

DEATH OF A ZIONIST



Yehudah ben haGalut
Child of the Galut
Essays

Judah A. Kessler

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FIRST EDITION

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To Rabbi Judith Lewis (Rabbi Emerita at Riverdale Temple, New York) with-out whose stoicism, guidance, encouragement and infinite wisdom, patience and guidance I would never, undoubtedly, have had the strength to endure, persevere and continue through a time of darkness, dread and utter futility, to rise up, out of and away from it all to live a fuller, stronger, more fulfilling and rewarding life.

Foreword

Don't be discouraged! There are a lot of Hebrew and Yiddish words, terms and expressions in this text because, well, it's about Jews and many (not all, of course) Jews use them. Why? Well, for many of us, we just do. We grow up hearing them and they're as common to us as, let's say, the expression "Voila!" or "Deja vu" and a multitude of other expressions that English-speakers use and never actually think about.

But, at the end of it all, there is, for your further reading enjoyment (?) an "Appendix-Glossary" with definitions of many if not all of the terminologies used. (So, I might guess that you could use this book as a "Foreign Language Guide" as well as being informative on the topic alone. Two books for the price of one! Such a deal! - You'll forgive me for saying.)

I've often said that, in a general sense, being Jewish is automatically being "bi-lingual" at least: we grow up speaking our native language, "Mother tongue", AND a bit of Hebrew as well. Learning any more languages just becomes part of the routine if, when and where we're able.

In any event, I hope this all helps to better explain much of the political side of Jews and the relationship with a much misaligned and misused term these days: "Zionism". It wasn't originally a negative ideology. But as with much, humanity seems to have made it so... all too often.

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When I approached the “Beth Din”, I was most perplexed. Never before in my life had I ever needed to “prove” that I am a Jew. Although my childhood was predominantly secular, my mother assured that she was a Jew and by matrilineal law, all of her children were Jews as well.

“I cannot tell you what religion you must choose to follow. God is something only your heart can tell you. You’re free to explore other religions, other beliefs, and when you find the one that your heart says is right, you may follow that. But know that no matter what religion you settle into, you will never stop being a Jew.” My mother firmly believed that Jews are a “People” and we are inextricably bound to that People, its history, heritage and traditions.

In my entire lifetime, I never even remotely doubted the word of my mother. Concurrently, I never had to prove that I was, I am, a Jew. Being a Jew was not a collection of papers, documents, records. Being a Jew was having been created from the flesh of my mother, who was a Jew, whose mother was a Jew, whose ancestors were Jews. I lived as a Jew. I thought as a Jew. I learned as a Jew. I existed as a Jew. When asked, I proudly stated “I am a Jew”.

That was proof that I am a Jew. I never doubted it. I never denied it. I never knew myself to be anything other.

When I approached the “Beth Din”, requesting some enigmatic piece of documentation providing some perplexingly tangible evidence of my existence as a Jew, not for one fleeting moment was I ever even slightly uncertain that I would be provided with some silly little “ID” substantiating my history, heritage, tradition, ancestry. I found the very idea of “proof” to be quite insane, however. Abraham, Sarah, Moses , Judah , Rachel, Leah, Isaac, Aaron... Did they carry some form of “Identity Card” with them? I’d never heard of such a thing. Yet, if it was demanded of 21st Century Jews to do so, as my ancestors of Nazi Europe proudly wore their yellow “Magen David”, so too would I proudly carry my “papers” proving my existence as a Jew.

When, after several weeks of waiting for word from the “Beth Din” that my application had been “approved” I instead received a cold, impersonal e-mail informing me that, in the opinion of the members of the “Beth Din” I am not, in fact, a Jew. I was devastated! Not only had my own existence been abolished, but my entire ancestry, history and heritage as well. Not by stroke of pen, but by click of computer, this menagerie of men who knew nothing of my lifetime and who never took the time to learn the intricacies of my existence, unilaterally eliminated not only my present, but my blood-line and my connection to everything I’d ever known to be stable and indestructible!

In essence, by their decree: I ceased to exist!

They, that “Beit Din”, void of all humanity, declared that, if I wished to “BE” a Jew, I would have to “convert”.

Convert? What? How? One cannot “convert” from what one has always been to that which one has only known. One does not “become” something which one already “is”. One cannot “convert” from “White” to “Black” nor even the converse. It was not merely improbable, it was impossible!

When, like a rushing ball of Hell’s fire I was struck by the ultimate consequence of such folly, I felt my soul crushed: At the moment of my “conversion”, I would officially declare the denouncement of my mother, would officially declare her removal from what was her People, would negate her existence as a Jew, and would throw her other children off into something much more horrible than the “Galut”... I, single-handedly, would publicly and officially declare my entire family to be “Goyim”! Just as this “Beth Din” disposed of me, I would be equally guilty of throwing the souls of the Jews who are my ancestral foundation into a void, an abyss, larger and deeper than “sheol”!

I actually wanted my next breath to be my last. I could NOT even imagine doing what was instructed and I could NOT accept the reality of the situation.

I turned to the only solace I knew, or had ever known: synagogue. A “Reform” temple, but, nonetheless, a place of gathering and worship of Jews... the only “mishpacha” (family) I’d ever truly known.

With head covered by my kippa, I sat, front row, as close to the Ark as possible, hoping that “God” would hear me better, considering my proximity to His Torah scroll. I sobbed. I trembled. I pleaded. I needed explanation, direction, comfort, protection, solace. I needed assurance that “God” still held me as His child, a generation of Abraham, a child of my mother who revered Him, a Jew. I had, at that moment, no one else to turn to and no where else to go.

Even at that moment, I found myself, formerly a Traditional Conservative, in the house of Reform worship. I pleaded to God as a Conservative Jew in the “temple” of Reform Jews all the while bombarded by the words of a “Beth Din” who declared that I had no right to either.

Now I wondered: Did God hear me? Was God listening? Or was God, like that “Beit Din”, looking for ways to sweep me out, denouncing, denying, disposing of me? Was I where I didn’t belong? Was I in a place, amongst a People, “posing”? Did God think me an “intruder”? I’d gone beyond devastation. I was beyond “Galut”. In my despair, I began to cease to exist. Even my soul lost all traces.

Even today, as I compose these thoughts, I'm uncertain where I found the strength to persevere. But I grew defiant, indignant, independent. I had the courage and fortitude of my mother and I would NEVER allow a bungling bunch of inhuman and inhumane strangers to eliminate the great existence of the great, caring, loving, compassionate, intelligent Jew who was my mother! They would never do this. I would never allow them to.

I left that sanctuary that day, angry, embittered, but defiant and determined. I would not only disprove them, that "Beth Din", but I would perpetuate, somehow, my mother's honour. For the moment, they may well have taken me off-guard, but they would never, not now, not ever, eradicate my mother!

What followed in the weeks after was the answer to each and every one of my questions. Yes, assuredly, God DID see me, and God DID hear me, and God DID provide me with comfort, support, consolation and solace.

In the words of the Rabbi at that Temple was all that my battered soul required for strength and recovery. In the assuring tones of a learned, knowledgeable, intelligent, compassionate and astounding wisdom-filled voice was the essential, integral "chuppah" under which I could rest, recuperate and heal.

“I have no doubt that you are a Jew.”

“You have no doubt that you are a Jew.”

“You probably know more about being a Jew than most typical Jews today.”

“You’ve obviously lived your life as a Jew.”

And then came the most decisive, most important statement:

“Don’t let them do this to you.”

There was the crux of all of it. I was letting them do this to me. Worse yet, I was letting them do this to my mother! I was allowing them to erase and eradicate everything! I was permitting them to dictate the sentence of my elimination!

At that very moment, it all came to a spiritually palpable and violent halt.

Here was the Truth. Here was the fact. Here was the assurance that God not only heard me, listened to me, felt my pain, empathized with my agony, but gave me the answers, the solution that only God could give.

Today, it’s almost a year later. I’ve moved on-ward from my days in that Reform congregation and returned not only to my Traditional Conservative life but have gone deeper into the wonders and magnificent embrace of what was, and is, MY ancestry, tradition, heritage and identity as a Jew. I daven, I shuckle, I don’t merely attend but participate in shacharit, mincha and ma'ariv. I

recite brachot. I've rejoiced at Simchat Torah and I've wept at Yom Kippur. I live mitzvot. I know that out of 613, I can truly follow only some 463 and must work on 28. I am not "perfect". But there is one thing that I am... again... undeniably, incontrovertibly and assuredly... I am a Jew!

I still don't have an ID card, suitable for wallet. I do have a "Teudat Gerut", presented to me by that Rabbi who saved a "Jewish Soul" from destruction. It symbolises not a "conversion" into Judaism, but a "conversion" from intellectual void and darkness into an enlightenment and the knowledge that my identity and existence as a Jew can NEVER be eradicated and that the "proof" is in my spirit... just as it was in the spirit of my ancestors: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, et al... including... my Mother, of most blessed memory.

Prologue

These essays do not, in any manner, espouse the dissolution of either the Chief Rabbinate of Israel nor the Beth Din. To be without either or both would certainly diminish the particular uniqueness of the Jewish People.

However, a point in fact, worthy of much attention, is the current absence of a Sanhedrin without which, Jews have managed to survive, continue to exist and remain Jews. If Jews are strong enough to thrive without a Temple and Sanhedrin, why couldn't we survive without a Chief Rabbinate and/or Beth Din? In fact, many Jews have never approached a Sanhedrin, Chief Rabbi or Beth Din and have other-wise successfully survived as Jews.

It is not for the purpose of suggesting the elimination of these governing positions that these essays appear. Rather, it is, most definitely, to make particularly clear, a sorely necessary move into the global 21st Century on the parts of both, the Chief Rabbinate and the Beth Din.

When the Chief Rabbi of Israel, currently Sephardic, can manage to strip away the Halachic authorities of the Ashkenazic representative in the Chief Rabbinate, this surely presents a grave situation which requires immediate rectification and repair. When the affiliation of one is allowed to

trump another, all Jews, eventually suffer from a blatant imbalance of government authority and intelligence. When a 59-year old immigrant to Israel is allowed to over-throw the authority of a 54-year old Sabra, (born and raised in Israel), this calls for particular scrutiny ,investigation, rectification. And when the aforementioned is allowed to unilaterally nullify Jews world-wide – to suddenly declare some conversions non-Kasher and void – to deny ANY Jew a rightful place in a state supported in great part by Jews world-wide, Jews of ALL affiliations/denominations – this can only be viewed as another atrocity committed against all Jews – another Holocaust. And, as with previous atrocities, this must cease, and cease immediately before more Jews are disenfranchised and sent to death in exile (Galut) with no identity.

When a Beth Din, governed by the dictates of a Chief Rabbi such as the aforementioned, can, in a matter of mere seconds, destroy and erase entire Jewish generations by mere decision, can expel Jews into the realms of non-Jews with no regard of human dignity, a cry must be heard, an abomination must be put right.

In these days of this common 21st Century, there are Jews who have survived onslaughts, attacks, genocides. There exists today, generations of those Jews who possess their ancient identities only through oral records of family histories. Today, there are Jews who have, in spite of odds, managed

to nurture, with-in their heart and soul, that which provided the strength, the courage, the endurance, the survival of the ancestors without the formality and privilege of documentation. As of this moment in time, there are Jews whose whole written history fell prey to and was destroyed by those who sought to destroy all Jews, every-where, through-out history. For the most part, it is this faction of world Jewry that finds itself the victim of methodical elimination. Additionally, there are those who have, perhaps for lengths of years and generations, known themselves to be Jews who are finding that, based upon whim and wont of archaic unilateral decision, are systematically being rejected, their conversion being nullified, that they are no longer “Jews”!

The ramifications are endless. Nullify a Jew today and entire families become null and void within the “Family” of Jews, histories are eliminated.

It is in response to this atrocity that these essays have been written. The time to cease the abomination must now be at hand.

Book I – The New Jew

Many years ago, the common calendar brought us into the 21st Century and more recently, the Jewish calendar brought us into the year 5767.

Technologies have continued to change, political views and alliances have shifted, national borders have been drawn and re-drawn, new nations have been born, old nations have died. Through all of this change, this passing of time, we, the Jewish People have succeeded in surviving... in one way or another. The People of the kingdom of Judah thrive, mostly in the Diaspora, as the People of the original kingdom of Israel have been long-ago relegated to the history of our Torah scrolls. We recall, we remember, we never forget... or do we?

The “People of Israel”, the “Israelites” of our ancestry, suddenly ceased to “be” in our ancient history. Amalgamated and assimilated into the land of Judah, the once autonomous tribe relinquished their identity to become Judean. Those Judeans, comprised of disparate elements, became, over time, “Jews”. They did not become “Israelites” any more than all Jews became “Israelis”. But the nation that survived and evolved, retained not only the basic concepts and content of a common religion, but maintained and developed rich traditions that identify us, the Jews, as a distinct People among the nations of our world.

