

Hobart



CHAVERIM

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Happy New Year, Friends

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president's pre-amble....

Once again, as I sit here writing this, I am amazed at how quickly the year has passed. I'll put it down to the fact that "I MUST be getting older!" Ah well, c'est la vie!

So much has happened, locally, nationally and internationally – good and not-so-good. Israel and what happens there, and to Jews anywhere and everywhere, seems to have been making headline news on a continual and continuing basis. Let us hope and pray that peace will come SOON.

Here in Hobart, life goes on. We continue to welcome visitors Yes, even in the winter months! and those who visit our shul all have a wonderful sense of history, of continuity of a Jewish presence in Hobart and Tasmania for more than 158 years. The launching of Peter and Ann Elias' book "A Few from Afar: Jewish Lives in Tasmania from 1804" was a fantastic event and continuing sales of the book prove that it's an absolute winner! Once again, "Thank You", Peter and Ann. You are inspirational to us all.

May I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their continued support of this congregation. Being so small, everyone's contribution is vital for us to be able to survive and thrive. And a big thankyou to this edition's subscribers.

To our many friends everywhere, may I wish you L'shanah Tovah Tikateinu v'teichateinu – May we all be inscribed and sealed for a good year of life – a year of positive action!

Caroline

THE JEWISH PEOPLE: WHO AND WHAT ARE THEY?

This Adult Education Course is described in full detail below.

The course is advertised in the Adult Education Program Booklet as distributed in local newspapers. It is the program for the upcoming term, starting at the end of September. The course runs on 2 Sundays: 9th and 16th November, from 10.30am until 5.00pm, with short breaks for coffee/tea and a 30 min lunch. The course is briefly described in the program (Page 5: Philosophy & Religion) and is called "Judaism and the Jews". We are unsure about a deadline re: enrolments as none was mentioned in the program. However, please enrol as soon as possible so that Adult Ed can decide if there are sufficient numbers of people to make the course financially viable. The organisers look forward to seeing you there!

COURSE OUTLINE

Aim: For many centuries Gentiles (i.e. non- - Jewish people) have been indoctrinated with a negative view of the Jewish People. This course strives to try and transform the stereotypical

image society generally has of Jews into one that reflects truth through discussions of factual and accurate information.

It will provide a basic familiarity with the history of the Jewish people, their culture, traditions, religion as well as the impact they have made on western society. Students will also gain some insight into the reasons for the continued existence of the Jews as a people.

It will further provide information generally not easily accessible to Australians to discuss contemporary issues such as antisemitism, the Holocaust and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Finally, a few passages in the Pentateuch (also called Five Books of Moses or Torah) are reviewed to correct faulty translations and interpretations (See topic no. 5 in the syllabus). This topic is intended to give students a taste of what will be done in a follow up course. This follow-up course is entirely concerned with a thorough study and analysis of the Torah text and its meaning and what can be learned from it. At this time it has not been decided when it will be offered.

Time Table: The course has been conducted in other forums where it took 20 hours to present. Due to concerns by the School of Adult Education about its viability to present it in this way over a period of 10 weeks it was agreed to condense it to 12 hours. It will be conducted from 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM on two successive Sundays. There will be 2 short tea breaks and a lunch break of half an hour.

Class Participation: Questions are very much encouraged because they serve as an excellent learning tool. Answers to questions concerning topics not immediately related to the discussion at hand may be postponed to the breaks if deemed appropriate or until after class. You may already have many questions. Some questions regularly asked are:

- Who or what are Jews ?
- Why are Jews still around when others are gone ?
- Do Jews have a special role to play ?
- Why are Jews the Chosen People ?
- What does it mean to be the Chosen People ?
- What are the facts regarding death penalties for immoral behaviour ?
- Where does the claim that Jews have money or control the Banks come from ?
- All those Jewish doctors, lawyers and scientists. Are Jews more intelligent than Gentiles ?
- Why aren't there more Jewish plumbers, carpenters, electricians, etc. ?
- Why don't the Jews assimilate into Gentile society ?

