

Scholar's Holiday

Lag Ba'omer, also known as the Scholar's Holiday, is a time of rejoicing. It was on that day that the prayers of the pupils of the gentle sage, Rabbi Akiba, brought about the end of a terrible plague in what was then Palestine. Legend also has it that Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai had remained hidden in a cave during the persecutions (by the Romans) for fourteen years. When he died, the rainbow, which had not been seen for many years, appeared in the sky to remind the Jews of his prophecy that before the Messiah came to free the Jewish people, they should see a bow of many colors in the sky. So in his memory, European Jewish school boys were allowed to leave their books and roam the woods and fields carrying bows and arrows.

This holiday, therefore, is a nature as well as an historical festival. It is after the service on the eve of the second day of Passover that the counting of the Omer begins. An Omer (in this case meaning harvest) is actually a measure about the size of half a gallon which contained some of the wheat of the first harvest that was brought as an offering for the priest of Jerusalem. The counting lasts for seven weeks. The days of counting, which are called the **Sefirah** days, are a time of unhappy memories for the Jews, because at this period there were terrible massacres, under the Roman emperors and later during the Crusades. Marriages, festivals and even haircuts were not permitted during the Sefirah days, except on the New Moon and the thirty-third day of the Omer (Lag Ba'omer). This year it falls on May 15th.

Rabbi Simeon's burial place — Meron in Galilee — has remained the scene of a picturesque ceremony. It is on Lag Ba'omer that the Hasidim and others bring their young children for their first haircut as well as lighting bonfires and dancing throughout the night.

— R.M.

Peace?

By Rabbi Richard K. Rocklin

The questions are many. Simply stated, what is the Israeli attitude toward the peace treaty with Egypt?

Fortunately, we were in Israel during the time President Carter made his historic adventure.

The Israelis were not lined up in the streets to see President Carter, nor was there dancing in the streets upon the news that Egypt had accepted the terms of the agreement. Why? The Israeli is neither foolish nor without understanding in terms of the precariousness of this Egyptian-Israeli treaty.

Let us review. What Prime Minister Begin has agreed to essentially is Israel's surrender of a huge amount of vitally strategic territory in exchange for Anwar Sadat's assurances. Setting aside for the moment the Halachic objections to retreat from the Sinai, and they are weighty, let's consider the prospects for Egyptian adherence to the provisions of the new treaty.

Historically the Egyptian record of abiding by peace treaties with Israel is to put it mildly, miserably. Egypt to put it in the past 30 years violated each agreement. On February 24, 1949, representatives of Israel and Egypt signed the United Nations mediated armistice agreement ending the War of Independence. Paragraph 3 of the agreement added: "No warlike act or act of hostility shall be conducted from territory controlled by one of the parties to this agreement against the other party." The Egyptians immediately violated the treaty by blocking Israeli ships from the Suez Canal, installing artillery at Sharm el Sheikh, and barring Israeli shipping from the Straits of Tiran. That was just a beginning. It then openly launched a campaign of terrorism in Gaza, Northern Sinai. In just six years time there were over 1800 Egyptian-sponsored border raids and nearly 1400 armed clashes with Israelis forcing killing 100 Egyptians and wounding 300.

In similar fashion, the Egyptians paid no heed to the ceasefire they agreed to in August 1970 ending the war of attrition against Israel. With Gamal Nasser and then Anwar Sadat at the helm, Egypt whisked new missile batteries, thousands of soldiers into the Suez Canal area, all blatant violations of the armistice.

And the last time — Sadat

made a total mockery of the 1975 accord he signed with Israel. Although the Western media has paid scant attention to Israel's repeated complaints, there is little doubt that the Israeli charges are accurate since they have been confirmed by both the United Nations and the President of the United States. The accord permits Egypt to station eight battalions in the Sinai. In June 1977 a U.N. report stated that there were at least ten Egyptian battalions, perhaps as many as 16 to 18 as Israel had charged. This past February 23, President Jimmy Carter told *The New York Times* that there are currently at least five full Egyptian divisions, 30 to 45 battalions facing Israel in Sinai. Israeli Chief of Staff, General Mordecai Gur, has further charged that the Egyptians moved surface-to-air missiles into Sinai — another treaty violation.

