

Rabbinically Speaking

Jews' right to 'have guns' and use them

By RABBI RICHARD BIRNHOLZ, Congregation Schaarai Zedek

Once upon a time four peasants got together to discuss why Jews do not hunt. One said it was because Jews do not like to kill God's creatures. Another added that animals are defenseless and Jews will not hurt animals that cannot protect themselves. A third said that Jews do not like to follow the ways of the gentiles and that Jewish law specifically prohibits hunting for sport. Then the fourth peasant joined in with an answer that resonates with anyone who knows Jewish history. He said, "Jews don't hunt because we don't let them have guns."

The recent Gaza flotilla incident is another reminder of this story's tragic truth. The world always finds insidious ways to deprive Jews of the right to defend themselves. Even now, after the Israelis have finally gained independence and can freely exercise their right to have guns, their enemies still effectively keep them from "having guns" by delegitimizing their legitimate right to use them. Notice the way the Palestinians have managed to turn justice on its head in Gaza. No nation in the world would allow an enemy to fire rockets unimpeded into its population centers. Its first response would be to stop the arms supply. Yet when Israel imposes a naval blockade along the Gaza coast to do just that, its enemies cleverly delegitimize this legitimate act of self-defense by using it to portray the Israelis as heartless monsters who have inflicted this blockade on the defenseless, blameless Palestinians for the sole purpose of starving them to death. The truth be damned.

Why can reasonable people not see the unfairness in this? Number one, most people are not critical thinkers. They may be taught that "seeing is believing," but perception actually works the other way around. People believe that the truth lies in whatever they are taught to see and hear as true. Hamas, Hezbollah and their Iranian handlers learned long ago that if you tell half the truth, you can get most people to believe your version of the other half.

Second, the world has been conditioned to believe that any charge leveled at Jews must be true. Two thousand years of anti-Semitic hate mongering has paved the way for this travesty.

Third, most Middle East countries want to believe the Palestinian version of the truth condemning Israel because they benefit from it at this point in time. Iran uses it to further cement her power over the Middle East. The European nations embrace it to placate their growing Islamic populations. Turkey uses it to shift her sphere of interest from Israel to Iran where she sees her future. And Hamas uses it to advance its cause and, at the same time, divert the world's attention from its persecution of its Fatah brothers and sisters in the West Bank.

But Israel cannot afford to play this game. Her goal has to be winning the war on the ground, not the publicity war. The Holocaust taught us what appeasement begets. Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon and Gaza have taught us what acts of good faith beget — more fighting and less security. Israel cannot allow world opinion to determine its course.

Torah tells us that God gave us the commandments so that we might live by them, not die by them. God may not have been referring specifically to modern Israel's military challenge in this teaching, but its intent fits perfectly. Israel must follow God's commandments, which require the pursuit of justice, mercy and righteousness, but never at the cost of her national life or the life of her citizens. The world may try once again to take away Israel's guns, but it will never again take away her right to fight for her survival.

Rabbinically Speaking is published as a public service by the Jewish Press in cooperation with the Tampa Rabbinical Association which assigns the column on a rotating basis.



Congregations



Rodeph Sholom's 2010-11 officers and board: Front row: Honorary President, Sam Verkauf. Second row (L-R): Jonathan Kaplan, president Men's Club; Burton Bernstein, vice-president fundraising; Jay Hoffer, president; Carol Simon, vice-president membership; Lisa Tawil, member-at-large. Third row (L-R): Stephen Kreitzer, member-at-large; Lillian Stark, vice-president ritual; Robert Lynn, member-at-large; and Michael Shapiro, secretary. Missing from photo: Margot Marcadis, immediate past president; Carnot Nelson, past president representative; Valerie Blau, Sisterhood president; Russell Leisner, Marc Ostroff, Errol Pegler and Joseph Weissman, members-at-large.

