

MINYAN MONTHLY

Volume 7, No. 6

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Tishri-Heshvan 5754

HILLEL YACOV

--by Laurie Levenson

It is almost impossible to put into words our sadness over the death of Jacob Stern. He, like his parents, added a special light and love to our lives. Jacob was loved by all. His smile renewed our faith. His promise renewed our hope.

We extend our deepest sympathies to the Stern family. May their pain be eased and may Jacob's memory be a blessing.

Contributions in Jacob's memory may be made to the Bureau of Jewish Education or Sinai Akiba Academy.

NOTED ISRAELI ARCHEOLOGIST
PROF. AVRAHAM BIRAN
TO SPEAK NOV. 16

-- by Michelle Krotinger Wolf

The most recent archeological discoveries from the Tel Dan site in Northern Israel will be discussed by Professor Avraham Biran at a free lecture Tuesday, November 16, 7:30 p.m. at Stephen S. Wise Temple.

Dr. Biran is Director of the HUC-Jerusalem archeology center and has been excavating at Tel Dan for 22 years. His most recent discovery is of a 9th Century BCE commemorative

inscription which provides the only known documentation of King David and his dynasty outside of the Bible.

Reservations are required. Please call (213) 749-3424.

TREASURER'S REPORT

--by Dale Bodenstein

Thanks are due to the following people for their generous contributions to the Library Minyan: William and Leah Mille; Jonathan Friedman for a donation to the kiddush fund; Karen Goldman and Efrem Grail in memory of Samuel M. Melton; Jo Mintz in honor of Vicki and Mark Rothman's baby boy; George and Holly Flesh in honor of Abigail Harris; Valerie Goldstein; Sandra Braun and Jerry Abell. As the new Minyan Treasurer, please send any correspondence to:

Dale Bodenstein
1121 S. Spaulding Ave.
L.A. CA 90019

LOST, one multi-colored Tallis and maroon bag. If found or if location known, please contact or return to Norm or Rachel Green, (213) 938-8110.

**Upcoming Conference: Furthering
Awareness of College Options**

--by Caty Konigsberg

FACETS/HILLEL will sponsor the fourth annual conference for Jewish high school students and their families to further awareness of college options on Sunday, October 24, 1993 at 1:00 p.m. at Griffin Commons of Sunset Village, UCLA. Special keynote speaker will be Prof. Miriyam Glazer, Associate Professor of Literature and Chair of the Department of English and Literature at Lee College, UJ. She will attempt to inspire Jewish students to look at their collegiate adventure with perspective, excitement and direction.

The conference includes a College Fair with over 25 major colleges and universities around the country participating. Important resources on financial aid and college selection will be available at the book fair. Financial aid counselors and master placement coordinators will also be on hand to answer your questions and discuss college options. There will be 7 workshops led by top experts in the field and current college students. We anticipate a great response and encourage participants to register early to ensure sufficient materials.

If you would like to order The Hillel Guide to Jewish Life on Campus (\$16.95) or "A Guide to Jewish Scholarships, Fellowships, Grants and Loans" (\$10.00), they will be available at the conference or by advance mail. Please send a check for payment to:

FACETS/HILLEL, 1600 Campus Road, Box F-10, Los Angeles, CA 90041.

For more information or registration materials, please call Caty Konigsberg, Director, (213) 259-2959; FAX (213) 341-4959.

A Reply to a Response:
"Homosexuality Not Acceptable
as an Alternative Lifestyle"

--by Eric Lesin

I was surprised to see that little old me could start a trend of immediate editorial replies. I will be interested to see what other types of viewpoints draw responses and the frequency thereof. I was, however, pleased and gratified to see my views printed unabridged.

In my view, the current zeitgeist of embracing homosexuality as a fully acceptable alternative lifestyle to be celebrated and supported is unacceptable. Participating in a zeitgeist is a matter of sympathy, unexamined assumptions, fashion and political correctness*. Sincerity and good intentions, even when widely shared, are no guarantee of correctness.

The editorial response says, "We would question what is the purpose for the continuation of Am Yisroel." This seems to imply that if we don't treat homosexuals well there is no reason for our existence. I feel strongly that we must treat individuals with kindness and respect simply because they are human beings. That doesn't

mean we should subvert our sustaining heritage and collective good in order to accommodate the practices of a particular group. Changing our value system to accommodate other's behavior guarantees our conversion into an insipid religion. We would become a mishmash of religious practices, where people go to transition out of their respective heritage in a friendly, accepting and non-demanding atmosphere.

