

# Gedaliah – The Real Story

by Rabbi Raymond Apple AO R.F.D., Emeritus Rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Sydney



The Fast of Gedaliah on 3 Tishrei, the day after Rosh Hashanah, is a whole series of puzzles – a fast that became a feast and then a fast again; a religious event marking a political assassination; a day named for an almost unknown; a link with Rosh HaShanah that has no apparent connection with New Year spirituality. It cries out for attention and explanation.

## First, who was Gedaliah?

He was a member of a leading Judean family, the son of Ahikam ben Shaphan, a political adviser to King Josiah (II Kings 22:12) who had protected the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 26:24).

Gedaliah had probably shown promise as a diplomat and administrator long before the Babylonians destroyed the First Temple in 586 BCE leaving villages and towns in ruins, murdering thousands of Jews and carrying thousands more into exile in Babylon.

## What was left in and around Jerusalem?

A small, insecure, impoverished Jewish group that appeared to have no future. Babylon had won a military victory but shrank from eradicating normal life in the conquered territory. They appointed a Jewish governor over Judah, this same Gedaliah, in order to maintain a semblance of order.

Actually, Gedaliah's appointment, told twice in Tanakh – Jer. 40-41 and II Kings 25:22-26 – may have been suggested by Jeremiah, whom the Babylonians released from prison into Gedaliah's protection (Jer. 39:14) in recognition of his opposition to the Jewish rebellion.

Gedaliah set about his daunting task and began to achieve his program. He urged the people



to come to terms with the overlords, and promised, **“It will be well with you”** (Jer. 40:9). The economy began to improve, and **“they gathered wine and summer fruits in abundance”** (Jer. 40:12).

Life settled down. Mitzpah, north-west of Jerusalem, became the administrative centre. Many of the Jewish population came out of hiding, and Gedaliah tried to win over those who were full of doubts.

He thought his peace process would work, but the facts proved otherwise. Ishmael ben Netaniah, of royal origins (Jer. 41:1), resented the governor's appointment and criticised his policies. He formed an alliance with nearby Ammon and gathered the disaffected Jewish elements around him. Gedaliah's advisers warned him to tread carefully, but he refused to take heed. He even invited Ishmael to a Rosh HaShanah meal, but during the meal Ishmael and his supporters assassinated the governor and his staff and ran off to Ammon.

Their hopes shattered, the Jewish community fled to Egypt with Jeremiah. Gedaliah was gone; his dreams had evaporated.

The Jews instituted a fast in his memory. Though the assassination probably took place on Rosh HaShanah, a fast was not possible on a festival so, according to the commentator David Kimhi, it was moved to the third of the month (the Tanakh itself merely says – in Jeremiah 41:1 – that the events were **“in the seventh month”**, which some understand as the 1st of the month, whilst others think it was the 3rd).

Gedaliah was a good and wise man, but there were many other good and wise people who were probably even more righteous, who lost their lives for the sake of their faith and people, and have no day instituted in their memory. The Talmud (Rosh HaShanah 18a) does praise Gedaliah but it criticises him for ignoring the warnings he was given (Niddah 61a), so the sages clearly did not regard him as a saint.

## So why have a fast, and why name it for Gedaliah?

It is because the episode marked a major national catastrophe, the apparent end of Jewish communal life in the Holy Land.

This was the context of the fast, and Gedaliah's name was a symbol, a form of convenient shorthand. For 70 years this and the other historical fasts reminded the people of what they had lost. Then the Second Temple was built on the ruins of the first, and according to the Talmud (Rosh HaShanah 18b) the fasts became feasts. The sages even found an additional reason to feast on 3 Tishrei, marking the day when it was decided not to write the Divine name in documents which might be discarded (Megillat Ta'anit).

Tragically, the Second Temple suffered the same fate as the first, and the sages reinstated the fast day.

The coincidence that ever since it has been the first calendrical event after Rosh HaShanah suggests that the best of plans can be ruined by internal dissent and disunity.

Rosh HaShanah symbolises our dreams; the fast of Gedaliah tells us not to let them end in tatters.

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# The Day of Judgement

Professor Eliezer Segal, University of Calgary, Canada.



The portrayal of Rosh Hashanah as a “Day of Judgement” dominates the liturgy and customs of the holiday season. As the tradition perceives it, between the New Year and the Day of Atonement G-d sits in judgement over all mankind to determine our fates for the coming year.

This symbolism is drawn upon to great effect by the authors of the *piyyutim*, the liturgical poems composed to enhance the statutory prayers of the season. The Jewish people, alongside the rest of humanity, are depicted as standing in a divine court-room, pleading for mercy.

If judged according to the merits of our case, we all deserve punishment. Our only hope is to persuade G-d to suspend the laws, or to remind him of outstanding favours owed to our forefathers.

In describing the atmosphere of the court, the rabbis and poets based themselves upon settings that were familiar to them.

The court-room is of course a well-trodden venue of Talmudic Judaism and provides a wealth of details that can be elaborated in sermons and *piyyutim*.

## No Lawyers

It is therefore most surprising to find that the court scenes that appear so prominently in rabbinic midrash and prayers as models for G-d's judgment of mankind are, for the most part (for reasons that are not entirely evident to me), not Jewish courts at all, but Hellenistic and Roman ones.

This fact becomes clear when we look at some of the procedural terms that are mentioned. In many of the texts, we read of debates between a *sanegor* and a *kategor* – a prosecuting and defending attorney. These are none other than the *synegoros* and *kategoros* of the Hellenistic judicial system.

In our sources the position of *kategor* is often filled by angels, who are believed to hold a mild grudge against the Jews for usurping G-d's special favours. The job of *sanegor* is likely to be held by the Hebrew Patriarchs, by personified representations of the “Congregation of Israel,” by a person's virtuous deeds, etc.

Thus, in a well-known talmudic discussion, the rabbis explain why a *shofar* cannot be fashioned from a cow's horn because “the *kategor* cannot serve as *sanegor*,” that is to say, the cow's horn, which holds incriminating associations with the Israelites' worship of the Golden Calf, cannot properly perform its designated function of arguing the Jews' case before the divine tribunal.

Actually, the traditional Jewish court does not permit the use of lawyers at all (though the office of “rabbinic pleader” has developed in recent years in Israel). The talmudic sources, which were familiar with the Roman court system and its susceptibility to persuasion by mellifluous rhetoric, warned the Rabbis, “Do not act like the professional pleaders” (*orkhei hadayyanim*). It was the judge's job to get at the truth, without its being packaged by a professional.

Nevertheless, one of the favourite High Holy Days hymns uses the same expression to designate G-d himself as *El Orekh Din* – the G-d who presides over judgement.

## Military Metaphors

The Mishnah also resorts to imagery taken from Roman military life when it compares G-d's judgement of humankind to a commander reviewing his troops: “All the denizens of the world pass before him like a *numeron* (regiment).”

The terminology, taken from the vocabulary of the Roman legions, was unfamiliar to some of the rabbis of the Babylonian Talmud, who took it to refer to a flock of sheep being counted by the shepherd. In this version, it entered the haunting poetry of the “*Untanneh Tokef*” prayer.

A conventional sign of a victorious soldier was his return bearing in his hand a *baian*, a palm-frond. The midrash saw in this Roman custom a fitting analogy to the Jewish taking of the *lulav* on Sukkot, a few days after the judgement of Yom Kippur: Consider two parties who go to trial before a king, and no one but the king himself knows which was declared victorious. In the end, it is evident that the one who

emerges holding the *baian* was the victor.

Another version of this passage uses the metaphor of a triumphant chariot-racer being decorated with a wreath. So too, Sukkot is a celebration of our favourable judgement on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

## Justice and Mercy

By building upon the imagery of the Roman judicial system the midrash was able to contrast imperfect human justice with the ideal of G-d's judgement.