NOTE:

The tutors and the course will not encourage people to convert to Judaism.

The syllabus that follows below is the one for the 20 hour course. It is obviously impossible to deal with every topic adequately in the reduced course length. Given the available time the tutor will decide which topics will be discussed in some depth and which ones will only be touched upon. Some of this will also depend on the interest in any of the syllabus topics as expressed by the students.

Syllabus:

1. Historical Overview and Origin of the Jewish People
2. Keeping the Commandments: What does that mean ?
 - 2.1 The Sabbath : Concepts and laws
 - 2.2 The Festivals : Concepts and laws
 - 2.3 The Dietary Laws (Keeping Kosher)
 - 2.4 Community & Family Life: Concepts and laws
 - 2.5 Ethics, Education
 - 2.6 Justice System
 - 2.7 What Commandments can / should non-Jews observe ?
3. The Roles of Men and Women in Judaism
4. Fast Days and other Commemorative Days

5. Written and Oral Torah : Some Insights into the Real Meaning of Bible Texts.
 - 1.1 Proper Translation & Interpretation: The history of and need for the Oral Torah (the Talmud)
 - 1.2 Selected insights: Some examples of these are:
 - Did G-d really make Eve out of Adam's rib ?
 - How long was Moses arguing with G-d at the burning bush ?
 - Should 'An eye for an eye' be taken literally ?
 - What is the prophecy in Gen. 3:15 ?
6. Hebrew is the Holy Tongue: Explanations & Insights into the deeper meaning of the Hebrew Alphabet and the shape of its letters.
7. The Promised Messiah: Concepts and Insights into the Messiah and Messianic Era.
8. Antisemitism:
 - Origin & History of Christian, Islamic, Political and 20th Century Antisemitism
9. The Holocaust:
 - Introduction- How could it happen ? – What happened ? – Life under Nazi occupation – Did it really happen ?
10. History of the Holy Land with emphasis on the 19th and 20th Century and the Arab–Israeli conflict.
11. Impact of Judaism on Western Society – socialism – trade unionism – human rights – courts of law – charity – civil law – Christianity etc.
12. Jewish Humour. This topic is last, because by now the students will have enough knowledge of Judaism to more deeply comprehend Jewish jokes.

The follow up course would mostly consist of an expansion on Topic 5. Written & Oral Law.

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if the ark was built today.....

And the Lord spoke to Noah and said, “In one year, I am going to make it rain and cover the whole earth with water until all flesh is destroyed. I want you to save the righteous people and two of every kind of living thing on the earth. Therefore, I am commanding you to build an Ark. “

In a flash of lightening, God delivered the specifications for an Ark. In fear and trembling, Noah took the plans and agreed to build the Ark. “Remember, “ said the Lord, “you must complete the Ark and bring everything aboard in one year. “

Exactly one year later, fierce storms covered the earth, and all the seas of the earth went into a tumult. The Lord saw Noah was sitting in his front yard weeping. “Noah, “ He shouted, “where is the Ark? “ “Lord, please forgive me! “ cried Noah.

“I did my best, but there were big problems. First I had to get a permit for construction and Your plans did not comply with the codes. I had to hire an engineering firm and redraw Your plans. Then I got into a fight with the Occupational Health and Safety Commission over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system and flotation devices.

Then my neighbour objected, claiming I was violating zoning ordinances by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to lodge a Rezoning Application with the City Council & it is now with the Land & Environment Court.

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I had problems getting enough wood for the Ark, because there was a ban on cutting trees to protect the kookaburra. I finally convinced the Dept. of Conservation & Land Management that I needed the wood to save the kookaburras. However, National Parks & Wildlife won't let me catch any kookaburras, so no kookaburras.

The carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the Dept. of Industrial Relations before anyone would pick up a saw or hammer. Now, I have 16 carpenters on the Ark, but still no kookaburras.

