



Flushing-Fresh Meadows Jewish Center
 193-10 Peck Avenue ✦ Flushing, New York 11365 (718) 357-5100

THE BULLETIN

Nov-Dec 2015
 Vol.14, No.3

Cheshvan-Kislev-Tevet5776
 Rabbi Gerald M. Solomon
 Cantor Aaron Katz

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
 FOR NOVEMBER**

Friday, Nov. 6
 Mincha/Maariv.....4:15P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....4:29P.M.
Saturday, Nov 7
 Parashat Chayeh Sarah
 Shabbat Mevarchim Services.....9:00A.M
Kristallnacht Commemoration.....11:00A.M.
 Shabbat Ends.....5:37P.M

Friday, Nov.13
 Rosh Chodesh Kislev
 Mincha/Maariv.....4:15P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....4:22P.M.
 Saturday, Nov.14
 Parashat Toldot - Shabbat Services.....9:00A.M
 Shabbat Ends.....5:30P.M.

Friday, Nov.20
 Mincha/Maariv.....4:15P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....4:16P.M.
 Saturday, Nov.21
 Parashat Vayeitzei - Shabbat Services...9:00A.M
 Shabbat Ends.....5:24P.M.

Friday, Nov.27
 Mincha/Maariv.....4:00P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....4:12P.M.
 Saturday, Nov.29
 Parashat Vayishlach
 Shabbat Services.....9:00A.M.
 Shabbat Ends.....5:21P.M.

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
 FOR DECEMBER**

Friday, Dec. 4
 Mincha/Maariv.....4:00P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....4:10P.M.
 Saturday, Dec. 5
 Parashat Vayeishev
 Shabbat Mevarchim Services.....9:00A.M.
 Shabbat Ends.....5:19P.M.

Friday, Dec. 11
Sixth Eve of Chanukah
 Mincha/Maariv.....3:45P.M.
Chanukah Candle Lighting Time.....4:00P.M.
Shabbat Candle Lighting Time.....4:10P.M.
 Saturday, Dec. 12
 Shabbat Chanukah-Rosh Chodesh
 Parashat Mikeitz- Services.....9:00AM.
 Shabbat Ends.....5:19P.M.

Friday, Dec.18
 Mincha/Maariv.....4:00P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....4:11P.M.
 Saturday, Dec. 19
 Parashat Vayigash - Shabbat Services.....9:00A.M.
 Shabbat Ends.....5:20P.M.

Friday, Dec.25
 Mincha/Maariv.....4:15P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....4:15P.M.
 Saturday, Dec. 26
 Parashat Vayeichi - Shabbat Services.....9:00A.M.
 Shabbat Ends.....5:24P.M.

ATTENTION SNOWBIRDS:
 Please let the Office know when will be going to Florida for the winter so that your mail can be sent to the appropriate place.

CENTER NEWS

MAZEL-TOV

Our dear co-President **Anita Bernstein** is celebrating a very special Birthday this week. Our wish for you, Anita, is that you continue to celebrate your birthdays in good health and happiness for many years to come. YASHER KOACH!

KUDOS

To Cantor Katz and the FFMJC Men's Choir (Byron Dresner, Jerry Sandell, Rabbi Solomon, Rabbi Efron, and David Nagan) for their stellar performance at the Shirathon

THANK YOU

To all who contributed to our successful Yom Kippur Appeal. With your help we will continue to be able to maintain and improve the beauty and functioning of our Shul.

If you have not yet sent in your donation your prompt attention would be appreciated.

CONDOLENCES

To **Pearl Rosenthal** on the loss of her beloved husband **Carl**. Also to his son Marty, his daughter Roberta (Robin) and his grandson Austin.

Carl was a regular at the Shabbat morning Service. He and Pearl would be among the first to be there. As one of only three Levi's in our Congregation he will sorely be missed. Carl was always ready to help out wherever he could. A real Mensch. For many years he would chair a trip to Atlantic City to help raise money for a cure for Cancer.

(Editor's note)

Carl loved to play golf. I, Larry Corn, Bob Rubin and he formed a tight foursome that could be found on the golf course most Monday mornings here on the Kissena Golf Course and in Florida on the Marina Golf Course. If you knew Carl you knew he was great fun to be with. Even in the last couple of years while battling his dreadful disease he was never other than cheerful and optimistic.

Even towards the end this past Spring he could hit the ball further than any of us. On a personal note we will miss you greatly.

CONDOLENCES

To the family of **Fred Weinstein** who passed away after a long illness.

Fred and his late wife Ruth, both Holocaust survivors, are remembered as a very loving and popular couple who were very active in shul activities.



SISTERHOOD

We want to thank all our members who support our activities at the FFMJC. The Sisterhood Board works very hard to bring programs and activities to our members. Thank you to Anita Bernstein who spends many hours preparing the Sisterhood Calendar and then distributing it to our subscribers. Thank you to Shari Zuber who helped Anita edit the Calendar before it went to the printer. Thank you to Matilde Cohen for all her support. Thank you to Susan Gastman who does the shopping and preparing of the food for the monthly luncheons. Thank you to Bette Glasser who takes care of the Treasury, the Book Club and the Hanukkah Party along with Shari Zuber. Thank you to Sandra Godnick who sits at the door to collect the money at the luncheons. Thank you to Sandra Schwadron for sending out the postcard reminders for the board meetings. Thank you to Sylvia Udasin who always knows who to contact for entertainment. Thank you to Rosalie Weiner for being our Torah fund chair, taking care of the bookkeeping and collecting money at the meetings. The money we collect for Torah Fund goes to the Jewish Theological Seminary. And thank you to all the rest of the Board that helps in many ways by being there with their thoughts and suggestions and presence.

We had two beautiful luncheons for Succoth, even though one had to be held indoors. A big thank you to Rabbi Solomon and Cantor Katz for enhancing the afternoon with their music.

