

Flushing-Fresh Meadows Jewish Center

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

THE BULLETIN

October, 2010
Vol.8, No.4

Tishri/Cheshvan
Rabbi Gerald M. Solomon
Cantor Mordechai Dier

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

| | |
|---|----------|
| Friday, Oct. 1 - Mincha/Maariv..... | 6:15P.M. |
| Candle Lighting Time..... | 6:20P.M. |
| Saturday, Oct. 2 - Parashat Bereishith | |
| Shabbat Mevarchim Services..... | 9:00A.M |
| Shabbat Ends..... | 7:22P.M. |
| Friday, Oct. 8 - Mincha/Maariv | |
| Candle Lighting Time..... | 6:09P.M. |
| Saturday, Oct. 9 - Parashat Noach | |
| Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Services..... | 9:00A.M |
| Shabbat Ends..... | 7:16P.M. |
| Friday, Oct. 15 - Mincha/Maariv..... | |
| Candle Lighting Time..... | 5:58P.M. |
| Saturday, Oct. 16 - Parashat Lech-Lecha | |
| Shabbat Services..... | 9:00A.M |
| Shabbat Ends..... | 7:05P.M. |
| Friday, Oct. 22 - Mincha/Maariv..... | |
| Candle Lighting Time..... | 5:48P.M. |
| Saturday, Oct. 23 - Parashat Vayera | |
| Shabbat Services..... | 9:00A.M |
| Shabbat Ends..... | 6:55P.M. |

SHABBAT DINNER

| | |
|---|----------|
| Friday, Oct. 29 - Mincha..... | 5:15P.M. |
| Candle Lighting in Synagogue..... | 5:30P.M. |
| Candle Lighting Time..... | 5:38P.M. |
| Kabbalat Shabbat/Maariv..... | 5:40P.M. |
| Dinner..... | 6:30P.M. |
| Saturday, Oct. 30 - Parashat Chayei Sarah | |
| Shabbat Services..... | 9:00A.M |
| Shabbat Ends..... | 6:45P.M. |

COMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAYS STARTING OCTOBER 6, 10:30 TO NOON

TOPIC: "ROMANTIC & SEXUAL REFERENCES IN THE TANACH"

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2:00 PM
SHIRATHON 2010

THURSDAY, OCT 21, 12 NOON
SISTERHOOD LUNCHEON
PROGRAM: "SENIOR RIGHTS AND SCAMS"

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 10:30 AM
BOOK CLUB "THE STREET OF A THOUSAND BLOSSOMS"

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29
SHABBAT DINNER
SERVICES 5:15 PM
DINNER 6:30 PM

IN MEMORIAM

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Albert (Albie) Esterow.

Albie was an active member of Fresh Meadows J.C. from its beginning. He held many offices during the years, culminating in his years as Executive Vice President and President.

His dedication to FMJC was unwavering. He gave of himself unstintingly and even though he ran a successful business he could be found at FMJC at all hours tending to the Center's business.

Albie and his wife Lillian retired to Florida in 1993. For the years he lived in Fresh Meadows he could truly have been call "Mr. Fresh Meadows Jewish Center".

Rest in Peace, Albie.


**Addendum to New Year's Greetings,
5771**


**“May you be blessed with a cornucopia overflowing with a harvest
of Maasim Tovim”**

The following members and their families extend best wishes for the coming New Year to
the Congregation of Flushing-Fresh Meadows Jewish Center.

Mark Astel & Family
Seymour & Miriam Fishkin & Family
Ruth & Dana Fishler
Sam Jaffe & Family
Beatrice Kahn
Inge Lewkowitz
Bea Kauder & Family
Mr. Amiel Singer
Cecile Raps

CENTER NEWS

NEW MEMBERS:

Steven and Linda Trainin
Barry and Renoka Abrams

A very warm welcome to you and we look forward to seeing you at Services and at the many programs we offer.

CONDOLENCES:

To **Luisa Cvern** and family on the passing of her beloved daughter Dora,

To **Lillian Esterow** and family on the passing of her beloved husband Albert.

