

THE ILLUMINATOR

A man with a heart as big as the world?
- Jane Katz

A life of courage is a life of integrity. When we are too eager for approval, we lose our courage. We say what other people want us to say. We do what other people want us to do. We become what other people want us to become. Many men and women choose to wear the masks that public opinion fashions for them. They never tell others what they really believe; they never act out of their private convictions; they never feel comfortable with controversy. They prefer to be safe, even if safety makes them the prisoners of convention. Integrity is the courage to be one person instead of two - the bravery to let our private self mold our public image, the determination to be the master and not the victim of life - even though disapproval and anger may be the rewards of our honesty. Courage is the search for respect, not agreement.
- - Rabbi Sherwin Wine

Rabbi Sherwin Wine was killed in an automobile accident in Morocco on July 21, 2007. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan (A.B., A.M.) and the Hebrew Union College. In 1963 he founded the Birmingham Temple in suburban Detroit, the first congregation of Humanistic Judaism. In 1969 he helped establish the Society for Humanistic Judaism. In 1986 he helped to create the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews, a worldwide association of national organizations. The American Humanist Association selected him Humanist of the Year for 2003. The Humanist of the Year award was established in 1953 to recognize a person of national or international reputation who, through the application of humanist values, has made a significant contribution to the improvement of the human condition. Rabbi Wine is the author of *Humanistic Judaism, Judaism Beyond God, Celebration, and Staying Sane in a Crazy World*.

A Tribute to Rabbi Wine

How do we say goodbye to Rabbi Wine,
A man with a very big heart?
You encouraged us to sing,
So we will sing your praises.
You taught us to ignore the unknowable,
To seek solace in the known world.
You taught us to dispel the darkness by embracing the light,
And to build lasting bridges to the other side.
You urged us to reach out to others in our community,
And to find common ground with the community of nations.
You walked the world seeking truth. You asked questions,
you listened, you cared, and thus you brought others together.

What you taught us is a powerful legacy.
By trying to live up to it, we will hold onto you.

How do you say goodbye to Rabbi Wine,

Fall 2007

From the President

The death this summer of Rabbi Sherwin Wine was a tragic loss to all humanists, to Humanistic Judaism, and to many of us personally.

Last October, I attended my first meeting as *Or Emet's* representative on the Board of the Society for Humanistic Judaism. The meeting was held in The Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills, Michigan, the temple that was established by Rabbi Wine in 1963 as the very first Congregation for Humanistic Judaism. Today, there are 40 SHJ congregations in North America, and Humanistic Jewish groups in 13 countries.

I first met and spoke with Rabbi Wine at that meeting. We also talked at last May's board meeting. I will forever be grateful to *Or Emet* for giving me those opportunities. Rabbi Wine was an inspirational, charismatic, warm, brilliant, up-beat, respectful, joyous and passionate man who embraced Jewish culture and history, valued integrity, and believed in the power in each of us.

Reading Rabbi Wine's books, hearing him speak, talking with him, have changed me. I never expected to feel this much of a loss or to feel this strongly about the importance of Humanistic Judaism; but I do.

Rabbi Wine wrote *Ayfo Oree* and helped us all to be at peace with the truth of its message:

*Where is my light? My light is in me.
Where is my hope. My hope is in me.
Where is my strength? My strength is in me.
And in you.*



Sherwin Wine (1928-2007)

The *Illuminator* welcomes:

Letters to the editor; essays; poems; humor; announcements of Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, weddings, graduations, and anniversaries; articles; photographs (black and white), if relevant to an article; and appropriate paid advertisements.

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	- w/school	\$475
	- 2 nd child	\$60
	- add. child	no charge

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Or Emet is affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ) and the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews.

The Life of Courage

Or Emet's Executive Committee has approved a budget for 2007-2008. Dues statements will be mailed soon. We finished the past year with a healthy surplus, primarily due to budgeted expenses which never materialized. The Executive Committee elected to

pursue a more aggressive budget this year, adding staff to the school, increasing advertising expenditures, and accepting room rate increases at most of our venues. We are budgeted to have a net loss for the year, but will still have a small surplus at the end of the budget year.

Or Emet has always had a policy of not refusing membership because of inability to afford dues. We welcome guests at our *seder*, Friday and Sunday programs, and do not charge for our High Holiday services. These policies were reaffirmed by our Executive Committee, but put additional strains on our congregation financially.

