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Customs and Symbols

by Rabbi Gary M. Golbart
Adat Ami, Las Vegas

If we ask of our children which of the Jewish holidays is most important to them, many, I dare say, would choose Chanukah! If this is the case, it is because our Christian friends have given us the motivation to take this relatively minor Post-Biblical holiday initiated late in our history (165 B.C.E. by Judah Maccabee) and incorporate such enjoyable family Minhagim, or customs, of lighting candles, playing games, and giving gifts. If not for the close proximity of Chanukah and Christmas, our holiday would most likely not have risen to its current popularity.

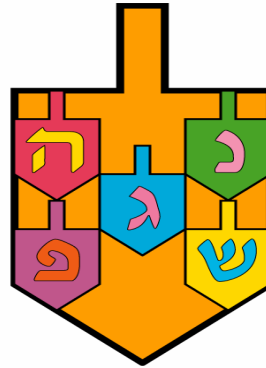
In this country a barrage of Christmas media marketing attacks us and our Jewish children retaliate in a competitive mode by boasting to their Gentile friends that we receive gifts for eight days. Competition during the winter holidays gave us the impetus to find symbols and customs that bring joy to the Jewish family. We have found the answer their 25th of December by raising our weed of the 25th of Kislev to great heights of excitement and fun. We overcompensate!

Throughout the year, however, there are many opportunities to create and enjoy family Minhagim, which bring the family closer together and imprints special memories in our Jewish consciousness. There are appropriate symbols and cus-

toms used during Shabbat, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Purim, Pesach, etc. to bring each to a delightful and memorable place in our weekly and yearly cycle. We need not just react to the competitive spirit we find in December, but we can add to the enjoyment of our Jewishness by finding new ways to enhance our religious experience.

We find some Jewish homes during Chanukah displaying inappropriate symbols, some even derived from pagan origins with reasoning that they do not want to miss out in the festive nature of the season, and see no harm in their use. Chanukah commemorates our desire to remain Jews no matter how difficult it may be and the sacrifices that are sometimes needed to succeed and survive. Jews using symbols and following practices of another religion defeat the very purpose of Chanukah. Many even fail to see the value in following the many Jewish customs available during the year that will enrich their lives.

Customs and symbols are very powerful. They are used to remind us of something, whether it be the Tzitzit on our prayer shawls to remind us of our Mitzvot, our commandments; the Shabbat candles to remind us of the sanctity of the day of rest, or the Mezuzot on our door posts to remind us that one is entering a Jewish home with Jewish responsibilities. There



IFR Mission Statement

The IFR is a professional organization of rabbis united by a commitment to Jewish tradition and a desire to facilitate the Jewish spiritual growth and life cycle needs of all.

IFR provides a progressive, pluralistic forum, linking member rabbis in a spirit of friendship and a sense of community.

IFR provides support for members in their professional endeavors and offers continuing education. IFR encourages professional relationships with rabbis and other rabbinic organizations.

Customs and Symbols

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are symbols that may save our lives, such as those, which warn us of railroad crossings or to stop at an intersection. Other symbols may cause great emotional reaction such as the Ku Klux Klan's burning cross or that of the Nazi Swastika.

The Minhagim and symbols with which we choose surround us makes a difference in our quality of life. They serve to remind us of whom we are, what our responsibilities are to our families, our fellow man, and to our G-d. Choose them with care and their power will be a blessing.

Speak to your religious leaders for suggestions on how to create more meaningful holidays, as us to suggest books that will offer good instruction, and make a commitment to do a little more each year, and another Mitzvah to your list of observances, and seek out custom and symbols that will bring warmth and meaning to your life and that of your family and community.

May this Chanukah be a time of celebrating peace, and dedicating ourselves to the ideals of Judaism and the survival of our people

in a far off land. At a time like this we need to recognize how tragic war is for everyone; regardless of the reasons, is never an ideal state in the world.

Rabbi Gary Golbart is a founding member and past president of the IFR. Rabbi Golbart is the spiritual leader of Adat Ami in Las Vegas Nevada.