On the one hand, unlike a mortal judge, G-d is not subject to error, corruption or bribery. But on the other hand, unlike most worldly judges, G-d's justice has the advantage of being tempered by compassion. The human being can implore G-d not to decree according to the standard of law, but to temper his decision with the measure of mercy.

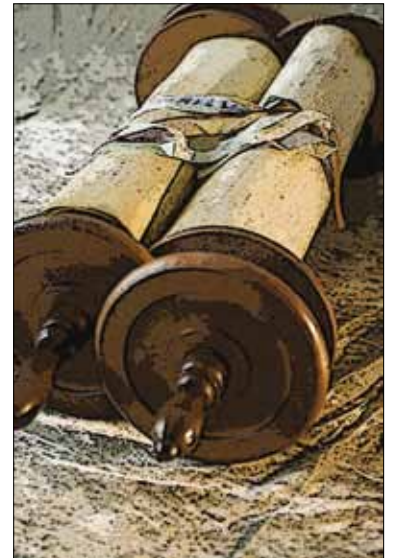
In later midrashim the qualities of divine justice and mercy were no longer depicted as merely ways in which G-d judged His creatures, but were transformed into personalities in their own right, fulfilling the roles of *kategor* and *sanegor* in the celestial court, supplying G-d respectively with reasons for condemning or acquitting His creatures.

## G-d on Trial

A feature which has typified Jews' relationships to G-d from as far back as Abraham and Moses is that G-d can be argued with and persuaded to change his mind.

The *selichot* petitionary prayers recited at this time of year, in addition to expressing a contrite recognition of our sinfulness and powerlessness before G-d's will, are often characterised by an aggressive “bargaining” posture. The authors “remind” G-d of the suffering to which we have been subjected and of the merits earned by our righteous ancestors, and ask that these factors be counted to our credit.

This pious familiarity before G-d, who is perceived not only as a judge but also as a patient and forgiving father, was taken to extremes by the famous Hasidic master Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev.



Known as the “*Sanegor of Israel*” for his insistence on always seeing his fellow Jews in a favourable light, Levi Yitzhak is said to have challenged G-d one Rosh Hashanah to a lawsuit – a *din Torah*. G-d, he argued, had no right to prolong Israel's exile when other more sinful nations were allowed to live in peace and prosperity. A grim variation on this story is recounted by Elie Wiesel in his Holocaust memoir *Night*, and later formed the basis for his play “*The Trial of G-d.*” On Rosh Hashanah, from the depths of their sorrow and despair, the inmates of Auschwitz called G-d to judgement and condemned him for allowing such evil and suffering in His world.

Both stories, that of Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev and that of the Auschwitz inmates, end in the same way. After declaring G-d's guilt the accusers rise to recite the *Kaddish* – the proclamation of G-d's sovereignty over the universe.

The point is a profound one: For the Jew, it is possible to argue against G-d, but not to live without him.

*May all our judgements during the coming year be favourable ones.*

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# Report from Our Outreach & Public Relations Manager



Dear Congregants, last year I wrote in my report that I'd hope to outgrow the boardroom for our communal Seder. Well, with the help of Rabbi Jacks and his five children I had no choice.

I can honestly say either way, we would have been in the Winton Hall. We had an overwhelming response and a very successful night.

Australia's Biggest Morning Tea has now become part of the MHC calendar. This was initiated two years ago with approximately twenty people in attendance, and has grown to almost seventy people this year. This year we were fortunate to have congregation member and Melbourne socialite Lillian Frank AM MBE address us on "Life at its Fullest."

We thank all those who attended for their time and generosity for such a worthy cause. Next year my wife, Natalie and I have offered to host the event at our new home. Stay tuned.

Shavuot this year had a slight twist to it. Unlike in previous years where we would have the traditional service followed by an appropriate Shavuot Kiddush. This year, we invited Madrichim (leaders) from the Betar movement to lead the children.

They joined in the activities with them while the service was taking place for the adults, and then headed them to a fabulous **Top Ten Flavour Ice Cream Kiddush**. (Sometimes it's still good to be a kid).

At the moment of writing this report, plans are being finalised for MHC's first **Trivia Night**.

With three weeks out before the event we have had tremendous feedback with more than sixty people responding. Many thanks to all our sponsors who have kindly donated towards the night.

There is an ever increasing demand for people wanting to do their Haphtorah on their anniversary. I would love to help anyone interested wanting to do it. Please don't be shy, ring the Shule office I am available **24/6 (not on Shabbat)** I can come to your home or workplace for half to one hour, once a week.

Every Tuesday I make it my duty to visit members and non members who are at Cabrini Hospital. If there is anyone you know who would like a visit from any of our rabbonim, Refuah Committee, or myself, please let us know. We would be only too happy to come and visit.

At the time of writing this report, there is only a short time before the Year 12 students undergo their final VCE exams. I would like to wish them all **GOOD LUCK** in their exams.

With the New Year Approaching we hope and pray that this year will be a year of peace not just for Israel but for the entire world.

Together with my wife Natalie, and our children Lior, Noa & Benji, I take this opportunity of wishing you and your extended families a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year and well over the fast.

Ronny Kowadlo



## Shalom and Greetings from Jerusalem

Over one and a half years have passed since we made Aliyah. Thank G-d we are very settled now and are busy with our daily routine.

I spend each morning in Jerusalem attending shiurim at the Jerusalem Great Synagogue and The Central Jerusalem Synagogue. The wealth of knowledge is amazing. Each and every shiur is a pearl from recognised scholars.

Sue has continued with ulpan classes and is using and understanding more and more Hebrew. We are also very involved in our volunteer work. I volunteer one day a week at both Hadassah Hospital and Shaarei Tsedek hospital. Sue also is doing one and a half days at Shaarei Tsedek.

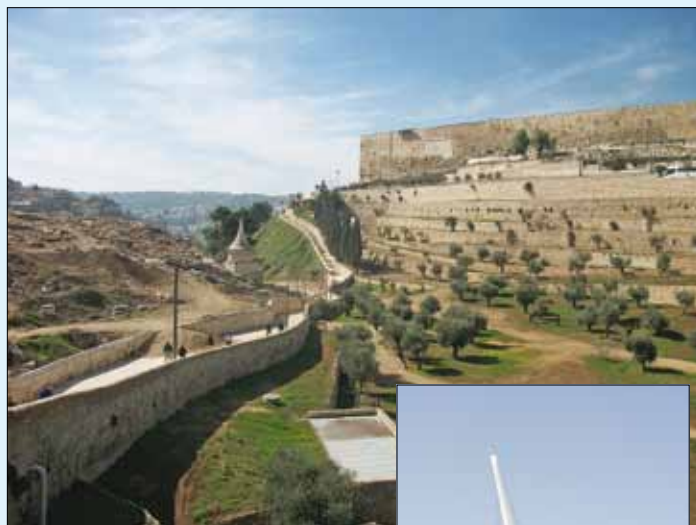
We have also had the opportunity to see more of the country. We recently visited the

town of Maalot for a shabbat. Maalot was the scene of the terrorist attack on a school in 1974, in which 22 children were murdered. Every metre of the country has a story.

The political situation continues to be a concern. The two main issues are the peace process and the imprisonment of Gilad Shalit. There doesn't seem to be an immediate resolution, however we can only hope and pray that on both issues the outcomes will be positive. There is no doubt that life in Israel cannot be duplicated.

We hope that one day you will have an opportunity to visit (or perhaps come and stay).

We would love to be able to welcome you into our home. If you are planning a trip please let us know. Our email address is [hlgluck@gmail.com](mailto:hlgluck@gmail.com)



Sue and I wish you and your families a Shana Tova Umitukah – A happy, sweet & healthy New Year.

