



*Reflections of a
Quad-Cities Rabbi*

Natorei Karta In Tehran

The subjects of Zionism, Messianism and the Holocaust have always fascinated me since my days as a student in the Lubavitch Seminary stretching back several decades. As many of you probably know, nearly all of the Hassidic rabbis (including Chabad) condemned Zionism because only the Messiah could bring back the Jews to their homeland. Some even went so far as to claim that God punished the Jewish people by initiating a Holocaust to punish the Jews for following the godless ideology of Zionism. Despite their disdain toward Zionism as a movement, groups like Chabad and Gerrer participate in the Israeli army and are committed to keeping Israel safe from her foes. Hassidic sects are not so easily typecasted.

After WWII, the Rebbe of Satmar (St. Mary, Hungary), Yoel Titlebaum (1888-1979), felt convinced that the Holocaust occurred because the Jews adopted Zionism instead of the Messiah. By insisting on a secular redemption, Israel became "prey" to their Nazi tormentors." Titlebaum's reasoning is simple and clear. If Jews suffer, it is because of their sinful ways and attitudes. To this day, the Satmar Hassidic community has remained opposed to the State of Israel, but not even the Satmar Hassidic community would ever think of joining President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad's conference to debunk the Holocaust.

Despite their ideological affinities to the Natorei Karta ("Guardians of the City"), the Satmar condemned the Natorei Karta for joining this infamous meeting in Tehran. In fact, the Satmar Rebbe issued a ban of "harem" on the Jewish delegates who attended the Teheran conference and accused them of "acts of insanity," of "walking hand in hand with the Arabs and giving the certificate of approval to those who spill Jewish blood." This is quite an amazing indictment.

Why did Rabbi Yisrael Hirsch, the head of the Natorei Karta, participate? He wanted to "further our campaign to reduce the world's hatred for the Jews, which exists because of the crimes of the Zionists."

Hirsch's antics are not unusual when you consider the Natorei Karta's history. His ailing father, Moshe, even got to be "minister of Jewish affairs" in Yasser Arafat's cabinet.

Moshe also had close ties with Ayatollah Khomeini back in 1979.

More seriously, by participating with Ahmadinejad, R. Yisrael Hirsch has lent a "Jewish hand" to Holocaust denial. He is helping to do Hitler's work.

The politics of their anti-Zionism philosophy has a hidden history. When the IDF confiscated Yasser Arafat's documents in a 2002 raid, they found records of payments totaling \$55,000 from the Palestinian Authority to Moshe Hirsch, minister of Jewish affairs. Follow the money trail

When some of the Israeli reporters asked whether Iran was paying for their participation, the sect's leaders denied ever receiving monies. However, when they were once asked as to how they support themselves, he replied "Contributions." Hmm. . . . it's probably a family business (JPost, Jan. 23rd, 2007).

Hirsch claimed that his group's participation won their hosts' respect for being authentic religious leaders. "The Arabs are convinced," he says. "They know that we are the ones who represent true Judaism."

As one Israeli writer observed:

"The Iranians know what a valuable asset they are, ""There are a lot of idiots in the world, and Ahmadinejad can use Natorei Karta when he denies the Holocaust to say, 'You see? Even the Jews admit it.' And in the end, a lot of people will believe him."

Rabbi Hirsch did not realize living under the Iranian regime of Ahmadinejad, the Israeli dictator would force them to become Muslims under the threat of death. If Rabbi Hirsch could peer into Ahmadinejad's reptilian brain, he would hear him say to himself, "My, My, . . . These Natorei Karta Hasisidic Jews would make great Muslims."

And now you know, the rest of the story.

Rabbi Dr. Michael Samuel

ADULT EDUCATION

Interested in Becoming a Gabbai?

■ **This month we will be starting our new Gabbai class on Wednesday nights from 7:00 -8:00 PM on Feb. 17th, 14th, and the 21st.**

■ **Weekly Parsha Class held every Thursday at the Pizza and Subs from 12:15-1:30 PM**

■ **On Every Shabbat after Shabbat Luncheon from 12:30 - 1:15 PM.**

■ **Introduction to Judaism Classes held every Thursday from 7:00-8:00 PM**

■ **Biblical Hebrew Class on Monday from 1:00 - 2:00 PM'**

■ **Comm University Classes from Sunday Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25 Birth and Rebirth Through Genesis – Based on my new Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Plz call up to R.S.V.P. From 2:00 – 4:00 PM**

FOR OUR TEENS

Every Sunday from 9:15-45
The Justice Code of Deuteronomy

JUDAISM MEETS THE TWILIGHT ZONE

This is based on an old program I once did where we examined Jewish and Biblical themes found in the Rod Sterling's great program. The discussions are great, and they are a lot of fun. This month we

will focus on the Adam and Eve Story According to Rod Sterling and "Becoming Real" – *The Masks We Wear*

Developing a Personal Theology of God – The advanced class will be studying the images of God found in the film "Bruce Almighty"

TU B'SHVAT is Coming, the holiday of trees!