One additional fascinating item which has gained little exposure outside Israel is the astonishing fact that Egypt is currently building a massive tunnel beneath the Suez Canal to link Egypt to the Sinai. As the *Jerusalem Post* reported, the tunnel is large enough for tanks, missile carriers, armored vehicles, and would be a crucial asset to Egyptian troops in the event of another war. Not only is this Egyptian military project a clear violation of the Sinai accord, but it also must pass some doubt in the mind of the Israeli concerning this latest quest of peace. The fact that construction of the tunnel began just before Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and is now nearing completion as Sadat signed another peace treaty, makes the Israeli wonder how believable Sadat's pledges of "no more war" really are.

Let us be very optimistic at this season of the year, but let us continue to exercise caution.



I Do Not Know If My Grandchildren Will Be Jewish

By Saul Brenner

In 1968, the year before our older son was born, my wife and I visited Israel. There we met a young Scottish Jew who told us, "A Jew is not someone with all Jewish grandparents. Rather, he is someone with all Jewish grandchildren."

I wondered if all my grandchildren would be Jewish. I still wonder. We no longer live in a society in which one is fated to be a Jew. Many young Jews have joined oriental cults, become members of Jews for Jesus, or decided not to identify with any religious or ethnic group. Will my two sons leave Judaism as well?

I believe there is a strong relationship between the quality of one's Jewish experiences and the probability that one will choose to remain Jewish. My wife and I have sought to provide experiences for our children which generate enthusiasm for Judaism. We have sent our sons to the Hebrew Academy where they eagerly learn Hebrew and other Jewish subjects. We try to celebrate the Sabbath and the Jewish holidays in a meaningful way, not only in the synagogue, but at home as well. Every year I build a Succah in our backyard. We expose our boys to expressions of Judaism that differ from our own, including Reform and Chassidic. If we have the money we will send our children to Camp Ramah and later to Israel. My wife and I plan to make some arrangement for the continuation of our sons' Jewish education after they graduate the Hebrew Academy.

We believe Judaism is a valuable heritage. Perhaps our grandchildren will value Judaism as well.

JCC To Host Newcomers' Eve

The JCC will host a wine and cheese evening for all newcomers who have arrived in Charlotte during the past year. The event will be held on Saturday, May 19, from 7:30-9 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center.

"There are so many newcomers in the Charlotte Jewish community that it is up to all the organizations to help them meet each other, meet established residents and feel a part of the community," says Mrs. Linda Kaplan, a member of the evening's planning committee and herself a recent addition to Charlotte. "The Temples and organizations have done their share in this process and the JCC is proud to join in their effort." (Note: *The News* is now publishing lists of newcomers for the benefit of the membership chairpeople of the various Temples and organizations as well as to make the names familiar to all our readers. If you know of any names inadvertently omitted please call the JCC at 366-0357. (See p. 8)

As part of the Newcomer Evening the JCC will make available copies of Shalom Y'all brochures. Data on all organizations will be included. Members of the JCC board will also be present to help newcomers exchange information and get answers to the widest range of questions and concerns about Charlotte and the surrounding area.

Invitations have already gone out to all newcomers on the JCC list.

News Watch

Edited By
Marta Garelik

ITALIANS 'REGRETS' HOOLIGANS; *The Jerusalem Post International* — ROME (Reuter) — Italy has expressed regret to Israel over an anti-Semitic demonstration by neofascist youths at a basketball match recently.

During a European basketball cup match in the northern town of Varese between Tel Aviv Maccabi and Emerson of Varese, a group of neo-fascist youths shouted insults and unfurled banners bearing anti-Jewish slogans.

The Foreign Ministry sources said Ambassador Girolamo Nisio, in Tel Aviv, had been instructed to convey the government's regret for "the contemptible and shameful episode of hooliganism."

"Hitler taught us that killing Jews is no crime" and "Jews into the oven" were some of the slogans screamed during the match.

SCHOLARSHIPS; *The Jerusalem Post International* — The Acre Municipality granted 19 scholarships worth IL 2,600 each to Arab university students. The municipality hopes to double the number of scholarships for Arabs next year.

VIENNA DROPOUTS; *The Jerusalem Post International* — The dropout rate among Soviet Jewish emigrants arriving at the Vienna transit camp reached a peak of 76% in the first week of this month.