In very recent times, claims have been made by those who previously would not likely be viewed as “Jewish”, to some direct lineage to “newly discovered” tribes of Judean ancestry. From India to Ethiopia, “New Jews” are sprouting like desert flowers after a sudden and unexpected rain. Yet, from whence come the claimed lost tribes, many established Jews know not. The tribal kings are not part of common Jewish nomenclature, but somehow, someone manages to tie the ancient to the contemporary and much like the ill-begotten child in a nunnery, the “New Jew” is nurtured, grows and becomes a “Jew”. Whether the established Jew of global proportions accepts the “New Jew” or not is irrelevant and immaterial. What is of titanic and tantamount import is the fact that, for purposes of contemporary Israeli law of “Return”, that legislature which warmly welcomes those in the Diaspora “back to their Home-land” (Israel), the “New Jew” is afforded all the assistance and provided all the comforts and luxuries the coffers of the Knesset can dole out. Transport, housing, health care, employment, language studies, financial subsidies – the package and parcel – all neatly placed in the open arms of theses who have just recently discovered some long-elusive, or perhaps magically manufactured direct link to the ancient “People-Judean”. In the 60-plus years of the existence of our “New Israel” – not to be confused with that kingdom, tribe, land of Torah in which resided the “Israelites” and not the “Israeli” – the complexion of the “Israeli” has changed. Like the

colour, shade and hue of desert flowers, so too number the diversities of the faces of the State of today's Israel.

On the surface, this acceptance of the "New Jew" can easily be looked-upon as a politically correct and divinely inspired application of the ancient decree: "Let the stranger in your midst be to you as the native for you were strangers in the land of Egypt". Israel warmly accepts the arrival of the "New Jew" and indeed, bestows upon each, those gifts and blessings of the "native"... native Israeli, native "Jew". With astounding immediacy, the "New Jew" becomes the Jew of ancient history, is absorbed into Jewish culture and society and becomes... Jew.

Knesset, Chief Rabbinate, Beth Din... across the board and gamut, the "New Jew" received acceptance and a resounding "Baruch Haba" – Welcome Home!

Meanwhile, in less obscure reaches of humanity, the established "Old World Jew" is, under cover of ignorance and lack of press, being pushed down, squeezed out, dejected, ejected, and rejected. The surviving generations of predominantly Ashkenazic Jews are increasingly being regarded as some waste product of Jewish history. The contemporary generations who are the products of survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, the reigns of Soviet terror, those who have kept the traditions, the beliefs, the

core values of Jews alive in spite of the attempts at annihilation and, as it was in the times of our nomadic ancestors as recorded now in our Torah, by means no greater than “Oral Tradition”, these stoic souls are being brought to the precarious brink of extinction. These Jews are being punished for being survivors, for, perhaps, being reminders of an atrocious past. Worst of all, the punishments now being meted out are coming not from familiar anti-Semites, but from Jews! Jews of political positions of clout and power. These old generations, these survivors, are being scrutinized to death by the “Ultra-Orthodoxy” and the “Chief Rabbinate” of Israel. These “survivors of survivors” are being shifted from a Diaspora, off into a full “Galut”! As if our observances of our traditions, our religion and the fact that we have managed, against all odds, to hold fast to those values which make us Jews is of no consequence, those who hold themselves in greater esteem and import, are brutally negating not only a right to a place with-in global Jewry, but are, unilaterally, abolishing our existence completely. Sadder still is the fact that there is no voice being raised to halt this atrocity. Like silent lambs to the slaughter, like our ancestors to the Holocaust, the majority of Jews are being stripped of our identity, removed from our very Jewish existence and relegated into some obscurity.

It has been estimated that what is classified as the “Orthodoxy” in global Jewry constitutes a mere ten per-cent of all Jews. The vast majority of this

relative minority is far removed from the realities that are contemporary society – secular and religious. These “Orthodox” Jews and those factions of which the “Orthodoxy” is comprised exist apart from general society and, in great part, refuse to participate in Creation as a whole. They create ghettos – much like those that were forced upon many of our ancestors, against which many rebelled – in which they dwell and often work. They notoriously neither invite the out-side world in nor accept invitations to participate with the world outside their own. In short, their sense and concepts of a “reality” is almost (if not actually) completely of their own fabrication. In order to maintain their own, their reality, their world and their existence, they dwell, marry, procreate, exist only with-in. Of frightening certainty, it is from this faction of Jewry that the Jewish law courts and Israeli government come. This is the body-politic which controls issues regarding “halacha”, the ultimate point of reference for all matter of Jewish life – in fact, Jewish existence.

Enigmatically, these are the very same who rule to accept the “New Jew” by perhaps manipulating “halachic” references or simply on their own terms. It is the decisions and decrees of these that have changed not only the faces of Israeli society but have changed the face of Israel over the years. Yet, these are those who will, simultaneously by stroke of pen or utterance of word, eradicate the identity and entire Jewish history of the “Old World Jew”

who has, perhaps for generations, other-wise managed to preserve a rich tradition, founded firmly in true Jewish culture, carried in heart and soul and passed through time, from time almost unmemorable.

Today's Jew, child of the children of survivors of onslaughts, recorded and some unrecorded, precariously teeters on the very brink of complete obscurity. As the words and teachings of matrilineal heritage are inconsiderately nullified due to the lack or absence of some visible, palpable record of one's incontrovertible connection to or with an ancestor of Biblical proportions, some matter, pleasing to the archaic minority which has mystifyingly taken control of all words officially Jewish, an ever-increasing number of Jews, mostly Ashkenazic and considerably of the Conservative and Reform denominations become, in essence, invalidated, vitiated, annihilated, obliterated. Those who do not, have not and will not appease the minorities – not unlike as with the pagan gods of ancient mankind – in all manners possible, those who will not placate the aggressive tyrants who hold destinies in their clenched fists will, with no doubt, one day find themselves no longer even remotely associated with the comforts, the consolations, the essence of “being” which had been the maternal endowment of one's Jewish soul.

Like a soldier court-martialed, a traitor exiled... fail to provide that which is demanded, fail to possess

that which is accepted and fail to continue existing. Of mystic proportion is the fact that, in a flash, someone who has never been suspected of having or expected to have ever had any connection to anything even remotely Jewish can somehow sway today's Sephardic Chief Rabbinate into believing (or permitting to be believed) that a "claim" to Jewish ancestry is valid and sufficient to make one worthy of the inheritance of Israel. These "New Jews" continue to astound those of a rational sensibility with their abilities to create Jews where previously there were none, whilst ensuring that multi-generational Jews are programmatically abrogated.

If these "New Jews" do maintain an Orthodoxy with-in the traditional realm of life-Judaic, time alone will prove their good testaments and testimonies. Should they fail, or their motives be ulterior, the best that can be hoped for is that the light of a truth sad as this may shine long before the current tyranny has put all other Jews so far into obscurity that tracing and reviving what is, today an Ashkenazic beauty, is completely removed and lost in an abysmal eternity.

Book II.1

It was pre-dawn, that one moment when the earth and sky are all the same deep blue-black, one indistinguishable from the other. Off in the great distance, a fine thread of orange-red snapped a horizontal line – it alone worked the wonder, re-created the production of God, separated the earth from the heavens above. It was a sight of beauty. It was the commencement of a new day, a day as fresh as the very first.

While Opa prepared himself and home for the necessities of this day to come, the sun rose slowly, widening the thread of light on the dark horizon. Earth below, the band of crimson broadened, the heavens distinguished themselves, the sky blazed and the house filled with light, flooded with a red glow that poured relentlessly through every window.

Although this particular day was new, the routine was old. The dawn was fresh, but the duties, the chores were old, familiar, comfortable, common. The machinations rolled along as usual, as they had on so many new days before this one. There was no indication, no way of knowing that this was to be the last of such days. There was no indication, no clue, no warning of the changes to life that lurked in the long, dark cast shadows on the earth outside and through the house within.

This is how it began. Softly, sweetly, innocently, at the silent dawning of a new day – the dawning of the last day. On this morning, Opa woke and as Oma cooked breakfast, they discussed the day to come in the peace of the early morning... neither knowing or even remotely suspecting that new days, for the rest of their lives, would never again be like this one. But this is how it began...

The Depression came, rolled over the country like a dark, heavy, suffocating blanket. What very little was saved was worth nothing. In the bleakness of struggle and hardship came the roar of storming boots and rough hands throwing open the doors of tyranny and terror. Then, at a moment's notice, like a crack of thunder pealing across a new blood-red sky came the order: RUN! While you can, if you have any desire to survive, to take another breath... GO! The Nazis had control, a world war was raging, chaos ruled and the Jews were being held responsible for all trials and tribulations across Europe... and the world.

There was no time to think. Time had become a luxury, fit only for the fair of hair, the fair of skin, the fair of eye. Time was a gift bestowed upon... the Gentile. As it was stolen from the Jew, time was lavished on the rest of the population. As means of survival – money, business, food, shelter – were pillaged from the Jews, they were dispensed and dispersed to the others... to the specifically non-Jews. No, there was no time to think – there was

barely time to move, to run, to go. There was the duration of a heart-beat and in that moment lied the escape.

Breakfast on the table, fire on the stove, cows in the barn, horses in the field, chickens in the yard – a shirt and sweater in a bag, a mouthful of the last meal of home – they didn't lock the door behind them, didn't bother to take the key. What was left behind could be replaced. What they held on to... each other... was rare, was special, was all they wanted, was all they needed. Out the door, into the day, off and away from that bleeding horizon and into the world, clinging only to each other and their own Hopes, they ran. For dear and precious life... they RAN!

Book II.2

It was pre-dawn, that one moment when the earth and sky are all the same deep blue-black, one indistinguishable from the other. Off in the great distance, a fine thread of orange-red snapped a horizontal line – it alone worked the wonder, re-created the production of God, separated the earth from the heavens above. It was, however, a different and unfamiliar horizon that appeared as the sun rose higher, washing this world with the light of another day.

Today there was no farm-land rolling far and away into the distance. There was no open heaven above. The tiny villages of home were no-where to be found and there was no peace. Outside these new windows was a cacophony of sounds. The bucolic pastures and rows of crops were replaced by throngs of people, completely unfamiliar faces, rushing bodies moving in all directions. From the strangers' mouths spewed the dissonant tones of languages loud and senseless. From the pavement below came the droning of motor-vehicles – a constant roar of deafening machinery.

Europe was gone... off beyond that horizon blocked by the stone and brick of the high-rises of this new world's city. As the chaotic din of New York rumbled here, the pounding programmatic showers of the bombs of war were obliterating all evidence of what would hence-forth become the

“Old World”. As the smokes of engines and oil burners and boilers rose in the still airs of New York and filled the nostrils with their acrid soots, across that ocean which my ancestors had journeyed to their escape, smoke and cinders, soot of a different composition rose to darken the sky and block the life-giving light of the sun. There, in what was “home”, nostrils drew into the lungs of those who still breathed, the fine ashen remains of neighbours, friends... family. Europe was engaged in an effort to rid itself – and the world – of the hideous Jew. The Nazis were systematically mingling the dust from whence mankind had come with the dust from which men had built their houses. The land once made fertile by the waters of Spring and Summer rains, the melting Alpine snows, was now being soaked with the blood of those who had toiled for generations in the land which they knew as their “Homeland”. The remaining Jews were being turned to soot and the earth was muddied with their blood.

Oma and Opa were a life-time away in a “New World” to which they had escaped. The atrocious tortures of the Homeland were off in the distance, well beyond their sight. But even as Oma prepared a new breakfast, on a different stove, and Opa prepared for the necessities of a new day in a new land, out there, outside the window in the droning din of this “New World”, a birth was taking place. The off-spring of the hellishness across the sea was breathing the air of freedom in America.

Like a stow-away seed hidden in the cuff of a European trouser, undetected by the over-wrought civil servants at Ellis Island, the seed of “Jew hatred”, anti-Semitism, “anti-Germanism” sailed effortlessly and silently into the New York harbour, lodged in the hearts of the unsuspected. Like a non-native species of plant or animal, this plague, having no real deterrent yet, came to life on the shores of “the land of the free” and soon spread “from sea to shining sea”. The unadulterated hatred, founded in the darkness of stupidity, ignorance and arrogance soon established not only itself but its off-shoots and off-spring here in the land in which the Jews of Europe desperately sought refuge – and life.

No-where did this evil presence bear its razor-sharp claws and teeth more than on the portals and windows of the new home that Opa had provided for his loving wife and their children. No-where did this blood-thirsty hatred plant its victory flag deeper and more solidly than on the façade of the small business that Opa had produced in order to provide for his family.