Sue & Harry Gluck



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# “EHR KUMT” First Day of Rosh Hashanah



Despite being delivered last Yom Tov, the editorial team deemed the address is of as much relevance today as it was last year and the message remains a powerful one.

**Many years ago a Chasid used to travel from shtetl to shtetl selling holy books. On one occasion he came to a wealthy land owner and asked if he would like to purchase a book of Torah teachings. The banker agreed and not only purchased the book, but paid for it with a hundred ruble note.**

He then began to chat with the Chassid and offered him a cigar, taking one also for himself. The Chassid noticed that the banker proceeded to rip a page from the holy book he had just bought and holding it to the open flame on the stove, used the page to light his cigar. The Chassid said not a word but simply drew out from his pocket the 100 ruble note he had just received from the banker, held it over the stove as well and used it to light his cigar.

This simple, little tale reflects a profound divergence of values. Our sympathy clearly and instinctively is not with the banker but with the pious Chassid. None of us would come to the defense of the banker. None of us would claim moral supremacy for the banker. None of us would justify his boorish deed. As the sages of the Talmud would say – **“Pshita – It is so obvious”**.

Sadly though our planet is immersed in perversity where morality is not so manifest – where the book burner is a hero and the pious one, a villain.

I thought long and I thought hard on whether to deliver the sermon I am about to share. We all wish to bounce happily out of shul on the High Holidays, filled with warm fuzzies, ready to gobble up our brisket, our honey cakes and our kugel. We want to be shaken and stirred – but not too much. We want to be guilt-schlepped – but not too much. We want to be provoked but not too much. We want to be transformed but not too much.

I get it, but as a rabbi I have a compelling obligation, a responsibility to articulate what is in my heart and what I passionately believe must be said

and must be heard. And so, I am guided not by what is easy to say but by what is painful to express. I am guided not by the frivolous but by the serious. I am guided not by delicacy but by urgency. We are at war. We are at war with an enemy as savage, as voracious, as heartless as the Nazis but one wouldn't know it from our behavior. During WWII we didn't refer to storm troopers as freedom fighters. We didn't call the Gestapo, militants. We didn't see the attacks on our Merchant Marine as acts by rogue sailors. We did not justify the Nazis rise to power as our fault. We did not grovel before the Nazis, thumping our hearts and confessing to abusing and mistreating and humiliating the German people. We did not apologise for Dresden, nor for The Battle of the Bulge, nor for El Alamein, nor for D-Day.

Evil – ultimate, irreconcilable, evil threatened us and Roosevelt and Churchill had moral clarity and an exquisite understanding of what was at stake. It was not just the Sudetenland, not just Tubruk, not just Vienna, not just Casablanca. It was the entire planet. Read history and be shocked at how frighteningly close Hitler came to creating a Pax Germana on every continent.

Not all Germans were Nazis – most were decent, most were revolted by the Third Reich, most were good citizens hoisting a beer, earning a living and tucking in their children at night. But, too many looked away, too many cried out in lame defense – **“I didn't know.”** Too many were silent. Guilt absolutely falls upon those who committed the atrocities, but responsibility and guilt falls upon those who did nothing as well. Fault was not just with the goose steppers but with those who pulled the curtains shut, said and did nothing.

In WWII we won because we got it. We understood who the enemy was and we knew that the end had to be unconditional and absolute. We did not stumble around worrying about offending the Nazis. We did not measure every word so as not to upset our foe. We built planes and tanks and battleships and went to war

to win... to rid the world of malevolence.

We are at war... yet too many stubbornly and foolishly don't put the pieces together and refuse to identify the evil doers. We are circumspect and disgracefully politically correct.

Let me mince no words in saying that from Fort Hood to Bali, from Times Square to London, from Madrid to Mumbai, from 9/11 to Gaza, the murderers, the barbarians are radical Islamists.

To camouflage their identity is sedition. To excuse their deeds is contemptible. To mask their intentions is unconscionable.

A few years ago I visited Lithuania on a Jewish genealogical tour. It was a stunning journey and a very personal, spiritual pilgrimage. When we visited Kovno we davened Maariv at the only remaining shul in the city. Before the war there were thirty-seven shuls for 38,000 Jews. Now only one, a shrinking, gray congregation. We made minyon for the handful of aged worshippers in the Choral Synagogue, a once majestic, jewel in Kovno.

After my return home I visited Cherry Hill for Shabbos. At the oneg an elderly family friend, Joe Magun, came over to me.

**“Shalom,”** he said. **“Your abba told me you just came back from Lithuania.”**

**“Yes,”** I replied. **“It was quite a powerful experience.”**

**“Did you visit the Choral Synagogue in Kovno? The one with the big arch in the courtyard?”**

**“Yes, I did. In fact, we helped them make minyon.”** His eyes opened wide in joy at our shared memory. For a moment he gazed into the distance and then, he returned. **“Shalom, I grew up only a few feet away from the arch. The Choral Synagogue was where I davened as a child.”**

He paused for a moment and once again was lost in the past. His smile faded. Pain filled his wrinkled face. **“I remember one Shabbos in 1938 when Vladimir Jabotinsky came to the shul”** (Jabotinsky was Menachim Begin's mentor – he was a fiery orator, an unflinching Zionist radical, whose politics were to the far

right.) Joe continued **“When Jabotinsky came, he delivered the drash on Shabbos morning and I can still hear his words burning in my ears. He climbed up to the shtender, stared at us from the bima, glared at us with eyes full of fire and cried out. ‘EHR KUMT. YIDN FARLAWST AYER SHTETL – He's coming. Jews abandon your city.’”**

We thought we were safe in Lithuania from the Nazis, from Hitler. We had lived there, thrived for a thousand years but Jabotinsky was right – his warning prophetic. We got out but most did not.

We are not in Lithuania. It is not the 1930s. There is no Luftwaffe overhead. No U-boats off the coast of long Island. No Panzer divisions on our borders. But make no mistake; we are under attack – our values, our tolerance, our freedom, our virtue, our land.

Now before some folks roll their eyes and glance at their watches let me state emphatically, unmistakably – I have no pathology of hate, nor am I a manic Paul Revere, galloping through the countryside. I am not a pessimist, nor prone to panic attacks. I am a lover of humanity, all humanity. Whether they worship in a synagogue, a church, a mosque, a temple or don't worship at all. I have no bone of bigotry in my body, but what I do have is hatred for those who hate, intolerance for those who are intolerant, and a guiltless, unstoppable obsession to see evil eradicated.

Today the enemy is radical Islam but it must be said sadly and reluctantly that there are unwitting, co-conspirators who strengthen the hands of the evil doers. Let me state that the overwhelming number of Muslims are good Muslims, fine human beings who want nothing more than a Jeep Cherokee in their driveway, a flat screen TV on their wall and a good education for their children, but these good Muslims have an obligation to destiny, to decency that thus far for the most part they have avoided. The Kulturkampf is not only external but internal as well. The good Muslims must sponsor rallies in

Times Square, in Trafalgar Square, in the UN Plaza, on the Champs Elysee, in Mecca condemning terrorism, denouncing unequivocally the slaughter of the innocent. Thus far, they have not. The good Muslims must place ads in the NY Times. They must buy time on network TV, on cable stations, in the Jerusalem Post, in Le Monde, in Al Watan, on Al Jazeera condemning terrorism, denouncing unequivocally the slaughter of the innocent – thus far, they have not. Their silence allows the vicious to tarnish Islam and define it.

Brutal acts of commission and yawning acts of omission both strengthen the hand of the devil.

I recall a conversation with my father shortly before he died that helped me understand how perilous and how broken is our world; that we are living on the narrow seam of civilisation and moral oblivion. Knowing he had little time left he shared the following – *“Shal. I am ready to leave this earth. Sure I’d like to live a little longer, see a few more sunrises, but truthfully, I’ve had it. I’m done. Finished. I hope the Good Lord takes me soon because I am unable to live in this world knowing what it has become.”*

This startling admission of moral exhaustion from a man who witnessed and lived through the Depression, the Holocaust, WWII, Communist Triumphalism, McCarthyism, Strontium 90 and polio. – Yet his twilight observation was – *“The worst is yet to come.”* And he wanted out.

