



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

**THE BULLETIN**

Nov.-Dec. 2014  
 Vol.13, No.3

Cheshvan, Kislev, Tevet, 5775  
 Rabbi Gerald M. Solomon  
 Cantor Aaron Katz

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2014**

<b>Friday, Nov. 7</b> - Mincha/Maariv.....	4:15P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....	4:26P.M.
<b>Saturday, Nov 8</b> - Parashat Vayeira - Shabbat Services.....	9:00A.M.
<b>Kristallnacht Commemoration</b> .....	11:00A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....	5:35P.M.
<b>Friday, Nov.14</b> - Mincha/Maariv.....	4:15P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....	4:19P.M.
<b>Saturday, Nov.15</b> - Parashat Chayeh Sarah - Shabbat Services.....	9:00A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....	5:28P.M.
<b>Friday, Nov.21</b> - Mincha/Maariv.....	4:00P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....	4:14P.M.
<b>Saturday, Nov.22</b> - Parashat Toldot - Shabbat Mevarchim Services.....	9:00A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....	5:23P.M.
<b>Friday, Nov.28</b> - Mincha/Maariv.....	4:00P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....	4:11P.M.
<b>Saturday, Nov.29</b> - Parashat Vayeitzei - Shabbat Services.....	9:00A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....	5:20P.M.
<b>Friday, Dec. 5</b> - Mincha/Maariv.....	4:00P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....	4:10P.M.
<b>Saturday, Dec. 6</b> - Parashat Vayishlach - Shabbat Services.....	9:00A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....	5:19P.M.
<b>Friday, Dec. 12</b> - Mincha/Maariv.....	4:00P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....	4:10P.M.
<b>Saturday, Dec. 13</b> - Parashat Vayeishev - Shabbat Services.....	9:00A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....	5:19P.M.
<b>Friday, Dec. 19</b> - Fourth Eve of Chanukah - Mincha.....	3:45P.M.
<b>Chanukah Candle Lighting Time</b> .....	4:00P.M.
<b>Shabbat Candle Lighting Time</b> .....	4:12P.M.
<b>Saturday, Dec. 20</b> - Shabbat Chanukah-Parashat Mikeitz-Shabbat Mevarchim Services.....	9:00AM.
Shabbat Ends.....	5:21P.M.
<b>Friday, Dec. 26</b> - Mincha/Maariv.....	4:15P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....	4:16P.M.
<b>Saturday, Dec. 27</b> - Parashat Vayigash - Shabbat Services.....	9:00A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....	5:26P.M.

**COMING  
UP**

**Adult Education  
 Institute  
 "Story of the Jews"  
 Film and Discussion  
 Nov.5,12,19  
 10:30-Noon**

**Kristallnacht  
 Commemoration  
 Saturday Nov. 8**

**Shabbat Dinner  
 Friday Nov. 14  
 4:PM**

**Thanksgiving  
 Observance  
 Nov.27**

**Chanukah  
 Dec. 17-Dec 24**

**Chanukah  
 Celebration  
 Dec.17  
 12:30**

**Save the Date!  
 Lecture and Lunch  
 Dec 25  
 Look for further  
 info.**

**CENTER NEWS****MAZEL TOV**

**Joan & Larry Corn** on the birth of their great granddaughter **Bayla Rose Harris**.

**Sylvia and Mort Stern** on the birth of their grandson.

**Mark Astel** who celebrated his 90th birthday and sponsored a Shabbat Kiddush.

**Rochelle and Bob Mendelow** on the marriage of their grandson **Ari Schnitzer**.

**Bette Glasser** on the marriage of her granddaughter in California.

**REFUAH SHLAYMA**

**Joyce Warshowsky** who is recovering from hand surgery.

**Joan Corn** who is recovering from shoulder surgery in Florida

And to all those who are ill we wish them a complete and speedy recovery

**TRANSITIONS**

**Ray and Len Mishler** have moved to an assisted living facility in Mt. Vernon. We wish them a long and happy experience in their new home. If you would like to contact them call the office for their phone number.

**Rabbi Efron** is moving to the Atria in Kew Gardens. We will sorely miss your presence and participation at Shabbat Services.

**NEW YEAR GREETINGS**

The following also send their good wishes for a Happy, Healthy New Year 5775.

**Janet Hiller**

**Ruby Asher and David ,Lisa Lieberman & family**

**SISTERHOOD**

We wish all the Snowbirds a good winter. However, Sisterhood still has many plans for those who remain in the North.