Opa gathered the bucket, the brush, the soap and rags. He filled the bucket with hot water and soap. At the front door of the house, he began to scrub. The run-off water turned a milky red as paints mixed and dissolved into the solution. This door done, he put his supplies together, bade goodbye to his wife and children and departed from his home

– enveloped in a sense of some anxiety – to the address of his little restaurant. There, again, Opa filled the bucket with hot water and soap and at the front door of the restaurant, he began to scrub. Again, the run-off turned red as paint and soapy water mingled... Another solution... Another “final solution”. On another morning of another day in America, another red swastika was removed, another bold reminder that these people, these Germans, these Jews hadn’t “escaped”, they’d only relocated to a place where they only stood a chance of surviving, a chance perhaps a bit better than if they’d remained at “Home” in the land into which they’d been born.

The anit-Semitism had followed them. Here, as in that Homeland not so far removed, they were being held responsible for the down-fall of nations, the destruction of values and ethics, the loss of lives through wars of human history, and here, and now, as American boys went off to battle on Europe’s soil, these People, my own ancestors, were being held responsible not only for the European atrocities, but for the deaths of the American youth as well!

Now it became obvious: Survival was completely contingent upon complete assimilation. If this family was to even hope for the next breath of life, all evidence of anything “different from American” must be shed, dissolved, obliterated. From now and through death, there would be nothing outwardly

or noticeably “German” or “Jewish”. Anne Frank hid and survived in an attic, but here, in this family, in this home, there would be no attic. The garments of the “Old World” would be brought to ashes and would be gone. The only remaining bastions of “German” and “Jew” would take the qualities of ancient traditions. Any traces of history, tradition, ancestry, previous existences, were relegated to the “Oral Traditions”. Only in absolute privacy, behind tightly closed doors and secured windows would any of the past be momentarily brought to life. Even then, what would be handed-down, passed along would be brief, succinct, and minute.

As the Nazis in Europe killed-off their Jews, the anti-Semites of America made their efforts of support. Although outwardly, on the surface, the people of European Jewry continued to live, not as Europeans or Jews but as some breed of “American”, Jewish souls were ruthlessly attacked until most of them disintegrated. Jewish souls in America rose up into the skies, joined their dead brethren from the European ovens and disappeared from sight into the great ether of eternal oblivion.

Out of this, as like the miracles recorded in the history of the Bible and its many manifestation, has risen some very new and rather unique souls. Up from, out of and in spite of the ashes of countless holocausts and attempted genocides, mornings of the 21st Century break, shedding light upon the

children of the children of Jewish history. Here, in the “Galut”, in the Diaspora, in the Exile, to what should be the amazement of all humanity, are the often disenfranchised survivors of timelessness.

As testimony to this existence, this life, this being, stands this work, this documentation of a spirit, a soul, as body... a person... a Jew! Deep with-in the essence of this Jew are the voices of those who escaped the nightmares of wars. Here, in the heart of this Jew are the living remnants of those who were skilful and resourceful enough to continue their existence, to continue their lineage. In the soul of this Jew are the words of the “Oral Traditions” of the Jews of the “Old World”.

Against the odds, in resistance to the efforts of history, a German-Jew, American born, breathes the air, now cleansed of his ancestry, sent to the heavens as soot. A German-Jew carries, deep, deep with-in his soul, the memories of those voices that managed to traverse vast open seas and not only escape slaughter in Europe, but survive the continued attacks on the grounds of land that they had hoped to be their “sanctuary”, their reprieve, their respite. Not merely some cheap bronze plaque, mechanically inscribed with some obscure name, nor some stone carving resemblance of some one or no one in particular; flesh and blood recall and recount, record and remember, reserve and remind.

Today, the Ashkenzic Jew serves as a brilliant testament to the resilience of the “People Judaic” of Europe. With little – and often no – physically recorded and/or documented evidence to the past, this 21st Century Jew maintains a history and heritage carried through the years on nothing more than a voice – a whisper on a breeze. Like the very earliest of Jewish ancestry, these Jews live on little more than the “Oral Traditions” which are richly preserved in memory, in heart, in soul. Although the conveyance of word changes, the voice, the body, the person, the word of what makes a Jew a Jew has survived in spite of repeated efforts to silence it. In spite of historical assimilation of ancestors, because of the assimilation of ancestors, the 21st Century Ashkenazic Jew is living proof of the strength and endurance and resilience of a remarkably great Jewish People. Although superficially, the past of today’s Jew blends completely into secular history, the very core, the absolute essence of all history-Jewish survives, continues, burns brightly with purely divine light in every fibre, in every cell of a Jew who carries through life, all that makes him a “Jew”.

Book II.3

It is pre-dawn, that moment when the earth and sky are the same deep blue-black. Off in the distance, a fine thread of orange-red snaps a horizontal line. The line now does not broaden into the dawning of a new day. Instead, the silent blood-stained line becomes a snare, like wire, and with undetectable rapidity, snaps at, across and through the throat of a German-Jew. In its wake, the physical body of the victim remains visually intact. No painful shriek, no spewing blood-shed, not even an indication of the white-hot razor-thin severance which has occurred. The presence of the German-Jew remains, for all intent and purpose, intact... completely intact.

Ah, but unseen and undetected, the life-line to a Jew's vibrant history, a Jew's connection to a Jew's very essence of existence has been quickly and silently severed. As the world sits calmly watching, the soul of the Jew is painfully passing, excruciatingly expiring, distinctly disappearing – fading into oblivion. Now, this time, there is nothing that can be done to save this Jewish soul. The attack, this time, comes not in the manner of guns, bombs, bullets. The enemy is not from without, and there is no place of sanctuary to run to, no place of hiding, no chance for survival. Unlike the attacks of history, this contemporary annihilation of the Jew originate from the Jews!

Within recent years, with the establishment and growth of the State of Israel, a “government” of sorts has been granted the authority to decide, unilaterally, and dictate who is and who is not, in the scheme of things-global... a Jew. To the great chagrin of all too many, due, in part to a terrible imbalance in the State of Israel in quantity of Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews, the Sephardim have managed to obtain a position of tyrannical authority over every Jew in Creation. Due to some as yet unexplained and indescribable farce, the truly right-wing, ultra-conservative, ultra-Orthodox, long removed from tangible realities of contemporary life and existence have been afforded the power to ultimately proclaim and denounce the authenticity of each and every Jew world-wide. The ramifications of this century’s folly, this pustule in the history of Jewish-kind, has been little – if not nothing –short of yet another assault, another abomination, another Holocaust.

Jews of conversions in the Conservative and Reform movements are suddenly finding themselves rejected out-right. In spite of having lived as good, up-standing Jews in every manner, perhaps for many years, many generations, these people are informed that their status amongst the People-Judaic has been negated. Simply put, they are not Jews. Where children and even grandchildren are concerned, here too, these offspring are relegated to the “non-Jew” status. What they “ARE” is yet unclear. What is clear, in the eyes

of the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel and his Orthodox cronies and lackeys in the global realm of deluded Orthodoxy is that these people simple are NOT Jews and, as such, they simply cease to exist. Not Jewish? Not a concern. Not Jewish? Non-existent.

Now we focus on Oma and Opa who, in their flight toward survival on that fateful morning in Europe, left behind not only the material furnishings of home but collections of documents and documentation of traditions and lineage “Jewish”. Certificates suitable for framing or being pressed into Bibles, were left behind, scattered about Europe at the hands of invading forces or allies. As “Old World” homes met with destruction, as synagogues burned and crumbled to the ground in piles of dust and rubble, so too went the finely lettered and often ornate parchments of record. Up in smoke – down in flames went entire family histories... entire connections to Jewish family and Jewish history.

The Jews of Germany, France, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Russia and other nations lost their Jewish “identity papers” to the wars, to the invaders, to the revolutions and destruction. In the immediacy of flight for survival, “papers” necessary for escape were of greater import than “papers” to decorate or document events which, in the minds and hearts of these Jews, would never be forgotten. Exact dates and times might, in time, become faded

and blurred. But the fact that marriages, deaths, burials and births occurred would remain fixed and steady-fast.

“Insufficient” declares today’s Rabbinical Council, Beth Din, Orthodox Sephardic Chief Rabbi. As the survivors of the survivors come forward through the new millennium to take their birth-right amongst and amidst the global “Family-Jewish”, as more and more find in their Jewish hearts and Jewish souls the desire to migrate to the land promised to all Jews by the God of Abraham and Moses, as Jews of the “Conservative” and “Reform” movements want to enroll their children (survivors of survivors of survivors) in reputable and established Jewish schools of Jewish learning, at ever-increasing rates these “Jews” are learning that they have none of the “rights”, none of the affiliation, none of the history they’d lived with through generations.

Nullified, negated and as easily as Nazi incendiary devices obliterated the paper trails of their stoic surviving relatives, many – all too many – of today’s Jews are crisply, coldly, flatly and inconsiderately eliminated and extradited, and other-wise removed, not only from their immediate Jewish and extended families of Temples, schuls and synagogues, but from the entire global census of Jews. Regardless of any adherence to any traditions or commandments, any practices and observances, or any connections

to or with anything Jewish at all, by swipe of pen or word of mouth, the generations of mostly Ashkenazic Jews are vaporized, eliminated.

Book II.4

In the Nazi Holocaust, Jews were killed in gas chambers or shot. Remains were buried in mass graves or cremated in massive ovens – the remains of the cremated were buried or some-how returned to the earth from whence mankind comes.

In the Rabbinical Holocaust of this century, Jews are not killed out-right. There are no gas chambers, gun shots, crematorium. There are no gallows, no crucifixions. All too simply, these Rabbis who insist upon humane killing of animals whose meat they consume, simply wipe Jews of whom they disapprove completely out of existence. Worse is not that these Jews no longer exist... this Rabbinate ensures that these Jews never existed at all throughout history!

It is post-dawn, that moment when the earth and sky are separate, very visible entities, when the differences between heavens and earth are obvious, when the world should be awake and aware. It is a time when Jews should know that Jews should cooperate with Jews. It is a day when Jews should accept Jews with their diversities of opinions. It is a day when the facts and realities of five thousand years of disenfranchisement must be intelligently acknowledged and accepted. It is time to restore the dignity of the ancestors who fought to live and survive.

In a time when the Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Israel can be striped of halachic authority simply at the whim of the Sephardic Chief Rabbi, it is a day when Jews of global proportions must wake up, to recognize the importance of the Ahkenazic Jew with-in the entirety of World Jewry. It is more than time to return the dignity to those Jews from whom status and place in the “Family-Judaic” has been abolished.

At a time in human history when mankind can be proud of ridding tyrannical megalomaniacal dictators, it is now the responsibility of every Jew – Orthodox, Conservative, Reform – to accept the birth-right of our ancestors who strove and suffered so that we may exist and take our rightful places, side by side, give honour to those ancestors and to take our own places.

Book III.1

With-in the realm of Jewish life, Jewish living, there exists a 2-word phrase, a concept, worthy of Talmudic reference. As with much Jewish thought and teaching, it deals with, amongst other points, “Dignity”... human dignity... a person’s dignity. The inextricable quality dearest to all human beings. Indeed, damage or deny one’s dignity and it may not be unlike the taking of one’s life. Dignity is not merely a matter of pride. It runs deeper – much deeper – than the superficial. It is, to a great extent, the very core of human existence – human life, a most integral element, necessary to and responsible for the continuation of an individual’s existence. Strip away human dignity and most often, the will to live, the drive to exist, fades, resulting in depression, a bleak, morose lethargy... a loss of spirit, a loss of soul, loss of appetite and disassociation from even the basic, mundane routines of daily existence. Remove dignity from the basic equation of living and the result can, with great certainty, be death – spiritual and physical.

In Talmudic reference, there is “KVOD HABRIOT”. It is explained as “Respect for people. A ground for halachic decision in a number of areas. With regard to relaxing certain Rabbinic restrictions in circumstances where their fulfilment would cause an infringement on a person’s dignity.”

In contemporary Rabbinic decision-making, it

appears that this “Kvod Habriot” has been conveniently relegated to obscurity where the dignity of many Jews of today is concerned...

Book III.2

Contemporary Jews, educated Jews, enlightened Jews are no longer the children of our nomadic and oft-times enslaved fore-fathers whom, in time-Biblical, wandered about vast tracts of desert lands relying on the hospitality of strangers, in strange nations of strange customs. With science and exploration, with the diversities of the Diaspora, the developments of better understanding of the human psyche, with the ability to acculturate, Jews now are comprised of any number of associations, affiliations, cultures, realms, belief systems. In no way has any of this development mitigated or lessened the core values of any real Jew. It is not that the Jew has denounced that which makes him/her specifically “Judaic”, rather, knowledge, learning, enlightenment have become incorporated into those facets of life which make us “Jews”. We, as a People, have through-out our entire history, from Torah to encyclopedic documentation, sought, with great desire, all manner of education. We have, for the most part, searched for the deeper meaning, the better and best defining qualities, the answers and solutions to even that which might appear to others as petty, minute or irrelevant. The answers and solution, the information found, becomes a part, another facet of all that sets us apart from many other People – that makes us “Jews”. It brings us closer to understanding – comprehending – our world as it is comprised of such diversities in all aspects of Creation.

