

Politics – October 2011

The world is shaped by those who dare.

Gilad is back at home. Veshavu banim legvulam.

~Raphael Cohen-Almagor

"... More than machinery, we need humanity, more than cleverness, we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent, and all will be lost ..."

~The barber in Charles Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, 1940.

Gilad Shalit Is Free
Exchange with Abe Silverman
Social Justice
MK Shelly Yachimovich - New Labour Party Leader
House of Lords for Israel
European Association of Israel Studies
Internet Responsibility Conference in Paris
Dan Shechtman Wins 2011 Nobel Prize in Chemistry
Boycott China, Say Bioethicists
My New Article
New Books
Things that Are Said to Disappear in Our Lifetime
Movie of the Month – Closing the Ring
Monthly Poem
Gems of the Month (4)
Lost Generation?
Wake Up Call in Paris
Light Side

Gilad Shalit Is Free

Gilad Shalit is back at home. On October 18, 2011, Gilad was finally united with his family. Veshavu banim legvulam.

The price was high. The decision was right. Every Israeli parent should know that the government and army will do all that is in their power to bring their children back home, alive and well. Every soldier should know that when s/he gives two/three and more years of their life to defend the safety of Israel that all is done to see that they return home alive and well. This is the government's and army's duty.



Gilad Shalit

Since his return to power, Prime Minister Netanyahu has made many decisions, most of which I criticized. This is the first decision I congratulate and celebrate. No doubt, a courageous decision. It came very late, five years and four months after Gilad Shalit was captured. But it came. We know of other precedents that not all captured Israeli soldiers lived to see the day. I am absolutely delighted for Gilad, and for his loving family who did not give up, and fought to unite with their beloved.

I wish Gilad Shalit and his family many years of good health, tranquil happiness, peace, love and joy, as they surely deserve.

Exchange with Abe Silverman

Sept 21/11

Re "A Palestinian State is both a Palestinian and Israeli interest"

I think every clear thinking person would agree, but what price are you prepared to pay to achieve that goal.

Shana Tova

Abe Silverman

Edmonton AB

Dear Abe

I think the price Israel will pay if the conflict won't be resolved will be extremely high.

Shana tova

23/11

But do you think it is possible to reach an agreement with the Palestinians without paying a price that is unacceptably high.

Shabat Shalom

Abe

Yes, Abe. I am talking about Abbas, not Hamas. With the latter it is hopeless. But we can strike a decent deal for Palestine, and Israel, with Abbas.

Bear in mind: Israel at present is far stronger than Palestine. But its power deteriorates by the moment. I am speaking with a great sense of urgency. The ME is changing for the worse as far as Israel is concerned. We need to move swiftly.

Shana tova to you and your loved ones,

Rafi

Sept 23/11

Interesting exchange that we have going. Lets for a moment pretend that you and I are entrusted with the task of creating a peace plan.

Lets start with what the Arabs say is the greatest obstacle to peace. Settlements. Do we both agree that most settlements should be abandoned except for those that are strategically important and for those there will be a land swap or compensation. (You should know that it makes me angry that 1 million Arabs can live in Israel and 1 Jew will not be able to live in Palestine.)

Recognition. Do you agree that the Principal as described in the Partition Plan of 1947 is the logical way to go. One Jewish State and one Arab State?

Security. Would or could Israel agree to giving up the right to monitor the Military Activities in Palestine and in the Jordan Rift Valley? I don't think so. At least not for the next 25 years.

The right of return. I can't see Israel agreeing to the right of any Arab to come to Israel and claim what he believes is his property.

I do however believe that all Arab claims to property within Israel should be dealt with fairly and compensation be paid where applicable. This of course should be dealt with through Israeli Courts.

Jerusalem. I think we can agree that eastern Jerusalem should be given to the Arabs but not the old city and I'm sure an agreement can be reached on the joint administration of the Holy sites.

Did I leave anything important out? Do you think that peace is achievable? I don't. My view is the Arabs will never accept a 2 State solution. One Jewish and one Arab.