On November 13<sup>th</sup> at 12 Noon we invite you to the Sisterhood Luncheon followed by an interesting program. Mark Heffron, DC will tell us "How to Feel Better As We Grow Older". Bagels and Lox etc. lunch is \$10.00 payable at the door.

The book club meets each month over the winter (except for January). The book for discussion on November 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM is "Orphan Train" by Christina Baker Kline. On December 18<sup>th</sup> we will be discussing "Once We Were Brothers" by Ronald H. Balson. The February 26th book is "Love and Treasure" by Ayelet Waldman. The books for our club are reserved for us at the Fresh Meadows library.

The annual Chanukkah celebration at our Center will take place on Wednesday December 17<sup>th</sup>. Watch for the flyer and celebrate with your Synagogue family... with lunch and entertainment!!

Looking ahead to Purim. Come hear the Megillah on Wednesday night March 4<sup>th</sup> and then celebrate Purim with a Seudah lunch on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

At this time we would like to thank our entire Sisterhood Board for the help and support that keeps us functioning. Thank you to **Susan Gastman**, for shopping and preparing the lunches with the help of **Matilde Cohen and Shari Zuber**. Thank you to **Sylvia Udasin** for bringing us her granddaughter who presented a most interesting program at the July meeting and for securing the entertainers for our Chanukah and Purim parties. Thank you to **Rosalie Weiner** for engaging our speaker for the November meeting and for chairing the Torah Fund and for taking time from eating her lunch to prepare the Simcha Fund announcements. Thank you to our Treasurer and Book Club leader **Bette Glasser** for arranging for the Chanukah and Purim parties in addition to her other responsibilities. Thank you to **Sandy Godnick** for sitting at the door to collect to money for the luncheons. Thank you to **Irene Dresner** for taking the minutes and turning them in so promptly, and for helping to set up the Succah luncheon. Thank you to all who support our functions.

All our best to all for a healthy, good winter,

**Marilyn Brown and Joan Levine,**  
Sisterhood Co-Presidents

**RABBI'S MESSAGE**  
**ECHOES OF THE HOLY DAYS**



**ROSH HASHANAH - FIRST DAY**

\*The United States is at war with the forces of evil as we enter the new year. Assisted by a multiple Arab State coalition, Israel remains uninvolved in the fighting so as not to jeopardize the constituency of the coalition and undoubtedly to prevent direct strikes on Israel from Isis forces. Israel has had enough strikes from Hamas, the evil twin of Isis which has in fact transformed Radical Islam's war against the Jews into an all out Jihad, Holy War against all those who would deny the radicals their goal of establishing a dominant Radical Islamic Moslem State as it has claimed religious authority over all Muslims of the world as it seeks to reestablish Moslem supremacy and a subsequent return to a Caliphate in which the Caliph, designated as the supreme religious and political leader, believed to be a successor to Muhammad, leads the entire Muslim faithful under Islamic Law. A popular notion is that Sharia Law would be instituted. Thinkers on the subject indicate that such an institution of that brand of Islamic Law would be totally incompatible with democracy, freedom of thought and womens' rights, to name a few. .

\*We have to stop begging the nations of the world for their approval. The state of Israel has been called on the proverbial world carpet for its non conformity many times for its actions taken against existential threats. Israel has been so accused every time it seeks to protect itself from annihilation. True, world opinion is somewhat important, but we have a guarantee from a higher authority that if we do justly, and take responsibility for our actions by explaining our actions, and by sincerely fessing up to our mistakes, this is all that G-d requires. As long as Israel knows it is in the right, it has nothing to fear from world opinion. Similarly, a crucially important lesson of the High Holy Day season teaches that if we take a similar tack with our fellow human beings - explaining our actions to them and confessing our mistakes in sincerity, we will be blessed with the blessed knowledge that being forthright brings, the knowledge that we truly have gained the understanding and forgiveness of our fellow men and women. We needn't then be concerned about what they think of us. If we follow this sage advice as individuals and as the nation of Israel, we will be blessed with the self-confidence we need, we will be blessed with renewed fortification of the spirit. We would not have to constantly seek the approval of other people or other nations. . .