All contributions to *Or Emet* are tax deductible. I would like to remind all members of our congregation that we do have cards available to send, when donations are made to *Or Emet*, in honor of life events. A donation has been made to *Or Emet* in honor or memory of _____ is a wonderful way to express your support to friends or loved ones, and help our congregation.

Finally, for those of our congregants who can afford to do so, we would like you to consider donations beyond the regular dues structure. With our tight budget, even modest amounts of money can be extremely valuable. We feel we are a significant asset to the Twin Cities community and our long term viability and strength are dependent on a healthy financial picture.

To quote Sherwin Wine, "there is a large mass of unaffiliated cultural Jews out there who will choose to be Humanistic Jews when they discover that we can serve their needs. The lifestyle of Humanistic Judaism is the life of courage. In the problematic world of the twenty-first century, that message will be needed."

Please help us to continue to provide that message!

Harold Londer

Rabbi Wine's book *Judaism Beyond God* (\$25) and "Create Your Own Jewish Calendar" (\$10) will be on display and available for purchase from *Or Emet* in September and October.

Humanistic Judaism is a voice for Jews who value their identity and who seek an alternative to conventional Judaism.

Humanistic Judaism rejects supernatural authority and affirms the rights of individuals to control and be responsible for their own lives.

The Society for Humanistic Judaism mobilizes individuals to celebrate Jewish identity and culture in a manner consistent with humanistic philosophy.

Or Emet Fall 2007 Schedule

	Time	Location	Event
September			
Wednesday 12	7:30 pm.	Mpls. JCC	<i>Rosh Hashanah Service</i>
Thursday 13	10 am.	(see p. 8)	<i>Tashlich Service</i>
Sunday 16	10 am.	Friends School	Cultural School and Adult Program: "Traditions and Humanistic Judaism."
Friday 21	7:30 pm.	Mpls. JCC	<i>Kol Nidre Service</i>
Saturday 22	4 pm.	Mpls. JCC	<i>Yom Kippur Day Service</i>
October			
Sunday 7	10 am.	Friends School	Cultural School and Adult Program: " <i>Or Emet: The Sum of Our Parts.</i> "
Friday 26	7:30 pm.	Mpls. JCC	<i>Shabbat Service and Program: "Sholem Aleichem: Readings and Commentary."</i> Presenter: Edith Davis
November			
Friday 9	7:30 pm.	Mpls. JCC	<i>Shabbat Service and Program: "Can Israel Survive as the Mideast's only Democracy?"</i> Presenter: Allan Miller
Sunday 18	10 am.	Friends School	Cultural School and Adult Program: "Finding Common Ground." Presenter: Richard Logan
December			
Friday 7	tba	Friends Mtg. House	<i>Hanukkah Party with Cultural School</i>
Sunday 16	10 am.	Friends School	Cultural School and Adult Program: "Jewish/Christian Relations."

Minneapolis (Sabes) JCC is located at 4330 Cedar Lake Road, St. Louis Park.

Minnesota Friends School is located at 1365 Englewood Avenue, St. Paul.

Friends Meeting House is located at 1725 Grand Avenue, St. Paul.

All *Or Emet* Programs are free and open to the Public. A Humanistic Jewish *Shabbat* Service precedes Friday evening programs and an *Oneg* follows.

Congregation News

If you do not know where you are going, any road will get you there."

- - Thomas Carlyle

Looking forward to being with everyone as we celebrate the High Holidays and at our program/JCS session in September. Be sure to mark your calendars for our services at the Minneapolis JCC; for our Tashlich service and pot-luck lunch at the home of Bruce Pomerantz; and for our traditional "Breaking the Fast" on Yom Kippur.

And while you have your calendars out, be sure to note our first Sunday morning together of the Year 5768:

Sunday, September 16, 2007
10 am. at the Friends School

There will be an Adult Program: "Traditions and Humanistic Judaism." Presenter: Harold Londer, *Or Emet* Co-founder and Past President, and there will be brief previews of the school year and coming adult programs.

The first Jewish Cultural Sunday School session is also on September 16 at 10 am. There is exciting news from the JCS Committee. They have been working throughout the summer to create what promises to be a GREAT year of learning and fun for the children with wonderful and enthusiastic new teachers.

JCS

The Jewish Cultural School (JCS) is excited to introduce this year's teachers and a new Education Coordinator.

Or Emet member **Scott Oremland** will teach the younger JCS age group, including daughter Alexa. He looks forward to drawing on the wealth of teaching tips and materials accumulated by his mother, Faith Oremland, who taught the younger kids for the past two years. Of course, Scott is also eager to try several ideas of his own. His familiarity with *Or Emet* and the JCS program should be a boon. We are very grateful for Scott's willingness to volunteer for this important job. After all, what could be more central to the school's purpose than instilling our youngest kids with a sense of community and Jewish identity?

