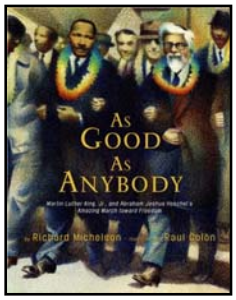
THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LIBRARIES NOTABLE BOOKS OF JEWISH CONTENT FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS 2009

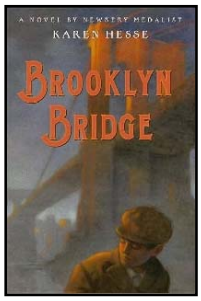
These outstanding books were selected from among the over one hundred thirty titles evaluated by the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee of the Association of Jewish Libraries during 2008. The Committee recommends them for library, classroom, and home use. Visit www.SydneyTaylorBookAward.org for more information about the Sydney Taylor Book Awards.

THE SYDNEY TAYLOR BOOK AWARD WINNER FOR YOUNGER READERS:



Michelson, Richard. *As Good As Anybody: Martin Luther King, Jr. and Abraham Joshua Heschel's Amazing March Toward Freedom.* Illustrations by Raul Colon. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, 2008. ISBN 978-0-375-83335-9.
This fictionalized parallel biography of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, presents a beautiful and inspiring tribute to a little known alliance in American history. Colon's stunning illustrations with subtle coloring bring the text, and the message of persistence, justice, and brotherhood, to life. (Grades 2-5)

THE SYDNEY TAYLOR BOOK AWARD WINNER FOR OLDER READERS:

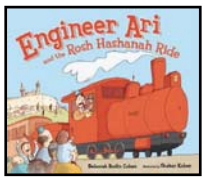


Hesse, Karen. *Brooklyn Bridge*. New York: Feiwel & Friends, an imprint of Macmillan, 2008. ISBN 978-0-312-37886-8.
While his family left the anti-Semitism of Russia to build the American dream, Joey Michtom's dream is to visit the glittering Coney Island. Crafting a story from the spark of a true event, the invention of the Teddy Bear in 1903, Hesse masterfully weaves multiple themes of hard-work, survival, homelessness, and familial dedication. (Grades 5-8)

THE SYDNEY TAYLOR BOOK AWARD WINNER FOR TEEN READERS:

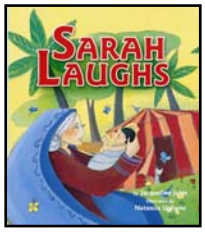
Zenatti, Valerie. *A Bottle in the Gaza Sea*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2008. ISBN 978-1-59990-200-5.
This honest yet hopeful story about the relationship between an Israeli girl and a Palestinian boy via e-mail and instant messaging conveys the confusion, anger, exhaustion, and depression felt by many young people during the 2003 Intifada. (Grades 9-12)

SYDNEY TAYLOR HONOR AWARD WINNERS FOR YOUNGER READERS:



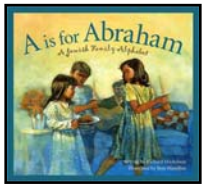
Cohen, Deborah Bodin. *Engineer Ari and the Rosh Hashanah Ride.* Illustrations by Shahar Kober. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, an imprint of Lerner, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8225-8648-7.

Ari is selected to engineer the first train between Jaffa and Jerusalem. Filled with pride, he boasts to his friends and neglects to say good-bye before he sets off. As the train stops to collect the necessary items to celebrate the Jewish New Year, Ari is reminded of the true meaning of the holiday. Charming, colorful illustrations give the reader a sense of what Israel's countryside might have looked like in 1892. (Pre-School-Grade 2)



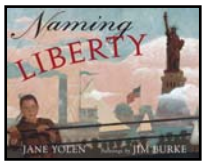
Jules, Jacqueline. *Sarah Laughs.* Illustrations by Natascia Ugliano. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, an imprint of Lerner, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8225-9934-0.