Shabat Shalom

Abe Silverman

Thank you, Abe.

I believe that the way to escape the deadlock is to rely on the Clinton parameters and the Geneva Accord. Both documents lay the foundations for resolving all contentious issues.

Borders – Israel will withdraw to the Green Line, evacuating settlements and resettling the settlers in other parts of the country. Major settlement blocs may be annexed to Israel upon reaching an agreement with the PA of territory exchange that will be equal in size. At the Taba talks, the Palestinians presented a map in which Israel would annex 3.1 percent of the West Bank and transfer to the PA other territory of the same size.[1] Beilin said that they were willing to concede Israeli annexation of three settlement blocs of at least 4 percent of the West Bank.[2]

Territorial contiguity – a major elevated highway will connect the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to allow safe and free passage. The road will be solely Palestinian. No Israeli checkpoints will be there.

Security – The Palestinian sovereignty should be respected as much as possible. Checkpoints will be dismantled. Only the most necessary will remain, subject to review and necessity. The Palestinian state will be non-militarized. This issue was agreed upon in 1995. Also agreed: Joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols along the Jordan River, and the establishment of a permanent international observer force to ensure the implementation of the agreed security arrangements.[3]

Jerusalem – What is Palestinian will come under the territory of the new capital Al Kuds. What is Jewish will remain under Israeli sovereignty.

Haram al-Sharif – Palestine will be granted extraterritorial sovereignty over the site under Waqf administration. Jews will enjoy right of access.

Water – Israel and Palestine should seek a fair solution that would not infringe the rights of any of the sides and will assure that the Palestinian people will have the required water supply for sustenance and growth.

Terrorism and violence – Both sides will work together to curb terrorism and violence. I emphasize that there is zero sum game between terror and peace. Therefore, both sides will see that their citizens on both sides of the border reside in peace and tranquility. Zealots and terrorists, Palestinian and Jews, will receive grave penalties for any violation of peace and tranquility. The Palestinians, apparently, fail to understand the gravity of terrorism and are willing to accept it as part of life. Nabil Shaath said: “The option is not either armed struggle or negotiations. We can fight and negotiate at the same time, just as the Algerians and the Vietnamese had done”.[4] Democracies, however, see things differently. On this issue there should be no compromise.

Incitement – Both sides will overhaul their education curricula, excluding incitement, racism, bigotry and hate against one another. The curricula should reflect a language of peace, tolerance and liberty.

Prisoner exchange – As an act of good will, part of the trust-building process, Israel will release a number of agreed upon prisoners. In return, Gilad Shalit and other Israeli prisoners (if any) will return home. With time, as trust will grow between the two sides, all security prisoners will return home.

Right of return – the 1948 Palestinian refugees will be able to settle in Palestine. Israel will recognize the Nakba and compensate the refugees for the suffering inflicted on them. No refugees will be allowed to return to Israel. This dream should be abandoned.[5]

I'd be happy to publish our exchange in the next Newsletter, if that's OK with you.

Shana tova to you and your loved ones

Rafi

Social Justice

On September 26, 2011, the Trachtenberg Committee submitted its recommendations. They did not meet the expectations of the hundreds of thousands of protesters who demand immediate relief in coping with the hardships of life and the high cost of living. The main concern is that their recommendations would be implemented over a five year period. This is an eternity in Israeli politics. The government will change, and then all recommendations might sink into oblivion.

What is required is a concise list of dramatic recommendations, easy to implement with immediate effect:

Affordable public housing in all parts of Israel, regulated by the government to cater for the needs of small and large families. The housing plan should include rental as well as apartments for purchase. The Committee merely recommended the building of 15,000 units for rent, designated for families that earn 15,000 shekels or less.

