



# Flushing-Fresh Meadows Jewish Center

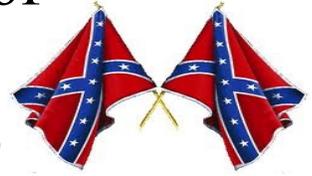
193-10 Peck Avenue ✦ Flushing, New York 11365 (718) 357-5100

January – February, 2012  
Vol. 9, No.4

## THE BULLETIN

Tevet/Shevat/Adar 5772  
Rabbi Gerald M. Solomon  
Cantor Aaron Katz

### A Course in Commemoration of The Sesquicentennial of The War Between The States



### One People - Two Sides: How American Jews Viewed The Civil War



Brigadier General  
Edward Salomon  
USA

Six Wednesdays  
Beginning January 4, 2012  
10:30 AM – 12 Noon

Instructor: Rabbi Gerald Solomon



Secretary of State  
Judah P. Benjamin  
CSA

### ATTENTION:

Friday evening services for the months of January and February are suspended due to anticipated inclement weather.

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

### JANUARY

Friday, Jan 6 - Candle Lighting Time. . . 4:25 PM  
 Saturday, Jan 7 - Parashat Vayechi  
 Shabbat Services. . . . . 9:00 AM  
 Shabbat Ends. . . . . 5:34 PM

Friday, Jan 13 - Candle Lighting Time. . 4:32 PM  
 Saturday, Jan 14 - Parashat Shemot  
 Shabbat Services. . . . . 9:00 AM  
 Shabbat Ends. . . . . 5:42 PM

Friday, Jan 20 - Candle Lighting Time. . 4:40 PM  
 Saturday, Jan 21 - Parashat Vaeira  
 Shabbat Mevarchim Services. . . . . 9:00 AM  
 Shabbat Ends. . . . . 5:50 PM

Friday, Jan 27 - Candle Lighting Time. . 4:48 PM  
 Saturday, Jan 28 - Parashat Bo  
 Shabbat Services. . . . . 9:00 AM  
 Shabbat Ends. . . . . 5:58 PM

### FEBRUARY

Friday, Feb 3 - Candle Lighting Time. . . 4:57 PM  
 Saturday, Feb 4 - Parashat B'shalach  
 Shabbat Shirah Services. . . . . 9:00 AM  
 Shabbat Ends. . . . . 6:07 PM

Friday, Feb 10 - Candle Lighting Time. . 5:05 PM  
 Saturday, Feb 11 - Parashat Yitro  
 Shabbat Services. . . . . 9:00 AM  
 Shabbat Ends. . . . . 6:15 PM

Friday, Feb 17 - Candle Lighting Time. . 5:14 PM  
 Saturday, Feb 18 - Parashat Mishpatim  
 Shabbat Sh'kalim  
 Shabbat Mevarchim Services. . . . . 9:00 AM  
 Shabbat Ends. . . . . 6:24 PM

Friday, Feb 24 - Candle Lighting Time. . 5:22 PM  
 Saturday, Feb 25 - Parashat T'rumah  
 Shabbat Services. . . . . 9:00 AM  
 Shabbat Ends. . . . . 6:32 PM

### ENDOWMENTS

Yahrzeit Plaque  
     In main Sanctuary. . . . . \$275  
     In Lasky Chapel. . . . . \$175  
 Panel in new stained glass window  
     . . . . . \$500  
 Endow a Siddur. . . . . \$50  
 Endow a Chumash. . . . . \$75  
 Sponsor a kiddush. . . . . \$225  
 Special kiddush. . . . . ask  
 Listing in Book of Life. . . . . \$25  
 Rabbi's Discretionary Fund. . . . .

Please contact office (718) 357-5100  
 if you are interested

### KEEP ON GIVING

Hunger is a daily struggle for the indigent and does not end when the holiday season becomes a faded memory. Please continue to bring in canned or boxed goods so that the wintry months will be a little less cold for those less fortunate.

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### In The Community

For those in need, a new restaurant has opened to serve meals free of charge.  
 Open Sunday- Thursday: 4 PM to 9 PM  
 at 98-08 Queens Blvd, Rego Park  
 Kosher Meals under Rabbinical Supervision  
 People of all ages and faiths are invited  
 No Questions Asked

# SCHEDULED EVENTS

**Wednesdays Beginning Jan 4<sup>th</sup>  
10:30 AM to 12 Noon**

Adult Education Institute Courses  
Conducted By Rabbi Gerald Solomon  
“One People - Two Sides:

How American Jews Viewed the Civil War”

**Thursdays: 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM**  
“On-going Discussion Group”

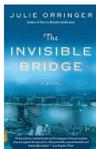
**Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> @8:00 PM**  
Program Committee Meeting  
All Members Are Welcome To Attend

**Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Sarah Solomon z”l  
Memorial Lecture (Following Kiddush)  
“Hadassah at 100: A Century of Service to the  
Jewish Community”

**Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup>**  
Tu B’Shevat Kiddush

**Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup> @8:00 PM**  
Program Committee Meeting  
All Members Are Welcome To Attend

**Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> @10:30 AM**



Sisterhood Book Club  
**“The Invisible Bridge”**  
By Julie Orringer




**Those who are interested in joining a Men’s Choir for a monthly Shabbat service and a joyful experience should contact our Cantor by calling the temple office.**



## CONDOLENCES

Condolences are extended to the family of Elizabeth Weigler, a devoted member of the Flushing Jewish Center. She will be missed by her vast family and friends.

Condolences to the friends and family on the passing of Bernie Solomon. The Solomon family has been a prominent supporter of the Fresh Meadows Jewish Center from its beginnings. Bernie’s presence at minyan and Shabbat services will be sorely missed.