The story of Sarah, the biblical matriarch, is told beginning with her childhood in Ur and continuing through her marriage to Abraham, their journey to Canaan, and the eventual birth of Isaac. Vibrant illustrations show her sweet, generous and loving personality, as well as the starry nights and windswept deserts on the way to Canaan. (Kindergarten-Grade 3)



Michelson, Richard. *A is for Abraham: A Jewish Family Alphabet*. Illustrations by Ron Mazellan. Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, an imprint of Gale, 2008. ISBN 978-1-58536-322-3.

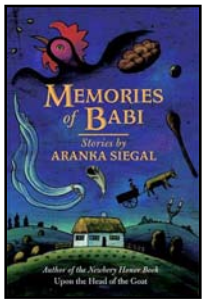
From A for Abraham to Z for Zayde, this alphabet book, illustrated by fluid, realistic paintings, provides a wealth of information about Jewish culture, history, personalities, holidays, customs, and ceremonies. (Grades 1-4)



Yolen, Jane. *Naming Liberty*. Paintings by Jim Burke. New York: Philomel Books, an imprint of Penguin, 2008. ISBN 978-0-399-24250-2.

Parallel stories tell the arrival of two young ladies to the United States - Gitl, the daughter of a Russian family, who decide to emigrate to avoid the pogroms and persecution of Czarist Russia and the Statue of Liberty, conceived and developed by the young French artist Frederic Auguste Bartholdi as a commemoration for America's centennial birthday. Illustrations in counterpart oil paint panels reflect the 19th century Eastern European village against the more modern cities of Paris and New York. (Grades 1-4)

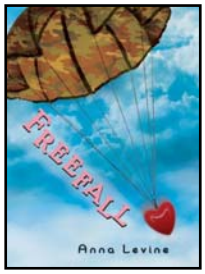
SYDNEY TAYLOR HONOR AWARD WINNER FOR OLDER READERS:



Siegal, Aranka. *Memories of Babi*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2008. ISBN 978-0-374-39978-8.

Eight short episodic stories reflect the author's childhood in a small village in Hungary and incorporate Jewish values of kindness, generosity, honesty, help for the less fortunate, and special moments filled with a little adventure, amusing escapades, and lots of love. (Grades 3-6)

SYDNEY TAYLOR HONOR AWARD WINNER FOR TEEN READERS:



Levine, Anna. *Freefall*. New York: Greenwillow Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2008. ISBN 978-0-06-157654-6.

Aggie Jacobs, a typical eighteen-year-old Israeli girl, decides to try out for an elite female combat unit in the Israeli army. Realistic dialogue and a first person narrative provide a genuine look at the realities of Israeli military life through the eyes of a young woman. (Grades 8-12)

NOTABLE BOOKS FOR YOUNGER READERS:

Kimmel, Eric. *Mysterious Guests: A Sukkot Story*. Illustrations by Katya Krenina. New York: Holiday House, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8234-1893-0.

During the festival of Sukkot, Eben builds a fancy Sukkah, but he makes the poor stand in the corner and eat leftovers. His brother Ezra's Sukkah is plain, but he welcomes all who come with a full heart. When the *ushpizin* visit they bestow an identical blessing – may this Sukkah's outside be like it's inside - with very different results. (Kindergarten-Grade 3)

Levine, Anna. *Jodie's Hanukkah Dig*. Illustrations by Knesia Topaz. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, an imprint of Lerner, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8225-7391-3.

Jodie wants to be an archeologist in Israel like her father. When they visit a dig in Modi'in, she finds a way to help out and makes an important discovery related to the history of Hanukkah. (Kindergarten-Grade 3)

Ofanansky, Allison. *Harvest of Light*. Photographs by Eliyahu Alpern. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, an imprint of Lerner, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8225-7389-0.

