

SCIENCE-Fiction Fanzine

Vol. XXVII, No. 04; April, 2015

## חדשות האגודה – אפריל 2015 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy 2015

**Don't miss the Spring "Olamot" SF event: Khol haMoed Pesakh:**

**Tel Aviv 6-8 April 2015 – see: <http://2015.olamot-con.org.il/>**



**כנס "עולמות" למדע בדיוני ולפנטזיה, בימים שני שלישי ורביעי 8-6 באפריל 2015 – חול המועד פסח**  
 במתחם אשכול פיס, רח' הארבעה 3, תל-אביב. פרטים נוספים ניתן למצוא [באתר הכנס](#) ובדף [הכנס בפייסבוק](#).  
**מועדון הקריאה של חודש אפריל** יתקיים בכנס "עולמות", במתחם הפונדק, ביום רביעי, 8 לאפריל, בשעה 12:00.  
 יעסוק בזוכה פרס גפן "האלף בית של השטן" מאת דריל גרגורי. מנחות: שלי שחף ודפנה קירש. הכניסה חופשית  
 ואינה כרוכה בתשלום או בחברות באגודה, ואינה מותנית בהגעה למפגשים קודמים או עתידיים.  
**מועדון חודש מאי** יעסוק בזוכה פרס גפן "כל סיפור הוא חתול פתאום" מאת גבריאלה אביגור-רוותם.

**כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים בלוח האירועים** (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד)

לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף לרשימת התפוצה או לדף האגודה

**בפייסבוק**, <http://www.sf-f.org.il> Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site:

### In this issue:

- 1) Another great person in our world of Fantasy & SF has passed away in March: The inimitable Terry Pratchett, author of tens of Discworld books and other great stories as well.
  - 2) A special contribution on Pratchett's "Johnny and the Bomb" by Bezalel Podolak
  - 3) Final installment on Zombies...but only the first part (see why below)
  - 4) We're pushing off Aharon's "Sheer Science" pick-of-the-month to the upcoming issue (same reason as 2...)
- Leybl Botwinik (CyberCozen assistant editor).

### In Memorium: Terry Pratchett (1948-2015)



We received the news that the beloved and prolific fantasy writer Terry Pratchett passed away last month with deep sadness. He leaves behind a legacy of tens of fantasy and science fiction books and several movies based on his works.

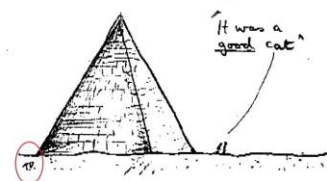
We hope to present some of his contributions to the Science-fiction and Science-fantasy related genre in this and future issues, and we invite our readers to share their thoughts and SF/Science-related reviews, etc.

Here's something from Devra, one of our readers:

...While I never met Leonard Nimoy, I did sit next to Terry Pratchett on a panel once---it must have been when WorldCon was in Boston (1989). I don't remember anything about this panel except that Pratchett and I were both bored by whoever was doing most of the talking, and he doodled a cartoon, in pencil, on his pad of paper:

A very large Egyptian pyramid, with two comparatively tiny people walking away from it. One is saying, "It was a good cat." I asked if I could have it, and he kindly initialed it for me. I could send you a copy if you'd like. It doesn't look like much, but I guess it's vintage, now that it's 25 years old.

I don't think I've ever even read Pratchett, but I can testify that he was charming and funny in person. — Devra



From a simple google search <https://www.google.co.il/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=terry%20pratchett%20books> we have:

Sir Terence David John "Terry" Pratchett, Kt, OBE was an English author of fantasy novels, especially comical works. He is best known for his Discworld series of about 40 volumes. [Wikipedia](#)

Pratchett, who has sold more than 85 million books worldwide in 37 languages,<sup>[4][5]</sup> was the UK's best-selling author of the 1990s

**Born:** April 28, 1948, Beaconsfield, United Kingdom

**Died:** March 12, 2015, Broad Chalke, United Kingdom

**Spouse:** Lyn Pratchett (m. 1968–2015)

**Movies:** The Colour of Magic, Johnny and the Dead, Troll Bridge

**Books:** The Colour of Magic, Good Omens, Mort, more

**TV shows**

Going Postal 2010

The Colour of Magic Since 2008

Terry Pratchett's Hogfather 2006

Wyrd Sisters Since 1997

The Guardian website includes an extensive set of links to Pratchett related sites, articles, etc.

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/terrypratchett>

This one is especially touching – Graffiti in Pratchett's honour/memory:

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/gallery/2015/apr/03/terry-pratchett-graffiti-tribute-london-brick-lane>

## Special contribution:

### Terry Pratchett and his Book "Johnny and the Bomb"

- By Bezalel Podolak

#### Pratchett and his Discworld

Terry Pratchett, who has just recently passed away, was a renowned author of international acclaim. He is, perhaps, most famous for his satirical/fantasy novels based on the unique imaginary world of his own creation – the Discworld – where science is effectively replaced by magic. Here, all things are made to be so stereotypical that you can only read, smile, and finally laugh out loud.