Increasing minimum wage to 4000 Shekels per month (\$1000);

Insuring household income of 5000 shekels for families of 4 and plus (\$1300);

Update social security aid to needy people;

Increasing salaries of society's angels: Teachers, nurses and social workers to a minimum of 5000 shekels per month;

Increased 3% taxation on those earning 50,000 (\$13,500) shekels and more per month. The committee made similar recommendation for people who earn 40,231 Shekels a month;

Decreasing government ministers and MKs by 3%, a symbolic step that shows that the government and legislators have a sense of social justice and social responsibility.

All measures should take effect from November 1, 2011.

MK Shelly Yachimovich - New Labour Party Leader

MK Shelly Yachimovich is the new Labour Party leader. On September 21, 2011, she defeated MK Amir Peretz in the second round of the Labour primary elections. Two other candidates ran in the first round: Amram Mitzna and MK Yitzhak Herzog.

Yachimovich received 54% of the votes, while Peretz received 45%. A total of 61% of Labour Party constituents exercised their right to vote in the internal elections.

"We will work together as a united party," Yachimovich said, "We intend to bridge between the historic Labor movement and the new winds blowing on the street... With you, I know that it is possible to make real changes in Israeli society."

"We will work together as a united party," Yachimovich said, "We intend to bridge between the historic Labor movement and the new winds blowing on the street... With you, I know that it is possible to make real changes in Israeli society."



The younger generation of Labour Party supporters is dominant in the Yachimovich camp. She has received the support of many of the leaders of the recent social protests. Yachimovich has a healthy sense of social justice. She made a name for herself as a woman with a conscience about social matters, women's issues, and issues concerning religion and state that are intimately related to feminist issues.

Yachimovich is very opinionated, strong-willed and determined. A journalist by profession, she set a model as how NOT to conduct an interview. She hosted top radio shows in Israel, and made a name for herself as a sharp, sometimes relentless interviewer. She often used her interviewees to promote her own agendas, and was known to speak more than her interviewees. Her "questions" were far longer than the time she allowed her interviewees to answer. I was invited to appear in her talk shows a number of times, and declined all invitations. I did not think she was really interested in my views. Yachimovich is in the talking business, not the listening business.

When she decided to officially move to the other side of the microphone and run in the Labour primaries, people were not surprised. Her heart, mind and soul are in politics. As a journalist, she was a disguised politician. This is her true calling. I hope she has learnt to listen, as this quality is important in politics, more so when one advances to its

high echelons. Yachimovich is very bright, with a clear social agenda, and liberal-democratic-socialist views. She is the second woman to head the Labour party. The first was another strong-willed, sharp woman who became prime minister: Golda Meir. Meir was also known for her inability to listen. Israel paid a high price for this inability: The Yom Kippur War.

You ask me: Whether Yachimovich can be Israel's prime minister. My answer is: Yes. She can present a formidable challenge to Prime Minister Netanyahu. Labour is now on the rise, as usual when a leader is elected, and a new promise appears on the horizon. Polls give Labour 22 mandates if elections were to be held now, but there is a long way until elections, and Yachimovich is taking votes from the "wrong" camp, Kadima. Some 40 percent of voters are undecided as to how they would vote in the next elections. She needs to appeal to Likud supporters and sway them away from their dangerous, anti-social leadership. I think Yachimovich is capable of doing that. She loves to talk, and is quite convincing. Her views, if implemented, will do far more justice to the poorer classes of Israeli society who have been voting during the last decades for the Likud far more than they voted Labour. Yachimovich needs to convince them that they will be better off with her in the prime minister office.

In the last 2009 elections, the Labour Party received only 13 mandates, a historic nadir. In January 2011, former leader Ehud Barak split with the party, taking with him four MKs to establish Atzmaut (Independence). Thus presently Labour has only eight seats.

See <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4125799,00.html>

House of Lords for Israel

Four candidates ran in the Labour Party internal elections for leadership, including Amram Mitzna, who had failed as a former party chairman. He decided to run again, and failed miserably, coming in last, well behind Yachimovich and Peretz. People did not believe that this old horse is capable of learning new tricks. They did not wish to give him another try. Amir Peretz, one of the three architects of the most unfortunate Israel-Hezbollah War, advanced to the second round and I was hoping that people's memory was not THAT short. I now trust that Peretz's future is behind him.

