

May/June 2011

Dear Chavera,



The past few months have been filled with a variety of experiences for us as a movement.

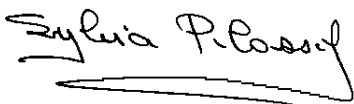
In January we held the annual World WIZO Meeting of Representatives, attended by most of the leaders of the movement from WIZO Federations around the world. This was a wonderful opportunity to exchange views on various issues on the agenda of the Jewish People in general and WIZO in particular.

We are now in the intermediate stages of organizing the 25th World WIZO Enlarged General Meeting, to take place from January 15th -19th, 2012 in Tel Aviv. We look forward to having sizeable delegations from all WIZO Federations. Now is the time for us to widen the ranks of the movement and to amplify its strength.

In April we celebrated the holiday of Passover. In general, spring marks the beginning of a significant period in the life of the People and the State of Israel. This is the time when we mark Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, Memorial Day, the 63rd anniversary of Israel's Independence, and Jerusalem Day. Very shortly, we will be celebrating the holiday of Shavuot.

We are pleased to present you with the articles we have compiled, and hope that you will be enriched and inspired by them.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sylvie Pelossof".

Sylvie Pelossof
Chairperson
Department of Organization & Education
World WIZO Executive

It's the Event of 2012



Where Can You:-

- Meet WIZO Members From All Over the World?
- Take Part in the Decision-Making Process?
- Witness the WIZO Experience?
- Strengthen Israel Through WIZO?
- Be a Link in the Zionist Chain?

WHERE CAN YOU CREATE A NEW TOMORROW?

at the

25th World WIZO Conference (EGM)

January 15 – 19, 2012

Hilton Tel Aviv

Lectures, Panels, Discussions,
Meetings with Israel's Leaders,
Tours & Special Events
Exclusive Events for Aviv Participants



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www.wizo.org

HOLIDAYS

SHAVUOT DECORATIONS

Synagogues and homes are traditionally adorned with fresh greens and flowers in honor of the holiday that occurs in the spring. Small trees, leafy or flowering plants, boughs, and floral arrangements are placed around the sanctuary and near the ark, as well as around the house and on the dining table.



Favorite flowers for the occasion are lilies -- standing in for the lily of the valley to which Israel is compared in the Song of Songs (2:1-2) -- and roses, chosen because of a playful reinterpretation of a verse from the Book of Esther (8:14), "the decree (*dat*) was proclaimed in Shushan" becomes "the law (*dat*) was given with a rose (*shoshan*).\" Lilies and roses often have been placed directly on the *Sifrei* (plural of *sefer* -- scroll) *Torah*, individually, in wreaths, or in garlands.

As an agricultural holiday, Shavuot has always been linked to plant life. In particular, the baskets used to transport first fruits to the Temple were adorned with flowers and leaves. According to another explanation for the decorative scheme, the greens recall Sinai itself. The fact that the Israelites were warned not to allow their livestock to graze near the mountain (Exodus 19:12-13) indicates there was a grassy oasis at its base. The greens serve as vibrant reminders that Torah is "a tree of life to those who hold fast to it" (Proverbs 3:18).

Some rabbis claimed -- even though they are in contradiction to the foundation for the holiday of *Tu B'shevat* -- that we use branches because Shavuot is the Day of Judgment for fruit trees. Rabbi Elijah, *Gaon* (meaning "excellency" or "genius") of Vilna, Lithuania -- the leading sage of his era (1720-1797) -- tried to have the custom of decorating with flowers and leaves discontinued when similar practices became widespread among Christian churches for Whitsun, the day Jesus' disciples are said to have been divinely inspired (the Christian version of Pentecost, Greek for "50th" and the archaic term for Shavuot).

Despite the admonition of the Vilna Gaon, using plants and flowers to decorate homes and synagogues for Shavuot was fairly widespread, particularly in Europe. Fresh grass was sometimes scattered on the floor of a house, and spices and roses on the synagogue floor, a reference to the *midrash* claiming that the Israelites had to be revived after fainting out of fear when they heard G-d's voice. Another *midrash* says that the fragrance of spices filled the world as each commandment was issued. Because flowers were used to decorate the Torah scrolls, in Italy the holiday was called the Feast of Roses, and in Persia the Feast of Flowers.

Papercuts

The prohibition by the Vilna Gaon of using decorative greens may have led to the adaptation of the folk art of paper cutting specifically for Shavuot. While the craft in general was widespread, its application for this holiday was limited geographically to Galicia, Bukovina, and adjoining areas of Poland and Russia, especially Lithuania and the Ukraine.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, *heder* [religious school] and *yeshivah* [advanced Talmudic academy] students and older men with time on their hands created the intricate lacy patterns. The papercuts -- called *Shavuoslekh* (little Shavuot) or *roiselekh* (little roses) for their characteristic shape and design--were the only Jewish papercuts seen from the street. (The works of the Jewish artists Maurice Gottlieb and Mark Antokolski are said to have attracted the attention of non-Jewish patrons who later helped the artists enter art academies.)



Floral motifs were prevalent, inspired by words of the *Akdamut* hymn [which is read in synagogue on Shavuot], the legend that Mount Sinai burst into flower at the giving of the Torah, the classic image of Torah as the Tree of Life, and the Song of Songs' image of Israel as a rose. Some papercuts had text -- "*Hag Hashavuot Hazeh*" (this Shavuot festival) -- and some depicted classic Jewish symbols: the crowned Torah scroll, tablets of the commandments, star of David, animals real and mythological, and zodiac signs.

By Lesli Koppelman Ross. *Excerpted from Celebrate! The Complete Jewish Holiday Handbook.*
www.myjewishlearning.com

Lesli Koppelman Ross is a writer and artist whose works have appeared nationally. She has devoted much of her time to the causes of Ethiopian Jewry and Jewish education.

