seders in my mother's nursing home. We would have our dinner early, and the rabbi would do the traditional service, the meal finished quickly, and the confused or disoriented residents

were taken back to their rooms.

My mother's death began a swirl of funerals for family and friends. I remember mostly the rabbi's harkening back to the simple comforts of the scent of the kitchen, the table set so nicely with all the fine china, the aroma of the soup boiling on the stove, the handmade lacework on the furniture, in a house still smelling of homemade gefilte fish.

Yes, it is the food that triggers ones memories, but it's more about the family and the abundance of love that brings all of us together on Passover. Seder is where the true meaning of Passover is instilled in our youngsters so that the pattern our elders have set for them will continue.

Time is the most important gift a family gives each other. Time to accept the Seder invitation, time to connect with those who live out of town, time to just sit and savor the scent of the cooking, and the scents of life. The Passover Seder table in my house, and my aunt and uncle's, was full of food, family, and most of all, love.

A few Seders ago, after my husband passed away, I looked at my table, and the chairs were empty. Each chair held a memory of those who had graced our table years before. I wiped my tears, and vowed to fill those chairs again.

I will fill them with the elders who are left for us to love, youngsters who are here to be loved, and mostly, for the future generation. I hope they will continue the tradition of the Seder nights, the beautiful service, and love of family and friends. I will embrace them when I can, and while I can.

Happy Passover to all.

Rosalie Avigdor is the author of Dear Bubby with Love. She founded the Canadian Writers Society, and is presently working on a book of interviews about adoption. She can be contacted at: [CanadianWritersSociety@hotmail.com](mailto:CanadianWritersSociety@hotmail.com)





## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

**The "Ersh" Lady of "Televisye"**

(The first lady of television)

challah, blintzes, and bagels. In the introduction, she states her reasons for writing a cookbook:

"So how did I come to write a cookbook? I had to protect myself, that's how... When I cook for my family, I don't have trouble. But when someone, Mrs. Herman, for instance, asks me, 'How do you make this or how do you make that?' do I know? Of course I know, but can I tell her? Of course I can, but it's easier to show her. So I have to say to her, 'Come into my kitchen and I'll make you up.'"

In reality, Gertrude Berg could not cook at all. She left such duties to a personal chef and maid!

The program ended its CBS run in 1951 under a cloud of controversy. Philip Loeb had been black-listed for alleged left-wing sympathies. General Foods demanded the actor be fired. Berg refused to do so, and pleaded her case with network president, William S. Paley, to no avail. Berg even met with the Cardinal Francis Spellman, head of the N. Y. Archdiocese.

It didn't work.

On Sept. 2, 1955, a maid at the Taft Hotel in New York City, discovered the body of Loeb, age 64. Loeb had committed suicide. Little did he know, however, that



an agent had made the decision, just a week before Loeb's suicide, to close his file. There was no definite information concerning Loeb's membership in the communist party within the past five years. Loeb's claim of innocence were heeded too late to save him. His death haunted Berg the rest of her life.

While in production of her starring role in "The Play Girls," Gertrude Berg had a heart attack and died. The woman who called Perry Como, "My Perreleh," was gone.

Berg's husband admitted, "They said it was heart failure, but it was overwork. She couldn't stop or even slow down."



Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of two books: [Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers](#) and [Are Yentas, Kibitzers & Tumblers Weapons of Mass Instruction? Yiddish Trivia](#). To order a copy, contact her at: [Wolfeny@webtv.net](mailto:Wolfeny@webtv.net)





# MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Good or bad for  
the Jewish people?



By Nathan Weissler

On the approaching Jewish holiday of Passover, we commemorate our people's freedom from slavery in Egypt. Millennia, after the Exodus, we still struggle with questions of how to constructively use our modern tools to preserve human freedom. The Jewish people, in fact all of humanity, has to ask itself: "Are we being enslaved by modern technology?" I personally believe in the positive aspects of contemporary technology, and that they are healthy and constructive.

Technological instruments, such as the Internet, have served as tools for putting pressure on the world community to decisively act when human rights are violated. Technological devices, such as the rapid spread of cellular phones, text-messaging, and ubiquitous Internet access, make it harder to hide persecution, and bigotry, directed towards all people; be they Hindi, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, or any other faith.

The Middle-East continues to be a boiling cauldron of anti-Semitism. Saudi Arabia and Iran are frequently sighted for their anti-Semitic, anti-Israeli climate. Iran has received widespread attention and publicity through YouTube, Google, Twitter and other means of modern technology.

Similarly, modern technology in Latin, and South American countries have been used to combat anti-Semitism; notably, the anti-

Semitic activity which occurred in Argentina in the beginning of 2009. Also, in Venezuela under President Hugo Chavez, the Venezuelan police, in late 2007, raided a wedding celebration taking place inside the Union Israelita synagogue in a suburb of the Venezuelan capital of Caracas.



Rabbis in New York, Bombay, Beijing, Jerusalem or Washington D.C. can easily learn, almost instantly, about events in Iran, Venezuela, or any other location, and they can quickly act on that knowledge. Prejudice is also combatable by economic boycotts; especially in today's world in which many nations rely on each other.