When I started rounding up the other animals, I got sued by the RSPCA. They objected to me only taking two of each kind aboard. Just when I got the suit dismissed, the EPA notified me that I could not complete the Ark, without filing an environmental impact statement on Your proposed flood.

They didn't take very kindly to the idea that they had no jurisdiction over the conduct of the Creator of the universe.

Then the Dept. of Land and Water Conservation demanded a map of the proposed new flood plain. I sent them a complete set of UBD's and Gregory's Directories. Right now, I am trying to resolve a complaint filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, that I am practising discrimination by not taking godless, unbelieving people aboard!

The Australian Tax Office has seized my assets, claiming that I'm building the Ark in preparation to flee the country to avoid paying taxes. I also have to wait for the registration of my ABN (Australian Business Number) for the GST.

I just got a notice from the Waterways Authority that I owe them some kind of user tax and failed to register the Ark as a recreational water craft.

I also need a Boat Drivers Licence, but they are debating about how to classify the craft.

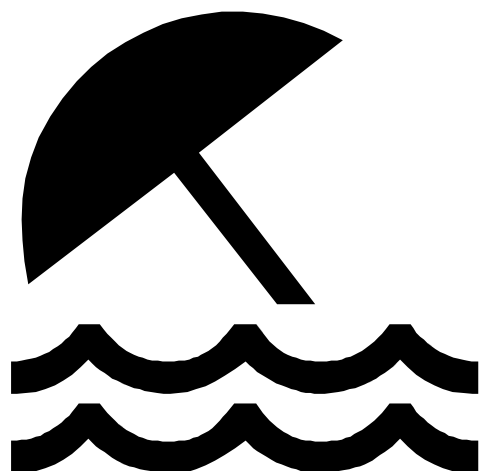
I am getting continual visits from Greenpeace, the RSPCA, Workcover, The Sheriff's Office, and numerous other Government departments.

Finally, The Australian Council for Civil Liberties got the courts to issue an injunction against further construction of the Ark, saying that since God is flooding the earth, it is a religious event, and therefore unconstitutional, so I really don't think I can finish the Ark for another 5 or 6 years! " Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear, the sun began to shine, and the seas began to calm. A rainbow arched across the sky. Noah looked up hopefully.

"You mean You are not going to destroy the earth, Lord? "

"No, " said the Lord. "I don't have to. The bureaucracy has beaten Me to it! "



Haiku Error Messages (NO Computer Rage Here)

In Japan, they have replaced the impersonal and unhelpful Microsoft error messages with Haiku poetry messages. Haiku poetry has strict construction rules: each poem has only 17 syllables - 5 syllables in the first line, 7 in the second, 5 in the third.

They are used to communicate a timeless message, often achieving a wistful, yearning and powerful insight through extreme brevity.

Here are some actual error messages from Japan. Aren't these better than "your computer has performed an illegal operation?"

**The Web site you seek
Cannot be located, but
Countless more exist.**

*Chaos reigns within.
Reflect, repent, and reboot.
Order shall return.*

**Program aborting
Close all that you have worked on.
You ask far too much.**

*Windows NT crashed.
I am the Blue Screen of Death.
No one hears your screams.*

**Yesterday it worked.
Today it is not working.
Windows is like that.**

**Your file was so big.
It might be very useful.
But now it is gone.**

*Stay the patient course.
Of little worth is your ire.
The network is down.*

**A crash reduces
Your expensive computer
To a simple stone.**

*Three things are certain
Death, taxes and lost data.
Guess which has occurred.*

**You step in the stream,
But the water has moved on.
This page is not here.**

*Out of memory.
We wish to hold the whole sky,
But we never will.*

**Having been erased,
The document you're seeking
Must now be retyped.**

*Serious error.
All shortcuts have disappeared.
Screen. Mind. Both are blank.*

**I ate your Web page.
Forgive me; it was tasty
And tart on my tongue**

some helpful advice

If you or a friend are considering a Kosher computer, you should know that there are some important! upgrades and changes from the typical computer you are used to, such as:

The cursor moves from right to left.