Paper cut illustration from Tami Lehman-Wilzig Kids Books
<http://tlwkidsbooks.blogspot.com/2009/05/shavuot-custom-thats-cut-above-rest.html>

SHAVUOT AND THE MAGNIFICENT 7'S

An incredible tapestry of 7's is woven into Creation. How many can you name?



In the beginning...G-d created 7's.

Oh sure, He created light and dark, the heavens and earth, too. But for reasons unknown to us, He seemed to have a special affinity for the number 7.

The fact that the Torah begins with a verse containing 7 words and 28 letters (divisible by 7) is hardly remarkable. But when placed within the context of the overwhelming number of associations in Judaism with '7', a fascinating tapestry begins to unfurl. Let's take a closer look at this phenomenon.

Why "Shavuot?"

Every spring, Jews around the world celebrate the holiday of Shavuot --commemorating the most seminal event in the history of mankind, G-d's revelation at Mount Sinai.

Shavuot. Curious name for this holiday, no? Shavuot means "weeks," underscoring the 7-week period between Passover and Shavuot in which we count each day (and week) in anticipation and preparation for re-living the Sinai revelation. But why call it Shavuot — "weeks"? Why not call the holiday "Torah," or "Sinai," or "Commandments," or "Tablets." Of what significance is "Weeks"?

Time contains many different entities. Nearly all of them are related to natural phenomena. Days, nights, months, seasons and years are all directly determined, in some way, by the constellations. There is one exception — the week. The formulation of a week seems to be totally arbitrary. Who needs it? Let one day just follow the previous one. And why 7 days?

The concept of a week and its constitution of 7 days is one that is strictly G-d-invented and human-adopted. While we may quibble about creation — how, when, by whom, why — the world has consensually agreed to the concept of a week. The Beatles were wrong...there are only 7 days in a week. And whenever a week is completed it is yet another reminder to mankind (or should be) that G-d created the world in 7 days. (Only 6 days were required to manufacture the physical structures, but the process was not complete until the spiritual realm, Shabbat, was added.)

Call it the "week link."

Why "7"?

Kabbalah teaches that the number 7 represents wholeness and completion. After 7 days, the world was complete. There are 6 directions in our world: north, south, east, west, up and down. Add to that the place where you are, and you have a total of 7 points of reference.

Shavuot, marking the emergence of the Jewish people into a nation, by virtue of their receiving and accepting the Torah, also marks a completion. Perhaps that is why the holiday is called Shavuot, "Weeks." We want to identify this holiday as a completion of the process of Jewish nationhood.

No one is certain why G-d chose the number "7" to signify completion. All we can do is speculate, observe and marvel.

In honor of our own completion of the 49 day period leading up to Shavuot, we present 49 allusions to the number "7" within Judaism. How many of these do you recognize? How many more can you add?

The Magnificent Sevens!

1. Shabbat is the 7th day of the week.
2. There are 7 weeks in the counting of the Omer before Shavuot. (Leviticus 23:15)
3. In Israel, there are 7 days of Passover and Sukkot. (Leviticus 23:6, 34)
4. Every 7th year, the land lays fallow during *Shmita* (Sabbatical year). (Leviticus 25:4)
5. After 7 cycles of *Shmita*, we have a Jubilee year (*Yovel*). (Leviticus 25:8)
6. When a close relative dies, we sit *Shiva* for 7 days.
7. On Sukkot we shake 7 species — 1 *lulav* (palm branch), 1 *etrog* (citron), 2 willow and 3 myrtle branches.
8. *Yitro* (Jethro), the first real convert to Judaism, had 7 different names, and 7 daughters (one who married Moses).
9. Moses was born and died on the same day — the 7th of Adar.
10. Our Sukkah huts are "visited" by 7 guests — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David.
11. The Menorah in the Temple had 7 branches.
12. Ahashuerus, King of Persia during the miracle of Purim, held a party for 7 days. (Esther 1:5)
13. There are 7 holidays in the Jewish year: Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Chanukah, Purim, Passover, and Shavuot.
14. In addition to the 613 Commandments, the Sages added 7 more.
15. There are 7 Noachide Laws pertaining to all humanity.
16. At every Jewish wedding, 7 blessings are recited (*Sheva Brachot*).
17. Each Shabbat, 7 people are called to the Torah reading (*Aliyot*).
18. The first verse in the Torah contains 7 words (and 28 letters).
19. Our Matriarch Leah had 7 children — six sons and one daughter.
20. There were 7 days of preparation for the construction of the Tabernacle in the desert. (Leviticus 8:35)
21. Traditionally, the bride circles the groom 7 times under the (wedding canopy).
22. We wind the *Tefillin* (phylactery) straps around the arm 7 times.
23. Moses was the 7th generation after Abraham.
24. Each plague in Egypt lasted 7 days.
25. In Pharaoh's dreams there were 7 cows and 7 stalks of grain. (Genesis 41)
26. The Biblical contamination period typically lasts 7 days. (Leviticus 13:4)
27. G-d created 7 levels of heaven. (Hence the expression, "I'm in 7th heaven!")
28. On Shabbat and holidays, we recite 7 blessings in the silent *Amidah*.
29. There are 7 special species of produce by which the Land of Israel is praised: wheat, barley, grapes, pomegranates, figs, olives, and dates. (Deut. 8:8)
30. The world has 7 continents.
31. The 7 weeks of the Omer correspond to the 7 "*sefirot*," the 7 behavior traits in which we serve G-d: kindness, strength, beauty, triumph, splendor, foundation, and kingship.
32. Noah sent the dove and the raven out of the Ark for 7 days to inspect the weather conditions. (Genesis 8:10)
33. 7 nations warred with Israel: Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Girgashites.
34. On Yom Kippur, the High Priest sprinkled the blood in the Temple 7 times. (Leviticus 16)