Cong. Rodeph Sholom

Award winners: Awards presented at the recent annual meeting were: Sam Reiber, Member of the Year; Evan Brownstein, New Member of the Year; Dana Kanfer, the Sinsley Education Award; and Sally and the late Mendel Riba, the Lifetime Achievement Award. Sam Verkauf was named Honorary President of the congregation.

Speaker series: The Saturday summer speaker series continues with D'var Torahs presented by Stephen Kreitzer, July 24; Rob Schwartzberg, July 31; Caryn Baird, Aug. 7 and Fred Neusner, Aug. 14.

Needlework: The congregation is organizing a knitting/cocheting club on Thursday mornings. Time and dates to be announced. A yarn exchange is also going to be included.

Cong. Schaarai Zedek

Bowling: A family night of bowling, open to all families, couples, and singles (children must be accompanied by an adult) at Pinarama Lanes will be held on Wednesday, July 28 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Cost is \$7 per person and includes shoes and two hours of bowling. Food is available for purchase. Call Lindsey Morgan in the temple office for more information or to RSVP, (813) 876-2377, ext. 221 or by email: lmorgan@zedek.org.

Movie time: Join Rabbi Joel Simon for Shabbat services followed by a special movie and discussion on Friday, July 30 from 7:30-9:30 p.m. Call the temple office for more information. (813) 876-2377

Teen night: Teens in seventh through 12th grades are invited to a summer hangout on Wednesdays Aug. 4 from 6:30-9 p.m. There will be Wii, movies, games, food and more. There is no charge to attend. RSVP to Lindsey Morgan at (813) 876-2377, ext. 221 or via e-mail: lmorgan@zedek.org.

Shabbat Candle Lighting Times



July 23 • 8:08 pm	Aug 13 • 7:53 pm
July 30 • 8:04 pm	Aug 20 • 7:47 pm
Aug 6 • 7:59 pm	Aug 27 • 7:40 pm

20s and 30s Shabbat get together: A special Shabbat reception will be held Friday, July 23 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. for those in their 20s and 30s. Enjoy hummus, pita, wine and cheese. Following the reception, join the rest of the community for a Shabbat service with guitar at 7:30 p.m. For more information, contact Rabbi Simon at jsimon@zedek.org or at the temple (813) 876-2377, ext. 229.

Shabbat Pre-Neg: A pre-service Shabbat wine and cheese nosh will be held on Friday, Aug. 6 at 6:30 p.m. before services begin at 7:30 p.m. Pre-Shabbat service receptions are held monthly.

Summer fun: An end-of-the summer family get together is planned for Sunday, Aug. 15 from 3-6:30 p.m. Families dine together, then adults will see a movie with a discussion led by Rabbi Richard Birnholz. Children will have their own special family-friendly movie and special activities, too. RSVPs are a must. Call (813) 876-2377

Hebrew refresher: Student can get a "jump start" on Hebrew with a "Hop on Hebrew" review, taught by Nathan Weinbren on Aug. 16, 17, 18 and 20 from 4:30-5:30 p.m. Weinbren uses games to refresh aleph/bet Hebrew skills. Cost is \$25 and is appropriate for students entering the fourth and fifth grades. For more information or to enroll, call the Religious School office at (813) 876-2377, ext. 210 or 215.

Religious school registration: Registration for Schaarai Zedek's Religious School is now open. All children who are 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2010 are eligible to attend. A special non-member Religious School registration is available on a one-time basis for grades Pre-K through 5. A non-member tuition fee applies. Call the Religious School office at (813)-876-2377, ext. 210 or 215) for more information.

Cong. Kol Ami

Annual kick-off: Come to Congregation Kol Ami's annual kick-off Sunday, Aug. 29 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. to see what programs are coming up this year. Pick up religious school packets, sign up as a volunteer, join Hazak, a chavurah, Sisterhood, Men's Club, USY, Kadima, Boneem, or learn about Torah University classes. The bloodmobile also will be at the synagogue.