Eva Cohen has been hired to teach the older JCS age group, replacing Mona Fenichel, who taught for the past two years. (Mona has moved to Mankato to

pursue a Master's degree in speech pathology.) Eva attended JCS herself many years ago, as the daughter of members Molly Wilbur-Cohen and Barry Cohen. A college junior majoring in visual arts and anthropology, Eva has completed several arts and community volunteer experiences that have given her the opportunity to work with children of different ages - including a camp at the nationally renowned Heart of the Beast Puppet Theatre in Minneapolis. The JCS students will benefit from Eva's visual arts expertise. She looks forward to getting more teaching experience at *Or Emet* and hopes to join the Teach for America program after college. Eva is in the Twin Cities only temporarily this year; she will return to the East Coast next fall to finish her degree at Brown University. We are very fortunate to be crossing paths with her during her year in Minnesota.

Laurie Levi will be our new Education Coordinator - a role last filled by Nancy Holden. Laurie will provide a range of services to help support and assist in the growth and development of the JCS. Laurie has substantial experience working in a congregational setting with parents, children, staff, committees and other volunteers, having served as the Preschool Administrator for ten years and, before that, as a coordinator of 7th and 8th grade religious school programs at Temple Israel in Minneapolis. She holds a Masters' in Social Work and Public Affairs and is interested in learning more about Humanistic Judaism. We are very fortunate to have found such a highly qualified candidate to help the school flourish.

Perhaps the best thing about Laurie, Eva and Scott coming on board the JCS is that each of them seems genuinely excited about the opportunity to learn from the experience, as well as contribute to it. All in all, we are looking forward to a great year.

Now, all we could use are more wonderful and enthusiastic learners! Classes have openings that we'd love to fill; so, if you know any family that may be interested, do have them contact either Barbara Weisman: wegwise@bitstream.net, 612-722-1030, or Sara Langer, 612-377-6203.

- - Barbara Weisman, Education Committee

Humanistic Judaism beyond Sherwin

Sherwin Wine, the founder of the Society for Humanistic Judaism, died in a tragic car accident on July 21, 2007. Sherwin was vacationing in Morocco,

riding to dinner, when his taxi was struck by another vehicle, killing Sherwin and the cab driver. Sherwin's long time life partner, Richard McMains, was severely injured but survived. Sherwin was 79 years old.

Sherwin's life story is well known to most of us. He was born in Detroit and raised in a conservative Jewish family. He attended the University of Michigan and Reform Judaism's Hebrew Union college, from which he graduated as an ordained rabbi. He served in the military, in the Korean War, and returned to Detroit as an assistant rabbi in a reform synagogue. In 1963, he started his own congregation, initially with eight families. His humanistic philosophy, which he had been formulating for years, was finally able to be blended with his Jewish heritage in a meaningful manner.

Sherwin's small congregation generated significant controversy. Sherwin was branded "The Atheist Rabbi." His seminal work *Judaism Beyond God* struck a chord with thousands of Jews around the world. His driving energy, passion for his beliefs and vision of a new branch of Judaism stimulated many. The Society for Humanistic Judaism, the International Federation of Secular and Humanistic Jews, and the dozens of humanistic Judaism congregations around the world are all a testament to his legacy.

On a personal note, I have considered Sherwin a friend for over twenty years. From my first exposure to him at the First Unitarian Society - he spoke on Humanistic Judaism in the morning and Arthur Koestler that evening (both brilliantly) - I was hooked. His intelligence, sense of humor and courage, are unmatched. I had the privilege of attending many weekend seminars over the years under Sherwin's tutelage. On topics ranging from the Holocaust, the bible, Jewish ritual and Israel, his ability to teach and inspire was unfailing. With his piercing eyes, his stinging wit, his almost encyclopedic knowledge, and his organizational skills, he was the equal of any college professor.

My wife (Jan) and I had the opportunity to go to Israel on a tour led by Sherwin. To experience Israel with Sherwin as a guide was a magical experience which I will forever treasure. I can still picture him in the Golan Heights, or in Jerusalem, or proudly introducing to us secular Israelis. Jan and I also attended a Humanistic Judaism conference in New York, the highlight being Sherwin leading us through a walking tour of the old Lower East Side. His knowledge of the history and culture made it hard for me to believe he was from Detroit and not lower Manhattan.

month on the calendar but the seventh, and the new moon of the seventh month was a day of dangerous supernatural happenings.