chuppah

35. The Jewish New Year of Rosh Hashana occurs, surprisingly, in the 7th month — Tishrei. (Leviticus 23:24)
36. The Jewish calendar, largely lunar, has a cycle of intercalation that contains 7 leap years during each 19-year period.
37. There are 7 notes on the musical scale.
38. A *Kohen* (priest) should participate in the burial of 7 relatives: father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter, and spouse. (Leviticus 21:2)
39. We dance 7 circles (*hakafot*) on the holiday of Simchat Torah.
40. The smallest allowable dimension of a Sukkah is 7 cubits by 7 cubits.
41. The world has 7 seas.
42. Joshua led the Jewish People around the walls of Jericho 7 times before the walls fell. (Joshua 6:15)
43. Jacob worked for Laban for 7 years (twice) in order to marry his daughters. (Genesis 29:27)
44. The Holy Temple contained 7 gates of entry.
45. We recite 7 blessings every day before and after the "Shema" — 3 in the morning and 4 at night.
46. The Talmud lists 7 female prophets: Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Chuldah, and Esther.
47. A Jewish servant regains freedom after working for 7 years. (Exodus 21:2)
48. We conclude our Yom Kippur prayers by proclaiming 7 times, "The Lord is G-d!"
49. A Jewish wedding is followed by 7 days of celebration (*Sheva Brachot*).

by Rabbi Yaakov Salomon

www.aish.com

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ZIONISM

SHE MET HERZL

As one of the very last people still living [in 1981] who met Theodor Herzl face to face, Dr. Salomea Levite, still bright-eyed, active, and altogether charming at the incredible age of 97, was invited to recall that historic occasion in the first of the new 19-part television documentary film, "Pillar of Fire," presenting the last hundred years of modern Zionist history. Fascinated, all Israel watched her aristocratic, mobile face as she recalled that fateful day in 1903 when the Zionist Congress met to discuss the hapless Uganda proposal. "Herzl placed his hand on my shoulder," she said. "He wished me a long and fruitful Zionist life – which I have had."



Dr. Salomea Levite

Elaborating on the memory in her own home where I visited her, she added: "I still remember as if it were yesterday how the tall and handsome Herzl, accompanied by his queenly mother, descended the red-carpeted stairs of the Hotel Trois Rois in Basle, and my sister Helena Sololov and I were introduced to him as 'the youngest delegates at the Congress.' I was just seventeen then, and I was representing the Zionist Students movement. I was studying at the University of Berne, one of the few European universities that

accepted full time women students in those days. Inspired by Weizmann, Buber, Feivel and other 'young rebels', we were always passionately absorbed in Zionist debate..."

After earning her doctorate in philosophy, sociology and history, Dr. Levite returned to her native Warsaw to serve as the Polish correspondent for the *Berliner Tageblatt* (for which Herzl worked as the Vienna correspondent twenty years earlier). Later she was asked to become a candidate for the Duma, but her husband, Dr. Leon Levite, whom she married at that time, would not allow it.

Among her literary works was a chapter on the "History of the Jews in Russia and Poland during the years 1850 – 1888" which was incorporated into Professor M. Philipson's famous "History of the Jews".

During the First World War years she and her husband, who was President of the Zionist Organization in Poland, lived in Yalta, the Crimean health resort, where she organized the first Zionist club for the Jewish youth. Back in Warsaw after the war, she became an active leader in the Zionist movement, especially in the *Keren Hayesod* (Jewish Foundation Fund) and in ORT.

In the meantime, WIZO had come into existence, in 1920, and in the following year Dr. Levite was invited to the first World WIZO Conference in Carlsbad, which she attended with her little girl and the child's nurse.

The rest is WIZO history. She plunged into the task of building up the WIZO Federation of Poland which became the largest in Europe with a membership of ten thousand. At the same time, in order to prepare women for settlement activity in Palestine, she obtained the use of their estate from the Jewish Colonisation Association for the establishment of a girls' training farm. Over 150 girls received their training at this and another girls' school she set up, before leaving for Palestine.

Driven into hiding with her family after the war broke out in Poland in 1939, they were finally able to escape and landed in Palestine in 1940, when Dr. Levite resumed her WIZO career without interruption. She became a member of both the World WIZO and Palestine WIZO executives, concentrating mainly on pre-vocational training for girls in the elementary schools, providing practical training to young girls arriving in the country without professional qualifications, setting up special work rooms for preparing teachers in handicrafts, giving practical aid, advice and loans to middle aged and elderly immigrant women. In 1954 she also found the time to set up evening courses for young girls from the Oriental communities in Jerusalem. In 1962 she was made an Honorary Life Member of WIZO.

When she turned ninety, Mrs. Raya Jaglom, World WIZO President, gave a luncheon party in her honor where she regaled a large and happy gathering with her stories of the past and her meetings with famous people. One of these was the late Dr. Vera Weizmann whom she met in Carlsbad in 1922. Dr. Vera Weizmann said to her: "We want you to organize and lead a branch of WIZO in Poland." To which Dr. Levite replied: "I'm afraid I don't really like to work with women." "You'll get used to it," Dr. Weizmann retorted. "So I did," Dr. Levite remembered. "For the next fifty years I worked with women, and I got used to it."

Working with and for women has won a permanent place for her in the history books still to be written about the building up of the State of Israel which Herzl prophesied when she was a child.

Sylvia Satten Bainin, "Dr. Salomea Levite and the Pillar of Fire", WIZO Review No. 212, January-February 1981. Central Zionist Archives, PR/4004.

ORGANIZATION

ARE YOUR MEETINGS EFFECTIVE?

This article is devoted to the bane of many a business owner, manager or team leader's life: meetings!

No one enjoys meetings that are poorly planned, poorly run or ineffective. When you hold meetings you really do have an obligation to everyone present to make sure they are effective meetings rather than a waste of everyone's time.

There are a number of things you can do as a leader to ensure effective meetings. We will look at four tips to make your meetings more effective.