Microsoft Office now includes, "A little byte of this, and a little byte of that."

It comes with two hard drives-one for: fleishedik (meat) business software and one for milchedik (dairy) games.

Instead of getting a "General Protection Fault" error, my PC now gets "Ferklemppt".

The Chanukah screen savers include "Flying Dreidels".

The PC also shuts down automatically at sundown on Friday evenings.

The "Start" button has been replaced with the "Let's Go!! I'm Not GeTTINGAny Younger!" button.

When disconnecting external devices from the back of my PC, you are instructed to "Remove the cable from the PC's tuchus."

Internet Explorer has a spinning "Star of David" in the upper right corner. You will hear "Hava Nagila" during startup.

When running "ScanDisk," it prompts with a "You want I should fix this? message.

When your PC is working too hard, I occasionally hear a loud "Oy!!!"

"Year 2000" issues were replaced by "Year 5760-5761" issues.

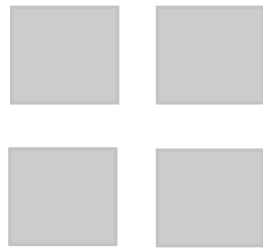
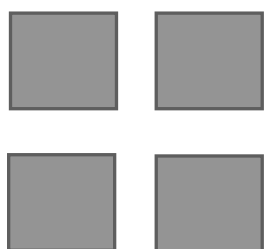
After 20 minutes of no activity, your PC would go "Schloffen."

Computer viruses would now be cured with chicken soup.

There is a "monitor cleaning solution" from Manischewitz that advertises that it gets rid of the "schmutz und drek" on your monitor.

After your computer dies, you MUST dispose of it within 24 hours.

And of course the BEST Feature of all: Kosher Computers DONT GET SPAM!



around our community.....

Rosh HaShanah

The pre-*Rosh HaShanah* clean-up, held on Sunday 21st September, was very well attended by so many willing helpers. After all the polishing, vacuuming, cleaning, our *shul* absolutely gleams and is ready with the *Yom Tovim* white drapes, etc. for the coming High Holy Days. *Thank You* to everyone who helped.

birthdays

We don't have a "Birthdays Register" and if someone out there would like to put one together and pass it to the newsletter editor, that would be very much appreciated. I know that since our last "*Chaverim*", both Aviva and Carol Samuelson have celebrated their birthdays, and there could well be others in our community who have celebrated theirs. *Mazel Tov* to you all!

thankyou....

I should like to thank, in advance, Sean & Kim (and Michal) Ladiges, Haggai & Aviva Samuelson and Sarah Rubenstein for preparing to conduct our *Rosh HaShanah* services, and to Len Freedman for preparing to conduct our *Kol Nidre/Yom Kippur* services. A lot of hard work goes into preparing for these services and we are very grateful to you all. *Thank You!*

A special "*Thank You*" to Sean Ladiges for designing the front cover of this edition of "*Chaverim*".

From me I should like to thank everyone for their good wishes during my stay in hospital and during my convalescence. Also, "*Thank You*" to the Ladies Group and to the congregation as a whole for the beautiful flowers which certainly brightened my days!

Aviva Samuelson

Aviva Samuelson will be celebrating her bat-mitzvah on Shabbat 25th October. We will have Rabbi Fred [and Sue] Morgan in Hobart to conduct the service. Please come and help Aviva celebrate this very special day.

On Friday 24th October (6.15pm Progressive service) Rabbi Morgan will conduct a Baby Naming Ceremony for Elinor and Yoram Levy's baby daughter, Iris. We look forward to seeing you there!



continued

pot luck events

At the time of going to press, our Pot Luck Convenor [Carol Samuelson] tells me that there isn't a firm venue for *Breaking our Fast* after *Yom Kippur*. [Monday 6th October]. If you feel able to offer your home, please contact Carol on 6229 6649 or via email: carolsamuelson@primus.com.au.

