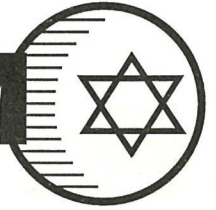


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- The Genius of Beruriah
- Rabbi Gilah Dror Reclaiming History
- The Hidden Twin Sisters of the 12 Tribes
- Ida Fink's stories
- In Focus: Rhea Tregobov

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**Jewish Women's FORUM** 

**MISSION**

This publication is for all Jewish women.

JWF aims to provide an open forum for women across the spectrum of Jewish society. We believe that by acknowledging and respecting the diversity among us we can create a strong community. When we celebrate all our parts we will be more unified.

The Jewish Women's Forum seeks to encourage women to realize their potency in both their private and public lives and to envision themselves as initiators of positive change.

We decry violence, hatred and destruction. We promote respect for life. Our goal is to play a role in creating a shift from a patriarchal society to a partnership society.

**EDITOR'S  
MESSAGE**

The *Jewish Women's Forum* is for all the diverse voices in our community. Non-partisan, we are committed to the bold discussion of issues which concern us as women and Jews. *JWF* is about inclusion and community building. We believe that by acknowledging the differences among us, we may find points in common. *JWF* challenges Jewish women to be leaders in the creation of a society founded on harmony, compassion, justice and spirituality.

The *Jewish Women's Forum* is based on the premise that women are powerful and capable, as well as earthy and spiritual. Jewish women know how to take care of matters and get things done, despite a history of marginalization due to our race and gender.

The *Jewish Women's Forum* is not against men. We believe, however, that women need means through which we can realize our strengths and give value to the female perspective. By providing a medium for Jewish women's voices, *JWF* hopes to play a role in the development of a consciousness which embraces building a "partnership" society.

Each issue of the *Jewish Women's Forum* is devoted to a specific subject. We invite our readers to participate in the discussion by sending articles, stories, poems and drawings in response to the topic in question. Send us letters, too, so that we may know your opinions about what you've read and what you'd like to see discussed in the future. We would be pleased to receive suggestions about women to profile or books to review. This is an interactive publication, which you can help shape.

This magazine is also a bulletin board where you can announce events, activities and enterprises.

To inaugurate this publication and the New Year, this first issue is dedicated to the recognition of women throughout Jewish history. Though often nameless, faceless and without

voice women were always "there". We call this issue *Expanding Our History*, because we want to enrich and build awareness about women's roles in and contributions to our nation.

Let us realize that women have left a legacy of courage, strength, wisdom, love and dignity. Women have been teachers, prophets, warriors, poets, judges and healers. Alongside husbands and fathers were always wives and mothers.

Integral to our sense of ourselves as Jews must be the knowledge that we were half of Israel from the beginning of our history. We were in Eden, at Sinai and in the Haganah. We danced at the Red Sea, in Kibbutzim and at our children's weddings. We were always persons, perhaps we're also priests.

In this issue we have space for only a few samples of Jewish women's lives, but our hope is that these will nudge you to a connection with your mothers and sisters. We urge you to continue expanding our history in your own life. Tell how Eve led Adam to knowledge and experience. Remember Sarah's endurance and Rebecca's cleverness. Recall how Miriam carried out God's will. Most importantly, describe to your daughters and sons and to each other, your grandmothers' lives and how quietly or grandly they were significant in their homes and in their communities.

*L'Shanah Tovah*



Dorothy Lichtblau

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This issue is dedicated to my mother, Rita Lichtblau and my father Marek Lichtblau, whose generosity and encouragement fuelled this endeavour.

**To The Reader**

The Jewish Women's Forum will not publish articles or advertisements which are sexist, racist or demeaning in any way. Articles disguised as advertising will not be published. *JWF* reserves the right to refuse to publish articles, at the sole discretion of the editor.

Articles submitted for publication should not exceed 800 words in length. Contributors will be given a maximum by-line of three lines. Please check all your facts and proofread your article before you submit it. If you'd like your original material returned please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope with your submission.

The Jewish Women's Forum currently does not pay contributors. Articles published will be edited without consultation with the writer. We will always endeavour to maintain the integrity and tone of the author's work.