First, make sure your meeting has a clearly understood and communicated purpose. There is nothing that makes a meeting more ineffective than when there is an unclear objective.

Lack of clarity in your meeting's aim can even lead to meeting attendees working at cross-purposes.

When you define the meeting objective clearly - and communicate it to attendees before the meeting begins - you will find the right people not only attend your meeting, but they come well prepared and participate fully. This is one of the most powerful ways to ensure that your meetings are effective.



Second, make sure your attendees are the right people – the ones who need to be there. Don't invite others who aren't involved in the project and don't neglect to include anyone who is.

If the right people are at your meeting, all the information you need will be available, decisions will be made more quickly, time won't be wasted bringing people up to speed on issues or outcomes and teambuilding will occur by default as people begin to feel involved in the things that matter.

Third, make sure your meeting lasts as long as needed to achieve your outcomes - but no longer.

That doesn't mean that sharing a cup of coffee or even a meal before or after your meeting is inefficient or a waste of time. In fact it can be a great way to build team spirit - better even than many other team building exercises. And if teambuilding is one of your objectives in organizing the meeting you might even consider it an essential part of your meeting agenda.



However, if your meeting has a more focused purpose that is achieved in 20 minutes, don't be afraid to conclude the meeting just because you asked people to set aside an hour for it. You will find everyone will be delighted to move on to work on their other priorities.

And finally, if your meeting is critical, such as one for strategic business planning, a critical incident review or even one where poor group dynamics is an issue, consider using a professional facilitator.

An external group facilitator will allow you to fully participate in the discussions rather than having to focus on the meeting process, which is imperative in such critical situations.

Careful group facilitation can be the difference between achieving your meeting's purpose or not - and after all, that is at the core of what effective meetings are all about!

These are four simple yet powerful things that will make your meetings more effective. Apply them now and you will become known as someone who always runs effective meetings.

By Kerrie Mullins-Gunst

Kerrie Mullins-Gunst is an expert in the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors leaders need to mentor, manage and lead their people, and one of Australia's leading female business speakers. For more free leadership tips, tools and resources visit <http://www.kmgconsulting.com.au> and <http://leadershipskillcenter.com>. Copyright Kerrie Mullins-Gunst.

SO ARE YOU A GOOD LEADER?

I often hear people, who might be involved in either big or small organizations, complaining that good leaders are hard to find. Is this true? Do we need to look for good leaders who were born that way, or can they be taught?

While I agree that some people are natural born leaders, I believe that most become leaders through learning and experiencing what works and even more importantly, what doesn't.

There are many things a leader must do, but let's focus on three specific things that **you** can do to be a better leader. In order to do a good job, any leader must be able to guide, motivate, and help his or her people.



Guidance

A leader guides people by providing an example of how things should be done. To guide effectively, a leader should be working alongside his or her volunteers, in the trenches so to speak. The leader is not necessarily doing the same work but is working alongside them.

A leader doesn't just tell someone to do something; that's what a boss does. Leaders demonstrate what they want their people to do. Do you want your team to be punctual and work hard? Then don't come in late, take long lunches, and leave early.

Motivation

A quality leader motivates others. There are many ways to motivate, but a common thread among great leaders is to listen to what their people have to say and respect them and the job they do. As a leader, your team members are important. They have a huge wealth of experience and knowledge about the integral workings of their job that you probably don't have, unless you worked your way up the ranks. Look inside yourself and think about what motivates you - a bonus, a vacation? Those are nice, but actually the biggest motivator is recognition and a big pat on the back for a job well done.

Help

Good leaders provide help to their team members to do their job. What do your volunteers need from you to get their job done quickly and efficiently? What tools can you provide them to help them do their job better? If you are not sure what help your people need, simply ask them what they need. Could you ask that someone type and email a 97 page report when they don't have a computer? Of course not -- they are not equipped. Help also can be provided in the form of additional training for the volunteer to do the job correctly, or coaching and feedback that improves performance.



So, are you a good leader?

Most people in leadership positions must learn how to be good leaders. If you focus on guiding, helping, and motivating others, you will be well on your way to becoming a leader anyone would be proud to follow.

Adapted from an article by Kerrie Mullins-Gunst
Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/2755626>

SUCCESSFUL JEWISH WOMAN

IN LOVE WITH KING SAUL: YOCHI BRANDES



“Haifa is the city of my birth, the city in which I grew up until the age of four and the city in which I had the grandfather and grandmother whom I loved the most in the world. Jerusalem is a city with which I have been in constant interaction, from my childhood until today. The milestones that are perhaps the most central to my life are connected to Jerusalem, and there I began to be a writer. It is an amazing city, very diverse, lively, special, the most colorful and diverse in the country, perhaps in the world. It is fascinating, it has amazing contrasts, but it is a city in which it is hard to live.”

Author Yochi Brandes smiles frequently, and speaks quickly and generously. She is smooth and candid. She was born Yocheved Rabinowitz in Haifa in 1959 the Hassidic Rabbi of Biale, and in the course of her childhood spent one year in the home of her grandfather, her mother’s father, the Hassidic Rabbi of Chehov. In Haifa and later in Petah Tikva she attended ultra-Orthodox schools affiliated with the *Bet Yaakov* education network. But unlike most of her peers, she continued with academic studies at the religious Jerusalem College and afterwards at Bar-Ilan University, completing a master's degree in Jewish Studies at the Conservative Movement's Shechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. She is married to Ofer Brandes, a high-tech professional, and they have four children - two sons and two daughters.

Brandes’ writing draws its inspiration from the Jewish bookshelf in all its variety: the Bible, writings of the Sages, Jewish law, prayer, Kabbalah and Hassidism. Most of her books describe central chapters in the history of Zionism.