I share my father’s angst and fear that too many do not see the authentic, existential threat we face nor confront the source of our peril. We must wake up and smell the hookah.

Ask the member of our shul whose sister was vaporised in the Twin Towers and identified finally by her charred teeth, if this is real or not. Ask the members of our shul who fled a bus in downtown Paris, fearing for their safety from a gang of Muslim thugs, if this is an exaggeration.

Ask the American GI’s we sit next to on planes who are here for a brief respite while we fly off on our Delta Airlines vacation package. Ask them if it’s bad. Ask them if it’s real.

Did anyone imagine in the 1920’s what Europe would look like in the 1940’s. Did anyone presume to know in the coffee houses of Berlin or in the opera

halls of Vienna that genocide would soon become the celebrated culture? Did anyone think that a goofy-looking painter named Shicklgruber would go from the beer halls of Munich and jail, to the Reichstag as Feuhrer in less than a decade? Did Jews pack their bags and leave Warsaw, Vilna, Athens, Paris, Bialystok, Minsk, knowing that soon their new address would be Treblinka, Sobibor, Dachau and Auschwitz?

The sages teach – *“Aizehu chacham – haroeh et hanolad – Who is a wise person – he who sees into the future.”* We dare not wallow in complacency, in a misguided tolerance and naïve sense of security.

We must be diligent students of history and not sit in ash cloth at the waters of Babylon weeping. We cannot be hypnotised by eloquent-sounding rhetoric that soothes our heart but endangers our soul. We cannot be lulled into inaction for fear of offending the offenders. Radical Islam is the scourge and this must be cried out from every mountain top. From sea to shining sea, we must stand tall, prideful of our stunning decency and moral resilience. Immediately after 9/11 how many mosques were destroyed in America? None. After 9/11, how many Muslims were killed in America? None. After 9/11, how many anti-Muslim rallies were held in America? None. And yet, we apologise. We grovel. We beg forgiveness.

The mystifying litany of our foolishness continues. Should there be a shul in Hebron on the site where Baruch Goldstein gunned down twenty-seven Arabs at noonday prayers? Should there be a museum praising the U.S. Calvary on the site of Wounded Knee? Should there be a German cultural center in Auschwitz? Should a church be built in the Syrian town of Ma’arra where Crusaders slaughtered over 100,000 Muslims? Should there be a thirteen story mosque and Islamic Center only a few steps from Ground Zero?

Despite all the rhetoric, the essence of the matter can be distilled quite easily. The Muslim community has the absolute, constitutional right to build their building wherever they wish. I don’t buy the argument – *“When we can build a church or a synagogue in Mecca they can build a mosque here.”* America is greater than Saudi Arabia. And

New York is greater than Mecca. Democracy and freedom must prevail.

Can they build? Certainly. May they build? Certainly. But should they build at that site? No – but that decision must come from them, not from us. Sensitivity, compassion cannot be measured in feet or yards or in blocks. One either feels the pain of others and cares, or does not.

If those behind this project are good, peace-loving, sincere, tolerant Muslims, as they claim, then they should know better, rip up the zoning permits and build elsewhere.

Believe it or not, I am a dues-paying, card carrying member of the ACLU, yet from start of finish, I find this sorry episode disturbing to say the least.

William Burroughs, the novelist and poet, in a wry moment wrote – *“After one look at this planet, any visitor from outer space would say – “I want to see the manager.”*

Let us understand that the radical Islamist assaults all over the globe are but skirmishes, fire fights, and vicious decoys. Christ and the anti-Christ. Gog U’Magog. The Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness; the bloody collision between civilisation and depravity is on the border between Lebanon and Israel. It is on the Gaza Coast and in the Judean Hills of the West Bank. It is on the sandy beaches of Tel Aviv and on the cobblestoned mall of Ben Yehuda Street. It is in the underground schools of Sderot and on the bullet-proofed inner-city buses. It is in every school yard, hospital, nursery, classroom, park, theater – in every place of innocence and purity.

Israel is the laboratory – the test market. Every death, every explosion, every grisly encounter is not a random, bloody orgy. It is a calculated, strategic probe into the heart, guts and soul of the West.

In the Six Day War, Israel was the proxy of Western values and strategy while the Arab alliance was the proxy of Eastern, Soviet values and strategy. Today too, it is a confrontation of proxies, but the stakes are greater than East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Israel in her struggle represents the civilised world, while Hamas, Hezbollah, Al Queda, Iran, Islamic Jihad, represent the world of psychopathic, loathesome evil.

As Israel, imperfect as she is, resists the onslaught, many

in the Western World have lost their way displaying not admiration, not sympathy, not understanding, for Israel’s galling plight, but downright hostility and contempt. Without moral clarity, we are doomed because Israel’s galling plight ultimately will be ours. Hanna Arendt in her classic *Origins of Totalitarianism* accurately portrays the first target of tyranny as the Jew. We are the trial balloon. The canary in the coal mine. If the Jew/Israel is permitted to bleed with nary a protest from *“good guys”* then tyranny snickers and pushes forward with its agenda.

Moral confusion is a deadly weakness and it has reached epic proportions in the West; from the Oval Office to the UN, from the BBC to Reuters to MSNBC, from the New York Times to Le Monde, from university campuses to British teachers unions, from the International Red Cross to Amnesty International, from Goldstone to Elvis Costello, from the Presbyterian Church to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

There is a message sent and consequences when our president visits Turkey and Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and not Israel.

There is a message sent and consequences when free speech on campus is only for those championing Palestinian rights.

There is a message sent and consequences when the media deliberately doctors and edits film clips to demonise Israel.

There is a message sent and consequences when the UN blasts Israel relentlessly, effectively ignoring Iran, Sudan, Venezuela, North Korea, China and other noxious states.

There is a message sent and consequences when liberal churches are motivated by Liberation Theology, not historical accuracy.

There is a message sent and consequences when murderers and terrorists are defended by the obscenely transparent *“one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.”*

John Milton warned, *“Hypocrisy is the only evil that walks invisible.”*

A few days after the Gaza blockade incident in the spring, a congregant happened past my office, glanced in and asked in a friendly tone –

*“Rabbi. How’re y’ doing?”* I looked up, sort of smiled and replied – *“I’ve had better days.”*

“What’s the matter? Is there anything I can do to cheer you up?” he inquired.

“Thank you for the offer but I’m just bummed out today and I showed him a newspaper article I was reading.

“**Madrid gay pride parade bans Israeli group over Gaza Ship Raid.**” I explained to my visitor – “**The Israeli gay pride contingent from Tel Aviv was not allowed to participate in the Spanish gay pride parade because the mayor of Tel Aviv did not apologise for the raid by the Israeli military.**”

The only country in the entire Middle East where gay rights exist, is Israel. The only country in the entire Middle East where there is a gay pride parade, is Israel. The only country in the Middle East that has gay neighbourhoods and gay bars, is Israel.

Gays in the Gaza would be strung up, executed by Hamas if they came out and yet Israel is vilified and ostracised. Disinvited to the parade.

Looking for logic?

Looking for reason?

Looking for sanity?

Kafka on his darkest, gloomiest day could not keep up with this bizarre spectacle and we “**useful idiots**” pander and fawn over cutthroats, sinking deeper and deeper into moral decay, as the enemy laughs all the way to the West Bank and beyond.

It is exhausting and dispiriting. We live in an age that is redefining righteousness where those with moral clarity are an endangered, beleaguered specie.