The views expressed in the articles published in the Jewish Women's Forum do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

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NOV.-DEC., 1994	A JEWISH EDUCATION: WHAT DO WE TEACH OUR CHILDREN?	OCT. 14/94	OCT. 21/94
JAN.-FEB., 1995	HOW JEWISH WOMEN CAN HELP CREATE PEACE CONSCIOUSNESS.	DEC. 14/94	DEC. 19/94
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## IN FOCUS

### RHEA TREGEBOV

by Dorothy Lichtblau

A poet, author of children's books, editor and teacher, Rhea Tregebov's list of literary accomplishments and activities require several pages to outline. By the time she graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1974, she'd won two creative writing prizes. Since that time she's picked up a few more awards, the most recent is the 1994 Malachuk Review Long Poem Competition. Yet this author of three poetry collections (*The Proving Grounds*, *No One We Know* and *Remembering History*) says that it took her many years to believe that she had the right to call herself a writer.

Tregebov attributes her lack of confidence to the era in which she grew up. "I spent a lot of time, probably up to my mid-twenties, dancing around the notion, 'Should I really commit? How dare I?' I think it was typical of women at the time to ask, 'Who, me? What do I have to say?'"

Born in Saskatoon in 1953, Tregebov lived in Winnipeg from the time she was three. Her family home reflected the rich diversity of the Jewish community in that city. Both her mother and father were Canadian-born children of Russian immigrants who had come to Manitoba in the early part of the century; her parents each spoke Yiddish before they learned English. Her father's family was descended from Kohanim and more traditional, though, not strictly religious, because they were farmers in rural Manitoba.

Tregebov describes her mother as "very Jewish identified", but not religious. Her politics were left-wing and she didn't go to shul. *The Big Storm*, one of Tregebov's children's books, about a young child who lives in an apartment above a delicatessen, is her mother's story.

As a young child, Tregebov attended Talmud Torah Hebrew Day School. She remembers it as an unhappy experience, devoid of flexibility and fun.

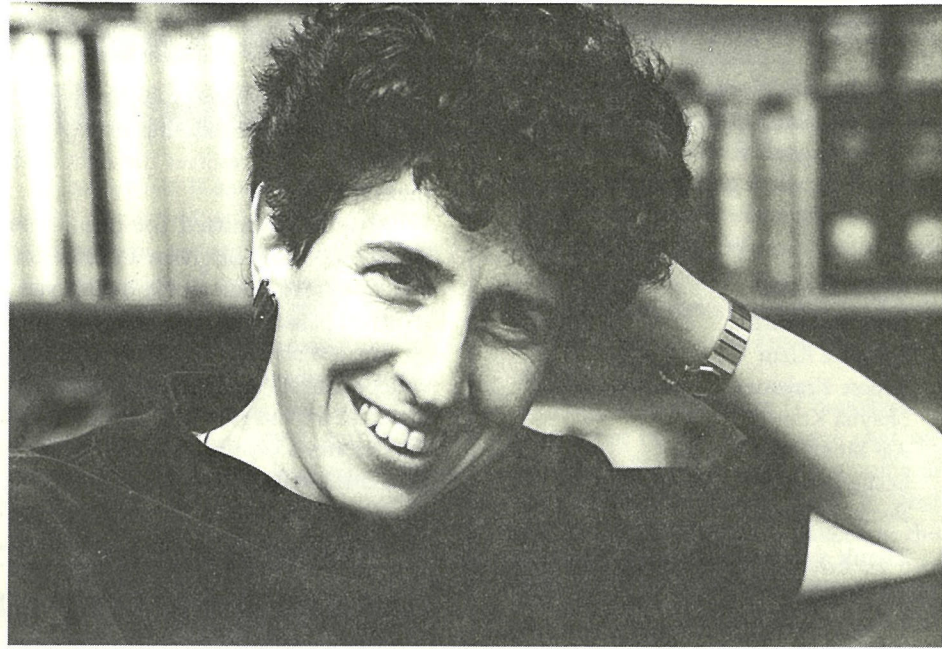


Photo Credit: Peter Higdon

She received lots of homework, but got no creative writing classes. In junior high she switched to the public school system. There, under the guidance and encouragement of a teacher she began to write poetry.