For our Pot Luck events for *Rosh HaShanah* and *Sukkot* we will be holding our *lunches* at the Fern Tree Community Centre, 8 Stephenson Place, Fern Tree. We do hope that you will join us in this "new" venue and enjoy the experience. Once again, we do ask that when making your contribution you make just a bit "extra" so that we can confidently cater for unexpected visitor.

welcome

I should like to extend a warm welcome to Rosalyn Chapman and her family who have recently moved from Sydney to Hobart (well, actually New Norfolk!)

good health!

May I take this opportunity to wish improved health on everyone who has not been so well since the last edition of "Chaverim" was published. Winter in Hobart is nearly over and spring is just about "sprung"! Warmer weather is just around the corner!

We love this quote:

**LIFE MUST BE
LIVED AS PLAY**

Plato

Congratulations

to Sven Ladiges! Sven's thesis: "Cu and Zn relations in fertilised eucalypt plantations" (*) has been accepted. This is the culmination of many years hard work by Sven and I am sure he will acknowledge the contribution of his family in gaining his doctorate. Well done, Dr Sven, and congratulations from us all!

(* The thesis investigated the interaction between copper, zinc, nitrogen and phosphorus nutrition in *Eucalyptus nitens*. The critical foliar concentration for copper was confirmed. A high rate of nitrogen application induced copper deficiency by interference with its transport to the shoot)

The Prize of Peace

*Based On A Sermon For Shabbat Shoftim
Saturday 30th August, 2003*

By Rabbi Fred Morgan

In the late 1980's the first intifada began, the uprising of Palestinians in the refugee camps and the impoverished villages in Gaza and on the West Bank. That was a spontaneous uprising, quite unlike the second intifada, the so called "Al-Aqsa intifada" which was controlled behind the scenes. There is a great deal of evidence to demonstrate that the second intifada was manipulated by the Palestinian authorities. The first intifada was not controlled by leaders who were using it for their own ends, it was a spontaneous uprising of the people. It was probably less threatening to Israel militarily but more threatening politically than the second intifada. It must be said that it was certainly more threatening morally for Israel. I don't think it is a coincidence that truer efforts for peace followed the first intifada, with more sincerity and goodwill, than followed the second intifada. The first intifada was an eruption of anger from ordinary Palestinians who had no weapons but rocks, and who felt deprived of justice.

A few people emerged at that time as spokespeople for the Palestinian people: not Yassar Arafat, but others who presented themselves almost as theologians of this popular movement. Foremost amongst those spokespeople was Dr. Hanan Ashrawi. I can recall listening to Hanan Ashrawi on television in England at the time of the first intifada. Her head was covered by a shawl, but not the shawl of the ultra-religious. She was certainly one of the most articulate and convincing people I have ever heard, soft spoken, very calm and yet incredibly powerful, a very elegant woman as well, with a riveting presence. Clearly Ashwari is an intellectual in the style of her mentor, the professor of literature at Columbia University, Edward Said. Once Hanan Ashwari became a media star (she became one very quickly), she was absorbed into the hierarchy of the newly formed Palestinian Authority. But, unlike her boss Arafat, Hanan Ashwari always remained articulate, thoughtful, calm and independent in her thinking. Indeed there were times when she resisted Arafat's leadership. She even resigned a high position in the Palestinian Authority in dissent from his handling of government for the Palestinians.

Now, Dr. Hanan Ashrawi has been awarded the Sydney Peace Prize. I believe she'll be receiving that prize shortly. Of course, the Sydney Peace Prize is not the Nobel Peace Prize, but it is nevertheless a prize of considerable stature. It does mean something, especially here in Australia. Even if we had not heard of it before, it now means something. Understandably, the award of the Sydney Peace Prize to Hanan Ashwari, a leading Palestinian spokesperson and activist, has raised hackles within the Jewish community here in Australia.