“I am descended from families of Hassidic rabbis on both sides. To be the daughter of a family of Hassidic rabbis is on the one hand pleasant, because you feel like royalty. On the other hand it creates very strong limits because there are very high expectations. When I would visit my grandfather in Jerusalem, because I was always a mischievous, daring and different girl, I incurred strong criticism: how can I talk like that and dress like that and read that and do what I do, when I am a princess and my grandfather is a king?”

Growing up

“Forty years ago, ultra-Orthodox and secular Jews lived side by side, in the same neighborhoods and the same buildings. During the week, our lives were very similar to those of our “free” neighbors - all the fathers went to work in the morning, and almost all the mothers were home-makers. Both girls and boys studied mathematics and English, Hebrew and civics, the Hebrew Bible and history until the ninth grade. Almost everybody read a daily newspaper. Quite a large number

of mothers would take their children to the cinema. Almost all the girls and a large percentage of the boys had a subscription to the public library and read what they wanted, without censorship.

“Every one of us stood to attention when the siren was sounded on Memorial Day. Quite a considerable number of families flew the Israeli flag from their porches on Independence Day. I was taught that the State of Israel was the best thing that had happened to the Jewish people in the past 2,000 years and that we must defend it with all our might and love it.

“The ultra-Orthodox community in Israel in the 1970s was very moderate. For the most part, it was an open and creative society that lived from the labor of its hands, conducted good and close relations with its secular neighbors and felt a deep love for this country. Their love did not stem from lofty ideology as did that of the religious Zionists, but from a feeling of gratitude on the part of Holocaust survivors who had finally found refuge. In a moment of truth, my mother told me: ‘My grandchildren who today sit protected in the *heders* (religious schools) and *yeshivas* (advanced schools of religious learning) can allow themselves the luxury of not being Zionists. But I, who suffered persecution for many long years and who could not find a safe refuge, whose sister was murdered because we had no safe place to go, cannot help but thank the L-rd every day and every hour for the miracle that is called the State of Israel.’”

Transition

“Rabbi Kuperman’s Girls’ College in Jerusalem was a very significant chapter in my life. It was the transition from the ultra-Orthodox world to the secular world. I was exposed to new readings in Judaism and in the Bible, though with certain limits. There I experienced very deep friendships with girls whom I did not have an opportunity to meet before that, girls from the *Bnei Akiva* (National Religious) trend, and they opened new worlds for me. But along with this I experienced a great many conflicts and tensions, because I felt that this could not be a final stop for me, rather a way station; and that I aspired to a more open world than the one they offered me.”

“I became secular very slowly. In a certain sense it is a process that has continued for decades. Since I was a little girl I knew that I would not stay in the ultra-Orthodox world. For as long as I remember myself, I was always attracted to that other world, the free one. When someone becomes secular, generally the assumption is that the person throws away the world in which they grew up. I have never thrown it away. It is part of me and will always be a part of me.”

The Bible

"For me, the Bible is and has always been the most precious cultural creation," Brandes says. "It is the greatest cultural love of my life. There is no cultural work that can be compared to it. There were years when I thought that I would find other things; but I learned that my great love was and remains the Bible. It is not a love that just streams harmoniously -- I have many quarrels and conflicts with it. But the quarrels and conflicts strengthen my connection to it. It is truly my cultural oxygen.

I have had the great good fortune to learn the Bible with commentaries from many different worlds. I think that very few people have this. On the one hand I have the traditional

commentaries, the Sages and Nachmanides and Maimonides and Jewish philosophy. On the other hand I have Biblical criticism, and my literary readings and those of others; and when teaching and writing, I bring with me all this wide world that I have collected and I create a new reading that is mine alone. This is how I make my contribution and do what I believe in. I believe with all my heart that everyone who learns Bible and Judaism needs to bring the root of his soul -- that is what it is called in the Hassidic world -- with him to the world, and to the place in which he creates."

"I am presumptuous," Brandes says. "I write books not only so that people will read and enjoy them, but also to shake up readers and shift their views. I want them to have new thoughts about our society and culture."

Her first published work, "*Ma'adim*," came out in 1996. Her first novel, "*Gmar Tov*," was published in 1997. The book, which became a bestseller and made her famous as a writer, describes the tragic breakdown of the marriage of Sarah and Benjamin, cousins who grew up in the ultra-Orthodox Hassidic world of Bnei Brak. Brandes combines the contemporary story of Sarah and Benjamin with incidents during the period of the Second World War, a combination of time periods that became a trademark of her works later on. Brandes then produced the best-sellers "Hagar" in 1998, "Quench Love" in 2001, "White Seeds" in 2003 and "Confession" in 2005.

Brandes' next novel, "Kings III" (2008), is a Biblical novel dealing with the beginning of the Jewish monarchy. It tells of the decisive events of the division of the kingdom from an unconventional point of view.

"'Kings III' was the aspiration of my life from the time I became a writer. Until I wrote it, I wrote historical novels about the history of Zionism, because Jewish history interests me; but I was afraid to write a novel that was truly about Judaism. I was afraid that if I would put too much Judaism in my books no one would read me. 'Kings III' proposes a totally different reading from what we are used to. I must say with great pleasure, thank G-d all my books were successful, but 'Kings III' is the most successful. It has awakened public discussion, but much less severe than I thought; and it grants me so much joy that in the wake of this book people are coming to Judaism and the Bible, and seeing that Judaism is a living thing."

King Saul

"I am in love with King Saul. One of the amazing things is that I always liked him, but I wasn't in love with him until I started to write 'Kings III'. My great love was his daughter Michal, and I started to write the book because of her. When I got into the character of Saul I discovered him in a different way than the way he is described in the Bible, where he is portrayed as a sinner and a madman. I wrote about him from the point of view of the writers of the House of Saul and the Kingdom of Israel, where he is portrayed as the perfect king." Brandes notes that there are traditional commentaries which support this view.