To the families of **Aaron Dinaburg** and **Joseph Savronsky** who passed away recently. They were both active members of Queensboro Hill J.C.

Yizkor Pledges

If you have made a pledge during the Yizkor Appeal we respectfully ask you to make your payment as expeditiously as possible. We have large expenses looming (new heating boiler for the school building). Your co-operation would be much appreciated.

LIPSKY-BLUM POST #764
Jewish War Veterans of the USA
Benjamin Singer, Commander
(718) 463-4742

If you want to join JWV
Please contact Benjamin Singer

In case of a Veteran's death
Please contact Benjamin Singer
and he will arrange to have
an American flag present



RABBI'S MESSAGE

ONCE AGAIN: WHO IS A JEW?

While synagogues throughout the world appeared full for the holy days this new year, we realize too that appearances are not always accurate indicators of the truth. Before we acquiesce to a superficial success and an unrealistic sense of satisfaction let us affirm a truth. Based on Jewish demographic statistics in the United States, we need to remind ourselves that there could be so many more of our fellow Jews joining with us if only we could persuade the unaffiliated to affiliate and if only we could find a reasonable and equitable solution for the multitudes who wait at the doorway to Jewish life, who are in the limbo of presently unrealistic conversion requirements and thus, non-conversion or unrecognized conversion becomes their lot. Back in July, we talked about the seemingly omnipresent question: Who is a Jew? and what the latest opinions espoused are, coming out of the Chief Rabbinate in Israel. The issue in July was tabled. We should expect that it will return soon. The Conservative and Reform realms have been battling for recognition in various areas of Jewish-religious life for many years. The battle, sadly, rages on with a big difference. What's that? A contemporary rabbi explains:

“At present, Israel's Chief Rabbinate recognizes only those conversions performed by a select group of American Orthodox rabbis. Even conversions performed by some Israeli Orthodox rabbis are not accepted. And even Orthodox rabbis who have worked closely with the Chief Rabbinate's committee on conversion have had their conversions questioned and sometimes, shamefully, even revoked years later. The new legislation, therefore, further discriminates not only against Conservative and Reform Jews, but also against many streams within the Orthodox community.

While Conservative and Reform Judaism are by and large each united within their respective denominations, there are countless strains within Orthodoxy. Orthodox Jews range from Hasidic—and even among those sects there are serious divisions and disagreements—to Sephardi, Ashkenazi, Agudah, religious Zionist and modern Orthodox. The Chief Rab-

binat is controlled by only one of these groups—the Haredi extreme right-wing element of Orthodoxy, which is often unwelcoming to Orthodox people who are outside their camp.

But even if every conversion performed by an Orthodox rabbi were accepted, the new legislation would still be bad law. Israel today is a diverse society. Religious and non-religious Jews are often at odds with each other. The feelings of the non-Orthodox toward the Orthodox are especially bitter. This discord can often be traced to negative feelings regarding the Chief Rabbinate, which is seen by many (especially the non-religious) as the symbol of a monopolizing Orthodoxy in Israel and throughout the world.”

In his essay published in Ha'aretz, entitled *CONVERSION AS A STRATEGIC GOAL* Israel Harel informs us as follows: “The purpose of the Conversion Bill is to increase the number of Jews, and as such it must be supported on principle. It is a strategic goal, a matter of survival for our people, whose ranks are dwindling exponentially. Diaspora Jewry is in an accelerated process not just of decline, but of extinction, out of choice, and every action that increases the worldwide Jewish population is welcome.” Is he merely an alarmist or a pragmatist or both?

Seeing conversion as a means to augment the Jewish population doesn't smell too kosher. Yet looking back in history this has, in fact been done on a number of occasions on a massive scale without too much regard for the mandate for what we might call qualitative conversion requirements. For those of us who concern ourselves with such matters, consolation comes from the notion that despite the machinations of human beings in their efforts to do right by the issue of conversion, one thing is certain. Only G-d knows the authoritative answer to the question: Who is a Jew? Only He knows who has an authentic Yiddishe neshamah, Jewish soul. He chose us as His special people not because we were great in numbers, just the opposite, because we were the least numerous people. Greater numbers impress humans and appear to be a present strategy for Jewish survival, but great numbers alone apparently leave G-d unimpressed.

