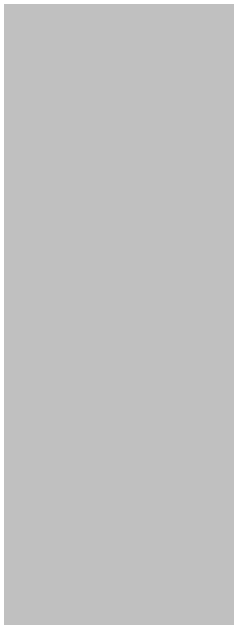


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May 2004

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

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From the Desk of Rabbi David E. Fass

What Do You Want Them to Say?

What do you want our children to say when a kid in their class says:

“You Jews are oppressing the Palestinians. If you’d stop, there would be no terrorism.”

What do you want our children to say when they’re at a friend’s house and their parent asks:

“Why don’t you Jews believe in Jesus?”

What do you want our children to say when they’re in a group and someone says:

“The Jews are the ones who killed Christ.”

What do you want our children to say when someone on their sports team says:

“The Holocaust never happened. It’s just Jewish propaganda to make people feel sorry for the Jews.”

What do you want our children to say when they overhear someone say:

“The Jews really are responsible for 9/11. They did it to create conflict between America and the Arab world.”

What do you want our children to say when a fellow student begins “warning” other students:

“There’s a secret Zionist conspiracy to rule the world. They already control Hollywood, and banking, and the stock market.”

Do you think our children would know how to respond to these anti-Semitic lies? Do you?

What do you want us to say when you let your kids stop coming to the one place they

can learn these things, our Religious School, just as they are beginning to be grown up enough to understand them?

What do you want us to say when you let your kids come late to class, or pull them out early for soccer, basketball, ballet, piano, karate, and it destroys the dynamics of the classroom, ruins everyone's learning, and makes it almost impossible to hire and budget properly for faculty?

What we say is: **JUDAISM IS NOT JUST ANOTHER AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY**

Do you think the Christian evangelicals who are now on a reinvigorated campaign to convert us, and especially our children, will ignore Jews over thirteen because they're just not very involved anymore? Do you think the Arab propaganda machine, unbelievably active on more and more college campuses and fueled by the untold wealth of the Saudis, will find much resistance from Jews who know little or nothing of substance about Judaism or Israel? Do you think a teacher who questions the right of Israel to exist in a college classroom will get much of a rebuttal from Jewish students who know Judaism only from what they were taught in elementary school?

Do you think of any of these things before giving in to the perfectly predictable desire of adolescents to attend as little school as possible? Do you understand that although leisure time activities may be fun, they are temporary and must take a back seat to the learning and creation of a permanent sense of Jewish ethics and spiritual growth? Do you understand that it's not very important to be your child's friend, but absolutely crucial to be a parent who sets limits and presents an example of adult maturity and morality?

You should.

Please forgive the strident tone of this article, but I feel an increasing sense of danger. Our people, our Judaism, is under attack all over the world, including here in the America that was and is a haven for so many millions of our people. Maybe before 9/11 some of us might have fooled ourselves into letting other people be Jewish for us, the Rabbis perhaps, or the Orthodox. Not any more. Terrorist bombs, evangelical proselytizing, Arab propaganda and just plain old-fashioned anti-Semitism don't make any distinctions based on varieties of Jewish ritual observance and philosophy.

The most important thing we do as a Temple is teach our people, young and old, to be proud to be Jewish. We try and teach what we believe to be the truth about Judaism and Christianity and Islam and... We try and teach knowledge of Judaism, past and present. We try and teach an ethical and moral approach to our lives and to others that is the opposite of bigotry and prejudice.

Please, see to it that your kids attend. See to it that they don't come late and leave early. See to it that you teach by example by coming to our adult education programs yourself. Don't send your kids to Temple, bring them. Come to services as a family. Make Friday night Temple night.

We all need to know what to say.

The very highest mitzvah in all of Judaism is Pikuach Nefesh, saving a human life. By donating blood, you will be doing exactly that. Whether your donation brings someone back from the brink of death or sustains someone in health so that they can continue their normal existence, you are helping others to live.

The harsh winter we have just left behind had a very negative impact on our local blood supply. With travel difficult, many blood drives had to be canceled. Yet, the daily need for blood in our area persisted.

Please, from a Jewish perspective, from a humanitarian perspective, from any perspective at all give blood and give regularly. If you are already a donor, your next opportunity is at our Temple's blood drive on Tuesday, May 4th from 4:00-9:30 pm in the Temple social hall. If you are not yet a donor, this is a wonderful opportunity to become one.

I can tell you from personal experience that it is a wonderful feeling to walk out after giving blood knowing that you have just helped to save someone's life. Why not bless yourself with that feeling and bless someone else with the gift of life?

Rabbi Fass



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Cantor's Notes

Cantor has been visiting our Sister Congregation in Kiev and was unable to make this month's Lamp deadline. Check this space next month, when Cantor will fill us in on his Journey.

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