The next Sisterhood meeting on November 12th features a Doctor from the North-Shore LIJ Health system who will speak to us about sleep disturbances and how to help. Watch for the flyer.

There will be no book club in November. The next meeting will be on Thursday, December 3rd at which "The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry" by Gabrielle Zevin will be discussed.

Looking ahead, we will be celebrating Hannukah on December 10th with Latkes and LoMein.

IMPORTANT; The chair exercise class which meets every Tuesday at 11 AM is planning to continue through the winter. We hope to have more people attending. Try it!! It's good for you! Tell your friends.

Have a healthy and warm winter, from the snowbird Co-Presidents

Marilyn Brown and Joan Levine

Note:

If you have not already done so, please send in to the Office the name and contact number of a person we can call in case of an emergency

RABBI'S MESSAGE



ECHOES OF THE HOLY DAYS

ROSH HASHANAH - FIRST DAY

Robert Emmons, Professor of Psychology at the University of California is recognized as the world's leading scientific expert on gratitude. He explains why gratitude is good for our bodies, our minds, and our relationships. He writes, "my colleagues and I have helped people systematically cultivate gratitude, usually by keeping a *gratitude journal* in which they regularly record the things for which they're grateful."

"Gratitude journals and other gratitude practices often seem so simple and basic; in our studies, we often have people keep gratitude journals for just three weeks. And yet the results have been overwhelming. We've studied more than one thousand people, from ages eight to 80, and found that people who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits: These benefits are found in three distinct areas of the human being, the physical, the psychological and the social."

But seriously, for many of us, it is hard to be an optimist in our world what with all the horrors we are exposed to regularly. We are full of aches and pains, if not physically, then mentally. Many are tired of being overexposed to the negative, stressed out about time and money, worried about the threat of terrorist activity in our world, the threats of war, the saber rattling, the all too frequent horrible shootings we have come to hear about so regularly, that the cup of joy for so many of us looms large and to fill it seems nearly impossible. The rabbis of the prayer book, however had the right idea on being optimistic and grateful. In the very beginning of the morning service, every day, they inserted the *Birchot Hashachar*, the morning blessings. These are precise and straightforward: Thank you, God, for opening my eyes. Thank you for restoring my soul to me today. Thank you for clothing me. Thank you for lifting my feet to take a step.

Dear friends, the main point of this discussion is this. A grateful soul will definitely be a forgiven soul. I can't imagine G-d not forgiving someone who constantly thanks G-d every day for everything he/she has. What's more I can't imagine fellow men and women not forgiving one who regularly shows gratitude to them either. Chances are good that such a grateful soul would not be sinning big time anyway. That's the whole idea. Gratitude can virtually prevent wrongdoing from occurring. Truth be told, while we may not be all righteous and do all the things that our parents, teachers, rabbis and consciences taught and told us to do, the thing that, I believe will save us and cause us to be forgiven is rooted in the fact that we were grateful for all the blessings G-d has provided us as well as our gratefulness to others for all the good we have derived from our relationships with them. A grateful soul will be a forgiven soul.

ROSH HASHABNAH - SECOND DAY

Dear friends, in the midst of his presentation of the laws of teshuvah (repentance), the 12th-century philosopher Maimonides writes about the balance on which our deeds are weighed. Each of us, he says, has merits and demerits, good deeds and bad. Adding one mitzvah to our bunch can tilt the world to salvation. Adding one sin can tilt the world to destruction. Our lives are assessed and evaluated as a whole--at the end of life, and also every year on Rosh Hashanah, the New Year.

He continues: "The blowing of the shofar on the New Year is a biblical directive and contains a deep meaning. The shofar speaks to us and says: "Awake, sleepers, from your sleep; rouse yourselves, slumberers, from your slumber. Examine your deeds, return in repentance and remember your Creator. Those who forget the truth in the vanities of time and spend their years on meaningless pursuits that neither profit nor save, look to your souls and improve your ways and works. Let each leave his ways that are bad and thoughts that are not good."

The questions we ask ourselves on Rosh Hashanah are about the use of time. Did we use it to serve a purpose, or did we merely exist? Did we just pass time or to use prison lingo, did we just "do" time? Did we use it for ourselves or did we share our time with others? Did we bring blessing into a life other than our own or did we just seek to enrich ourselves? Did we invest our time feeding our bodies but not our souls and did we seek to sustain other bodies and their souls through our acts of giving and thereby sustain our souls as well?

That is what it is to be awake, states Maimonides: to know that our acts make a difference in the world we live in and therefore, our actions affect not only the world but the structure of the universe entire. Our actions can and do make a

(Continued from page 3)

difference on the microcosmic as well as the macrocosmic level. Yes, it is the sound of the shofar, on Rosh Hashanah, instructs Maimonides, which reminds us of the truth that every act we perform in this life is noted, every act counts and has some effect on the world we live in and subsequently on the universe. Our actions, thus, are much more far reaching than we may think.

But there's another and simpler message, which is that when we cry from the heart, someone listens. A rabbinic teaching instructs: Mah sh'yotze min halev, nichnas la-lev." "What goes out from the heart, goes into the heart." What is said with heartfelt sincerity will be received with heartfelt sincerity. That's the message of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah.

"There's nothing closer to God than a broken heart and nothing stronger than a heart that's been healed by God's forgiveness." We should affirm on this day that G-d is the "One Who heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds." (Psalm 147:3) This is why we offer these words to a mourner: "May the Omnipresent One comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem."

But today we pray: May the shofar of Rosh Hashanah summon us to yet greater achievements, both spiritual and physical, so that we can remain true to our faith, true to our G-d and a blessing to others.

YOM KIPPUR - KOL NIDRE

Tragically, not all of our people are thankful for Israel. Indeed, significant numbers of the Jewish People are anti Israel. Indeed there are significant numbers of our own people, both religionists and secularists who believe that Israel should not have been reestablished.

