

# Lake Shore Drive Synagogue

בס"ד

January-February 2004

שומר ישראל

Shomrei Israel

70 East Elm Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
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## TALLIT TALK

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Twice each day we read the third paragraph of the *Shema* taken from Numbers 15:37-41. This paragraph elaborates on the cryptic passage (Deuteronomy 22:12), "You should make tassels (גְּדִילִים) on the four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself." These tassels are referred to in Numbers as fringes or *tsitsit* (צִיצִית).

But what about garments with no corners? Are we off the hook with regard to that commandment? The rabbis say no, because the observance of a commandment should not depend on the whimsical decision regarding what item one takes out from one's wardrobe to wear each day. Instead they invented a four-cornered garment to which *tsitsit* are attached, called the *tallit katan* [little tallit] or *arba kanfot* [four corners], and made it a sartorial requirement to be worn all day. {It needn't be worn at night, because the text of Numbers 15:39 says "and you shall look at it," which the Rabbis interpreted to mean only when there is light to see them.)

The law of *tsitsit* in Deuteronomy 22:12 precedes laws of marital and sexual misconduct (Deuteronomy 22:13-29), and so the rabbis invented another four-cornered garment, the *tallit* (or *tallit gadol* [large tallit]), which is to be worn at the *shacharit* prayer service by married men as a reminder of those latter passages of Deuteronomy, and not as part of the fulfillment of the Numbers passages.

The Numbers text gives the reason for this garment, namely that it is an aid by which one remembers the commandments. One bit of justification that *tsitsit* help us remember the commandments is to note that the numerical value of צִיצִית is 600, and, adding to that 8 for the number of strands in each fringe and 5 for the number of knots in each fringe, we get to 613, the number of commandments in the Chumash. Another is a tale from the Talmud (Menachot 44a) of a man who heard of a prostitute who charged 400 hundred golden dinars for her services, and so he went to avail himself of this woman. As he climbed naked on the bed the four *tsitsit* of his garment struck him on the face, at which point he turned away from her. When asked by her what flaw he saw in her, he replied, "I have never seen a woman as beautiful as you are, but there is one commandment the Lord our God has given us; it is called *tsitsit* ... which appeared to me as four witnesses to testify against me to God." As a result of this encounter, the prostitute decided to convert to Judaism and ultimately married the man.

The most interesting part of the Numbers paragraph is the commandment that the fringe should contain a blue string (פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת). The color, translated as "blue," is the Hebrew word *techelet*. *Techelet* is described in the Talmud as a dye derived from the blood of a rare blue marine animal, called *chilazon* (חִלְזוֹן), which comes out of the sea in abundance only once in a seventy year period (Menachot 44a). In post-Talmudic times no one could identify the *chilazon*, and so the practice of including a blue string was dropped. In 1888 Rabbi Gershon Chanoch Leiner (the Radziner Rebbe) produced a blue dye from the ink of the cuttlefish *sepia officianalis* mixed with prussic acid, and his followers still use this product. In his doctoral thesis Chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac Herzog argued that the *janthina* snail is the *chilazon*. Some Israelis are producing *techelet* from the dye of a snail known as *murex trunculus*, though [www.chilazon.com](http://www.chilazon.com) provides evidence that this snail isn't the *chilazon*. But, if you want to join those of our synagogue members who already have blue fringes, let your fingers do the walking. Just log on to [www.tekhelet.com](http://www.tekhelet.com), and, for \$70, you too can have a set for your *tallit*.

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## OPENING BENEDICTES

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I have used the abbreviation ב"ד as the opening benedicite in the upper right hand corner of this Bulletin since its inception. For those who are unfamiliar with this abbreviation, it is short for the Aramaic phrase בסיעדיא דשמיא, which means "with the support of Heaven." There are those who prefer to use בע"ד, which is short for the Hebrew expression בעזרת השם, meaning "with the help of God" (the word השם literally means "the Name," referring to the name of God, and the ד in the abbreviation is the one letter shorthand for the ineffable name of God, usually written as ד'). The most common opening benedicite is ב"ה, which may be an even shorter version of בעזרת השם, though some have told me that this is an abbreviation for ברוך השם, "blessed is God."

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March-April 2004

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## BURIAL SITES OF ISHMAEL AND ESAU

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We are all familiar with the story of Abraham purchasing the cave of Machpelah (מכפלה) in Hebron as a burial place for himself and Sarah (see Genesis 23 and Genesis 25: 9-10). We also learn in Genesis 49:29-33 that Isaac and Rebecca were buried there, as were Jacob and Leah. Isaac's burial is also mentioned in Genesis 35:27-29, where Hebron is referred to as Kiriath-arba (קרית ארבע). The Talmud (Eruvin 53a) speculates on why the cave had a name that means "doubled." One view was that it consisted of two chambers, a lower and an upper, hence the name Machpelah ("doubled"). The other view was that it consisted of two chambers, one inside the other, and it was named Machpelah because couples were buried there. Moreover, it was called Kiriath-arba ("arba" meaning "four") because four couples were buried there, the three aforementioned couples and Adam and Eve. The Zohar contains many tales about Abraham's decision to select this as his burial site, including one where when Abraham entered the cave the place was filled with the scent of the Garden of Eden and the voice of angels said, "Adam is buried here."

But where were Abraham's son Ishmael and Isaac's son Esau buried? One version of the story of the death of Esau is given in the Talmud (Sotah 13a). When Jacob's funeral procession arrived at the cave of Machpelah, Esau came and wanted to prevent the burial there. Esau argued that Jacob buried Leah in Jacob's plot and that the remaining plot belonged to him as part of his birthright that he did not sell to Jacob. An argument ensued as to what were the terms of the sale of Esau's birthright to Jacob, it was ascertained that the title is in Egypt, and so Naphtali was sent back to Egypt to bring back the document. When Chushim, the hard-of-hearing son of Dan, asked what was going on, he was told about Naphtali's assignment, to which he said, "Is my grandfather to lie in disgrace until Naphtali returns from Egypt?" and he took a club and clobbered Esau on the head so that his eyes dropped out and fell to Jacob's feet. The Midrashic work Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, written in 75 CE, continues this tale with the note that the head of Esau rolled down into the cave and fell into the lap of Isaac. This Talmudic and Midrashic tale, though, is at variance with the Pseudepigraphic works Jubilees 38 and Testament of Judah 9, which indicate that Esau decided after eighteen years of peaceful relations to wage war on Jacob, and, according to the Testament of Judah, "Jacob struck Esau with an arrow, and in death he was carried up to Mount Seir." (This is the mountainous region from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba.)

To locate Ishmael's burial site one must study Arabian traditions. A pre-Islamic legend has Adam and Eve wandering the earth after being banished from the Garden of Eden, finally ending up at Mt. Arafat, near the present city of Mecca, where they built a shrine. This shrine was washed out in the great flood, and one Islamic tradition has it that Abraham was ordered by God to emigrate with Hagar and Ishmael to the valley at Mecca, where he built a small house for them and later demolished it in order to rebuild in its place Adam's shrine, called the Ka'ba. This shrine is now the central 50 foot high cubic stone structure within the Great Mosque in Mecca. Opposite the northwestern wall of the Ka'ba is the Hijr, a semicircular area in which Muslim tradition has it that Hagar and Ishmael are buried. This legend is at variance with another Islamic tradition, relating to the cave of Machpelah. According to that tradition Abraham and Hagar are buried there, along with Ishmael and his wife, and Esau and Judith (see Genesis 26:34).

If you found this interesting, please thank Al Shiner for inspiring me to do the research; if not, blame me, not him.

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## ISHMAEL'S WIFE AND SEFER HAYASHAR

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In the last Bulletin I said, "According to that [Islamic] tradition Abraham and Hagar are buried there [the Caves of Machpelah], along with Ishmael and his wife, and Esau and Judith." Compulsive as I am, I was bothered that I could not track down the name of Ishmael's wife. Her name is not mentioned in the Tanach. The only Midrash about Ishmael's wife was the following story (see Ginsberg, The Legends of the Jews Vol. I, p. 266-69). When Abraham visited Ishmael and his first wife she didn't treat him hospitably, so Abraham told Ishmael to divorce her, which he did. Ishmael married another, who treated Abraham well when he came for a visit, so Abraham said, "She's a keeper" (or words to that effect). But no names of wives are given by Ginsberg.

Digging further I found the following verses in the Book of Jasher, Chapter 25:

15 :And Ishmael took a wife from the land of Egypt, and her name was Ribah, the same is Meribah. 16: And Ribah bare unto Ishmael Nebayoth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam and their sister Bosmath. 17: And Ishmael cast away his wife Ribah, and she went from him and returned to Egypt to the house of her father, and she dwelt there, for she had been very bad in the sight of Ishmael, and in the sight of his father Abraham. 18: And Ishmael afterward took a wife from the land of Canaan, and her name was Malchuth, and she bare unto him Nishma, Dumah, Masa, Chadad, Tema, Yetur, Naphish and Kedma.

So I infer that Malchuth was the name of the wife Islamic tradition says is buried in the Caves of Machpelah.

But what is this Book of Jasher? This book is mentioned twice in the Tanach, Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18, referred to סֵפֶר הַיָּשָׁר, Sefer HaYashar. But this book is to be found in neither the Apochrypha nor the Pseudepigrapha. So what is this text? It is presumed from the context to be a text giving more detail of the history of the Jewish people than given in the Tanach. The particular "Book of Jasher" from which I excerpted this text was published in 1887 by J.H Parry and Company of Salt Lake City, and adopted by the Mormon Church as an authentic biblical work.

Here is the mythology underlying this Book of Jasher. When Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70 CE, an officer named Sidrus discovered a hidden library complete with a scholar hiding there. The officer had mercy on the man and took him and the books to his residence at what is now Seville, Spain. Ultimately the manuscript was donated to the Jewish college at Cordova, Spain. There was reportedly a 1552 Hebrew edition printed in Naples, but the Hebrew version that is the basis of this translation was published in Venice in 1625.

The book was first translated into English by a Jewish scholar named Moses Samuel, of Liverpool, England. But, because there was another Book of Jasher making the rounds of England at that time (that version has been adopted by the Rosicrucians as authentic; I checked it as well, and it has no mention of Ishmael) and proven fraudulent, Mr. Samuel sold his translation to Mordecai M. Noah, a New York publisher, and it was published there in 1840, away from the scandal. This Book of Jasher has been under recent study by a team of researchers led by Professor Jacqueline-Lise Genot-Bismuth, Chair of Ancient and Medieval Judaism at the Sorbonne. She organized a Seminaire sur le Sefer Hayashar de le Centre de Recherches sur la Culture Rabbiniqque, which in 1986 produced a reprint of the 1625 Venice Hebrew edition of Sefer Yashar, published by des Publications Universite de la Sorbonne Nouvelle. In their introductory essay they argue that the work is a 12th or 13th century Midrash.