To Build a Dwelling to fit all in our Community

By Rabbi Jeffrey Lipschultz

This is the special time for many in the faith community as we prepare to celebrate Sukkot. This is a unique time of year when the weather changes and yet we are commanded to dwell in such a flimsy building that is the sukkah. Sukkot is a festival of striking beauty and contrasts. For one week each year, we abandon the stoical permanence of our homes and live, instead, in the fragile, temporary structure of sukkot (booths). These booths remind us that we do not truly own our possessions. Things that we hoard and accumulate we will one day pass on to others. They can be lost, or broken, or stolen. The only true possessions we own are deeds of care and service, mitzvot. In that light, this Festival presents an ideal opportunity to reflect on the life of service embodied by the Festival and offered through our holy Torah.

One of the more negative aspects of the modern American life is the failure to find meaning in the beauty of nature. We are often given as a dose of daily life a self-centered mantra that "I am the only one that matters." Our country was not built with this concept but we seem to have developed it in our modern secular ways. We recognize the importance of our individual actions and strength in our material success but Judaism calls out for different action from what we are used to in such an individualistic society. The degree that we define ourselves as consumers and our interactions as commodities, we cheapen ourselves and we cheapen our interactions. We reduce every relationship into a mere transaction, as though all that life is about is an exchange of goods always searching for a bigger and better deal. On Sukkah we cease the consumer world and embrace the nature around us and thus connect to something greater. There is only one alternative to being a consumer and that is to be a servant.

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Bruchim Ha'Baim

New and returning IFR members

Rabbi David Abrahams

Rabbi Charna Klein

Rabbi Stuart Marks

Rabbi Robert Schriebman

Rabbi Barbara Aiello

IFR Rabbis News & Shmooze



After nearly five years with Temple Beth El in Bradenton, Florida, **Rabbi Barbara Aiello** has been named the first rabbi of Synagogue Lev Chadash in Milan, Italy. Rabbi Barbara begins her tenure there on September 1, 2004 and will lead High Holy Day services for the congregation of over 200 members. Synagogue Lev Cha-

dash, which translates as "New Heart" is affiliated with the World Union of Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) and is the first Liberal (Reform) synagogue in Italy.

Rabbi Barbara speaks Italian and is a first generation American whose family originates in Italy. Her father, Antonio Aiello was raised in Calabria in the small mountain village of Serastretta in the Province of Catanzaro, and worked with the Partigiani (Italian Partisans) during World War II.

In addition to her rabbinic duties, Rabbi Barbara continues as religion columnist for the Venice (FL) Gondolier and as advisor to Bradenton's new "Chavurah Ner Tamid" (ChavurahNerTamid@hotmail.com).

She has been the National Chaplain for Bugles Across America, a volunteer organization that is dedicated to honoring military veterans by playing TAPS at their funerals.

Rabbi Barbara Aiello Synagogue Lev Chadash Milan, Italy

For the past three years Rabbi Barbara has hosted her own radio program, "The Radio Rabbi" on WLSS AM 930 in Sarasota, Florida. Before her ordination as rabbi from the Rabbinical Seminary International (RSI) in New York City, Rabbi Barbara was the creator and founder of "The Kids on the Block" educational puppet program used around the world to help children accept and appreciate difference and diversity.

As Rabbi of Synagogue Lev Chadash, Rabbi Barbara is the first woman rabbi in Italy.

**Rifuah Shelema to
Rabbi Richard Allen
after his surgery.**

Continued from page 2**To Build a Dwelling**

Jewish tradition stands and falls on our willingness to be not consumers of services, but servants of the Holy One: "Ana avda D'Kudsha Brikh Hu, I am a servant of the Holy Blessing One." When shoppers approach a transaction, they consider how it will benefit them and there is often an exchange that will allow the least investment of resources, energy and time yet will provide the biggest bang for the buck, the best return.