The innovative British instituted the House of Lords designed for retired politicians who are unable to retire and/or find another job. Socialist Israel saw this option as too elitist. But give the Likud another decade in power, and House of Lords in Israel won't be that far-fetched.

European Association of Israel Studies

I attended the inaugural conference of the European Association of Israel Studies. The first session concerned Zionism. The main speakers were **Prof. Anita Shapira** and **Prof. Derek Penslar**. I put to both of them: There is a shared feeling, anxiety among lovers of Israel and hope shared by its enemies that the Zionist enterprise might not be sustainable in the long run. Israeli society is a society under constant and severe stress,

and the developments in the region make Israel even more vulnerable. I asked them whether this anxiety is justified, and if it is, what Israel can do to improve its condition. Shapira answered that Israel's fragility is a reflection of Jewish state of mind. We Jews tend to be worried. But there is a strong reality. Israel has withstood many challenges successfully, and it is here it to stay. Shapira maintained: "I have grandchildren in Israel and I certainly think there is a future for them".

Penslar said that the Zionist project was completed in the 1970s. He explained that the Zionist project was inherently revolutionary, and in the 1970s that revolution ran out of steam as Israel became a more affluent society, the Israeli public grew cynical about its leadership and ideology in the wake of the war, and the Labour party became sclerotic and corrupt. The coup de grace came from the Likud's victory in 1977, as Menachem Begin was the first major leader in the history of Zionism and Israel - including his ostensible mentor, Jabotinsky - to separate Zionism from a mission for individual and collective transformation. Previously, Zionism demanded that Jews undergo a sea change, via the Labour Zionist ideal of *haganah atsmit* (self-defence) through productive labour. Conversely, the Revisionist ideal was of chivalric *hadar* (splendour), or some combination of the two. But Begin's message to Israelis was that they were fine the way they were. Begin's counter-revolution was a kind of inverse Copernicanism. Whereas Zionism's founders forced Jews to attain certain universal western ideals, to attach themselves to the world while dialectically creating a uniquely Jewish state, Begin championed a lachrymose parochialism rooted in a notion of eternal, external *sinat yisra'el* (Israel hatred).



I am certainly encouraged by the positive predictions of these two senior historians. Their optimism relieved them from the necessity to explain what Israel needs to do to sustain its existence in a growingly hostile middle east.

I had a discussion with **Dr. Magnus Norell** who just came from Beirut, where he met senior Hezbollah officials who insisted that they will never recognise Israel. The meeting took place in a fairly shabby office, where the electricity went out a few times. Still, the Hezbollah men have an unshaken belief that Israel will disappear from the map. According to their estimation, this will happen around 2030. Why 2030? Because by then the conditions will be ripe. Because by then (if not before) Israel will become more and more isolated. The pressure around it will grow as Egypt and Jordan will retract from their peace agreements and adopt the Hezbollah radical line. What will happen to the Israeli Jews? They will face two options. Either they remain subjects in the Palestinian state, or leave to a destination of their choice. Hamas and Islamic Jihad embrace the same game plan. More violence and further strife are bound to happen.

There is not any real scope for compromises here either; the existence of Israel is an existential problem for, not only the Moslem world, but for the whole world. Therefore, Israel has to disappear. Either it will implode (because its weakness and lack of support from outside) or it will be conquered by military force. There are no 'third options' here.

The good news came from **Prof. Clive Jones** who estimates that Yemen won't fall into the hands of al Qaeda. Yemen is a tribal society, and tribal affiliation and sentiments are more powerful than jihadi ideology. Al Qaeda may infiltrate the tribal society and affect Yemen but it is not powerful enough to overtake Yemen.

Internet Responsibility Conference in Paris

I participated in LICRA and INACH annual conference on Virtual Citizenship and Social Responsibility. LICRA is the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme). INACH is the International Network Against Cyber Hate. The 2-day conference was held at the new state-of-the-art French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.



