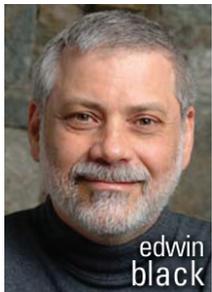


Farhud Day marks ‘forgotten pogrom’ of Jews in Arab lands

On June 1, I addressed a packed room at the United Nations in New York at a ceremony marking the first International Farhud Day. “Farhud” is Arabic dialect for “violent dispossession.” Among Jews from Arab lands, it refers to the blood-curdling pogrom by Nazi-allied Arabs against Baghdad’s peaceful Jewish community on June 1-2, 1941. The ensuing mass rape, beheading, murder,



burning and looting spree were the first steps in a process that effectively ended 2,600 years of Jewish life throughout the Arab world. Ultimately, some 850,000 to 900,000 Jews were systematically pauperized and made stateless in a coordinated forced exodus from Arab lands.

After I described in detail how the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, leader of the Arab community in Mandate Palestine, organized the brutal two-day massacre, a tear-stained woman I did not know, who turned out to be of Iraqi Jewish descent, slowly shook her head in disbelief and muttered softly, “I never thought I would hear these words in this building.”

Many Sephardic Jews consider the 1941 Farhud to be their Kristallnacht. However, for the past 74 years, neither the facts about the massacre, nor the culpability of the Nazified Iraqi and Palestinian Arab perpetrators,

Edwin Black is the author of “IBM and the Holocaust” and “The Farhud — Roots of the Arab-Nazi Alliance in the Holocaust.” He began the initiative to proclaim International Farhud Day at the United Nations.



Mufti of Jerusalem joins Hitler in Germany to celebrate expulsion of Jews, circa 1941-42.

nor the expulsion of 850,000 Jewish refugees from the Arab world that followed, were topics the United Nations wanted to discuss. Nor were this bloodletting and its aftermath commemorated in the vast chronicles of organized Holocaust remembrances or spoken of within the Jewish community. In fact, it took years of highly acrimonious, sometimes public debate and pressure on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum — only recently successful — for that institution to recognize either the atrocity that occurred or the Mufti’s role in the killing as a Holocaust-era persecution.

Indeed, the Farhud is most often referred to as the “forgotten pogrom.” In his remarks at the June 1 conference, Conference of Presidents vice chairman Malcolm Hoenlein asked, “I must wonder why it took 74 years for the world to recognize the tragedy of the Farhud.”

Why indeed?

First, persecution of Jewish victims in Arab countries did not conform to the classic Holocaust definition, as expressed by the museum’s mission statement: “The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.” This geographic qualifier left out the Jews of Iraq as well as their persecuted co-religionists in North Africa, where some 17 concentration camps were established by Vichy-allied and Nazi influenced Arab regimes.

Second, the type of well-financed and skilled scholarship that has riveted world attention on the Holocaust in Europe has generally bypassed the Sephardic experience.

Third, much of the Jewish media did not devote sufficient space and informed knowledge to the topic. Critics suggest that in recent years, the Jewish press has marginalized the atrocity as a political discussion. “When former [Israeli] Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon was doing his 2012 campaign for Jewish refugees from Arab lands,” asserts Lyn Julius of the British organization HARIF—Association of Jews from North Africa and the Middle East, “hardly a day went by when certain Jewish or Israeli newspapers did not politicize the matter, or suggest Israel was exploiting the issue for political gain.”

The day before the United Nations proclamation, one prominent Jewish newspaper published an article on the Farhud, writing, “Now, Jewish organizations and the Israeli government deploy it [memory of the Farhud] frequently to support their claims for refugee recognition on behalf of Middle Eastern Jews.” A Sephardic gentleman

... FARHUD, 26

ADL prepares college students for realities of anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism on Bay Area college campuses is a growing concern and poses a challenge for students who encounter it. A number of local incidents have been widely reported in the media, including swastika graffiti appearing at U.C. Davis and Stanford University. Nationally, the



local voice

Anti-Defamation League’s 2014 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents reported a 21 percent increase from 2013, and has registered a number of serious anti-Semitic incidents in 2015. California witnessed a 27 percent increase. Underlying these numbers is that these incidents have a real effect on the wider Jewish communities at these colleges.

Another troubling trend is that well-organized anti-Israel groups such as Students for Justice in Palestine, which was founded in the Bay Area, are becoming more active locally and nationally and are increasingly using confrontational tactics that intimidate students. California college campuses, in particular, continue to be a proving ground for various anti-Israel campaigns, tactics and messages. At U.C. Santa Cruz, a group of anti-Israel activists recently set up a mock Israeli checkpoint that physically prevented students from entering university facilities, in violation of the code of student conduct.

Vlad Khaykin is assistant regional director for the Central Pacific Region of the Anti-Defamation League.

Calling to mind a similar incident at UCLA, the questioning of Stanford University student Molly Horwitz during her bid for student senate cast aspersions on her ability to be a fair and impartial representative because of her “strong Jewish identity.” Horwitz, who eventually won the election, understood too well the political machinations on campus when she felt it necessary to remove any references to Israel from her social media pages for the sake of her campaign.

