

Editorial/comment from Israel

'Conditional sentences' meaningless without followup

In the past 50 years, the Canadian justice system has seen reform after reform. The main emphasis over the decades has been on "rehabilitating" offenders, so that they're less likely to commit crimes again, and are helped to become more productive citizens.

That makes sense. But with the shift to meeting the needs of the offender, something has sometimes gotten lost - the rights of the victim.

A case in point, to date, has been the court proceedings against four young adults and a juvenile charged with toppling 315 tombstones in Beth Israel Synagogue's HSBA Cemetery last year.

That vandalism - reportedly the largest ever in a North American Jewish cemetery - has already cost Beth Israel nearly \$100,000. It included the destruction of dozens of historic tombstones; they were "silent sentinels", a local rabbi poignantly noted - reminders of the people whose births and deaths they commemorated.

The father of one of those misguided vandals showed responsibility and honor, when he urged his daughter to turn herself into police.

But the "conditional sentences" handed out to Shawna Lehr, Russell Martens, Clayton Parker and Chris Diamond raise questions about the effectiveness of our justice system.

Lehr and Martens both got those "punishments"

last June. Among other things, the offenders were ordered to enroll in Holocaust education programs, and to each pay \$17,600 for the damage they caused.

As of early November, when the last two young adults in the case went to trial, neither Lehr nor Russell had paid a cent in compensation. Nor had either even contacted the designated Jewish community educator, responsible for teaching them about the Holocaust.

And then, there were the cases of Diamond and Parker.

Both had criminal pasts, but they, too, received only conditional sentences.

Diamond emotionally apologized for his actions to Justice Wesley Swail and the Jewish community at their trials last month, noting that he has a Jewish stepfather and stepsister. Immediately afterwards, a *Winnipeg Free Press* photographer got a picture of Diamond and Parker outside the Law Courts Building, smoking and joking. That raises questions about the sincerity of their courtroom "atonements".

If provincial officials really want to ensure justice in the cases of these HSBA Cemetery vandals, they're going to have to do a better job of monitoring their actions, and ensuring the financial and other conditions imposed on them are actually met. Conditional sentencing may be a good idea in principle, but it's meaningless without adequate followup.

Dry Bones



A letter to my Islamic cousin Mustafa

Some evidence suggests many Arabs living in Holy Land have Jewish ancestry

Dear Cousin Mustafa, You may be surprised to hear from me in this way, but I shall explain. Genealogy, the study of family descent and relationships, is very popular among many Jews these days.

INSIDE ISRAEL



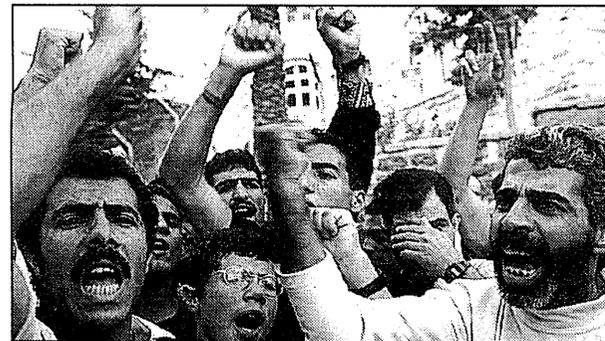
CARL ALPERT

We are curious to know who our ancestors were and who were their other descendants, rela-

tives of ours, who have drifted out of contact with us.

We have succeeded in tracing our forefathers to shtetls in Russia and Poland. Some of us have a long and distinguished ancestry in countries like Iraq and Morocco. Intensive research has enabled many of us to find tracks leading to the expulsion from Spain more than 500 years ago.

We constantly seek information from old records which will enable us to broaden the base of our family, and some of us have been able to summon family reunions, uniting blood



Muslim worshippers demonstrate in East Jerusalem last month: A research paper by a Tel Aviv University professor shows definite genetic link between Jews and the native Arabs of Palestine, Carl Alpert writes. *Israelnet photo.*

relatives with whom contact had long been lost.

Dear cousin Mustafa, these days historical research has been supplemented by biotechnological evidence - and we have found you and your family, blood relatives all. The relationship had long been suspected, but never proven until now.