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גמ"ד

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## KASHRUT TODAY-PART I

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When I was very young the Kashrut picture was quite simple -- items were kosher or they were not. There was never a problem with respect to bread and cake, except for the kashrut of the shortening used in the baking. There was never a problem with respect to milk products except for whether or not animal gelatin was used in the making. There was never a problem with respect to approved meat except for the shechita. There was never a problem with canned tuna. And there was never a problem with vegetables.

Today, though, we are bombarded with a variety of Kashrut designations. We have Pas Israel and Pas Palter, Chalov Israel, Migdal, Bishul Yisroel, and Glatt Kosher. Rumanian Meat Market has two separate meat bins, one labeled Bais Yoseif and the other labeled Lubavich. And vegetables have the esoteric labeling "Bodek." Let me walk you through this bewildering maze.

Meat: Chasidische Shechita: "Bais Yoseif" is the Chasidic-Ashkenazic pronunciation of Beit Yosef, the commentary written in 1522 by Rabbi Yosef Karo on the Tur (shorthand for Arba'a Turim, the encyclopedic compilation of Jewish law written by Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher in 1340). In it are the laws of *Shechita* (ritual slaughtering) to be followed by the *shochet*. One of the laws was that the knives used for slaughtering had to be nick-free. The standard knife is made of wrought iron, which is difficult to sharpen. If they were highly polished, they would quickly become nicked, thus unfit for use. With the advent of steel knives, the founder of the Lubavich movement, known as the Alter Rebbe, encouraged the use of the polished steel knives (see Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Vol. 6, Responsum No. 7), insisting that Chasidic *shochetim* use steel knives for *Shechitah* to ensure the better observance of Kashruth. Though most *shochetim* today use steel knives, there are probably some who consider the use of steel a modern innovation and only use iron knives. So Rumanian Meat Market puts those meats where the slaughtering was done with iron knives into the "Bais Yoseif" refrigerator and those where steel knives were used into the "Lubavich" bin.

Glatt Kosher (גלאט כשר): In addition to being slaughtered in accordance with the laws of *Shechita*, meat is deemed kosher only if it is determined in post-mortem that the animal's organs are undamaged. (Otherwise the meat is *treif*, a word whose origin is the Hebrew תריפה, meaning "torn.") The most common area of damage is the lungs, which are the first organs examined. If the lungs are smooth (the Yiddish word for "smooth" is *glatt*), with no adhesions, then the animal is described as *glatt* kosher. If there are adhesions which can be peeled from the surface of the lung without puncturing the lung, and the rest of the animal is undamaged, the meat of the animal is declared kosher, though not *glatt* kosher.

Vegetables: Bodek (נקי מחשש תולעים ואין צריך בדיקה) -- literally "free from concern about bugs and there's no necessity to inspect" -- the word *bodek* is related to *bedikat*, as in the search/inspection for chametz): Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 list swarming creatures that are permissible; all other are not kosher. Currently, USDA regulations permit as much as 60 or more aphids, thrips or mites per 3.6 oz. in frozen broccoli. And, routinely, frozen spinach is certified USDA with as much as 50 or more aphids, thrips, or mites per 3.6 oz. Obviously, neither one is acceptable or certifiable kosher by halachic standards. You can purchase frozen broccoli, spinach, and other leafy vegetables that are certified kosher from a company named Bodek Kosher Produce, Inc., online at <http://www.bodek.com/productb.htm>.

(Part II in the next Bulletin will cover Milk, Bread, and Tuna)

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## KASHRUT TODAY-PART II

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Continuing with my exposition of the kashrut concerns of today, we will look at milk, bread, and tuna.

Milk and milk products: *Chalav Israel* (חלב ישראל) -- literally "milk of Israel." As a matter of background I cite a portion of Mishnah 2.6 of the Talmud Avodah Zarah (page 35b):

ואלו דברים של עובדי כוכבים אסורין חלב שהלכו עובדי כוכבים ואין ישראל רואהו,

"And these things of the gentiles (עובדי כוכבים, literally "*star worshippers*," sometimes abbreviated as "עכו"ם, and transliterated as "*akum*") are forbidden... milk which a gentile has milked when no Israelite watched him;" The rationale behind this is that, lacking proper supervision, we do not know whether the milk comes from a kosher or a nonkosher animal. Reb Moshe Feinstein (1959) ruled that, as the production of milk is regulated by the USDA, we are assured that the milk does not come from a nonkosher animal, and so we are permitted to consume *chalav stam*, milk unsupervised by a Jew. Nonetheless there are those who insist on only drinking *Chalav Israel* milk.

There is a separate Rabbinic prohibition against *Gevinat Akum*, "cheese from gentiles." The reasons for this prohibition are quite complicated; one part of it relates to the rennet used in the formation of the cheese. The bottom line is that even if the cheese uses "vegetable rennet" it will still not be considered kosher unless it is made under Jewish supervision. Independent of this, there is a major debate on whether one is required to use *Chalav Israel* products to make kosher cheese. This is why Migdal cheese is labeled "under supervision from the time of formation of cheese and not from the time of milking הליבה ולא משעת גיבון ולא משעת הליבה," where, by contrast, HaOlam cheese has a *Chalav Israel* label.

Bread: *Pas Israel* (פת ישראל) -- literally "bread of Israel." The next item after milk listed in Mishnah 2.6 of Avodah Zarah is פת, bread. Again one can see from the above that it is forbidden to eat bread which is the product of gentile bakers. The product of gentile cooking is generally referred to as "*Bishul Akum* (בישול עכו"ם) -- cooking by gentiles;" by contrast, the product of Jewish cooking is generally referred to as "*Bishul Yisroel* (בישול ישראל) -- cooking by Israelites." Bread baked by a gentile is specifically referred to as *Pas Akum*.

The Rabbis have developed a number of exceptions to the prohibition of *Bishul Akum*. One is that if a Jew played a significant role in the cooking of the food, the designation *Bishul Akum* does not apply. There is a debate as to what the word "significant" means. Rav Yosef Karo, author of the *Shulchan Aruch* (1570), ruled that if a Jew merely turned on the flame but did not participate at all in the cooking process then the *Bishul Akum* prohibition still applies. The Ramah (d. 1244) held a contrary opinion, saying that even if the non-Jew lit the fire used for cooking from a fire lit by a Jew this suffices to avoid concern of violating the *Bishul Akum* restriction. According to this very lenient view, the Jew is considered to have participated in the cooking process. This debate has interesting implications, as the Ashkenazic Jews follow the Ramah and the Sephardic Jews follow the *Shulchan Aruch* rulings. If one follows the Ramah ruling, then it is sufficient for a Jew to merely light the oven to render the bread *Pas Israel*.

Tuna: This one is trickier. Another item listed in Mishnah 2.6 of Avodah Zarah is טריית טרופה , "minced fish." But, in addition to the exception described above, the Talmud (Avodah Zarah 38a) makes two more exceptions to the *Bishul Akum* prohibition. The first is based on an analysis of what is meant by "cooking." The Talmud explicitly excludes food items that people eat raw from the *Bishul Akum* prohibition. Maimonides (1194-1270) and the *Shulchan Aruch* (1570) rule that smoked foods are also not included in this prohibition. Approximately one hundred years ago, rabbinical authorities began to debate whether steamed foods are included within this prohibition, since steaming is analogous to smoking and not cooking, nor was steaming a form of cooking that was included in the original decree.

The second exception is food that is not suitable for a king's table (*Oleh Al Shulchan Shel Malachim* (עולה על שולחן של מלכים)). On this basis the Chazon Ish (Rabbi Avraham Karelitz, d. 1953) ruled that canned sardines cooked by non-Jews were forbidden because "the King of England eats sardines for breakfast." Based on this, OK Laboratories, a kashrut supervisory organization, contacted the White House to determine whether or not canned cranberries would be served at state dinners before issuing its kashrut ruling on this item, and learned that it is indeed served, and so ruled that it does not qualify for this exception from the *Bishul Akum* prohibition and must be cooked by a Jew.

Given that tuna is canned food, is it exempt from the *Bishul Akum* prohibition under the *Oleh Al Shulchan Shel Malachim* exception? Rav Soloveitchik said that this exception refers to food suitable to be served at a state dinner, and, as almost no canned food would be served at a state dinner, canned food (including tuna) should not be included in the *Bishul Akum* prohibition. But there are those who argue that tuna salad may be served at a state luncheon, thus invalidating this exemption. For them we can invoke an analysis of the processing of tuna. Since this processing involves stripping the flesh from the skeleton without allowing any of the bones to inadvertently stay in the meat, tuna processors first steam the whole tuna until it is partially cooked, after which it is easier to remove the bones and pack the tuna in a can. And so there are those who argue that this first "steaming" step exempts the tuna from the *Bishul Akum* prohibition. Finally, for the purist who requires that a Jew play a significant role in the cooking of the food to get it out from under the *Bishul Akum* prohibition, in order to meet the more stringent requirements of the Sephardic Jews, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel requires that the Mashgiach do more than turn on the pilot light for the oven; he must actually push the cans of tuna into the cooker!

Though people tend to lump the *Bishul Akum* prohibition with kashrut, and it is policed by kashrut inspectors, it has a completely different *raison d'etre*. Rashi gives the rationale for this prohibition:

"Anything that is cooked by gentiles, even in a pure pot, etc., [is prohibited] because of marriages."

כל דבר שבישלו עובד כוכבים ואפילו בכלי טהור וכולהו משום התנות.

The *Bishul Akum* prohibition was designed to inhibit interaction between Jew and gentile so as to prevent intermarriage! As one can see from the Talmudic discussion of possible exemptions from this prohibition, the avoidance of *Bishul Akum* has become an end in itself, without any relationship to the social problem that was its origin.

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## PRAYER OF JABEZ

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Tucked away in I Chronicles 4:10 is a one line prayer uttered by a relatively unknown character יַעֲבֵז referred to in English as Jabez. The verse begins "And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying," and the full text of what he said is: אָם -בְּרַךְ תְּבָרְכֵנִי וְהָרַבִּית אֶת גְּבוּלֵי וְהִזְתָּה יָדְךָ עִמִּי וְעָשִׂיתָ מִרְעָה לְבִלְתִּי עָצָבִי. The Jewish Publication Society translation is, "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Thy hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest work deliverance from evil, that it may not pain me." This is followed by the punch line, וַיִּבְּא אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּם אֶת אֲשֶׁר שָׁאַל, "And God granted him that which he requested." The only other thing we are told about Jabez, aside from his lineage (fifth generation descendant of Judah), is that he was more honorable than his brethren, and thus presumably merited that his prayer be quoted.

This prayer, though, has led to a publication phenomenon. In April 2000 Dr. Bruce Wilkinson, president of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, published an evangelical booklet entitled The Prayer of Jabez, containing his exegesis of this prayer, which has sold over nine million copies. This does not include the sale of the coffee mugs, calendars, paperweights, plaques, key rings, bookmarks, and compact discs. It was a publisher's dream-come-true.