One of the main reasons that many in the religious world have yet to do so is due to the fact that many of the original and current prominent figures in the story of Israel were and are distant from traditional religious values, and some even antagonistic toward them. That so many involved in the founding of the state were so distant from traditional Jewish values does not sit well in the religious mindset. Can this ever be changed?

It has been pointed out that Zionism developed from the ideological "isms" of the nineteenth century, and it is thus problematic to reconcile the aims of Zionism with the Torah and . This difficulty causes confusion for many and creates doubt as to how to relate to the miracle which is the reestablished State of Israel. Too many of our own refuse to accept that Israel is a fait accompli, that Israel is real.

Gratitude , as I had mentioned on Rosh Hashanah is called in Hebrew— is at the heart of what Moses had to say about the Israelites and their future in the Promised Land. Gratitude was not their strong suit in the desert. They complained about lack of food and water, about the boring manna, the dangers they encountered from the Egyptians as they began their exodus and about the inhabitants of the promised land they were about to enter. They lacked thankfulness during the difficult times. A greater danger still, said Moses, would be their lack of gratitude during the good times. He warned:

When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery...Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gained me this wealth.' (Deut. 8:11-17)

The worst thing, warned Moses, would be that they would forget how they came to the land, how God had promised it to their ancestors, and had taken them from slavery to freedom, sustaining them during the forty years in the wilderness. They should never attribute the nation's achievements to itself but should always attribute its victories, indeed its very existence to God. This is a dominant theme of Deuteronomy, and it echoes throughout the book time and again and forever.

YOM KIPPUR - YIZKOR

“Kol ha’maavir al midotav, ma’avirin lo kol p’shaav. “who is forgiving, God is forgiving of them.” With this statement the Talmud provides the direction for receiving forgiveness from the Heavenly court. God, say our rabbis, approaches us with the same attitude and philosophy we approach the people in our lives. He judges us with a mirror. If we are exacting and unforgiving to those around us, He is exacting and unforgiving of us. If we instead choose to dismiss, minimize and ignore the slights, and offenses that people have perpetrated against us, then God chooses to dismiss and ignore our slights and offenses of Him.”

This quote is the key to forgiveness and more it is a key to a successful life. He who treats others with kindness and compassion will himself be treated with kindness and compassion.

Maimonides identifies as one of the defining characteristics of a true scholar, that he/she must be a mevateir, one who is forgiving and does not bear grudges.

As we sense the power of Yom Kippur, now is the time to resolve to become a mevaitair, to become the kind of people who let certain things go, who don’t sweat the small stuff, who don’t make mountains out of molehills. Don’t be so concerned with rights, honors, privileges, and entitlements. You should pardon the expression but “standing on ceremony” is not always the way. Don’t focus so much on what you are owed and what the people who offended you deserve. This is a good day to resolve to put down the heavy baggage that you may have been carrying around and thereby prevent a spiritual hernia. Now is the time to let go and forgive, and the albatross you bear will not be so heavy..

TODAH RABBAH

Thank you to all those who helped make our High Holy Day Services the dignified and meaningful experiences they were. Thank you to Anita Bernstein and Albert Kimmelstiel for their work on the honors and aliyot. Thank you to our Gabbaim David End, Stuart Cohen and David Nagan for handling the honors and aliyot at the services as well as overseeing the reading of the Torahs and offering the appropriate “Mi Sh’berach” prayers. Thank you also to David End for his renditions of Pesukei D’zimrah at the services. Yashar Ko-ach!!

Shirathon 6

TODAH RABBAH

A massive undertaking such as our Shirathon takes great effort and expertise to make it the success that it is. We appreciate our synagogue leadership’s support in advancing the concept and allowing it to come to fruition. However, behind the scenes the silent workers should be thanked for their untiring dedication to the event. Zach Levine, Sandra Schwadron, and Stuart Cohen for their work in publicizing the event; Paul Zuber for the magnificent program booklet; Paul and Shari Zuber for the refreshment preparation, and Anita Bernstein, Irene Dresner, Marilyn Brown, David End, Shari Zuber, Honey Savishinsky, and Sheila Ornstein for help in setting up the beverages and snacks. Thank you to

all those who helped make our Shirathon 6 the best one yet.

And thanks to our soundman, Russell Targove, who made everyone sound better than ever.

But most of all a hearty thank you and a Yasher Koach to our Rabbi, Gerald Solomon who conceived, produced and worked tirelessly to bring together this wonderful entertainment.



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Kristallnacht 77th Anniversary...We Remember

On November 9 and 10, we mark the seventy-seventh anniversary of Kristallnacht, the "night of broken glass." Ram-paging mobs, spurred by the Nazi leadership, attacked Jewish targets throughout Germany and Austria. The damage was immense. Hundreds of synagogues were burned to the ground. Thousands of Jewish-owned businesses were ransacked. Nearly 100 Jews were murdered. And tens of thousands of Jews were arrested and deported to Buchenwald, Dachau, and other concentration .

Their crime? They were Jews. It was as simple as that. Observant or atheist, Zionist or anti-Zionist, bourgeois or socialist, they were all subject to the same fate.

The Holocaust had not yet officially begun. That would start on September 1, 1939, not quite ten months after Kristallnacht. But the Nazi war against the Jews was already well under way.

The goal was to rid Germany, Austria, and, eventually, all of Nazi-occupied Europe of Jews.

The Nazis almost succeeded. By the war's end in 1945, six million Jews, or two-thirds of European Jewry, had been annihilated. And ancient centers of Jewish civilization, from Vilna to Salonika, from Amsterdam to Prague, had been all but wiped out.

On this tragic anniversary, and every day, remembrance is essential.

