

**LIBRARIAN'S CORNER**

**Historical Fiction and Fascinating Facts**

Good historical fiction serves a dual purpose: besides telling an entertaining story, it teaches us about a different time period and often a different culture. Starting with *The Red Tent*, historical fiction about biblical and other Jewish women in history has engaged a wide, admiring audience.

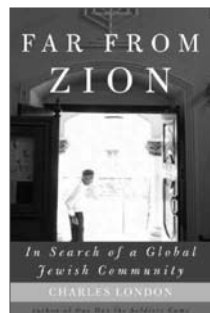
Maggie Anton burst onto this literary scene with *Rashi's Daughters*, Parts I, II, and III. Now Michele Cameron has written a comparable work: *The Fruit of Her Hands: The Story of Shira of Ashkenaz*. Shira is a free-spirited girl, raised by her widowed father in 13th-century Normandy. When she marries the brilliant scholar, Meir ben Baruch, she finds her soulmate and a window onto the world of talmudic scholarship. This multi-generational novel, set against the tragic end of hundreds of years of Jewish presence in medieval France, once again illuminates the enduring spirit of the Jewish people.

Charles London, the author of *Far from Zion*, grew up in an assimilated home in Baltimore. His family celebrated Christmas

and sent young Charles to a WASPy prep school. Being Jewish means very little to him until the summer of 2004 when he does relief work with children in Bosnia. There, he stumbles upon an unusual community of Jews, Christians, and Muslims all working side by side to rebuild their ravaged city. This gives Mr. London the idea for a journey that will take him around the world and back to his roots.

The subtitle of his book is *In Search of a Global Jewish Community*. Mr. London sets out to find Jewish communities in Uganda, Iran, Cuba, Burma – and Bentonville, Arkansas. He ends his fascinating account with these words about the far-flung pockets of Jews he finds: “Each group lives the idea, in its own way, that there is no exile. We are home.”

On a different note, *Start-Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle* tells an amazing Israeli tale. How is it, ask authors Dan Senor and Saul Singer, that a tiny



country, only sixty years old, surrounded by enemies, and with no natural resources still produces more start-up companies than large, peaceful nations like Japan, Canada, or Britain? Israel, the authors conclude, is not just a country but a state of mind. Whereas Americans emphasize decorum and exhaustive preparation, Israelis put *hutzpah* first. When an Israeli entrepreneur has a business idea, he will start it that week, claims one analyst.

Enterprising Israelis, Burmese Jews, and a Talmud-steeped matriarch in medieval France – the books in our library take you everywhere on the Jewish continuum. The story of our global community sits on our well-used shelves.

– MARA SOKOLSKY, LIBRARIAN



**Sunday, April 25, 2010 / 11 Iyyar 5770**  
 Game Time: 1:35 p.m., Fenway Park  
 We will leave from Temple Emanu-El at 11:30 a.m.

**BOSTON RED SOX VS. BALTIMORE ORIOLES**



*All Senior and Junior USYers, Kadima, and their families are welcome.*

Cost: \$45.00, includes roundtrip transportation and bleacher-seat tickets. **All proceeds will be donated** to USY's charity fund, Tikkun Olam.

Please RSVP by April 14th to Shana Newman at 331-1616 or [snewman@teprov.org](mailto:snewman@teprov.org). Reservations accepted with payment. Make checks payable to Temple Emanu-El. There are subsidies available.



If USY families do not buy all our tickets by April 15, we will offer the remaining tickets to the rest of the congregation.

**We have a limited number of tickets. First come, first served!**

**TRANSLITERATIONS**

Some *Kol* readers may have been puzzled when several Hebrew words in our March issue appeared in English transliteration with an underdotted *h* (*ḥ*). The *Kol* has decided to use the same system that our *Etz Hayim Humash* uses to distinguish the Hebrew letter *ḥet* from the letter *heh* (rendered by a regular *h*). The use of *ḥ* also serves to distinguish words spelled with *ḥet* (like *Ḥanukkah*, *ḥametz*, and *ḥag sameah*) from words spelled with *khaf*, which will continue to be rendered by *kh* as before. We shall retain the old-fashioned *ch* spelling for Hebrew words better known as Yiddish expressions – like *simcha*, *naches*, or *chai*.

We hope the new system will be helpful to readers who aren't always sure whether a word is spelled with a *heh*, a *ḥet*, or a *khaf*.

– JUDITH ROMNEY-WEGNER