## MAZEL TOV

To Joan and Zach Levine on the birth of their third great-grandson.

To Seth Marcus and Maxine Marcus on the official welcoming of their beloved Katherine Alyse as a daughter of Israel.

To the Members of FFMJC:

We thank you for your thoughtful kindness at a time when it was greatly appreciated.

The Family of  
Muriel Packer

### Program Note:

The Senior Fitness Program meeting on Tuesdays has been suspended until March 2012.

**RABBI'S MESSAGE**  
**SESQUICENTENNIAL**  
**OF THE CIVIL WAR**

Dear friends, as has been advertised, we have been in the midst of the observance of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, 1861 - 1865 – 2011 - 2015. There are a number of observances planned for this commemoration of the worst war in American History. We are fortunate in that we will be offering a course entitled **ONE PEOPLE, TWO SIDES: HOW AMERICAN JEWS VIEWED THE CIVIL WAR**. It is scheduled for six sessions but can be extended if needs be. The course will begin on January 4, 2012 from 10:30A.M. to 12 Noon. The primary discussion will focus on the issue of slavery and since I had written a graduate thesis entitled **ATTITUDES TOWARD SLAVERY AS REFLECTED IN THE WRITINGS AND SERMONS OF AMERICAN RABBIS DURING THE CIVIL WAR**, I am pleased to present a goodly amount of material for the course from the thesis. Chapter 5, in particular will be examined. It is entitled **“AMERICAN JEWS AND THEIR RABBIS TAKE SIDES ON THE SLAVERY ISSUE.”**

We will discuss, as indicated, the general attitudes toward slavery as well as the general rabbinic view and the specific positions on slavery held by the rabbis listed.

**INTRODUCTION**  
**GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD SLAVERY**

**RABBIS' VIEWS ON SLAVERY**  
**MORRIS JACOB RAPHALL**  
**DAVID EINHORN**  
**BERNHARD ILLOWY**  
**BERNHARD FELSENTAL**  
**SABATO MORAIS**  
**ISAAC MAYER WISE**  
**MAX LILIENTHAL**  
**ISAAC LEESER**  
**MAXIMILLIAN MICHELbacher**  
**JAMES K. GUTHEIM**  
**GUSTAV GOTTHEIL**

As we journey through the material, we will look with an eye to answer some very serious questions.

1. Why does slavery still exist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
2. What kind of work do the enslaved perform?
3. Where is slavery today?
4. Are people really being bought and sold into slavery?
5. Who is behind slavery?
6. What will end slavery?

Best wishes for the new secular year,  
 Rabbi Gerald M. Solomon

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**IN MEMORIAM:**  
**BERNIE SOLOMON**

*The following are excerpts from the eulogy for Bernie Solomon delivered by Rabbi Solomon.*

The *Malach Hamavet*, the Angel of Death, has made a call and taken away a dear and very sensitive gentleman leaving us all saddened. Bernie's passing has created a void in our congregational family as Bernie has now departed to join in Heaven the distinguished and noted Solomon family members in whom he took pride and who were known for their philanthropy and service to the Fresh Meadows Jewish Center for so many years. Bernie too is remembered for his kindness, his friendly ways, his positive and jovial disposition even when the going got rough for him, and he is also remembered for his generosity. The name Solomon is very much in view in our synagogue - a name that over the years has grown very much revered and remembered for the blessings the Solomon family provided for our synagogue. The loss of Bernie Solomon, a member of our congregation for over 50 years reminds us that life is given as a gift granted us by the grace of G-d, and taken from us by His will.

But Bernie was blessed with many strengths despite his illness and hospitalizations in the final years of his life. In fact, in thinking about his life,

the words of the Psalm which reads “*Y’may Shnotenu Bahem Shivim Shanah V’im Beegvurot Sh’monim Shanah*” comes to mind. “The years of our lives are three score and ten, if by reason of strength, four score.” Bernie lived 88 years on G-d’s earth, which means that he was blessed with “*arichat yamim*,” the blessing of “length of days.”

I knew Bernie as one who came regularly to Shabbat and Yom Tov Services both morning and often in the evenings as well as the mornings, as long as health would permit and I know he enjoyed being there always treating me with affection and kind words and enjoying our prayer services and the cantor’s offerings. He enjoyed singing the prayers with the congregation, often in his own way. He also enjoyed socializing with others at the various kiddushes and social functions. I know Bernie will be missed in our synagogue, but will always be remembered there and I am sure elsewhere by friends and acquaintances alike for his devotion to his religious faith, for his personal charm, his sense of humor, his kibbutzing, his caring and concern for the well being of others, his funny ways and his apparently boundless strength and energy. He liked so much to make others happy, to make them laugh, to make them smile, even to be entertaining with his pleasantries.

I had occasion to visit him in hospital settings as well as rehab facilities many times over the last two years where he always seemed to maintain such a wonderfully positive attitude about his health and prospects for recovery. He did not complain about his condition but gave thanks to G-d for every day that he lived even when in pain, and bore the dispensations which were visited upon him with resolve and with dignity. He knew the importance of acceptance - even the acceptance of his own imminent departure from the world with an upbeat attitude, with optimism, with hope and with faith. He did not bemoan his fate but lived each day with the knowledge that all we have is today, and we, therefore should live it to the fullest. And he demonstrated a selflessness in his demeanor. When I would inquire of him how he was feeling, no matter

how he felt, he would always respond that he was alright and would then ask me how I was. He often inquired about members of the congregation and urged me to extend to them his best regards and his love. Yes, it seemed on so many occasions, as I recall, that he was concerned more with the needs and wishes of others than with his own even during his times of great personal discomfort and emotional distress.

