

S H M A . C O M

Shlomi Ravid, PhD, has been a pioneer in developing peoplehood education. He was the founding director of the Israel Center of San Francisco, the founding director of the International School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies at Beth Hatefutsoth, and a member of the founding team of the Jewish Peoplehood Hub at the Jewish Agency. Ravid initiated and edited the *Peoplehood Papers* and the *Peoplehood Now*.

Zoe Jick, a recent Wesleyan University graduate, studied religion and wrote her thesis about the Jewish relationship to ethical eating. Zoe now lives in Tel Aviv, where she writes for TasteTLV.com. Her food blog, everywhereeating.blogspot.com, records eating experiences around the world.

Dr. **Jeffrey M. Green** is a translator best known for translating the novels of Aharon Appelfeld. His book, *Thinking Through Translation*, has recently been reissued by the University of Georgia Press, and his travel book about Naples and Sicily, *Largest Island in the Sea*, published by Vox Humana, is available from Internet vendors. He has lived in Israel with his family since 1973.

His blog, "A Year of Loss," in response to the death of his son Asher, can be read at: marjef.blogspot.com/.

Shira Beery was born in New York City to Israeli parents. Following in the footsteps of her parents and grandparents, she grew up in the socialist-Zionist youth movement, Hashomer Hatzair. After graduating from Stanford University with a bachelor's degree in international relations, she moved to Israel to work with Israeli NGOs and international organizations committed to social justice. Shira now works for the New Israel Fund in New York.

Living in Tel Aviv, I am acutely aware of being in a bubble, separate from the world and even the rest of Israel. Life is different here; Tel Aviv is a city of European cafés where people sit for hours, immersed in drinking cappuccinos and sharing conversation. People don't greet each other with "shalom"; they live in their own world.

Yet on Friday nights, the collective action of Tel Aviv emerges. With Shabbat around the corner, the city pulsates with the bustle and sounds of afternoon — people streaming to markets to buy *challot*, the sounds of taxi horns and cell phone ringtones. Around 7PM, the city stills; citizens sit for dinner, raise their wine glasses, and enjoy a few hours with friends.

How is it that, even in Tel Aviv, Shabbat still has the power to quiet Friday nights? For me, this is where and when Jewish peoplehood is most felt. Israel's most secular city follows — to some extent — Jewish guidelines because even the most mundane acts reflect an inherent connection to something greater than our individual selves. If I were to ask Tel Aviv residents if they celebrate Shabbat, most would scoff at such a silly question. But we have a collective identity and should embrace it — and as we do, we transform a people.

—Zoe Jick

Far from being disguised as a list, these lines are based on a thought-provoking displacement. The adverb "suddenly" should modify "feels" and not "wakes up": After the victory of 1948, the Jews in Israel felt like a unified nation, roused from the slumber of exile and dispersion and empowered to stride forward into history.

Zionist ideological solidarity, imposed (but without cynicism) on the ingathered Jewish people, has been energizing and has inspired hope, but we have never been able to greet everyone we meet with peace. Even when it was written, this poem was more wishful thinking than fact (not that poems are

required to be factual).

Today, responsible social critics are concerned that the huge disparities in income in Israeli society (not to mention the deep ideological and religious rifts and widespread corruption) may have eroded social solidarity beyond the point of no return. We sing Gilboa's words (check it out on YouTube) in a desperate effort of self-persuasion. But today we need inspired, courageous, honest, generous leadership. Platitudes will get us nowhere.

—Jeffrey M. Green

"A Song in the Morning"

Amir Gilboa

Suddenly in the morning a man wakes up and he feels that he is a people and he starts walking and everyone he meets he greets, "shalom."

Amir Gilboa's opening verse is disguised as a seemingly simple list of mundane acts performed by an individual. Holistically, this sequence of acts captures no less than the transformation of a people.

Appearing in the early 1950s, the poem reflects Gilboa's sense of the impact that the creation of the state had on the Jewish people. He asks: What is it that makes individuals, "all of a sudden" feel like a people? His answer: Through actions, the collective essence of the group actually reveals itself and a sense of identification emerges. Thus a man first "rises" in the morning and then "feels." It is reminiscent of Descartes' "I think therefore I am." The act of thinking necessitates the existence of an entity that performed it. Acting upon the world as a collective makes the people a real tangible entity with which individual Jews can identify.

Sixty years later, one must wonder what can inspire again our sense of peoplehood. What significant collective action would make us feel today — or in the next years — like a people? What collective ethos can rejuvenate and reenergize our mission to inspire the minds and hearts of Jews around the globe? What can make them rise in the morning, feel like a people, and begin making our world a better place?

—Shlomi Ravid

aspora Jews who supported them overcame their differences for the purpose of creating a progressive society based on Jewish and humanistic values, as popularized by Theodor Herzl in *Altneuland*.

Today, the fruit of that collective labor seems to divide, rather than connect, world Jewry. Peter Beinart writes that young American Jews feel alienated from Israel when asked to "check their liberalism at Zionism's door." Zionism no longer seems a multifaceted ideology, reflecting the diverse viewpoints of world Jewry. Instead, Zionism is understood narrowly as immigration to Israel or zealous support of Israel's government — however unacceptable its policies. If Jews are to realize the original Zionist dream that would bring us together and inspire the world, we must embrace pluralism once again.

—Shira Beery