Isaiah warned us thousands of years ago – “**Oye Lehem Sheh-Korim Layome, Laila v’Laila, yome – Woe to them who call the day, night and the night, day.**” We live on a planet that is both Chelm and Sodom. It is a frightening and maddening place to be.

How do we convince the world and many of our own, that this is not just anti-Semitism, that this is not just anti-Zionism but a full throttled attack by unholy, radical Islamists on everything that is morally precious to us?

How do we convince the world and many of our own that conciliation is not an option, that compromise is not a choice?

Everything we are. Everything we believe. Everything we treasure, is at risk.

The threat is so unbelievably clear and the enemy so unbelievably ruthless how anyone

in their right mind doesn’t get it is baffling. Let’s try an analogy. If someone contracted a life-threatening infection and we not only scolded them for using antibiotics but insisted that the bacteria had a right to infect their body and that perhaps, if we gave the invading infection an arm and a few toes, the bacteria would be satisfied and stop spreading

Anyone buy that medical advice? Well, folks, that’s our approach to the radical Islamist bacteria. It is amoral, has no conscience and will spread unless it is eradicated. – There is no negotiating. Appeasement is death.

I was no great fan of George Bush – didn’t vote for him. (By the way, I’m still a registered Democrat.) I disagreed with many of his policies but one thing he had right. His moral clarity was flawless when it came to the War on Terror, the War on Radical Islamist Terror. There was no middle ground – either you were friend or foe. There was no place in Bush’s world for a Switzerland. He knew that this competition was not Toyota against G.M., not the Iphone against the Droid, not the Braves against the Phillies, but a deadly serious war, winner take all. Blink and you lose. Underestimate, and you get crushed.

I know that there are those sitting here today who have turned me off. But I also know that many turned off their rabbis seventy five years ago in Warsaw, Riga, Berlin, Amsterdam, Cracow, Vilna. I get no satisfaction from that knowledge, only a bitter sense that there is nothing new under the sun.

Enough rhetoric – how about a little “**show and tell?**” Recently, on the cover of Time magazine was a horrific picture with a horrific story.

The photo was of an eighteen year old Afghani woman, Bibi Aisha, who fled her abusive husband and his abusive family.



Days later the Taliban found her and dragged her to a mountain clearing where she was found guilty of violating Sharia Law.

Her punishment was immediate. She was pinned to the ground by four men while her husband sliced off her ears, and then he cut off her nose.

### **That is the enemy.**

If nothing else stirs us. If nothing else convinces us, let Bibi Aisha’s mutilated face be the face of Islamic radicalism. Let her face shake up even the most complacent and naïve among us. In the holy crusade against this ultimate evil, pictures of Bibi Aisha’s disfigurement should be displayed on billboards, along every highway from Route 66 to the Autobahn, to the Transarabian Highway. Her picture should be posted on every lobby wall from Tokyo to Stockholm to Rio. On every network, at every commercial break, Bibi Aisha’s face should appear with the caption –

“**Radical Islamic savages did this.**” And underneath – “**This ad was approved by Hamas, by Hezbollah, by Taliban, by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, by Islamic Jihad, by Fatah al Islam, by Magar Nodal Hassan, by Richard Reid, by Ahmanijad, by Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, by Osama bin Laden, by Edward Said, by The Muslim Brotherhood, by Al Qaeda, by CAIR.**”

“**The moral sentiment is the drop that balances the sea**” said Ralph Waldo Emerson. Today, my friends, the sea is woefully out of

balance and we could easily drown in our moral myopia and worship of political correctness.

We peer up into the heavens sending probes to distant galaxies. We peer down into quarks discovering particles that would astonish Einstein. We create computers that rival the mind, technologies that surpass science fiction. What we imagine, with astounding rapidity, becomes real. If we dream it, it does, indeed, come.

And yet, we are at a critical point in the history of this planet that could send us back into the cave, to a culture that would make the Neanderthal blush with shame.

Our parents and grandparents saw the swastika and recoiled, understood the threat and destroyed the Nazis. We see the banner of Radical Islam and can do no less.

A rabbi was once asked by his students.... “**Rebbi. Why are your sermons so stern?**”

Replied the rabbi, “**If a house is on fire and we chose not to wake up our children, for fear of disturbing their sleep, would that be love? Kinderlach, ‘di hoyz brent.’ Children our house is on fire and I must arouse you from your slumber.**”

During WWII and the Holocaust was it business as usual for priests, ministers, rabbis? Did they deliver benign homilies and lovely sermons as Europe fell, as the Pacific fell, as North Africa fell, as the Mideast and South America tottered, as England bled? Did they ignore the demonic juggernaut and the foul breath of evil? They did not. There was clarity, courage, vision, determination, sacrifice, and we were victorious. Today it must be our finest hour as well. We dare not retreat into the banality of our routines, glance at headlines and presume that the good guys will prevail.

Democracies don’t always win. Tyrannies don’t always lose.

My friends – the world is on fire and we must awake from our slumber. “**EHR KUMT.**”

Written and delivered as a sermon by Rabbi Shlomo J Lewis of Etz Chaim Congregation, Atlanta Georgia, for Rosh Hashanah 2010.

Reprinted with his permission.



# Rabbi Jacks – A Meeting with the Premier, Ted Baillieu



I recently had the honour of joining seven Melbourne Rabbis in a Rabbinical Council of Victoria (RCV) meeting with the Victorian State Premier – Mr Ted Baillieu.

During the meeting I was privileged to give Mr Baillieu a book detailing the State of Israel's incredible accomplishments.

The book contained an inscription which I read to the Premier. The inscription concluded with the date the book was presented, both in the civil calendar (26 July 2011), as well the corresponding date (24 Tammuz 5771) in the Hebrew calendar. The Premier picked up on the Hebrew year. He said that he was humbled when he heard that this year was 5771.

Australia, he said, is a relatively young democracy. **“However,”** he noted, **“our indigenous population has a much older history that stretches back millennia. And today, as I heard the number 5771, I was reminded again how ancient and profound Jewish culture, heritage and wisdom is.”**

The Premier said that rabbinic leaders are owed a debt of gratitude by the State because of our focus on strengthening the family unit, which is the vital building block for a strong and thriving society.

The Rabbi's and the Premier also shared our common concern over mental health issues that affect a large portion of the Victorian population.

The Premier said that Rabbis have an important role in removing the stigma related to mental illness. He said that the shame associated with mental illness only serves to compound the impact that the disease has on society.

The Premier also spoke of his admiration for the State of Israel. He recently made his first trip to Israel and was deeply impressed by Israel's achievements, in spite of the difficult struggles that the State of Israel faces in its constant fight for survival. He said that he sees many ideological similarities between the Israeli and Australian people.



Rabbi Yaakov Glasman (the president of the RCV, and newly appointed Rabbi to St Kilda Shule) presented the Premier with a set of Jewish guidelines that have been developed by the RCV to facilitate interfaith meetings.

Rabbi Glasman mentioned that this was a cutting-edge document, the first of its kind developed by Orthodox Rabbis in Australia. Rabbi Glasman explained that the Victorian rabbinate is at the forefront of multicultural and interfaith awareness.

The Premier jokingly said that Victorians are normally ahead in most things. The Premier expressed his hope that in the future, he could meet with the rabbis on a regular basis.

At the conclusion of this cordial meeting, the Premier asked the rabbis if they would like a tour of the building. He then personally took us to various rooms and described what they were used for, as well as explained some of the beautiful artwork that lines the impressive walls of the building.

Throughout the tour, the Premier laughed easily and shared many fascinating personal anecdotes.

At an appropriate moment I asked the Premier if he remembered how we shared a podium together during the public Menorah lighting ceremony at Parliament house this Chanukah.

Mr Baillieu responded that he remembered the event well. He reminded me how, at the time, he remarked that he was very excited that this was to be his first official engagement as premier of the State of Victoria. He felt that it was fortuitous that he began his official duties with an address to the Victorian Jewish community.