This extended learning, this continuing education has, over the life-time and life-line of the Jew, brought about the birth of numerous factions and denominations of Jews. From the Hebrews of Abraham and Moses, through the Israelites of Jacob and the Judeans of Judah, the evolution of our People now consists of such congregations as “Ultra-Orthodox”, “Orthodox”, “Conservative”, “Reform” and “Reconstructionist”. Very much like a tree, from the main trunk sprout many branches, and from each branch, more and more branches again until what was once a single, frail, pale sprout pushing up and through the cold darkness of Earth’s soil, a strong, lush, full, vibrant, living, growing, awe-inspiring life is formed. The branches spread out in different directions, providing a canopy over-head. The boughs provide places into which shelters can be built. Even the tree, as a whole, provides a shelter from sun and rain under its many branches. Through the season, the tree’s shape changes as it grows, its leaves may change colour, it bears flowers and fruit. But, undeniably, this “tree”, even in its many manifestations, never ceases to be a “tree”. Even when its type changes, (oak, maple, poplar, sycamore, &c.), the tree remains a “tree”.

So too, it can be said for the Jew. From the seedlings of our People, described in Torah, we Jews have sprouted, single from Abraham, and frail. Out of the wilderness and a fragment of Creation which was known 5000 years ago, the Jews

wandered, pushing, toiling, striving for and toward life. Through the history, these, our ancestors, our fore-fathers and mothers multiplied. Their children removed and relocated further and further into regions other-wise unknown. Into nations of Babylonia, Assyria, Greece, Canaan, – Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon – Germany, France, Spain, Russia, China, Japan – Canada, The United States, Argentina, Brasil... From the seed of Abraham has grown the vast and boundless “tree” of the Jew.

The faces of Jews are innumerable. The colours of Jews are extraordinary. Even the names of the Jews are vast. And the factions, denominations, affiliations and association of Jews defy accurate count. Yet, all the while, all through-out, all-encompassing, all told, all considered, one point, one fact remains constant – all are “Jews”. We were Jews, we are Jews, we will always be Jews, and in that assurance, that familiarity, that comfort, we hold our pride and in our Jewish identity resides our Jewish “Dignity”.

Book III.3

But it has come to be, and not to pass that, in these times, as the tree of Jewishness grows, there are those who feel it their duty to constrict the growth, the abundance, the very life of Jews. There are those who have, almost unilaterally, appointed themselves the “Keepers” of world Jewry. Like some arborist gone amok, they have managed to beat their swords into pruning hooks and in their misdirected, mal-formulated frenzy, deem it necessary to radically and violently prune the very “Tree of Jewish Life”. The branches of Jewish existence are being lopped off, thrown to the chaff, left to wither and often, to die. Death, not in the physical sense so much as in the spiritual...

Jewish souls are dying.

Contemporary “Orthodoxy” has been granted, in great part by way of the silence of the majority of world Jewry, the ability to decide what soul is and what soul is not “Jewish”. Entirely all too often, this decision is founded on the ability to provide various manner of documentation, records of birth and life-cycle events. “Brit Mila”, “Bar Mitzvah”, “Ketuba”... specifically Jewish paper-work is, for the most part, the only “acceptable” evidence in the eyes and minds of Israeli Chief Rabbinate and Beth Din, on one’s connection with the “Family-Judaic”. These often ornate works of art have been given such import as to trump any and all other forms

and manner of ensuring one's place of security and "life" on the "Jewish Tree of Life". These simple documents like "papers" demanded in the shtettles of war-time Europe, serve as the sole means by which many Jews are either permitted a continued existence with-in the family fold or sent away, extradited, exiled into the spiritual Holocaust. These material fragments bind one's soul to the trunk of Abraham or, in their absence serve to sever an other-wise viable limb of the "Tree of Jews", to be sent off with no identity, left alone to slowly suffer and die alone, disconnected from the source of strength and nourishment – from all other Jews.

Today, there is an absence of memory, apparently, of the historical facts behind many Jews of contemporary societies. Even in Biblical records there are accounts of attempted genocide focused on the "Israelites" (whom, in Torah, were successfully obliterated – their kingdom having become the northern region of the Judean empire), the Hebrew People, the Jews. Crusades have been waged in subsequent times where-by the choices available to Jews were simple: convert or die. A world war, a "cold war" era, jihad and junta have served as methods of eliminating Jews from populations across our Earth. These have been times in the history of Jews and mankind as a whole during which not only documentation but synagogues and Jews themselves as well have been destroyed. From many Jews who have survived,

their lives were dependant upon an ability to, for that moment in history, draw faith, tradition and ancestral pride deep into their own hearts and souls, to shelter and protect their Jewishness in a relative obscurity, to maintain their Jewish culture and identity in secrecy.

In manners which can only be conscious and intentional, our current Beth Din and Chief Rabbinate boldly choose to disregard the historical hardships of Jews of the past. With methods and in ways frighteningly similar to those employed by the Nazis of World War II, these “Keepers” of the global Judaic family, these self-proclaimed main trunks of the “Jewish Tree of Life” are completely blind to the sufferings of history’s Jews. They are re-writing Jewish history, re-drawing the face of the Jewish People. Systematically, connections to and with the central core of Jewish identity, Jewish life, Jewish existence are severed. With the sweep of a pen, with the utterance of a phrase or even a word, Jews seeking recognition, acknowledgement of their place in the scheme of world Jewry, are finding, at increasing rates, that the central Jewish body-political, can, will and has stripped away all evidence of any and all indications of connectivity to Jewish life and living. Just as the Nazis of World War II ruthlessly stripped the European Jews of their possessions, their families, their homes and their dignity (and often their will to live) the Jewish hierarchy is likewise destroying Jewish dignity, particularly those Jews whom, for what-ever reason

or cause, find it necessary to seek a return to the very roots and essence of their family history.

Jews born of Jewish mothers, who, according to halachic law are, in fact, no questions about the matter at all, JEWS, but who are children of the escaped survivors of Europe's Holocaust often have no visible evidence of their rights, their identities. Their ancestors, living and breathing due, in most part, to their abilities and capabilities to escape from those who would have destroyed them, did not, in a great many instances, carry with them, any documentation, any identification other than their faith... their Jewish souls... their Jewish spirit for life. When word of impending death arrived, the Jews of Europe, amongst them, mothers and mothers-to-be, left hearth and home with immediacy, often taking little more than the very clothes they wore at the moment. No photographs, no trinket, no food... no ketuba, no certificate of birth, no certificate of brit mila, no certificate of death. In efforts to take the next breath of life, these people, guilty of nothing more or less than being Jews, simply brought with them their faith, their courage, their hearts and souls, their pride... their dignity... their life. And, in the wombs of women, they brought their children – the children who would be – who are today – almost microscopically scrutinized in an attempt to strip them – and their ancestry – of that heritage, that dignity which survived and thrived in spite of all of the attempts at destruction.

In war-torn Europe, grandmothers fled the horrors, the terrors of torture and death at the hands of those bent on their obliteration, carrying with them, in their own wombs, the daughters who would be born in freedom. Those daughters, born in the “New World” would give birth to their own daughters (and sons). The “Family-Judaic” would continue.

Ironically, these children, brought to life in the Diaspora of the “New World” are, these days, being stripped of their ancestors’ “Gift of Jewishness”. Their maternal lineage is being severed and erased – not by bloodshed, gas chamber or oven. Today, the Jewish family is destroyed by another “minority”, a different form of “Nazi” killer.

When contemporary Jews attempt to establish their Jewish lineage, their attachment to the central trunk of the “Jewish Tree of Life”, quite often these attempts include decisions made by a Beth Din, a Jewish Court of Jewish Law, consisting, ultimately, of Ultra-Orthodoxy and Orthodoxy... a noticeable minority within the global presence of Jews. The Beth Din, relying solely upon some tangible paper, parchment or other decorative recordings of one’s family, probes by way of inquiry, into the deepest personal facets of the searcher’s life and soul. In the absence of ink and paper support and substantiations, after some considerable period of time, the final decision of this ad hoc law court is, most often, that “THEY” will not establish any

relative connections between the applicant (the “New World Jew”) and the ancestry of Abraham. In essence, the ultimate decree is that the “New World Jew” is severed from the “Tree of Jewish Life”, removed from the family history of the “Family-Judaic”, the Jewishness of the applicant’s mother is essentially negated and nullified... core values attacked... Jewish dignity is removed and destroyed... “KVOID HABRIOT” is ignored by those very same people who profess to up-hold the Torah, Talmud, Midrash, &c. There is no “respect”, there is no “dignity”. There is a decision, and that decision is final.

Book III.4

“N’EMANUT”: Trust, belief, and credibility. Belief in things that a person says about himself or about others...” Also found in Talmud, also discarded at the whim and will of Beth Din and Chief Sephardic Rabbinate of Israel. When one orally recounts, retells, continues the teachings of one’s maternal ancestry, the decisions of Beth Din and Chief Rabbinate further the injury and the destruction of dignity by way of implying – and often documenting – disbelief in the statements relating to the claims of one’s Jewish identity. Not only does this disbelief apply to those immediately involved but this distrust, this effort to eliminate credibility continues along the matrilineal course.

If I tell you that I am a Jew because my mother told me that she is a Jew and you don’t believe me, then certainly, you don’t believe my mother. If my mother told me that she is a Jew because her mother told her that she is a Jew and you don’t believe my mother, then certainly you don’t believe her mother.

I then ask: “MA LI L’SHKAYR?” (Why should I lie?) Why concoct, why fabricate false history intricately bound to the history of Jews? To what end? Why attempt to bind myself and my mother and her mother – all along the matrilineage – to the roots of Abraham? Why create false histories involving pain, suffering, disrespect of family? To what

benefit?

Where the decision of non-Jewish ancestry is dictated, I ask: Where is “N’EMANUT”? Where my history and heritage are stripped away, I ask: What of “KVOD HABRIOT”?

Above these questions I ask: Is Talmud of no consequence? Is Midrash of no use? Is Torah of no importance? Is all else superseded by whim and wont of one (or three) who more than obviously wish to distil world Jewry to the point of only Sephardic Orthodoxy?

Concurrently I question the remaining members of World Jewry – the majority, the Conservatives, the Reform, those who, perhaps without their knowledge have been, on the “official” roster of Jews, removed: Why the silent acceptance? How are you unlike the silent Jews of historical Holocausts who, in peace, remained in treacherous lands and in silence, walked to their torture and death?

To the Beth Din, Knesset, Chief Rabbinate I say:
I am a Jew amongst Jews – neither better nor worse than any other Jew. From my mother, now of blessed memory, I inherited not only the traditions and core values of my Jewish family but the inextricable pride and dignity of the Jewish People. My mother received her birth-right of the Jewish family, her attachment to the “Tree of Jewish Life” through her mother, now of blessed memory. I am

here to compose these words due to the survival of my grandparents. Their strength, their courage, their fortitude brought me into this world, and they did not suffer in vain. The memories of them and their struggles and successes will not perish. Their rightful places in the great lineage of Abraham shall always exist. For as long as one Jewish heart continues to beat, it will beat the collective memory of all Jews who suffered because they were Jews, who suffered to remain proud and dignified Jews, who survived because they were Jews and who have been bound into the Book of Life and to the “Tree of Jewish Life” for and through eternity.

I am a Jew amongst Jews who rejects the notion that a minority, pitifully removed from the realities of Creation and existence of this, the common 21st century, this year 5767 has the power, the right, the authority to eradicate not only my own Jewishness but that of my family and my ancestors. Sadly, accountability is absent in this matter. When a non-Jew fights or otherwise causes any sufferings of Jews, it is an atrocity. But when Jews are the source and cause of Jewish pain and suffering, it is an abomination not only against all Jews but against the very God of Abraham and all Jews since Abraham. This abomination is in effect, on-going, un-checked, unabated.

If “KVOD HABRIOT” is alive at all today, it is due to the diligence of the survivors of survivors of survivors – it is certainly dead in our Beth Din,

Chief Rabbinate and the Knesset of the state of Israel – that nation/state which we, as Jews, have known to be “The Promised Land”. If there is today, a respect for the dignity of Jews, it is, most certainly, a respect amongst the Jews of the “Family” and, most certainly not forth-coming from the governing bodies of World Jewry.

In matters of “Jewish Identity”, one need only view the history, Biblical and current, to realize that very few, if any, who are not Jews would wish affiliation with or enter into a People who have suffered some of the most horrific atrocities in the entire history of human-kind. Where one is willing to accept the yoke of responsibility for “Tikkun Olam”, where one can, even through one’s “Oral History”, provide evidence of a Judaic ancestry, where one is aware of and abides by the 613 mitzvot (those still applicable to contemporary Jews) by which every Jew is expected to live, “K’VOD HABRIOT” should be exercised and “N’EMANUT” must be respected.