The 15th day of the Jewish month of Shevat is the official "birthday" for trees in Israel. Tu b'Shvat is considered the beginning of the year for trees because it is the mid-point of winter: the strength of the cold becomes less, the majority of the year's rains (in Israel) have fallen, and the sap of the trees starts to rise.

On Sunday, February 4th 2007, we will be celebrating Tu Bishavt in style, We will have a Tu' Bishevat Seder in honor of this lovely holiday. Hopefully, you will find this Seder also to be a liberating, enlightening experience. This practice dates back to about the 16th century in Safad. Rabbi Yitzchak Luria [1534-1572], the greatest Kabbalist of Safad encouraged everyone to make a "seder," which is similar to Passover. Certain fruits are eaten in a particular order, accompanied by specific readings.

Ritual Corner: GUIDELINES FOR A HOMEMADE TU B'SHVAT "SEDER"

- 1) Gather a bunch of people from our synagogue family and beyond. Each one should help with the preparations, including researching something to say.
- 2) Buy as many different fruits as you can (see "30 Fruits" below). Make an extra effort to obtain the 12 listed in "The First Twelve" below.
- 3) Also buy at least two bottles of sealed kosher wine: one white, one red (see "Four Cups" below).
- 4) Bake (or purchase) cake or cookies or anything tasty

that is made primarily from wheat flour.

5) Set the table festively--tablecloth, candles, flowers, etc.

6) BE SURE each participant knows which blessings to say before and after which foods. They are printed in every siddur. The ceremony is meaningless without them. (

7) Begin by serving the cake and saying the blessing for it, Mezonot.

8) On this occasion the blessing over fruit should certainly be said over one of those for which the Land of Israel is specially praised, either the one for which you have a strong preference or the one nearest the top of the list.

9) The first cup of wine should be poured at the beginning (see Four Cups). It may be blessed upon and drunk between the cake and the fruit, or after reaching grapes (

10) Have a good time, but don't be too light-headed. To the best of my knowledge, Jews are the only people who make food into a religious service. Celebrate!

THE FIRST TWELVE FRUITS OF THE TU B'SHVAT "SEDER"

WHEAT is the basis for our sustenance (see Psalms 81:17; 104:15; 147:14), but only after we labor to grow, harvest, and prepare it. Although wheat is not a fruit, it is still one of the products which distinguished the Land of Israel in ancient times.

❖ BARLEY, although not included in the seder, is one of the seven fruits for which Israel is praised. Often used for feeding animals. Its designation for the Omer offering inspires our efforts to harness our natural and instinctual tendencies (*for more info, come to our Kabbala class on Wed. nights!*)

❖ 2 OLIVES yield the best of its oil only when the fruit is crushed. Olive oil floats on top of all liquids. [See also Jer. 11:16.]

❖ 3 DATES are often a metaphor for the righteous (Ps. 92:13, Song 7:9), as the date tree is both lofty and fruit-bearing. Further, as the date tree is impervious to the changing winds, so too are the Jewish people.

❖ 4 GRAPES can be turned into very different sorts of food (raisins) and drink (wine); so too, each Jew has the potential to be successful in some aspect of Torah and mitzvot observance and to be special in his or her own way.

❖ 5 FIGS must be picked as soon as they ripen, for they quickly go bad. Similarly, we must be quick to do mitzvot at hand before the opportunity "spoils."

❖ 6 POMEGRANATES, it is said, have exactly 613 pips, equal to the number of mitzvot in the Torah. Try counting! In any case, "Even the least of us are as full of merit as a pomegranate is pips"-

❖ 7 ESROGIM [citrons] are considered to be an extremely beautiful fruit, and are of great importance at Sukkot time (see Lev 23:40 and commentaries). The esrog remains on the tree throughout the entire year, benefitting from all four seasons and unifying them. Now in Clifton Park, chances are you won't find any for sale, so I suggest we use oranges instead. ORANGES are a very important part of Israel's fruit industry.

❖ 8 APPLES is the ancient symbol of enlightenment and love.

❖ 9 WALNUTS Kabbalists are fond of pointing out that if you cut open a walnut, you will find four sections, corresponding to the four letters of God's name. As walnuts have two shells which have to be removed, one hard, one soft; we too have to undergo both physical and spiritual circumcision

❖ 10 ALMONDS signify enthusiasm in serving God, for the almond tree is always the first to bloom. This is why Aaron's rod sprouted specifically almond blossoms (Num. 17:23). [

❖ 11 CAROBS take longer to grow than any other fruit. They remind us of the necessity to invest many years in Torah-study in order to attain worthwhile clear understanding.

❖ 12 PEARS of different strains still maintain a close affinity--see Mishna Kilayim 1:4.

Rabbi Michael Samuel