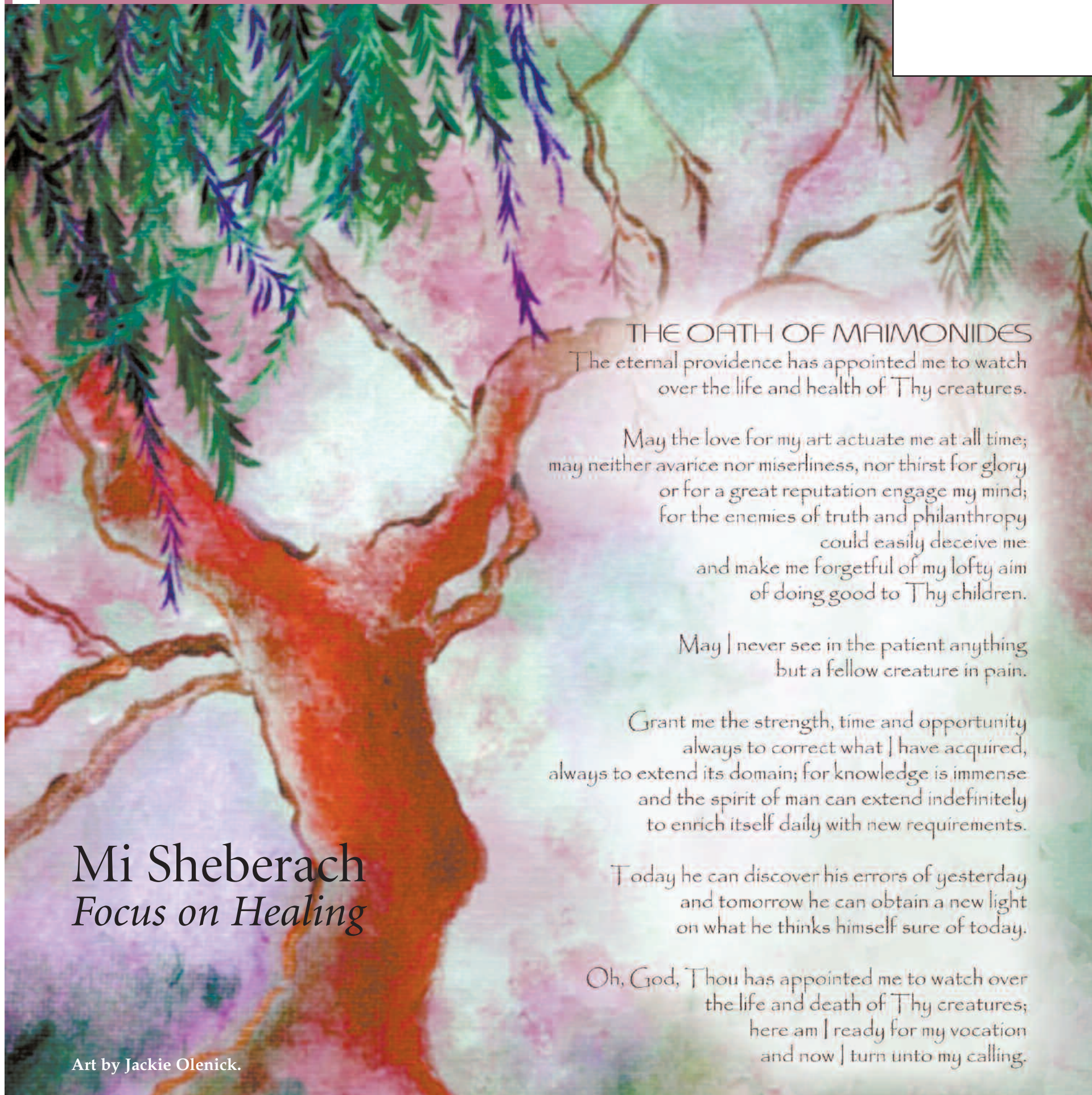


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*Mi Sheberach
Focus on Healing*

Art by Jackie Olenick.

THE OATH OF MAIMONIDES

The eternal providence has appointed me to watch over the life and health of Thy creatures.