Wilkinson's take on this prayer is fascinating. First he analogizes "Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed" with the phrase in Genesis 32:27 לֹא אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ כִּי אִם בְּרַכְתָּנִי "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," uttered by Jacob to the angelic wrestler, as indicating that God wants to be requested to bless people. The second request, "and enlarge my border," indicates that one should ask God to give you big things, because "He can do it and He wants to do it!" The third request, "that Thy hand might be with me," is interpreted by Wilkinson as saying "Jabez's life was centered in God... try to do the same!" Finally he translates the last phrase as "that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain," a bold request that nonetheless one is allowed to utter, by virtue of its appearance in this prayer.

Wilkinson's claim is that "readers who commit to offering the same prayer on a regular basis will find themselves blessed by God in everyday life." This claim has been attacked by most theologians. The obscurity of this prayer alone is evidence that the Bible does not justify using "the prayer of Jabez" as a formula for success. Contrary to Wilkinson's promises, there is no assurance that, God "always answers" this particular prayer.

Dr. Larry Pechawer, a Hebrew Union College trained Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew Language at Ozark Christian College, Joplin, Missouri, has taken issue with the basic premise of the text. In his book, The Lost Prayer of Jabez, he argues that the word vocalized by the Masoretes as מִרְעָה, translated as "from evil," is a misvocalization. The original unvocalized text is מִרְעָה, which Pechawer believes should have been vocalized מִרְעָה, meaning "pasture." He also argues that the preceding word , וְעָשִׂיתָ , translated "Thou wouldest work deliverance," is a quite basic word meaning "do, make, provide, prepare." Thus he believes the phrase is merely "and provide me with pasture land."

Though part of the Tanach, the Prayer of Jabez is not part of our tradition. Our rabbis have created for us a rich spectrum of prayers. May our individual and collective prayers in these Days of Awe bring for us a wonderful 5765.

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## *KASHRUT ALERT*

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This is not a Wry Bread column! What you see at your left is a picture of a copepod, a tiny crustacean that is causing consternation among the observant Jews of New York. The problem arose in mid May when an Israeli company was accused by some customers of selling vegetables contaminated with insects, which, as you Bulletin readers know from my May-June Bulletin, is a violation of kosher laws. The company insisted that the bugs were introduced when the vegetables were washed in New York. Several Orthodox Jews then put the city's tap water under a microscope, turning up the millimeter-long creatures. These are not in violation of the injunction against insects; they are as treif as lobsters! As a result, the Lubavichers advised their followers to buy water filters. Rabbi Zimmerman of the Satmars ruled that, for those who can't afford filters, water can be run through a double cloth to remove the copepods. The Department of Environmental Protection, which runs the New York reservoirs, said that the copepods are impossible to do away with and that they deliver health benefits to the reservoir.



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## JEWISH LITERACY

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Perhaps stimulated by the success of University of Chicago Professor Allan Bloom's 1987 blockbuster, The Closing of the American Mind, Eric Donald Hirsch, Professor of English at the University of Virginia, created a companion book, Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know, which itself went on to become a 1987 best seller. As Rabbi Joseph Telushkin acknowledges in his preface to his 1991 book, Jewish Literacy, at a dinner in the winter of 1988 Rabbi Nathan Laufer described to him the work of Professor Hirsch, and suggested to him that he compile a list of terms that every Jew should know. The result was a book subtitled "The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History." This book covers a myriad of topics, 346 of them to be precise, and anyone who has absorbed all Rabbi Telushkin has to say about these topics in 670 pages is truly "Jewishly literate" in a religio-historical sense.

One problem with these lists is that it fosters "second-hand" knowledge about the topics that the list creator thinks are important. The counter to this is to create lists of books which will provide "first-hand" knowledge, and make the list broad enough that upon completion of these books all the important topics will have been covered. Telushkin does this by citing "sources and further readings" for most of his 346 topics. But this way of reading is topic-oriented. What one needs is a Jewish counterpart to the Great Books Program reading list. An attempt in this direction was made by Barry Holtz in his 1984 book, Back to the Sources, subtitled "Reading the Classic Jewish Texts." It provides a guide for the reader of Jewish religious texts.

The major gap of the Telushkin work, though, is its lack of attention to Jewish fiction, music, and art. The gap in Yiddish fiction has been filled by the brother-sister combo David Roskies, Professor of Jewish Literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary and Ruth Wisse, Professor of Yiddish Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard. In his 1995 book, A Bridge of Longing, subtitled The Lost Art of Yiddish Storytelling, Roskies introduces the reader to seven major Yiddish writers: Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, Isaac Meir Dick, Yehuda Leib Peretz, Sholem Aleichem, Der Nister (Pinchas Kahanovitsch), Itzik Manger, and Isaac Bashevis Singer. But this only scratches the surface of "Yiddish literacy." Ruth Wisse's 2000 book, The Modern Jewish Canon, takes on the whole of "Jewish" literature, and, in her "suggested reading list," provides the erstwhile Jewish literate with 48 books, a melange of Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, Polish, French, and English/American books, beginning with Medele Moykher Sforim's The Mare and ending with Philip Roth's American Pastoral. Not to be outdone, PaknTreger, the magazine of the National Yiddish Book Center, entered the list-production business with a special Fall 2001 issue featuring "the 100 greatest works of modern Jewish literature."

Modern Jewish literature is alive and burgeoning on the American scene. There is a relatively new organization, called *Nextbook*, who, in conjunction with the American Library Association Public Programs Office, sponsor three series in the Chicago Public Libraries: the Readings & Performances series presents the most innovative and original new voices in Jewish literature in lively, unusual settings; the Writers Series presents leading writers from the United States and around the world discussing their work and its relations to Jewish history and culture; the History, Culture & Ideas series invites scholars, critics, and journalists to explore 3,000 years of Jewish civilization. And *Nextbook* has even developed a list of books to recommend for those interested in delving into modern Jewish literature. More on their program, along with a discussion of Jewish music and art, will appear in our next issue.

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## MORE KASHRUT ALERTS

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Let me bring you up to date on two new issues. The first has to do with the kashrut of Hebrew National hot dogs. You know them from their classic advertisement, "We Answer to a Higher Authority." Here is what Rabbi Lopatin had to say in his December 2003 letter to Anshe Sholom congregants: "Best's Kosher and Hebrew National meats do not meet community standards. Best's Kosher relies on leniencies regarding the lungs of the animals it processes, leniencies that are below the standards of the Orthodox community. Hebrew National seems to have real problems with the credibility of its supervision, even though the rabbi in charge, Rabbi Tuvia Stern, is a learned man. Hebrew National is on a lower halachic level than Best's (though Best's apparently is now buying some meat from Hebrew National); neither one is flat-out treif, but, they are not currently up to the standard that the community should be keeping. [UPDATE: Rabbi Stern, former Rav Hamachshir for Hebrew National, has passed away. The new supervising authority is Rabbi Ralbag of the Triangle K, and even though this is an improvement in supervision, Hebrew National is still not reliably kosher by the standards of this community. As before, I am not saying that the meat is treif, and in order not to embarrass someone I would probably eat it, but I would not bring it into my home or serve it to others.] " In short, neither Best Kosher nor Hebrew National are *glatt* kosher. But kosher they are. In issuing his letter Rabbi Lopatin has implicitly defined the "Orthodox community standard" as *glatt*, as has the CRC and OU. This ratcheting up of kashrut standards is something that the community should be aware of.

The second issue is based on Empire Kosher Poultry, Inc.'s press release of August 24, 2004, in which they announced that all Empire products will henceforth carry the *hechsher* of K'hal Adath Jeshurun ("KAJ"), in addition to that of the Orthodox Union. Why two *hechsher*'s? Isn't OU's good enough? It seems that OU isn't acceptable to the chassidic community. Though KAJ is not a chassidic organization (it is run by the German-Jewish synagogue of Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer), Empire believes that they can attract chassidic customers with this second *hechsher*. And I guess they have. Rabbi Gershon Tannenbaum, Director of the Rabbinical Alliance (a group of *haredi* rabbis who will not ally itself with the Rabbinical Council of America, the dominant Orthodox rabbinical association), greeted this news in his column in the Jewish Press with the headline "Empire's Chassidische Chickens." Toby and Jerry Mann called my attention to some great letters to the editor of the Jewish Press, under the headline "Much Ado About Chickens," one of which responded to Tannenbaum with the query "what makes a chicken chassidic (does the chicken wear a gartel?)" Who knows? Maybe the "Orthodox community standard" may be ratcheted up another notch, with OU's *glatt* standard not being kosher enough.

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## JEWISH LITERACY-PART II

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In the last Bulletin I mentioned Nextbook as a source for suggestions for reading Jewish-related literature. Its name is derived from the Saul Bellow observation in his review of Primo Levi's Periodic Table, "We are always looking for the book it is necessary to read next." [www.nextbook.org/books/category.html](http://www.nextbook.org/books/category.html) is the Nextbook website, on which you will find extensive reading lists in the following eight areas: Fiction, Religion, History, Memoir, Poetry, Philosophy, Biography, and Children's Literature. Nextbook advertises itself as a gateway to Jewish literature, culture, and ideas. These lists are part of this gateway, designed to lead Americans interested in learning more about Judaism, and to encourage all readers, to encounter great works of literature and nonfiction. For those interested, I have left material about Nextbook on the table in the entry to the synagogue, including information about their free public programs in the Chicago area.

Those of you who haven't heard about the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music should investigate it. You'll be in for a treat. The Milken Family Foundation, chaired by Lowell Milken (Michael Milken's brother), has devoted 14 years of research to seek out every conceivable piece of American Jewish music – from classical music, such as biblical epics set to music by Kurt Weill and other 20<sup>th</sup> century composers, Jewish legends in tone poems, film scores, and operas, symphonies and concertos based on Jewish themes, to the more popular cantorial compositions, Sephardic music, klezmer tunes, and songs from the Golden Age of Yiddish Theatre. They have recorded over 600 pieces, and are distributing them in a series of CDs on the Naxos American Classics label. You can find out more about the series on either the Milken Archive website [www.milkenarchive.org](http://www.milkenarchive.org) or on the Naxos website [www.naxos.com](http://www.naxos.com). A thirteen part series containing excerpts from the series, hosted by Leonard Nimoy, just finished airing on Wednesday nights on WFMT.