It is true that Ashwari is a moderate within Palestinian circles. She claims that she is not in sympathy with terrorist homicide bombings or with Arafat's form of governance. But though she may be out of sympathy with these methods, she is in sympathy with what she sees as the frustrations that lead the terrorists to these acts of violence and murder, and, of course, she is eager to see the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. Indeed, there are many within Israel itself who now support a two-State solution to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. They seek an end to violence through a political contract between two States. That is what Hanan Ashwari would like to see happen, but she hasn't separated or distanced herself entirely from the Palestinian Authority. She is still part of that establishment of violent resistance.

So, should Hanan Ashrawi have been awarded the Sydney Peace Prize? This question matters to us Jews because the Prize seems to give a form of legitimization to the Palestinian cause, and not only to the cause but to the means by which that cause is pursued. The cause is pursued by terrorist homicide bombings, intended to kill innocent people.

Some people have argued that giving the Peace Prize to Ashrawi is wrong-headed because peace is a partnership. It requires two sides to come together in some sort of mutual understanding. It makes no sense to award one of the sides with a peace prize, leaving the other side out in the cold. Think of Yassar Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, think of Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat. You need two sides to make a peace, so if there is a prize for peace it should either go to both sides or to neither side. I think there is a lot to that argument.

Other people point out that the award simply confirms, or appears to confirm, the public bias against Israel and in favour of the Palestinians in this country, and indeed in most English speaking countries outside of America. If we leave aside all else, with the "roadmap to peace" having reached a dead end before our very eyes, surely this is the wrong time to give a peace prize to either side's representatives. What is really being said by giving Ashrawi a peace prize at this time? Is it that the Palestinians are seeking peace but that Israel is not? How could anyone possibly argue that? What evidence or proof is there that the Palestinians are seeking peace but Israel is not? And even if Ashrawi stands out from others in the Palestinian camp, has she had any particular effect on the peace process? Has she pushed it forward? Has she given it new meaning? Has she strengthened the means by which peace is being pursued, or is she simply speaking words that sound conciliatory but in fact are filled with anger and hatred? In other words, has Hanan Ashwari taken any risks towards peace or has she, like Yassar Arafat, said one thing but done another?

continued overleaf

continued from previous

Truly, these are the questions that the Peace Prize Committee should have asked; and if they have not asked these questions, they are dangerously naïve.

There is, further, an important spiritual point here beneath the politics of the situation, and this is the point that Torah directs us towards in the famous words *tzedek tzedek tirdof*, "Justice, justice shall you pursue". The commentators traditional and modern ask, Why is the word *tzedek* repeated in this text? One of the reasons commonly given is that Torah stresses that it is justice that we are bound to seek. Justice is not a natural goal for us human beings; in nature vengeance overrides justice. But according to Torah justice is what we must seek.

There are, however, other explanations to the repetition of the word justice, and here is one of them. It is not only the end result of our pursuit that matters, it is also the manner in which we pursue it. The manner of seeking justice must also be just, true and upright. Thus *b'tzedek tzedek tirdof*, "You shall pursue justice justly". True justice, pursued justly, leads to the kind of peace that benefits both parties. In such a place the well-being and sense of *bitachon*, of security, would be distributed equally between the Palestinians and the Israelis. I call this a spiritual outlook because it is at the very heart of what the Torah teaches us.

As commentators have remarked over and over again, the way in politics is to favour oneself, but the way of Torah is to ensure justice not only for oneself but for the other party as well, without special bias, without regard for what is right for me alone. This is a function of the recognition all of us, we and our enemies alike, are created in the image of God. It recognizes that each of us deserves respect for no other reason than that we are created in the image of God. We do not have to "earn" someone else's respect in that sense, it is God given. It is very hard to acknowledge the humanity in another human being who threatens us, but that is unquestionably the spiritual goal of Torah, even if it is not a common political goal. This is pursuing justice in a manner that itself is just.