May the love for my art actuate me at all time; may neither avarice nor miserliness, nor thirst for glory or for a great reputation engage my mind; for the enemies of truth and philanthropy could easily deceive me and make me forgetful of my lofty aim of doing good to Thy children.

May I never see in the patient anything but a fellow creature in pain.

Grant me the strength, time and opportunity always to correct what I have acquired, always to extend its domain; for knowledge is immense and the spirit of man can extend indefinitely to enrich itself daily with new requirements.

Today he can discover his errors of yesterday and tomorrow he can obtain a new light on what he thinks himself sure of today.

Oh, God, Thou has appointed me to watch over the life and death of Thy creatures; here am I ready for my vocation and now I turn unto my calling.

Seen on the Israel Scene



Analyzing Israel's vision for peace and security

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Thirteen and a half hours after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unveiled his foreign policy speech, his international press spokesman, Mark Regev, answered questions at a press conference at the King David Hotel for the foreign press. This press conference was sponsored by the Israel Project, which is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that provides journalists, among others, with accurate information about Israel. Its executive director, Marcus Sheff, welcomed the journalists.

Mr. Regev prefaced the question-and-answer period with three points related to Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech. The first point was that the prime minister said, "even before his trip to Washington, the Israeli government was ready for direct talks with the Palestinians. Israel places no preconditions on those talks." Mr. Regev asked rhetorically, why haven't we seen a resumption of dialogue? and went on to respond, not because the Israeli side has placed preconditions.

The second point was that "Israel has not said that Palestinian recognition of Israel as a homeland of the Jewish people is a precondition for talks. It requires the historic reconciliation of two peoples."

Regev said that unfortunately peace between Israel and the Palestinians will mean two peoples living side by side, and Israel must accept that the Palestinians have rights and the people have national rights, just as Israel has the right of Jewish national self-determination. "Most of the world accepts Israel as the Jewish national home; this is not a precondition. This is a requirement to make talks a success."

The third point was that Prime Minister Netanyahu supports President Obama's vision of region peace. "We want to see Arab states support development of the West Bank for the good of the Palestinians," Mr. Regev said. "We envision income-producing projects in tourism, industry, commerce and agriculture. Economic development is a crucial ingredient making the peace process work."

Mr. Regev said Prime Minister Netanyahu wants a "triple track" approach – political track, economic track and security track. "The Arab states can and should play an important role for the Palestinians in the West Bank," he said.

In response to journalists' questions, he said the following: "The Palestinians must govern themselves."

"Rockets from the West Bank could cause a reign of terror on the heart of Israel."

"The international community should commit that the [Palestinian state] be peaceful and demilitarized."

"All sides have to take steps to make this process work."

"Israel will honor all signed agreements, which includes the Road Map."

"Netanyahu never ruled out a 'state.' If there is agreement on substance, that future Palestinian state will be demilitarized."

"The way to narrow the gaps is through negotiations. We want to move forward."

"Israel places no preconditions whatsoever. We are ready for immediate talks with the Palestinians."

"International guarantees are effective mechanisms in place to prevent arms smuggling to a demilitarized state."

"We are ready for political talks; both sides bring positions to the table."

"We see the Palestinian Authority as a responsible Palestinian government. Hamas is part of the problem not the solution."

"We want to see the Arab states play an enhanced, upgraded role. We want to see Egypt and Jordan play a role."

"The core is the Palestinian refusal to accept the legitimacy of the Jewish State."

"We'd like to see an Iran that respects its own people and its neighbors."

Ethiopian National Project

A few months ago I had the opportunity to attend an evening of Ethiopian music, dance and humor sponsored by the Ethiopian National Project. This week I attended a press conference featuring Dr. Nigist Mengesha, director of ENP, and Tracy Shipley Amar, marketing director and a student.

Dr. Mengesha came to Israel in 1984 and received her undergraduate degree from Bar Ilan University and her master's from the Hebrew University. Her Ph.D. in education is from Sussex University in England.

"Many years of my life have been dedicated to work with my community," she told the members of the foreign press. There are now 120,000 Ethiopians in Israel, 55% below the age of 18.

A huge cultural gap exists, however, with developing drug addiction, adults unemployed and 70% receiving funding from B'tuach leuomi (Israel's social security system). Many of their children are considered at risk.