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## THE OPENING BLESSINGS OF THE AMIDAH

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Our Sunday morning post-Shacharit breakfast class (conducted mostly in Yiddish, with some Russian, Hebrew, and English thrown in) has been covering the prayerbook. We are currently studying the Amidah, also known as the Shemoneh Esrei, on pages 98-119 of the Art Scroll Siddur. The name Amidah is the Hebrew for "standing," as this is one of the few prayers recited from a standing position. The name Shemoneh Esrei is the Hebrew for "eighteen," the number of blessings in the original version of this prayer (a nineteenth was interpolated into the Amidah by Rabban Gamliel II in 76 CE). Though the Amidot for Shabbat and for the Holidays do not contain all these blessings, they are nonetheless sometimes referred to also as "Shemoneh Esrei." What they all have in common are two triplets of blessing, an opening set of three and a closing set of three. In this Bulletin I will recap (in English) what we covered in our class about the first three of these blessings.

Tradition has it that the eighteen blessings were instituted in 335 BCE by the 120 elders of the Anshei Knesset Hagdolah. The Talmud (Megillah 17b, Berachot 28b) credits Simeon the Pakulite, a contemporary of Rabban Gamliel II, with the development of the Shemoneh Esrei as we know it. (No one knows what the word "Pakulite" means; Rashi thinks it means "cotton dealer.") At the very least, Simeon organized the eighteen blessings into the order that we have them today. Moreover, he provided a rationale for each blessing and its order in the sequence.

The inspiration for the first three blessings are the opening verses of Psalm 29, read on Friday night (page 314 of the Art Scroll Siddur). Indeed, the Art Scroll Siddur instructs us that it is customary to stand during the recitation of this Psalm, undoubtedly as a reflection of the role this Psalm has in the construction of the Amidah. They read, "Ascribe unto the Lord, oh ye sons of might, ascribe unto the Lord glory and strength, ascribe unto the Lord the glory due unto His name, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Let us see how Simeon makes the connections.

The first blessing begins with an invocation that God is the Lord of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and ends with the phrase "Blessed are you, Hashem, Shield of Abraham." Simeon refers to this blessing as אבות ("Patriarchs"), and interprets the first phrase of this Psalm verse, "sons of might," as an allusion to the Patriarchs.

The second blessing is "Blessed are you, Hashem, Who resuscitates the dead." Simeon refers to this blessing as גבורות ("mighty deeds"), the resuscitation of the dead being the mightiest of deeds, and links this to the second phrase of this Psalm verse, "glory and strength."

The third blessing is "Blessed are you, Hashem, the holy God," begins with the phrase "You are holy, and Your Name is holy." Note that the word for "holy," קדוש, appears three times in this blessing, as an allusion to the famous verse from Isaiah 6:3, beginning "Holy, holy, holy, ..." Thus Simeon refers to this blessing as קדושות ("sanctification"), linking it to the last phrase of this Psalm verse, "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

By the time the next Bulletin rolls around we will have completed our study of the Amidah, and I will recap for you then the background of the closing set of three blessings.

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## THE CLOSING BLESSINGS OF THE AMIDAH

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In the weekday Amidah the series of three blessings that lead up to the closing blessings are (#14) a blessing for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, (#15) a blessing asking for a resumption of the Davidic reign (interpreted as an implicit prayer for the coming of the Messiah, who by tradition is to be a descendant of David), and (#16) a concluding request that God accept our prayers, including any personal prayers we may want to interpolate into the Amidah at this point in the service (two examples of such personal prayers are given on page 108 of the Art Scroll Siddur, one for livelihood and one for forgiveness). The closing three blessings of the weekday Amidah are incorporated into all versions of the Amidah, be they the Shabbat, Holiday, or High Holiday Amidot.

The first of these, blessing #17 (beginning with רצה and ending with שכינתנו לציון), asks for the restoration of the Temple service, including the fire offerings (ואשי ישראל). The Talmudic rationale for this blessing being next in line is that "when David comes prayer will come," and "when prayer has come, the Temple service will come" (Megillah 18a). Thus the natural sequence from blessing #15 is #16 and #17. At this point in the service on Rosh Chodesh and on the Holidays the extra blessing colloquially called "ya'ale v'yovoh" (יעלה ויבא) is interpolated. That blessing is a reminder of the additional sacrifices offered by the Israelites in the Temple on those special occasions, and so has its natural home within the blessing relating to the Temple service.

The Conservative prayerbook has excised the reference to the fire offerings, but kept the phrase את העבודה, "restore the service," translating this phrase as "restore worship." By contrast, in the Shabbat Musaf Amidah there is an explicit reference to sacrifices (page 466 of the Art Scroll Siddur), "there **we** will perform before You (ושם נעשה לפניך) the rite of **our** required offerings (את קרבנות חובותינו)." The Conservative prayerbook changes the tense of this phrase to "there our ancestors sacrificed to you (ששם עשו אבותינו לפניך) with **their** daily offerings (את קרבנות חובותיהם)." (And the Reform prayerbook eliminates Musaf altogether as too reminiscent of the offerings.)

The second of these, blessing #18 (beginning with מודים "we gratefully thank you" and ending with "it is fitting to give thanks") follows from #17 for, as the Talmud continues, "when the service comes, thanksgiving will come." The interpolations of thanksgiving for Chanukah and Purim, the "ahl hanisim" prayers, fit naturally within this blessing.

At this point in the repetition of the Amidah the priestly blessing is chanted (page 116 of the Art Scroll Siddur). Why is this an appropriate point for such a blessing? Because of the verse Leviticus 9:22, which Ibn Ezra translates as "Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them, *having stepped down* after offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the offering of well-being." That is, the sequence of events is offering followed by priestly blessing. So why does this not follow on the heels of #17? The rabbis interpret the Hebrew phrase for "sacrifice of thanksgiving," זבח תודה, as also implying the sequence "sacrifice, thanksgiving" תודה זובה. Thus the thanksgiving blessing properly should immediately follow the blessing referring to the sacrifice.

The final blessing is a blessing of peace (שים שלום) during Shacharit and Musaf, שלום רב during Mincha and Maariv). Why is this the final blessing? Because this is the punch line of the priestly blessing, and so we as well request that it be granted.

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## KASHRUT TODAY-PART III

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In reading the cRc web page I came across this announcement:

### Pas Yisroel and Yoshon List

All cRc retail bakeries, including both Dunkin Donuts and Breadsmith, are Pas Yisroel.

The following industrial bakeries are Pas Yisroel:

Eli's Cheesecake, Natural Ovens, Solomon Bakery, Neuman's Bakery, Al-Kbayim, and Bakery Chef

The following industrial bakeries are NOT Pas Yisroel:

Bay's, Azteca, Mi Mama, Sugar & Spice, Mission Foods, and Keeblers

The following cRc RETAIL bakeries are Yoshon:

Chaim's, King David, North Shore, BB's Bagels, and Bagel Country

The following bakeries are NOT Yoshon:

Dunkin Donuts (both), Breadsmith (both), Ada's, and Shalom Bakery

I covered Pas Yisroel in the July-August 2004 Bulletin. But what's this "Yoshon" all about? Leviticus 23:9-14 describes the two offerings, *omer* and *bikkurim*, to be taken from the new grain crop. It concludes with the injunction, "Until that very day, until you have brought the offering of your God, you shall eat no bread or parched grain or fresh ears; it is a law for all time throughout the ages in all your settlements." The new grain crop is referred to by the Hebrew word for "new," "*chodosh*." The opposite of "new" is "old," or "*yoshon*" in Hebrew.

The rabbis have debated about whether the phrase "in all your settlements" refers only to Israel or to anywhere that Jews live. Most interpret this phrase to apply worldwide, though there are some rabbis who disagree. About 25 years ago Rabbi Yosef Herman of Monsey, New York started a project to get *kashrut* certifiers to differentiate between *chodosh* and *yoshon* products. First of all this dichotomy applies only to five grains -Wheat, Oats, Spelt, Rye and Barley. Rabbi Herman determined that the planting and rotting of any of the five grains must take place before the 16th of Nissan in order for the resulting crop to be considered *yoshon* and therefore permitted to be eaten. Anyone of the grains that has been planted after the 16th of Nissan will only become permitted after the following Pesach.

Rye and spelt are always *yoshon*, but barley and oats, being spring crops, are *chodosh*. This creates a problem for beer drinkers, since malt comes from barley, and so may be *chodosh*. Wheat presents a difficulty, as there is both spring wheat (planted in the spring and harvested in August) and winter wheat (planted in the fall, and harvested the following summer). Winter wheat is *yoshon*, whereas spring wheat is probably *chodosh*. When a claim is made that the wheat is winter wheat is there any realistic way of independently verifying whether it is so? There are now a few mills that are supervised by the Orthodox Union of New York which pack bags in 50 and 100 lb. sizes that are certified as *yoshon* and sold as such to bakeries. It is probably these suppliers that provide the wheat for Chaim's, King David, North Shore, BB's Bagels, and Bagel Country, enabling them to be certified as *Yoshon* by the cRc.

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## GLEANINGS FROM LIKUTEI P'SHATIM

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Ernie Goldstein called my attention to two items in the February 5, 2005 *Likutei P'shatim*. One informed us that someone from OU will speak on "the important issue of kashering spray (and other) dryers." The other informed us of a *shiur* given at the Chicago Community Kollel on "Hilchos Shabbos: The Halachos of Laundering and Soaking." Your intrepid investigative reporter's curiosity was piqued by these items, and so I herewith report on my research on these two matters.

Kashering sprays (and other) dryers: After pasteurization, two steps are necessary to create powdered milk: the milk must be condensed, and it must be dried. The condenser is a vessel that removes water from the milk via a vacuum, and it is kashered with boiling water. There are two methods of drying the milk. One is a spray dryer, which is a large, inverted cone. The milk is sprayed in from the top and receives a blast of hot water. The water immediately evaporates. In many plants these spray dryers are used for a variety of non-kosher items along with milk. So they need to be kashered with boiling water. Another way to dry the milk is by using a roller dryer. The milk is sprayed onto a heated roller, which then dries the

milk. A roller dryer is heated using either regular water or water that was removed from milk in the condenser. One generally assumes that water is kosher, but if the water has been used to heat non-kosher ingredients it may be rendered not kosher. Also, condensate, water that was removed from non-chalav Yisrael milk by a condenser, also should not be used to heat the roller dryer.

Laundering and Soaking on Shabbat: One of the thirty-nine forbidden Shabbat labors is that of removing dirt that is either completely or partially absorbed in a fabric. There are three stages to the laundering process, each of which is separately prohibited: soaking [or spraying], scrubbing, and wringing. The prohibition against scrubbing and wringing is understandable, as both of these activities involve a level of work. But what about soaking? The Talmud says that "soaking is like cooking" כבוש הרי הוא כמבושל (Pesachim 76a, Hulin 97b, 111b, 113a). That is, soaking an item in a liquid causes a "transference," just as cooking does. But only absorbent materials are included in this prohibition. Thus leather may be soaked in water, since leather - no matter how soft, is nonabsorbent. Similarly, other soft non-porous materials such as soft plastic, rubber, nylon or any other synthetics which do not absorb are permitted to be soaked in water on Shabbat. Contemporary rabbis have ruled, though, that even non-absorbent materials may not be soaked in a cleaning solution. Even though the item does not become "soaked," it is nevertheless being "laundered," since a cleaning solution will remove [all or part of] a stain. The Rishonim disagree whether or not it is permitted to soak a clean garment in water if one does not intend to clean it. While the majority of the rabbis are lenient, Mishnah Berurah recommends that one follow the more stringent opinions and refrain from doing so. Ernie, aren't you glad you asked?