Bernie was a very thankful man, thankful for each day. - Bernie, I believe, teaches us this lesson as he was thankful for the years and wonderful blessings he did enjoy - members of his family, his friends, his community, his shul - his service and - he loved the great gift which he was blessed with, the gift of life. What a wonderful teaching he has left us - to love every minute of our lives, to accept the good with the not so good and to have faith that ultimately, as he and our sages have pointed out by word and deed, all that happens to us is for our own good.

We can perpetuate his life and his memory by doing mitzvot in his name and by so doing help him to accrue greater and greater merit in Heaven. Whenever we think of him, let that thought then inspire us to do a mitzvah, a good deed - he will benefit and will bless us as well.

Beryl Dovid ben Layb Yosef, *Lech B’Shalom* - We are saddened that you have left us. “T’he nishmato tserurah bitsror ha-chayim.” “May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life.” May peace envelop his soul. May his repose be in *Gan Eden*, in Paradise. Amen.



## **TU B'SHEVAT: NEW YEAR OF THE TREES**

Tu B'Shevav, the "new year of trees," begins this year on Wednesday night, January 19th and ends at sunset on January 20<sup>th</sup>. The name Tu B'Shevav corresponds to the holiday's date, Tu being an acronym of the Hebrew letters tet and vav, whose numeric values add up to fifteen, and occurs in the month of Shevat. Tu B'Shevav is a post-biblical holiday; it's first mentioned in the Mishnah (the codification, completed around 200 CE, of what, until then, had been Jewish oral law).

There, it is listed as one of four new years in the Hebrew calendar:

- (1) Rosh Hodesh Nisan in the spring, the first day of what the Bible specifies is the first month, and the date for counting the number of years a king has reigned;
- (2) Rosh Hodesh Elul in the late summer, the dividing date for determining which crops are subject to tithing (Maaisrot in Hebrew); those harvested before that date belong to one year; those on or during the date to another;
- (3) Rosh Hodesh Tishrei, in the early fall, which subsequently came to be called Rosh Hashanah and was designated as the beginning of a new Hebrew year, but here was designated as the day on which God judged human beings;
- (4) Tu B'Shevav, on which God "judges" trees according to the human behavior.

### **Tu b'Shevav Seder**

Tu b'Shevav seders first originated among followers of the Jewish mystical practice known as Kabbalah who settled in the Israeli city of Safed in the 16th century. Today, a growing number of Jews have reinstated the custom.

Tu b'Shevav also is used as the "divider" in determining the age of a tree, and when people may eat its fruit. A tree planted any time (even one day) before Tu b'Shevav is considered one year old on that day. In terms of when one may eat its produce: according to the law of orlah (forbiddenness), as stated in Leviticus 19:23-25, only beginning in the fifth year of a tree's growth may its fruit be eaten.

During the first three years, it is forbidden, while in the fourth, it is dedicated to God.

While Tu B'Shevav occurs in the middle of winter in North America, in Israel, it marks the very first signs of spring. The fall and winter rainy seasons, which generally begin around the holiday of Sukkot, generally end some time before Tu B'Shevav, and usually the first buds of the almond tree, the first tree to blossom, appear about the time of the holiday.

A minor holiday, on which working and cooking are allowed, and during which the Torah is not read and no special prayers are recited, Tu B'Shevav still is marked as a happy day. Traditionally, no eulogies are delivered on Tu B'Shevav. In addition, Jews everywhere drink wines and foods from Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel), particularly the seven types of grain and produce those for which the Land is praised in Deuteronomy 8:8: "a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees and [date] honey." If, as is customary, a person eats such fruit for the first time that year, he or she says the Shehecheyanu blessing, praising G-d for allowing one to live "until this season."

Additionally, in Israel, schoolchildren and other people plant trees on Tu B'Shevav, symbolizing their commitment to the Land. In the Diaspora, Jews have used the holiday to learn more about the Land of Israel, and to make or renew a commitment to safeguarding the environment.

A growing number of Jews have reinstated the custom of holding Tu B'shevav Seders. First practiced by followers of the Jewish mystical practice known as Kabbalah who settled in the Israeli city of Safed in the 16th century, these seders, like the Passover one, sometimes involve four cups of wine (dark red, light red, pink and white), symbolizing the passing of the four seasons. Also included are the seven species of grain and produce mentioned in Deuteronomy, and other fruits and nuts from Israel, along with readings related to Eretz Yisrael, nature and

ecology, and social justice.

Some Jews use Tu B'Shevat to learn about traditional and modern Jewish teachings and values on ecology, ethics, and social justice. This emphasis flows from the metaphorical use of "tree" - for example, the Torah is called "a tree of life" (aitz hayim). It also derives specifically from some of the instructive allusions to trees in traditional Jewish texts. An example is Adam and Eve's having been forbidden by God from eating from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" in the Garden of Eden, thus losing their childlike innocence, but gaining a knowledge of the human potential for moral and immoral behavior (Genesis, chapters 2 and 3).

Jewish laws that pertain to nature, and to trees in particular, include one prohibiting soldiers from cutting down fruit-bearing trees to build bulwarks when besieging a city. In a striking expression of concern, even empathy, for the integrity of nature, the Torah asks rhetorically, "For is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee?" (Deuteronomy 20:19).

At the beginning of the Zionist movement, Tu B'Shevat again took on new meaning as planting trees became a symbol for the Jewish re-attachment to the land of Israel. The most recent transformation has re-popularized Tu B'Shevat into a holiday of Jewish environmentalism as a sort of Jewish Earth Day because of its association with trees and, by extension, with nature.