In Deuteronomy we recently read about Moses re-

minding the people how G-d became angry with them for making the Egel, and said to Moses: "Release me and I shall destroy them and erase their name from under the Heavens, and I shall make you a mightier, more numerous nation than they." Here G-d is showing His great disappointment with the people saying essentially that the people failed to show G-d their qualities which attracted G-d to them in the first place - qualities which were so good, their small numbers were inconsequential. It is as if G-d is expressing His disappointment out loud to Moses saying: Maybe now I should get a nation to be my special nation which is great in numbers. But G-d didn't really want that. He didn't really need that. We remember that Moses said to the people in Deut.7:7 "Not because you are more numerous than all the peoples did the L-rd desire you and choose you, for you are the fewest of all the peoples," to which Nachmanides comments: "Normally, a king would be expected to cast his lot with the most populous nation because it says in Proverbs, 14:28, "With the multitude of people is the king's glory." The more people, the more subjects a king has, the greater glory is to the king. If G-d chose Israel, says the Ramban, He must have found unique merit in them. Their being small in number didn't matter. The making of converts may add numbers to the ranks, but based on the biblical teaching that G-d didn't choose us because we were great in number, would mass conversions pass muster with the Almighty? Is it the right course to pursue?

Perhaps we need to be reminded that the Jewish People were never very big size-wise and apparently will never be. Movements to convert, historically, never had much of an impact on Israel's overall population. But today, we are talking about hundreds of thousands of Russian immigrants which is quite a significant number and may well have a significant long term impact. But first, so many of them need to be convinced that they should seek out conversion. The decision to convert must originate with the individual. Let us pray for guidance from above that we may be blessed to do the right thing at this pivotal moment in Israel's history. May we make the right decisions regarding conversion along with all the other momentous decisions of our time.

With all good wishes for the new year,

Rabbi G.M. Solomon

UPDATE

Israeli Jews back non-Orthodox conversions, poll finds.

Mark Brodsky, September 28, 2010

NEW YORK (JTA) -- Nearly two-thirds of Israeli Jews believe that non-Orthodox converts to Judaism should be considered Jewish, a new Israeli government survey reveals.

The survey released Monday, which was commissioned by the Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs Ministry to gauge Israelis' perceptions of the Diaspora, found that 63 percent of Israeli Jews believe that those converted by non-Orthodox rabbis should be regarded as Jews. Some 30 percent believed they should not be seen as Jewish.

The findings put the general public at odds with religious authorities in Israel, which only partially recognizes conversions performed by non-Orthodox rabbis inside the country. Those converted by non-Orthodox rabbis outside Israel are automatically eligible for Israeli citizenship like other Jews.

Also, the survey found that 68 percent of Israeli Jews believe intermarried Jews should be considered part of the Jewish people, to 21 percent disagreeing.

Diaspora Affairs Minister Yuli Edelstein said he hoped the findings of the survey would bring the two communities closer together.

"Maybe following this in the political system, we can convince more people that whoever chose to go through a conversion in their community overseas in a Reform or Conservative manner and chose to join us here, we should choose to bring them closer and not push them away," he told Israel Radio, according to Haaretz. "If we want to bring about unity ... we should not boycott or strong-arm anyone."

The Reform and Conservative movements were among those fighting the Israeli parliament's attempt this summer to pass a measure that would have tightened the Orthodox-run rabbinate's control over conversions.

**Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's
Speech to the United Nations**
(September 24, 2010)

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nearly 62 years ago, the United Nations recognized the right of the Jews, an ancient people 3,500 years-old, to a state of their own in their ancestral homeland.