I believe that strengthening relationships between Jewish leaders and politicians from all political parties is something to be encouraged. I look forward to being involved in developing these relationships in the future to the benefit of our entire community.

Rabbi Avrohom Jacks



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# Humility – The Eleventh Commandment



Heschel tells the best humility story I've ever read. It goes like this:

A noted scholar, Rabbi

Isaac Meyer Alte, spends his life in study of a single tractate of Talmud dealing with civic law. (I'll skip my normal ironic impulses to tell you that so devoted was he to his work that his kids, for want of discipline, ran the streets like wild goats and his wife explored every cave of infidelity.) He lived in such squalor that cockroaches and rats fled next door. But, oh you should have read his Talmudic analysis. Spectacular. Beautiful – the angels applauded. But the scholar, before publication, wanted his old mentor, an expert on this Talmudic section, to read, review, and offer his opinion. With trembling heart, he took it to his old teacher. They sat in the cottage – the scholar afraid he had wasted years of his life – the teacher, eyes glued to the manuscript. He even forgot to eat the lunch his wife had prepared.

Finally, he turned the last page. He looked up with a face full of admiration. His words of praise were golden. Such insight, such wisdom. And then to the harm of generations yet to come (you'll see why in a minute) he announced his verdict. Hundreds of scholars, he said, would be shamed by this superlative work. They would be humiliated. In our words, to put it simply, Rabbi Mendel said – all other commentators through many generations will look like Jackasses, so superior was this work. Rabbi Isaac Meyer Alte gently asked for his manuscript, tore it in two pieces, and threw it in the fire. Humility reigned. My kind of rabbi.

© Ted Roberts, MHC's International Correspondent, Huntsville Alabama.



To me, it's a thoughtful analogy that also applies to the synagogue. Like the state itself, often the morals of the street, of life itself – condemned by our Tanach – are sometimes necessary to drive the engine of the synagogue. Example? Should the synagogue charge for a High Holiday seat? The Inspirational Banquet? Yes, I know a synagogue has expenses. The line between the holy and this world's necessities is a fine one. Ugly money always shows its face.

Sure, there's a mortgage, maintenance, and miscellaneous expense, but if they're kept under control, there should always be room for the stranger – whose hospitality is constantly recommended by the Chumash. Rabbis have to worry about this dilemma, too. Many an idealist from Rabbinical School has been transformed by his duties into, at best, an accountant – at worst, a politician. After all, there is a contract to be renewed.

One of my personal idiosyncrasies in regard to rabbis is a rare one. I don't favor Pompous rabbis – no matter their knowledge – no matter their pulpit skills, no matter their illustrious background. No matter their pinnacle of wisdom, I like them to realise that their relationship with the Almighty is no closer than mine – given equally moral behavior (and I've never been in jail nor harvested the corners of my fields). I understand the Rabbi's knowledge of Judaica far exceeds mine – that's not the question.

Somerset Maugham once recommended that every judge place a roll of toilet paper on the bench to remind him of his humanity. I would recommend the same for rabbis. The G-d of Judaism is an equal opportunity CEO. He tells us explicitly in his five-booked company charter that you may not see him; and

you may not know him and live. How many times are we not told that his ways are unfathomable to us. So, I like humility in my rabbis. I like the understanding that he is the schoolmaster, but still the mere mortal. Just like me. There are no popes in Judaism. But there are dozens of midrashim that connect G-d as easily with the lowly, the ragged, the ignorant as the Gaons of Judaism.

I'm on solid ground here because a scholar like Abraham Joshua Heschel states, **"In the spiritual dimension, self-renunciation counts more than achievement of scholarship"**. If there's ever been a Jewish trait that we have not boasted of, it's humility – a characteristic that has been drowned, deluged by our 21st Century flood of self assertion. But it didn't used to be that way. The Chumash lauds humility, not pride. Humility before man and G-d. Witness Jacob's confrontation with Esau, Joseph's reunion with his brothers, even Abraham's dealing with Lot. By the way, the root of the word baruch, that is in all our prayers, is the same root as for the word, knee – meaning kneel. Implying abject humility.

Walk humbly with thy G-d, says Micah, an edict not often obeyed by us **"stiff-necked"** Jews who love nothing better than a verbal brawl with he who made them and governs the palace called Earth. So, it's not surprising that the prophets recommend humility, but we find our Chumash full of G-d/man debates. How awesome that the puppet has the gall to argue with the puppet maker. Humility should be the banner of the pious Jew. For does Micah not say, **"Love mercy and walk humbly with thy G-d"**?

Of all the sages, storytellers, commentators, Abraham Joshua

There are as many flavors of Rabbis as ice cream at Baskin Robbins. And we each have our preference. That's why there's Tutti Frutti as well as pomegranate ice cream and rabbis who *whisper* from the pulpit and those who *bellow*.

## What a job!

It's the only profession where I'm in favor of an extravagant minimum wage enacted by the Senate.

It's a deserving profession – look at the mix of skills required; politician, CEO, psychiatrist, salesman, scholar. And most important, holiness – goodness must illuminate his soul and shine on every one of his mundane duties here below. The light of kindness must gild the darkest of his managerial duties – like maybe the budget can't afford free holiday seats or the cantor sings like a Jewish parrot or Schleppey Greenberg, in the front row, snores too loudly. **Who's the fixer? The Rabbi.**

The mix and contrast of Jewry's attitude is almost analogous to the Jewish attitude toward Israel. Some Jewish intellectuals – and even the Satmar Chasids – in a strange meeting of minds frown at the founding of Israel – the maintenance of a state for a biblical people like us surely conflicts with our biblical values, they contend. First of all, Jews would return home at the beckoning of the Mosiach, not politicians, say the Satmars. Then, to govern and survive a state, we must lie, we must deceive, and occasionally we must kill. No room whatsoever for humility or Torah values. You might even have to defend yourself on Shabbat or Yom Kippur. Likewise, the rabbi must maintain a worldly pragmatic side if his synagogue is to flourish.

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and their families*



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# Ten Year Old Girls Group with Rebbitsen Racheli Jacks

In this day and age it is so difficult drawing the attention of youngsters and teens, what with all the electronic gadgets and gizmos out there designed to entertain. All the more so when we endeavor to get our children excited about solid family values, steadfast tradition and historical Jewish heritage.

Ten year old girls getting together in a social setting, enjoying activities catered to their age group, all with educational and authentic value – is what we are aiming for.

Creating enthusiasm for and connection to our Jewish roots is the ideal thing to do during the precious year or years leading up to the age of Bat Mitzvah.

This is a new project and our theme for this year is “Jewish Holidays”. Each session includes learning about our rich Jewish festivals, enriched with crafts and activities to make the Jewish holidays come to life and relate to their everyday lives.

We look forward to a great program ahead!

Rebbitsen Racheli Jacks



## MHC's Ten Year old Girls Group

- How can solid family values rival your child's Facebook account?
- The Toorak Shule is starting an exciting group for ten year old girls.
- High-quality social interaction!
- Get-togethers that are fun, educational, and filled with authentic value!
- Foster enthusiasm and a connection to our Jewish roots during the precious years leading up to the age of Bat Mitzvah.
- Our theme for the year is "Jewish Holidays" to be covered over 9 sessions.

