



Address Correction Requested

Ahavath Achim – Hebrew Congregation
1850 N. Woodlawn
Wichita, Kansas 67208
(316) 685-1339

Administrator Office Hours:

Mon – Wed – Fri: 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon; 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Rabbi – Judah Kogen
President – Paul Wolff
Gabbai – Jan Hoffman

Member, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ)

All articles due by the 15th of the month



From our Rabbi

This month, I am sharing a piece by my good friend and colleague, Rabbi Emeritus Gordon Tucker of Temple Israel Center in White Plains, NY. The voting period is almost over and it is urgent that we all vote by March 11. I have edited this only to the extent that several points he made were only relevant to his community.

VOTING (FOR MERCAZ) IN THE WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS ELECTIONS

This is not really just a talk. It is an exhortation. Because we are in the midst of an extended, but still finite, election period for delegates to the next World Zionist Congress, to be held in October of this year. Yes, the very same World Zionist Congress that was convened for the first time by Theodor Herzl in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. Since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, it has been held approximately every 5 years, and this will be the 38th such gathering since Herzl.

To vote from the U.S. for one of slates running in this election, you must be a permanent resident of this country, have turned 18 by June 30 of this year, pay a \$7.50 registration fee, and not be voting in the Israeli Knesset elections next month. Voting is by individuals, not by households, so spouses and adult children over 18 all have a right and a responsibility to vote.

Now why is it important to do so? And for whom are we urging you to vote?

Slate 6 is the slate known as the Mercaz slate of candidates. I remember well when Mercaz was first formed, in 1978, and the decision quickly made, by then Chancellor Gerson Cohen of the Jewish Theological Seminary, to endorse and bless its founding. Although Mercaz is a Hebrew word that means “center”, the English consonants in its name were intended as an acronym for “Movement to Reaffirm Conservative Zionism”. This is important in itself. It was a re-affirmation, because Conservative Judaism has the proud history of being the only major movement in Jewish religious life in this country that never harbored a non-Zionist or anti-Zionist faction. Both Reform and Orthodoxy did in the past (and there are still anti-Zionists in parts of the ultra-Orthodox world). But Solomon Schechter threw in his lot with Zionism from the outset of his leadership of our movement, and Mordecai Kaplan, with his insistence on the primacy of Jewish peoplehood, did as well, repeatedly and pointedly. So Mercaz was indeed a re-affirmation of what was already in our DNA.

Why was a reaffirmation necessary? Well, that’s pretty much the essential story here. By the late 70s, it was clear that the

bargain that Ben Gurion had made in 1948 with the Orthodox, and increasingly ultra-Orthodox, rabbinical authorities was creating an untenable situation in which Judaism in the Jewish state was being defined more and more monopolistically as Orthodox Judaism. And we are not speaking here of the open, modern Orthodoxy that we know among our friends and neighbors — but rather a rigid, unyielding, and intolerant religious establishment. An establishment that used the state power that they were granted over religious life to delegitimize, deny funding to, and more and more often denigrate in humiliating terms the Judaism that you and I practice and believe in. So Mercaz was born, a bit more than 4 decades ago, and it represents us in these periodic elections to the World Zionist Congress.

The monopolistic religious structure that is still in place — incredible as that may seem — means that there is massive and direct government funding for the Orthodox institutions: synagogues, youth groups, even rabbinic salaries, and Orthodox-dominated religious councils that in turn fund such things as Mikvehs from which our people are generally excluded. And while the idea of government funding of religion is alien to us as Americans, it is the way things happen in Israel. Except, of course, for our movement, and other non-Orthodox communities. Whereas competition with other religious groups is the last thing on our minds of people building a religious community, the government has created such a competition. But now, having been forced to compete, we are not doing so in an open, accessible market, but rather in a system that is loaded, like phony dice, against us.