Special service: The Musical Infusion Initiative's Shabbat Ruach service will be held on July 30, at 6:30 p.m. Join this special Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma'ariv service that will be filled with inspiring melodies and meaningful teachings.

Jewish meditation: Join Rabbi Bob Judd every Wednesday at 7 p.m., before minyan, for an

• CONTINUED on NEXT PAGE

Religious Directory

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY Reform

BETH ISRAEL/ JEWISH CONGREGATION OF SUN CITY CENTER - 1115 East Del Webb Blvd., Sun City Center • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 5203, Sun City Center, 33571 • Rabbi Philip Aronson • Shabbat Services: Friday 7:45 p.m. • Telephone: 633-2548 or 634-2590 • Web address: http://fi042.urj.net.

Congregation BETH AM - 2030 W. Fletcher Ave, Tampa 33612 • Rabbi Jason Rosenberg • Vikki Silverman, Cantorial Family Educator • Shabbat Services: Friday nights, 1st and 3rd, 8 p.m.; 2nd and 4th, 6:30 p.m.; Saturday: 10:30 a.m. • Telephone: 968-8511 • Website: www.mybetham.com.

Congregation BETH SHALOM - 706 Bryan Road, Brandon, 33511 • Rabbi Betsy Torop • Shabbat Services: Friday 7:45 p.m. • Telephone: 681-6547 • Website: http://bethshalom-brandon.org.

Congregation SCHAARAI ZEDEK - 3303 W. Swann Ave., Tampa 33609 • Rabbi Richard J. Birnholz, Rabbi Joel Simon • Cantor Riselle Bain • Services: Friday, 7:15 p.m.; Saturday Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service, 11 a.m. • Telephone: 876-2377 • Website: www.zedek.org.

Conservative

Congregation KOL AMI - 3919 Moran Road, Tampa 33618 • Rabbi Robert Judd • Hazzan Jodi Sered-Lever • Shabbat Services: Friday 6:30 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m. • Sunday morning minyan 9:15 a.m. • Monday-Thursday minyan 7:30 p.m. • Telephone: 962-6338 • website: www.kolami.org.

Congregation RODEPH SHOLOM - 2713 Bayshore Blvd., Tampa 33629 • Rabbi Marc Sack • Cantor Moshe Friedler • Shabbat Services: Friday 6:30 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m. • Daily Minyans: Mon.-Fri. 7:15 a.m., Wednesday, 4:30 p.m.; Sunday, 9:15 a.m. • Telephone: 837-1911 • Website: www.rsholom.org.

Orthodox

BAIS (TEMPLE) DAVID CHABAD - 2001 W. Swann Ave., Tampa 33606 • Rabbi Lazer Rivkin • Shabbat Services: Friday 7 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. • Telephone: 966-8770 • Website: www.chabadofcentralflorida.com.

CHABAD LUBAVITCH of TAMPA - Frank A. Weaner Center, 14908 Pennington Road, Tampa 33624 • Rabbi Yossie Dubrowski, executive director • Telephone:

963-2317 • Website: www.chabadoftampabay.com.

CHABAD of BRANDON - Rabbi Mendel Rubashkin • Services: Bi-weekly, 7 p.m. • Call for location, Telephone: 657-9393 • Website: chabadbrandon.org.

CHABAD LUBAVITCH of SOUTH TAMPA - Rabbi Mendy Dubrowski • 4107 W. Platt St., Tampa, FL 33609 • Telephone: 813-287-1795 • Website: www.ChabadSouthTampa.com

CHABAD at COUNTY LINE - Rabbi Mendy Yarmush • Telephone: 813-642-3244 • Website: www.chabadatcountyline.com.