Reporting unsatisfactory responses from the Stanford administration and others to whom she had turned for help after the incident, Horwitz contacted ADL for assistance, support and guidance. Together with Stanford Jewish and pro-Israel groups, Horwitz and ADL are now working together to foster dialogue about anti-Semitism on campus and to educate the campus community about, among other relevant topics, what distinguishes legitimate criticism of Israel from anti-Semitism.

While the distinctions range from clear to subtle to nonexistent, we must not conflate anti-Israel activism with anti-Semitism. ADL has worked with student groups, campus Hillels and administrators on numerous local campuses to guide them in making distinctions between legitimate expressions of criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism. At the same time, administrators need to recognize that the impact of anti-Semitism and anti-Israel activism can often be very similar. And too often, one can lead to the other. Some students on campuses where there is significant anti-Israel activity report that they feel increasingly marginalized, isolated or compelled to hide their Jewish identity. As one student im-

acted by anti-Israel bias told us, “We shouldn’t have to defend our identity. The fact that I am Jewish is getting in the way of my studies.”

The good news is that people are beginning to take notice and take action to support Jewish students on California campuses. University administrators generally recognize the importance of issuing swift, forceful statements condemning anti-Semitism. And while there is a need for directly labeling anti-Semitism when it occurs, some campus administrators are going further to proactively ensure inclusive campus climates free from any harassment or intimidation.

Unfortunately, some who are understandably frustrated by the proliferation of anti-Israel activity on campuses have sought a quick fix by turning to legal means to confront BDS. Legislation that bans BDS activity threatens both First Amendment-protected free speech and the value of academic inquiry that guides the vigorous exchange of ideas on university campuses. Such legislation is likely to be struck down as unconstitutional

... ADL, 21

Local voices welcomed

J. welcomes your local voice on timely Jewish issues and events of the day. Submissions will not be returned and are subject to editing or rejections. Approximate length: 750 words.

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In women's vows before God, a hint of advancing rights

For me, the beginning of Matot-Masei is one of the most moving passages in all the Torah. That might seem shocking at first, for on the surface it looks like so many other terribly sexist pieces of our text. Yet, a closer look can reveal a

beautifully redemptive vision of reality.

Numbers chapter 30 addresses issues involving voluntary vows. We learn that if a man makes a vow, he is obligated to carry out the specifics of that vow. He is not allowed to break the pledge he chose to take upon himself. When a



rabbi jacqueline mates-muchin

woman makes a vow, however, the situation is rather different. If she is young or unmarried and her father learns of her vow, and has no objection, she is obligated to keep the vow. If, however, he objects, then her vow is nullified, and we are told that God will forgive her. If she is married and her husband has no objection, then her vow stands. Yet, if her husband objects, the vow is nullified, and again, we are told, God will forgive her.

The fact that a father or a husband can nullify the vows that a woman voluntarily makes, presumably because her heart is moved to do so, is highly problematic and difficult to digest. Worse, it is juxtaposed with the freedom a man has to make and keep his own vows, regardless of what his parents or spouse may think. It feels like it is yet another example of inequality in a system that puts women at the whim of their male relatives.

That is, it would be except for the last detail in each of the verses — the detail explaining that God will forgive the woman whose father or husband kept her from keeping her vow. That suggests that whether the person who vows is male or female, God hears the vow the same way. At the same time, it would seem that God understands the social context and the fact that women were not always free to make their own choices. Therefore, God will forgive the woman who is restricted by her circumstances. We know that God took the vow seriously, or there would be no reason for God to forgive her. God hears all the vows in the same way.

Yet, if God hears the vows of all peo-

ple, then why is it allowable for a father to restrict his daughter or a husband to restrict his wife?

Ultimately, Torah established a new way of life, a new civilization. It pushed us forward, reaching new heights of morality and justice, to be sure. At the same time, if it were to present

a society so wholly different from the one that the people knew, it would have been nearly impossible to ensure that the first generation would pass Torah to the next. Thus, we have excerpts like this one, that recognize the status quo and, at the same time, hint at something that moves beyond what the people knew then and there.

When Torah was given, women often did not have power to choose their own paths and make their own vows. To give them that ability outright would, perhaps, have been too shocking to the societal system. Not even God could expect change to happen quite that fast. Yet, the fact that God must forgive a woman for not keeping her vow means that her vow was just as good as that of her male counterpart. God sees the vows as equal. God does not favor the choices of men over those of women.

In this way, Matot-Masei helps to redeem other passages within the text that are not as explicit in their recognition of the value of women's choices, nor in the recognition of the difficult situations in which women find themselves. In Matot-Masei, we know that the ultimate vision, God's vision, sees people's intentions, hopes and dreams in much the same way, regardless of who those people are. It is other human beings that stunt each other's options and possibilities. Let us, then, take the lesson of this week's parashah and learn how to become more God-like, focusing our attention not on others' outward appearance or social status, but rather, may we hear only the utterances of each person's heart. ■

Rabbi Jacqueline Mates-Muchin is the senior rabbi at Temple Sinai in Oakland. She can be reached at rmates-muchin@oaklandsinai.org.

deaths

F. Carl Grumet

A longtime resident of Stanford, F. Carl Grumet, M.D., died on July 11, 2015 at home at the age of 77 from lymphoma.