### Session Themes and Dates

1. **Introductory session - Sushi Making and "Horah" Dancing!**  
Sunday 7th August, 2011  
10:45am-12:00pm
2. **Rosh Hashanah session (2 weeks before R"H)**  
Sunday 18th September, 2011  
10:45am-12:00pm
3. **Succot session (Monday in the Succah)**  
Monday 17th October, 2011  
6:00pm-7:45pm (includes dinner)
4. **Chanukah session (2 weeks before Chanukah)**  
Sunday 11th December, 2011  
10:45am-12:00pm
5. **Tu B'Shvat (Tuesday, eve of Tu B'Shvat)**  
Tuesday 7th February, 2012  
6:00pm-7:45pm (includes dinner)
6. **Purim session (2 and a half weeks before Purim)**  
Sunday 19th February, 2012  
10:45am-12:00pm
7. **Pesach session (3 weeks before Pesach)**  
Sunday 18th March 2012  
10:45am-12:00pm
8. **Lag Ba'Omer session (Lag Ba'Omer is the following Thursday)**  
Sunday 6th May, 2012  
10:45am-12:00pm
9. **Shavuot session (Shavuot is the following Sunday)**  
Sunday 20th May, 2012  
10:45am-12:00pm

**COST:** MHC Members: \$10 per session or \$60 for all 9 sessions  
Non-Members: \$15 per session or \$130 for all 9 sessions

**VENUE:** The home of Rabbi Jacks, 5 Kensington Road, South Yarra (off Toorak Rd).

**CONTACT:** Rebbitsen Racheli Jacks on 0419 749 227  
or rachel@melbournesynagogue.org.au



Photography Stephen Reynolds



**Fun, Crafts and Activities.**  
**Making Jewish Holidays come to life!**

**At first we were hoping this would be the best Ten Year Old Group ever – by the end we were SURE that we are the BEST Ten Year Old Group ever!**

Our first meeting was “Sushi-Making and Horah Dancing” – the girls used their creativity and kitchen skills to produce beautiful sushi! For the more advanced, we taught them how to make the “inside-out sushi” and we were impressed with what the girls made! Each girl received a Sushi kit so she could make her own Sushi at home... Moms, you can have a break

in the kitchen while your daughters try out their newly acquired skill...

We learned the Horah dance, including variations of the traditional Horah to spice up any Simcha. Now the girls can practice at upcoming Bar Mitzvahs, weddings, or other family celebrations! Each girl received a specially-produced CD with our theme song for the year, entitled **“Let’s Get Ready for Shabbat!”**. Our theme is **“Jewish Holidays”**, and each session takes place shortly before a Jewish Holiday.

There is so much to experience, so much to explore! Understand the Jewish Holidays like never before! **Word of mouth is spreading...** we already have 10 girls signed up for our Rosh Hashanah session! (Sunday, September 18, 10:45am-12:00pm, at the home of Rebbetsin Jacks). Members are welcome to bring their friends along. For enquiries, to sign up, or to be notified before our next event please call Racheli on **0419 749 227** or email to [racheli@melbournesynagogue.org.au](mailto:racheli@melbournesynagogue.org.au)



## Mummy and Me Club – Every 3 weeks on a Thursday Morning

**What do tired Mums, sleepless nights and 10:45 on a Thursday morning have in common?**

**They are all part of the Mummy and Me Club!**

(Hopefully not the sleepless nights part!)

For Mums who just recently had babies, we just started a “Mummy and Me Club” (“Latte Club” is its unofficial name, except that we don’t have

the Latte because our nursing babies do not appreciate that (what we Mums do for our kids!!)

We meet every 3 weeks on a Thursday morning (our first one was launched July 7, 2011).

If you know someone who recently had a baby and can use some friendship, laughter, advice-sharing, a decent brunch (we hold each others’ babies so we could get to eat!!!) and moral support, then call us and join (it’s free of course!)

We will be happy to welcome you and your baby (and if you have a toddler, bring him or her along too!

Most of us have two babies, either twins or “two under two years old”!

To contact us, call Rebbitsin Racheli Jacks on **0419 749 227** (please leave a message!), or by email [racheli@melbournesynagogue.org.au](mailto:racheli@melbournesynagogue.org.au)

And by the way, nursing and nappy-changing are welcome at the “Mummy and Me Club”!

Looking forward to meeting you and your precious little bundle of joy...!!!

*Rebbitsin Racheli Jacks*





# “Who are today’s Chalutzim ?” Israeli Guest Speaker Motti Isaak

**When David Sherr told me that Motti Isaak was coming to town, I thought, well this is going to be interesting.**

A visitor with his wife, Chaviva, from the community of Karnei Shomron, a 15 minute drive from Kfar Saba, and not far from the ancient city of Schem (Nablus), where Abraham entered Eretz Yisrael, and Joseph’s tomb lay.

I say interesting, but maybe I mean controversial, as the word Settlement and Settler has connotations for not only the People of Israel, but for the most powerful man in the world, the President of the United States.

But hang on, when I first learnt Jewish studies as a child,

by correspondence, and then at Mount Scopus, settlements were part of our history from as early as the 1800’s and throughout till statehood.

Our teachers referred to them as the Yishuv and the Jews, who established them, for Zionist and / or, Religious, and / or Socialist reasons, were Chalutzim (Pioneers).

This was something to be proud of in our history. It was a badge of honour to be involved in the establishment of a settlement in the Galil, the Negev or in Gush Etzion.

So, on a cold and rainy Melbourne Monday, 25th July 2011, in front of over 100 people and 30 youth, the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation and Friends of Likud, together with gracious hosts Goldie & Irving Birch, had before us a Danish Oleh from Copenhagen, who in 1968, made Aliyah.

After a few short years, this man took the hard option of moving to a new Yishuv or Settlement, in the Shomron, to join others in

building new communities, as previous generations had done in reclaiming our 4,000 year old Homeland.

Who could deny this Zionist, this Religious grandfather, from reclaiming historical, biblical Israel, where Abraham entered and his offspring lived around 3,900 years prior to the establishment of Tel Aviv in 1909.

For this is from where we were exiled twice.

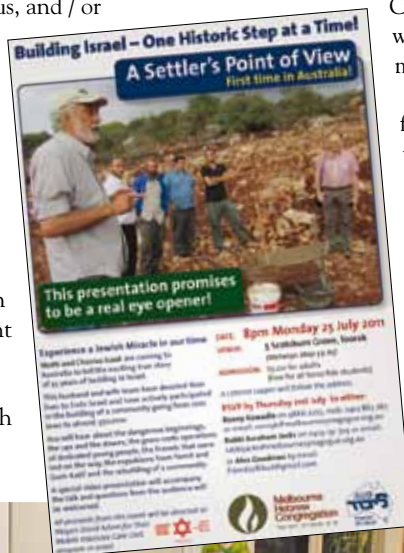
Motti Isaak was a Captain and then a Major (Res) in the IDF, raised 6 children with Chaviva.

Motti Isaak is today’s Chalutz and Karnei Shomron is today’s Yishuv.

*Alex Goodman,  
President Friends  
of Likud.*



*Photography Stephen Reynolds*



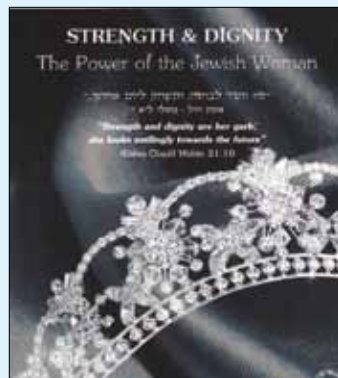


## Celebrating the Power of Woman – A weekend of “Strength and Unity”

I was asked to give a workshop entitled “Enjoying Our Children” at a recent convention. The convention consisted of only women, from all parts of Melbourne, and from all backgrounds and levels of observance. Many women had to organise a series of arrangements in order to attend this Melbourne Jewish Women Convention – be it dinners, car pooling, babysitters, or instructions for the husbands while they would take the weekend off, to be spent in a 5-star Hotel in Geelong.

The guest speaker for the weekend was Sara Esther Crispe, world-renowned orator, and founder of TheJewishWoman.Org. A Jewish feminist and author of many articles, Sara Esther presented a powerful message that **“Woman without...her man...is nothing”**. She asked us to punctuate the sentence. Most people read: Woman without her man, is nothing. However, Sara Esther asked us to read it differently: **“Woman – without her, man is nothing”**.