## **JEWISH NATIONAL FUND PROJECTS**

### FORESTRY

JNF has planted more than 240 million trees since 1901 to protect the land, green the landscape and preserve vital ecosystems. Through the generosity of donors like you, JNF continues this effort, planting seedlings, maintaining forest health, combating desertification, protecting watersheds and managing water flow.

### WATER

Over the last decade, Jewish National Fund has dramatically increased Israel's water resources,

providing drinking water to 1.2 million Israelis. JNF's water management projects--never more critical to Israel's survival--include reservoir and dam construction, water conservation, river rehabilitation and recycling. More needs to be done to alleviate Israel's annual water deficit.

### COMMUNITY

JNF builds the infrastructure necessary to create and support entire communities throughout Israel, with a major focus on developing Israel's northern and southern regions. As Israel's population expands, these newly developed towns offer opportunities for Israeli families. But development costs are enormous.

### SECURITY

Through JNF's work, there is hope for a safer Israel. JNF builds security roads along the Lebanese border, so children and their parents can travel to school and work shielded from harm. Security roads offer more than just peace of mind. They offer Israelis the ability to live safely in their communities-- allowing them the freedom to travel, to shop, to live life as normally as possible. JNF-built parks provide a place for families to gather and enjoy simple pleasures away from the stress of daily life.

### EDUCATION

For over a century, JNF has fulfilled its mandate to provide Zionist education to Jewish children around the world--introducing them to the natural wonders of their homeland and the importance of protecting the environment. JNF-sponsored scholarships and programs at the university level, such as Caravan for Democracy, ensure the commitment to enhancing the land and preserving its resources is transmitted from generation to generation.

### TOURISM

JNF has built over 1,000 parks, playgrounds and recreation areas for enjoyment by Israeli families and tourists alike, as well as walking trails,

archeological restorations and facilities for the physically challenged. JNF also builds soldier/family picnic sites, where the heroic men and women of the Israel Defense Force can share precious time with their loved ones. And JNF-sponsored trips allow thousands of visitors to experience firsthand the wonders of Israel and support its economy. Plan a trip to see the splendor of Israel today.

### HERITAGE SITES

JNF is actively identifying, restoring and saving and historic sites associated with Israel's modern history. With our partners at KKL and the Society for Preservation of Israel Heritage Sites (SPIHS), we are working to increase public awareness of the importance of heritage preservation and providing new tourism opportunities. Whether it's the Ayalon Institute, an underground bullet factory used in The War Of Independence, or the museum at Atlit which is dedicated to preserving the story of illegal immigrants to Israel, JNF continues to be at the forefront of the development of vital facilities that boost the Israeli economy and improve the quality of life for the people of Israel and its visitors.

### RESEARCH

As a founding member of the International Arid Lands Consortium, JNF is at the forefront of this critical global issue. JNF funded-researchers find solutions to the challenges presented by the Middle East's arid environment. Breakthroughs in water-conservation technologies have enabled Israel's farmers to stay competitive in world markets. And by sharing this cutting edge technology with other countries, JNF is helping improve the quality of life not only in Israel but around the world.

### EDUCATION

JNF engages, educates, and energizes American students by introducing them to the natural wonders of Israel and the importance of protecting the environment. JNF sponsors scholarships and programs at the university level, such as Caravan for Democracy, to strengthen the commitment to Israel. Our annual Alternative Spring Break trip brings

college students and young professional to Israel to perform community service projects. JNF brings Israel programs to hundreds of synagogues, summer camps, and community centers across the country.

### TOURISM & RECREATION

JNF has built more than 1,000 parks, playgrounds and recreation areas for Israeli families and tourists to enjoy. Our parks feature walking trails, bike paths, archeological restorations, and facilities for people with disabilities. JNF also builds soldier/family picnic sites, where the heroic men and women of the Israel Defense Force can share precious time with their loved ones.



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL  
PLANT TREES WITH JNF  
FOR TU B'SHEVAT

PURCHASE OF TREES MAY BE MADE  
THROUGH THE SYNAGOGUE OFFICE.  
PLEASE CALL TODAY - 718-357-5100

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Tu B'shvat  
the Holiday  
for Trees



## **ARE YOU HAPPY TO BE JEWISH?**

By Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein  
(*Jerusalem Post, December 8, 2011*)

Are you happy to be Jewish? Is it a burden or privilege? For many, Jewish identity means having inherited a history of pogroms, the Holocaust, hatred and suffering; and now, the trauma of our past is interlocked with our fears for the future, filled with military threats, mounting international isolation of the State of Israel and increased incidents of anti-Semitism around the globe.

Though we are troubled, we must not fall into the trap of negativity, nor of a Jewish identity defined by our enemies. Hanukka offers us a different path, away from pessimism and toward a positive and inspiring Jewish identity.

There were two great miracles that took place some 2,200 years ago, when the mighty Greek Empire was defeated by a rebellion led by the Maccabees--the priests in the Temple. The first was the unlikely military victory of this group of priests and their followers over a world superpower. The second was when they entered the Temple and, as is recorded in the Talmud, found only one flask of ritually pure olive oil for lighting the menorah, but instead of it burning for one day, it miraculously lasted for eight. When we light Hanukka candles, we celebrate the second miracle and not the first.

This seems counter-intuitive: on the scale of miracles, surely the defeat of a world empire at the hands of a group of priests is more impressive--and indeed more historically significant--than how many days the oil burnt. Why, then, do we celebrate this seemingly smaller miracle? Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk (1843-1926), writes in his commentary on the Humash, that our Talmudic sages modeled Hanukka on the G-d-given pattern of our other festivals, which focus not on the defeat of others but rather on the positive goals we achieved for ourselves; Passover, for example, is called *z'man heirutinu*, the time of our freedom--and not "the time of the downfall of Egypt."