I delivered a speech on Media and Social Responsibility. I was the only academic speaker invited to talk in this highly selective conference. The other participants who arrived from fourteen countries were all members of NGOs combating racism and discrimination in their respective countries as well as representatives of concerned governments and leading Internet services.

At the end of the conference we drafted a Charter of Social Responsibility for Internet Service Providers and other concerned NGOs for a responsible Internet conduct.

Dan Shechtman Wins 2011 Nobel Prize in Chemistry



Another great achievement for Israeli academia. Professor Dan Shechtman has been named as the winner of the 2011 Nobel Prize in chemistry. He was awarded the prize for his discovery of patterns in atoms called quasicrystals.

Shechtman is a professor at Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, in Haifa, as well as an Associate of the U.S. Department of Energy's Ames Laboratory, and a professor at Iowa State University.

The Nobel Committee for Chemistry at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said Shechtman had discovered "quasicrystals", which it said were like "fascinating mosaics of the Arabic world reproduced at the level of atoms" and which never repeated themselves.

Up until then, scientists had thought the atom patterns inside crystals had to repeat themselves. Shechtman had to fight for recognition, and his way to achieve this was not easy. It is worth while telling his story.

In chemical terms, a crystal is a regular and repeating arrangement of atoms within a material. A quasicrystal presents a pattern that scientists had thought was impossible. The pattern of atoms within a material influences the material's physical properties. Shechtman was studying a mix of aluminum and manganese in his microscope when he found a pattern that never repeated itself and appeared contrary to the laws of nature. "His battle eventually forced scientists to reconsider their conception of the very nature of matter," the academy said.

Nancy B. Jackson, president of the American Chemical Society called Shechtman's discovery "one of these great scientific discoveries that go against the rules." When Shechtman announced his discovery of an unusual pattern of atoms, she said, other experts hesitated.

"People didn't think that this kind of crystal existed," she said. "They thought it was against the rules of nature." Only later did some scientists go back to some of their own inexplicable findings and realized they had seen quasicrystals but not realized what they had.

Staffan Normark, permanent secretary of the Royal Swedish Academy said Shechtman's discovery was one of the few Nobel Prize-winning achievements that can be dated to a single day.

Crystallographers always believed that all crystals have rotational symmetry, so that when they are rotated, they look the same. On April 8, 1982, while on a sabbatical at the U.S. National Bureau of Standards and Technology in Washington, D.C., Shechtman first observed crystals with 10 points — pentagonal symmetry, which most scientists said was impossible.

"I told everyone who was ready to listen that I had material with pentagonal symmetry. People just laughed at me," Shechtman said in a description of his work released by his university.



For months he tried to persuade his colleagues of his find, but they refused to accept it. Finally he was asked to leave his research group, and moved to another one within the institute. Shechtman returned to Israel, where he found one colleague prepared to work with him on an article describing the phenomenon. The article was at first rejected, but finally published in November 1984 — to uproar in the scientific world. Double Nobel winner Linus Pauling was among those who never accepted the findings.

"He would stand on those platforms and declare, 'Danny Shechtman is talking nonsense. There is no such thing as quasicrystals, only quasi-scientists.'" Shechtman said.

In 1987, friends of Shechtman in France and Japan succeeded in growing crystals large enough for x-rays to repeat and verify what he had discovered with the electron microscope.

"It borders on art," academy member Sara Snogerup Linse said of the quasicrystal patterns. "Humans have created similar patterns in macroscopic scale with the help of ceramic tiles, quilts, etc. But what was new was that it was found also in the world of molecules and atoms."

The academy said quasicrystals are being studied for use in new materials that convert heat to electricity: "There is research going on in the field of thermal-electric applications, where waste heat can be converted to electrical currents or energy," said Cesar Pay Gomez, structural chemistry expert at Uppsala University in Sweden and an advisor to the prize committee.