Nearly 600 of the 800 emigrants who arrived in Vienna during the week decided to forego Israel and settle elsewhere, even though they left the Soviet Union on visas for Israel. Most of them come from Odessa and other cities where Jewish identity is marginal.

Jewish Agency Executive Chairman Arye Dulzin has sent aliya department head Raphael Kotlowitz to the U.S. to confer with Jewish leaders on the situation.

THE LITTLE MATTER OF MONEY DOESN'T WORRY THE CONDUCTOR; *Jerusalem Post Reporter* — HAIFA — The Haifa Symphony Orchestra is in serious financial difficulties and does not have enough money to pay its musicians. An appeal has been launched to try to save the orchestra, one of the North's main cultural assets, but because of the financial uncertainty, four new immigrant musicians have returned to the U.S.

Reversing the direction, however, is conductor and professor of music, David Epstein, of the Mass. Inst. of Tech. He was invited to give two concerts this month, but the orchestra withdrew the invitation when it found there wasn't enough money to pay him.

But Epstein told them he would waive both his fee and the cost of travelling to Israel.

"Cultural life should not suffer because of money," Epstein wrote to the orchestra management.

PRESIDENT PORTILLO AWARDED DEGREE; *MEXICO CITY* — Words of praise for Israel came from the lips of Mexico's President Jose Lopez Portillo as he was awarded an honorary degree from the hands of Avraham Harman, President of the Hebrew University, at a festive banquet attended by leading Jews of Mexico, Canada and the U.S.

The rebirth of Israel was described by Portillo as a phenomenon of history and he

praised the Jewish people for maintaining their identity through centuries of dispersion and persecution.

ONLY 30 JEW STILL LIVE IN CHINA; *The Jerusalem Post International Edition* — According to a study on "Jewish Communities in the Far East" published recently by the publications service of the Government Information Centre, 30 of the 839 million people in China in 1976 were Jewish.

Evidence of the presence of Jews in China goes back to the Eighth Century, but a permanent Jewish community was established only in the 1840's after the conquest of Hong Kong by the British and the penetration of European powers to Shanghai, and other cities.

SAN FRANCISCO'S JEWISH MAYOR; *The Jewish Post and Opinion* — LOS ANGELES — Dianne Feinstein, San Francisco's mayor, is a Jew by choice, according to an interview in the *Los Angeles Times*. Mrs. Feinstein became mayor after the assassinations of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk, a Jewish gay activist, on Nov. 27.

Born to a Roman Catholic mother and a Jewish father, Mrs. Feinstein was quoted as saying that her parents encouraged her to be a free thinker. She went to a Catholic convent school.

She also attended a Jewish Sunday School, and at the age of 20 chose Judaism, she says, because she "liked the simplicity of the religion, the directness, and I was aware of the prejudice that exists and of our distinct heritage. I felt a need to go in that direction."

LIVER TRANSPLANT; *TEL AVIV* — A rare liver transplant was performed by doctors at Rehovot's Kaplan Hospital. It involved giving a 10-day-old baby a fetus' liver containing antibodies necessary to fight a disease which had killed her parents' two previous children shortly after birth.

The operation was the first of its kind in Israel and only the sixth in the world. The Israeli recipient was the youngest so far.

No special problems were encountered in performing the transplant.

Children of God Cult Back In Va.

They distribute literature for donations on crowded city streets and in college towns, and they call themselves the Children of God. They have also been known, of recent date, to use the name of the Family of Love. By whatever name, they are an anti-Semitic, anti-Israel, anti-American, and pro-Arab religious cult. They have reappeared in Virginia and are of concern.

The anti-Semitism of the leader of the Children of God cult is blatant. "Therefore, I shall rise up and destroy thee who calleth thyself Israel... Oh, ye enemies of the Almighty and you crucifiers of the Son of God..." was part of the mock-spiritual language in a diatribe written not long ago by the self-styled prophet and leader of this strange worldwide cult and propaganda apparatus — David Brandt Berg, who now calls himself "Moses David," "Father David" or "Mo."

They began as an offshoot of the "Jesus Freak" movement and have grown to number, according to their figures, 8,000 young people in some 70 countries around the world. Berg

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