I stand here today as the Prime Minister of Israel, the Jewish state, and I speak to you on behalf of my country and my people.

The United Nations was founded after the carnage of World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust. It was charged with preventing the recurrence of such horrendous events.

Nothing has undermined that central mission more than the systematic assault on the truth. Yesterday the President of Iran stood at this very podium, spewing his latest anti-Semitic rants. Just a few days earlier, he again claimed that the Holocaust is a lie.

Last month, I went to a villa in a suburb of Berlin called Wannsee. There, on January 20, 1942, after a hearty meal, senior Nazi officials met and decided how to exterminate the Jewish people. The detailed minutes of that meeting have been preserved by successive German governments. Here is a copy of those minutes, in which the Nazis issued precise instructions on how to carry out the extermination of the Jews. Is this a lie?

A day before I was in Wannsee, I was given in Berlin the original construction plans for the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Those plans are signed by Hitler's deputy, Heinrich Himmler himself. Here is a copy of the plans for Auschwitz-Birkenau, where one million Jews were murdered. Is this too a lie?

This June, President Obama visited the Buchenwald concentration camp. Did President Obama pay tribute to a lie?

And what of the Auschwitz survivors whose arms still bear the tattooed numbers branded on them by the Nazis? Are those tattoos a lie? One-third of all Jews perished in the conflagration. Nearly every Jewish family was affected, including my own. My wife's grandparents, her father's two sisters and three brothers, and all the aunts, uncles and cousins were all murdered by the Nazis. Is that also a lie?

Yesterday, the man who calls the Holocaust a lie spoke from this podium. To those who refused to come here and to those who left this room in protest, I commend you. You stood up for moral clarity and you brought honor to your countries.

But to those who gave this Holocaust-denier a hearing, I say on behalf of my people, the Jewish people, and decent people everywhere: Have you no shame? Have you no decency?

A mere six decades after the Holocaust, you give legitimacy to a man who denies that the murder of six million Jews took place and pledges to wipe out the Jewish state.

What a disgrace! What a mockery of the charter of the United Nations! Perhaps some of you think that this man and his odious regime threaten only the Jews. You're wrong.

History has shown us time and again that what starts with attacks on the Jews eventually ends up engulfing many others.

This Iranian regime is fueled by an extreme fundamentalism that burst onto the world scene three decades ago after lying dormant for centuries. In the past thirty years, this fanaticism has swept the globe with a murderous violence and cold-blooded impartiality in its choice of victims. It has callously slaughtered Moslems and Christians, Jews and Hindus, and many others. Though it is comprised of different offshoots, the adherents of this unforgiving creed seek to return humanity to medieval times.

Wherever they can, they impose a backward regimented society where women, minorities, gays or anyone not deemed to be a true believer is brutally subjugated. The struggle against this fanaticism does not pit faith against faith nor civilization against civilization.

It pits civilization against barbarism, the 21st century against the 9th century, those who sanctify life against those who glorify death.

The primitivism of the 9th century ought to be no match for the progress of the 21st century. The allure of freedom, the power of technology, the reach of communications should surely win the day. Ultimately, the past cannot triumph over the future. And the future offers all nations magnificent bounties of hope. The pace of progress is growing exponentially.

hope. The pace of progress is growing exponentially. It took us centuries to get from the printing press to the telephone, decades to get from the telephone to the personal computer, and only a few years to get from the personal computer to the internet.

What seemed impossible a few years ago is already outdated, and we can scarcely fathom the changes that are yet to come. We will crack the genetic code. We will cure the incurable. We will lengthen our lives. We will find a cheap alternative to fossil fuels and clean up the planet.

I am proud that my country Israel is at the forefront of these advances--by leading innovations in science and technology, medicine and biology, agriculture and water, energy and the environment. These innovations the world over offer humanity a sunlit future of unimagined promise.

But if the most primitive fanaticism can acquire the most deadly weapons, the march of history could be reversed for a time. And like the belated victory over the Nazis, the forces of progress and freedom will prevail only after an horrific toll of blood and fortune has been exacted from mankind. That is why the greatest threat facing the world today is the marriage between religious fanaticism and the weapons of mass destruction.