From the first spring blossoms to the harvesting of green olives before Sukkot, an Israeli family works together throughout the year, culminating in the celebration of Hanukkah with flickering wicks floating in the precious oil they have produced together. (Grades 1-4)

Rouss, Sylvia. *Sammy Spider's First Shavuot*. Illustrations by Katherine Janus Kahn. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, an imprint of Lerner, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8225-7224-4.

Continuing the popular series, Sammy Spider learns about Shavuot, first with the traditional blintz and fruit recipes, then with the holiday's significance, and finally with a little experimentation of his own. (Preschool-Grade 2)

Schreiber, Elisheva. *My Tzitzis Book*. Illustrations by Batsheva Ravad; translated by Sherie Gross. New York: Feldheim Publishers, 2008. ISBN 978-1-59826-155-4.

This informative explanation of the meaning of wearing a four-corner garment with *tzitzis* is augmented with creative clay figures of scenes of boys and men wearing their *tallis katan* beneath their everyday clothing. (Kindergarten-Grade 3)

Ziefert, Harriet. *Hanukkah Haiku*. Illustrations by Karla Gudeon. Maplewood, NJ: Blue Apple Books, 2008. ISBN 978-1-934706-33-6.

Eight haikus reflect on specific aspects of Hanukkah such as candle lighting, dreidel spinning, and latke frying. The simple poetry is embellished with rich and deeply colored paintings and graduated paper size is used to uncover each new candle. (Preschool-Grade 2)

NOTABLE BOOKS FOR OLDER READERS:

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *The Boy Who Dared: A Novel Based on the True Story of a Hitler Youth*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-439-68013-4.

A powerful work of historical fiction portraying key moments in the life of a real German teenager during World War II. As he waits in prison, Helmuth Hubener reflects on events that led to the day of his execution for the crimes of listening to foreign newscasts, creating and distributing pamphlets, and for his resistance to the Nazi Party. (Grades 6-9)

Durango, Julie. ***The Walls of Cartegena.*** **Iillustrations by Tom Pohrt. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2008. ISBN 978-1-416-94102-6.**
Because of his intelligence and facility with languages, 13-year-old Calepino escapes the usual fate of slaves delivered by ship from Africa to Cartagena (Colombia), and grows up to become a protégé of a kind Jesuit priest, an interpreter, and a helper in the leper colony where he befriends a Jewish doctor, a convert to Christianity. (Grades 4-6)

Feinstein, Edward M. ***Capturing the Moon*****. Springfield, NJ: Behrman House, 2008. ISBN 978-0-87441-840-8.**
Each story in this collection includes a short description of the value presented and follow-up discussion questions. Stories are grouped into six categories: "What Really Matters in Life?" "Doing What's Right," "It's Up to You," "Teachers and Friends," "Hidden Truths," and "The Miracle of Jewish Life." (Grades 5-8)

Fitzgerald, Stephanie. ***Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass: Igniting the Nazi War Against Jews*****. Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point Books, 2008. ISBN 978-0-7565-3489-9.**
Created for school research, this well-designed book includes clear, accurate information, historic photographs with informative captions, a glossary, bibliography, source notes, and timeline. Personal reflections and memories by eyewitnesses add to the impact of the account, which directly confronts Nazi lies about the Jews. (Grades 5-8)

Herman, Charlotte. ***My Chocolate Year*****. Illustrations by LeUyen Pham. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2008. ISBN 978-1-4169-3341-0.**
Fifth grader Dorrie Meyers embarks on an exciting school year with a favorite teacher and the Sweet Semester dessert and essay contest. World War II has just ended and when her cousin Victor, the sole Holocaust survivor of the family, comes to live with her family, he shares a recipe from his family's bakery to help her with the contest. (Grades 3-5)

Morpurgo, Michael. ***The Mozart Question*****. Illustrations by Michael Forman. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2008. ISBN 978-1-4063-0648-4.**
Paolo Levi, a fictional Italian violin prodigy, tells the secret tale of his parents' experience as musicians in a concentration camp orchestra. (Grades 4-7)