We remember the Jews of Germany and Austria, who had contributed so greatly to what they believed to be their homelands, and who became the targets of a genocidal policy.

We remember the new alphabet of annihilation created by the Third Reich, which began with "A" for Auschwitz and ended with "Z" for Zyklon-B, the killing agent used in the gas chambers.

We remember the vibrant lives of Jewish communities across Europe that were extinguished in the flames of the Holocaust.

We remember the 1.5 million Jewish children murdered in the relentless Nazi pursuit of the so-called Final Solution.

We remember how many borders were so callously closed to Europe's Jews when there was still a chance to escape.

We remember that our own country, the United States, yielding to domestic isolationism and anti-Semitism, did far less than it could have to shelter Europe's Jews.

We remember a world without the one country, Israel, which could have provided a haven to all Jews seeking sanctuary.

We remember that earlier in 1938, prior to Kristallnacht, Nazi had moved with impunity into the Sudetenland, then part of Czechoslovakia, and Austria, with barely a peep from the international community.

We remember that just weeks before Kristallnacht, the British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, traveled to Germany for the third time in two weeks and returned to London to assure the British public that there would be "peace for our time."

We remember the valiant forces of the Allied nations that ultimately destroyed the Nazi Reich and saved the world from Hitler's boast of a thousand-year reign.

We remember the military cemeteries across Europe, and beyond, filled with the graves of young soldiers who fought with such courage and bravery to defeat Nazi Germany and its allies.

And we remember the examples of those few who, at such risk, sought to shield Jews from harm.

Kristallnacht reminds us of the lurking capacity for inhumanity that resides in the human spirit.

Kristallnacht reminds us of nations that prided themselves on advanced levels of civilization, yet had a capacity for barbarism that exploded in ways never before witnessed.

Kristallnacht reminds us of the dire consequences when a targeted people is utterly without recourse to any means of

(Continued from page 6)

self-defense.

Kristallnacht reminds us of the fertile soil of anti-Semitism, cultivated for centuries by religious, racial, and political ideologies obsessed with murdering, exiling, converting, segregating, or scapegoating the Jews.

Kristallnacht reminds us that there is a slippery slope from the demonization of a people, to the dehumanization of a people, to the destruction of a people.

And Kristallnacht reminds us that, in the face of evil against fellow human beings, never can silence be an option, indifference a strategy, or "never again" a mere slogan.

***REMINDER: KRISTALLNACHT MEMORIAL SERVICE: NOVEMBER 7, 2015 DURING SHABBAT SERVICES**

CHANUKAH: A BRIEF HISTORY

Chanukah, the Jewish festival of rededication, also known as the festival of lights, is an eight day festival beginning on the 25th day of the month of Kislev. **This year, Chanukah begins on Sunday evening, the 6th of December.** In the Western world, Chanukah is probably one of the best known Jewish holidays. Chanukah is actually a simple historical commemoration, celebrating the victory of a small band of Jewish rebels fighting against the imposing might of the Hellenistic Assyrian army. Commemorating this fight against oppression and assimilation, we kindle lights to remember the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem, and to rededicate ourselves to strengthening our own Jewish identities today.

Talmudic Beginnings

The rabbis of the Talmud ask a strange question: Mai Chanukah? (Shabbat 21b). Loosely translated, this means, "What is Hanukkah?" At this point you may be asking: "you mean the ancient sages of our tradition didn't know the story about the wicked king and the flask of oil that lasted eight days and about latkes and dreidels and little chocolate coins?"

Well, except for the little chocolate coins part, the ancient sages did know that story. In fact, they gave it to us. What they were not sure about was how to properly celebrate the holiday, or how all the different traditions that had developed fit together.

To explain how the ancient rabbis saw Chanukah, first let's take a step back and look at the historical record, as best we understand it. In 167 B.C.E., a king named Antiochus Epiphanes ruled over a chunk of the Middle East that included the land of Israel. He wanted to unify all the peoples under his rule with one culture, the Greek-Roman culture called Hellenism, which had been handed down from the time of Alexander the Great (ca 323 B.C.E.). So Antiochus outlawed the study of Torah and the practice of Judaism, and put Greek gods in Jewish holy places.

Some Jews went along with Antiochus's edicts and assimilated into Hellenism, but other Jews rebelled against these oppressive laws. The most successful rebel was a Hasmonean priest named Mattathias. He and his five sons, including the legendary Judah the Maccabee (Judah the "Hammer") led a successful rebellion to retake Jerusalem and reestablish Jewish sovereignty. When they took over the Temple and cleaned out all the remnants of the idolatrous Greek worship, they rededicated the Temple and then immediately, according to one historical account, held a late observance of the eight day festival of Sukkot, the most important festival of Temple times, and the most recent one to have gone unobserved. The next year, to commemorate their victory and the rededication of the Temple, a "late Sukkot" was held again, thereby giving birth to our eight-day celebration of Chanukah - which means "dedication".

The deeds of the Maccabees were recorded and reported to other Jewish communities throughout the Land of Israel and to those communities outside the land that developed during the first exile and who never returned. The oldest sources we have for the story of the Maccabees is the . The First Book of Maccabees is a simple history, telling the story of the revolt and continuing the story of resistance that continued after the revolt when the Hasmoneans took over the monarchy. The Second Book of Maccabees was composed as a letter, written to the Jewish community of

of Alexandria, explaining the events that took place and encouraging them to commemorate the Hasmonean victory by observing the new holiday of Chanukah.