Sherwin visited our congregation several times. He was planning on visiting us again next year. I know many of you had the same reaction to him and his ideas that I did. I have re-read *Judaism Beyond God* more times than I care to admit. I am proud of Sherwin's inscribed words on my copy: "To Harold. In Friendship and With Admiration, Sherwin Wine." On one of his trips to the Twin Cities, Sherwin and I had a few hours to kill, and I suggested a walk. It was a nice day and I recommended a walk around one of our lakes; but Sherwin insisted on walking at the Mall of America! I remember him discussing with me why Jews are urban creatures in the twentieth century, not farmers. He loved the place, or at least told me he did.

One of the most difficult tasks of being a humanist is dealing with loss and pain. The "easy" answers of traditional religion angered Sherwin. Whether explaining the Holocaust, the death of a loved one, or a major tragedy, Sherwin never felt the answer "It was God's will" said very much. Why, in the world, would God "will" such events if he/she was all powerful? I think Sherwin's own words from the chapter on "Death" in *Judaism Beyond God* are powerful and helpful:

The Humanistic Jew starts with mortality as an unavoidable and final event. Life is valuable because it does not go on forever. Happiness is an urgent matter because it will not be available after we die. If there is "immortality," it is purely figurative. Only memory survives in the minds of others. To accept this truth is to live courageously and generously in the face of every individual's personal tragedy. To surrender to fear and despair is to give the fates more than they deserve. Life can be long enough to be satisfying and to fulfill important dreams if we accept time as a special gift and do not waste it.

- - Harold Londer

High Holidays 2007

The Jewish year begins in the fall with Rosh Hashana (first day of Tishri). The holiday was not called Rosh Hashana ("head of the year") until talmudic times. This reflects a long-standing debate in a two-harvest culture about whether the year begins in the spring or in the fall. In the Middle East, the time after the fall harvest and just before rainy season must have been a time of extreme apprehension and fear of drought. The calendar itself reflects this, as Tishri is not the first

Orthodox Judaism interprets the holiday as a day of divine judgment. Humanistic Jews acknowledge the importance of the holiday within Jewish culture and their individual lives. We retain the core symbolism of making an end and a beginning and offer individuals the option of *self*-judgment and taking opportunity to review personal and social behavior. We blow the *shofar* not as a calling together to face danger, but as a summons to act communally in the face of injustice.

Yom Kippur initially probably preceded Rosh Hashana and was a day of purification when – just as in other ancient religions - sacred places and temples were cleared of impurities so that subsequent celebrations could take place without defilement. In rabbinic Judaism, Yom Kippur became the provenance of an omnipotent *Yahveh* elevated to world dominance who annually judges all humanity, especially his chosen servants, the Jews. *Yahveh* comes down from heaven to sit on a throne in Jerusalem, sitting for 10 days passing judgment, rendering his initial verdict on Rosh Hashana and final verdict on Yom Kippur, which becomes a preview of the final, final judgment on Resurrection Day.

Once the Secular Age had arrived in the 18th Century, the experience and theology of Yom Kippur as divine terror became something of an embarrassment to non-Orthodox Jewry. The Conservative and Reform rabbis applied the insights into personal experience of the new science of psychology and emphasized the possibility for the individual to reevaluate and change for the better. The old theology and liturgy remained the same, with the sermons going off in an opposite direction.

Humanistic Jews reject trying to reconcile an arbitrary, primitive message with the lessons gained from experience of daily life. Experience tells us the world is indeed filled with terror, surprise and injustice. What is needed, however, is courage, and not obsequious cringing before an equally terrifying deity. If anything, the High Holidays are a reminder of the tools with which evolution has presented us to subdue terror, overcome difficulties, and help create happiness. Reconciliation is with ourselves and our communities; in this way Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur remind us of human achievement and the potential for future change.

- - adapted from *Judaism Beyond God* by Sherwin Wine and *Guide to Humanistic Judaism*

Donations to Or Emet

Rollie Langer, for Jan Withers and Harold Londer, in memory of Royce Withers
Phillip Griffin and Muriel Sterne, for Jan Withers , in memory of Royce Withers
Judith Lippold, in memory if her father Irving Rosenthal & mother, Shulamite Hurwitz Rosenthal

Honor Your Family and Friends with a Gift to Or Emet

Birthdays, anniversaries, special achievements, graduations, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, and memorials are just a few of the opportunities to honor your friends and family with a donation to Or Emet. Cards will be sent to those you honor informing them of your tribute. It's a wonderful way to show that you care.