When a Jew presents him/herself to the “scrutinies” of a Beth Din in order to re-establish a firm Jewish identity, the sincerity of the Jew is worthy of great commendation for, if the Jew is sufficiently firm in resolve as to approach the members of the Law Courts of the Jewish People, if the Jew is so sufficiently sure of his/her ancestry, if the Jew is sufficiently secure in his/her own Jewish identity, then the members of a Beth Din, along with the Chief Rabbi of Israel must recall another Talmudic

reference: MA LI L'SHKAYR... "Why should I lie?"
Otherwise, the sentencing of more Jews to the Galut, the torturing and deaths of even more Jews and Jewish souls will continue... unabated... an atrocity against human-kind and an abomination against Jews.

Our Jewish history is recorded with more than enough brutality at the hands of the goyim. It must not be allowed to continue with accounts of brutality meted out by Jews.

Death of a Zionist

Today, as I compose my thought, the words of a bruised and perhaps some-what shattered Judaic heart, I am a 60-plus year old man of very good health and stamina. I was a fervent Zionist in years now some-what long gone. I was a believer of belonging to and in “ha Aretz”, Israel. I was registered with my local Aliyah centre and I did look forward to the days of waking, walking and working beneath the chuppah of the Israeli sky.

Yesterday, in the days of zealous and energetic youth, I attended Shabbat services in what was then a “Conservative” schul (which has become, over the course of the omni-present Judaic identity crisis, a “Traditional” schul), and, with Judaic pride, participated in the synagogue youth group. Much in the fashion of my ancestors of biblical lore and contemporary history, I learned to dismiss the jibes and other forms of persecution liberally ladled on me at any given moment. And in true conformity to an age-old saying “That which does not kill me only makes me stronger.”, my adolescent blood ran hot and flowed through the veins of the body of the Jewish Defence League.

I was a Jew. My family, my People, my Nation were all Jews. Many, if not most of us, products of an ancient “Galut” existed, lived and thrived in a shtetle I knew as “Diaspora”. Dispersed amongst the nations, elements of the “goyim” we were still

very strong in spirit, joined, no matter what, as one blood, one body, one spirit, one soul. We were “Nefesh Yehudi”. I would sob at the recitation of “Hatikvah”. I would wail with-in as I felt my being washed-over by the melody. We were dispersed, yet we were “One” in the vastness of “Olam”. We were Jews. I was a Jew. I was one atom of a greater cell that comprised a greater body of existence. We were Jews – we were “One – I was a Jew.

I was not then, of the “Orthodoxy” of my People. I was certainly secular, existing in a 20th century of a calendar observed by the majority, created by a People not my own. I smoked cigarettes, drank alcoholic beverages, drove a car at whim and want, sang and danced to all the contemporary music. I rebelled against the Viet Nam war and nuclear arms. And I tried recreational drugs. I did not attend Hebrew school, nor did I daily don “tzitzit”. But my heart, my mind, my being remained ever Judaic. I did not require external proof or validation of my ancestry and birth-right. My Mother, of blessed memory, affirmed my status and that was completely and absolutely sufficient for me. I had her word, my kippa and tallis, my schul, my history, my traditions, my God, my People. I was a Jew. I was content, I was proud and yet humble, and I stood firmly on a foundation built on the bedrock of Jerusalem. I was Judah and Judah was my People.

And that was then, and this is today...

Today it is, as it was in the earliest recorded histories, that the land, the nation I've lived my life knowing as my "Homeland" is still steadily bombarded by a barrage of attempts to annihilate it and its inhabitants. Through-out the course of humanity's history, the boundaries and borders of Israel, Israel-Judah, Israel, have been drawn and re-drawn. The little nation has been from the Jordan to the Mediterranean, the Golan through the Negev, it has been decreased, diminished, increased, expanded, argued, debated, bought, sold, won and lost. Always, what we have come to know as "Israel" has depended upon the willingness and ability of its residents and inhabitants to defend its borders, and maintain its existence.

The people of Abraham, Moses, Israel and Judah... on through the leaders of this 21st century of common era have all maintained, in some manner, the "Homeland" of "Am Yisrael". They have come from the nations of the earth; they have been born of the nation of Israel. They have been Halutzim, Sabra, Olim. Their presence and efforts were welcomed and appreciated. But again, that was "then" and is not "now".

Now I draw in my mind, with nothing more than words, the geographical image of that relatively diminutive parcel of land that I, in youthful ignorance, thought of as my "Homeland". To the west I read: Mediterranean Sea, Gaza, Hammas. To the east I read: West Bank, Fatah, Syria, Jordan,

Iran. To the north: Lebanon, Hezbollah. To the south perhaps a silent, but very deadly shadow lurking, plotting, planning, scheming. In all instances I see the mere morsel of my very existence engulfed, entrapped, walled-in in a fashion not unlike the ghettos of my People in World War II Europe. Upon the precipices of those walls perch the vultures of the oppressors, bent on feasting upon the carcasses and spoils of the nation they yearn to destroy.

Today I am a 60-plus year old man of very good health and stamina. I am a Jew. I was a Zionist. I am a Jew who wants to be counted amongst those who will build a strong nation, who will maintain a "Homeland" for my People. I have no expectation, no pre-conceived notions, I do not seek Utopia. I make no demands. I have hopes, some dreams and a great desire to contribute, to the best of my human ability, to the continuation, the on-going building and the strengthening of my "Homeland" and my "People". Yet, as strong and fervent as my own aspirations are, today's Israel makes it all more than abundantly clear that it has neither desire nor need of any assistance I might have to offer. Worse, I know that I am not alone. I am not "unique".

In a manner and fashion, "Hitlerian" (in a manner similar to that of Adolph Hitler) in nature, the chief rabbinate of Israel has seen fit, and is blindly permitted to, on whim and whimsy, denounce, deny and negate any and all traces and remnants of

world Jewry as it sees fit. In accordance with the dictates of one megalomaniac who has not only placed himself in the stead of God but is enigmatically allowed to do so and maintain his position of psychotically self-appointed dictatorship, those who for multitudes of generations have known nothing other than their status as Jews are finding themselves, our-selves, remanded to a state of complete and total obliteration... Our existence has not merely ceased, but has never, in the eyes of Shlomo Amar and his mindless followers, never, ever been. It is not merely that we were not born Jews, rather it comes that, to these mindless idiots, we were never born at all. It is not that we are not members of the global “mishpachah” of Jews but that we are not even members of anything. It is not that we were “were”... it’s less than we aren’t even “not” at all!

For many of us, the matter is simply that we are not “Sephardic”, therefore we are not Jews, therefore we do not exist. Therefore, whether or not we wish to participate in the on-going creation of an Israeli Homeland is of no consequence.

As affected with an “Hitlerian” mind, I have been negated, abolished, eliminated. Essentially the criteria include, but are in no manner limited to trivialities such as: I do not dress in the fashions of Amar’s choosing. – I do not pray or worship in the manner of Amar’s personal choice. – I do not strictly adhere to the rules and regulations written

and interpreted by some rabbis with whom Amar is blindly in agreement. – My ancestry is not of the origins of Amar’s ancestry. – My family did not require material validation in the form of some paper documents of their faith, traditions, learning, teaching, hearts, mind and souls, as Amar’s obviously did and does. My family pronounces the Hebrew letter “thav” as an “s” while Amar’s pronounces it as a “t”. So, for these reasons Amar sees fit to dissolve me and my entire ancestry, not ever having met any of them or ever having known them to any extent.

As it was with Abraham and Moses, wandering with the Hebrew People through deserts, my Judaic faith and traditions were passed down from mother to child, carried and nurtured in heart and soul. The fact that I am a Jew to this day, keeping “Shabbos”, worshipping at synagogue, continuing my Judaic learning in spite of the absence of written documentation, is a living testimony to my endurance and my resolve to remain, forever, a Jew. My heart-felt desire to give my good life and good years to the successful structure of the Judaic Homeland serves to validate the strength of my ancestors’ Judaic identity.

Over the course of recent time, as I read and hear the news of ceaseless onslaughts against the nation of Israel and her inhabitants, my desire to become an active and accountable member of her defence is over-shadowed. As I read the reports and see the

film footage of suicide bombings, militia attacks, ketusha missiles, the destruction of Tsfat, Nahariyah and other towns, villages, settlements, and as I put faces, names and people to the statistical numbers of the dead in Israel, the overwhelming consolation comes in the following manner:

Shlomo Amar has decreed that I am not a Jew. Thus, I am not entitled to the benefits of the “Law of Return”. I have no right to Israel; therefore I have no vested interest in it. The secular government of the land silently permits the continuation of this farce and so I must conclude that it approves of this policy.

This said and contemplated over a course of time, I am able to further conclude that the state of Israel is completely capable of providing for and defending itself to any and all extents in its current state. As such, there is no need at all of my support in any manner of fashion, by my physical presence or financial contributions. Further, there is no need for any assistance, in any manner, from any one outside the State of Israel. Tantamount to all of this, since the official stand of the chief rabbinate and secular government of Israel is that only Ultra-Orthodox Sephardim are actually “Jews”, and their ultimate goal is the creation of a solely “Judaic” Homeland, those of us who are neither Ultra-Orthodox nor Sephardic should not, indeed **MUST** not provide any support by any means for a

nation-state to which we hold nothing and, in which and to which we essentially do not exist.

I am a 60-plus year old man of very good health and stamina. I am well-versed, learned and knowledgeable in the history, ways and means of my Judaic People. I am a Jew. I am "Judaic". I am not Jew-ISH. I am a Jew. I was a Zionist. I believed that I had a duty to uphold, defend and support the Homeland of the Jews. I have been corrected. I have learned. Israel has neither need nor use of me. I have permission from the chief Rabbinate and the beis din and the secular government of Israel to continue my existence and my life free of the burden of Israel.

I am a Jew. I was a Jew. I shall forever be a Jew. Israel does not require us Jews and we do not require Israel.

Epilogue – Sinat Hinam

In March 1997, the Agudath Harabonim declared “Conservative” and “Reform”... “NOT JEWS”.

As of 2001, there were approximately 5,280,000 Jews in the United States alone (American Jewish Year Book 2001).

Conservative and Reform Jews provide immense support for the state of Israel in many ways, including but certainly not limited to financial donations as well as political means. As this support continues, dictates of the Chief Rabbinate profess that any Jew other than those directly affiliated with the “Orthodoxy” are not Jews at all.

One ramification of such a decree is the nullification not only of a contemporary Jewish status and identity, but that of one’s entire ancestry. (Denial of one’s Jewish status nullifies that Jewish status of one’s mother, one’s mother’s mother and on through as far back as is historically possible.)

Meanwhile, prospective “Olim” risk being denied rights and privileges other-wise and previously guaranteed to all Jews relocating to Israel under the “Law of Return”. Olim of the “Conservative” and “Reform” affiliation are and shall be expected to succumb and submit to taxation and other laws of the State of Israel and, where applicable, military service. However, benefits guaranteed to the “Orthodoxy” will be denied.

Continued support in any manner of the current politics of the Chief Rabbinate and government of Israel is de facto approval and acceptance of this practice.

Cessation of support of and for the Jewish Homeland is in NO manner espoused or implied. It is, however, of tantamount importance that Jews affiliated with the non-Orthodoxy make educated contributions of support and where such support benefits the purposes and the People of specifically non-Orthodox organizations, funds, services and the likes require and demand nothing less than the most stringent scrutiny. Conservative and Reform Jews are encouraged and urged to ensure that they are completely aware of the application and distribution of their contributions to the State of Israel so as to ensure avoidance of misappropriation or any indication that support of any bias against Conservative and/or Reform Jews is avoided.

As the Orthodoxy is known to engage in excessive use and application of the term “sinat hinam” (pure hatred) when-ever they perceive any action or word contradictory to their person, heritage or belief system (these essays contained here-in included, undoubtedly), so too can the Conservative and Reform Jew apply, most appropriately, this concept in view of the political and religious actions exercised against them (originating in the Orthodoxy).

The philosophy of this author, the purpose of these essays, simply stated is: Indeed, support the Homeland of Israel and the Jewish global Family... carefully, specifically and intelligently. Preserve not only the Jewish Homeland, but the vast and rich heritage of ALL Jews.

Beware, lest we become victims of
“SINAT HINAM“.

Jacob's Stone

Va-Yetse' Genesis 28:10-11

Jacob left Beer-sheba and set out for Haran. He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place...

(Summer 2008: and on laying his head on the stone, he slept...)

It wasn't a stone, but a back-pack upon which I laid my head. It wasn't the Negev desert sands that cradled me as I lay, gazing into the vast, deep indigo above me, marvelling at the billions of glittering stars in that endless heavens that became my roof at night. Nor was it an ancient acacia that spread its branches over me, and my dreams, offering shelter from sight and elements.

The tall sea grasses waved softly and silently around me. The Long Island sands caressed my exhausted reclining body and the open Atlantic lulled me with sweet hushes of surf as it came and went on the shore. Some nights, spent under a compassionate birch, the gentle shifting of leaves, rustled by an ocean breeze offered comfort whispering "sh... sh... sh..." and a voice in my heart consoled "Sleep. All is well and as it should be."