Our community at Temple Beth Sholom has connected to its congregants not as consumers trying to reach a better product but as individuals striving for community. That is what we learn on this unique time that a Kahila (community) like ours lives not on the money and buildings around it but within the hearts who attend our holy grounds and the individuals who reside in our lives. This is what is represented in all Sukkah's throughout the world.

When I was a Rabbinical student there was a text that spoke to me on this unique holiday, I remembering being told of a wonderful story about Rabbi Hayyim Krasner, a Hasidic leader, who went with his followers to visit an acrobat in the town of Krasny who was going to balance himself on a very high tightrope walk across a river. Like the rest of the townsfolk, the Rebbe appeared to be fascinated and stared with great intensity as the man made his way across the river. The crowd was gaping below. When the tightrope walker was finished, the Hassidim asked their teacher, "Rebbe, why was this so interesting to you?" And Rebbe Hayyim responded, "You might think that the acrobat crossed the river because of the financial reward offered to the person who would do it. And indeed he might have started with that motivation. But once he was up on the tightrope, if he had thought about that reward for even an instant, he would have fallen. While he was on the tightrope, the only thing he could think about was the next step and the step after that to keep his balance and from falling to the ground.

With community that we see on Sukkot we are able to make the next step not as individuals but as a whole being masked within the hearts of our Jewish community. With this vision of togetherness we reach the end of our goal and become much blessed in this result.

We come together at this special time to remind ourselves not of our flaws but of our connection to one another. On Yom Kippur we stood contemplating our own individual deeds and need for correction but on Sukkot we come together as a community to build something that exists in our hearts. The booths that we reside in during this time is to remind us that the material world is temporary but our community and faith in fellow man is the core of our existence.

To my friends in all the Jewish community take this opportunity to come to our sukkah and give of yourselves that will make it something special. When we dance with the Torah's on Simchat Torah on Thursday October 7th we remember through the act of sitting in the sukkah that we can build torah within our hearts through the connection of community.

Have a Chag Semiach and a good Simchat Torah—

Rabbi Jeffrey Lipschultz is the spiritual leader of Temple Beth Sholom in Chula Vista. He welcomes your comments at dvjewish@rof.net

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Rabbi Suzanne H. Carter

Kol Hanisiya

The year 5764 was *my* year of Jubilee-l'tov u'l'rah. I celebrated my 10th year as a rabbi, received my AARP card, my oldest son Ari turned 30, weathered (barely) two major hurricanes, periodontal surgery, buried my last parent, and was elected president of the IFR.

For the IFR, 5765 brings the organization into its fifth year. The IFR seed was planted in August 1999 by myself and several members who saw the need to bring rabbis together from all backgrounds to form a *non movement* rabbinic organization which would support their pluralistic membership. A wonderful idea for sure, but could it be accomplished? Several rabbis rose to the challenge, including Rabbi Buz Bogage who encouraged the group to meet.

In early March 2000, over 25 rabbis convened in Florida and the IFR was hatched. The "hatching" committee was given the name "baytzah" and the name has stuck since that time. Rabbi Louis Solomon was elected president and served the IFR for two terms, with Rabbi Gary Golbart serving as president this past term.

As with most organizations in their early years, we have had our aliyot and yeridot. Some of the original members left, new members have joined and some of the original members have returned. As with my year of jubilee, the IFR experienced growing pains.

The first Board meeting of the new IFR Board will be held on December 21, 2004. We will be addressing various topics which will effect the whole membership as well as setting up a regular schedule to meet as issues arise that need to be addressed. Each officer will submit a report, and the minutes will be posted on the web site for your review.

Some of the topics we will address is the formation of an IFR Beit Din, membership dues, Board members responsibilities to the organization, the 2006 convention, IFR newsletter, website and more participation from the general membership. The IFR is the first organization of its kind, united by a commitment to Am Yisrael. How can the IFR serve *you*, and how can *you* serve the IFR, so this unique organization can continue to serve rabbis beyond its year of Jubilee?