So too Hanukka does not commemorate the defeat of the Greeks, but rather the rededication of the Temple and, especially, the rekindling of the menorah, which represents the light of Torah values. There is a moral reason for this model: It is insensitive to celebrate the suffering of other people.

According to the Midrash, when the feared Egyptian army was drowning in the Red Sea and the angels wanted to sing praises, G-d rebuked them; how could they sing when His creations were being destroyed? But there is an existential reason as well, and that is that Hanukka is not about the battle won over our enemies but about the victory of being able to light the flames of Torah values in the world.... This is why on Hanukka we focus on the miracle of the menorah and not the miracle of the war. Hanukka teaches us that Jewish identity should not be defined by struggle with our enemies, but rather by our G-d-given moral vision, mission and values.

Suffering and anti-Semitism must not define Jewish identity, for three reasons: First, that would give far too much credence to our enemies; we must not give them the right to define who we are. Second, it creates an identity rooted in negativity and pain, and this kind of Jewishness is not sustainable.... Third, defining ourselves by a history of suffering fosters the notion that our existence is solely about survival. But unlike animals whose aim is solely survival, human beings were created...to live with the higher purpose of a Divine mission, a calling which we carry in our souls.

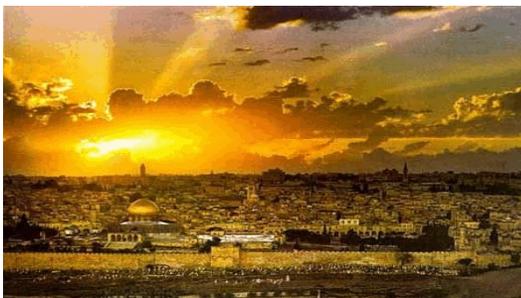
The lessons of Hanukka need to guide us today. For too many Jews, centuries of pogroms and oppression have defined what a Jew is. Although the Halacha [Jewish law] mandates that we remember and honor the victims of anti-Semitism and mourn the suffering and destructions on fast days throughout the year...pain cannot dominate who we are. It forms but a part of a broader, positive whole.

It was the Maccabees, the loyal and devoted priests of the Temple, who fought for freedom in those days because their vision was founded upon authentic Jewish values.... When we light our Hanukka candles, we celebrate not the fearful battle with our enemies but rather the privilege of having a value system given to us by G-d--represented by the glowing flames of the menorah--which illuminates a dark world.

These values guide us, giving meaning, purpose and direction to our existence. They guide us on our moral responsibilities and spiritual vision of how to be a nurturing parent, a respectful son or daughter, a loving spouse, and on the meaning of honesty, integrity, generosity and compassion; how to run a government and economy; how to establish courts and what justice is; how to connect with G-d and how to pray and learn; how to practice medicine and law; how to understand science, psychology and history; how to be ethical in business and generous in charity; and how to live with inspiration and meaning in accordance with Hashem's will. This model of positive Jewish identity is the key to our future....

With all the troubles of our time we need a compelling and inspiring vision of what it means to be a Jew. And that can only be found in the light of the menorah. History has proven that the only form of Jewish identity which has sustained, nurtured and inspired generations of Jews for thousands of years has been an identity rooted in Torah Judaism. As we stand around our Hanukka candles this year, let us look at the lights and internalize what they represent: the light of our values, meaning and purpose, the fulfillment of a noble and Divine mission and the privilege and joy of our Jewish legacy.

*(The writer is chief rabbi of South Africa.)*



## **FREE POLLARD NOW, IN THE NAME OF HIS LATE FATHER!**

By David Kirshenbaum

*(Jerusalem Post, December 26, 2011)*

During the past 22 years, I had the privilege of knowing Dr. Morris Pollard, the father of Jonathan Pollard. Earlier this year, Dr. Pollard passed away at the age of 95. One of the little known aspects of Jonathan Pollard's case is how much his father contributed to the United States.

Dr. Pollard was a world class scientist and cancer researcher who continued his work until just a few weeks prior to his death. For nearly 50 years, Pollard oversaw Notre Dame University's longest-running medical research program that resulted in major discoveries in the battle against cancer. He developed bone marrow transplants to treat leukemia and sarcomas, for which he was honored with the Hope Award from the *American Cancer Society*; pioneered discoveries for the suppression of colon carcinoma and related metastases and methods for dissolving blood clots; developed groundbreaking tests for Hepatitis A and discovered treatments for trachoma, a major cause of blindness around the world. In World War II while a member of the US Army, and under the orders of Gen. George Marshall, Pollard investigated and tested vaccines for exotic viruses then afflicting American soldiers in the Pacific. Working with these vaccines and viruses was fraught with potentially fatal health risks. Pollard was honored for his work with three presidential citations and an Army Commendation Medal. Pollard published more than 300 scientific articles, and was world-renowned in his field for developing a unique breed of germ-free "Lobund-Wistar" rats to study the mechanisms of disease. Even at age 95, he was in his lab almost every day....

Only after Jonathan's arrest did Dr. Pollard fully understand some of the conversations he had had

with Jonathan, who had seemed to be extremely troubled by things he had learned at work as a civilian analyst in Naval Intelligence. In private conversations, Dr. Pollard told me he regretted not having been more receptive to Jonathan's veiled approaches for advice about how to deal with the fact that information was being withheld from Israel.

Ironically, those restrictions were imposed in response to Israel's destruction of Iraq's Osirak nuclear facility. Bobby Ray Inman, deputy CIA director at the time, has acknowledged that he was so disconcerted that American-supplied satellite photography had been used to carry out Israel's operation that he ordered all intelligence data covering areas more than 400 km. from Israel's borders to be withheld from Jerusalem....