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## WHAT MAKES WINE “KOSHER”?

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There are lots of misconceptions about what makes a wine “kosher.” There are some who would say, “It’s been blessed by a rabbi.” There are others who would say, “It has to be red, heavy, and very sweet, like the Mogen David or Manischewitz wines I remember drinking as a child.” In truth, the issue is much more complex. We begin by quoting the basic injunction in the Talmud, from which all the rules relating to wine stem. Mishnah 2.3 of the tractate Avodah Zarah, a tractate dealing with idolatry, says, “These things that belong to gentiles are forbidden, and it is forbidden to have any benefit at all from them: wine ...” The intent of this particular injunction was to keep Jews away from anything that related to idolatrous practices of gentiles. The wine of gentiles that could (potentially) be put to idolatrous use was dubbed *yayin nesech* (יין נסך, “wine used for idolatrous libation”).

But that’s only part of the story. Further on (pages 30b-31a of Avodah Zarah) Rav Assi (310 CE) said in the name of Rav Yochanan (270 CE) who said it on behalf of Reb Yehuda ben Beteira (60 CE) “There are three kinds of wine; (i) libation wine (יין נסך) from which it is forbidden to derive any benefit and of which a quantity the size of an olive causes one to become ritually unclean, (ii) ordinary wine of heathens (סתם יינם) from which it is likewise forbidden to derive any benefit whatsoever and of which inclusion of 3/40 of a liter renders drinks or edibles unclean, and (iii) wine of an Israelite that had been deposited with a heathen (יינו אצל עובד כוכבים) which must not be drunk but the benefit of it is permitted.” Thus, in addition to wine that has been earmarked for idolatrous purposes, a second category of wine, *yayin stam* (יין סתם, “ordinary wine made by gentiles”), and a third category of wine, wine made by Jews but handled by a non-Jew, were banned by the Rabbis of the Talmud.

What’s the reason for these other two bans? It has nothing to do with idolatry. Rather, it is like the prohibition against *bishul akum* (בישול עכו”ם, “cooking by gentiles”) that I described in the July-August 2004 Bulletin – designed to inhibit interaction between Jew and gentile so as to prevent intermarriage. Indeed, Rabbi Raphael Grunfeld of New York leads off his May 2, 2003 Daf Yomi web page with the line, “Many mixed marriages begin with mixed drinking.” Rabbinic authorities interpret the Talmud as containing two separate decrees relating to *yayin stam*, one against drinking it in order to discourage fraternization, and the second against deriving any other benefit from it out of the explicit concern that associating with non-Jewish wine would lead to idolatrous practices. Because idolatry is no longer prevalent today, the second decree against deriving any benefit from *yayin stam* no longer applies today and has been automatically rescinded by the rabbinate. But the first decree is still in force.

The Talmud goes on to point out that if wine made by gentiles were to be boiled it could be used by Jews. This type of wine is dubbed *yayin mevushal* (יין מבושל, “wine that was boiled”). According to Maimonides (1135-1204 CE) the reason this is so is that *yayin mevushal* was never used for idolatry. But the Rosh (Rabbi Asher, 1250-1327 CE) rejects Maimonides’s explanation and argues that, since the main reason for the prohibition against drinking *yayin stam* is out of the concern of intermarriage and not because of past idol worship practices, the prohibition ought to apply to *yayin mevushal* too. He argues that *yayin mevushal* is permitted is because it is not a popular beverage, and so would not lead to fraternization with gentiles. Moreover, he says, as a matter of principle the Rabbis did not enact decrees to cover rare situations (מילתא דלא שכיחא לא גזרו בה רבנן). The Rashba (Rabbi Shlomo ben Avraham, 1235-1310 CE) adds to this debate by claiming that cooked wine is not “wine,” but is a different beverage with a different taste, and the Rabbis did not have it in mind when they legislated against *yayin stam*. So there’s a controversy about whether, if it really retains the character of wine,

*yayin mevushal* can be used at all by Jews.

What is this boiling process? The great American halachic authority Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986) never gave a precise temperature requirement; he merely said the wine should be heated to a degree that it is “too hot to touch.” The typical process for making *yayin mevushal* is a “flash pasteurization” process, which differs for whites/blushes and for reds. The whites/blushes are flash pasteurized before fermentation, the reds after fermentation, by quickly heating the crushed grapes to a temperature of 185°F for a few moments, then cooled “in a flash.” So this process certainly qualifies for Rabbi Feinstein’s approval. Fortant advertises that its *mevushal* temperature is 175°F; Abarbanel’s 2002 Château de la Salle Beaujolais-Villages, in a case of one-upmanship, makes a point of stating on its back label: “Made *mevushal* at 90° C.” That’s 194°F!

According to the great Israeli halachic authority Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (1900-1995), wine becomes *yayin mevushal* only when it is cooked on the fire in the open, because this produces a different beverage with less alcohol and a different taste. (Rabbi Auerbach’s process would for sure produce something that is not wine, therefore approved by the Rosh and Rashba as drinkable by Jews.) But flash pasteurized wine is not prepared in the open, but instead in sealed pipes from which the vaporous clouds of alcohol have no means of escape and never leave the beverage for good, so that the wine does not evaporate and, according to Rabbi Auerbach, tastes exactly like regular wine. Since the flash pasteurized wine tastes like wine, the “rare situation” argument of the Rosh for allowing *yayin mevushal* to be drunk does not apply, and so Rabbi Auerbach has ruled that flash pasteurized wine and grape juice are subject to the laws of *yayin stam* just the same as regular wine. (Whether it does or doesn’t taste like wine is the subject of oenological debate. The April 2004 issue of *Wine Enthusiast* says that under the wrong conditions heated wines can take on a sweet, cooked, possibly stale [Madeira-like] taste or even a burned, rubbery edge.)

Where does this leave us? If one follows Rabbi Auerbach (as the Israeli kosher wine makers do), nothing short of having no gentile in the production or distribution process will make the wine free of being forbidden for use by Jews. But this still doesn’t give a free ride to the Israeli wine makers who employ only Jews in the production process. The Israeli rabbinate has gone even beyond this, requiring that all the Jews engaged in the wine production process be Sabbath observers. It is not merely a matter of having an appropriate *mashgiach* on the premises; the entire staff has to be Sabbath observers! And then the *mevushal* process is only a useful add-on, designed to allow the wines to be handled and poured by non-Jews.

If one follows Rabbi Feinstein (as the American and other non-Israeli kosher wine makers do), one can use non-Jews to produce the wine, as long as there is an appropriate *mashgiach* supervising the process, but the wine will be *yayin stam* until it becomes *mevushal* via flash pasteurizing. That’s why it’s hard to find a non-*mevushal* non-Israeli kosher wine.

Hungarian Kosher Foods of Skokie maintains a website, [www.kosherwine.com](http://www.kosherwine.com), with the largest selection of kosher wines obtainable online. There are a number of excellent wine makers in Israel whose wine is not certified as kosher. One of them, Amphorae, has even made it to Charlie Trotter’s restaurant’s wine list. To learn about these wines, check into this website: [www.finewinetoursofrael.com](http://www.finewinetoursofrael.com).

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## KOL NIDRE

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Though it is the opening prayer of the Yom Kippur service, the Kol Nidre prayer is the centerpiece of this service. Part of the reason for its prominence was not only its haunting melody but its presentation. In the eleventh century the tradition was to recite it three times, beginning in a low, soft voice and gradually at each repetition increase in volume. By the sixteenth century its melody had been well established.

The introduction to the prayer is itself awesome. The phrase "By the authority of the heavenly Tribunal, and of the Court below, with divine sanction and with the sanction of this holy congregation, we declare it lawful to pray together with those who have transgressed" precedes the Kol Nidre. This phrase was added to the prayer at the time of the Inquisition in Spain at the end of the fifteenth century, at which point the Catholic Church had imposed forced conversion on Spanish Jewry. On the night of Yom Kippur these forced converts assembled in secret dungeons to plead for Divine Mercy over their seeming apostacy throughout the year. The phrase "we declare it lawful to pray together with those who have transgressed" was the welcome to the service of those converts who had been unable to withstand the tortures of the Inquisition and who had publicly accepted Christianity. Today this phrase takes on a different meaning. It invites all Jews, regardless of their violations of the precepts of the Torah throughout the year, to participate in the Kol Nidre service. The service is open to "those who have transgressed."

Another aspect of the Kol Nidre ceremony is the flanking of the Chazzan by two congregants carrying Torahs. This triad is a recreation of the tribunal that is required for the repealing of vows. It is they (and not the congregation) who utter the introductory phrase to Kol Nidre, inviting all "those who have transgressed" to participate.

The Kol Nidre prayer itself deals with vows to be made in the future. The prayer recognizes that if one makes a vow to God and forgets to abide by its terms then he will have jeopardized the atonement he seeks on the next Yom Kippur. And so he in advance repeals future vows to God (and at the same time repeals retroactively all vows to God made during the previous year which he had forgotten), thus enabling him to enter Yom Kippur without bearing the sin of having violated vows to God. As to vows to man, Yom Kippur brings no atonement until the injured party is appeased (see Mishnah 8.9 of Yoma for a full discussion of this issue).

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## “WORK” ON THE SABBATH

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Though the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15) from doing any “work” (מלאכה) on the seventh day, what constitutes “work” is not defined therein. There are four forbidden activities explicitly mentioned in the Torah: (1) the incident of the Sabbath manna (Exodus 16:23-30) ends with the phrase “let everyone remain where he is: let no one leave his place on the seventh day,” which was originally viewed as only referring to an injunction to not go out and collect manna on the Sabbath but was more broadly interpreted to mean not to go more than 2,000 cubits beyond the city wall, (2) agricultural activities such as plowing and harvesting (Exodus 34:21), (3) kindling fire (Exodus 35:3), (4) gathering wood (Numbers 15:32-36). Specific prohibitions from doing business are mentioned elsewhere in the Tanach: generally conducting business (עשות הפנך) Isaiah 58:13; setting forth corn to sell (Amos 8:5); “bringing ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell” (Nehemiah 10:32); “treading winepresses, bringing in heaps of corn, wine, grapes, figs, and all matters of burdens and lading asses therewith, bringing in fish and all manners of ware and selling them, (Nehemiah 13:15-18); carrying burdens (משא), in particular produce (Jeremiah 17:21-27).