The most urgent challenge facing this body is to prevent the tyrants of Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Are the member states of the United Nations up to that challenge? Will the international community confront a despotism that terrorizes its own people as they bravely stand up for freedom?

Will it take action against the dictators who stole an election in broad daylight and gunned down Iranian protesters who died in the streets choking in their own blood? Will the international community thwart the world's most pernicious sponsors and practitioners of terrorism?

Above all, will the international community stop the terrorist regime of Iran from developing atomic weapons, thereby endangering the peace of the entire world?

The people of Iran are courageously standing up to this regime. People of goodwill around the world stand with them, as do the thousands who have been protesting outside this hall. Will the United Nations stand by their side?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The jury is still out on the United Nations, and recent signs are not encouraging. Rather than condemning the terrorists and their Iranian patrons, some here have condemned their victims. That is exactly what a recent UN report on Gaza did, falsely equating the terrorists with those they targeted.

For eight long years, Hamas fired from Gaza thousands of missiles, mortars and rockets on nearby Israeli cities. Year after year, as these missiles were deliberately hurled at our civilians, not a single UN resolution was passed condemning those criminal attacks. We heard nothing--absolutely nothing--from the UN Human Rights Council, a misnamed institution if there ever was one.

In 2005, hoping to advance peace, Israel unilaterally withdrew from every inch of Gaza. It dismantled 21 settlements and uprooted over 8,000 Israelis. We didn't get peace. Instead we got an Iranian backed terror base fifty miles from Tel Aviv. Life in Israeli towns and cities next to Gaza became a nightmare. You see, the Hamas rocket attacks not only continued, they increased tenfold. Again, the UN was silent.

Finally, after eight years of this unremitting assault, Israel was finally forced to respond. But how should we have responded? Well, there is only one example in history of thousands of rockets being fired on a country's civilian population. It happened when the Nazis rocketed British cities during World War II. During that war, the allies leveled German cities, causing hundreds of thousands of casualties. Israel chose to respond differently. Faced with an enemy committing a double war crime of firing on civilians while hiding behind civilians--Israel sought to conduct surgical strikes against the rocket launchers.

That was no easy task because the terrorists were firing missiles from homes and schools, using mosques as weapons depots and ferreting explosives in ambulances. Israel, by contrast, tried to minimize casualties by urging Palestinian civilians to vacate the targeted areas.

We dropped countless flyers over their homes, sent thousands of text messages and called thousands of cell phones asking people to leave. Never has a country gone to such extraordinary lengths to remove the enemy's civilian population from harm's way.

Yet faced with such a clear case of aggressor and victim, who did the UN Human Rights Council de-

cide to condemn? Israel. A democracy legitimately defending itself against terror is morally hanged, drawn and quartered, and given an unfair trial to boot.

By these twisted standards, the UN Human Rights Council would have dragged Roosevelt and Churchill to the dock as war criminals. What a perversion of truth. What a perversion of justice.

Delegates of the United Nations,

Will you accept this farce?

Because if you do, the United Nations would revert to its darkest days, when the worst violators of human rights sat in judgment against the law-abiding democracies, when Zionism was equated with racism and when an automatic majority could declare that the earth is flat.

If this body does not reject this report, it would send a message to terrorists everywhere: Terror pays; if you launch your attacks from densely populated areas, you will win immunity. And in condemning Israel, this body would also deal a mortal blow to peace. Here's why.

When Israel left Gaza, many hoped that the missile attacks would stop. Others believed that at the very least, Israel would have international legitimacy to exercise its right of self-defense. What legitimacy? What self-defense?

The same UN that cheered Israel as it left Gaza and promised to back our right of self-defense now accuses us--my people, my country--of war crimes? And for what? For acting responsibly in self-defense. What a travesty!

Israel justly defended itself against terror. This biased and unjust report is a clear-cut test for all governments. Will you stand with Israel or will you stand with the terrorists?