What comes out of this skewed structure is a perverse twisting of what Zionism was always supposed to be about. Zionism was about allowing Jewish culture to flourish without the constraint of foreign domination, so that Jewish political life, intellectual life, moral development, and its religious expression could reflect the full range of what the Jewish people believe and aspire to. Alas, the last in this list — religious expression — has been hamstrung by invidious funding decisions that cut us out, and by offensive rules and insulting rhetoric that besmirch our reputation. Offensive rules include such things as declaring weddings done by Conservative rabbis not only to be invalid, but illegal. I myself officiated at the joyous wedding of my colleague Rabbi Adam Baldachin to our own Maital Friedman in Ramat Rahel in 2006. I was not detained by the police (though I suppose I could have been), but the wedding was only recognized in Israel because of a civil wedding that took place before a Justice of the Peace in the United States. How crazy is that? And the insulting rhetoric includes frequent salvos from the empowered rabbinic authorities that we are a cult, that we are bent on destroying the Jewish people by sullyng true Torah religion, and slanders so much worse that should not be dignified with expression from this Bimah.

So where does the World Zionist Congress come in? Simply thus: the more delegates we elect to the Congress, the more seats we will have at the table in the Jewish Agency, the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish National Fund, and other organs. Since they are not formally government organizations, through them we can obtain precious funding to nurture the religious culture that we offer daily to an Israeli population that wants and needs it. 2-3 million dollars can flow to our movement in Israel and throughout the world if we are represented well there. More, if we can up our election results. Last time around, in 2015, there were some 56,000 total votes from among all American Jews (A number that is itself embarrassingly low). Our movement accounted for under 10,000 of them. It got us to some important seats at the table, but it was not nearly enough. I should add here that in the last election the Reform Movement turned out nearly twice as many votes for their Arza slate. And we know what in part accounts for that. The Reform Movement, consistent with their own conscientious way of observing Shabbat, has always been able to use the times with the largest turnouts — Shabbat services — to have people literally sign up, pay registration fees, and complete the voting. We are unable to do the same. But it would be a horrible irony if the fact that we take a more traditional view of Shabbat observance in the synagogue were to work to our detriment in Israel, where we are slandered as being untraditional. It means that the urgency of getting out the vote is that much greater.

The overall American turnout is expected to be significantly larger this year, which means that, just to break even, we need to increase our absolute vote by a significant amount. This is by no means impossible. It shouldn't even be hard. It takes about 5 minutes to do it. And \$7.50. Are the ideals of Zionism important enough to you? Is the reform of Israel into a state that honors and helps flourish all forms of Jewish expression important enough to you? I know you well enough to know that they are. And thus your mandate is clear: Vote!

And just so it is crystal clear: the groundwork has been done by our heroic rabbis, educators, and community leaders in Israel. There are today more than 80 Masorti Kehillot throughout Israel. Some 2,000 of our teens are in the Noam Youth Movement, and more than 700 attend Camp Ramah-Noam in the summers. More than 800 B'nai Mitzvah are celebrated each year in our congregations, and because of that, more than 100,000 people have had direct experience of the intellectually and spiritually open, egalitarian Judaism that comports with the values of most Israelis. We have phenomenally talented young rabbis, and a clear majority of the congregants in our kehillot are native born Israelis.

Are Israelis ready for it? Of that, there is no question. The whole reason that there is a second "Mulligan" coming up for the Israeli elections is because following the previous two elections, coalition building foundered on the issue of breaking the Orthodox religious monopoly. Were there no insistence on the part of some potential coalition partners about breaking that monopoly, we'd have had an Israeli government in place 9 or 10 months ago.

There's more. A survey by the respected Israeli pollster Rafi Smith after the September Knesset election revealed that 57 percent of the Jewish Israeli electorate did not want any incoming governing coalition to include or depend on parties that are Haredi (Ultra) Orthodox. That 57 percent majority also wanted any coalition that was formed to support religious freedom in Israel. And 69 percent said that support for religious freedom was a significant factor in their September vote.

Other surveys consistently show that 64 percent of respondents want there to be separation of religion and state in Israel. 64 percent do not want any religious body to have governmental authority in Israel. And 62 percent want Israel to recognize a range of Jewish conversion ceremonies — not just Orthodox ones blessed by the Chief Rabbinate.

In other words, when you vote, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are not only voting for what is good for us — you are voting for what is good for — and wanted by — a significant majority of Israelis.