So what happened to the story of the oil and the miracle of the lights? Well, that's where the rabbis come in. In the rabbinic sources, we find virtual silence on the topic of Chanukah in the Mishnah. It is only in the Gemara (the later rabbinic material which, along with the Mishnah makes up the Talmud) that we find the new story about the oil and the miracle of the lights. By the time of the development of the Talmud, the Jews were living under Roman rule in Israel and under Persian rule in Babylon. In these circumstances, celebrating stories about military rebellion might not be viewed in too positive a light by the authorities, and the sages also feared that some Jewish hotheads might stir up trouble and cause all kinds of problems for the Jewish community. So the Talmudic sages chose to emphasize the oil/miracle aspect of the established holiday. G-d wrought a great miracle for the people, enabling the few to triumph over the many, and G-d showed the people another miracle in the oil, when a flask of ritually pure oil sufficient for one day lasted for all eight days (of the late observed Sukkot Festival.)

But there is more. The battle fought by the Maccabees was not only a revolt against religious oppression and colonial domination, but it was a civil war as well, fought between pietistic adherents to a strict traditional observance of Judaism (as practiced in those days) and those who were attracted to the might and worldliness of Hellenism and sought to acculturate. Ironically though, after their victory, the Hasmoneans assumed the Monarchy of Israel - which, in of itself was prohibited for a priestly family, and eventually, after some generations, became advocates of Hellenization and invited the Roman Empire to become protectors of Israel, setting the stage for the eventual Roman conquest. As a priestly family, the Hasmoneans sided with the Sadducees, the priestly advocates of the authority of Temple Sacrifice, against the Pharisees, the forerunners of the rabbis and the form of rabbinic Judaism we continue to practice today.

With the destruction of the Second Temple, the fall of the Sadducees, and the ultimate conquest of the Land of Israel by the Romans, the new rabbinic authorities assume the mantle of religious authority. Unhappy with the Hasmoneans and critical of the eventual outcome of the Maccabean revolt, the Rabbis set out to relegate Chanukah and the Maccabees to a mere footnote in Jewish history. Hence the exclusion of Maccabees from Hebrew Scriptures and the shift in the emphasis of Chanukah from the victory of the Maccabees to G-d's miracle of light. Effectively, the Rabbis sought to write the Maccabees out of Jewish history. Like the exclusion of Moses from the Passover Haggada, the Maccabees were removed from Chanukah, and the spotlight was put on G-d.

So back to our Talmudic question: Mai Chanukah? "What is Chanukah?" Well, the answer depends on your perspective. It could be a holiday of religious freedom, inspired by the people's desire to shake off oppressive laws. It could be commemoration of the human capacity for courage and hopefulness, as we remember the Maccabees' brave revolution. It could be an opportunity to reflect on Jewish distinctiveness and the miracle of Jewish survival in societies that offer so many opportunities to just chuck it all and assimilate. It could be a spur to many Jews to reach out to each other across denominational and ideological boundaries, inasmuch as the Maccabean revolt was also a civil war between Hellenized and non-assimilated Jews. It could be, as the Talmud suggests, a time to thank G-d for the miracles in our lives; a time to think about what is in G-d's hands and not in human hands. It could be a chance to ask ourselves: what seemingly ordinary things can I experience as miracles today?

LIGHTING THE CHANUKAH CANDLES

On the first night of Chanukah, put one candle on the right side of your Chanukiah, and say these blessings before lighting it. Light the Chanukiah **BEFORE** lighting Shabbat candles on erev Shabbat.

Barukh atah adonai, elohenu melekh ha'olam, asher kidshanu bemitsvotav, vetsivanu lehadlik ner shel chanukah.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us through His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah light.

Barukh atah adonai, elohenu melekh ha'olam, she'asah nisim la'avotenu bayamim hahem bazman hazeh.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who made miracles for our ancestors, in those days, at this season.

On the first night only, we add:

Barukh atah adonai, elohenu melekh ha'olam, shehekheyanu vekiyemanu, vehigi'anu lazman hazeh.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has given us life, and sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

On the second night, put two candles in, and light starting from the "new" candle on the left, reciting only the first two blessings. Keep on increasing each night, until you've got all eight candles lit.

The lighting of the Chanukiah is done at home, after nightfall, (50 minutes after sunset) or when the family has gathered.

Ten Deadly Lies about Israel

Ambassador Ron Dermer

1. Israel is trying to change the status quo on the Temple Mount.

False. Israel stringently maintains the status quo on the Temple Mount. Last year some 3.5 million Muslims visited the Temple Mount alongside some 200,000 Christians and 12,000 Jews. Only Muslims are allowed to pray on the Mount, and non-Muslims may visit only at specified times, which have not changed. Though the Temple Mount is Judaism's holiest site—where Solomon built his Temple some 3,000 years ago—Israel will not allow a change in the status quo. The ones trying to change the status quo are Palestinians, who are violently trying to prevent Jews and Christians from even visiting a site holy to all three faiths.

2. Israel seeks to destroy al-Aqsa mosque.

False: Since reuniting Jerusalem in 1967, Israel has vigorously protected the holy sites of all faiths, including al-Aqsa. In the Middle East, where militant Islamists desecrate and destroy churches, synagogues, world heritage sites, as well as each other's mosques, Israel is the only guarantor of Jerusalem's holy places. Palestinians have been propagating the “al-Aqsa is in danger” myth since at least 1929, when the Palestinian icon, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini, used it to inspire the massacre of Jews in Hebron and elsewhere. Nearly a century later, the mosque remains unharmed, but the lie persists.

3. A recent surge in settlement construction has caused the current wave of violence.

False. Annual construction in the settlements has substantially decreased over the past 15 years. Under Prime Minister Ehud Barak (2000), 5,000 new units were built in the settlements; under Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (2001-05) an average of 1,881; under Prime Minister Ehud Olmert (2005-08) 1,774. All three were hailed as peacemakers. What about under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (2009-15)? Just 1,554..

4. President Abbas says that Israel “executed” the innocent Palestinian Ahmed Manasra.

False: Manasra is neither innocent nor dead. He stabbed a 13-year-old Jewish boy who was riding his bicycle. Manasra has been discharged from the same hospital where his victim continues to fight for his life.