We must know the answer to that question now. Now and not later. Because if Israel is again asked to take more risks for peace, we must know today that you will stand with us tomorrow. Only if we have the confidence that we can defend ourselves can we take further risks for peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All of Israel wants peace.

Any time an Arab leader genuinely wanted peace with us, we made peace. We made peace with Egypt

led by Anwar Sadat. We made peace with Jordan led by King Hussein. And if the Palestinians truly want peace, I and my government, and the people of Israel, will make peace. But we want a genuine peace, a defensible peace, a permanent peace. In 1947, this body voted to establish two states for two peoples--a Jewish state and an Arab state. The Jews accepted that resolution. The Arabs rejected it.

We ask the Palestinians to finally do what they have refused to do for 62 years: Say yes to a Jewish state. Just as we are asked to recognize a nation-state for the Palestinian people, the Palestinians must be asked to recognize the nation state of the Jewish people. The Jewish people are not foreign conquerors in the Land of Israel. This is the land of our forefathers.

Inscribed on the walls outside this building is the great Biblical vision of peace: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. They shall learn war no more." These words were spoken by the Jewish prophet Isaiah 2,800 years ago as he walked in my country, in my city, in the hills of Judea and in the streets of Jerusalem.

We are not strangers to this land. It is our homeland. As deeply connected as we are to this land, we recognize that the Palestinians also live there and want a home of their own. We want to live side by side with them, two free peoples living in peace, prosperity and dignity.

But we must have security. The Palestinians should have all the powers to govern themselves except those handful of powers that could endanger Israel.

That is why a Palestinian state must be effectively demilitarized. We don't want another Gaza, another Iranian backed terror base abutting Jerusalem and perched on the hills a few kilometers from Tel Aviv.

We want peace.

I believe such a peace can be achieved. But only if we roll back the forces of terror, led by Iran, that seek to destroy peace, eliminate Israel and overthrow the world order. The question facing the international community is whether it is prepared to confront those forces or accommodate them.

Over seventy years ago, Winston Churchill lamented what he called the "confirmed unteachability of mankind," the unfortunate habit of civilized societies to sleep until danger nearly overtakes them.

Churchill bemoaned what he called the "want of

foresight, the unwillingness to act when action will be simple and effective, the lack of clear thinking, the confusion of counsel until emergency comes, until self-preservation strikes its jarring gong.”

I speak here today in the hope that Churchill’s assessment of the “unteachability of mankind” is for once proven wrong.

I speak here today in the hope that we can learn from history--that we can prevent danger in time. In the spirit of the timeless words spoken to Joshua over 3,000 years ago, let us be strong and of good courage. Let us confront this peril, secure our future and, God willing, forge an enduring peace for generations to come.

ON MORALITY

AGE OF THE MORAL COP-OUT CARRIES A HIGH PRICE

David Selbourne has got it right. In a recent pamphlet, *Moral Evasion*, he lists the eleven arguments now regularly deployed to sabotage any attempt to make moral judgements. They are: There's nothing you can do about it. It's never been any different. There's no quick fix. It's the price of a free society. You must move with the tide. You can't turn back the clock. The problem is much more complex than you think. It's beyond the reach of the law. You are focusing on the wrong issue. Who are you to talk? Everyone's doing it, so how can you object?

The result is one of the strangest cultural moments in history. What other ages found offensive - crudity, incivility, obscenity, blasphemy - are today so commonplace as to be routine. Meanwhile, what other generations saw as essential to civilisation - moral judgement, the capacity to discriminate between right and wrong - has become not just controversial but taboo. Merely to suggest that there may be some ways of life more gracious, honourable, decent, benign or just plain good than others is to risk accusations of judgementalism and moral panic. Hell hath no fury like a relativist scorned.