If this is the justice that Ashwari has been seeking, if she has sought justice for both Israelis and Palestinians, then she deserves the Sydney Peace Prize and *gezuntahet*, good luck to her! But if this is not the peace that she has been seeking, how can her words of peace ever be fulfilled? As long as the Israelis are seen and portrayed simply as being objects of hatred for Palestinian children, how can there be peace? And for our part as Jews, as long as we see Palestinians simply as objects of hatred and fear, then how can there be peace? Let the Sydney Peace Prize be awarded to that person who overcomes their own inclination to prejudice, hatred and distrust, and so comes to see their enemy as a potential friend. That person truly deserves a prize of peace.

Inserted with the kind permission of Rabbi Fred Morgan.

High Holydays

After a bit of a drought, as far as festivals are concerned, we are in the month of Elul, busily preparing for Rosh Hashana.

In our theology, this is the day when every human being, not just every Jew, is required to give an account of what he or she has been up to in the past year, and a judgment is made regarding what is to befall us in the coming year.

The observant Jew prepares himself during the month of Elul for this judgment. Maimonides explains that the Shofar, the Ram's Horn, is blown every morning as a means of stirring the Jew to repentance, and several other reasons based on this theme are given.

The most striking feature of the Rosh Hashana service is, of course, the sounding of the Shofar, not just with a simple blast, but with the prescribed sequences of the Tekia - Shavarim - Teruah sounds.

Festive meals are a feature of the two days of Rosh Hashana, a feature of which is the head of a fish gracing the table, symbolic of the wish that, in the coming year we should achieve the status of the head of the community rather than its tail.

Another, somewhat more appealing item is an apple dipped in honey, for a sweet year. For the same reason, we dip our Challah in honey rather than the usual salt.

The ceremony of Tashlikh is an ancient ritual casting-away of sins, into any body of water capable of sustaining fish, such as the sea, a stream, a lake, or even a pond in the park. There are numerous reasons for this custom, which space precludes me from going into here.

Judgement is reserved, and our fate hangs in the balance until the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, when, by means of a strenuous day of prayer and fasting, we have one last chance to tip the balance and turn an unfavourable judgement into a favourable one.

The last act of the day is a single sounding of the Shofar, from which a number of reasons are given, my favourite being that it demonstrates our confidence that we have emerged from our trial victorious.

Immediately following Yom Kippur, it is customary to begin building the Sukkah, in preparation for this Festival four days later. This is one of the most fun festivals, and not much needs to be said here.

Next, we have Shemini Atzeret, immediately followed by Simchat Torah, my personal favourite, despite having the brakes put on a bit by my sensible wife and my body's gradual decline in its ability to handle alcohol.

After all this action, we then have a bit of a break until Chanukah - but more about that later!

Shalom, David.

Being a Jew

by Moshe Katsav

The writer is President of Israel.

Jerusalem Post

The late Daniel Pearl of blessed memory, by stating “I am a Jew” to his terrorist captors before being murdered, proclaimed his affiliation to a religious and national entity, and his being part of Jewish history. This declaration encompasses a way of life, beliefs and views. To be a Jew means having an outlook on worldwide issues that is founded on Jewish principles based on the Bible.

To be a Jew means to belong to a faith, which gave humanity the belief in one God and universal values, which have accompanied humankind since the founding of the nation 3,313 years ago at Mount Sinai, when we sanctified our faith and received the Ten Commandments.

To be a Jew means to belong to a people that has showed determination and steadfastness and withstood numerous afflictions and tribulations for thousands of years.

The Jew belongs to a nation that lost its independence when the First Temple was destroyed 2,690 years ago and the people of Israel were expelled and exiled to Babylon. He belongs to a nation the Persian Empire tried to annihilate 2480 years ago. The Purim miracle occurred and the Jews were saved.

He belongs to a nation, which the Hellenist Empire, 2,166 years ago, tried to convert and did not succeed. The Jewish people then revolted under the Maccabees against the Greeks and in so doing prevented the loss of independence.

He belongs to a nation that lost its independence a second time, 1,933 years ago, to the Roman Empire, resulting in the exile of the Jewish people from its country.