5. Israel uses excessive force in dealing with terrorist attacks.

False: Using force to stop an attack by a gun, knife, cleaver or ax-wielding terrorist is legitimate self-defense. Israeli police officers are subject to strict rules that govern the use of deadly force, which is permitted only in life-threatening situations. How would the American public expect its police to respond to terrorists stabbing passersby as well as police officers?

6. The current violence is the result of stagnation in the peace process.

False: Israel experienced some of the worst terrorism in its history when the peace process was at its peak. The reason for Palestinian terrorism is neither progress nor stagnation in the peace process, but the desire of the terrorists to destroy Israel.

7. President Abbas is a voice of moderation.

False: Abbas said on September 16 that he welcomes “every drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem.” Abbas has not condemned a single one of the 30 terror attacks on Israelis over the past month. He and his Fatah movement continue to use the Web and the airwaves to incite the Palestinians to even more violence.

8. International action is required to enforce the status quo on the Temple Mount.

False. Israel enforces the status quo. The international community can help most effectively by telling the truth and affirming Israel's proven commitment to maintaining the status quo. It can also help by holding Abbas accountable for his mendacious rhetoric regarding the Temple Mount.

9. The reason the conflict and the violence persist is because the Palestinians don't have a state.

False: The Palestinians have repeatedly refused to accept a nation-state for themselves if it means accepting a nation-state for the Jewish people alongside it. In 1937, the Palestinians rejected the Peel Commission report that called for two states for two peoples; in 1947, they rejected the U.N. partition plan that did the same. In 2000 at Camp David and again in 2008 the Palestinians rejected new proposals that would have created a Palestinian state. The Pal-

estonians rejected peace both before and after the creation of Israel, before Israel gained control of the territories in 1967 and after Israel vacated Gaza in 2005. The Palestinians have always been more concerned with destroying the Jewish state than with creating a state of their own. The core of the conflict remains the persistent refusal of the Palestinians to recognize the nation-state of the Jewish people in any borders.

10. Palestinian terrorism is the consequence of Palestinian frustration.

False: Palestinian terrorism is the product of incitement, which inculcates a culture of hatred and violence in successive generations. The biggest frustration of the terrorists is that they have failed to destroy Israel. They will continue to be frustrated.

(Ron Dermer is the current Israeli Ambassador to the United States)

Historical Dating: Jewish versus Secular

The Jewish dating system is taken primarily from a book called "Seder Olam Rabba," dating back to the 2nd century CE and attributed to Rabbi Yosef ben Halafta. The sources for the dates in Halafta's book come from rabbinic traditions recorded in the Talmud as well as numerous chronologies written in the Hebrew Bible.

It is also essential to remember that traditional Jewish chronologies (since the beginning of the Jewish calendar almost 6,000 years ago) are based on the highly accurate astronomical phenomenon of the moon orbiting the earth (months) and the earth around the sun (years). This gives traditional Jewish chronology a high degree of accuracy, especially when it comes to the major events of Jewish history.

Actually, the "secular" calendar has experienced many difficulties in trying to properly "align itself with the stars." Back in 46 BCE, the calendar had become hopelessly confused. Julius Caesar was forced to abandon the previous lunar system, replacing it with a tropical year of 365.25 days. Further, to correct the accumulation of previous errors, a total of 90 intercalary days had to be added to 46 BCE, meaning that January 1, 45 BCE, occurred in what would have been the middle of March.

Over the next 1,600 years, the disagreement between the Julian year of 365.25 days and the tropical year of 365.242199 gradually produced significant errors. The discrepancy mounted at a rate of 11 minutes 14 seconds per year - until it reached a full 10 days. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII proclaimed that 10 days should be skipped in order to bring the calendar back into line. This was accomplished by designating that October 5 become October 15. In other words, the dates October 5-14, 1582 were simply eliminated.

So how do we get the chronology that historians use today?

Historians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries worked backward and pieced it together. This was done primarily through comparing what little historical records survived from ancient Rome, Greece, Mesopotamia and Egypt, together with archaeological finds and radio carbon dating.

Because there are margins of error in all of these methods and much is open to interpretation, significant debates erupted between different scholars which continue to this day. Therefore, the chronologies used by modern historian can best be described as well-educated guesses.

Jewish chronology makes a stronger case for historical accuracy, and that's why we have chosen to use the traditional Jewish dates.

Today there are a number of renowned scholars also challenging the modern chronology and even attempting to reconcile it with the Jewish chronology. Amongst them is British scholar Peter James who writes: "By re-dating the beginning of the Iron Age in Palestine from the early 12th century BCE to the late 10th, a completely new interpretation of the archaeology of Israel can be offered: One which is in perfect harmony with the biblical record." (*"Centuries in Darkness" by Peter James; Rutgers University Press, 1993, p. 318.*)

NEWS EXCERPTS**Were There Jewish Temples on the Temple Mount? Yes - Ruth Schuster and Ran Shapira**

The contention that there is no proof the Jewish Temples existed on the Temple Mount is an artifact of the recent Israeli-Arab conflict. Jewish, Christian and Muslim tradition has always held the Mount sacred and none queried the existence of the Temples. A Brief Guide to al-Haram al-Sharif, published in English by the Supreme Muslim Council itself in 1925, states: "The site is one of the oldest in the world. Its sanctity dates from the earliest times. Its identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is beyond dispute." "There is no scholarly school of thought that doubts the existence of the First Temple," Prof. Israel Finkelstein, a world-renowned expert on Jerusalem archaeology, told Ha'aretz.

Archaeologist Gabriel Barkay noted: "Two copies of inscriptions prohibiting the entry of nonbelievers to the Temple have been found on the Temple Mount, which Josephus wrote about. These inscriptions were on the dividing wall that surrounded the Second Temple, which prevented non-Jews from accessing the interior of the courtyard." The "warning" stone is at the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.