**ROSH HASHANAH - SECOND DAY**

\*Rabbi Yechiel Epstein, in his classic work the Arukh HaShulchan (Yoreh De'ah 345:5) states, "This is the general principle in connection with suicide: we find any excuse we can and say he acted this way because he was in terror or great pain, or his mind was unbalanced, or he imagined it was right to do what he did because he feared that if he lived he would commit a crime...It is extremely unlikely that a person would commit such an act of folly unless his mind was, in fact, disturbed. . ."

\*It takes a great deal of strength to wage war with yourself. Fighting mental illness can feel like destroying your own self. For healing, it is strongly believed in the psychotherapeutic community that being reborn is not an uncommon goal. It is very much in keeping with the ideal of total repentance and purging and cleansing of the soul, our High Holy Day themes. Experiencing the death of the old mindset and being reborn into the new is a goal which takes much time and perseverance. Too many of the sufferers lack the necessary patience to work out those mentally unhealthy areas in favor of new, healthier attitudes. This is the essential theme of these Holy Days for the mentally ill as well as the mentally healthy - ideally through repentance to be reborn into new and healthier attitudes and actions. It should be noted, however, that not all mental illness can be treated effectively with psychotherapy. . .

\*A colleague instructs: "Depression can look like a regular case of being sad to an outsider. The outsider might even think that depression and feeling sad are the same thing. This can lead to terrible mistakes. You can be cheered up if you are sad. Most people who are feeling sad would welcome it. But for someone suffering from depression, the brain does not respond the same way as it does for someone without depression. The outsider might think that the depressed person simply lacks the initiative, or will power, or interest in feeling better. They may think that happiness is a choice. For most people, happiness is a choice. For people with depression, happiness is not a choice. Don't ask people with depression to just grin and bear it. That's causing more harm than good. . ."

## YOM KIPPUR - KOL NIDRE

\*The words of the Israeli Prime Minister need to be heard, The following is an excerpt from his remarks at the U.N. Human Rights Council's just days ago:

“We live in a world steeped in tyranny and terror, where gays are hanged from cranes in Tehran, political prisoners are executed in Gaza, young girls abducted en masse in Nigeria, and hundreds of thousands are butchered in Syria, Libya, and Iraq.

Yet nearly half, nearly half, of the U.N. Human Rights Council's resolutions focusing on a single country have been directed against Israel, the one true democracy in the Middle East. Israel, where issues are openly debated in a boisterous parliament, where human rights are protected by independent courts and where women, gays and minorities live in a genuinely free society.

The council's biased treatment of Israel is only one manifestation of the return of one of the world's oldest prejudices. We hear mobs today in Europe call for the gassing of Jews. We hear some national leaders compare Israel to the Nazis.

This is not a function of Israel's policies. It's a function of diseased minds. And that disease has a name. It's called anti-Semitism. It is now spreading in polite society, where it masquerades as legitimate criticism of Israel.

For centuries, the Jewish people have been demonized with blood libels, and charges of deicide. Today, the Jewish state is demonized with the apartheid libel and charges of genocide. Genocide. In what moral universe does genocide include warning the enemy's civilian population to get out of harm's way or ensuring that they receive tons, tons of humanitarian aid each day, even as thousands of rockets are being fired at us, or setting up a field hospital to aid their wounded. Well, I suppose it's the same moral universe where a man who wrote a dissertation of lies about the Holocaust and who insists on a Palestine free of Jews can stand at this podium and shamelessly accuse Israel of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

In the past, outrageous lies against the Jews were the precursors to the wholesale slaughter of our people. But no more. Today, we, the Jewish people, have the power to defend ourselves. We will defend ourselves against our enemies on the battlefield. We will expose their lies against us in the court of public opinion. Israel will continue to stand proud and unbowed.”

Dear friends, Israel is an integral part of our purpose as Jews in this life of ours. I believe that we will be taken to task for why we did not support Israel in its ongoing struggle for survival and peace if we choose not to. I believe our reward for supporting Israel cannot be measured in human, material terms. I just know and I believe each of you know deep down that it is the right thing to do. It is what our G-d requires of us. It is what forgiveness of our sins that we have come here for on this our holiest of days depends upon. Resolving to help the land of Israel and the people of Israel and in fact helping the Jews of the world, whether in a small or more substantial way, must have a priority place on our list of new year's resolutions. Some may consider a trip to Israel, some may choose to support a worthy organization in Israel. Some may elect to provide some service to Israel here where we reside.