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- In honor of _____
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- To celebrate _____
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Message: _____

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(The amount will not be disclosed to the card recipient.)*

Minimum donation of \$15 per card

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COLLOQUIM 2007
Jews and the Muslim World:
Solving the Puzzle
October 19-21

Six extraordinary scholars representing the Muslim, Jewish and Christian worlds will spend two exciting days exploring this topic:

Yehuda Bauer	Jane Gerber
Fawaz Gerges	Amir Hussain
Jacob Lassner	Derek J. Penslar

There will also be a special memorial tribute to Rabbi Sherwin Wine.

Presented by International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism in Farmington Hills, Michigan
Registration Fee: \$225 or \$300 (with meals).
Info: www.iishj.org or call 248-476-9532.

SHJ Conference and Teen/Young Adult
Conclave 2008

“Connecting to Judaism: I Did it My Way”

April 4-6, 2008

Including a celebration of the life and legacy of our late founder and mentor, Rabbi Sherwin Wine.

Host: *Adat Chaverim* Congregation
Marriott Warner Center,
Woodland Hills, Los Angeles, CA

Register for the Conference: www.shj.org. Fees have not yet been decided, but there will be three fee categories: Adults, College Students, and Teens.

Post-Conference Tours:
April 6-8

“Humanistic Judaism Affirms a Belief in Human Beings”

(Article from the Sarasota (FL) newspaper about SHJ President Lew Altman)

By Susan L. Rife

Louis Altman divides Judaism into three groups. Not Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism. These three are his first group, observant Jews who share "belief in a deity you can pray to and one who may conceivably intervene in our personal lives and the course of history," said Altman. The second group consists of Jews who are not attached to a congregation or synagogue, may not believe in a traditional God and rarely think about religious things. In the middle is a small group who "want to belong to an extended family such as that a synagogue provides and want a cultural connection" with the historical Jewish community. Altman represents that third group as the newly installed President of the Society for Humanistic Judaism.

"Humanistic Judaism provides a viable alternative for Jews who desire a cultural, ethical and social connection with their heritage, but whose philosophy is centered on human life and the physical world, in contrast to traditional religion," said Altman, a retired intellectual property attorney who lives in Sarasota and in Northbrook, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. He added, "Humanism means more than just not believing in a traditional supernatural God. It also means believing in the human being. Humanism means the individual doesn't belong to God, doesn't belong to the state, doesn't belong to the Jewish people. The human being is the essential organizing principle of our philosophy. Humanism celebrates human independence, human freedom."

Humanists and Faith

Evidence that God exists
No one can produce.
To say "because we must have faith,"
Is just too, too obtuse.

But if some evidence is found,
We're open to receive it;
It's just that it takes evidence
To have faith and believe it.

-- Margo Fox



Humanistic Jews of Minnesota

C/O Mike Persellin

Box 22513

Robbinsdale, MN 55422

An Invitation from Bruce Pomerantz

On Thursday, September 13th, you are invited to the **Rosh Hashanah/Tashlich Service** at my home where we will also share a potluck lunch and, for those who wish to participate, a Tashlich walk.

It would be helpful to me to hear from you if you are planning to be there, and to get an idea of what food you will be bringing. RSVP to 612-327-6131 or brucep@usfamily.net.

Directions to the Tashlich service at my home, 5687 W. Bavarian Pass, Fridley.

At intersection of I-694 and Silver Lake Road (Exit 39), after coming off the exit ramp, go north on Silver Lake Road a short distance to make a left hand turn at traffic light at the first intersection (McDonald's on immediate left, a Wells Fargo branch bank is upper left, and a Champs restaurant on right, gas station on upper right) onto Innsbruck Drive. Go .7 mile to intersection with West Bavarian Pass (there is a lawn boulder on the right just prior to the intersection), turn right and go .2 mile. 5687 is on right-hand side. Parking is permitted on either side of the street. (If possible, please bring folding chairs.)

**SHJ President Louis Altman will be joining us on
Yom Kippur**

Louis Altman, President of the Society for Humanistic Judaism, will be visiting *Or Emet* for Yom Kippur services. Lou has served on the SHJ Executive

Committee since 2000 and is a member of the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Sarasota, Florida. (see article about Lou Altman on page 6)



*

L' Shana

**Tovah Happy New
Year**