Tregebov, however, still didn't imagine she would be a writer. In the fifties and early sixties creative expression was not emphasized in the school system. "And," she says, "growing up I never met a writer or an artist, though my parents were avid readers and involved with discussion groups."

Women were largely excluded from the academic canon, consequently girls had few role models. Emily Dickinson, Virginia Woolf, Ann Sexton and Sylvia Plath, authors Rhea Tregebov discovered and loved, presented a double-edged sword. They were great writers, but emotionally tortured people, whose lives she didn't want to emulate.

Her views about herself and the arts began to change during her early twenties, especially during her graduate school years at Boston and Cornell Universities, when she became attuned to the feminist movement. Afterward, in Toronto, Tregebov was part of the editorial collective of *Fireweed*, a feminist literary journal. "That is where I got my professional training as an editor and in publishing, because of all the skill sharing and information

sharing. It was wonderful to be twenty-five and part of all of that."

During her youth, Tregebov drifted from Judaism because, "being Jewish meant the Holocaust and there was so much pain involved and reliving the past." In recent years, part of her evolution has been the greater prominence of Judaism in her life. It pleases her to note that for her young son, Sasha, being Jewish is a more positive and happy experience. For him, it means celebrating holidays, loving books and a certain cuisine.

Tregebov is glad that for Sasha anti-semitism is less evident than when she was growing up. When she was a child, "If some kindly man wished me a Merry Christmas, I would just nod and avoid the issue. My son will say, 'No, we don't celebrate Christmas. We have Hannukah. I'm Jewish.' And I'm so happy for him and the changes."

There has always been a thread of Jewish culture in Tregebov's poetry, "...but I wasn't always sure I knew what to do with it," she says. She's amazed by the number of Jewish references there are in her latest writing and thinks this is probably because her feminist, left-leaning views have connected with Jewish history and culture. She took part in the 1993 Jewish Women's Conference at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, in Toronto, and found the experience "heavenly."

Generally, Tregebov is not labelled a Jewish writer, but she states, "It is my political intention to present myself as a Jew." For her this means that there are situations where she feels it necessary to place her heritage in the spotlight. For instance, during the 1993 International Author's Reunion in Finland, where there were many Eastern and Central Europeans in the audience, she prefaced comments with, "As a Jew I..."

Tregebov is currently involved in a project initiated by Frieda Forman of the Women's Resource Centre at OISE. Over the past four years, Forman and a group of female colleagues have gathered Yiddish stories written by women, which now are being translated. The collection will be published by Second Story Press early in the autumn of 1994 under the name *Found Treasures*. Rhea Tregebov is the copy editor of the book.

"It's been thrilling learning about these women and working on these stories," says Tregebov. Her association with this project, she feels, has tremendously expanded her awareness of Jewish culture and history, and women's lives within these frameworks. So much so, that Tregebov's next goal is to learn Yiddish.

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## PERSPECTIVES

### BERURIAH - Second Century Genius, Twentieth Century Heroine

by Dr. Reena Zeidman

The intellectual, political and social presence of women in contemporary society causes us to seek precedents in ancient worlds. In Jewish circles, one of the best-known scholars of talmudic time is Beruriah, wife of Rabbi Meir, the illustrious Sage of the second century C.E. Beruriah, the woman who "learned three hundred laws from three hundred scholars in a single day" represents what the modern educated Jewish woman strives for: intellectual rigour, facility with texts and a dauntless wit.

Her name evokes such strength of character that yeshivot are named after her, plays are written about her and mothers give their daughters her name. However, we hope to be spared from her tragic demise, supposedly a result of her non-conformist approach to the Sages' wisdom.

The Talmud and related literature preserve ten references to Beruriah's thought and actions. These give us clues about her character and can be placed under three categories: the woman who outwitted her spouse and other Sages, the woman who was a sensitive and martyred figure and the woman who was an elite Jewish legal decision-maker. Throughout these anecdotes are glimpses of her learned nature, her sharp mind and her cynicism regarding negative attitudes toward women. The following example beautifully illustrates her traits.