Chag Chanukah Sameach

May this festival of light shine on all humanity and bring us all peace

*Kol Tur**shosh*

On the Necessity of Sensitizing Those Who do not Know.**Rabbi Richard Allen Ph.D.**

(The reason for which my wedding ceremonies are neutral and do not have mention of Jesus or Adonai)

It is my firm belief that Interfaith weddings should take place neither in a church nor a synagogue. Interfaith weddings should take place on neutral ground, thereby favoring neither one nor the other religion. It is for this reason and by way of explanation that I write the following:

Jews and non-Jews alike have misconceptions with regard to so-called "Jewish symbols" in the wedding ceremony. The first thing I must do is to debunk the notion of "Jewish symbols."

The **Huppa** is symbolic of the home. Anyone who has gone camping knows what the flap of a tent looks like. The flap and the canopy and the **Huppa** are one in the same and the canopy is used throughout the Middle East and as far away as India.

THE RINGS: They are a symbol of your commitment. There is nothing mystical about them.

WINE is celebratory. That is all. It is not transubstantiation.

KIDDUSH CUP This is a cup used for blessing wine; it is traditional, but not a necessity. A wine glass will do.

BREAKING THE GLASS: This reminds the bride and groom that relationships, like glass, are fragile. My own words reflect the fact that two people who love each other can repair relationships through their love and trust in each other.

THE SEVEN BLESSINGS (Sheva B'rachot) are read or sung in Hebrew during the ceremony. **This is the only truly Jewish part of the ceremony.** And these blessings are for the health and happiness of the couple. I call them prayers rather than blessings.

A few years ago a priest asked me to come to his parish to take part in an ecumenical evening. The other speakers were a Methodist minister and a re-

tired priest.

I was asked to speak first and I had two topics about which I wished to speak: the abysmal level of Judaic education in Reform congregations and also the "hot button" that most Jewish clergy do not wish to mention for fear of alienating the assembly.

As I spoke about the poor quality of education they minister and the priest both were nodding their heads in agreement. When I saw that I stopped. I asked them if the level of education was as bad in their own religious schools. They told me that I was describing their schools as well.

And then I spoke about the **main subject** as far as I was concerned: **anti-Semitism**. I talked about my childhood and how, in the mostly the non-Jewish neighborhood where I went to elementary school, as I passed the Church school, I heard, "Here comes the Jew." I began running as soon as I heard that because I knew that stones were going to be hurled at me from the kids in the Catholic school.

When my parents moved to a neighborhood where more Jews lived I did not have to suffer that. I went to a high school which was one third Jewish, but even there; there was enough anti-Semitism to go around - especially from the Polish Catholics who made up another third.

At the age of 20 I joined the Air Force to serve my country during the Korean War. Once again I was singled out for a great deal of anti-Semitic behavior, which ran the gamut from, "Kike, Sheeny, Hebe, Jew-boy" to "dirty Jew and Christ-Killer." This is all pretty ugly, but it is the truth. I have had to put up with this rampant anti-Semitism to the present. This is not an uncommon story; it is known to most Jews in this country.

When I finished speaking at this ecumenical evening, the priest arose to speak. He said, "I am so happy that Rabbi Allen chose to speak on this subject because no one in this room has any idea of what it feels like to be on his end of the stick. We

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don't know what real discrimination feels like because we are the ones who are guilty of discrimination. When the Methodist minister spoke he said almost the same thing.

Today, anti-Semitism continues to linger in this country in the radicalized right wing of American politics, in anti-Israel leftist circles and among many anti-Zionist groups whose hatred of Israel barely disguise their broader contempt for everything and anything Jewish. Keeping these opinions on the margin of American society is not only the work of watchdog Jewish organizations like the ADL, but of all Americans of good faith who understand as a matter of conviction that "promise of America" is the promise of a society without hate, prejudice or social fear.