Two years later, she published "Seven Mothers" (2010), a commentary on the stories of seven great Biblical women: Lot's daughter, Tamar, Miriam the prophetess, Pharaoh's daughter, Ruth, Michal and Esther. Brandes gives an alternative reading of the story of each personality, analyzes the view of the Bible regarding her, and extends the analysis with Jewish and general sources from other periods.

In January 2011, Brandes' play "Because You Chose Us", which deals with vital questions of Jewish identity, premiered at Habimah Theater.

Beyond novels

In parallel with her literary writing, in 1999 Brandes established the series of books "Judaism Here and Now", of which more than 50 books have already been published. The purpose of the series is to present a variety of topics in Judaism and Jewish culture to the contemporary Israeli reader. Yochi Brandes taught Bible in schools, colleges and cultural institutions for many years. She is involved from time to time in current events, mainly as an interviewee on radio and television programs. In the 1980s, Brandes presented a short segment on Judaism on the television program "Combinations". She wrote a column in *Ma'ariv* newspaper for two years, and continues to publish articles in various newspapers. She also lectures in various forums on literature and Judaism.

Yocheved or Yochi?

"Yocheved is the name I was born with and grew up with until the age of 15, and to this day I am called this by my ultra-Orthodox family. At the age of 15, within the framework of my leaving the ultra-Orthodox world, I decided that I did not want this name. I announced that my name was Yochi. Later on, the more I went into the Bible in depth, I fell in love with the Biblical character of Yocheved, who was an amazing woman; and the more I fell in love with Yocheved, I regretted more and more that I had abandoned her name. I can't change it back; but today whenever someone calls me Yocheved -- the ultra-Orthodox, people who knew me as a child, sometimes my husband as a sign of affection -- I like it. As Yochi Brandes I am a better person: more human, both from a personal point of view and from the point of view of personal perfection; and I hope that I will continue to improve over time. I have a great many things to correct in myself and to do, and I hope that G-d will give me the strength and the ability to continue."

Talking about the preservation of Judaism, Brandes notes: "History teaches that cultures are ultimately preserved not by military victory and occupation, but by myths and stories. What happened during the last 100 years is significant. The closer we are to the events, the more relevant it is. But what will determine victory in the long run is the story that we tell of what happened. Judaism was preserved...because of the story that it told and continues to tell its children - because of '*You shall tell your son on that day*' [Exodus 13:8]."

INTERNET INFO



www.JustIsrael.net

Pro-Israeli advocacy is a truly challenging arena. Any advocate on behalf of Israel is frequently forced to handle Israel's problematic image, confront the hostile public relations of the opposition, and explain diplomatic and military actions which are often impossible to understand out of context.

JustIsrael is dedicated to promoting a positive global public opinion of Israel. The website provides advocates with a set of neutral tools, not based on any political agenda, designed to aid them in addressing their target audience.

www.5leggedtable.org



Those of you who have attended WIZO Aviv or Lapid International Seminars have had the privilege of listening to Jewish educator Avraham Infeld.

Being Jewish is like having a 5 legged table.

The 5 Legged Table is Avraham Infeld's metaphor for describing a strong and stable Jewish identity and according to Avraham, there are 5 components, or "legs" that combine to make up a person's Jewish identity;

Memory, Family, Covenant, Israel and Hebrew. This website is dedicated

to exploring the metaphor of the 5 Legged Table and Avraham Infeld's teachings about Jewish life and identity. Click on each "leg" to find video material connected to these ideas, and read responses to them from Jewish educators and leaders from around the world.

Choosing at least three of the components of Jewish identity, or "legs" provides a stable platform for living a Jewish life and contributing to the world. Less than three, and your "table" or platform of Jewish identity will topple over; more than three makes it sturdier. Choosing three also means that every Jew shares at least something with every other Jew, even though they may look different and have very different lifestyles, cultures and customs. Despite the difference in Jewish expression, Jews share some of these elements through the way they build their own identities.

EXHIBITS

Light and Shadows: The Story of Iran and the Jews

Beit Hatfutsot – The Museum of the Jewish People

This exhibition tells the story of the Jewish community in Iran – an ancient narrative that has been transmitted from one generation to the next.

At a time when, for the most part, Iran is associated in the public sphere with warfare and with a sense of great apprehension, it is especially interesting to direct our gaze to the cultural connection between the Jewish (even the Israeli) sphere and the Persian sphere. From this perspective, we can examine the heterogeneous character of Iran, which has always constituted a mosaic of different ethnic communities, religions, cultures and languages.

This heterogeneity was also characteristic of the country's Jewish communities, which formed distinct cultures within cultures. These communities had much in common with one another and with their non-Jewish neighbors, yet were each also defined by unique traits. For a period of over 3,000 years, since the first Jews exiled from Jerusalem to Babylonia settled in this region, the lives of Iranian Jews vacillated between social and cultural marginalization and between integration into the complex and fascinating Persian sphere. Their existence was marked by periods of persecution and by legal prohibitions, as well as by outstanding creative and intellectual contributions. This exhibition narrates a history of great cultural achievements, alongside moments of great difficulty, and even of forced conversion to Islam; moments of prosperity and periods of concealment, oppression and even accusations of impurity – a story of light and shadows. *Open through August 31, 2011.*

A Land and its Dolls: Israeli Souvenirs and National Identity

Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv



National costume dolls as a socio-cultural phenomenon are a part of popular culture that began before the establishment of the State of Israel, and came to its end in the late 1980s; its halcyon days were between the 1950s and the 1970s. These dolls were made by artists, artisans and craftspeople who used an array of techniques and styles. Most of the doll makers and designers were not born in the country; some of them had had art or artisan education and others had a modicum of knowledge of the field. The dolls were displayed and sold privately, in souvenir shops or in shops owned by institutional bodies such as WIZO, *Maskit* and *Hameshakem*. They were bought as souvenirs, mementoes of a place or an experience, by Israelis and particularly Jewish tourists -- a reminder of their national homeland, to be put on display in their faraway homes. In retrospect, these national costume dolls evoke memories, and perhaps even yearning. However, the exhibit seeks to expand the scope beyond the nostalgic context and regard these dolls as symbolic units that convey messages and meaning about the period, and the changes that took place over seven decades. *Open through November 15, 2011. Curator: Dr. Shelly Shenhav-Keller.*

ISRAEL TOUCH

15TH ANNUAL CLEANTECH EXPO TO BE HELD IN TEL AVIV

The 15th annual CleanTech Expo in July will highlight Israel's solutions for the energy and water needs of Brazil, Russia, India and China.