*Rabbi Yose the Galilean was going along the road. He met Beruriah. He said to her, "By which road shall we go to Lod?" She said to him, "Galilean fool! Do not let the Sages say, 'do not talk too much with a woman'?' You should have said 'By which to Lod?'"*

Her sensitivity is amply demonstrated in one particular story. Upon her son's sudden death on the Sabbath, Beruriah refrained from telling

her husband until the day's final prayers were conducted. When she approached him with the painful news she showed her scholarly prowess by prefacing the information with learned riddles. "Rabbi, earlier today, a man gave me a deposit and now has come to claim it. Must I return it?" R. Meir replied in the affirmative. She then took him to the son's room. The Rabbi broke down, but she, always one to retain her composure, helped to comfort him with thoughtful words. "Rabbi, did you not say to me that I must return the trust to its master?" He, finally, replied in an equally educated fashion, knowing she

**Beruriah, the woman who "learned three hundred laws from three hundred scholars in a single day" represents what the modern educated Jewish woman strives for: intellectual rigour, facility with texts and a dauntless wit.**

would understand the reference, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)

Among all of these traditional tales about Beruriah, the Torah-educated woman, there is one which eclipses them all. The story of her tragic death is told by Rashi, an eleventh century talmudic commentator. In reference to the unexplained, hasty flight of R. Meir to Babylonia "on account of the Beruriah incident", he notes:

One time Beruriah mocked what the Sages said, "Women are flighty". R. Meir said to her, "By your life! You will eventually concede the correctness of their words." He instructed one of his

disciples to tempt her to infidelity. The disciple urged her for many days, until she consented. When the matter became known to her, she strangled herself, while Rabbi Meir fled because of the disgrace."

Most writers on the subject suggest that Rashi is consciously slandering a woman devoted to learning. I propose we evaluate the story in a different light. Rashi sets up Beruriah as a woman, whom he knew from the pages of the Talmud, as firmly entrenched and respected in the male world of the Sages. This world offers up men of great intelligence and charity, but also men who fall into disgrace over sexual misadventures. R. Meir, Beruriah's husband is depicted as tempted in sexual relations with a woman, who at the last moment is revealed as Satan, disguised to demonstrate his weakness. Rabbi Hiyya bar Ashi, another Sage of the third century, is said to have committed suicide after he realized he had sexual relations with his wife disguised as a prostitute.

Beruriah, in a strange way, is included in the realm of the greatest minds of the Talmud. She is educated, provides pronouncements that are accepted in legal spheres, but also is tarnished, as it were, by her sexual infidelity. She follows the male model, which is the only one the world of the Sages knew. In this light, she had to fall into sexual misadventure to be considered one of the intellectual elite!

Where does our intellectual past take us with figures such as the beloved Beruriah? The Sages wanted, and we might add, needed, to include her in the legacy of the typical male intellects - strong, but flawed. Her womanly strengths and her criticism of the traditional male world, however, are evident in all she says. Beruriah's full and productive life should not be overshadowed by demeaning references to eleventh century tales about her death.

*Dr. Reena Zeidman is the Chair of Jewish Studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. She received her Ph. D. in Talmud from the University of Toronto and currently resides in Toronto.*

## RABBI GILAH DROR: RECLAIMING AN ANCIENT TRADITION

by Agnes G. Meinhard

I admired her long before I met her. When I first heard of Rabbi Gilah Dror, from a friend, I suddenly found myself recalling youthful fantasies of becoming a rabbi or a hazan; fantasies laced with frustration even as I dreamed them, because, given the reality of the times, I would first have had to become a man. And now, here was a woman, around my age, who was fulfilling a dream that I myself once harboured; a woman who made courageous decisions despite obstacles that would have daunted others; a single mother who dared to switch careers even as she was bringing up three children; in short, a person with the conviction to pursue what she saw as her birthright too.

Finally, one crisp, bright, shabbat morning I had the opportunity to visit her synagogue. As I listened to this inspiring rabbi, draped in her talit, shedding new light on the weekly parasha, I was treated to a glimpse of her erudition and deep love for her people. Her small form and unassuming manner belie her keen intellect, relentless energy and significant accomplishments. I wondered, as I watched her, what was the driving force behind her achievements.