From a Jewish perspective, definite advantages include the fact that support for Israel, and issues of Jewish welfare, can receive substantial boosts of support from technological connections via social networking sites, such as Facebook, and other online communities. Additionally, the many and varied Israeli newspapers online—Ha'aretz for instance—certainly help spread an appreciation for Jewish

On a broader scale, technology has been crucial in raising awareness. For instance, the "Save-Darfur" Movement has received a definite boost from modern technology. I found a powerful music video, [Living Darfur \(Official Music Video\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQwCCm-H-sU) on You Tube—filmed on the Chadian-Darfur border. The film has a powerful message, and you can view it at (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQwCCm-H-sU>.) Ever since the United States Congress officially declared the Darfur, Sudan killings a genocide in 2004, contributions, and volunteers have been recruited thanks to these vast new methods of communications.

Technology can be used to negative effect as well. Repressive regimes like Burma and China can reign in access tools in order to subjugate their population.



The so-called "great fire-wall" of China continues to be a subject of international wrangling. A recent breach into Google Gmail

accounts inside

China garnered international attention. Bigoted leaders, such as Venezuelan President Chavez, Iranian President Ahmadinejad, can use modern technological tools to hurt not only the Jewish people, but all people.

Finally, in the spirit of Pesach—Jewish World Watch, a non-profit in Encino, California, has organized inter-faith Passover activities, which stress the relevance of the crisis in Darfur, especially on Pesach. This is an example of how the positives override the negatives of modern technology. Again, this has, to a great extent, been advertised using technology such as the Internet. See (<http://www.jewishworldwatch.org/advocate/rally.html>) for more information.

Have a joyous Pesach!

Nathan Weissler is a freelance writer living in Chevy Chase, Maryland. He also contributes to the Gantseh Megillah and he can be reached at [nathan.weissler@hotmail.com](mailto:nathan.weissler@hotmail.com)

## THIS & THAT

### The Four Questions

Preamble: Why is tonight different from all others?

1. Why must we eat matzah?
2. Why do we eat bitter herbs?
3. Why do we have to dip twice?
4. Why must we eat while reclining?

### What's on The Seder Plate.

1. Z'roah - roasted shank bone from a lamb
2. Baytzah - the hard boiled egg
3. Marer- bitter herbs
4. Charoset - mixture of sliced apples, walnuts and wine
5. Karpas - a green vegetable
6. Chazeret - more bitter herbs

The three matzahs on the table symbolize the three branches of Jews: Cohan, Levi, and Yisroael.

### Afikoman:

The very last thing that is eaten at the Seder is a piece of matzah called the "Afikoman."

It is customary for the children to "steal" it, and refuse to give it back unless the parents promise them a small gift.

Sometimes the parents hide it, and offer a reward to the child who finds it.

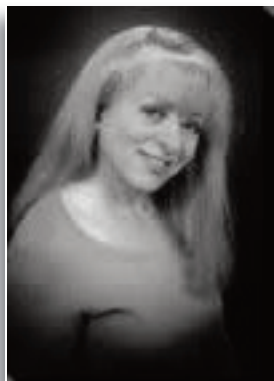
### Opening the Door:

At the end of the Seder meal it is customary to open the door, and welcome in the Prophet Elijah.

*Special thanks to Mrs. Gail Elis and her class at Temple B'Nai Torah in Wantagh, New York, for taking the time and trouble to contact me concerning errors in last year's This & That.*

# Successful Seder Entertaining

By Eddy Robey



When preparing a festive meal, we are in a sense offering our hearts, on a platter, filled with hope and caring. It is a lovely gift, and one in which all should take pleasure from, unmarred by nervous jitters.

I am going to offer a few bits of advice for readers who are planning an event, however

small. None of these ideas are unbreakable rules. They are guidelines to ensure comfort. Do remember that your guests want to have a pleasant time.

1. All that schmutz you are finding will be invisible to your guests. Be neat, polish mirrors and get rid of obvious dust on furniture. Believe me, NOBODY will see dust bunnies under the bed or the inside of your oven. White glove inspections are the stuff of Army nightmares and old MGM movies; real people don't do that. I promise that a messy drawer will not bring a tour of guard duty.

2. Put a lock on your bedroom door and use it. Your private space is just that, private. Find another place to stash the coats. The purpose of entertaining is to share your home, not to surrender it. As host, you define the space for a party, and don't need to offer anyone a tour. If it would be easier for you to close the door on a messy office, do it. There is no need to explain why anything is off limits.

3. Do not leave anything in the bathroom, if you do not want it handled. Even the nicest people have an unfortunate tendency to open drawers and medicine chests. Get a box: throw in your pills, personal care items, etc. Then hide them elsewhere. If the bathroom is neat and clean, you will seem a marvelous housekeeper, even though the rest of the place is a wreck. Be certain to have clean towels and dental floss available. For some reason, those who open medicine chests are always in search of dental floss.