At the recent rally against anti-semitism, one sign next to me read as follows: "We didn't wander the wilderness for 40 years for this". And surely, we did not cross the Sea together, eat the Manna together, thirst for water together, and fight the Amalekites together only to be made into second class Jews in the Jewish state.

There's one more thing, which is perhaps more important than all I've already said. Failure to have our values and passions reflected in our votes and our proportional representation will fortify the lie that the Israeli government has put out in recent days. Namely, that the American Jewish community — outside the Orthodox world — needn't be taken into account. They think we don't really care about Israel and Zionism, and they smugly predict our demise in a generation or two. The strategic thinking is that the Christian Evangelical community is far more concerned about Israel than are Conservative and Reform Jews, and that they will be around longer and have more clout in America. So focus on them instead. This is no fantasy — this thinking is articulated and documented. God forbid that our failure to be heard will confirm this mischievous nonsense in the minds of some Israeli government officials.

I am certain that you believe that we are more interested in the success of the ideals of Zionism than are the Evangelicals. And so you know what to do right now, in this election period. You have until March 11. But please don't wait until then. Because we want you not only to vote and to tell your partners and children to do so. We want you to tell your friends, share this information with them, and make sure we are there in the numbers that will truly reflect who we are, and the Zionism and State of Israel in which we believe.

Rabbi Judah Kogen

(For those who might prefer to submit a paper ballot and personal check by postal mail, we have printed a quantity and they are available at the Synagogue.)

In Our Family

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Adam Beren
- 2 Rebecca George
- 2 Charlene Goodman
- 12 Dr. Yoram Leitner
- 22 Dr. Mark Goodman
- 28 Ludmilla Fridman



REFU'AH SHLEMAH

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Jodie Abels | Nan Joseph Bailey |
| Lori Atkins | Holly Robbins |
| Judy Frank | Mary Ann Filbrick |
| Larry Frank | Eunice Schonning |
| Stuart Frank | Amos Leitner |
| Rebecca George | Phyllis Leitner |
| Melvin Kahn | |
| Jerry Marcus | |
| Marilyn Mason | |
| Andrea Stras | |
| Allie King | |
| Allen Boge | |
| Howard Marcus | |
| Stanley Harder | |

May the one who blessed our ancestors, bless them with a complete healing; a Healing of Body and a Healing of Spirit.

Candle Lighting Time	March 2020
FRIDAY 6..... TETZAVEH	6:11 PM
FRIDAY 13..... KI TISA	7:17 PM
FRIDAY 20..... VAYAKHEL/PEKUDE.	7:24 PM
FRIDAY 28..... VAYIKRA.....	7:30 PM

Synagogue Board Meeting

The regular meeting of the Synagogue Board of Directors will be held on Monday, March 16th, at 7:30 p.m.

Contributions

Yahrzeit Fund

- Ed Anger
- Kenneth Braun
- Lou & Kim Gollin
- Barbara Herman
- Mark Werbin
- Warren Kourt



IN MEMORY OF BETTY NOVICK

- Ryan & Joanna Bendell
- Derry Larson
- Elliot & Rita Magidson
- Jack McInteer
- Darl & Pat Cord
- Lorraine Cherrick
- Dr. & Mrs. Herb Kadison



IT IS WITH DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILY OF

Benjamin Teague, Father of Pat Patterson

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this time of sorrow.

Purim Services and Dinner

Monday, March 9th, Fast of Esther

Reading of the Megillah.....7:30 PM

Tuesday, March 10th

Morning Service and Reading of the Megillah9:00 AM
Purim Dinner.....7:00 PM

Tuesday, March 10th, 7:00 p.m.