Among Bloomberg New Energy Finance's top 10 cleantech pioneers announced in April were two Israeli firms - the solar energy company BrightSource and the water monitoring company TaKaDu.

Water and sun: That's pretty much what is setting the stage for this summer's CleanTech 2011 conference. And what a place to do it - the sunny beach city of Tel Aviv. Those who follow industry trends know that the prominence of Israeli companies is so obvious that industry leaders like the Cleantech Forum have created special newsletter sections just to cover Israel.

Before "cleantech" had become the sexy industry brand that it is today, the Mashov publishing house in Israel was creating an agricultural magazine, and for the last 14 years had been presenting cleantech solutions in Tel Aviv to an annual audience. The company, which also runs and organizes Israel's annual agro fair, decided three years ago to step up business development opportunities and start promoting its annual event beyond local buyers.

This year, Mashov expects more than 25,000 visitors at the 15th annual CleanTech expo at the Tel Aviv Exhibition Grounds, July 5-6. The two-day event will focus on renewable energy, water, green building, recycling and infrastructure - everything that can fit under the roof of the cleantech definition. There will be a distinct focus on "Big Four," or BRIC, countries - Brazil, Russia, India and China.

Meeting the global village

In economic terms, BRIC countries are considered to be at the same stage of new and advancing economic development. Hoping to bypass the mistakes of the West, these countries are eager to learn how to do business in the cleantech sector and implement new technologies. "This year we decided to make BRIC countries the honored ones in terms of events and symposiums," says Shafir Godel, the international affairs manager for the event. Other targeted opportunities such as R&D programs, business development and investment are to be addressed by ambassadors from these countries.

Israel, he stresses, will always be the priority at CleanTech exhibitions. But since the world is a global village, it pays to showcase foreign as well as Israeli companies, including about 10 startups.

A special water symposium with a guest host from the United States is expected to be a popular part of the expo, Godel believes, especially given the diversity and quantity of established and new Israeli companies in this sector.

The sun is one to watch

"Last year, our event was conquered by the solar industry, and it's one of the biggest sectors today," says Godel, who works as a consultant on behalf of Mashov.

In water technology, visitors can expect to see exhibitors providing industrial and municipal solutions such as purification technologies related to wastewater treatment and recycling. And there will be plenty of valves, pumps and meters, as these are still the foundation of the water business of today.



In renewable energy, opportunities in wind, solar, geothermal and hydro-electricity will be explored, as well as highlights and opportunities for Israeli feed-in tariffs (for solar created electricity that is sold to a local, regional or national power grid) in commercial and residential buildings crowned by solar photovoltaic equipment.

And of course, many world investors are keen to know what Israel plans on doing with the natural gas resources that could change the face of energy consumption and delivery in Israel. Cleaner fuel and new technologies for transporting gas and oil will be explored, with the aim of leading to greener businesses and societies.

By Rivka Borochoy, 15 May 2011. Innovative Israel, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website

WELCOME TO ISRAEL'S SUMMER FESTIVAL SEASON

Once the winter rains end, Israel's cities come alive with festivals showcasing everything from opera and puppets to beer and kites.

MAY

Jerusalem Season of Culture, May 18 - July 22

An initiative of the Schusterman Foundation-Israel, this ambitious cultural project is modeled on other prominent international cultural festivals, and highlights Jerusalem's flourishing arts scene. Among the scheduled events are performances by the Merce Cunningham Dance Company at the Israel Museum; evening cultural performances and celebrations at the Machane Yehuda Market; the unveiling of a commissioned work by video artist Kutiman; the Jewish Theater of Sweden's production of Different Trains; and a performance by soprano Renee Fleming with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Zubin Mehta.

Israel Festival, May 23 - June 18

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Israel Festival, which was founded in the ancient Roman theater in Caesarea and moved to Jerusalem in 1982, 50 outstanding performances in music, dance

and theatre will be offered. Some of the performers are the Batsheva Dance Company, Helsinki Baroque Orchestra, Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Ahinoam Nini and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. Also featured will be premieres of Israeli works and tributes to leading Israeli artists; street theater; children's shows; and a nightly jazz club.

JUNE

White Wine Festival, June 1-2

Taking place at the Herzliya Marina, this festival promotes white wine culture in Israel with Israeli and international white wine for tasting and for sale, as well as wine accessories, books, cheese, olive oil and more.

The Israeli Opera Festival, June 1- 9

The Israeli Opera will be accompanied by the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra for Verdi's Jerusalem at Sultan's Pool and by Italy's Arena di Verona Orchestra for Verdi's Messa da Requiem at Masada; and by the Rishon LeZion Symphony Orchestra for Aida featuring Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli at Masada. Other venues will include Jerusalem's Tower of David Museum and the churches of St. Andrew's, Augusta Victoria, Lutheran (Redeemer), Dormition Abbey, Vincent de Paul and the Austrian Hospice.

Abu Ghosh Music Festival, June 7- 8

This leading Israeli vocal music festival has been staged twice a year since 1992 in two churches: the 12th century Crusader-Benedictine Church in the heart of the village, and the Kiryat Ye'arim Church on a hill overlooking this mostly Arab Jerusalem suburb. This year's 10 offerings range from the Avishai Cohen String Quartet and the Tel-Aviv Chamber Choir to the Ra'anana Symphonette and the Israel Stage Orchestra. There will be classical, gypsy, mandolin and gospel music.