The ENP focuses on programs for 13-to-18-year-olds and trains Israeli Ethiopians to be the leaders with after school scholastic programs, neighborhood outreach programs and parent programs and workshops. Last year 8,000 youth participated in ENP programs although the potential is 16,000.

"We are highly motivated to be integrated into Israeli society," Dr. Mengesha said. "Ninety percent of the Ethiopians are going to the army."

Joining the professionals was 16-year-old Moshe, a student at an ORT high school. He described the after school assistance program in which his friends participate and the preparation for army programs. He is a member of the Shovei Tzion rap group who wrote their own song about the prejudice against them and performed it at the concert last spring.

The major problem affecting the ENP is funding, which comes from American Federations and the Israeli government. There are 70 Ethiopian nongovernment organizations, 10 which are very active; ENP strives to be an umbrella for these. Eighty NIS (\$45) helps support scholastic assistance for an Ethiopian-Israeli student; 360 NIS (\$90) will help fund an Israel Defense Forces preparation program; 540 NIS (\$135) will help sponsor a parents workshop; 1,800 NIS (\$450) will help fund activities at an ENP Youth Outreach Center; 4,000 NIS (\$1000) will support scholastic assistance for one Ethiopian-Israeli youth for one year.

Persons wishing to make a donation to further the work of ENP can send a check to: ENP, 1 Ibn Gvirol, P.O. Box 7171, Jerusalem, Israel 91071.

Just this week an Ethiopian rights activist called on the Knesset Finance Committee chair to hold an emergency meeting aimed at saving a plan for improving integration and absorption of Ethiopian immigrants. Five ministries would share the initiative for the 110,000 Ethiopians, which includes mortgage subsidies, educational, social and community needs. Ethiopian immigrants are one of the most poverty-stricken in the country.

The Jerusalem Festival of Light

It was an unusually warm and balmy evening, and as soon as Netanyahu's speech finished, friends of ours came by and we made our way to Jaffa Gate. Throngs of thousands of secular and modern Orthodox people crowded through the gate, picked up booklets in various languages and participated in the Jerusalem Festival of Light, which began last week and continues two more nights. By walking through the Old City, one could supposedly follow four different trails where examples of light installations and art displays could be seen.

We viewed a hanging kinetic sculpture by the David Citadel moat where motion generated light, then wandered through the Armenian Quarter into the Jewish Quarter. Arriving in the Cardo, the main street in the Roman and Byzantine periods, we looked down upon booths set up by 26 artists displaying and selling light installations.

Realizing the crowds were too many to see much of anything else, we returned to the Jaffa Gate area, descended some steps

and were in the Mamilla shopping mall. Steimatzky's book store chain has opened an outdoor cafe where we sat leisurely drinking ice cafe. The outdoor cafe sits in the shadow of the Stern House where Theodor Herzl slept one night in 1898. Stone by stone was numbered and the house taken apart and reassembled to be the Steimatzky book store.

Talented Student Artists Show Works

In the Mabada (Lab) next to SuperDeal and just below Derech Hebron, opposite the Dan Boutique Hotel, sits a warehouse. From June 12 through June 30, it is site of an art exhibit of the final work projects of fourth-year students of Emunah College.

The college, with 500 students, located on Derech Bet Lechem and Rivka, is for only Orthodox religious women, and offers programs in art, graphic design and theater. It is sponsored by Emunah (formerly Mizrahi Women), the Orthodox women's organization, and offers a four-year academic program as well as a one-year program for women high school graduates, Emunah Omanut, with 65% of the program in art, integrated with Jewish studies. The school has a dormitory for out-of-city and out-of-country students.

According to Mel Alexenberg, head of the School of Arts, they were looking for a venue for the 12 senior students to show their works and were able to rent this warehouse, clean it up and install it with partitions and lighting. There are photographs, paintings, sculpture, videos, black and white drawings, a floor wood project and woven leaves that created video designs.

Miscellaneous

Koogel.co.il (that's right, like kugel) is a new Hebrew web site, closed on Shabbat and aimed at Haredim. The site says it has 50-70,000 users and will develop an English section in the future...

Are you an alumni of AEPi men's Jewish fraternity? You now may look up brothers in Israel. A branch has opened at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, the first college fraternity in the State of Israel.

Sybil Kaplan, an American olah, lives in Jerusalem. ■