I was alone, but not lonely. I was abandoned indeed, but not with-out friend, and at moments, some-what nervous but not afraid. I had come

upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set.

Many days before, I had sat in a room, protected from the elements, in a relative comfort, essentials around and with me. On that one day in particular, I sat, pondering in great focus, what was to come, but never being certain, for no-one knows what Fate in Creation holds for any one. It was a moment of decision. Only that which was necessary, that which held the tantamount import was to be taken on this, what very well might be my final setting-out. Only those most dear possessions, that which identified me, my life, my humanity, my existence, my essence, would accompany me. I was setting-out, but not for Haran. I was setting-out for no-where known and every-where unknown. It was the very first point in my existence when there was no shelter, no destination, no familiar grounds upon which to depend. For the first time, there was no-one to turn to, no one other than myself to consider, no place in mind to think of as a destination. There was no certainty other than the departure and the uncertainty that departure was. I would survive to tell the tale, record the events of this history, or I would not survive and die, leaving, perhaps, some to wonder... if any-one cared to wonder. So I wondered...

Should I, like Jacob, wrestle with the angels and unlike Jacob, not survive, my lifeless remains, soulless, be found, some-where, any-where by stranger

(or not), what was my existence, my being, my soul. What would best identify the “I” who once walked this Earth? What would separate me from all others, yet bind me to the commonality of human-kind? Who exactly, concisely, and precisely am I now and will be recalled as?

A Jew. First, foremost, a Jew.

At the moment, no, that one second in all time and Creation, as all through my time before and henceforth, as always before, as presently and all time future, as my Mother before me, and now and forever in my heart, there was never now, nor would there ever be any better identification of every beat my heart would take. Nothing more or less had or would identify the soul which I’d been given. And if, and when that soul departed from me, as my body was departing from comforts this day, both would be recalled, if either was ever to be recalled, remembered, as “a Jew”.

So into the back-pack that was to become the “stone” upon which I would lay my head when I laid down in what-ever place I might find myself as the sun set, I placed, with all Love and Care, that which would tell this “Creation” I might well be leaving behind, all there was to know of the one who was. Into the back-pack I placed, like Moses in the basket on the Nile, the black velvet bag that held and protected my tallit with the fringes that I, as a Jew, had been commanded to wear, and the

Tanakh in which was recorded my history, my ancestry, my past, present and future. There was nothing more, nor nothing less that needed to be known by anyone. Should I survive. I should do so as a Jew. And should the God of Abraham find Love and Compassion for me and take my soul from me, to Him, He will take the soul of one of His People, the People of Israel, a Jew. And so, as a Jew, as the Jews of my ancient history had done, I departed, I “set out”.

All through the hours, as sun shone, clearly in the blue of the Heavens or diffused by cloud and rain, I carried with me, that which was of greatest, immeasurable importance to me. Though at times it seemed to weigh heavily upon my back and shoulders, I did not fail to keep these with me: my tallit with fringes upon its corners and my Tanakh, the history of my being. And when the sun set and the time to stop had come, there, beneath my head, I placed them both, protected in my back-pack, my “Jacob’s stone”, laid down, closed my eyes, and slept, not alone, but with my ancestors and the God of my ancestor, Abraham. All was well, for as God watched over the People Israel, so too He watched over me, granting peace to my soul, rest to my body.

It has been almost a year now, as I record this event, since that day when I “set out”. As the sun brings day, my “stone” remains on my back and when the sun has set, it is, of late, beside me, never

out of reach. Today, my tzitzit are an integral part of those garments that protect me. They remind me, at all times, of the greatness of the strength and endurance of my People. My Tanakh provides reassurance in moments of anxiety with reminders of those stressful times when I face the unknown and unknowable just as my ancestors faced the same, when the God of Abraham, the God of me, brought them (and brings me) through terror and turmoil, to a place of peace. There have been and are obstacles and oppressors along my way. But there have been joyous and joyful incidents as well.

Over the course of time passed, I have lost contact with many whom I regarded as “friend”. For days at a time, I travel solo on my journey through this life-time. Often – most often – I speak with no-one. But I know that I am not lonely and cannot say that I am alone, for God has provided for a reconnection with His People, my People, Israel. Fellow Jews have come at unexpected moments, with greetings: “Ma-shlom-cha?” (How are you?) And truthfully, I am able to reply: “B’seder. B’met, ha kol b’seder.” I am, it is all, OK.

And there is Shabbat, the day my God has blessed not only in the history of my People, but even now, today. I have been given the gift of a most gracious, kind and caring congregation of Jews, of my People, who have welcomed me, the “stranger in their midst” and weekly, I am blessed with the serenity and contentment of their company as I sit

amongst my People in synagogue, wrapped in the very tallit that has provided me with an identification, a constant reminder of who I am, and from whence I have come. It is that very tallit in which I wrap myself, each Shabbat, as God is wrapped in a splendour of Divine light, upon which, nightly, I laid my head in the same manner as Jacob, my ancestor, laid his head upon his stone. I am, as I record this segment of my existence, "Homeless", in a manner of speaking. However, in fact, "b'met", I am not, because, as the history of my People records in my Tanakh, often a Hebrew, an Israelite, would "set out" on a solo journey to somewhere, but, no matter where or what, no Hebrew, no Jew was or is ever "alone", or "Homeless". We are always with our ancestors and a living part of their history with them. We are always amongst other Jews. Though we may not know it, they are around us. I have found a "Home" amongst my People, albeit once weekly at synagogue. But I am at "Home" and though I have yet to meet or speak with many, these people, this People is my family. Beside me as I write, is my "Jacob's stone". With me always is that which defines and identifies me. On me are the tzitzit which my ancestors donned as God had commanded. It is not for the sake of "validation", for validation is unnecessary. Rather, when I wanted and needed the comfort of knowing what was my existence, my being, my soul, what would best identify the "I" who walks this Earth, who, exactly, concisely and precisely "I" am... the answer to all questions was then, as it is now,

simple:

A Jew... "I" am a Jew and these are the tangibles that keep me aware and strong. These are the tangibles that send that message to the world.

Although I have been tried, by my own People and the Goyim alike, and although there have been barrages of verbal and psychological onslaughts against me, I was, I am and will forever, carry the tradition of my Mother, now of blessed memory, and forever be able to say and know with all conviction that I am a Jew, a son of Abraham, blessed by the God of the People of Israel and Judah.

Addendum: And so, the efforts of New York City's "Beit Din" are in vain. Try as they did, the spirit of THIS Jew was not and is not broken. Here-in is the proof that even rabbi's, given that title by nothing more than humans, are, themselves, nothing more than mere mortals and capable of failure. I am most happy to be able to post this message... to those three men in New York City and to the world. LET NO OTHER JEW BE DISMAYED BY THE DECISIONS OF MORTALS, THE DECISIONS OF A MORTAL BEIT DIN! GOD ALONE KNOWS, GOD ALONE JUDGES AND GOD ALONE DECIDES. THE ANSWERS ARE IN THE HEART AND SOUL.

References

Rabbi

Main Entry: rab·bi

Pronunciation: 'ra-"bI

Function: noun

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English, from Late Latin, from Greek rhabbi, from Hebrew rabbi my master, from rabh master + -I my

1 : MASTER, TEACHER — used by Jews as a term of address

2 : a Jew qualified to expound and apply the halakah and other Jewish law

3 : a Jew trained and ordained for professional religious leadership; specifically : the official leader of a Jewish congregation.

(Source: <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/rabbi>)

Rabbi Shlomo Amar was the Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv. When he was 55 years old he was elected Chief Rabbi of Israel (April 14, 2003.) Rabbi Shelomo Amar, the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of the State of Israel was born in Morocco in 1948 and immigrated to Israel in 1962. A close associate of the Shas Party's spiritual leader and former Sephardi Chief Rabbi Rabbi Ovadia Yossef, Rabbi Amar served as head of the Petah Tikva Rabbinical Court. In March 2002 he was elected chief Rabbi of Tel-Aviv, the first sole chief rabbi of the city. Rabbi Amar was sent by then Interior Minister Eli Yishai to Ethiopia to meet with the Falash Mura community there. He subsequently recommended that they undergo conversion to revert to Judaism. In 2003 Rabbi Shelomo Amar was appointed Chief Rabbi of Israel.

(Source:

<http://www.sephardiccouncil.org/sages/haravamar.html>)

Rabbi Yona Metzger was born in Haifa. He served in the IDF as a chaplain, fought in several wars in the 7th Armored Tank Brigade, and was discharged with the rank of captain.

He is the youngest Chief Rabbi in Israel's history. Rabbi Metzger received his ordination from the Yeshivat Kerem BeYavne hesder yeshiva before working as a religious teacher. He served as rabbi of the Tiferet Zvi Synagogue in Tel Aviv and was later appointed regional rabbi of northern Tel Aviv. Metzger has written ten books, two of which were awarded prizes by the President of Israel. He is also the former head of a publishing house.

While Metzger is from a National Religious family and educational background, he has been closely identified with Haredi Judaism, and often seeks the advice of Degel HaTorah's spiritual leader Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliashiv. Some observers have claimed that this makes Metzger an excellent candidate to represent both communities, with one reporter calling him "undoubtedly the most moderate and most Zionist candidate." His supporters have often compared him to his immediate predecessor, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, who was seen as having a foot in every camp, which helped him in dealing with different kinds of Jews, particularly secular ones. However, others have suggested that the perception of Metzger not having a "real base" has in fact hurt his credibility. Some Religious Zionists consider Metzger to have "sold out" to the haredim, and while the haredim are happy to have someone loyal to their camp in the post, they do not really consider Metzger to be a member of their community. The fact that he was largely undistinguished in either group prior to the election has not helped his prestige. A 2003 Jerusalem Post article included an interview with several students at the Religious Zionist Bar-Ilan University where one man commented, "We don't consider Metzger to be one of our own".

Since becoming Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Metzger has been very active in attempting to reach out to various diverse groups of people, both Jews and non-Jews. His many high-profile relationships and cooperations with leaders of other faiths and nationalities are reminiscent with the "international" reputation of his predecessor, Rabbi Lau. Rabbi Metzger has

attempted to facilitate the maintaining of kashrut standards in Israel by employing technology, for instance, by activating steam pumps for cooking meat via cell phone in order to avoid issues of bishul akum, (the cooking of food by a non-Jew). Metzger has also been involved in strengthening ties between Israeli and Diaspora standards of kashrut in order to make them more standardized and consistent. Rabbi Metzger has been a prominent activist in attempting to keep up public interest in the cases of several “lost Israelis”, notably Jonathan Pollard and Ron Arad. He has repeatedly brought up Arad in the course of official meetings with various Muslim dignitaries. Metzger has also been involved in keeping up the pressure on both the Israeli and various Arab governments to protect the safety and negotiate the release of various Israeli prisoners taken captive by Hezbollah, culminating in the 2004 release of Israeli businessman Elchanan Tenenbaum. In 2004, Metzger announced an initiative to insert a special prayer for Jonathan Pollard into the daily prayer service. The prayer was written by Metzger and is written in the style of a “Mishberach prayer” intended for people in dire straits. Many Orthodox synagogues announced that they would adopt the new prayer into their liturgy.

(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yona_Metzger)

American Jews, also known as Jewish Americans, are Americans of ethnic Jewish descent, or those who have converted to Judaism. Population estimates vary; most recent surveys range from 5.2 and 6.4 million, making the Jewish population in the United States the largest or second largest in the world after Israel, depending on sources. The American Jewish community is composed mostly of Ashkenazi Jews, but there are also Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews, along with other Jewish ethnic divisions, encompassing a wide range of spiritual beliefs, from the ultra-Orthodox Haredi communities to Jews who are entirely secular.

(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Jews)

(Reference:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Jews#Distribution_of_Jewish-Americans)

(Reference:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html#top>)

SYNAGOGUE AFFILIATION

(Source: http://www.ujc.org/content_display.html?ArticleID=32472)

Approximately 1 million American households — 15 percent more than in 1990 — report affiliation with a Jewish congregation. Forty-one percent of them belong to a Reform temple, 41 percent to a Conservative synagogue and 18 percent to Orthodox. In 1990, 35 percent of affiliated households belonged to Reform, 43 percent to Conservative and 16 percent to Orthodox. More core Jews — 30 percent — identify with Reform than with any other movement. Some 24 percent identify with Conservative, 8 percent with Orthodox, 1 percent with Reconstructionist and 1 percent with Humanistic Judaism.

X.Libris

Dynamic Judaism

The Essential Writings of Mordecai M. Kaplan
1985 The Federation of Reconstructionist
Congregations and Havurot, Emanuel S. Goldsmith
and Mel Scult

1. Kaplan believed in the law of polarity; everything that exists is both itself and more than itself, both individual and interactive, independent and interdependent. That law is divine, a law of God penetrating every nook and cranny of the universe. In human beings it takes the form of conscience, making us aware of our individual rights as well as of our responsibilities to others. To be human, people must both exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities. If they exercise their right without accepting their responsibilities, they become brutes, savages. If they accept their responsibilities without exercising and enjoying their rights, they become slaves to others. It is the combination and balance of rights and duties that constitutes conscience, the human instrument of moral responsibility. Conscience is the divine law of polarity, independence and interdependence, action and interaction, as that divine law operates among people.