In the merit of performing this great, great mitzvah of loving and caring for Israel, our holy, and true homeland, may we be blessed together with all the families of Israel throughout the world, with a complete, selicha, mechilah and kapparah, pardon, forgiveness and atonement. May we be found worthy of keeping our beloved, G-d given homeland, now and forever, and may we be blessed with a new year of good health, happiness, prosperity and peace for us and for all Israel. Let us say, Amen.

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## YOM KIPPUR YIZKOR

Dear friends, on this holiest of days let us mean what we say in our prayers and supplications even as we tremble a bit inside in the prayerful hope that our expression of thanks to Him will help us to be sealed in the Book of Life for the new year of 5775.

To learn the lesson to be constantly thankful to G-d and our fellow men and women for all the blessings we do have and do enjoy is to have learned the true meaning of being a Jew. The word for a Jewish person is Yehudi whose root is found in the word Hoda-ah which means “thankfulness.” The true meaning of being a Jew is therefore found in the truth that the Jew is one who is always engaged in giving thanks. If only we could be thankful enough, we would then live out our lives in full accord with the will of G-d. For us it is our key to being forgiven for our sins and achieving atonement with G-d. With what shall I come before Thee, O' L-rd, is a question we, individually must ask. What

makes me worthy of forgiveness? What deeds have I done which will win for me forgiveness and my soul redemption? What mitzvot have I fulfilled that will cause G-d to look favorably upon me? Singer and movie star

Julie Andrews once quipped: "A lot of my life happened in great wonderful bursts of good fortune, and then I would race to be worthy of it." As the old Yiddish folk song sings forth: "Tsu vos toigst du oif der velt? Mit vus vest du coomin oif yener velt? What makes you worthy of all the good in your life in this world and with what will you come to the next world?"

We face the truth today that the majority of our people throughout the world do not observe our faith and its precepts appropriately if at all. Upon careful analysis we all tend to come up rather short, except, of course for the Tsadikim and Tsidkaniot, those few special righteous souls who sustain us and our world by virtue of their righteousness and whose identities are unknown to us.

What will save the rest of us, I firmly believe, is told to us in Psalm 100 of the Book of Psalms. We learn these words: "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and unto His courts with praise; give thanks to Him, bless His Name. For the L-rd is good, His kindness is forever; His faithfulness endures to all generations." Thankfulness will win the day for us. Is it possible for G-d to punish a soul who immerses himself or herself in constant thankfulness? When someone expresses sincere thankfulness to us, how can we not forgive, how could we possibly punish such a thankful soul? Thus, to be truly and sincerely thankful is our key to forgiveness from G-d and our fellows, to salvation from all the evil that threatens the world and to the acquisition of atonement with G-d on this Day of Atonement. Let thankfulness be our byword now and all the days of our lives. It may well save our lives and our world in these perilous times. May He grant all of us a complete selicha, mechila and kapparah, pardon, forgiveness and atonement but without our having to undergo trials, tribulations, wars and suffering. That each of us here and all of our people throughout the world be written and sealed for a good and healthy and happy life in the new year and always. May we always have the faith that G-d is our only real Protector, the Shield of Abraham, the Guardian of Israel, and the Maker of Peace. Ufros Alaynu Sukat Sh'lomecha. Spread Your Tabernacle of Peace over Israel and over all the lovers of Zion. G'mar Chatimah Tovah and Shanah Tovah!

## THANK YOU

**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. Yasher Ko-ach!!!**

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## Kristallnacht 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary...We Remember

On November 9 and 10, we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of Kristallnacht, the "night of broken glass." Rampaging 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 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 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 8, 2014 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 Wednesday evening, the 27<sup>th</sup> of November.** 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 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 sage 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 practised 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 it-

self 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?

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## Protesting the Met's "Death of Klinghoffer"

Yvette Alt Miller

*The Death of Klinghoffer*, the controversial, anti-Semitic opera had its opening performance at the Metropolitan Opera of New York yesterday. It sparked large protests, including 100 wheelchairs, objecting to its cynical depiction of the murdered, wheelchair-bound Klinghoffer.

The opera purports to depict the brutal 1985 murder of Leon Klinghoffer, the disabled Jewish American tourist who was shot and dumped into the sea by PLO terrorists who hijacked the cruise ship on which he and his wife were taking a special trip to Israel for their 36<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. But instead of showing the brutal killing of a defenseless old man by terrorists, the opera takes a strange turn, positing both Leon Klinghoffer and his murderers as moral equivalents, each representing an equally valid world view.