I agree that we should "open our arms to anyone that is willing to pray with us". However prayer is a private matter not to be confused with celebration of a living style that is not ours.

"Lesin is unaware that gay couples are raising families these days" is a correct statement. If there are, they are very few. In fact, I would support bar and bat mitzvah and eventual halachically sanctioned marriage for Jewish children in that situation. I would invite such a family with Jewish children to pray in the Minyan. I would have them over to my house for Shabbat dinner. Bring that family on. I would not accept an aufruf or marriage ceremony for the couple however.

Why do we not celebrate a gay couple's commitment? Aside from the fact that it is not in our tradition or law, a commitment in Judaism is based on the idea that the couple will try to bear children and rear them a Jewish environment. Judaism is not a religion of love rights where people unite because they love each other. Sexual love is a means to the

end of the continuation of Am Yisroel. I have some very close friends whom I can truly say that I love, for whom I have risked my life, and they have risked theirs for me. Where is the synagogue ritual for these partners?

Finally, it was suggested that the minyan should build a bridge to the gay community. Why is this necessary? How about a bridge to the Christian community, a bridge to the homeless community? What is to be accomplished? We should be building our bridges to non-affiliated Jews to bring them in, to other Jewish denominations to foster constructive understanding, to non-Jewish groups such as churches and Arab populations to enhance communication of ideas.

I am sure people who support a more inclusive stance do so in part out of sympathy or fashion. Some who oppose change do so in part out of [respect for] law or fear of change. I maintain that the self-interest of our religion is not served by official sanctioning of practices that have no basis in our tradition and no future sustaining value. Just "feel good" is not enough.

*** Myron Magnet: The Dream And The Nightmare**

PLEASE SEND YOUR ARTICLES
TO THE MINYAN MONTHLY

Mail to: Sharon Williams
9114 Olin Street
Los Angeles, CA 90034
Or Call: (310) 838-1316 (H)

MINYAN COMMITTEES/CONTACTS

Chair, Steering Committee
 Norman Green (213)938-8110
 Minyan Treasurer
 Dale Bodenstein(213)937-7443
 Reading Torah or Haftorah
 Lida Baker (213)934-3663
 Gabai'im-Shabbat/Holiday Services
 Torah Honors
 Alan Broidy (213)933-8894
 Stan Goldstein (310)837-5503
 Art Metz (310)276-6905
 Itzhak Yaron (310)839-8112
 Drashot
 Mark Rothman (310)659-0269
 Torah Gabai'im
 Norman Saiger (310)837-5927
 Evan Greenspan (818)760-0774
 Child Care
 Teri Cohan Link(213)272-7401
 Fran Grossman (213)933-5040
 Michelle Wolf (213)954-8681
 Child Care Volunteer Coordinator
 (Vacant - at time of press)
 Hospitality
 Abby Harris (310)556-7778
 Kiddush
 Judy Weinstock (213)933-1772
 Carl Sunshine (213)934-7889
 Membership
 Michael Rogson (213)939-5124
 Mailing List
 Mitch Miller (213)937-3255
 Minyan Guide
 Carl Sunshine (213)934-7889
 Minyan Monthly
 Sharon Williams(310)838-1316
 Dianne Winocur (310)652-4597
 Michelle Wolf (213)954-8681
 Ritual Committee
 Ronnie Cohen (213)658-8057
 Scheduling Events-Master Calendar
 Lida Baker (213)934-3663
 Shiva Minyans
 Norm Saiger (310)837-5927
 Rachel Green (213)938-8110

EDITOR'S COLUMN

--by Sharon L. Williams

All at the Minyan were stunned by the death of Jacob Stern last week. As a mother, I could not help but be reminded of a similar "close call" when my son was small, an incident that could easily have turned out just as tragically. My heart goes out to the Stern family, and I'm sure everyone in the Minyan feels the same.

I apologize for the late publication date of the Monthly; we had an issue ready to take to the copier, when the events of last week forced some major revisions. I hope no one was inconvenienced by the delay.

Eric Lesin's reply to last month's editorial begins on page 2, and I'm sure he will be gratified to again see his views printed essentially unchanged. There were no takers on another sally at the subject (not to imply that there is no response!). Anyone wishing to continue the discussion is welcome to contribute.

Judy Masserano sent me some items which have been misplaced since my vacation. I hope to locate and print them in next month's issue, along with other items held back this month.

To register comments and/or reactions to articles in the Monthly, as well as on other topics of common interest, feel free to contact me. My message machine is always on.

 DON'T FORGET WE'RE STILL COLLECTING
 CANNED AND PACKAGED FOODS FOR
 SOVA