Carl was born in New York City, New York, on Oct. 12, 1937 to the late Rebecca and Louis Grumet. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Rhoda Burns Grumet; daughters Amy Connolly (John) of Palo Alto, Jill Lauren of Scotts Valley, and Nancy Prouty (Devin) of Menlo Park; brother



George Grumet (Barbara) of Edison, New Jersey; brothers-in-law Rob Burns (Lynda) of Piermont, New York, and Douglas Burns (Ellen) of New York City; nine grandchildren, Zachary and Jeremy Rosenbaum, Taylor and Sydney Ginieczki, Caleb and

Abby Prouty, and Mark, Ahna and Elena Connolly; and many loving nieces and nephews.

Carl graduated from Rutgers University ('59 Physics B.S.), Columbia University ('62 Physics M.S.) and the University of Pennsylvania ('65 Medicine M.D.). As a Professor of Pathology at Stanford University School of Medicine, Carl was the Founding Director of Stanford's Blood Center, Tissue Typing Lab and Transfusion Service and honoree of departmental-named lecture series. He co-authored medical publications that significantly affected national transfusion practices, served on NIH and FDA advisory committees; served on national committees of medical professional associations setting standards in transfusion and tissue typing, established and directed the Stanford University Blood Center, and was a member of NIH's U.S.-Russian Scientific Exchange program and a consultant for the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Carl contributed to improving safety of transfused blood (e.g., testing for HIV, CMV, hepatitis), improved compatibility testing in transplantation, helped establish national registries for unrelated marrow donors, contributed to understanding mechanisms underlying genetic control of disease susceptibility, and

defined the molecular biology and immune functions of the HLA system.

Carl was a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather and brother. His greatest joy was spending time with his family, and he embraced the time with his precious grandchildren. In addition to family, Carl found love and support from his community of friends. He was an active member at Congregation Beth Jacob in Redwood City and a member of Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills. Carl was a strong supporter and advocate of Israel and Jewish causes including Hadassah and American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

An accomplished yet humble man, Carl was a role model for both family and friends. His easy laugh and sense of humor will be greatly missed. He lived his life with grace, integrity and dignity.

Funeral services were held on July 14 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills with burial at Skylawn Memorial Park, San Mateo.

Memorial contributions to Sequoia Chapter of Hadassah, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto, CA 94303; American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) (www.aipac.org/act/donate); Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road, Los Altos Hills, CA 94022; or Congregation Beth Jacob, 1550 Alameda de las Pulgas, Redwood City, CA 94061 are preferred.

✪ Sinai Memorial Chapel
(650) 369-3636

Dr. Robert A. Mendle

Nov. 16, 1917–July 5, 2015

Dr. Robert A. Mendle, family doctor, world traveler, teacher, lover of the great outdoors, and official birdwatcher passed away peacefully in his home on July 5. Born November 16, 1917, Dr. Mendle lived an incredibly full life. He was a San Francisco native and resided in the Richmond District almost the entirety of his life.

Dr. Mendle was blessed to meet his wife of 74 years, Barbara Paula Murphy, in the founding class of Presidio Middle School. Dr. Mendle and Barbara married in 1941 and a few years later bought their house that they have lived in for 65 years on 29th Avenue. In 1947 they welcomed their son, Robert, and had many wonderful

Farhud Day marks 'forgotten pogrom' against Jews in Arab lands

... from 15

in the audience showed me the article in disbelief, saying, "Deploy it frequently to support their claims for refugee recognition on behalf of Middle Eastern Jews? They would never say such a thing about the European Kristallnacht!"

On June 1, 74 years late, International Farhud Day was finally created, to honor the victims of the June 1941 Baghdad massacre, recognize the participation of Palestinian Arab leaders like the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and commemorate the forced expulsion of nearly a million Jews from Arab lands. "We recognize this date as a lamented day of history that should not be forgotten," the U.N. proclamation stated.

Seven parchment copies were signed by the key organizers: Rabbi Elie Abadie of

Jews for Justice in Arab Lands, Alyza D. Lewin for both the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists and the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, Maurice Shoheit of the World Organization of Jews in Iraq, Avi Posnick for StandWithUs, and myself as historian. Numerous Jewish and non-Jewish organizations added their voices as co-sponsors.

Not on the list of signatories was Israel's permanent mission to the United Nations, but its efforts bored through tunnels of U.N. bureaucracy and secured the space and broadcast slot for the ceremony. The Israeli Foreign Ministry devoted a page to International Farhud Day, and Google added it to their online calendar sites.

Going forward, memories of the day Baghdad burned in 1941 will no longer be invisible, muffled or parenthesized. ■