Another inscription in stone, "To the trumpeting place," was found in 1968 at the southwest corner of the Temple Mount. "It is known that trumpets were blown at the corners of the Temple Mount, to declare the advent of Shabbat and other dates," Barkay explains. The stone is now at the Israel Museum.

We don't need to rely exclusively on digging in Jerusalem for solid evidence that the Mount housed the Second Temple. Roman Emperor Titus boasted of crushing the Jewish rebellion in 70 CE and destroying the Temple in Jerusalem. "The Arch of Titus in Rome shows the procession following the gleeful plunder of the Temple by the Romans, even showing the menorah they removed," says archaeology writer Julia Fridman. (Ha'aretz)

Time for Palestinians to Stop Pretending that We Can Destroy Israel - Bassem Eid

I am a proud Palestinian who grew up in a refugee camp. I want peace and prosperity for my people. I want an end to the misery and destruction. It is time we Palestinians stopped pretending that we can destroy Israel or drive the Jews into the sea. It is time that we stopped listening to Muslim radicals or Arab regimes that use us to continue a pointless, destructive, and immoral war with Israel.

In the West Bank, the only good jobs are with Israeli companies, and the BDS movement is doing its best to take those jobs away from us. Abbas runs a corrupt dictatorship that uses international funds to consolidate its own administration rather than to develop the Palestinian economy.

Despite what we tell ourselves, Israel is here to stay. What's more, it has a right to exist. It is the nation of the Jews but also a nation for Israeli Arabs who have better lives than Arabs anywhere in Arab countries. We must accept these facts and move on.

We know that Israelis want to live in peace, and that the vast majority of Israelis are friendly and neighborly. We know that Egypt was able to secure a very favorable peace deal with Israel because Egypt agreed to accept Israel and to give up on violence.

The writer is the founder and former director of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group. (Times of Israel)

Israel to UN: There Is No Cycle of Violence, There is Terrorism - Danny Danon

Israel's new Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, told the Security Council on Thursday: Tragically, since the establishment of the State of Israel, every Israeli in every generation has been touched by war and by terror. My own father, Joseph Danon, was severely injured by terrorists. We all hope and pray for peace with our neighbors, and we will do all that we can to achieve this noble goal, but we will never compromise the security of the Jewish state.

Over the past six weeks, the streets of Israel have been swept by a savage tide of terror, and I am disappointed that all I hear are calls to end the "cycle of violence." This is not a cycle of violence. These are simply unprovoked attacks against Israelis for no reason other than the fact that they are Jews living in their historic homeland. Like any country, Israel has the right and obligation to defend its citizens, and this is exactly what we are doing. Any country whose people were being attacked in the streets on a daily basis would act in the exact same way.

(Continued from page 11)

If the UN is truly interested in calming tensions and bringing peace to the region, it must end its practice of calling on both sides to "show restraint," and clearly state that there is one side that is instigating terror. Stop making excuses for the Palestinians, and start holding them accountable. Only then will the prospects for peace return.

(Jerusalem Post)

Attacks Against Israelis: The World's Silence Is Deafening

David Harris

October 11, 2015

For days now, I have been watching in dismay as Israeli citizens face random attacks, some deadly, by Palestinian assailants on the streets of their cities and towns. Children have been orphaned, parents have lost children, and some survivors are doubtless scarred for life.

I have been waiting to see whether Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, whose false claims about Israel supposedly changing the status quo at a Muslim holy site helped trigger the unrest, would seek to calm the situation or inflame it still further.

I have been following the journalistic acrobatics of some mainstream media, such as the BBC and The New York Times, which seek to avoid calling a spade a spade in reporting what's happening, blurring the distinction between who are the arsonists and who are the firemen.

I've been observing the international community largely languish in silence or, at best, issue mealy-mouthed statements calling for "restraint" on both sides, hewing to the 50-yard line. And I've been wondering, not for the first time, what it would take for the world to wake up and acknowledge — without equivocation, resort to moral equivalence, or diplomatic gobbledygook — that Israel, the lone liberal democracy in the Middle East, is facing violence that must be condemned unequivocally, and that it, like any other nation, has the obligation to defend itself.

It's striking how, when it comes to these issues, some otherwise intelligent and thoughtful people in government, media, or think tanks, just shut down their critical faculties. Instead, they resort to a Pavlovian response mechanism that essentially rejects any possible legitimacy for the Israeli position and blindly defends whatever Palestinian narrative comes along.

In this mindset, if Israelis are being shot or stabbed, they must have done something to "deserve" it. If Israeli authorities mobilize the army and police to stop the terrorism, then, by definition, Israel is using "excessive force." No matter how inflammatory President Abbas's speeches at the UN may be, he is a man of "peace." No matter how many times Israeli leaders call for face-to-face negotiations with the Palestinians, Israel is always branded as the "obstacle" to peace.

Isn't it long overdue to get real, see things as they actually are, and stop living in a world of self-imposed illusions and falsehoods? Undoubtedly, some of the individuals who express these views, and the institutions they represent, are ideologically blinded. Down deep, they just can't abide the notion of Jewish self-determination, even as they place the Palestinians on a political pedestal.

But there are others who hope to see a two-state accord, allowing both Israelis and Palestinians to pursue their national aspirations alongside one another, and I have no reason to doubt their sincerity.

Yet I do question their strategy. While they do not hesitate to push, prod, and criticize Israel when they believe, rightly or wrongly, that Israel isn't acting in the spirit of a two-state vision, they're too often deafeningly silent when it comes to Palestinian behavior — including right now. This double standard is the height of condescension or, indeed, infantilization.

By indulging the Palestinians, rationalizing their every misstep, coddling their leaders, going along with their unilateral steps at the UN and elsewhere, ignoring incitement and glorification of "martyrs," and excusing every turn-down of an Israeli two-state offer, these presumably well-intentioned actors are making the achievement of a two-state agreement less, not more, likely.