2. God is the Power, Force, Process, Dimension, or Energy by means of which people are motivated to

exercise their rights, pursue their responsibilities, and strive to be at peace with themselves, with nature, and with other people.

3. If we read with understanding the prayers we recite in a Jewish service, we would discover that they are meant to be a means of getting us to identify ourselves with the Jewish people, and of arousing in us a passionate yearning that our people rise to great spiritual heights.

4. Ethnic consciousness, or a sense of people-hood, functions through the medium of a living civilisation, which is an organic ensemble of the following cultural elements having their rootage in a specific territory; a common tradition, a common language and literature, history, laws, customs, and folk-ways, with religion as the integrating and soul-giving factor of those elements. To this ensemble must be added an active leadership which is concerned with translating that tradition into a means of serving the essential needs of all who are identified with the people. The foremost among those are: being wanted and having something to be proud of.

5. Religion should be a series of self-corrective attempts on the part of man to become fully human.

6. The millennium will come when mankind learns to be half as afraid of the scientific hell of its own

invention as it was for centuries of the theological hell of its own imagination.

7. The God-impulse in us is not fear but hope, not helplessness but self-help, not despondency but courage, not the obfuscation of the mind but the light of reason, not the belittlement of what man is but the exaltation of what he might be.

8. The foremost problem in Jewish religion is how to get Jews to take the Bible seriously without taking it literally.

9. According to Rabbi Yose, exemption from death was the condition on which Israel was willing to accept the Torah. Rabbi Hama bar Hanina said, "Adam would not have experienced the taste of death, if not for the fact that some of his descendants were bound to consider themselves gods." Rabbi Jonathan said to him, "If that were true, only the wicked should suffer death and not the righteous." To which Rabbi Hama replied:

"That would lead the wicked to practice insincere repentance and to perform mitzvot for ulterior motives." According to Rabbi Jonathan, "The reason the wicked die is that they might cease provoking God. The reason the righteous die is that they might rest from their continual struggle with the evil Yetzer." According to Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish, "The wicked die because of their sins. The righteous, on the other hand, accept death willingly

so as not to appear to be motivated in their righteousness by the fear of death; for that they will be rewarded doubly in the world to come.”

10. But the synagogue must not be the exclusive club-house of a homogeneous group, nor must the rabbi be monopolised by those who can pay his salary. Rabbis, as well as social workers, centre executives, and other functionaries should be appointees of the community as a whole.

11. The unique element in the Jewish religion consisted in the conscious recognition that the chief function of the belief in God was to affirm and fortify the moral law. It is one thing to obey an inherent principle of the human mind, but it is another to be conscious of that principle and to apply it to a critical situation. The outstanding characteristic of the Jewish religion is its conscious emphasis upon the teaching that the moral law is the principal manifestation of God in the world. (The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion)

12. Observations:

12.1 The foremost problem in Jewish religion is how to get Jews to take the Bible seriously without taking it literally.

12.2 It is a sign of childishness to accept the great religious myths as literal truths, a sign of adolescence to regard them as delusion, and a sign of maturity to appreciate their spiritual implications.

12.3 The ancient authorities are entitled to a vote – but not to a veto.

12.4 Those to whom every inherited folly is holy are mainly to blame for there being so many to whom everything holy is folly.

13. It is neither necessary nor possible to do more than indicate certain principles which have to be followed in the formation of an organic community. The first principle is that all who definitely desire to see Jewish life fostered, regardless of how they conceive the form or content of that life, should be eligible for membership. The first step in the self-discipline which the pronounced survivalists among us must take is to cooperate with all who prefer to remain Jews, on any terms whatsoever. No one but a fanatical believer in his own particular brand of Jewish survivalism would withhold membership in the Jewish community from those who conceive of Jewish survival differently from the way he does. One has to be blind to the complexity of our inner problem to claim to have found the only true solution, and to refuse to cooperate with anyone who disagrees.

(The Future of the American Jew)

14. If the individual is not to be sucked into the vortex of the mass, he must consciously retain his selfhood; he must refuse to accept blindly and unquestioningly purposes imposed from without.

(The Future of the American Jew)

15. The people-hood, the culture, and the religion of the Jews are one and inseparable. Their mutual relationship may be compared to that which exists among the three dimension of the physical body. They correspond to the three concepts referred to in the popular dictum: Israel, the Torah, and the Hole One, blessed be He, are one (cf. Zohar 5:73b). In this statement, "Israel" represents people-hood; "Torah", or Israel's way of life, represents culture; and "The Hole One" represents religion. The purpose in pronouncing them one is to stress the fact that none of the three terms can even be understood except in relation to the other two. Jewish religion, Jewish people-hood, and Jewish culture are all aspects of the same reality, and each is meaningless apart from its relation to the totality of Jewish life.

(The Future of the American Jew)

(NB: The inclusion of these articles do not necessarily indicate my personal espousal, support or identification with the writings/beliefs of Rabbi Kaplan. They are included to promote dialogue and perhaps prompt readers to think or re-think current position, belief, thought.)

Yehudim

There is, at the present, much being addressed as times continue. Most of all, I thank you for your time and for reading any of what has been documented here. If you choose to do so, I thank you for contacting me, via e-mail, with your input and your thoughts.

If nothing more than thought-provoking, I hope that these words will make some difference, provide some encouragement and comfort, and equally important, better understanding to those who read them and those who might hear them or hear of them.

Please feel free to contact me, if you wish, at:
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Appendix-Glossary

Definitions of vocabulary appearing in the text.
 (Take comfort in the fact that if most, if not all of these terms are completely foreign to you, you're certainly not alone. Many Jews have never seen nor heard them and this list will be an education to them as well.)

A

AGUDATH: *Aguda* or *agudah* (אגודת) (possessive: *agudas* or *agudath* (אגודת)) are Hebrew terms for "union" or "organisation". Organizations known commonly as "**Aguda**" include:**Agudath** Israel of America.
 (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aguda>)

AGUDAT HARABONIM: The Aguddas HaRabbanim should not be confused with the Agudath Israel of America (Agudas Yisroel) organization, or with the Union of Orthodox Congregations. The Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada also known as the Agudas HaRabbanim (or Agudath Harabonim) ("union of rabbis"), and sometimes as the UOR, was established in 1901 in the United States and is among the oldest organizations of Orthodox rabbis which could be described as having a Haredi worldview. It was originally aligned with the Orthodox Union; in later years, the Orthodox Union drifted away from the Agudas HaRabbanim, and closer to the relatively Modern Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America (RCA).Among the well-known leaders from the organization's past is Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. In recent years, the organization has been under the direction of Rabbi Hersch M. Ginsberg.

(Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_of_Orthodox_Rabbis)

ALIYAH: a·li·yah ə'lēə/*noun* (JUDAISM)
 1. immigration to Israel.

"students **making aliyah**"

2. the honor of being called upon to read from the Torah.

"I was called up for an aliyah"

from Hebrew *‘āliyāh* ‘ascent.’

AM YISRAEL: “The People of Israel”.

ASHKENAZI: äSHkə'näzē, aSHkə'näzē/ *noun*

plural noun: **Ashkenazim** 1. a Jew of central or eastern European descent. More than 80 percent of Jews today are Ashkenazim; they preserve Palestinian rather than Babylonian Jewish traditions, and some still use Yiddish. Compare with Sephardi. From modern Hebrew, from *Ashkenaz*, son of Japheth, one of the sons of Noah (Gen. 10:3).

B

BAR MITZVAH: bar mitz·vah ,bär 'mitsvə/ *noun*

noun: **bar mitzvah**; plural noun: **bar mitzvahs**; 1. the religious initiation ceremony of a Jewish boy who has reached the age of 13 and is regarded as ready to observe religious precepts and eligible to take part in public worship. A boy undergoing the bar mitzvah ceremony. Mid 19th century: from Hebrew *bar mišwāh*, literally ‘son of the commandment.’

BEIT DIN/BEIS DIN: A beit din or beis din (Hebrew: “house of judgement”, plural battei din) is a rabbinical court of Judaism. In ancient times, it was the building block of the legal system in the Land of Israel. Today, it is invested with legal powers in a number of religious matters, both in Israel and in Jewish communities throughout the world, where their judgements hold varying degrees of authority (depending upon the jurisdiction and subject matter) in matters specifically germane to Jewish religious life. (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dayan>)

BRACHOT: Brachot (Hebrew: ברכות) literally "the blessings".

BRIT MILA: The **brit milah** (Hebrew: ברית מילה, pronounced [bʁit mi'la]; Ashkenazi pronunciation: [br̩is 'milə], "covenant of circumcision"; Yiddish pronunciation: **bris** [br̩is]) is a Jewish religious male circumcision ceremony performed by a mohel ("circumciser") on the eighth day of a male infant's life.

C

CHUPPAH: 'חופּאָ, 'חופּאַ

noun: **chuppah**; plural noun: **chuppot**; noun: **chuppa**

1. a canopy beneath which Jewish marriage ceremonies are performed.

late 19th century: from Hebrew *huppāh* 'cover, canopy.'

D

DAVEN: 'dävən/

verb **daven**; 3rd person present: **davens**; past tense: **davened**; past participle: **davened**; gerund or present participle: **davening**

1.(in Judaism) recite the prescribed liturgical prayers.
Yiddish.

G

GALUT (GALUTH): exile of the Jews from ancient Israel : diaspora.

GOY/GOYIM: goi/*noun* plural noun: goyim

1. a Jewish name for a non-Jew.
from Hebrew *gōy* 'people, nation.'

Note: The term "goy", used in common conversation and vernacular, in and of itself is NOT derogatory as it refers to any people or nation other than that of the person using it.

H

HA ARETZ: Literally “The Land”. In Hebrew, reference to “the land” of Israel.

HALACHA/HALACHIC: *NOT to be confused with “halal”. * ,hälä'KHä,hälô'KHə/ *noun*

noun: **Halacha**; noun: **Halakah**; noun: **Halakha** 1. Jewish law and jurisprudence, based on the Talmud.

from Hebrew *hālākāh* ‘law.’

HALUTZIM: Halutz (Hebrew: חלוץ, pl. **halutzim**), also “chalutz”: Hebrew for a pioneer. It may refer to early Jewish immigrants to Palestine, both followers of practical Zionism (starting with 1897), and those who immediately preceded them - the Hovevei Zion and Bilu during the First Aliyah.

HAREDI: KHäre'dē,hä'rādē/

noun: **Haredi**; plural noun: **Haredim**

a member of any of various Orthodox Jewish sects characterized by strict adherence to the traditional form of Jewish law and rejection of modern secular culture, many of whom do not recognize the modern state of Israel as a spiritual authority.

Hebrew, literally ‘one who trembles (in awe at the word of God).’

HATIKVAH: (Hebrew: הַתִּקְוָה, pronounced [hatik'va], lit. English: “**The Hope**”) is a Jewish poem and the national anthem of Israel. Its lyrics are adapted from a poem by Naftali Herz Imber, a Jewish poet from Złoczów (today Zolochiv, Ukraine), then part of Austrian province Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria.

(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatikvah>)

K

KASHER/KOSHER:

mid 19th century: from Hebrew *kāšēr* ‘proper.’

'kōSHər/*adjective*: **kosher**

1. (of food, or premises in which food is sold, cooked, or eaten) satisfying the requirements of Jewish law.

"a kosher kitchen"

- (of a person) observing Jewish food laws.
- (of ritual objects) fit for use according to Jewish laws.

2. genuine and legitimate.

"she consulted lawyers to make sure everything was kosher"

KETUBAH: (Hebrew: כְּתוּבָה; "written thing"; pl. **ketubot**) is a special type of Jewish prenuptial agreement. It is considered an integral part of a traditional Jewish marriage, and outlines the rights and responsibilities of the groom, in relation to the bride.

KIPPA: kē'pä/*noun*: **kippa**; plural noun: **kippas**; noun: **kippah**; plural noun: **kippahs**; noun: **kipah**; plural noun: **kipahs**; noun: **kipa**; plural noun: **kipas**; plural noun: **kippot**
another term for yarmulke.

mid 20th century: from modern Hebrew *kippāh* .

KNESSET: (Hebrew: הַכְּנֶסֶת [ha'kneset] (listen); lit. the gathering or assembly; Arabic: الكنيست al-K(e)neset) is the unicameral national legislature of Israel.