Gilah Dror, Rabbi of Congregation Eshel Avraham, in Beer Sheva, travelled a long distance to reclaim the ancient tradition of women leading our people. Born in Petach Tikvah, in 1950, she moved to New York at the age of seven. Growing up in a large orthodox community, Gilah was a regular shul-goer, loving the music and enthusiastically participating in the services. She admired her rabbi and, even as a young girl, listened intently to his sermons. At home, she was surrounded by books and conversations about Jewish issues and Zionism. At the Yeshiva she attended, one of her

teachers urged her to become a lawyer, "because she had such a natural talent for Talmud study"!

Gilah, always fascinated by the struggle between the power to do good and the impulse towards evil, a theme common to both law and religion, followed her teacher's advice and returned to Israel to study law at the Hebrew University. Many years would pass, however, before she would apply her talent for Talmud, and explore the struggle between good and evil impulses, in a rabbinical setting. Those intervening years followed a pattern familiar to many women: work, marriage, children and eventually divorce.

**And now, here was a woman, around my age, who was fulfilling a dream that I myself once harboured; a woman who made courageous decisions despite obstacles that would have daunted others...**

The road to the rabbinate was a long intellectual journey of studying Jewish sources under orthodox tutelage. It deepened her knowledge of our sacred texts, but paradoxically led her farther away from her orthodox lifestyle. She realized that in the orthodox world, the ever-evolving development of our tradition, which had ensured its vitality and centrality to successive generations, had been arbitrarily frozen. She was also disturbed by the disenfranchisement of 50% of its population.

Ever more cognizant that women's voices are dismissed as insignificant, and their experiences often trivialized, Gilah realized the need for women rabbis. A woman rabbi by definition takes part in the decision-making process in the field of Jewish law and is

a recognized partner in the process of developing Jewish standards for our generation. Thus women's contributions to the study of Torah and of what it means to be a good Jew, become a lasting part of Jewish tradition.

Her ambition to become a rabbi was fuelled by her abiding love for Jewish studies and her enduring concern for the fate of the Jewish people. Firm in the belief that our tradition can provide guidance to those who are struggling to express their humanity, Gilah wished to become more involved in the spiritual life of her people. She decided that the rabbinate would serve this need better than law. She enrolled in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in Jerusalem but had to complete her fifth year in New York because the Conservative Seminary in Jerusalem did not grant smicha to women rabbinical students.

Since becoming the Rabbi of Congregation Eshel Avraham three years ago, membership has increased by 80%, kindergarten attendance has more than tripled to almost 70 children, the youth movement has grown to over 40 members. In addition to Friday night and shabbat services, there are activities almost every evening, including adult education and community projects, involving Ethiopian immigrants. Her bright mind and impressive accomplishments have been recognized by her colleagues who recently elected her as President of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel, the first woman ever to hold such a position anywhere in the world.

This is not simply an account of a remarkable personal achievement. It is the story of a family pursuing a challenge together; of Gilah's mother, a woman always open to new experiences, who served as a role model and nurtured her daughter's dreams, providing critical emotional and family support; and of her children, whose pride in their mother was a constant source of encouragement. "Still," in Gilah's own words, "it was not easy." But together they realized the dream.

*Agnes G. Meinhard, Ph.D. is a professor of Organizational Behaviour in the Faculty of Business at Ryerson Polytechnic University.*

## PERSPECTIVES

### IN SEARCH OF THE HIDDEN TWIN SISTERS OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

by Shayna B. Kravetz

In Genesis (Bereshit), Chapter 46, the Torah describes Jacob and his descendants leaving Israel to go to Egypt. "His sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all of his descendants did he bring with him to Egypt." (Verse 7) The Torah then lists them all, concluding: "Every soul that came to Jacob in Egypt...except for the wives of the sons of Jacob, all the souls were sixty-six. And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two souls; every soul of the House of Jacob that came to Egypt were seventy." (Verses 26, 27)

Many commentaries try to reconcile the number of names actually listed in this chapter, their known descendants as they appear here and elsewhere in the Torah, and the numbers of 66 and 70 given in the two summarizing verses. Rashi, commenting on verse 26, discusses one method of resolving the inconsistencies, and then adds: "And to those who say that female twins were born with the tribes [i.e. the sons of Jacob and Joseph], we must respond that they died before their descent to Egypt, for they are not numbered here."