The women in the room all clapped. I suppose they



appreciated her message of empowerment. She was acknowledging the value of women in today’s society, where women not only raise their children and set the tone in the home, but also have an impact on the outside world.

I met many different types of women; it was a great networking opportunity. Several of the women had ties with the Toorak Shule. One woman’s grandfather had been a past president, another woman had been at a funeral where my husband officiated, some women had been married in our Shule, and many others had attended lectures organised by the Shule.

One woman in particular had attended our most recent Israel lecture at the home of the Birch family, and she was telling me how she had been invited to the lecture through the Likkud party; she was very impressed that the Toorak Shule was involving other organisations such as Likkud and Magen David Adom...

Later, I danced along with this woman... There we all were, women from all walks of life, different ages, some religious and some not, but what brought us together was our role as women, as wives and as mothers. A weekend in unity, from different synagogues, but bound because our Judaism is alive: we want to pass on this Jewish pride to our children and future generations...

On Saturday night we played **“Wave the Flag”**. Each person got 3 flags which we lifted – based on whether we agreed, were unsure, or disagreed with the statements that were presented to us about the **“Power of Woman”**.

Sunday morning there were workshops. The workshop I gave was entitled **“Enjoying Our**

**Children”**, as I mentioned. Other workshops were about **“What to Say– when someone suffers a tragedy”**; **“Living Within Your Budget – And Loving It”**; and **“Appreciating the More Intimate Side of Marriage”**, which was led by a psychologist.

After lunch, there was an auction – but instead of putting in money, we had to “pay” with resolutions of good deeds! If you won the prize you would undertake to keep your resolution – calling a lonely neighbour, helping parents, listening more to our kids...

And then approximately two hundred women packed their bags, inspired and energised to continue our essential role as nurturers and as leaders.

The next Melbourne Jewish Women Conference will take place August 2013. If you are interested in joining me in this unique experience of joy and inspiration for a weekend, let me know... (no rush, it’s in 2 years!)

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# From My Bookshelf

Eric M. Cohen OAM



In the previous issue of "Destiny" my article "What do Books Reveal" appeared. I have quite a few other books of particular interest to me.

I have a set of yomtov prayer books printed in London by L. Alexander, Whitechapel Road just over two hundred years ago.

The Prayer for the Royal Family refers to "our most Gracious Sovereign Lord King George III". The book's leather binding is still in good condition.



COHEN, ISAAC HENRY (1872-1942)

Barrister and politician, always known as Henry Isaac, he was born on 21 February 1872 in Flinders Street, Melbourne, eighth child of David Cohen, outfitter and later financier, and his wife Rachael, née Marks, both of London.

He attended St James' Grammar School, the Melbourne Hebrew School and, from 1885, Scotch College, where he was dux.

A student of Ormond College, University of Melbourne, he graduated B.A. (1894) and LL.B. (1895) with honours, and was admitted to the Bar in April 1896.

On 27 June 1901 at the Office of the Government Statist, Melbourne, he married Ethel Mary Keon of Launceston, Tasmania.

Cohen's career progressed slowly in the depressed 1890s: He taught backward boys at night, mastered shorthand and became a court reporter. However, after a widely reported case in 1906, he began to prosper, building up a large practice in all jurisdictions except the criminal.

He became a King's Counsel in December 1920. He stood for Parliament and at a by-election in May 1921, Cohen succeeded Sir Henry Weedon as a Nationalist member of the Legislative Council for Melbourne Province.

He held many ministries between September 1923 and April 1935 and became first chairman of the parliamentary Public Works Committee. He held the seat until 1937 when redistribution made it a Labor stronghold.

He died in Melbourne in December, 1942.

Author: Barry O. Jones. From *The Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 8, Melbourne University Press*

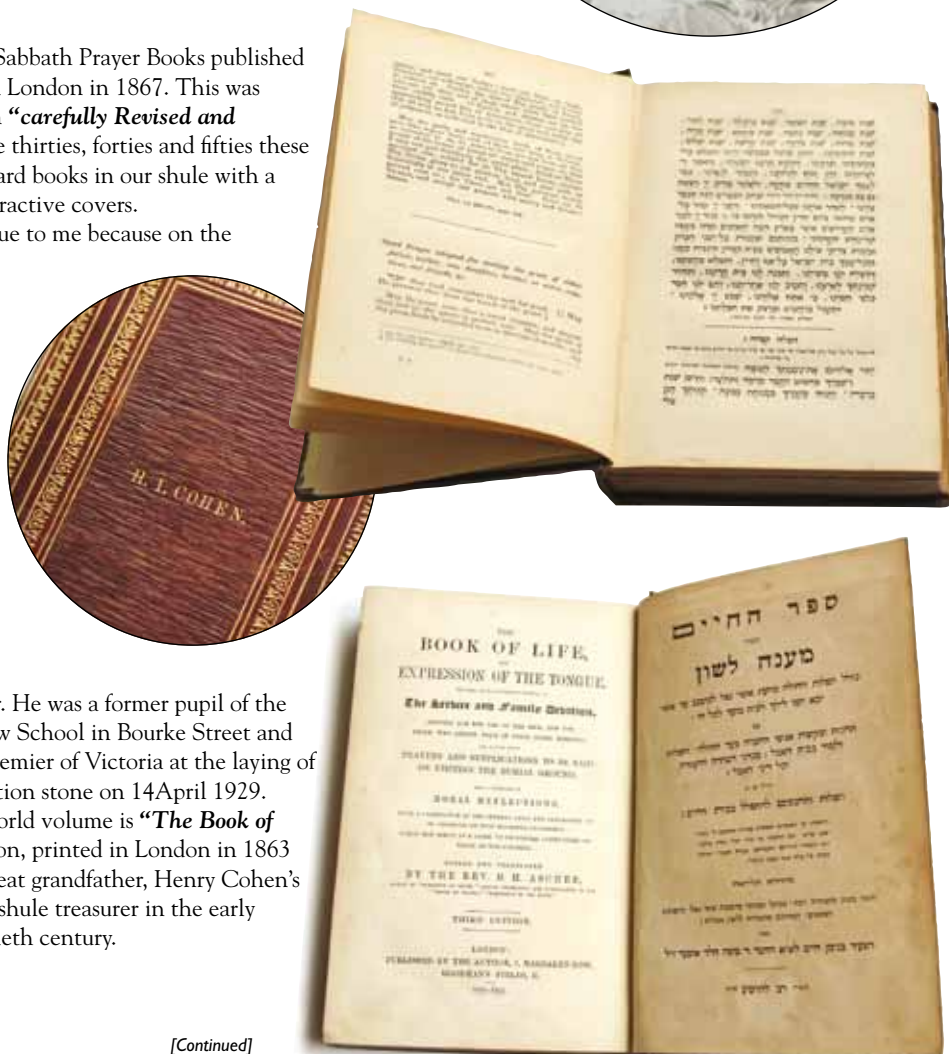
I have a set of Sabbath Prayer Books published by P. Vallentine in London in 1867. This was the second edition "carefully Revised and Corrected." In the thirties, forties and fifties these were almost standard books in our shule with a large variety of attractive covers.

My set is of value to me because on the cover they have "H.I.Cohen" printed in gold.

H.I. Cohen was at one time Attorney General of the State of Victoria (see side panel). On the occasion of my barmitzvah he passed on to me this set. He was a cousin of my great

great grandmother. He was a former pupil of the Melbourne Hebrew School in Bourke Street and represented the Premier of Victoria at the laying of our shule's foundation stone on 14 April 1929.

A rather old-world volume is "The Book of Life" – third edition, printed in London in 1863 and bearing my great grandfather, Henry Cohen's signature. He was shule treasurer in the early years of the twentieth century.



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