But nowhere is there a definition of “work.” That task is left to the Mishnah. One of the places in the Torah in which Israel is enjoined to observe the Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-17) follows immediately after the description of the construction of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:1-31-11). The Rabbis have argued that this was purposeful, to indicate that the list of labors involved in the construction of the Tabernacle provides a template for the definition of “work” prohibited on the Sabbath. These labors, 39 in number, are referred to as the 39 *melachot*.

Here is the list, taken from *Shabbat Mishnah* 7.2, p.83a): (1) זורע *zoreah* – seeding, (2) חורש *choresh* – plowing, (3) קוצר *kotzair* - reaping or cutting, (4) מעמר *m'amair* – gathering or bundling, (5) דש *dush* – threshing, (6) זורה *zoreh* – winnowing, (7) בורר *borer* – sorting, selecting, separating, (8) טוחן *tochain* – grinding, (9) מרקד *miraked* – sifting, (10) לש *lush* – kneading, (11) אופה *ofeh* - baking/cooking, (12) גוזז *gozez* – shearing, (13) מלבן *melabain* - whitening or bleaching, (14) מנפץ *menafetz* - disentangling, combing, (15) צובע *tzovayah* – dyeing, (16) טווה *toveh* – spinning, (17) מייכך *maisach* - stretching threads onto loom, (18) עושה שתי בתי נירין *oseh beit batai neirin* - preparing to weave, (19) אורג *oraig* – weaving, (20) פוצע *potzai'ah* - separating threads, (21) קושר *koshair* - tying a knot, (22) מתיר *matir* - untying a knot, (23) תופר *tofair* – sewing, (24) קורע *ko'reah* – tearing, (25) צד *tzud* – trapping, (26) שוחט *shochet* – slaughtering, (27) מפשיט *mafshit* – skinning, (28) מעבד *m'abaid* - salting/tanning, (29) משרטט *mesharteit* - tracing lines<sup>1</sup>, (30) מוחק *memacheik* - smoothing / scraping, (31) מוחתך *mechateich* – cutting, (32) כותב *kotaiv* - writing two or more letters, (33) מוחק *mochaik* - erasing two or more letters, (34) בונה *boneh* – building, (35) מותר *soser* – demolishing, (36) מכבה *mechabeh* - extinguishing a flame, (37) מבעיר *ma'avir* - kindling a fire, (38) מכה בפטיש *makeh b'patish* –finishing an object (lit.: “hitting with a hammer”), (39) הוצאה *hotza'ah* - transporting from domain to domain (i.e., carrying).

Modern interpretations of these *melachot* will appear in future bulletins.

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<sup>1</sup> The list of *melachot* in the Mishnah includes (28) “salting” (מולח) and (29) “tanning” (מעבד) as separate *melachot*. The Talmud (*Shabbat* 75b) states that these two are really the same *melacha*, and amends the Mishnah by eliminating “salting” and by inserting “tracing lines” as the twenty-ninth *melacha*.

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## THE WIG STORY

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You may be aware of the mass wig burnings that took place in Israel, Brooklyn, and other Chasidic population centers last summer. On May 13, 2004 Rabbi Shalom Yosef Elyashiv, the 91 year old spiritual leader of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party of Israel and head of the rabbinical Council of Torah Sages, declared that wigs produced from the hair sold to wigmakers by barbers posted outside the Tirupati temple of Sri Venkateswara on the Tirumala hill in the Andhra Pradesh province of India are not to be worn by Jews, as the hair had been used for idolatrous purposes. The fact is that these wigs had been the subject of controversy among rabbis, but generally approved, for over 40 years. So the first question is, "Why the fuss now?"

Let's go over the chronology, as I have been able to trace it. About 40 years ago, Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch, now head of the Aida HaChareidis in Jerusalem and a senior member of the Jerusalem Bet Din, started the fuss by declaring that Jews should derive no benefit from human hair products out of India. This was his understanding of the process: The cutting of the hair is done at or in the temple and is a religious procedure itself, after which it is supposed to be burned on an altar in a sacrifice to Vishnu. The Hindu priests, however, after placing the hair on the altar and perhaps burning some of it, proceed to steal most of the sacrifice hairs and sell them to exporters. But, because his story was based on speculation, it was not concurred to by the rest of the rabbinate, who continued to rule that the wigs may be used. To bring closure to this controversy, in 1992 Rabbi Elyashiv researched the issue and published an opinion permitting the use of Indian hair wigs, based on both on-site research by Elyashiv's emissary, Rabbi Ahron David Dunner, a rabbinical judge of London, and testimony by American professors of Hinduism, in particular Anand Mohan, a Hindu priest who is Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Queens College in New York. According to Dr. Mohan, the hair cutting practice is not a sacrifice to any god. What happens is this. Women sometimes make a vow that, if either something especially good or bad happens to them, they will "give away a prized possession" of theirs. Since they are not allowed to cut their hair at all except under certain circumstances, their long, silky hair is their most beautiful and prized possession. So they make a vow to cut it off. They do not have to do this in a temple, and they can throw the hair in the garbage if they want – it doesn't matter what happens to it. Rabbi Elyashiv then wrote a 3 page responsum, quoting Dr. Mohan by name, and explained that since the hair is not cut inside the temple in front of any god, and is not done as a manner of worship, use of it in a wig is permitted. Rabbi Elyashiv added that of course his responsum is contingent on the facts as presented to him. Rabbi Sternbuch was sent Rabbi Dunner's material as well, but he did not change his ruling – he still prohibited, disagreeing with Rabbi Elyashiv regarding certain laws and not being convinced that the Dunner report was accurate. And so things stood for over 25 years.

So what has changed? Associates of Rabbi Elyashiv claim that the rite has changed. So Rabbi Dunner was sent back to Tirupati to reinvestigate the process. His report, published in the ultraorthodox webzine *Dei'ah veDibur*, suggests that his fieldwork primarily involved asking participants (hair donors and barbers alike) about what they understood themselves to be doing. "We tried to speak with the people getting shaved to ascertain whether they came there ...to make a sacrifice ...or ...as an act of submission. Many of them said it is a gift to the idol because 'he loves [their] hair.' An important point I was asked to verify and which I brought up-- during the haircutting people say prayers out loud or silently to the idol and repeat them constantly. They also have a ... facility where they immerse themselves after the haircut. ...Afterwards I spoke with the barber and according to what I gathered, although the barber receives a salary he is considered their [the priest's] assistant and representative."

Emissaries sent by leading authority Rabbi Shmuel Halevi Wosner had come back with a less clear-cut stance regarding the Hindu rite. They found that there was a lot of confusion in Rabbi Dunner's research, because when Indian clerics talked about how the hair is an "offering" or a "sacrifice," it was later determined that they meant "offering" not as a religious offering but as in something you give, a "self sacrifice." The emissaries turned up many contradictory stories about the practice and procedure and meaning of the tonsure among the Hindus that were interviewed. Some said that the hair cutting is a sacrifice; some said it wasn't; some said that sometimes it is and sometimes it's not; some said that different Hindu sects and even different individuals do it for different reasons; some said that the Hindu hair is holy and therefore used in the religious practice and others said the opposite – that hair is unclean and therefore it is cut off before the woman enters the Temple; others said that really the process is not religious but the women who get their hair cut think it is, and that itself would render the hair to be prohibited.

So where do we stand? Rabbi Wosner issued a ruling it may be an *avodah zarah* (idolatry) situation, so one shouldn't buy any new Indian wigs and should try hard to exchange those already in one's possession, but one doesn't have to throw them out. On May 19, 2004 Rabbi Yosef Efrati, one of Rabbi Elyashiv's closest associates, published a summary of Rabbi Elyashiv's conclusion: since objects associated with idol worship are to be burnt in fire, wigs from hair generally known to originate in India (but not specifically from the temple) should be burned, while wigs specifically known to be from the Tirupati temple must be burned. (And of course Rabbi Sternbuch said, "I told you so 40 years ago!") It's too bad Rabbi Elyashiv issued such a myopic ruling; donating the wigs to cancer patients would have been a greater mitzvah than tossing them into a bonfire.

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## THE PINKIE STORY

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I have been asked about the origin of the custom of pointing to the Torah when it is lifted during *hagbah*. As you may have noticed, some who follow this custom use their pinkie, others their index finger. And some kiss their finger after pointing to the Torah. The earliest reference I can find is in MeAm Lo'ez, a commentary on the Chumash, the first two volumes (on Bereshit and Shmot) having been written by Rabbi Yaakov Culi of Istanbul in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. MeAm Lo'ez parshas Ki Savo, perek 17, in the section dealing with the laws and customs of *hagbas haTorah*, cites the following: "And there is a custom [during the *hagbah*] to point with the little finger over the writing [of the Sefer Torah] and then kiss it." No reason or explanation is given.

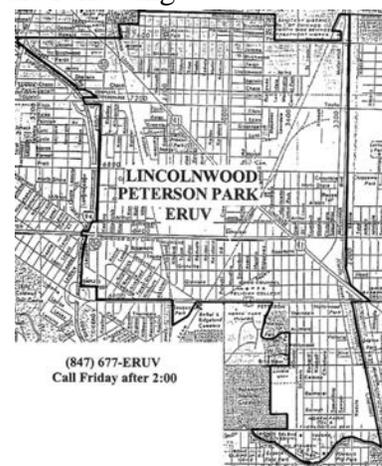
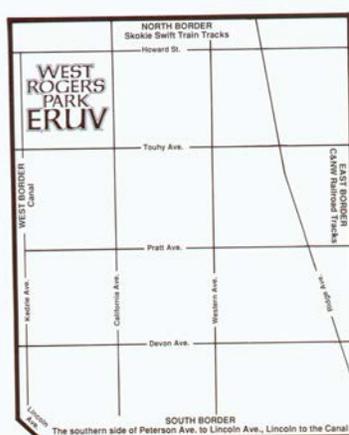
There are those who connect this custom with a passage in Taanit 31a describing the dancing of the righteous in the Garden of Eden in Messianic times. According to Ulla of Biryia in the name of Rabbi Elazar, "In the future the Holy One, blessed be He, will arrange a circle for the righteous, and He will sit among them in the Garden of Eden, and each and every one will point [to Him] with his finger." Rabbi Moshe Alshikh, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Bible commentator from Safed, suggests that in Messianic times the righteous will attain prophetic powers, so that each will be able to use his finger to point to God's revelation.

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## MORE ON SHABBAT "WORK"

In the November-December 2005 Bulletin I presented the list of 39 categories of activities that are designated in the Talmud as "work" on the Shabbat. The general principle underlying the construction of these categories is that "work" is any act where man demonstrates his mastery over nature. The first type of work that was explicitly prohibited in the Torah was that of carrying (#39 in the list: הוצאה *hotza'ah*). Exodus 16:23-30 was initially interpreted to refer to an injunction to not go out and collect manna on the Sabbath, i.e., to prohibit carrying in a public place. Why is this considered "work?" Because, according to this general principle, by taking things from nature and carrying them where he needs them man demonstrates his mastery over nature.