When I first read this commentary, I was astonished. Who were these twelve women? What was the Torah source for their existence? Why had I never heard of them? Rashi, although one of the greatest commentators, largely systematized and collocated and it would be rare for him to provide a comment without another source.

I went hunting among the stories of the births of the tribes to see whether there were other references. In Genesis 35, the Torah describes Rachel's birthing of Benjamin. "And they travelled from Beth-el and while [they were] still in the broad lands coming to Efrat, and Rachel gave birth and it was difficult for her in giving birth. And it happened that, while her giving birth

was difficult, the midwife said to her: 'Do not fear, for this also is a son for you.'" (Verses 16,17)

Those who interpret the Torah rely on the principle that every word has meaning; there are no accidental words or superfluous repetitions. So, why then does the Torah report the midwife saying, "This also is a son for you"? Rashi answers regarding verse 17, "Our rabbis learned that with every tribe was born a girl twin and with Benjamin was born an extra girl twin."

Why does it repeat that Rachel was having difficulty giving birth? The Oznayim La-Torah (a 20th century commentary on the Chumash) answers: "It is possible to say that [the first reference] was to the birth of the girl and [the second] was to the birth of Benjamin."

I still could not find clear evidence in the original source of the existence of the female twins, although it now appeared there might be thirteen sisters - one for each tribe and an extra one for Benjamin. I went back to the original verses in Chapter 46 and found a note about a Talmudic source that referred to those verses - Tractate Baba Batra, page 123a in the Talmud Bavli.

There amid a discussion of the various laws of inheritance and support for children from the estates of their parents, as a side issue, the Rabbis grapple with the inconsistencies in the numbering of Jacob's descendants in

Chapter 46 and again refer to the existence of the twin for Benjamin. Tosefot, a commentary on the Talmud, notes on the reference to Benjamin's twin: "Every one says that a female twin was with each of the tribes." A note nearby sent me to Chapter 82 of Bereshit Rabbah (a collection of aggadot including personal stories about Biblical figures that do not appear in the Torah itself).

Bereshit Rabbah, chapter 82 discusses Rachel's birthing of Benjamin. Section 9 describes a post-Biblical incident in which two students of Rabbi Joshua had disguised themselves in order to escape persecution for their Judaism. However, they were recognized by a Greek inquisitor who threatened to destroy them unless they correctly answered three questions about the Torah that they claimed to love so dearly.

One of the three questions the inquisitor posed was, "What is the meaning of the writing, 'And it happened that, while her giving birth was difficult...?'" The students told him that thus does one soothe the soul of the birthing mother, by telling her in the hour of the birth, "do not fear, for you have indeed given birth to a male." But the Greek responded by saying, "This is not how your Rabbi Joshua has interpreted it. But rather, for each and every tribe, his girl twin was born with him."

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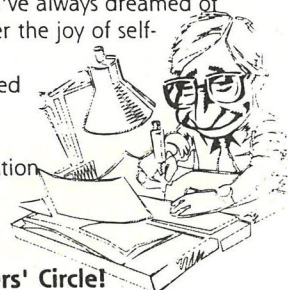
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How can the existence of these women, something that was universally accepted (according to Tosefot), something that was such common knowledge that even non-Jews heard of it (according to Bereshit Rabbah), something that was derived directly from Torah (in the story of Rachel's birthing), have disappeared from our collective memory? One might say that it has always been there waiting to be rediscovered. But women have not had the ability to trace their own heritage in Judaism until the re-expansion in the twentieth century of opportunities for women's learning. I continue in my quest for the thirteen sisters; there are always more sources to search and compare in the many layers of Jewish learning. I hope the reader will join me.

Shayna Kravetz is an Orthodox Jew, feminist and lawyer living and working in Toronto. She received her formal Jewish education at Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate in Winnipeg and Stern College in New York. She thanks the many study partners, study groups and, most of all, her late parents for the learning she has been given.