Even at its worst, it is important to remember that, American anti-Semitism, tempered by the market economy in this country, our underlying republican principles and the constitutional separation of Church and State never approached the levels of Jewish animus witnessed in Spain, Germany, Poland, Russia and the Middle East. America was far from perfect, but it was clearly different than other places of domicile for the Jewish people. For Jews around the world, the promise of America was greater than the failings of America. America, for most Jews around the world, was different.

The fact that American Jews have found the most welcoming society in the world, except for Israel, has led to assimilation. This assimilation, from the fortysomethings on down, makes them less aware of their Judaic roots and less caring of their Judaism in general. More is the pity, for they have forsaken their roots. They are less well-educated and less knowledgeable about Judaism. Two of my own children, who certainly had a good Jewish upbringing, have married non-Jews. Fortunately for me, their children are being raised within Judaism. In the cases of my own in-law children, they have seen the way our family interacts and feel that they want the warmth, love and beauty of our home and religious observance. We are very fortunate as parents because our in-law children are like a son and daughter to us. They wish to raise their children within Judaism with no pressure from my wife or me. Recently my son-in-law, after ten years of marriage,

has expressed the desire to become a Jew. He will study with me and, when I feel he is ready, go through the process of becoming a Jew.

You may wonder why I write all of the above. As a Rabbi it is my duty to teach and to reach out to humanity as best I can. In addition, I find that when a couple thinks about marriage they think more of themselves than of their parents or those who are invited to their wedding. It has been my practice for a number of years to recommend to every Interfaith couple that they buy and both read, **"The Inter-marriage Handbook"** in order to prepare themselves for the very important step that they are about to take.

They must learn about each other's religion. They must also be sensitive to their guests to make sure that their guests are not made uncomfortable by particular references to their specific religions. It is not only a question of good taste; it is also a question of the common courtesy to their guests.

Christians who have not felt the sting of anti-Semitic slurs cannot possibly feel or understand what reference to "our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" or mention of the Holy Trinity or the Father, Son and Holy Spirit can do to the discomfort level of the Jews who have been invited.

Since the First Century CE, starting with the polemics of Paul, going onward to the second century and for several centuries thereafter, beginning with the writings of the Church Fathers, there have been writings of a distinctly anti-Jewish nature. All of this, of course, is to blame the Jews for killing Christ and to justify the divinity of Christ.

A Concise History of Christian Antipathy toward Jews

Circa 40 - The story of Jesus has begun to take shape, constructed partly of historical memory and partly of imaginative readings of the ancient Scriptures.

c. 50 - c.60 The letters of Paul are composed. The

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earliest (1 Thessalonians, c. 51) rebukes Israel for not accepting Jesus.

c. 68 that Gospel of Mark is composed.

70 CE Romans attacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple.

c. 80 – 100 The (synoptic) Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John are composed.

167 Melito, Bishop of Sardis, raises the first recorded a charge of deicide against the Jewish people.

312 Constantine defeats his rivals and becomes Roman Emperor. The victory confirms his faith in Jesus Christ. Constantine's symbol becomes the Cross. Eventually, do to political reasons (the great number of Christians in his empire) Constantine declares Christianity to be the official religion of his empire.

325 Seeking a religious unity to match his newly won political unity, Constantine convenes the Council of Nicaea, which "unifies" Christian theology and belief with its Nicene Creed. The Cross comes to the center of the Christian cult, theology, and symbolism

c. 326 Constantine's mother, Helena, during a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, "finds" that True Cross.

387 St. John Chrysostom of the Antioch initiates and perfects the **Adversos Judeos** sermon genre. In the same year, Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, baptizes the convert Augustine.

388 Ambrose defends the righteousness of a synagogue burning, putting the very existence of Judaism at risk.

414 History's first organized assault on Jews as Jews takes place in Alexandria. Around the same time, history's first charge of ritual murder is brought against the Jews in Antioch.

427 Augustine completes *The City of God*, which argues decisively for the survival of Judaism with in the Christian world, but which also defines the dispersal of Jews as their proper condition.

1054 the Eastern Schism, the split between the Byzantine church and the Latin Church, becomes formal.

