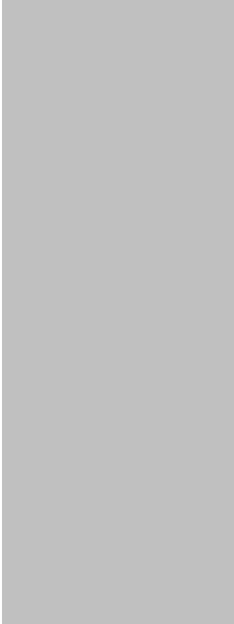


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## November 2003

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### From the Desk of Rabbi David E. Fass *For Shame!*

Alas, the world still applies a double standard to our people. The piece below, written by a professor at Tel Aviv Medical Center, is a frightening reminder that evil, politically motivated fundamentalism, still lurks unchecked in too much of our world. We are far from perfect, but we are among the highest angels compared to those who continue to malign us:

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### Our Apology

Following [one of the recent] atrocities in Jerusalem, Secretary of State Powell urged the Palestinians to issue some form of denunciation. [Then] Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas complained that only the Palestinian side is ever required to denounce terror. Predictably, the Palestinian denunciation later mumbles that they “deplore the murder of civilians on both sides.”

Perhaps the Palestinians have a point, and so to set the record straight, I do hereby denounce the following in the name of the Jewish People

1. All Jewish suicide bombers who have ever acted against Arabs.
2. All Arab buses blown up by Jews.
3. All Arab pizza parlors, malls, discotheques and restaurants destroyed by Jewish terrorists.
4. All airplanes hijacked by Jews since 1903.
5. All Ramadan feasts targeted by Jewish bombs.
6. All Arabs lynched in Israeli cities; all Arab Olympic athletes murdered by Jews; all Arab embassies bombed by Jews.
7. All mosques, cemeteries and religious schools fire bombed or desecrated by Jews in North Africa, France, Belgium, Germany, England or any other country.

8. The destruction of American military, governmental and civilian institutions in Kenya, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Yemen - along with the murder of U.S. Marines and diplomatic personnel.

9. All Jewish school books which claim that Arabs poison wells, use Christian blood to bake pita, control world finance, and murdered Jesus; or that Arab elders meet secretly to plot a world takeover.

10. And I am particularly ashamed at the way my fellow Jews attacked the World Trade Center, Pentagon and civilian aircraft on September 11th, and danced in the streets to celebrate the act.

Prof. Stephen Berger, Tel Aviv Medical Center

Coincidentally, while I was preparing this I received the following e-mail indicating that Israel was disbanding the Religious Affairs Ministry. By so doing, Israel takes a major step towards severing the connection between politics and religion that has been the source of so much of the world's evil:

NEW YORK (Oct. 8)----“The Israeli Cabinet’s decision to disband the Religious Affairs Ministry represents a victory for Israeli democracy, the Reform Movement, and its Progressive partners in Israel,” said Philip Meltzer, President, and Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, Executive Director of ARZA/WORLD UNION, N.A. “This is a momentous turning point in the struggle to achieve the creation of a pluralistic society in Israel, based on a more sensible accommodation of issues of religion and state. It is a goal we have been working towards for two generations.”

The Israeli Cabinet approved the dismantlement of the Religious Affairs Ministry by a vote of 18-3 Wednesday. Hirsch said that putting the Rabbinic Courts under the Ministry of Justice would have been unthinkable in the past.

The impact of the decision will be visible in two areas: First, the Rabbinic Courts will be required to follow legal procedures as a part of the Ministry of Justice; second, the Rabbinic Councils will operate under the supervision of the local municipalities. “We anticipate that Reform/Progressive institutions will receive more favorable consideration from the municipalities, resulting in more resources and more allocations for Progressive congregations throughout Israel,” Hirsch said.

According to Hirsch and Meltzer, “ This Cabinet vote constitutes another victory in a long battle with the Orthodox monopoly in Israel, which has been an oppressive force in the lives of ordinary Israelis. It is a huge step for all who care about the future of Israeli society and the integrity of Israeli democracy.”

[ARZA/WORLD UNION, N.A. is the representative of North America’s Reform Jewish community for issues pertaining to Israel and Zionism, as well as the voice of matters related to Reform Judaism worldwide. The organization is the North American representative of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.]

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## Cantor's Notes

I am writing this article one day after Yom Kippur. Some two thousand years ago, the great teacher Hillel taught, “ Do not separate yourself from the community.” (Avot 2:4)

On Yom Kippur we really felt like a community; a wonderful community united by common beliefs and inspirations. This inspiration came from many sources, but there is one source I would like to mention now. Everyone in the Temple Beth Sholom community owes much gratitude to the members of our volunteer choir: Eva Simons, Carol Pitkin, Laurie Winston,

Nancy Goldberg, Melinda Koss, Ellen Rosenman, Arlene Kalmanson, Marian Fass, Rita Weingold, Joyce Taub, Elena Schwartz, Elaine Feig, Risa Stern, Brad Kalmanson, Scott Jones, Len Sklerov. These people worked tremendously hard. They did a great job and all deserve our respect. I would like to congratulate them on their great achievement and express a wish that next year we will see more of you among them.

There is another group of people that also needs to be mentioned.

It is always a big responsibility and honor to read from the Torah. But to read on the High Holy Days is a double Mitzvah and double the responsibility. Those of you who attended the Second Day Rosh Hashanah service and Yom Kippur afternoon service enjoyed the reading of the Torah by our religious school students: Sara Pekofsky, Andrew Israel, Michelle Israel, Lindsey Bass, Katie Papo, Evan Ridge and Allison Gottlieb. Please join me in extending congratulations to them on their great accomplishments.

I want to thank all of you for your help in preparing for these High Holy Days.

I would like to tell you briefly about a great musical event which New York music lovers have long waited for. This November, after 67 years, the most "Jewish" opera ever written, "La Juive" (The Jewess) by Fromental Halevy, will return to the Metropolitan Opera. This opera is a romantic tale of forbidden love between the Jewess Rachel and a Christian prince, overshadowed by the historical frame within which it is told. This beautiful opera, last presented in 1936, is a poignant and timely revival.

Go to the Met, take your kids, and you will have a real quality time with your family.

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