Nobleman, Marc Tyler. ***Boys of Steel: The Creators of Superman.*** **Illustrations by Ross McDonald. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, 2008. ISBN 978-0-3758-3802-6.**
A picture book biography of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, two shy, nerdy, bespectacled Jewish teens from Cleveland who succeed in creating an American icon of bravery, super strength, and altruistic invincibility. (Grades 2-5)

Shahak, Bat-Chen. ***The Bat-Chen Diaries: Selected Writings*****. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, an imprint of Lerner, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8225-8807-8.**
This is the published diary, including poems, letters, and eulogies, of an Israeli girl who was murdered by a suicide bomber in Tel Aviv's Disengoff Center at Purim on her 15th birthday.

Sofer, Barbara. ***Keeping Israel Safe: Serving in the Israel Defense Forces*****. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, an imprint of Lerner, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8225-7221-3.**
Four different experiences told through the voices of individual Israeli teenagers, two girls and two boys, preparing to enter Israeli military service recount the history and many levels and opportunities available for youth reaching the required draft age. (Grades 4-6)

Stuchner, Joan Betty. *Honey Cake*. Illustrations by Cynthia Nugent. New York: Random House, a Stepping Stone Book, 2008. ISBN 978-0-375-85189-6.
This easy chapter book gently introduces readers to World War II and the Danish resistance through the story of 10-year-old David who lives in Copenhagen during the German occupation. (Grades 3-5)

NOTABLE BOOKS FOR TEENS:

Friedman, Robin. *Nothing*. Woodbury, MN: Flux, 2008. ISBN 978-0-7387-1304-5.
In alternating chapters, Parker Rabinowitz and his younger sister Danielle gradually reveal the terrible secret – a serious eating disorder – that hides behind Parker's good looks, great grades, ambitious college resume, pre-med plans, and success with girls. (Grades 8-12)

Laskier, Rutka. *Rutka's Notebook: A Voice from the Holocaust*. Time, Inc. Home Entertainment, 2008. ISBN 978-1-6032-0019-6.
A Jewish girl's diary, describing her life in the days before her family was sent to Auschwitz, was hidden under Polish floorboards in 1943, retrieved in 1945, and miraculously rediscovered only in 2006, allowing Zahava Laskier Scherz to explore the brief life of the half-sister she never knew. (Grades 7-10)

Lieberman, Leanne. *Gravity.* Toronto: Orca Book Publishers, 2008. ISBN 978-1-55469-049-7.
When Elisheva, a nature-loving sophomore in an all-girls Jewish high school, feels a sexual attraction for Lindsay, a girl she meets during a summer by the lake, all of her Orthodox upbringing and observances come into question. (Grades 9-12)

Matas, Carol. *The Freak*. Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2008. ISBN 978-1-55263-930-4.
When 15-year-old Jade awakens from a life-threatening illness and finds she can see the future, her life takes some very strange turns. This is the first book in a series, which continues with *Visions* and *Far*.

NOTABLE BOOKS FOR ALL AGES:

Takac, Esther. *Genesis—the Book with Seventy Faces: A Guide for the Family.* Illustrations by Anna Pignataro. New York: Pitspopany Press, 2008. ISBN 978-1-932687-92-7.
This beautifully designed guide, filled with watercolors, pen and ink, and crayon drawings, illuminates the twelve *parashiot* of the book of Genesis and provides a wonderful resource to learn, study, and interpret from the perspective of the sages, modern scholars, *midrash*, legends, and kabbalah.

Ruzansky, Rebecca Edid. *Celebrating with Jewish Crafts.* Photographs by Roberto Zeballos-Peralta. Rebecca Edid Ruzansky, 2008. ISBN 978-0-615-17114-2.
Crafts for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, Hanukkah, Purim, Passover, and Shavuot are presented with explicit instructions, clear color photographs and tips on techniques and supplies. A Jewish crafter's dream!

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