4. Quantity seems to be more important than quality with regard to food for gatherings. You will notice that

restaurants are often praised and patronized for large portions, even though the menu offerings are third rate. Use as many serving dishes as possible. If you can put it out on three platters, use nine and fill some of the space on them with parsley or edible flowers placed around the edges. Try to cover a buffet table so the cloth is invisible. For example, a different dish for each crudités, grouped around the one with the dip. Someone will say that you have made too much, but will be impressed that so many choices seem to be available.

5. Everything tastes better if there is a paper doily on the serving plate. This is true, even if the dish is juicy, and the doily is soggy under the food. Every market sells doilies. You can also become a better cook by decorating the platters with parsley, decorative kale or fruit slices. Pretty food tastes better.

6. A bunch of supermarket flowers on the table will make you a master chef. If you do not have the budget for flowers, fill a container (a rusty dented old pot or chipped pottery bowl are particularly artistic) with fresh fruit and/or vegetables, using decorative kale or curly endive for foliage. A large bunch of grapes, draped over anything else edible, will make your centerpiece look like a still life painting.

7. Dress, comb your hair, and apply make-up if you wear it: before doing anything else. When you feel attractive, you will also be more confident and friendly. If guests arrive early, you can continue with kitchen chores, but you can't duck out to take your shower. Another word about attractiveness: nobody looks good when their feet hurt. Wear comfortable shoes and save the high heels for when you are a guest.

8. Wear an apron. You will not be happy, if the inevitable spots and spills of the kitchen destroy your clothes. If you are male and feel self-conscious, at least tuck a towel in your waistband. It is a good idea to wear washable clothes and have an extra outfit waiting in the closet, just in case you get salad dressing all over yourself.

9. Never prepare something for guests, if you have



not tested the recipe beforehand. The most seemingly reliable sources may have an error or misprint. An additional caution: have a backup plan. What will you serve, if you drop the vegetables or burn the roast? Just knowing that no item is of critical importance will make everything flow more smoothly.

10. Do remember that you are supposed to have fun. When people are smiling, a less than perfect dish won't matter at all. If anything goes wrong, have a good laugh, and just keep going. The love you are offering will be returned in the gladness of the company.

# Orange-Almond Sponge Cake

I hope this recipe brings a smile to your Seder table.

This recipe requires a food processor and electric mixer. You will also need a 10 inch tube pan, the sort that comes in 2 pieces. Make sure the rack is in the center of the oven. Place a cookie sheet on it, and preheat the oven to 325 degrees. You are doing this because tube pans have a tendency to leak, and you don't want to have to clean up a mess.

Fit the bowl of the food processor with the metal blade. Place the Almonds and Sugar in the bowl, and process until the mixture is powdery. Add the Potato Starch, and Matzo Cake Meal, then process again until they are thoroughly mixed. Set aside until needed.

Pour the Almond Wine into the bowl that contains the Egg Yolks. Beat with the electric mixer on high speed, until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Fold in the Almond mixture until completely blended.

Wash the beaters thoroughly, and dry them. Start to beat the Egg Whites. As the Egg Whites start to thicken, add the Orange Juice Concentrate, and continue to beat until stiff and glossy.

Stir about a quarter of the beaten Egg Whites into the Egg Yolk mixture to lighten it. Then pour the Yolk mix

## Sponge Cake

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

(Pareve)

Cooking Time: About 60minutes

12 Eggs, room temperature and separated into

2 different large mixing bowls

2 tbs kosher for Passover, Almond-flavored Wine

1 tbs defrosted Orange Juice Concentrate

8 ounces blanched Almonds

1/3 cup Matzo Cake Meal

1/2 cup Potato Starch

1 cup granulated Sugar

ture into the remaining Egg Whites and fold the two mixtures together gently, until they are mixed. Be very gentle as you do this, so as not to deflate the Egg Whites.

Pour the batter into the tube pan, and lightly smooth the top. Place in the oven. Bake for one hour, or until firm and resilient to the touch. Do not open the oven door for the entire hour; curiosity will deflate the cake.

Remove the pan from the oven and immediately turn it upside down over the neck of a wine bottle to cool. Do not turn the cake right side up again until it is completely cold, at least 2 hours.

Using a thin-bladed knife, cut around the inside edge of the pan and the outside edge of the tube, to separate them from the cake. Grab the center tube and lift out the cake. Use the knife again, to make sure the bottom of the cake is not stuck to the pan. Then place a hand on either side of the cake, lift it off the tube, and place it on a plate. Immediately cover the cake with a dome or cellophane wrap to keep it from becoming dry before serving.

Soak the pan for about 10 minutes in hot soapy water before trying to clean off the residue of cake batter. Rough scrubbing or use of steel wool will warp the shape of the pan and make it harder to clean the next time. Just let it soak, and use a plastic scrub sponge to clean it.

Excerpted from:

**It's Not Just Chicken Soup**



# ENJOY A FRESH SHPRITZ OF BUBBLY YIDDISHKAYT

News and shmooze  
for today's Jews

[WWW.GANTSEHMEGILLAH.COM](http://WWW.GANTSEHMEGILLAH.COM)