One of the questions that haunted Dr. Pollard was why Jonathan was singled out for punishment far beyond that meted to every other American caught spying for US allies or neutral countries and even exceeded the sentence imposed on over 90 percent of spies for US adversaries. That mistreatment started immediately after Pollard was arrested, when he was thrown into a hospital for the criminally insane for ten months, despite the fact that there was no indication he needed medical treatment. Only as a result of Dr. Pollard's appeal to Congressman Lee Hamilton was the younger Pollard ultimately released from the psychiatric ward....

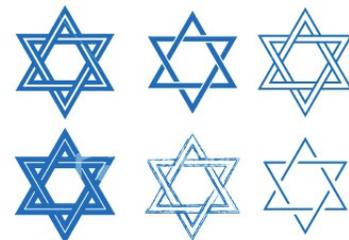
Another aspect of Jonathan's punishment that gave Dr. Pollard no rest was the influence on the sentencing judge of Caspar Weinberger's still-classified memorandum and the ongoing reliance upon it as grounds for Jonathan's continued imprisonment after a quarter of a century. Dr. Pollard strongly felt that the use of secret testimony in situations where, as in Jonathan's case, neither the accused nor his counsel is afforded an adequate opportunity to challenge it, was anathema to core American values.

That indefensible procedural defect was magnified, in Dr. Pollard's eyes, by questions about Weinberger's general credibility. During the Iran-Contra investigation... Weinberger was indicted by a

federal grand jury for perjury and obstruction of justice and was spared a trial and possible jail time only by a pardon granted by President George H.W. Bush....

Today, a large and growing cadre of former intelligence, congressional, White House and cabinet-level personnel who are familiar with the classified documents are calling for Pollard's release. These include Henry Kissinger, George Shulz, Dan Quayle, John McCain, former attorney-general Michael Mukasey and a bipartisan group of 18 former US senators, including four who served as chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Their calls are yet another indication that Pollard's crime did not warrant the punishment he has served. In light of that fact, the holiday season--a traditional time for presidential pardons--is an appropriate time to honor his father's memory. It is time for mercy. It is time at long last to free Jonathan Pollard.



Dec. 7, 2011

Flushing Fresh Meadows JC

Dear Friends,

Please accept my appreciation for the warm reception you extended to me last Shabbat on the occasion of my birthday.

May we continue to join in more celebrations on joyful events in your lives.

Yours,  
Rabbi Mordecai Efron

December 30, 2011

## WHERE DO ISRAELI HAREDIM STAND ON HAREDI VIOLENCE?

By Uriel Heilman

(JTA) -- The cascade of condemnations started pouring in almost as soon as the Israeli TV report aired. It's subject was an 8-year-old girl harassed by haredi men on the way to her Modern Orthodox girls' school in the Jerusalem suburb of Beit Shemesh.

The Israeli prime minister and president vowed that Israel would not tolerate haredi violence against women, whether directed at schoolgirls or women on public buses. Israel's opposition leader, Kadima's Tzipi Livni, went to a demonstration of thousands held Tuesday night in Beit Shemesh.

In America, too, the condemnations came fast and furious: Hadassah, the Jewish Federations of North America, the American Jewish Committee, the Orthodox Union, the Rabbinical Council of America and the haredi Orthodox umbrella body Agudath Israel of America were among the many groups that responded.

There appeared to be just one segment of the Jewish community that was staying silent about the violence: Israeli haredim. That's because there is some ambivalence among haredi Israelis when it comes to religious zealotry.

"The question isn't how many haredim support haredi violence and how many do not," said sociologist Menachem Friedman, an expert on haredi life and professor emeritus at Bar-Ilan University. "In all the conflicts involving haredi violence in Israel, from the British Mandate period until today, violent haredim were always a small minority, and I believe that the vast majority feel uncomfortable about them.

"The problem is that most haredim allow the extremists to act and do not stop them," Friedman continued. "Some, perhaps a small segment, really do support the violence; some, perhaps a larger segment, do not support the violence but understand the extremists, believing that actions like these, even if they are not pretty, at the end of the day are a true expression of religious sentiments," he said. "And the majority perhaps opposes the violence and knows that ultimately it's bad for Judaism but doesn't have the courage to go out and oppose it publicly."

There were one or two notable exceptions this week. "If there are those in our generation who believe that warfare is the way to spread the light of Judaism, they

are mistaken," the Jerusalem-based leader of the Belz Chasidim, Rabbi Yissachar Dov Rokeach, said Sunday during the nightly Chanukah candle-lighting ceremony at his synagogue, which holds upward of 6,000 people. Rokeach's comments, though tepid by secular standards, marked a rare foray into current events by the rebbe, who has an estimated 45,000 followers worldwide.

But the roundabout way the rebbe's message was delivered, and the scant media coverage given to haredi opposition to the violence aimed at non-haredim, is indicative both of the difficulties outsiders have with discerning shades of gray in haredi society and the ambivalence within the haredi world toward using violence to achieve religious aims.

For one thing, Israeli haredi condemnations of violence are not delivered the same way as condemnations in the non-haredi world. They are generally directed inward, not outward; they tend to be delivered not in statements to the press but as words of Torah to followers; they are often spoken not in English or Hebrew, but in Yiddish; and they are expressed less as a reaction to current events than as calls for dignified behavior by Torah-observant Jews.

"The Belzer rebbe is one of the few people who has the guts to say something," Tuvya Stern, a haredi attorney who lives in Beit Shemesh, told JTA. "But he's not going to condemn the extremists; that's not his way. He'll just advocate for a different approach."