So it's worth reminding ourselves why every other age than ours has cherished moral wisdom. It's not because people wished to interfere in what others do

in private. That may sometimes have happened, but it's not what morality is about. It's because life is short, and the bill for our mistakes is long. A child may bear the scars of a broken family for a lifetime. Trust, once broken, is hard to repair. An impulsive word can destroy a friendship. A single act of folly may wreck a career. Not everything we want to do, ought we to do. Our own happiness - let alone civilisation itself - depends on our ability to hold desire in check, restrained by thoughts of long term consequences and consideration for other people. That is where the moral sense is born.

It doesn't come naturally. Morality is not genetically coded. It is not hard-wired into our brain. That is what gives us our unique evolutionary advantage. *Homo sapiens* is the animal that learns. And we learn cumulatively, by not having to start afresh in each generation. Instead, through families and schools, we pass on the wisdom of the past, experience often bought at a high price. What makes humanity different from other life forms is our ability to think beyond the present. We remember what worked and what failed. We are capable of envisaging a different and better world.

We can tell the difference between what is and what ought to be. We also know that, whatever world we seek, we can't make it alone. Therefore we need to create a shared language of the imagination together with relationships of trust.

So, at most times most societies have invested vast energies in the institutions through which children learn how best to behave - families, schools, public codes of behaviour, together with the stories, songs and canonical texts through which a culture conveys its memories and ideals.

Reducing morality to private choice is as absurd as the idea that we can each invent our own treatments to cure disease and that the existence of doctors is a threat to our autonomy. So ignore the critics. David Selbourne is right. Moral wisdom is never certain or complete, any more than medicine is certain or complete. But it is something we inherit and learn and share. Above all it is something we are right to teach our children.

Britain's Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks



SISTERHOOD

What a joyous time we had eating and singing in our beautiful Succah! Unfortunately, on the second day the rains came but we enjoyed it just the same, but indoors. Thank you to Rabbi Solomon for leading us in song with his guitar accompaniment.

The next Luncheon on October 21st promises to be very informative, with a talk by Lori Woods of the Queens District Attorney's Office on "Senior Rights and Scams".

The book club discussion on October 28th is: "The Street of A Thousand Blossoms" by Gail Tsukiyama. The November book is "Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet" by Jamie Ford. Note: because of Thanksgiving the discussion will be Monday Nov. 22nd. The books are always reserved for our group at the Fresh Meadows library.

Look forward to seeing you at all our functions. Look for the details in the flyers enclosed.

Joan and Marilyn

Sisterhood Flushing-Fresh Meadows Jewish Center
193-10 Peck Ave., Flushing, N.Y. 11365
(718) 357-5100

SISTERHOOD LUNCHEON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2010 AT 12 NOON

You are cordially invited to attend our Sisterhood Luncheon on Thursday, October 21, 2010 at 12 Noon.

Following the luncheon we will have an interesting talk on "Senior Rights And Scams" by Lori Woods, Queens District Attorney's Office.

See You There

Marilyn Brown and Joan Levine
Sisterhood Co-Presidents

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--------|
| Admission at Door | Members | \$5.00 |
| | Non-Members | \$8.00 |

Basic Religion Test Stumps Many Americans

By LAURIE GOODSTEIN

Published: September 28, 2010

The New York Times

Americans are by all measures a deeply religious people, but they are also deeply ignorant about religion.

Test Your Knowledge

How much do you know about religion? Try answering a sampling of questions asked in a phone survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

Researchers from the independent Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life phoned more than 3,400 Americans and asked them 32 questions about the Bible, Christianity and other world religions, famous religious figures and the constitutional principles governing religion in public life.

On average, people who took the survey answered half the questions incorrectly, and many flubbed even questions about their own faith.

Those who scored the highest were atheists and agnostics, as well as two religious minorities: Jews and Mormons. The results were the same even after the researchers controlled for factors like age and racial differences.

“Even after all these other factors, including education, are taken into account, atheists and agnostics, Jews and Mormons still outperform all the other religious groups in our survey,” said Greg Smith, a senior researcher at Pew.