After all, if the Palestinians aren't held to a higher standard of conduct (or are quietly believed to be incapable of it), how in the world could they ever responsibly govern a state of their own, and not become yet another volatile, undemocratic Arab nation? And if that's the prospect, why would Israel, already facing a region in turmoil that only promises to get still more so, now conclude that the Palestinian leadership can be a reliable partner for peace?

Apropos, I recently met the foreign minister of a Latin American country, and we discussed his nation's voting

(Continued from page 12)

pattern at the UN on Israel-related issues. He said proudly that he considers carefully each of the (endless) resolutions before giving instructions on how to vote, paying particular attention, he stressed, to its implications for Israel's security. This sounded pretty good and he certainly came across as genuine. But I then asked him when was the last time he had visited Israel to see the evolving situation on the ground and along the country's borders. He replied that he had never been there, but hoped to go one day.

Forgive me, but how can someone thousands of miles away who has never laid eyes on tiny Israel, not even once — never stood at the border with Lebanon to see Iran-backed Hezbollah forces on the other side, never traveled to the Gaza frontier to understand Hamas's proximity, never realized that Islamist cells operate in the West Bank just a few miles, if that, from Israeli population centers, and never gazed across the border with Syria, where the only thing all the warring factions agree on, from ISIS to Assad's forces, is their hatred of Israel — determine what is and is not in Israel's best security interests?

But with all my grief at the attacks in Israel, and all my despair about how much of the international community is (and is not) reacting, there's one thing that gives me hope — Israel itself.

No matter the danger, Israel remains unbowed and unbent. It will defend itself as it must, and it will teach the world, which faces its own terrorist threats, a few lessons in the process. It will continue to yearn for enduring peace, even as its adversaries clamor for Jewish blood. And the people of Israel will not for a single moment stop living and contributing to one of the most exciting, innovative, and creative countries on the planet.

Shortly after a Tel Aviv discotheque was attacked by a Palestinian terrorist 14 years ago, killing 21 young people, someone came along and wrote on the charred building façade: "They won't stop us from dancing." Indeed, they won't.

(David Harris is the Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee)

Sisterhood

"The Simcha Cake Project"

Sisterhood has created a way of announcing special Simchas and other events in order to support the Torah Fund of the Jewish Theological Seminary. At each meeting we will be able to announce our Simcha and have it published in the Bulletin with a minimum donation of \$1.00. This is in lieu of putting Tzedakah boxes on the tables. Torah Fund contributions ensure our legacy to future generations of Conservative Jews by training Rabbis, Cantors, Educators, Scholars and Lay Leaders.

The following Simchas were announced at the October 23, 2015 meeting

Judy Levy	For daughter Emily's October birthday
Rochelle Mendelow	Good health to all and a good winter to all the Snowbirds On my grandson, Joshua, achieving his dream, being accepted to NY Police Academy
Susan Gastman	Good health to all
Sandra Schwadron	Good health to all
Sandy Godnick	Healthy winter to all
Bette Glasser	Helen Daniels, hope you are your way to feeling better Dorothy Lubitz, Hope you are feeling better every day Congratulations to my granddaughter, Dina Newman, on getting her MA from the Jewish Theological Seminary
Anita Bernstein	Good winter to all the Snowbirds. We'll miss you until you come back
Rosalie Weiner	A good winter to all
Marilyn Brown	Good health to everyone
Michael Green	Good luck to President Trump
Joan Levine	A good winter to all
Connie Hanan	Happy to be here
Fran and Joel Goldstein	A happy Thanksgiving to all
Ellen Zilka	Happy Thanksgiving to all
Edith Dressler	Happy birthday to my son
Rita Gittler	My grandson Justin being on the Dean's List at Binghamton
Meryl Roschwalb	On birth of a great-nephew

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NOVEMBER, 2015
CHESHVAN/KISLEV, 5776

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i> Rabbi's Class "G-d, The Jews And History" 10:30-Noon	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>  4:27	<i>7</i> ^{25 Cheshvan} Chayei Sara Ends 5:37
<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i> Rabbi's Class "G-d, The Jews And History" 10:30-Noon	<i>12</i> Rosh Chodesh Sisterhood Meeting 12 noon	<i>13</i> ^{1 Kislev} Rosh Chodesh  4:20	<i>14</i> ^{2 Kislev} Toldot Ends 5:30
<i>15</i> Global Day Of Learning	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i> Rabbi's Class "G-d, The Jews And History" 10:30-Noon	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>  4:15	<i>21</i> ^{9 Kislev} Vayetzei Ends 5:24
<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i> Thanksgiving	<i>27</i>  4:11	<i>28</i> ^{16 Kislev} Vayishlach Ends 5:21
<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>					

DECEMBER, 2015

KISLEV/TEVET, 5776

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Book Club "The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry" 10:30 AM	4  4:09	5 ^{23 Kislev} Vayeshev Ends 5:19
6 Erev Chanukah 1 candle  First Night	7 Chanukah 2 Candles  Second Night	8 Chanukah 3 Candles  Third Night	9 Chanukah 4 Candles  Fourth Night	10 Chanukah Party Latkes & LoMein 12 noon  Fifth Night	11 Chanukah 6 Candles  Sixth Night 4:09	12 ^{30 Kislev} Miketz Ends 5:19 Chanukah 7 Candles  Seventh Night
13 ^{1 Tevet} Rosh Chodesh Chanukah 8 Candles  Eighth Night	14 Last Day Chaukah	15	16	17	18  4:11	19 ^{7 Tevet} Vayigash Ends 5:20
20	21	22	23	24	25 4:15	26 ^{15 Tevet} Vayechi Ends 5:24
27	28	29	30	31		