

## Orthodox Wedding

(Continued from page 38)

Israel must remain a fortress that's open to them.

By Israeli law, they are entitled to citizenship as my children even if they weren't Jewish. But laws can be changed — and by the same group of people who are retroactively declaring people non-Jewish.

Granted, these are pretty somber motives for getting hitched. But after studying our *ketubah* with our rabbi, I feel entitled to some pessimism.

"It's basically a prenup," the rabbi told me about the text written on parchment, which states the man is responsible for the woman's well-being and specifies what alimony he'd pay her if he divorces her. "Nobody likes a prenup, so I don't call it that. And it contains some rosy talk about the joys of marriage. But make no mistake, this document is about what happens if it all goes wrong."

Then there's the fact that as Jews, we're told to remember the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem when we wed. That's why, traditionally, Jewish men break a glass under the *huppah*, or canopy.

Living as a Jew in Europe, a graveyard for 6 million Holocaust victims, destruction is never too far from my mind.

Such pessimism also extends to Israel, where despite phenomenal successes and inspiring expressions of unity, polarization in society has joined neighborly

hostility as a major threat to a viable future in a homeland for all Jews.

Still, I think of our Jewish wedding also as acknowledgment and appreciation of the tremendous privileges with which I've been blessed and seek to preserve.

The first is living with the best partner I could've hoped for. The second is our children's place in the world's only Jewish country. In joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, and hopefully long after death does us part. ✧



## New Books

(Continued from page 37)

Several scenes convey the young Regina as a kind of Disney-like Belle, greeting peddlers at the market, and clutching a book, daydreaming, as she crosses the street.

The afterword tells of the tragic ending of Jonas' life in 1944, where she was killed in the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. It would be nearly 30 years later until another woman, the American Sally Priesand, is ordained, in the Reform movement. Today there are nearly 1,000 women rabbis around the world, among them the book's author, who herself was a trailblazer as the first woman to be ordained as a rabbi in the Reconstructionist movement. Eisenberg Sasso also is the award-winning author of the best-selling children's book "God's Paintbrush."



**A Moon for Moe and Mo**  
Jane Breskin Zalben; illustrated by Mehrdokht Amini  
Charlebridge; ages 3-7

In this gloriously illustrated, uplifting story for these times, two boys — one Jewish and one Muslim — from Brooklyn's Flat-

bush Avenue meet at a Middle Eastern grocery shop. It's a rare year when Rosh Hashanah and Ramadan coincide in the fall. As their mothers shop, the boys run through the aisles, overflowing with spices, fruits, olives, and sugar-dusted candies, causing minor mischief and striking up the beginnings of a friendship. As the endearing story unfolds, the friendship blossoms and inspires their families to celebrate together.

Jane Breskin Zalben, an award-winning author, adds to her considerable collection of engaging stories that have enlivened the Jewish holidays for a generation of readers — "Beni's Family Treasury" and "Pearl's Passover," among others. Mehrdokht Amini's colorful collage illustrations burst off the page and bring the bustling neighborhood to life. Back pages explain the holidays and include recipes for each.

**And There Was Evening and There Was Morning**  
Harriet Cohen Helfand and El-lan Kahan Zager; illustrations by Ellen Kahan Zager  
Kar-Ben; ages 3-8

The story of Creation unfolds in lyrical rhyming couplets in this day-by-day biblical interpretation that introduces young kids to the Jewish origin story of how the world came to be. On day one, God brought light from darkness: "Our beautiful world was under-way."

In this retelling, God is referred to in gender-neutral language. Older kids will be engrossed with



Kahan Zager's detailed illustrations, which are drawn using Hebrew letters and words. The back page is a simple illustrated dictionary of Hebrew and English words.

**The Creation Book**  
Chani Gansburg; illustrated by Dena Ackerman  
Hachai Publishing; ages 2-6

Bold, bright illustrations will dazzle young readers in this story of Creation told in lively rhyming couplets that evoke each day's creation. The double-page spread for day five is a swirl of creatures from the oceans and sky: "Fins and scales. Flapping tails. A school of fish. A pod of whales."

Verse and art are well paired in this story, which is geared to families in the haredi Orthodox community, using the word Hashem, for God, with the He pronoun. ✧

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