That finding might surprise some, but not Dave Silverman, president of American Atheists, an advocacy group for nonbelievers that was founded by Madalyn Murray O’Hair.

“I have heard many times that atheists know more about religion than religious people,” Mr. Silverman said. “Atheism is an effect of that knowledge, not a lack of knowledge. I gave a Bible to my daughter. That’s how you make atheists.”

Among the topics covered in the survey were: Where was Jesus born? What is Ramadan? Whose writings inspired the Protestant Reformation? Which Biblical figure led the exodus from Egypt? What religion is the Dalai Lama? Joseph Smith? Mother Teresa? In most cases, the format was multiple choice.

The researchers said that the questionnaire was designed to represent a breadth of knowledge about religion, but was not intended to be regarded as a list of the most essential facts about the subject. Most of the questions were easy, but a few were difficult enough to discern which respondents were highly knowledgeable.

On questions about the Bible and Christianity, the groups that answered the most right were Mormons and white

evangelical Protestants.

On questions about world religions, like Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism, the groups that did the best were atheists, agnostics and Jews.

One finding that may grab the attention of policy makers is that most Americans wrongly believe that anything having to do with religion is prohibited in public schools.

An overwhelming 89 percent of respondents, asked whether public school teachers are permitted to lead a class in prayer, correctly answered no.

But fewer than one of four knew that a public school teacher is permitted “to read from the Bible as an example of literature.” And only about one third knew that a public school teacher is permitted to offer a class comparing the world’s religions.

The survey’s authors concluded that there was “widespread confusion” about “the line between teaching and preaching.”

Mr. Smith said the survey appeared to be the first comprehensive effort at assessing the basic religious knowledge of Americans, so it is impossible to tell whether they are more or less informed than in the past.

The phone interviews were conducted in English and Spanish in May and June. There were not enough Muslim, Buddhist or Hindu respondents to say how those groups ranked.

Clergy members who are concerned that their congregants know little about the essentials of their own faith will no doubt be appalled by some of these findings:

¶ Fifty-three percent of Protestants could not identify Martin Luther as the man who started the Protestant Reformation.






¶ Forty-five percent of Catholics did not know that their church teaches that the consecrated bread and wine in holy communion are not merely symbols, but actually become the body and blood of Christ.

¶ Forty-three percent of Jews did not know that Maimonides, one of the foremost rabbinical authorities and philosophers, was Jewish.

The question about Maimonides was the one that the fewest people answered correctly. But 51 percent knew that Joseph Smith was Mormon, and 82 percent knew that Mother Teresa was Roman Catholic.

OCTOBER, 2010

TISHRI/CHESHVAN, 5771

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|-----------|---|---|--|---|
| | | | | | <i>1</i> Simchat Torah  6:20 | <i>2</i> 24 Tishri Bereshit Ends 7:22 |
| <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> Program Committee 8:00 PM | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> Rabbi's Class "Romantic & Sexual Refer- ences in the Tanach" 10:30-Noon | <i>7</i> | <i>8</i> Rosh Chodesh  6:09 | <i>9</i> 1 Cheshvan Rosh Chodesh Noach Ends 7:16 |
| <i>10</i> | <i>11</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>13</i> Rabbi's Class 10:30-Noon | <i>14</i> | <i>15</i>  5:58 | <i>16</i> 8 Cheshvan Lech Lecha Ends 7:05 |
| <i>17</i> Shirathon 2:00 PM | <i>18</i> | <i>19</i> | <i>20</i> Rabbi's Class 10:30-Noon | <i>21</i> Sisterhood Meeting 12 Noon | <i>22</i>  5:48 | <i>23</i> 15 Cheshvan Vayera Ends 6:55 |
| <i>24</i> | <i>25</i> | <i>26</i> | <i>27</i> Rabbi's Class 10:30-Noon | <i>28</i> Book Club 10:30 AM | <i>29</i> Shabbat Dinner 5:30 PM  | <i>30</i> 22 Cheshvan Chaya Sarei Ends 6:45 |
| <i>31</i> | | | | | | |