It opens with a wholly-invented scene of Jews brutally killing defenseless Palestinian women and children – and then goes downhill from there. Jews are depicted as bloodthirsty and venal, willing to exploit others for their own gain, break the law, and attack other people. An initial "comic" scene in the original opera depicted the Klinghoffer's friends as thoughtless buffoons, and proved so nauseating to theatre-goers it was quickly scrubbed from all future productions. In contrast, the PLO terrorists who killed Klinghoffer are portrayed as more complex and even noble, singing at one point "we are soldiers fighting a war – we are not criminals, we are not vandals – we are men of ideals."

*The Death of Klinghoffer* was written by American composer John Adams, with a libretto by Alice Goodman, and both artists clearly had strong agendas as they worked on the piece.

One of Mr. Adams' aims in writing the opera was to teach Americans to be more nuanced in their approach to terrorism. He wanted to teach audiences that terrorism could be understood instead of condemned.

While she worked on the opera, Ms. Goodman abandoned Judaism altogether, converting to Christianity; today she is a Church of England vicar.

Given its offensive nature, *The Death of Klinghoffer* has rarely been performed. After its 1991 debut, opera companies the world over avoided it like the plague. It enjoyed a modest revival in 2001, when it was performed in Finland, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra planned to play extracts later that year. After the terror attacks of September 11, however, that plan was quickly abandoned.



Why would the Met perform this toxic work?

Some critics praise the opera's music. Many opera fans undoubtedly feel they have a right to listen to its music, even if the opera is in bad taste. But these fans should realize that *The Death of Klinghoffer* isn't an abstract piece of theatre: it goes a long way towards excusing the murder of a helpless American Jew, and its performance today runs the very real risk of exacerbating Jew-hatred around the world.

The Met's Director Peter Gelb has written the opera's goal is "to understand the hijackers and their motivations, and to look for humanity in the terrorists." Whereas for most opera-goers that sounds repugnant, for Mr. Gelb and some others, it undoubtedly sounds avant-garde and modern: offering an alternative world-view that is seductive in upsetting conventional mores.

But even he has realized the danger of this opera. Plans to offer live simulcasts of the opera in European venues were scrapped after a sharp rise in anti-Semitism there. The Met admitted there was danger the opera could "stir up anti-Israel sentiments" and be "a vehicle to promote anti-Semitism": the simulcasts were cancelled

In a poignant statement that the Met agreed to include in the opera's playbill, Ilsa and Lisa Klinghoffer, Leon Klinghoffer's daughters, explained the opera's dangers: "We are strong supporters of the arts, and believe that theatre and music can play a critical role in examining and understanding significant world events" they wrote, but "*The Death of Klinghoffer* does no such thing...it rationalizes, romanticizes and legitimates the terrorist murder of our father."

As the Met's live performances went ahead, outraged New Yorkers protested the work.

Rudolph Giuliani took the lead in leading protests outside Lincoln Center. "If you listen, you will see that the emotional context of the opera truly romanticizes the terrorists," he said.

As protestors outside sat in wheelchairs holding signs saying "I am Leon Klinghoffer," inside Lincoln Center, the opera was repeatedly disrupted by outraged ticket holders. "Shame on you!" cried audience members as the conductor took up his baton. After a particularly offensive chorus, many members of the audience booed. At the conclusion of the hijacking scene, one member of the audience declared "The death of Leon Klinghoffer will never be forgiven!" – and was quickly arrested. The opera was delayed and stopped several times; singers and members of the orchestra paused each time until the outraged boos and comments died down.

In 2001, after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, then Mayor Giuliani was offered \$10 million in disaster relief from Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal – on condition that he advocate a more "balanced" view of the Palestinian cause. Giuliani's answer was clear: "There is no moral equivalent for this act. There is no justification for it," he said, "And one of the reasons I think this happened is because people were engaged in moral equivalency in not understanding the difference between liberal democracies like the United States, like Israel, and terrorist states and those who condone terrorism. So I think not only are those statements wrong, they're part of the problem."

Rudolph Giuliani – like many of his fellow New Yorkers and supporters of Israel – realized what those who backed *The Death of Klinghoffer* didn't: moral equivalence is dangerous. It erodes our knowledge of what is good and right and enables us to rationalize the unthinkable. Back in 2001, Giuliani turned down the prince's offer. Today, we can stand similarly firm and say, like the protests at Lincoln Center, no to terror; no to moral equivalence. The death of Leon Klinghoffer cannot be explained away.