The prohibition against carrying on Shabbat only applies outside of an enclosed "private" area. Enclosed areas considered "private" may vary in size from a small home to an entire community. The Talmud specifies both the definition of an enclosure and how to render an entire area a private domain. The *eruv* is the boundary of the enclosed "private" area. Here in Chicago three *eruvim* have been established, one in Lakeview, one in West Rogers Park, and one in Peterson Park/Lincolnwood. Their boundaries are the following:



To determine whether the *eruv* is intact, call 773-743-7882 for the West Rogers Park *eruv*, 312-409-1866 for the Lakeview *eruv*, and 847-677-3788 for the Lincolnwood/Peterson Park *eruv*. (For information about the Skokie *eruv* call 847-679-3788, and for the Long Grove/Buffalo Grove *eruv* call 847-541-1460.)

Another activity of transformative of nature is that of gathering (#4 in the list: מ'עמר *m'amair*). Gathering is defined as the collection of **natural** produce into a bundle; the gathering of **manufactured products** is completely permitted. (So, as some rabbi has pointed out, there's no need to stop your child from collecting the candy bags after they have been thrown at the Bar-Mitzvah boy.) Actions mentioned in the Talmud that would fall under this work category would be piling scattered fruit, putting together a bouquet of flowers, or stringing figs.

A third activity of this type is that of reaping or cutting (#3 on the list: קוצר *kotzair*). The reason I introduce this next is to round out the set of activities that the Shabbat wood-gatherer of Numbers 15:32-36 was, according to the Talmud (Shabbat 96b), guilty of performing. The man gathering wood was guilty of performing all three of the aforementioned acts of "work," cutting the wood, gathering it, and carrying it.

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RABBI MEIR: THE JEWISH AESOP

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We've all heard of Aesop and his fables. Did you know that the Jews had their own fabulist? "When Rabbi Meir died there were no more makers of fables." Thus opens Mishnah 9:15 of the tractate *Sota*. And in *Sanhedrin* 38b Rabbi Yochanan says that Rabbi Meir knew three hundred fables about foxes." Rabbi Yochanan continues to say "But we have only three of them." He then teases us by giving three quotations from the Tanach, each of which is the basis for one of these three fables, namely "*The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge*" (*Ezekiel* 17:2), "*Just balances and just weights*" (*Leviticus* 19:36), and "*The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead*" (*Proverbs* 9:8). Rashi presents a construction of a single parable containing all three of these punch lines. Here is his retelling of the fable.

A fox once induced a wolf to enter a Jewish dwelling to help the inmates to ready the Sabbath meal. No sooner did he enter than the whole household set upon him, and so belabored him with cudgels that he was obliged to flee for his life. For this trick the wolf was indignant at the fox, and sought to kill him, but he pacified him with the remark, "They would not have beaten thee if thy father had not on a former occasion belied confidence, and eaten up the choicest pieces that were set aside for the meal." "What!" rejoined the wolf, "*the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and shall the children's teeth be set on edge?*" "Well," interrupted the fox, "come with me now and I will show thee a place where thou mayest eat and be satisfied." He thereupon took him to a well, across the top of which rested a transverse axle with a rope coiled round it, to each extremity of which a bucket was attached. The fox, entering the bucket, which happened to be at the top, soon descended by his own weight to the bottom of the well, and thereby raised the other bucket to the top. On the wolf inquiring at the fox why he had gone down there, he replied, because he knew there was meat and cheese to eat and be satisfied, in proof of which he pointed to a cheese, which happened to be the reflection of the moon on the water. Upon which the wolf inquired, "And how am I to get down beside you?" The fox replied, "By getting into the bucket at the top." He did as directed, and as he descended the bucket with the fox rose to the top. The wolf in this plight again appealed to the fox. "But how am I to get out?" The reply was, "*The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead;*" and is it not written, "*Just balances and just weights?*"

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★MAGEN DAVID★

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The six-pointed star (hexagram), called the Magen David, has long been a symbol of the Jewish people. The words "Magen David" literally mean "Shield of [King] David." The usual explanation for this appellation is that the soldiers of King David's army wielded shields in the shape of a six-pointed star. Yet there is no reference to this in any contemporaneous text. Moreover, King David's personal seal was not a star, but rather a shepherd's staff and bag. His son, King Solomon, used a five-pointed star (pentagram) for his personal seal. Some sources mention the Magen David as a Canaanite symbol, but there are no archeological digs to confirm this. The earliest known use of a hexagram in Ancient Israel is on a 6th century BCE seal. But this is believed to be a fortuitous finding. Early Jewish symbols on coins include the shofar, lulav, and the seven-branch menorah, but no hexagram is found in early Jewish coinage or other items containing Jewish symbolism. So how long has the Magen David been used as a Judaic symbol?

A Magen David was discovered as decoration in a synagogue in Capernaum, dated at around the 3rd century. Also, a tombstone dating back to 300 C.E. with a six-pointed star on it was found in Tarantum, in Southern Italy. But that's about it, until the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest textual mention of the Magen David is in a 12<sup>th</sup> century Karaite book *Eshkol ha-Kofer* by Judah Hadassi, where in chapter 242 he says, "Seven names of angels precede the mezuzah: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Rafael, Sariel, Raguel, and Remiel. Tetragrammaton protect thee! And likewise the sign called 'David's shield' is placed beside the name of each angel, and so the Magen David was included as a symbol in amulets." The Magen David was thereafter found in all sorts of kabbalistic material. Its use as a national symbol would have to wait until 1354, when King Carl IV insisted that the Jews of Prague make a flag for themselves that would feature the six-pointed star as well as the five-pointed star of King Solomon.

Exactly at what point the Star of David switched from being a fringe symbol to the mainstream emblem for Jews worldwide isn't clear, but it must have occurred somewhere between the 17th and 19th centuries. The synagogue in Bristol, UK, built in 1871, is decorated with a Star of David motif all over it. In 1897 Theodor Herzl incorporated the star into the flag of the Zionist movement. He wanted a flag with seven of these stars (possibly filled in) in gold on a white background. The design actually adopted by the Zionist Congress in 1897 was a blue Star of David on a white background, with blue stripes above and below, which ultimately became the flag of the state of Israel. One of the reasons the early Zionists chose this symbol was because, unlike the Menorah, it represented the Jewish people without having specific religious connotations.

The great Kabbalist scholar Professor Gershom Scholem of Hebrew University has theorized that the "Star of David" originates in the writings of Aristotle, who used triangles in different positions to indicate the different basic elements. The superposed triangles thus represented combinations of those elements. From Aristotle's writings those symbols made their ways into early, pre-Moslem, Arab literature. The Arabs venerated King Solomon, and so used the pentagram in their mystical documents. As the first appearance of the hexagram in Jewish writings was in a Kabbalistic work, Scholem speculates that it is possible that the hexagram was an alteration of the Arabic pentagram to convert it to something unique for Judaic use. Moreover in Kabbalistic teachings, one finds that the number six represents the Heavens and the Earth and the four directions (North, South, East, West), and so there are those who suggest that the Magen David with its six points correspond to this Kabbalistic idea, which in turn can represent God's Omnipresence.

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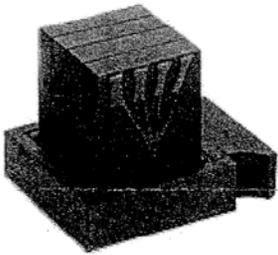
It was just a coincidence that Philologos, the author of the weekly On Language column in the Forward, devoted his June 30 article to the Magen David. Though Philologos pretty much covered the same historical material that I did in last month's bulletin, there was no plagiarism by either of us. His column addressed an interesting question: why is the same symbol called a shield in Hebrew and a star in English and in other languages? He speculated that this was because when the symbol was adopted by the Jews, "whereas stars have no great resonance in Jewish religious tradition, shields do," citing the numerous references to God as the shield of Israel. For yet another view on the origin of the Magen David, check out Uri Ofir's web site <http://moreshet.co.il/UploadFiles/magenew.doc> or its English summary: <http://star-of-david.blogspot.com/2006/06/jewish-origin-of-star-of-david.html>

One other point. I looked up the article by Herbert M. Adler in the 1902 Jewish Quarterly Review which described the inscription of a Magen David on a tombstone in the Museum of Taranto, Italy, which he dated as third century. The actual inscription is: **דויד מן מילו ★ פה ינוח אשת לאון בן ★**, "here lies the wife of Leon son of ★ David from Melos." It seems to me that the fact that the ★ precedes the name David indicates that the symbol was not really a general Jewish symbol, but was instead at that time associated with the name David.

## TEFILLIN - HOWS AND WHYS

The *tefillin* consist of two cube-shaped leather boxes, referred to as *batim* (literally, "houses"), one worn on the head, referred to as the *shel rosh* (literally, "of the head"), the other on the arm, referred to as the *shel yad* (literally, "of the hand"), with leather straps fixed to them for attaching them to the head and the arm. Inserted into the *batim* are four hand-inscribed sections from the Torah: (a) Exodus 13:1-10; (b) Exodus 13:11-16; (c) Deuteronomy 6:4-9; (d) Deuteronomy 11:12-21. The *shel yad* contains all four sections written on a single strip of parchment; the *shel rosh* contains four separate compartments, one for each of the four sections of the Torah.

The arrangement of the four sections is subject to debate. There are actually four configurations (out of 24 possibilities) in play in the Orthodox world. The most common is that of Rashi, namely, in order of appearance in the Torah: d,c,b,a, reading right-to-left. His grandson, Rabeinu Tam (12<sup>th</sup> century), came up with a different configuration: c,d,b,a. Then there is the Ra'avad (12<sup>th</sup> century) configuration: a,b,d,c, and the Shimusha Raba (13<sup>th</sup> century) configuration: a,b,c,d. The Lubavicher Rebbe instructed all to use the Rabeinu Tam *tefillin*. There is a saying, "He's so *frum* that he *davens* with two pairs of *tefillin*." No joke, there are some who want to make sure they are using the "correct" configuration by owning both configurations and switching from one to the other during the *shacharit* service. How do you cover all bases by using all four in one service? See this web site: <http://www.chabad.org/dailystudy/hayomyom.asp?tDate=8/24/2005&Lang=>



Black straps are inserted into each of the *batim*. The straps of the *shel rosh* are made to form a knot that will be at the back of the neck when the *tefillin* are worn. This knot is in the shape of the letter *dalet* ד. The strap of the *shel yad* is attached to the *batim* to form another knot shaped in the form of the letter *yod* י. The letter *shin* ש is worked into the leather of the *shel rosh*, a three-pronged *shin* on the right side of the wearer and a four-pronged *shin* on the left (there is a tradition that the four-pronged *shin* was the form used in the original Ten Commandments as engraved in stone, whereas the three-pronged *shin* is that used by scribes



on parchment; for that reason the four-pronged *shin* is sometimes referred to as God's *shin*). We now have the three letters *shin*, *dalet*, *yod*, in the *tefillin*, forming the word *Shaddai* שדדאי, one of the divine names. (Some *tefillin* have the letter *mem* מ instead of the *dalet* as the shape of the knot, and the three letters then form the word *shemi* שמי, "My Name.")