Israel has an impressive showing when it comes to Nobel winners, with seven winners in the past 20 years. Israeli scientists have won five nobels in the past decade, including the chemistry prize in 2009, which was awarded to Ada Yonath of the Weizmann Institute for her work on the ribosome.

Immune system researchers Bruce Beutler of the U.S. and Frenchman Jules Hoffmann shared the medicine prize with Canadian-born Ralph Steinman, who died three days before the announcement. U.S.-born scientists Saul Perlmutter, Brian Schmidt and Adam Riess won the physics prize for discovering that the universe is expanding at an accelerating pace.

Sources: <http://www.haaretz.com/misc/article-print-page/israel-s-dan-shechtman-wins-2011-nobel-prize-in-chemistry-1.388301?trailingPath=2.169%2C2.216%2C2.218%2C;http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2011/10/05/science/AP-EU-SCI-Nobel-Chemistry.html? r=1&emc=na>

Boycott China, Say Bioethicists



I have written about this issue in the past. Despite assurances that the practice is winding down, China persists in using organs from executed prisoners. In [an editorial in The Lancet](#), several prominent bioethicists have called upon doctors and scientists to boycott everything related to organ transplants.

"The time has come to bring normal scientific and medical interchange with China concerning transplantation to a halt. We call for a boycott on accepting papers at meetings, publishing papers in journals, and cooperating on research related to transplantation unless it can be verified that the organ source is not an executed prisoner. These steps are admittedly challenging. But the international biomedical community must firmly and boldly challenge the status quo--the barbarous practice of obtaining organs from executed prisoners."

One of the authors, **Arthur Caplan**, of the University of Pennsylvania, says that controversial practice will not stop unless international pressure is applied. In fact, he says, China is building an international medical city to capitalise on the medical tourism market with facilities for organ transplants. He declares:



"Using organs from prisoners who are executed on demand to get parts for rich visitors may bring currency to China but it also ought to bring shame. The Chinese people who need transplants deserve a better system as do the hapless prisoners who are being victimized. The rest of the world should say so loudly and clearly."

Source: "Time for a boycott of Chinese science and medicine pertaining to organ transplantation", *The Lancet*, Volume 378, Issue 9798, Page 1218, 1 October 2011
<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2811%2961536-5/fulltext>

My New Article

Freedom of Expression, Internet Responsibility and Business Ethics: The Yahoo! Saga and Its Implications

Abstract

In the late 1990s, the Internet seemed a perfect medium for business: a facilitator of unlimited economical propositions to people without any regulatory limitations. Cases like *Yahoo!* mark the beginning of the end of that illusion. They demonstrate that ISPs have to respect domestic state legislation in order to avoid legal risks. Yahoo! was wrong to ignore French national laws and the plea to remove Nazi memorabilia from its auction site. Its legal struggle proved futile and may have harmed its business. This essay argues for the adoption of standards of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR considerations may trump some forms of anti-social, highly offensive expression.

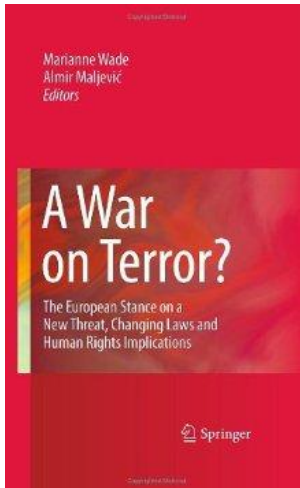
Keywords: Internet, Yahoo!, Nazi memorabilia, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), business ethics

The article is available at
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/gk777707jp2485r5/fulltext.pdf>

New Books

Marianne Wade and Almir Mljevic (eds.), *A War on Terror* (NY: Springer, 2011).

This book provides a comprehensive, up-to-date discussion on European efforts to curb modern forms of terrorism today. It explores recent developments in the war on terrorism, highlights the new threats, and probes the emergence of new, supra-national actors. The book also discusses the implications of the war on terror on human rights throughout Europe.