Rokeach's speech, which was reported in haredi media and noted by Israel Radio, was unusual both because it referred to current events and because it was aimed, at least in part, at a wider audience: The rebbe had invited an Israeli Knesset member, Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar, to be with him when he delivered his speech on Chanukah's sixth night. Because Rokeach made his remarks in Yiddish, it's not clear whether or not Sa'ar picked up on their significance. Rokeach's reaction, however, was exceptional. Most haredi leaders stayed silent.

The violent zealots are drawn largely from the Edah HaHaredis, a community of anti-Zionist haredim that is particularly strict even by haredi standards and has strongholds in Jerusalem and Beit Shemesh. The Edah is closely aligned with the Satmar Chassidic sect.

Haredi support for fighting a culture war against secularism extends beyond the Edah HaHaredis, but

most haredim who espouse such views won't go so far as to become defenders of the faith themselves. Haredim often invoke a classic metaphor to describe this approach: You may not want to live with a cat, but you need cats around to eat the mice if you want to prevent infestation.

This week, the "infestation" is the presence of a new Modern Orthodox girls' school, Orot, adjacent to a haredi neighborhood of Beit Shemesh. At other times, it has been the mixing of sexes in Orthodox neighborhoods, the operation of parking lots or roads on Shabbat in haredi neighborhoods, and attempts by women to pray with the Torah at the Western Wall.

Similar behavior can be found in certain Islamic societies and fundamentalist Catholic and Protestant communities, Friedman said, noting that a key difference with haredim is that any violence is relatively limited in scope, not involving serious injury or death. Then there are haredim who oppose extremism but fear speaking out because they do not want to be seen as lax in matters of religion.

When Rabbi David Kohn, the leader of the Toldos Aharon sect of Chasidim, spoke out a few years ago against religious violence via a Yiddish-language Torah exegesis of the story of Pinchas the zealot in the Book of Numbers, he quickly was condemned in placards posted around his neighborhood of Mea Shearim, in Jerusalem.

Other haredim don't speak out because they see fights like the one in Beit Shemesh not as a battle between extremists and moderates but as part of a broader Israeli assault on haredi life led by the mainstream Israeli media.

"The source of the pollution is in halachah [Jewish law] itself," former Knesset member Yossi Sarid wrote in a column published Friday in Israel's daily Haaretz. Sarid called for the disqualification of haredi parties from the Knesset. On Haaretz's English-language website, the article was titled "Orthodox Judaism treats women like filthy little things."

Facing such hostility, some haredim say, why get involved at all?

And then there is the large segment of haredim who see themselves as totally apart from the haredim perpetrating the violence. Their attitude is that if it's not their community members, it's not their business and they don't need to get involved.

While to an outsider all haredim may look alike -- with their black coats, hats and beards -- the haredi community is as fractured as the Jewish community as a whole. In Israel, the haredi community is divided

between Ashkenazi and Sephardic, Chassidic and non-Chassidic, moderates and extremists. Within the Chassidic community, too, there are multiple sects -- and sometimes even competing grand rebbes within the same sect.

But in a world seen by outsiders as monolithic, all haredim inevitably are associated with the extremism of a few, and haredi silence is seen as affirmation of haredi bad behavior. It's something that may irk haredim who are engaged with the outside world, but it doesn't seem to matter much to haredim who aren't.

That nonchalance is alien to the non-haredi Jewish world, where organizations and leaders go out of their way to denounce ideas, people or actions they find distasteful. That goes for everything from terrorist attacks to the bombing of churches in Nigeria, which at least four Jewish groups issued statements condemning this week. When the main haredi umbrella organization in America issued its statement this week condemning the violence, it also took a shot at those denigrating haredim in general. "Those who have taken pains to note that the small group of misguided individuals who have engaged in this conduct are not representative of the larger HAREDI community are to be commended," the Agudath Israel of America said in its statement. "It is disturbing, though, that some Israeli politicians and secularists have been less responsible, portraying the actions of a very few as indicative of the feelings of the many. Quite the contrary, the extremist element is odious to, and rejected by, the vast majority of HAREDI Jews."

Until haredim take to their synagogue lecterns, the airwaves or the streets, however, that's a message that's unlikely to be heard by the Jewish public. To be sure, there were a few haredim who joined Tuesday's demonstration in Beit Shemesh against the violence. Some were members of a new local haredi party called Tov (Hebrew for "good") whose platform espouses moderation and open-mindedness. "It was a very hard decision" because many of the protesters were engaged in anti-haredi sloganeering, explained Stern, the haredi attorney from Beit Shemesh, who is a leading Tov activist. "There were signs at the rally saying 'Haredim leave Beit Shemesh.'" "Nevertheless, he said, it was important to make a public statement. "There are rabbis in the haredi world who believe in violence as part of a religious duty," Stern said, "but they are not a large group of people."

## **NO, ISRAEL ISN'T TURNING INTO IRAN**

By P. David Hornik  
(*FrontPage, December 20, 2011*)

The big drama...in Israel...has involved Tanya Rosenblit, a 28-year-old writer and translator. Boarding a bus from the coastal town of Ashdod to Jerusalem, she stood her ground for about half an hour when ultra-Orthodox (haredi) Jewish men tried to pressure her to take a seat at the back. Rosenblit became an instant heroine, appearing on TV with the transportation minister and publishing an op-ed about her experience in one of Israel's largest dailies.

In January 2011 Israel's Supreme Court declared forced gender segregation on buses illegal. Politicians from both right and left condemned the attempt to coerce Rosenblit. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said "a fringe group must not be allowed to dismantle what we share in common." Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger, himself ultra-Orthodox, said, "We don't have the authority to force our ideas on others. This country does not belong to the haredi community."