When the Romans conquered the Holy Land, not all of us went into exile. Indeed, the remains of ancient synagogues serve as ample evidence of thriving Jewish communities here for several hundred years thereafter. And then, in the 7th century, came the Muslim invasion. The followers of Mohammed brooked no differences, and the native population, faith-

ful Jews as well as Jews who had converted to Christianity, were absorbed by the Islamic faith. They were reminded that both were descended from the twin brothers, Jacob and Esau, sons of Isaac.

The Muslims did not send large numbers of their own people to occupy the conquered territory. They were content to exact loyalty through forced conversions. Centuries elapsed, but many common denominators remained - for example, the aversion to swine. What became known as the Arab population of Palestine was in effect, to a large extent, descended from those Jews who had remained behind. As is well known, this population was later swollen by the

immigration of large numbers of other Arabs from surrounding lands. Years ago historians began to examine folk legends about this relationship. More than 100 years ago, Israel Belkind assembled evidence and wrote and taught that the Arabs here were in fact our blood brothers, but his views were rejected by both the religious and Zionist establishments. Some decades later, David Ben Gurion was attracted by the theory and found much to substantiate it. He even advocated, as a beginning, a campaign to draw the Beduins of the country back into the fold of Judaism. Caught up by internal problems, he abandoned the project.

The writer lives in Haifa, Israel.

And then modern science took over. In May, 2000, the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences published a research paper written by Prof. Batsheva Bonne-Tamir, of Tel Aviv University, and others, showing a definite genetic link between Jews and the native Arabs of Palestine. Still, she awaited further evidence.

It was not long in coming, as a result of knowledge of the properties of DNA. Scientists at the University of Arizona found that the Y chromosome in Middle Eastern Arabs was almost identical with that of Jews. Further studies by scientists at the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School, in collaboration with University College in London, made it possible to assert definitely that many Jews and Arabs are indeed closely related.

And so, dear cousin Mustafa, it appears that what we are engaged in now is a family quarrel. Need it be so violent? Come, stop throwing rocks and let's sit together over a dish of humous, with pitta. Let's talk about our ancestors and find that which we have in common, rather than that which separates us.

The writer lives in Haifa, Israel.

Comment/ letters



Patrons at a Tel Aviv café: David Klein's coffee is "rich and strong - the kind that Israelis love to drink." *Israelnet photo.*

Starbucks doesn't worry Klein

American-born Israeli supplies gourmet brand of coffee

The fact that the Starbucks chain is scheduled to begin operations in Israel next year doesn't bother energetic young American immigrant David Klein, whose gourmet brand of coffee is served at 35 cafes over the length and breadth of the Holy Land. "My blends," says the pony-tailed entrepreneur, "are geared to Israeli tastes, which is not the case with the standard Starbucks varieties. Of course, maybe they'll adjust their product to local preferences, as did McDonalds, which found that hamburgers prepared on a griddle-standard practice in the States wouldn't sell here. So their burgers in this country are cooked over an open flame. But even if the Seattle-based company learns to make Israeli-style coffee, mine will still be better."

ISRAEL UPDATE



NECHEMIA MEYERS

That may sound boastful, but then David has a great deal to be boastful about. Born in a suburb of Washington D.C. and educated in Boston, he came to Israel only seven years ago, initially settling in the Arava kibbutz of Ketura (where his sister already lived). In 1996, when David's Sabra wife decided to study in the center of the country, the two of them moved north, and he began looking for some way to make a living.

David and a friend, Dov Goldfarb, decided on something that was far from original - to open a coffee house in central Tel Aviv. The fact that there were already umpteen such establishments in the area didn't deter them;

they were certain that really good coffee and an inviting ambience would attract customers, with special emphasis on younger ones. And they were right.

Helped by a loan from Israel's Small Business Authority, they opened Cup O'Joe, and people came pouring in. At that point a decision had to be made: would they move ahead on the basis of franchises (like Starbucks), or operate primarily as suppliers of their special blends to individual coffee houses? They decided on the second approach.