Terry Pratchett was so into playing his part in the creation of his fantasy world that upon being knighted, he decided to mine some iron ore, smelt it in a homemade kiln, and forge his own sword. His friends even managed to help him acquire a small piece of meteorite so that his sword would contain a rare iron of perhaps mystical significance...

You can find pictures of him on the Web in full wizard garb (like those probably worn in his famous Unseen University). It is probable that upon dying, he found himself looking down at his own body and thinking "So that is what it's really like.." and then waiting to hear a tall, gaunt, dark robed, scythe-wielding figure say something like "MR PRATCHETT? I

HAVE LONG BEEN WAITING TO HAVE A WORD WITH YOU..." whereas what he really heard was "BINKY? - YOU MUST BE JOKING!"

Those who have read his works will be forever in his debt for the unique experience his novels have to offer. Those who haven't (yet) – don't know what they're missing.

The typical protagonist of Terry Pratchett's novels is a unique form of antihero. This person is usually someone who is not out to save the world but feels a measure of responsibility to it. He is usually someone who defines himself as a coward and yet when he is forced into undesirable situations, displays his true colors as a stalwart hero, standing boldly in the face

of destruction and doing what he must to save the world.

Often, the protagonist has some special power, luck, or understanding that lets him stand out from the rest of the population and eventually leads to his saving everyone. Arguably, there are exception to this norm. It might be worth pointing out here, for those who are interested, that several of Terry Pratchett's novels have been made into films, some with live actors and some as animated cartoons. Terry Pratchett's hand in these films is already evident in the opening titles, which invariably include the statement: "Mucked about by... Terry Pratchett".

### Johnny and the Bomb

For those unfamiliar with the series, Johnny is a poor kid from a poor English family. He is not handsome or athletic, nor is he exceptionally intelligent. He does have a very pure and honest soul and, apparently, he has a special spiritual affinity which tends to involve him and his friends in unique adventures. His friends include other teenagers all juvenile delinquents or on the verge of being so, as well as an incredibly intelligent, talented, and conceited girl. Invariably, the adventures end in such a way that although Johnny is the undisputed hero, the world will never know that, and even his friends will probably write off the adventure as being imaginary at best.

For those interested in reading the book - perhaps it is best to stop here...

Time travel is a subject that has been addressed by science fiction from many different aspects and angles. Changing history can lead to all kinds of potential paradoxes and complications. In this volume of the trilogy, Johnny and his friends find a mysterious wagon filled with what look to be garbage bags, but are, in fact, "bags of time". The wagon takes them back in time to England of World War II.

The alien surroundings of WWII England contrast sharply with the appearances and culture of Johnny's friends, one of whom tends to wear swastikas, and walks around with his head shaved. Fate, though, has brought Johnny back in time for a purpose. A bomb is supposed to drop on a certain street in his hometown and this bomb will kill several people. Johnny must warn the dwellers before the bomb hits in order that they might reach shelter in time.

Indeed, one of Johnny's friends gets stuck in the past and shows up as an older guy to convince Johnny of the necessity of this. The flow of time and alternate universes are thus explained by the analogy of "the trouser legs of time".

Johnny's unique spirituality lets him retain the memories of different times and even lets him time travel without the aid of garbage bags, albeit only for short distances...

The book confronts the reader with stigmas, the follies of fads, paradoxes of time travel, the communication gaps between generations, a wide variety of humorous situations and – like all of Pratchett books – a jolly good time. Certainly well worth the read.

\*\* \*\* \*

*From the Editors: Due to the length of the Final 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Zombie series, and the extra material we've added in this issue in memory of Terry Pratchett, we're only presenting the first part of it.*

### Zombies: The Jewish perspective

## UNDEAD Reborn – About Zombies – PART VI (A)

### 7 Did You Hear the One about the Jewish Zombie...?

A Jewish Zombie stumbles around, but in the end, captures his latest victim, an elderly Jew. He is about to take a big bite out of the man, when he suddenly stops. The victim, still in a state of shock, but suddenly both wary and curious, considers this an affront: "Vot's wrong –

*I'm not good enough for you to eat me?"* and the Zombie answers him in a gruff and scary voice: "...Yom ... Kippur..." (The holiest day in the Jewish calendar – and a day of fasting).

In previous chapters, we touched on various aspects of the Zombie popular culture: from drinks, to music, to the Zombie walk, films and comics. We hinted that we'd expand on any Jewish-related connections, and in the previous chapter, we even presented the ad for the Zombie Yiddish word game.

"...The Yiddish + Zombie Magnetic Poetry Sets contain over 500 Yiddish + living dead word magnets. Stick to your fridge or any steel surface. Includes a mini-dictionary of Yiddish words."