1096 with the beginning of the First Crusade, the Church the finds violence as a sacred act.

1098 Anselm completes *Cur Deus Homo*, asserting that God became man in order to suffer and die on

the Cross.

1144 Jews are accused of ritual murder of a Christian child in England, a "**blood libel**" that will be endlessly repeated.

1215 Pope Innocent III introduces laws to denigrate and isolate Jews, the ancestors of the yellow star of shame.

1242 King James I of Aragon forcibly requires Jews to listen to convert makers' sermons. King Louis IX of France (St. Louis) orders the Talmud burned in Paris.

c. 1260 The Dominican Thomas Aquinas publishes **Summa Contra Gentiles**, a summary of Christian faith as it should be presented to those who reject it, especially Jews. Now Jews who refuse to convert are regarded as deliberately defiant, instead of "invincibly ignorant."

1263 The Church moves in earnest to convert Jews.

1290, **England** expels all Jews – **England** had been officially "Judenrein" (cleansed of Jews).

1348 The Black Plague that devastates Europe brings with it a new level of Christian violence against Jews, with perhaps 300 communities wiped out. **A rumor is circulated that the plague originated in a Jewish well-poisoning scheme in Toledo.**

1391 A massacre of Jews in Seville, and then pogroms elsewhere in Iberia, result in unprecedented rates of Jewish conversion, which in turn lead Christians to suspect all, **conversos**.

1478 **The Spanish Inquisition** is established to ferret out secret Jews.

1492 **The Spanish Inquisition**, however, not only outlawed overt Jewish life in any of Portuguese or Spanish colonies but, by the end of the 16th century, had set up aggressive tribunals in the New World which not sought out Marranos but public ally burned them at the stake.

1496 – 1497 **Portugal** followed suit in along with mass conversions and wholesale massacres.

1517 Christianity in **Central Europe** was deeply split along religious lines following Luther's posting of his famed 95 theses compounding the problems of Jewish life with **ghettoization**.

1543 Luther's "**On the Jews and their Lies**" (a pamphlet) states Luther's horrendous words on

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burning the Jews in their synagogues is a precursor to Nazism.

1545 Emperor Charles V presses Pope Paul III to convene that Council of Trent, which declares that all sinners, not Jews, are responsible for the death of Christ, but Trent also imposes a new strictures on "unbelievers," including Jews.

1555 The Grand Inquisitor of Spain becomes Pope Paul IV. He ratifies the blood purity Statute of Toledo and issues Cum Names Absurdum, which establishes of the Roman ghetto.

17th Century: In **Amsterdam**, in the most prosperous of the Northern European Jewish communities of the **17th century**, internal problems and heresy trials tore at the cohesiveness of Jewish life. And, most of all, in the huge Jewish population centers of **Poland**, hundreds of thousands of Jews had perished in the Chmielnizki massacres of **1648** and **1649**.

1771 Voltaire anybody is a new, racial anti-Semitism, a defining Jews as "deadly to the human race."

1799 Napoleon, in extending the principle of equality before the law, and breaks down ghetto walls across your up, including in Rome. But he, too, will introduce restrictions designed to stifle Jewish "nationhood."

1815 After the defeat of Napoleon, the **Holy Alliance** restores elements of the old order. When **Pope Pius VII** is reinstated as ruler of the People States, he immediately **reestablishes the Roman ghetto**.

19th Century in America: The various court trials of a Jewish naval officer, Uriah P. Levy, in the decades before the Civil War were laced with public expressions of anti-Semitism. During the war itself, **General Grant**, in an act he later regretted, **ordered the only expulsion of Jews as a class in American history**. Following the war, in the wake of "Jim Crow" legislation, anti-Semitic discrimination in became widespread in the United States.

1818 Karl Marx, is born of a long that line of rabbis. His father had become a Christian. One of his first works will be "On the Jewish Question" (1843): "Money is the jealous god of Israel."