Congregation BAIS MENACHEM CHABAD — 8913 Eastman Dr., Tampa, FL 33626 • Rabbi Levi Rivkin • Shabbat dinner, 8 p.m. • Shacharit service: Mon. & Thurs., 8:15 a.m.; Weinberg Village. Mincha service: Mon. - Thurs., 6 p.m.; Weinberg Village • Telephone: 813-375-9799, 813-504-4432 • Website: www.chabadofcentralflorida.com

Congregation BAIS TEFILLAH - 14908 Pennington Road, Tampa, 33624 • Rabbi Yossie Dubrowski • Shabbat Services: Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. • Shachrit, Mon. - Fri., 6:30 a.m.; Maariv, Mon. - Fri., 7:45 p.m.; Sunday Shachrit, 9 a.m. • Telephone: 963-2317 • Website: www.chabadoftampabay.com

Congregation YOUNG ISRAEL of TAMPA - 5205 E. 131st Ave., Tampa, 33617 • Rabbi Uriel Rivkin • Shabbat Services: Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. • Sunday, 9:30 a.m. • 832-3018 • Website: www.youngisraeloftampa.org

MERKOS CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF CENTRAL FLORIDA — 613 S. Melville Ave. Tampa, 33606 • Director: Rabbi Lazer Rivkin • Telephone: 966-8770 • Website: www.ChabadOfCentralFlorida.com

Campus

CHABAD HOUSE JEWISH STUDENT CENTER AT USF — 13207 N. 52nd St., Tampa, FL 33617, Mailing address: USF Marshall CTR. Box 310, Tampa, 33620. • Rabbi Uriel Rivkin • Shabbat Services and Meal: Friday 7:30 p.m. • Housing Available • Telephone: 983-9770

THE HILLELS OF THE FLORIDA SUNCOAST— 13101 Sycamore Drive, Tampa, 33620 • Rabbi Ed Rosenthal • Shabbat Services: Friday 6 p.m. in the Marshall Center at USF • Sunday Bagel Brunches 11 a.m. • Telephone: 899-2788 • Website: http://www.hilleloftampabay.org.

USF CHABAD on CAMPUS — 4605 Sweetwater Lake Drive, Tampa, 33620 • Rabbi Pinny Backman • Website: www.USFChabad.com

Unaffiliated

OR AHAVAH - A Jewish Renewal Community • Rabbi Debrah Shenefelt, spiritual leader • Shabbat services • Telephone: 813-968-7850; email: orhaaha-vahtampa@att.net. • Affiliated with Aleph.

Temple OHEV SHALOM of NEW TAMPA • 6460 Tampa Palms Blvd. Tampa 33647 • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 46155, Tampa 33647 • Rabbi Mordechai Levy • Shabbat Services: 2nd and 4th Friday of the month 7:15 p.m. • 1st Saturday of the month 9:30 a.m. • Tel.: 632-9900. • Website: www.templeoheshalom.org.

HERNANDO COUNTY Reform

Temple BETH DAVID -13158 Antelope St., Spring Hill • Rabbi David Levin • Lynn Budnick, Gloria Goldman and Elaine Ticotin, cantorial soloists • Shabbat Services: Friday, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. • Telephone: 352-686-7034 • Website: www.tbdf.org.

CITRUS COUNTY

Congregation BETH SHOLOM - Civic Circle, Beverly Hills - Hazzan Mordeca Kamlot, spiritual leader • Mailing address: Beverly Hills Jewish Center, P.O. Box 640024, Beverly Hills, FL 34464-0024. Shabbat services: Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Telephone 352-746-5303

POLK COUNTY Conservative

Temple EMANUEL - 600 Lake Hollingsworth Drive, Lakeland, FL 33803 • Cantor Victor Geigner, Spiritual Leader • Shabbat Services: Friday 7:30 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m. Telephone: (863) 682-8616. • Email t.synagogue@verizon.net.

Orthodox

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF LAKE LAND - Mailing Address: 3616 Harden Blvd #127, Lakeland, FL 33803 • Rabbi Moshe Lazaros • Telephone: 863-877-0072 • Website: www.chabadlakeland.com.