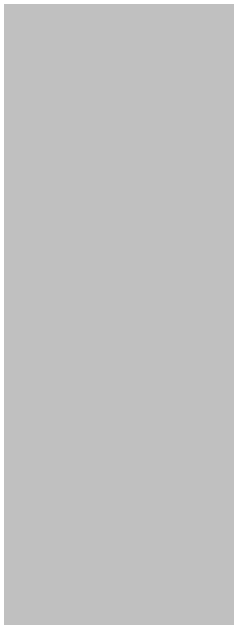


Temple Beth Sholom
228 New Hempstead Rd
New City, NY 10956
(845) 638-0770
FAX: (845) 638-1696
[Directions to Temple](#)
[Map or Text](#)



If you do not have Java enabled, use the alternate menu at the bottom of the page.



April 2004

The following excerpts from the **Lamp** are available for your review:

[Rabbi's Desk](#)

[Cantor's Notes](#)

[Back to top](#)

From the Desk of Rabbi David E. Fass *Gibson, Again*

Lately it seems as if my colleagues and I have been speaking more about Jesus than about Moses. If nothing else, Mel Gibson has gotten people talking. He has also made an unconscionable amount of money by unleashing yet again the most primitive and prejudiced aspects of the Christian attitude towards Judaism: that we are deciders, killers of Christ. Countless Jews have been murdered over the last two thousand years by Christian mobs, often inflamed by their priests' misreading of Christian Scriptures; the same misreading that Gibson uses.

We have a dilemma: do we see the movie so that we can respond from first-hand knowledge, knowing that some of the money we spend for tickets will go into Gibson's pocket? I felt that as the Rabbi, I had no choice. You will have to decide for yourselves. But know that if you go you will see two hours of the most sickening gore and torture imaginable

It seems as if many Christians who view the film find it a moving religious experience that adds depth to their faith in Jesus of Nazareth. Many, apparently, don't see the anti-Semitism the film propagates. That is here in America. I worry more about the reaction of people elsewhere, people who are already inclined to view Judaism and modern Israel as the source of most of the world's problems.

Below is the opinion piece I sent to the newspapers. I don't know if it changed any minds (or even, as I write this, if it was published), but I certainly hope so.

***** Passionately Biased *****

In my opinion, Mel Gibson's passionately crafted "Passion" is a biased movie. It is biased against Jews. It depicts the leaders of the Jews as arrogant zealots, and the overwhelming majority of the rest of the people as a bloodthirsty mob so intent on crucifying Jesus that no (supposed) leniency on the part of the Romans could dissuade them.

It is biased in that it focuses only on the material in the Gospels that blames the Jews for the killing of Jesus of Nazareth, to the exclusion of far more moderate views found elsewhere in those same Christian Scriptures.

It is biased towards historical inaccuracies and extraneous material found nowhere in the Scriptures, such as the scene in which Jesus' captors throw him off a bridge, to inflict the pain of dangling from his chains.

It is biased against Christianity. I have never heard, in any of my reading of Christian sources or in discussions with Christian colleagues and friends, that the quality and quantity of the sins from which Jesus was to free humankind was in some way proportional to the amount of pain inflicted on him. Yet this is just what Gibson suggests. There is rarely a moment that goes by in the film in which Jesus is not being hit with fists, ropes, chains, sticks, leather whips, whips with pieces of sharp metal that tear every inch of his flesh, pierced with thorns, knives, spears, and the nails of the crucifixion. For just over two hours, Jesus' blood washes over the screen.

It is biased against Catholicism. As a "traditionalist Catholic," Gibson rejects the theology of the Second Vatican Council that finally and officially gave the lie to the two thousand year old, anti-Semitic canard that the Jews and only the Jews were responsible for Jesus' death.

Mel Gibson's "Passion" is just that – Mel Gibson's, not Jesus'. It attempts to turn back the clock to an earlier, more primitive view of Jesus of Nazareth. At a time when we are quite literally at war with people who themselves are passionate about turning the clock back to a time of religious totalitarianism, Gibson has done no service to Christians, Jews, or anyone else. He has, instead, served only his own monumental ego, fueled by the incredible wealth of a media idol, fortunate enough to be blessed by God with good looks and a modicum of talent.

Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew, "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven." "Not everyone who says to me "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my Father, who is in heaven." [Matthew 6:1 and 7:2].

It seems to me that Gibson is doing Gibson's will, not God's. Whether he will spend eternity with God in heaven is open to considerable doubt.

Shalom,
Rabbi Fass

[Back to top](#)

Cantor's Notes

Our adult choir participated in a Choral Festival together with 12 other choirs in Teaneck, NJ. It was truly a musical celebration. I would like to congratulate all our choir members: Eva Simons, Carol Pitkin, Laurie Winston, Nancy Goldberg, Melinda Koss, Sandy Scharf, Marian Fass, Rita Weingold, Joyce Taub, Elaine Feig, Risa Stern, Scott Jones, Peter Taub, Gary Hochman, Rabbi David Fass, Vladimir Beryozkin, and Len Sklerov on a wonderful performance at this concert as well as at the B'nei Brith Annual Concert in

RCC a few weeks ago.

It was great to see our Sanctuary filled for Purim, Shabbat Across America, and the 4th, 5th and 6th grade Shabbat Services. I would like to thank everybody who made these events so successful!

Now that the Purim celebrations are over, we are ready to celebrate the next wonderful Jewish holiday, Passover. Nothing helps us to better set the mood for a holiday than music. Passover songs are numerous and familiar. The songs that you probably know the best are "Dayenu" ("It Would Have Been Sufficient"), "Chad Gadya" ("One Goat"), "Echad Mi Yodea" ("Who Knows One?"), "Adir Hu" ("Mighty Is He"), "Eliyahu Ha-Navi" ("Elijah the Prophet"), and "Avadim Hayinu" ("We Were Slaves"). Most of these songs are about sanctifying God and were added to the Haggadah over time. There are many country and culturally specific Passover songs that were also added to the Haggadah. It is interesting to note that, for instance, Passover songs such as "Chad Gadya" and "Echad Mi Yodea" were most likely modeled after Christian songs such as "The Twelve Days of Christmas." These two songs follow a cumulative pattern where a new event is added to each stanza followed by a listing of the previous events in reverse order all the way back to the first event. The main message of these two songs is that injustices occur in life, as demonstrated by each new event added to successive stanzas, but in the end it is God who is the strongest of all and will exact justice on any individual or group that seeks to harm another individual or group of people. Passover songs are not only about sanctifying God. There are Passover songs that teach gratitude for what one has in life. An example of this is the song "Dayenu." Passover songs such as these teach the message of gratitude in that anything God does for us.

Have a great and joyful (sameach) Pesach!
Cantor Schwartz

Home	Contacts	Newsletter	Calendar	Rabbi	President	Brotherhood
School	Nursery	Lamp Archives	Simply Simchas	Cantor	Jewish Links	Sisterhood
Youth		Bereavement	Recovery	Sponsors	ChaiSociety	Membership
College	Judaica	Beautification	Tzedakah			

Send mail to [Steve Weinberg, Webmaster](#) with questions or comments about this web site.
Copyright © 2006 Temple Beth Sholom New City