The word *Shaddai* also appears as a result of the winding of the strap of the *shel yad*. As the picture on the left of how the Lubavich put on tefillin illustrates, a *shin* is formed at the bicep, a *dalet* is formed on the hand, and a *yod* is formed on the middle finger. The picture on the right illustrates a more common development of the word *Shaddai*, where the *shin* is formed on the hand, a (kinda) *dalet* is formed on the lower part of the middle finger, and a *yod* is formed on the upper part of the middle finger.



Note that the strap is wound seven times around the arm. *Vayikra Rabbah* 27:20 says "all sevens are precious." From this the mystic Avraham Arie Trugman concludes that "... the inclusion of "sevens" in a host of rituals adds an aura of holiness and endless symbolic associations. From the bride circling the groom seven times, winding the straps of tefillin seven times on our arms, circling the synagogue seven times on Simchat Torah, to the seven fruits of Israel, the seven shepherds, the seven branches of the menorah, the seven blessings of bride and groom — in all these cases and many more, the number seven reminds us not only of holiness and blessing, but also of God's imminence in the dimensions of time, space, and soul."

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## THE SOUNDS OF THE SHOFAR

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In Numbers 29:1, when the Rosh Hashana holiday is introduced, it is referred to as *yom teru'ah* (יום תרועה), which is translated<sup>1</sup> as “a day when the horn is sounded,” But the word *teru'ah* does not literally mean “horn;” it is merely the name of one of the notes sounded on Rosh Hashana. In Leviticus 23:24 the day is referred to as *zichron teru'ah* (זכרון תרועה) translated as “commemorated with loud blasts,” but literally meaning “remembrance of blasts.” And in Numbers 10:10 it is written, “And on your joyous occasions – your fixed festivals and new moon days – you shall sound the trumpets (*useka'atem ba'chatsotsros* וְתִקְעֶתֶם בַּחֲצֹצְרוֹת) So you see that it is another instrument, the *chatsotsra* (translated as “trumpet”), that appears to be the one commanded to be used on Rosh Hashana.

The *chatsotsros* are introduced in Numbers 10:2 as the trumpets to summon the community. Two silver trumpets are to be constructed, and two sorts of blasts are described there, short blasts for alerting the community to move and long blasts to convene the community. The actual verse that differentiates the two kind of trumpet blasts is Numbers 10:7 (וּבְהִקְהִיל אֶת הַקְּהָל תִּתְקַעוּ נֶלֶא תְרִיעוּ) - where the long blast is referred to by the verb *tiskeu* (תִּתְקַעוּ) whose root is the same as the noun *tekiya*, and the short blast is referred to by the verb *tariyu* (תְרִיעוּ) whose root is the same as the noun *teru'ah*.

The word *shofar* appears in only one verse of the Torah (Leviticus 25:9), in the context of the Jubilee Year, where it is commanded to herald in that event on Yom Kippur with *shofar teru'ah* (שׁוֹפָר תְרִיעָה), a *shofar* blast. So how did the *shofar* (translated as “horn”) come to be associated with Rosh Hashana?

Both the horn (*shofar*) and the trumpet (*chatsotsra*) were used together as signals, as evidenced by the warning against an invading army issued in Hosea 5:8, (תִּקְעוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּגִבְעָה חֲצֹצְרָה בְרָמָה) “Blow ye the horn (*shofar*) in Gibeah and the trumpet (*chatsotsra*) in Ramah,” probably with short blasts. They were also used together as a call to worship, as is evidenced by the phrase (בַּחֲצֹצְרוֹת וְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר) with trumpets [*chatsotsros*] and the sound of the horn [*shofar*]”, probably with long blasts) from Psalms 98:6 used in our Kabbalat Shabat prayers. The trumpets were certainly around in the time of David, for in the 1 Chronicles 15:26 description of the ceremony when King David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, it was accompanied “with sound of the horn, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with psalteries [zither-like instruments] and harps.”

So what happened to the trumpets, and why does the *shofar* replace the trumpet in the Rosh Hashana service? The trumpets were to be sounded only by the priests, whereas nonpriests used the *shofar*. In his Excursus 21 on the trumpet and the *shofar* in the JPS Torah Commentary on Numbers, Professor Jacob Milgrom says, “it is likely that the non-priestly sources did not distinguish between the two instruments, calling both of them by the name *shofar*.” He says, in direct contradiction to the above quotes, that the rabbis posited that “the trumpet was only used during the time of Moses but not by Joshua and later generations,” citing Sifre Numbers 75 (written around 189 CE) as his source for that statement. Finally, he says, “Certainly by the time of the rabbis of the Gemara, the *amoraim* [3<sup>rd</sup> thru 5<sup>th</sup> century CE], the distinction between the *shofar* and trumpet was no longer known.”

Using Talmudic logic, the juxtaposition of the word *shofar* with the word *teru'ah* in Leviticus 25:9, as well as their dual use in these quotations, leads to the inference that the sounds to be used on the *shofar* should be the

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, I quote the Jewish Publication Society translation of the Torah, as it is the standard used by academic Biblical scholars.

same as those used on the *chatsotsros*, namely the long blast (*tekiya*) and the short blast (*teru'ah*). The long blast, the *tekiya*, was one continuous blast of the horn, ruled by the rabbis to be sustained for at least 3 seconds. But what constitutes a short blast? Rabbis differ on this. Some say it is the *tekiya* broken into a set of shorter blasts. Others say it is the *tekiya* broken into a series of staccato blasts. And so we compromise by using them both. The *shevarim* is the set of three short blasts, each at least one second long; the *teru'ah* is the set of 9 staccato blasts, lasting in total for at least 3 seconds.

As noted earlier, the blowing of the horn is referred to three times, in Leviticus 23:24 and 25:9, as well as in Numbers 29:1. Based on this the rabbis have declared (Sifre Numbers) that the sets of blasts should be repeated three times. Moreover, in each set of blasts there should be two *tekiya* blasts and one *teru'ah* blast. And, because we don't know what is the proper form of the *teru'ah* blast, we perform each of the following sets three times:

*tekiya shevarim teru'ah tekiya*  
*tekiya shevarim tekiya*  
*tekiya teru'ah tekiya*

So we hear 30 blasts in the initial *shofar* ceremony.

The full verse Numbers 10:10 is: “And on your joyous occasions – your fixed festivals and new moon days – you shall sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of well-being. They shall be a reminder of you before your God: I, the Lord, am your God.” There are three sections in the Rosh Hashana *musaf amida*, referred to as *malchuyot*, *zichronot*, and *shofrot*, and all of these derive from this verse. The first of these, *malchuyot*, is based on the closing phrase “I, the Lord, am your God אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. The second of these, *zichronot*, is based on the phrase “they shall be a reminder to you וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְזִכְרוֹן. The third of these, *shofrot*, is based the command, “you shall sound the trumpets” וַתִּקְעֵתֶם בְּחֹצְצָרָה (Note that they are not recited in the order in which they appear in Numbers 10:10; Sifre Numbers presents the reasoning for the rearrangement of the order.) Within each of these three sections the same set of 30 blasts is sounded during the repetition of the *amida*. Finally a set of 10 blasts is included in the closing *kaddish* of the *musaf amida*. This last set was included into the service by the Gaonim [7<sup>th</sup> thru 11<sup>th</sup> century CE]. If one were to pray in a Sefardic *minyan*, one would then hear 70 blasts. But the Tosafists [12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century CE] added 30 more, to be blown while the congregation is engaged in the silent *musaf amida*, at the same points at which they are blown during the repetition of the *amida*. So we hear 100 blasts in total.

The comedian Sam Levenson once referred to the *shofar* as “an ill wind that no one blows good.” Let us hope and pray that the sounds of the *shofar* this Rosh Hashana will augur good for all of Israel.

לשנה טובה תכתבו ותכתמו

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## WHY IS CHANUKA CELEBRATED ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup> OF KISLEV?

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We've all learned that the Hebrew word Chanuka means "dedication." The word Chanuka, as written in Hebrew, is חנוכה, which has by some been subdivided into two parts, חנו and כה. The significance of this subdivision is that the part חנו means in Hebrew "they rested" and the part כה is the Hebrew number 25, so the word Chanuka has been interpreted as meaning "they [the Maccabees] rested [from battle] on the 25<sup>th</sup>." After a year of battle against the Syrians the Maccabee fighters gained control of the Temple on the 24<sup>th</sup> of Kislev, in the year 139 BCE, and, "Judas and his brothers and all the congregation of Israel decreed that the days of the rededication of the altar should be observed at their season, every year, for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth of the month of Kislev, with gladness and joy (I Maccabees 4:59). But this date has a historic antecedent. It was on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev that Antiochus's minions sacrificed hogs and unclean cattle on the altar of the Temple (I Maccabees 1: 59). And so some speculate that the date of the rededication was contrived to coincide with the date of this ignominious act.

This date has an even greater historic antecedent. In 538 BCE Cyrus, king of Persia, permitted the Jews of his empire to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. Work on the Temple began in 536 BCE, but because of various adversities, the work lapsed for a period of sixteen years. The prophet Haggai, one of the prime movers (with Ezra and Zechariah) of the restoration of the Temple, announced (circa 520 BCE) "from this day and forward, from the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the ninth month [Kislev], from the day that the foundation of the Lord's Temple was laid" (Haggai 2:18). Scholars interpret this not as referring to the date of the original work of 536 BCE but to the date of resumption of the work, and this date has come to be regarded as the date of the effective foundation of the Temple. So others speculate that the dating of Chanuka was contrived to coincide (more or less) with the "official" date of the foundation of the Second Temple.

There is a story told in the Talmud (Avodah Zarah 8a) about Adam's first encounter with the winter solstice. Adam was created on the first of Tishrei (Rosh Hashana). When he noticed the days getting gradually shorter he feared that because of his sin the world is getting darker and returning to its primordial emptiness, and that he was sentenced to die. So he began fasting and praying for eight days. But when the month of Tevet rolled around and he noticed that the days were getting longer he declared an eight day holiday. In the following year he celebrated both periods as a holiday. (And this was, according to the Talmud, the origins of the Roman holidays Saturna and Kalanda.) Given that the winter solstice falls on December 21, it could very well be that the first of the eight day holidays celebrated by Adam was on or about the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev. And what better timing for a holiday to be celebrated in the darkest days of the year than a holiday known as the Festival of Lights?