An illustration of the Sabbath from 'Sefer Minhagim,' 1723, Amsterdam



*"I was a fantastic student until ten, and then my mind began to wander."*

Grace Paley, b. 1922  
American Writer

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## BOOK BAG

### THE WRITINGS OF IDA FINK

reviewed by Renate Krakauer

There are many published accounts of Holocaust experiences written by survivors. Each record is an important addition to the body of evidence refuting Holocaust deniers, especially as those who witnessed the events age and die.

In addition to the personal experiences are fictional works of varying quality. Two outstanding novels by Jewish women are *Anya* by Susan Fromberg Schaeffer and *Gone to Soldiers* by Marge Piercy. Schaeffer effectively uses an oral history approach to tell a powerful story. Piercy covers the broad sweep of historical events on two continents and in several countries - sort of a Jewish War and Peace.

An equally compelling novel, though briefer by several hundred pages and covering a much narrower range of experience, is *The Journey* by Ida Fink. Fink is not only a survivor, but a fine writer, as her fictionalized account about two sisters passing as Aryans demonstrates. This is not a story about epic heroics. It is about two young women who make their way across war-torn Germany by subterfuge and stealth. They work in factories, farms and villages and run away when people become suspicious.

Fink manages to sustain the suspense without explicitly bringing in the horrors of the camps and ghettos, although it is clear where the two women will end up should they get caught. They are not helpless creatures; using their wits and making the occasional mistake, they are still able to escape. In a hostile environment, they must learn new skills quickly, in order not to draw attention to themselves. They must become shrewd judges of whom they can trust and who may betray them.

This novel is beautifully written with vivid images of the countryside through which the women travel. Nature blooms and is oblivious to the surrounding

horrors. Fink pays attention to the small, everyday aspects of life, the details we all take for granted, but which assume tremendous significance in a time of war. A woman writer's sensibility combined with a survivor's experience make this a special book. Anyone interested in Holocaust literature, especially from a woman's perspective, should read it.

*The Journey* is Ida Fink's second



book. Her first, *A Scrap of Time*, is a collection of stories about Holocaust and post-Holocaust experiences in Poland. These moving stories describe ordinary people trying to cope as best as they know how. They worry about saving themselves and their families and berate themselves for what they see, in hindsight, as stupid decisions.

Here, as in *The Journey*, there is a recurrent image of nature unfolding in all of its seasonal beauty - flowers bloom, the sun shines, the sky is a rich blue, the rivers flow - in contrast with the unfolding events.

Luck plays a key role for those who are able to survive by passing as Aryans or being hidden by kind Poles. There is the crippled woman in "Behind The Hedge" who has to put up with her housekeeper's stories, a small price to pay for being kept from the slaughter. Less lucky is the young man who,

contrary to his own best interests, runs into the square to join his unfortunate compatriots on the final journey and sends a message back home to ask forgiveness for his foolish mistake. There is, also, the story of the couple who rehearse their blue-eyed child in how to answer the door if someone comes knocking, so that the Semitic-looking father can have enough time to escape. Another work is about parents who reproach themselves for having had a child five years previously.

In the second half of the book, Fink tells about survivors who must resume their lives, though they will never be the same again. The book ends with a radio play about a prosecutor who interrogates four survivors about their eyewitness accounts of the roundup and subsequent murder of 1250 people. The prosecutor is relentless in his attack on the survivors' credibility. The victims are put on the defensive due to legal maneuvering, which forcefully brings to mind the spectre of Holocaust denial.

These stories are appealing because they are so personal. Fink's writing style is deceptively simple. She has the ability to draw us into a scene by describing the people and their surroundings so effectively that we care intensely about what happens to them. By sheer luck some of the characters succeed; most do not. Those who survive not only have to pick up the pieces, but may be challenged on the authenticity of their memories.

Both the novel and the short story collection are well worth reading.

Renate Krakauer is a civil servant with the Ontario government. A child survivor of the Holocaust she writes in her spare time.

*"Whether women  
are better than men  
I cannot say - but I  
can say they are  
certainly no worse."*

Golda Meir, (1898 - 1978)  
Israeli Stateswoman

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