Jerusalem Light Festival, June 15 – 22

The architecture of the capital's Old City will be dramatically lit up in addition to light statues, installations, performances and museum artwork. The Light Festival brings to Israel well-known light sculptors and light designers from around the world, who exhibit their creations throughout the streets and alleys of the Old City, in major tourist sites and public spaces.

White Night International Festival, June 30

For the fourth year in a row, Tel Aviv restaurants will stay open all night offering special deals. Late-night theatre shows, music, art and special nighttime tours of the city are available as well. The main event will be the International Marathon for Jazz and Avant-garde Music in the Einav Culture Center above Rabin Square.

JULY

Music Festival on the Water, July-August

Every Tuesday evening in July and August at the Herzliya Marina square on the Mediterranean, the public is welcome to attend live performances by local and international artists in genres from opera, pop and jazz to romantic, Greek and other ethnic styles.

Jerusalem Film Festival, July 7-16

Between 150 and 200 films are screened yearly during this event at the Cinemateque and Sultan's Pool amphitheater, showcasing the best of international feature films, documentary films, and movies and shorts dealing with issues of Jewish identity and history, freedom and human rights. This year, in addition to existing cinematic competitions, there will be an international competition for short animation and sci-fi films and other artworks depicting Jerusalem in 2111.

Karmiel Dance Festival, July 12-14

About 5,000 dancers from Israel and abroad will take part in 120 events and performances at this 10th annual festival, which takes place in Karmiel, a central Galilee town between Acre and Safed. Activities, a bazaar and more than 250,000 anticipated visitors and guests are expected. A folk-dancing course in English is planned from July 4-15.

International Puppet Theater and Film Festival, July 21- 23, 28 – 30

The Israel Puppet Center in Holon, Israel's "Children's City," has been hosting this festival since 1995. In addition to about 30 performances by resident and international artists, there will be conferences, exhibitions, and an opening street procession; workshops for professionals and amateurs; a conference on the therapeutic use of puppets; and exhibitions at the museum and galleries including a special "Puppetry on the Screen" display.

AUGUST

Israeli Wine-Tasting Festival, August 14-19

Sample wines from Israel's leading wineries in the Israel Museum's Billy Rose Art Garden, with soft jazz playing in the background. A wine glass comes with each admission ticket.



International Festival of Puppet Theater, August 14-19

At The Train Theater and other Jerusalem theatres, local and international artists showcase the best in the field of puppetry at this annual event, now in its 20th year. The program is designed mainly for children and families, but includes performances for adults as well. There will be about 30 different productions with approximately 90 shows, including talent from Germany, Belgium, Italy, Bulgaria, The Netherlands, Peru, the United States and the Czech Republic.

International Klezmer Festival, August 15-17

Held in Safed, the kabbalistic heart of the Galilee, the Klezmer Festival showcases 45 artists performing "Jewish soul music" - among them are Sinai Tor, Simply Tsfat, Aaron Razel, the Persian Jerusalem Orchestra and Vilna Klezmer - and also features a huge outdoor arts-and-crafts sale, tours and children's events. The music is presented on eight stages and in the ancient cobbled alleyways of the city.

Jerusalem Beer Festival, August 18-19

Celebrating its sixth year at Jerusalem's historic Old Train Station, the Jerusalem Beer Festival is a magnet for young adults eager to sample more than 100 brands from all over the world -- mainstream, boutique and local. There will be live beer production process demonstrations, food stands and nightly shows by Israel's leading bands to round out the experience.

Kite-Flying Festival, August 23

Colorful shapes waft over the Israel Museum every year after being launched from the Billy Rose Art Garden. Children and their parents can take part in kite-building workshops and meetings with professional kite-flyers.

Red Sea Jazz Festival, August 22-25

This international jazz festival at Eilat Harbor was established in 1987. There are eight to nine concerts per evening, six clinics with guest artists and nightly jam sessions. Styles range from New Orleans to Latin jazz. Every evening at 7pm, there is an open concert featuring upcoming young Israeli jazz groups. Concerts are held in three venues: the Club, featuring 1,000 seats around tables serving food and beverage; the Hall, with 2,000 regular seats; and the Arena, with 4,000 seats, some overlooking the Red Sea.

SEPTEMBER

Tel Aviv Fashion Market and T- Market

Both of these month-long Tel Aviv festivals attract thousands of *fashionistas*, the first at the Israel Trade Fairs Center and the second at the Barzilay Club. Featured are the latest offerings from Israel's hottest fashion designers as well as last season's fashions at reduced prices.

Jerusalem International Chamber Music Festival, September 3-14

Taking place annually at the Jerusalem YMCA, this year's program celebrates Pierre Boulez's emblematic works, Brahms, Schumann, Chopin and Wolf. There will be a world premiere of a work by Matan Porat, a veteran member of the festival family. The founding artistic director is Elena Bashkirova, wife of the composer Daniel Barenboim.

Loving Art, Making Art, September 8-10

Tel Aviv's galleries, museums, exhibitions spaces and artist studios throw open their doors all day and night for free browsing during this annual kick-start to the art exhibition season. Specially commissioned works dot the city streets with color and sound.

Dona Gracia Festival, September 12-15

Dona Gracia, a successful European Jewish merchant, was the richest woman in the 16th century world. With the blessing of the Turkish Sultan, Dona Gracia worked for the establishment of a Jewish state in Tiberias and paid to build the walls of this lakeside Galilee city, but her sudden death at the age of 59 ended her Zionist initiative. Last year, Tiberias launched an annual festival in her memory at the Dona Gracia House Museum.

By Avigayil Kadesh, May 10, 2011. Israel Experience, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.