The book consists of four unequal parts: The first part (2 chapters) discusses German police perspectives, and terrorism on the Internet. The second part (4 chapters) concerns the role of the UN in the prevention and repression of international terrorism, the role of the European Union, and policies as how to treat victims of terror. Part 3 (5 chapters) is about the war on terror and its implications on human rights in Slovenia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Germany, Croatia and the United Kingdom. Part 4 (7 chapters) is titled “Disappearing Rights”, about the price that we citizens pay as a result of governmental counter-terrorism policies.

This is a valuable resource for scholars, legislators, decision-makers and human rights activists.

I thank Springer for sending me a copy.

Things that Are Said to Disappear in Our Lifetime

Some things are said to be part of the “old” world, and in fifty years time at most they will be gone. Some projections make sense. Other less. Some I pity. Some I do not.

I would not regret the passing of the Post Office, the Check

I will regret the passing of the Newspaper and of the book as well as the elimination of privacy.

I find it a bit curious that the projections also speak of the death of Land Line Telephone, of the entire music industry and of the television.

Movie of the Month – Closing the Ring



This is a wonderful love story, powerful and tragic. A young man and a woman fall in love. The man has to go to war. The woman is left behind. The man, Teddy, commits his friend Chuck to take care of Ethel if he doesn't return. Chuck loves Ethel. She does not love him. There is a third man, Jack, who also loves Ethel but is too proud to tell or to admit. Teddy does not return. At the tender age of 21, Ethel feels her life is over. Ten years later, she finally marries Chuck. Jack marries another girl, and another, and a third. He keeps an eye on Ethel.

The film starts when Chuck dies. Ethel does not mourn. Chuck was a good man, but she never loved him. At the same time, a young man who is fascinated by airplanes and loves the word "fantastic" finds in Belfast a ring that belonged to Teddy. He searches for Ethel, and finds her. He wants to close the ring. Ethel needs to close the ring. So does Jack. Both need redemption. Both need to confront their deep, hidden feelings. Both need to overcome the huge shadow of Teddy.

This is a moving film, with great actors (Shirley MacLaine, Christopher Plummer and Martin McCann), great story, sensitive director (Richard Attenborough) and a great song ("Lost without You" by Amy Pearson). One of the rare movies I watched more than once, and enjoyed both times equally.

Monthly Poem

When It Comes

When it comes
 Shaking grounds under feet
 Trembling existence
 Reaching inner
 Filling your cells
 Body, soul, heart.

Open the door
 Take out the blankets
 Cherish like a drop in the desert

Embrace gently and share
It's easy, just be yourself
Make the most of it.

Raphael Cohen-Almagor

Gems of the Month (4)

1. Paris



Paris is a city I always enjoy. It has so much to offer. Every visit reveals new discoveries. Beautiful architecture, gardens, museums, churches. It offers the best food in the world, aesthetic flower shops, book shops everywhere, galleries, music, and the people speak a language that rhymes in my ears.

2. August Rodin

My favourite sculpture. Amazing talent. So real results. Can't but admire.



3. Josh Groban



Josh Groban is blessed with a wonderful, rich voice. This month I was fortunate to see him in concert in the wonderful Manchester Concert Hall, a perfect place to enjoy Groban's singing. Groban enjoys entertaining his audience not only by singing. For part of the show, he arranged on-stage sofas for two young girls (5 and 8 y-o) and a young couple to watch him singing from the best possible position, while `enjoying a glass of wine and, in the case of the young girls, glasses of milk.

Enjoy some of his hits at http://www.metacafe.com/topics/josh_groban/

4. St. Martin in the Fields



During the late 1980 I taught at the Spiro Institute in London. I used to arrive early in order to enjoy the free luncheon concerts at **St. Martin in the Fields**. Last month, after many years, I had the opportunity to attend such a concert evoking some twenty old-years memories. Five talented musicians, Soloists of the Coldstream Guards Band, played for one hour in a packed church. I especially enjoyed Jacques Ibert's Deux Interludes for Flute, Violin and Piano. A short piece of two movements -- andante expressive, slow and charming, while the second allegro vivo, full of life, with noticeable Spanish influence. Beautiful.