Menu: Spaghetti, Green Beans, Salad

Cost: \$5 per person in advance

\$7 per person at the door

\$21 maximum charge per family, either in advance or at the door

Please mail your reservation check by Wednesday, March 4th to:

**Hebrew Congregation
 1850 N. Woodlawn
 Wichita, KS 67208**

1 Norman Leinkram
Remembered By:
Hara Braun

12 Rose Klaskin
Remembered By:
Herbert Klaskin

19 Anna Foreman
Remembered By:
Dee Abels

1 Betty Mitchell
Remembered By:
Dr. Stephen Zacker

13 Myer Stekoll
Remembered By:
Bernard Stekoll

20 Ety Fridman
Remembered By:
Buma Fridman

5 Solomon Zacker
Remembered By:
Dr. Stephen Zacker

14 Sidney Cohen
Remembered By:
Gillard Cohen

20 Bessie Wolff
Remembered By:
Paul Wolff

11 Ethel Beren
Remembered By:
Robert Beren

14 Joseph Snitz
Remembered By:
Barbara Herman

23 Jacob Saffier
Remembered By:
Linda Saffier

11 Helen Leifert
Remembered By:
Cynthia Stein

15 Bernice Slutsky
Remembered By:
Lawrence Slutsky

24 Sam Herstein
Remembered By:
Scott Herstein

12 Gerald Abels
Remembered By:
Dee Abels

18 Nathan Klaskin
Remembered By:
Herbert Klaskin

28 Estelle Bernstein
Remembered By:
Gillard Cohen

From Betty Novick's Family

Dear Rabbi Kogen and Ahavath Achim Congregation,

Having grown up in the Synagogue, attending Hebrew School, going to services and celebrating simchas, it was very fitting that we were able to have our dear mother's funeral in the place where we worshipped together.

It was comforting knowing the community was there for us, from the meaningful service to the well-prepared cemetery. To the delicious gourmet meal we shared after the burial and even to the well-attended Minyans as we started our Shiva in Wichita.

Rabbi Judah Kogen, we gained strength and comfort from your warmth, support, wisdom and accessibility, all of which we cherish. Your words of praise and historical context deeply affected us, honoring her memory. Taking care of us like family, you made sure we had minyan and could recite Kaddish. Thank you.

To have dear friends of the family and of our parents rally around to give us support and share memories at our time of loss confirmed our faith in the Wichita community and the precious but solid Jewish background and values we learned growing up at Ahavath Achim. "Brotherly Love" empowered us to connect Jewish values and ideals.

Fondly,

Michael and Charlene Kass & Jay Novick



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 2020

Sun, March 1	Morning Minyan	9:00 AM
Tue, March 3	Introduction To Judaism	7:00 PM
Thur, March 5	Bible Class	7:00 PM
Sat, March 7	Shabbat Morning Service	9:00 AM
Sun, March 8	DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS	
	Morning Minyan	9:00 AM
Mon, March 9	Fast of Esther	
	Megillah Reading	7:30 PM
Tue, March 10	Office Closed	
	PURIM SERVICE	9:00 AM
	PURIM DINNER	7:00 PM
	(No Introduction to Judaism class)	
Thur, March 12	Bible Class	7:00 PM
Sat, March 14	Shabbat Morning Service	9:00 AM
Sun, March 15	Morning Minyan	9:00 AM
Mon, March 16	Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 PM
Tue, March 17	Introduction to Judaism	7:00 PM
Thur, March 19	Bible Class	7:00 PM
Wed, March 20	SPRING BEGINS	
Sat, March 21	Shabbat Morning Service	9:00 AM
Sun, March 22	Morning Minyan	9:00 AM
*Tue, March 24	Introduction to Judaism	7:00 PM
Thur, March 26	Bible Class	7:00 PM
Sat, March 28	Shabbat Morning Service	9:00 AM
	Kiddush sponsored by Ludmila Fridman	
	In celebration of her Birthday	
Sun, March 29	Morning Minyan	9:00 AM
Mon, March 30	KITCHEN CLOSSES FOR PASSOVER	
*Tue, March 31	Introduction to Judaism	7:00 PM

**Once Purim is over, our attention turns to Passover. On Tuesday evenings after Purim, the Introduction to Judaism class will focus on Passover preparations: food, holiday observance and the Seder.*

The class meets on Tuesdays from 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM. Any member of the congregation who would like to learn/review these Passover materials is invited.

This segment begins on Tuesday March 17 and continues until Passover.