## 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 September 11, 2014 meeting

Rosalie Weiner	In honor of Anita Bernstein's new great-grandson In memory of all those who perished on 9/11/2001 and in support of their survivors
Anita Bernstein	New Year Greeting to all
Marilyn Brown	Happy Holidays to all
Matilda Cohen	Happy New Year and Happy Chanukah to all
Susan Gastman	Safe, Happy Healthy New Year to all
Sandra Schwadron	Mazel Tov to Rochelle Mendelow on the marriage of her grandson and to Bette Glasser on the marriage of her granddaughter
Joyce Warshowsky	Happy, healthy holiday to all
Joan Levine	Wishing everybody a healthy winter
Ruth Lasky	A happy, healthy New Year to all
Rita Kurz	Happy New Year
Lucy Gutman	Celebrating a new great-grandchild
Fran and Joel Goldstein	Wishing everyone a happy healthy New Year
Susan Kintzky	My daughter is getting married
Bette Glasser	For my Granddaughter getting married next week
Andrea Irizarry	For my healthy grandchildren
Sandy Godnick	For my grandson's wedding
Elaine Guthrie	Happy travelling to Matt and Stephanie
Roz Sternlieb	In honor of my grandchildren
Helen Daniels	Happy, Healthy New Year to all
Elyssa Schnaper	Peace in the world
Jackie Neus	Let peace reign among nations
Flora Margolin	A happy, healthy New Year to all

# NOVEMBER, 2014

## CHESHVAN/KISLEV, 5775

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					31	1 <sup>8</sup> Cheshvan Lech Lecha  Ends 6:42
					 5:35	
2 <i>Day-light Savings Ends</i>	3	4 Low-impact Exercise 11-noon	5 Rabbi's Course "Story of the Jews" 10:30-Noon	6	7	8 <sup>15</sup> Cheshvan Vayera Krystallnacht Commemoration  Ends 5:35
					 4:26	
9	10	11 Low-impact Exercise 11-noon	12 Rabbi's Course "Story of the Jews" 10:30-Noon	13 Sisterhood Lunch & Program 12 Noon	14 Shabbat Services & Dinner 4:00PM	15 <sup>22</sup> Cheshvan Chayeh Sarah  Ends 5:28
					 4:19	
16	17 Program Committee 8:PM	18 Low-impact Exercise 11-noon	19 Rabbi's Course "Story of the Jews" 10:30-Noon	20 Book Club "Orphan Train" 10:30 AM	21	22 <sup>29</sup> Cheshvan Toldot  Ends 5:23
					 4:14	
23 <sup>1</sup> Kislev Rosh Chodesh	24	25 Low-impact Exercise 11-noon	26	27 Thanksgiving	28	29 <sup>7</sup> Kislev Vayeitzei  Ends 5:20
					 4:10	
30						

# DECEMBER, 2014

## KISLEV/TEVET, 5775

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i> <sup>14 Kislev</sup> <i>Vashlach</i>   4:10  <i>Ends 5:19</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i> <sup>21 Kislev</sup> <b>Vayeishev</b>   4:09  <i>Ends 5:19</i>
<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i> <b>Erev Chanukah</b> 1 candle  <small>First Night</small>	<i>17</i> <b>Chanukah Celebration</b> 12:30 <b>Chanukah First Day</b> 2  <small>Second Night</small>	<i>18</i> <b>Book Club</b> 10:30 AM <b>Chanukah Second Day</b> 3 Candles  <small>Third Night</small>	<i>19</i> <b>Chanukah Third Day</b> 4 candles  4:00  4:12	<i>20</i> <sup>28 Kislev</sup> <b>Mikeitz</b> <i>Ends 5:21</i> <b>5 candles</b>  <small>Fifth Night</small>
<i>21</i> <b>Chanukah Fifth Day</b> 6 Candles  <small>Sixth Night</small>	<i>22</i> <b>Chanukah Sixth Day</b> 7 Candles  <small>Seventh Night</small>	<i>23</i> <sup>1 Tevet</sup> <b>Rosh Chodesh</b>  <b>Chanukah Seventh Day</b> 8 Candles  <small>Eighth Night</small>	<i>24</i> <b>Chanukah Eighth Day</b>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>   4:15	<i>27</i> <sup>5 Tevet</sup> <b>Vayigash</b>  <i>Ends 5:26</i>
<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>			