KVOD HABRIOT: (literally in Hebrew: "honour [of/due to] the [God's] creations (human beings)" also variously translated as "individual dignity", "individual honour", or "human dignity" (in a specifically Talmudic sense which may or may not be the same as the secular concept of human dignity) is a concept of Halakha (Jewish law) originating in the Talmud which permits exceptions to Rabbinic decrees under certain circumstances. This concept has been used in a number of contemporary Jewish religious-law decisions in Orthodox and Conservative Judaism.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kavod_HaBriyot)

M

MA'ARIV: (Hebrew: מַעֲרִיב, [maʔə'iv]), also known as *Arvit* (Hebrew: עֶרְבִית, [a'vit]), is a Jewish prayer service held in the evening or night.

(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maariv>)

MAGEN DAVID: mä'gen dä'vêd, 'môgən 'dôvid/

noun :Magen David another name for Star of David.

early 20th century: Hebrew, literally 'shield of David,' with reference to David, King of Israel.

MASORTI: the self-appellation of traditional, not strictly observant Jews in Israel, who mostly identify with Orthodox Judaism.

- Conservative Judaism, often named "Masorti" ("traditional") outside North America.

- Masorti Olami, international umbrella organization of Conservative Judaism

(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masorti>)

MIDRACH/MIDRASH: the *midrash* (/ˈmɪdrɑːʃ/[1] Hebrew: מִדְרָשׁ; pl. Hebrew: מִדְרָשִׁים *midrashim*) is the genre of rabbinic literature which contains early interpretations and commentaries on the Written Torah and Oral Torah (spoken law and sermons), as well as non-legalistic rabbinic literature (*aggadah*) and occasionally the Jewish religious laws (*halakha*), which usually form a running commentary on specific passages in the Hebrew Scripture (*Tanakh*).[2]

1. an ancient commentary on part of the Hebrew scriptures, attached to the biblical text. The earliest Midrashim come from the 2nd century AD, although much of their content is older. from Hebrew *midrāš* 'commentary,' from *dāraš* 'expound.' (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midrash>)

MINCHA: (Hebrew: מִנְחָה, pronounced as /mɪnχə/; sometimes spelled *Minchah* or *Minha*) is the afternoon prayer service in Judaism.

MI SHBERACH: One of the central Jewish prayers for those who are ill or recovering from illness or accidents is the Mi Sheberakh. The name is taken from its first two Hebrew words. With a holistic view of humankind, it prays for physical cure as well as spiritual healing, asking for blessing, compassion, restoration, and strength, within the community of others facing illness as well as all Jews, all human beings. (<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/mi-sheberakh-may-the-one-who-blessed/>) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HX5TWsfykSs>)

MISHPACHA/MISHPUCHA: ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS mishpocheh, mushpuche, mishpokhe. "Literally, "family". ...The word conveys a warm feeling of friendship." (JPS)

MITVOTH (MITZVAH): 'mitsvə/*noun*: plural noun: **mitzvoth**
 1. a precept or commandment.
 2. a good deed done from religious duty.
 mid 17th century: from Hebrew *mišwāh* ‘commandment.’

MIZRACHI: “Mizrahi” is a socio-political term describing Jews from Arab and/or Muslim lands, including Jews from North Africa, the Middle East, and parts of the Caucasus. (<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/mizrahim-in-israel/>)

N

NEFESH YEHUDI: “Jewish soul”. Example: In the Israeli National Anthem (See “Hatikvah”);
 נִפְשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִחְוֶה *Nefesh Yehudi homiyah,*
 A Jewish soul still yearns /*Beats a true Jewish heart.*

O

OLAM: The Hebrew word from which the aforementioned

"everlasting," "perpetual" and "**forever**" were translated, is "olam." Wilson's Old Testament **Word Studies** by William Wilson, gives the **meaning** of "olam" as "duration of time which is concealed or hidden." In other **words**, an unknown length of time.

OLIM: Someone who "makes aliyah" is called an oleh (m.; pl. **olim**) or olah (f.; pl. olot). Many religious Jews espouse aliyah as a return to the Promised land, and regard it as the fulfillment of God's biblical promise to the descendants of the **Hebrew** patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

OMA: German, Grandmother

OPA: German, Grandfather

R

RELIGIOUS: Function: adjective

Pronunciation: ri-'li-j&s

Etymology: Middle English, from Anglo-French religios, from Latin religiosus, from religio

1: relating to or manifesting faithful devotion to an acknowledged ultimate reality or deity <a religious person>
<religious attitudes>

2: of, relating to, or devoted to religious beliefs or observances
<joined a religious order>

(Source: Mirriam-Webster)

S

SABRA: (**Hebrew:** צָבָר, tzabar) is an informal-turned-formal term that refers to any Jew born on Israeli territory. ... Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Israelis have used the word to refer to a Jewish person born anywhere in Israel. The term alludes to a tenacious, thorny desert plant, known in English as prickly pear, with a thick skin that

conceals a sweet, softer interior. The cactus is compared to Israeli Jews, who are supposedly tough on the outside, but delicate and sweet on the inside.

SCHUL: noun, plural **shuln**
[shooln, shoo ln]. *Yiddish*.

1. a synagogue.

Dictionary.com Unabridged

Based on the Random House Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2017.

Adage:

What you call the place you go to on Shabbat depends on what you expect to get out of it:

A Synagogue is a meeting place, where you go to meet and commune with people.

A schul is a place of learning.

A temple is a place of worship and prayer.

SCHTETTLE/SHTETL: shtetl 'SHtetl,'SHtätl/*noun:historical*

1.a small Jewish town or village in eastern Europe.

2.a ghetto.

SECULAR: Pronunciation: 'se-ky&-l&r

Function: adjective

Etymology: Middle English, from Anglo-French *seculer*, from Late Latin *saecularis*, from *saeculum* the present world, from Latin, generation, age, century, world; akin to Welsh

hoedllifetime

1 a : of or relating to the worldly or temporal

<secularconcerns> b : not overtly or specifically religious

<secularmusic> c : not ecclesiastical or clerical <secular courts>

<secular landowners>

2 : not bound by monastic vows or rules; specifically: of, relating to, or forming clergy not belonging to a religious order or congregation <a secular priest>

(Source: Merriam-Webster)

SEPHARDIC: sə'färdē/*noun*: **Sephardi**; plural noun: **Sephardim**

1. a Jew of Spanish or Portuguese descent. They retain their own distinctive customs and rituals, preserving Babylonian Jewish traditions rather than the Palestinian ones of the Ashkenazim.

- any Jew of the Middle East or North Africa.

modern Hebrew, from *səpārad* , a country mentioned in Obad. 20 and taken to be Spain.

SHABBAT/SHABBOS: SHə'bät/ *noun*: **Shabbat**; plural noun: **Shabbats** 1. the Jewish Sabbath. from Hebrew *šabbāt* .

SHACHARIT: **Shacharit** [ʃaxa'vit] (Hebrew: שַׁחֲרִית *šahārit*), or Shacharis in Ashkenazi Hebrew, is the morning Tefillah (prayer) of the Jewish people, one of the three daily prayers.

SHEOL: "Sheol, " refers to the grave or the abode of the dead (Psalms 88:3 Psalms 88:5). Through much of the Old Testament period, it was believed that all went one place, whether human or animal (Psalms 49:12 Psalms 49:14 Psalms 49:20), whether righteous or wicked (Eccl 9:2-3). No one could avoid Sheol (Psalm 49:9;89:48), which was thought to be down in the lowest parts of the earth (Deut 32:22;1 Sam 28:11-15;Job 26:5;Psalm 86:13;Isa 7:11;Ezekiel 31:14-16Ezekiel 31:18). There is no light (Job 10:21-22;17:13;Psalms 88:6Psalms 88:12;143:3), no remembrance (Psalm 6:5;88:12;Eccl 9:5), no praise of God (Psalm 6:5;30:9;88:10-12;115:17;Isa 38:18)in fact, no sound at all (Psalm 94:17;115:17).

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/sheol/>)

SHUCKLE: Shuckling. Shuckling (also written as shokeling), from the Yiddish word meaning "to shake", is the ritual swaying of worshipers during Jewish prayer, usually forward and back but also from side to side.

SIMCHAT TORAH: or Simhat **Torah** (Ashkenazi: **Simchas Torah**, Hebrew: שמחת תורה, lit., "Rejoicing of/[with the]

Torah") is a Jewish holiday that celebrates and marks the conclusion of the annual cycle of public **Torah** readings, and the beginning of a new cycle.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simchat_Torah)

SINAT HINAM: PURE HATRED Sinat chinam means groundless hatred. (The verb *sonah* means to hate, as in the command *lo tisnah at ahicha blevavecha*, do not hate your brother in your heart, Leviticus19:17)

T

TALIT/TALIS: 'tälis,tä'lêt/*noun:* tallis

1. a fringed shawl traditionally worn by Jewish men at prayer. from Rabbinical Hebrew *tallit*, from biblical Hebrew *tillel* 'to cover.'

TALMUD: 'tälmood,'talməd/ *noun:* singular; proper noun: **Talmud**

1. the body of Jewish civil and ceremonial law and legend comprising the Mishnah and the Gemara. There are two versions of the Talmud: the Babylonian Talmud (which dates from the 5th century AD but includes earlier material) and the earlier Jerusalem Talmud.

from late Hebrew *talmūd* 'instruction,' from Hebrew *lāmad* 'learn.'

TANAKH: Tanakh is an acronym of the first Hebrew letter of each of the Masoretic Text's three traditional subdivisions: Torah ("Teaching", also known as the Five Books of Moses), Nevi'im ("Prophets") and Ketuvim ("Writings")—hence **TaNakh**. (/tɑːˈnɑːx/; Hebrew: תנ"ך pronounced [tɑˈnɑx] or [təˈnɑx]; also *Tenakh*, *Tenak*, *Tanach*), also called the *Mikra* or Hebrew Bible, and consists of twenty-four books.

TEUDAT GERUT: Certification of “kosher” conversion into Judaism.

(<http://www.yeshivatmaharat.org/gerut-and-jewish-identity/>)

TIKKUN OLAM: In modern Jewish circles, **tikkun olam** has become synonymous with the notion of social action and the pursuit of social justice. Jennifer Noparstak. **Definition.** The Hebrew phrase **tikkun olam** (pronounced tee-KOON oh-LUHM) means "world repair."

TORAH: 'tôrə,tô'rä,'tôrə/

noun

singular proper noun: **Torah** (in Judaism) the law of God as revealed to Moses and recorded in the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures (the Pentateuch). a scroll containing this. from Hebrew *tōrāh* 'instruction, doctrine, law,' from *yārāh* 'show, direct, instruct.'

TZITZIT/TSISIS: Tassels, Tzitziyot, today are attached to the Tallit and Tallit katan. The Tallit katan itself is commonly referred to as **Tzitzit**. According to the Torah, the purpose of wearing **Tzitzit** is to remind Jews of their religious obligations. In addition, it serves as a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt (Numbers 15:40).

Y

YARMULKE: ^lyämə(l)kə/ *noun:* **yarmulke**; plural noun:

yarmulkes; noun: **yarmulka**; plural noun: **yarmulkas**

a skullcap worn in public by Orthodox Jewish men or during prayer by other Jewish men.

early 20th century: from Yiddish *yarmolke* .

YEHUDIM: Biblical Hebrew word Yehudi meaning "from the Tribe of Judah", "from the Kingdom of Judah", or "Jew". The Jewish ethnonym in Hebrew is יהודים, **Yehudim** (plural of יהודי, Yehudi). (Jews)

YOM KIPPUR: ,yôm 'kipər,,yôm ki'pœr/ *noun:* **Yom Kippur**
The most solemn religious fast of the Jewish year, the last of the ten days of penitence that begin with Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year).

*Footnote:

“God understands English. God understands Hebrew. God understands Yiddish. God does not understand transliteration.”

(Rabbi Judith Lewis)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Judah Kessler... was born in a small New York state village in the Hudson River Valley, receiving his integral “Jewish” education, culture and traditions from his mother, now of most blessed memory.

Death Of A Zionist originally appeared as a web-log account of personal experience with a confrontation with the local Beit Din in New York City in 2007. At that time, unlike in years prior, an application for immigration from the United States to Israel required “acceptable” documented proof of one's “Jewishness” and having made said application, proof was demanded and the recommendation to obtain said documentation from a Beit Din was insisted upon. When after appearing before the three rabbis, giving verbal evidence of education, knowledge and Jewish life-style, amongst many other particulars, the Beit Din responded with a denial of affirmation and a recommendation of “kosher conversion”, Kessler commenced research and documentation of what proved to be a more common experience amongst Jews, particularly in the United States.

Having recounted this experience many times, Kessler was encouraged to document the matter and publish it so that others in the same or similar predicament could like-wise be encouraged to persevere. It also lends to better understanding of the Jewish life and the burdens and obstacles endured by non-orthodox Jews round the world.

Also:
judahakessler.wordpress.com

Other works:

Bitter-Sweet Bitterness: Working Homeless
Journal Days: Voices of the Working Homeless
I've Done It: A Quick Guide To Self-Publishing
Lembrook: A Short Story

Further recommended reading:

<https://riverdaletemple.wordpress.com/>