David and his partner presently import, roast and blend 25 tons of green coffee beans per year. The blended beans are then sent in gas-charged bags - which keep them fresh - to coffee houses from Rosh Pina to Eilat. Those establishments subsequently grind the beans (in grinders supplied by Cup O'Joe), prepare the beverage (in top-of-the line espresso machines supplied by Cup O'Joe) and serve it in cups and saucers (also supplied by Cup O'Joe). At the same time, each coffee house retains its original name and special character.

While David Klein now speaks amazingly idiomatic Hebrew, he is proud of his U.S. background, and builds upon it. That is why he chose a brand name based on the American slang term for coffee, and why he emphasizes American-level service. "When I promise something, it is done, and done on time," he declares.

"But my coffee," David adds, "isn't the watered-down variety served at Starbucks and its U.S. competitors. Mine is rich and strong, the kind that Europeans and Israelis love to drink."

The writer lives in Rehovot, Israel.

LETTERS

Writer depores anti-Semitic incidents

I read with disgust the Sun article (October 20) headline, "Two Cemetery Vandals Receive 'Slap On Hand'".

I have become more and more distressed as of late when reading one anti-Semitic story after another. In the past whenever the economy slumped, the bigots, anti-Semites and small-minded thugs would crawl out of their collective holes and haunts and do their dirty work. But our economy is doing relatively well.

So what causes people to say and do evil things? Is it just the schoolyard bully phenomenon?

There are probably a number of reason for man's inhumanity to man but I would like to focus in on his illogical, flawed thinking as the root cause of this abhorrent behavior. I know whereof I speak, as I think you will see shortly.

Those who hate Jews do so partly because they do not understand them, but I think their primary stumbling block is that they view their more prosperous Jewish neighbors and their minds are clouded by greed and jealousy. This illogical thinking leads many I am sure, to break the Tenth Commandment, and they covet that which

their neighbor worked for. This in turn leads some to break the sixth commandment and murder their neighbor. Witness 1930's Germany!

I contend that their flawed thinking goes something like this, "They wear kooky hats... send them in cattle cars to Auschwitz!" Another thinks, "They speak a strange language and write backwards... men, women and children to Belzec and the gas chambers!" Yet another watches as

Jews are loaded and shipped in deplorable conditions in cattle cars to their death and he thinks, "But they deserve it. (Why?) They insist on circumcising their boys on the eighth day!" Thousands of warped, hateful minds actually thought evil things like this, which caused them to set in motion a plan to capture as many Jewish men, women and children from East and West Europe as they could. They said they would, "solve the Jewish problem."

Actually the real problem was not a people who were "different", but in reality, people who should have known better allowed their minds to be contaminated by depraved thoughts.

How do I know that

MP's 'silence' re UN vote 'disappointing'

No comment, not even a whisper from Ray Pagtakhan, MP, Winnipeg North regarding his Liberal government's vote against Israel at the Security Council. Ray Pagtakhan obviously is not concerned with his 4500-plus Jewish constituents.

Perhaps it is time for his Jewish constituents to vote for another candidate.

Ray Pagtakhan is a disappointment, as is the Liberal government for their ignorance in condemning Israel. We should be aware of those who are true friends, and not merely political people seeking a vote and a guarantee for their pension.

S. WOLCHOCK
Winnipeg

there are many who think like this? Well, I am ashamed to say that I used to be a Holocaust denier. I grew up in an anti-Semitic area of the Interlake area and attended a German Lutheran Church where fallacious things were regularly said from the pulpit. People around me openly expressed their bigotry, and no one reprimanded them or tried to reason with them.

What caused me to suddenly see the "light"? Well, first I learnt of my mother's Jewish ancestry and then, when my German dad died seven years ago, my mother confessed that my biological father was not who I thought he was, but indeed was alive and well and was Jewish! Perhaps I will say more about this on another day.

I joined both Jewish libraries and started to read everything I could find on and about my new identity. I attended services at most of the synagogues and even took a Hebrew course. It is amazing how my world view changed when I simply proceeded to inform myself!

My newfound knowledge has made me passionate about educating our society on why they should love and respect their neighbors even if they are "different". I know how I used to think and how my acquaintances and friends sometimes think, so we should not delude ourselves into assuming that the ugly events of the past could not repeat themselves. It will take all of us reaching out to our neighborhood, reminding them gently that we can all live together in peace and harmony. Then we will be able to say confidently, "Never again!"

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