Lost Generation?

Lost generation? You decide whether the forward version is right, or maybe the backward version? http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=42E2fAWM6rA

Wake Up Call in Paris



RCA: I'd like to ask for a wake-up call, please.

Receptionist: Yes; at what time?

RCA: Quarter to eight please.

Noise of flipping papers

RCA: Hello?

Receptionist: Wake-up call, room 710 at four forty five.

RCA alarmed: No. I ask for quarter to eight, 0745.

Receptionist: Oh sorry; room 745 at 710.

RCA: My room number is 710. And I'd like a wake-up call at 0745.

Receptionist: 710 at 0475.

RCA: No. Please 0745.

Receptionist: Ahah yes, 0745.

RCA suspicious: What did you write?

Receptionist: Room 710 at 0745.

RCA: Thank you.

A few hours later, the phone rings.

Reception: This is your wake-up call.

RCA: Thank you

I open the light and look at my watch that, to my complete horror, says 0445.

RCA: I asked for a wake-up call at quarter to eight. Why did you wake me up now?

Reception: Ohuu, I am really sorry. There was a mistake. I will wake you up at 0815.

RCA: You know what? Wake me at 0730.

Light Side

Extracts from television and radio programmes:

BEG, BORROW OR STEAL (BBC2)

Jamie Theakston: Where do you think Cambridge University is?

Contestant: Geography isn't my strong point.

Theakston: There's a clue in the title.

Contestant: Leicester.

BBC NORFOLK

Stewart White: Who had a worldwide hit with What A Wonderful World?

Contestant: I don't know.

White: I'll give you some clues: what do you call the part between your hand and your elbow?

Contestant: Arm.

White: Correct. And if you're not weak, you're...?

Contestant: Strong.

White: Correct - and what was Lord Mountbatten's first name?

Contestant: Louis.

White: Well, there we are then. So who had a worldwide hit with the song 'What A Wonderful World'?

Contestant: Frank Sinatra?

BEACON RADIO (WOLVERHAMPTON)

DJ Mark: For £10, what is the nationality of the Pope?

Ruth from Rowley Regis: I think I know that one. Is it Jewish?

ROCK FM (PRESTON)

Presenter: Name a film starring Bob Hoskins that is also the name of a famous painting by Leonardo Da Vinci.

Contestant: Who Framed Roger Rabbit?

THE BIGGEST GAME IN TOWN (ITV) Steve Le Fevre: What was signed to bring World War I to an end In 1918?

Contestant: Magna Carta?

JAMES O'BRIEN SHOW (LBC)

O'Brien: How many kings of England have been called Henry?

Contestant: Er, well, I know there was a Henry the Eighth ... ER ..ER .. Three?

CHRIS SEARLE SHOW (BBC RADIO BRISTOL)

Searle: In which European country is Mount Etna ?

Caller: Japan.

Searle: I did say which European country, so in case you didn't hear that, I can let you try again.

Caller: Er.... Mexico ?

LUNCHTIME SHOW (BRMB)

Presenter: What religion was Guy Fawkes?

Contestant: Jewish.

Presenter: That's close enough.

PAUL WAPPAT (BBC RADIO NEWCASTLE) Paul Wappat: How long did the Six-Day War between Egypt and Israel last? Contestant (after long pause): Fourteen days.

DARYL DENHAM'S DRIVETIME (VIRGIN RADIO) Daryl Denham: In which country would you spend shekels?

Contestant: Holland?

Denham: Try the next letter of the alphabet.

Contestant: Iceland ? Ireland?

Denham (helpfully): It's a bad line. Did you say Israel?

Contestant: No.

THE VAULT

Melanie Sykes: What is the name given to the condition where the sufferer can fall asleep at any time?

Contestant: Nostalgia.

I thank Lord Philip Norton for these gems.

Peace, Freedom and Love,

Yours as ever,

Rafi

My last communications are available on <http://almagor.blogspot.com/>
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