It took me a while to figure how all this was connected (i.e. Zombies to Yiddish), when it hit me, and I added the following line to my previous write-up:

**\*\* OMG! I just figured out the connection: They think Yiddish is a dead language...**

In a very real sense, Jews have been existing in a sort of 'Undead' state for about 2000 years, since the expulsion of the Jews from their home in the Land of Israel by Ancient Rome: wandering/blundering about from country to country, with no seeming future; being ostracized and worse – treated as some diseased and unholy people that needed to be cleansed from existence (e.g. Germany's 'final solution' – the Holocaust); etc.

Even the Hebrew language – used mostly in print/scroll or in correspondence between religious authorities – had remained relatively 'frozen' for most of 2 millennia – until Jews started returning to the Holy land in masses.

I'm not going take this line of thought much further – there are probably more 'similarities' that can be dug up, including the false accusations of 'experts' like Toynbee who considered the Jewish people a 'fossilized' Nation:

"Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975) was an important British historian, who through his controversial theory on civilizations found a place in Israeli and Jewish awareness as an "anti-Semite." According to his theory, civilizations, like human beings, have life cycles that are marked by rises and falls. But the story of the Jewish people, who were determined to survive 2,000 years in the Diaspora only to rise again as a modern nation, did not suit his theory. Thus Toynbee described the Jews as a historic "fossil" - not dead, true, but also not really alive."

(From: <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/this-is-how-we-ruined-toynbee-s-theory-1.210993>)

Sounds very much like the description of a Zombie, to me...

Toynbee (and those like him) and those who claim that Yiddish is a dead language – have a lot to learn about Jews and Judaism. In a sense, like the Jews who have reclaimed their ancient heritage after 2000 years, you can't keep a good Zombie down. That's enough of that – we don't want to scare off our readers with anything too macabre, now do we...? (actually, we do – and will – but in proper proportion...). The rest of this chapter will deal with the following (though not necessarily in this order):

- The movie "World War Z" – The Jewish and Israeli connections
- Respect for the Dead and Afterlife: Reincarnation and Resurrection
- The "Golem" vs. the "Dybuk" vs. Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- The animated movie "The Corpse Bride"
- The golden rule of Community: Live and Let "Live"

I'm sure you're just 'dying' to read on, so let's get to it...

## World War Z – The Jewish and Israeli Connections

As we mentioned in a previous chapter, the movie World War Z has a Jewish and Israeli connection. In this movie, the entire world is infested by a very virulent plague turning normal humans into raging and extremely fast and violent 'Zombies' within seconds of being bitten. Israel seems to be one of the few countries that is surviving the outbreak ("managing" is probably more appropriate). In fact, it was one of the first countries to go into total lockdown – even before the outbreak (and awareness/knowledge of it) had become so widespread. How did they know?

According to one of the people in the movie, Israel was monitoring various radio frequencies from neighbouring countries in its day-to-day intelligence gathering. One such piece of information coming from India, sounded like some officer ranting about something that when translated into English came out 'Zombie'.

Of course, no one in the intelligence community believed this. They took it for granted that it was mistranslated, or just the rantings of some lone soldier – maybe even a practical joke. Now here comes the interesting part (Although not exactly in these words, or sequence) –

After centuries of being persecuted, the Jews developed a unique instinct and sensitivity in intelligence gathering, such that not even the 'silliest' (doubtful / preposterous) or miniscule scrap of information could be ignored. More so – as was explained – in a group of ten [MORE NEXT TIME]

(assuming cabinet ministers, or security experts), one person would be designated as the 'outside man' – i.e. the one that would never – under any circumstances allow anything to get by him. While the other 'nine' would continue their normal business, this one designate would delve into each and every minor bit of information and thoroughly run it down, no matter how absurd it might sound.

And this is what saved them – this person tracked down every possible lead, no matter how far-fetched or illogical, and he managed to put two-and-two together to get a clear enough picture that something was very wrong and that immediate emergency measures had to be taken. Two more interesting 'Jewish' aspects in the movie.

One, even though there is a worldwide plague going on, the Israelis are allowing enemy Arabs into the country. This is to save them, of course. The premise being – each one saved, is one less possible Zombie. Any other nation – when faced with an influx of refugees that were until that moment hell-bent on its destruction would probably lock the gate and leave them to their own (horrible) fate.

Another interesting moment, if you like, is that an Israeli soldier joins the movie's hero in the final part of the movie, to try and track down a solution to the epidemic. The soldier is an Israeli woman. I thought that was a nice touch, since most of the protagonists in the movie were men, and here is a lone Jewish woman involved in trying to save humankind.

***We'd love to hear your thoughts on any of the above subjects and we may publish some of them!***



**Don't forget:**

**Tel Aviv 6-8 April 2015 – see: <http://2015.ohamot-con.org.il/>**

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