1905 Protocols of The Elders of Zion, a document purporting to be records of a Zionist Congress, ap-

pears in Russia. (For many years Henry Ford included this pamphlet in the glove box of every model T. that was sold)

20th Century: **Leo Frank**, a Jewish manufacturer in Georgia was **lynched by a mob** in **1913**. **By the 1920s, various anti-Jewish quotas also were imposed and a National Origins Act passed by Congress effectively closed Jewish immigration to America.** Moreover, **Henry Ford, Father Charles Coughlin** (in regularly scheduled Sunday broadcasts) and others publicly spread anti-Jewish messages throughout American society.

1933 Hitler comes to power. His first bilateral treaty is the Concordat with the Vatican, negotiated by Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli.

1939 Pacelli becomes Pope Pius XII. He cancels Pius XI's in-progress encyclical condemning anti-Semitism. (Incidentally, Hitler died still on the roles of the Catholic Church.)

1943 Jews are rounded up at the foot of Vatican Hill, Pius XII does not openly protest.

1945 Jews are liberated from concentration camps and, under the direction of Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, are either repatriated or emigrate to Israel and the United States

1948 The State of Israel is born.

There is no need to discuss the **Nazi Holocaust**; I am certain everyone is aware of that **genocide**.

Today, anti-Semitism continues to linger in this country in the radicalized right wing of American politics, in anti-Israel leftist circles and among many anti-Zionist groups whose hatred of Israel barely disguise their broader contempt for everything and anything Jewish.

In **"Constantine's Sword,"** by **James Carroll** (formerly a Paulist priest), the author makes it very clear from where anti-Semitism comes - the Gospels - and after that, Christian teaching. The subtitle of the book is "The Church and the Jews." There is a clear difference for Mr. Carroll. He calls it anti-Judaism. Whatever it is called, it is pernicious. Many of my dear friends who are priests and ministers, as well as other people who are not Jewish, are receiving this letter

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I quote here from James Carroll, a former Paulist priest, author of Constantine's Sword: p.50 ***When the priest at the consecration says, "This is the cup of the New Covenant," he is pronouncing the Old Covenant superfluous. Its job after Jesus is to leave the sanctuary. The Jew's job is to disappear. From a Christian point of view, just by continuing to exist, Jews dissent. Because of the threat it poses to the faith of the Church, that dissent can be defined by Christians as the core of the Jewish belief, which of course continues the insult.***

He goes on to show, in great detail, how the Church has systematically used the Jews when it needed them and walled them up in ghettos when it did not. It is an exhaustive study, very fully documented, pages and pages of footnotes and a very large bibliography.

Monotheism – A belief in one God

It should be noted that Judaism is mother to Christianity and Islam. Judaism existed 1,000 years before Christianity and 1,500 years before Islam. The patriarchs of Judaism as well as Moses and King David are too shrouded in the mists of history for anyone to know whether or not they truly existed. I would like to believe that they did; I cannot be certain. The blessing that I share with a co-officiate at the end of the wedding ceremony dates back, we believe, more than 3000 years. It is from the book of Deuteronomy. One thing is certain: The Ten Commandments, the product of the Jewish people, is the first great social document ever written.

Another idea which should be understood is that Jews pray to God on a personal level, one-on-one, as opposed to having to go through any intercessor.

Non-Jews refer to the Hebrew Bible as the "Old Testament." This is Christian nomenclature. For Jews there is no New Testament. The two terms, "Old" and "New," make very clear that the New Testament supersedes the Hebrew Bible. Again, when Jesus is invoked in the marriage ceremony, it is almost an affront to the Jews in attendance.

This, then, is the baggage that Jews carry with them wherever they happen to be. Of course, I cannot expect that the non-Jew will be able to understand what is essentially within the **DNA of every Jew today**.

It is for this reason that I believe that the language of the wedding ceremony should be neutral and reference to "the Lord," or "God" should be the only references made during a wedding ceremony.

I would prefer to say that God has no identity crisis; people do. I believe that we all worship one God, but that we worship differently. Our beliefs are our own and we should not impose them upon others.

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