He belongs to a nation which for 2,000 years experienced continuous suffering, expulsion, forced conversions, exiles and inquisitions and, worst of all, the terrible Holocaust by the Nazis and their collaborators. The Jewish people rose up from the ashes and succeeded in reviving and obtaining sovereignty and independence in its homeland.

No event in the history of mankind is similar to that of the Jewish people.

Fifty-six years ago the Jewish people succeeded in reestablishing its state, a democratic, modern and liberal country with advanced

scientific and technological achievements, a country which bases its national life on the vision of the Prophets of Israel and on the moral values Judaism has given humanity.

Judaism emphasizes the value of communal life and mutual solidarity. "All Israel is responsible for one another," is the key phrase outlining a way of life. To be a Jew means to care for the weak and the needy.

Social justice and concern for the weak are cornerstones of Judaism and of the Torah of Israel and we see a straight line between concern for the weak and our possession of the Land of Israel. "Justice, justice shall you pursue that you may thrive and inherit the land."

In other words, in order for the Jewish people to live successfully in its historical homeland it must take care of the weak, the orphan, the widow and the disabled, as social justice is the basis of our life in Israel and the beginning of our redemption. In the Bible there are many references and laws dealing with social justice and concern for the weak, including the commandment to leave the corner of one's field, the forgotten sheaves, for the poor; the Shmita, the seventh year during which the land must lie uncultivated, year, the Jubilee Year for the redemption of people and land. It is even stated that "charity is equal to all the commandments of the Torah."

The State of Israel, as a Jewish democratic country, is also an advanced welfare state, aware of social needs.

THERE IS no conflict between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. After all, Christianity is based on Judaism and the Bible. The festivals and Jewish tradition were sanctified in the life of the Jewish nation before Christianity appeared, and Christianity is also based on them. During my last meeting with His Holiness the Pope in the Vatican, he quoted the Prophet Jeremiah and called Jews the elder brothers of Christians.

Likewise, regarding Islam: When the Jews were persecuted and expelled, approximately 500 years ago during the Middle Ages from Europe, the Muslim world absorbed the exiled Jews. The cooperation between Judaism and Islam resulted in a period of great cultural development for all humanity.

During these times a great collection of compositions, meditations and culture in commentaries, law, Jewish thought and communal life was created.

The prayerbook and the Bible, on which our national and religious life are based, bound thousands of Jewish communities, cut off from each other for thousands of years and scattered throughout the world. In this way Judaism and the Jewish people were preserved.

The prayers in synagogue are meant for purposes of religion and worship, but they are also an expression of appreciation of Judaism's magnificent past, thanks to which we have survived as a nation. The synagogue is also a place where moral principles and rules of behavior are imparted to the congregants. In this way a combination of religious prayer, honoring the past and the acquisition of moral principles was created.

Every Jew feels a spiritual bond and an emotional attachment to Judaism even if, in the era of globalization, he hardly knows the basic concepts of Judaism; even if his bookcase holds no books dealing with the Jewish faith, the Jewish people, Jewish culture and history.

The values of Judaism are universal and humane values. All parts of the nation Sephardi, Ashkenazi, haredi, Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Israelis and Diaspora Jews are all linked and joined to each other and to these values.

Judaism, therefore, is focused on social justice and concern for the weak. Judaism is faith, a world outlook, universal values, laws governing man's conduct towards his fellowmen and his conduct toward God. Judaism is linked to life.

To be a Jew means to belong to a nation whose people are spiritually and emotionally connected to each other, to belong to a group which shares a common magnificent past, one tradition and a common destiny and fate. The Jewish people are the sons of one father. We are one big family.

Let me quote Prof. Erwin Radkowski, chief scientist of the US Atomic Energy Commission in the 1960s that built the first nuclear powered submarine, the Nautilus. When asked how he recommends that a person improve his thinking ability, his reply was: "Study a page of the Gemara (commentary on the Jewish Oral Law) every day."



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