Gender segregation on Israeli buses has, of course, gotten attention from lofty places lately. Speaking to the Saban Center [last] month, [US] Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said it and other Israeli phenomena reminded her of Iran. And in an already-notorious op-ed Thomas Friedman included segregated bus lines for the ultra-Orthodox community (to repeat, now outlawed) in a volley of jibes against Israel.

As the above story reveals, yes, there is a problem--and yes, it's being addressed. It should also be seen in the right dimensions: only a small proportion of the public buses serve neighborhoods (mostly in Jerusalem) of the ultra-Orthodox, who account for 9 percent of the Jewish population. But, for some, catching a rumor somewhere (sex-segregated buses in Israel!) is enough to heap some more vilification on the much-criticized Jewish state.

And how did the problem come about? Does it really signal a deterioration of democracy, as Clinton

complained? Or does it in fact reflect something quite different?

The ultra-Orthodox have always been a problematic community in Israel, ranging from hostile to ambivalent toward the secular state. But back in 1948 when Israel was established, they were a tiny community. Young haredi men were exempted from military service and even given state support for yeshiva studies. The secular-Jewish majority tended to see the haredim as an eccentric remnant of the Diaspora that, in any case, would soon wither on the vine.

It didn't turn out that way; instead the community--very literally applying the biblical "Be fruitful and multiply"--burgeoned. And the last few years have finally seen some moderation, with small but increasing numbers of haredi young men enlisting for army service and others abjuring lifelong yeshiva study for the workforce. At the same time, another part of the community, anxious about these trends, has turned more extreme--hence such phenomena as sex-segregated buses and attempts to force that practice on others.

This capsule history, though, reveals that the flourishing of the ultra-Orthodox community resulted from Israel's democratic virtues of pluralism and tolerance. A community that the majority resented for its hostility or coolness toward the state and refusal to take part in defending it, and whose way of life many considered a distortion of the Jewish religion, was nonetheless allowed to go its own way and even supported from the public coffers....

Something similar pertains to Israel's Muslim community. When Switzerland banned the building of minarets in 2009, when France banned Islamic face veils earlier this year...Secretary Clinton, columnist Friedman, and their legions of fellow Israel-critics did not publicly lambaste these countries for gutting their democracy. Minarets and Islamic face veils are, of course, all over the place in Israel, and no one would dream of trying to prohibit them.... It should be pointed out, too, that at a time of rampant persecution of Christians in the Middle East, causing mass

emigration and vanishing populations, Israel is the region's only country where (mostly Arab) Christians enjoy full rights and have seen a dramatic increase in population--from 34,000 in 1948 to over 150,000 today.

So next time you hear that Israel is rapidly reverting to the Dark Ages, don't believe it. A radically heterogeneous country in a harsh part of the world, Israel faces more than its share of challenges. Friends of Israel don't rush to condemn it; often context and nuance can reveal a very different picture from the latest media clichés....

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## NAMES IN THE TORAH

By Udi Hammerman

The significance of names in the Torah is apparent from the beginning. Seeking a helpmate for the first man, God brings all of the animals of the world before him, "To see what the man would call them (Genesis 2:18-19)." Before names, the man is alone. The act of naming opens the potential for relationship.

However, the text does not record the names given by man to any of the animals. When woman, the one to whom man can truly relate, is created, he says (Genesis 2:23): "This is bone from my bones, flesh from my flesh, therefore let her be called Ishah (woman) for she was taken out of Ish (man)."

The first name explicated in the Torah is a name of deep, essential connection. Later, the first woman is given an even more specific name--Chava (Eve)--because she is in universal relationship: "the mother of all the living (Genesis 3:20)."

Our names are our essence. They are meant to describe what we truly are. If there were no names, what could one person call another? "Hey you: tall guy, smart guy, guy with red hair..." We would have no connection to anyone's true essence. There could be no real relationship.

Why is it that turning people into numbers is such a terrible thought to us? Because removing the name undermines the true nature of humans! Using numbers to tell the difference between one person

another means that I do not care at all about the people I am counting. I just need a way of telling them apart, like apples in a barrel!

That is the destruction of individuality, the destruction of personal meaning, and the destruction of relationship. It is relating to human beings only in terms of functionality, in terms of their usefulness to me, and not at all in terms of who they are, of caring, of relationship.

If the removal of names can lead to the destruction of a people, then the appropriate use of names can bring redemption. God's desire to liberate the slaves is aroused, in part, by the names with which Sh'mot opens. By keeping their Hebrew names during the period of enslavement, the Israelites prevented total assimilation into Egyptian culture. God teaches Moses various Divine names and their meanings to prepare him for his role as liberator.

Humans are brought into the world to give things their essence, their meaning, and their place in the world. When we do this, we truly fulfill our Divine purpose. When we do not, we risk destroying God's world. We must constantly be asking ourselves about our relationships. Are they relationships of love and caring, or are they self-serving and exploitative?

How do I relate to those different than me? How do I relate to the world beyond my immediate surroundings, for example, to the rainforests? To the cows at the factory dairy farm whose milk I drink every morning? To the chickens at the industrial poultry shed near my house? When I buy brand new sneakers, do I consider who made them? How was that individual human being treated while he or she made my shoes?

If we deny the names--the unique identity--of other people, of the creatures and plants and places of the earth, we risk becoming like Pharaoh and all the other despots of the world. Threatened by the complexity and variety of the world, they chose to see others as nameless resources, as nothing more than a means towards their own personal goals. Such a path, while often seeming to increase comfort and efficiency in the present, ultimately leads to slavery and oblivion.

