



# Carnegie Shul Chatter

August 1, 2018



## We're in Trouble!

Last Shabbos we again failed to have a minyan for services. One member said to me, "Why don't you really be forceful about this in the Chatter? Our Shul is in trouble."

So here I am being as forceful and blunt as possible.

Do you want a Shul that has services only on the High Holidays, or do you want a Shul where you can come on Shabbos and where people can say Kaddish on Shabbos?

What will it take to get you to attend Shabbos minyan? Can you come just once a month? Would a Minyan Club incentive like a special yarmulke get you there?

The Pleasant Hills Shul closed this year. The New Castle Shul closed this year. Is that what you want to happen to our Shul?

Paying your dues is nice. Coming on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is nice. Coming on Shabbos would be a real mitzvah.

Please, please, give it a chance.

**WE NEED YOU!**

## The Jewish State: Another Viewpoint

Last week's Chatter featured a couple of articles about Israel's new "Nation State" Basic Law. This week, Jewish Community Foundation Scholar, Rabbi Danny Schiff, published an article expressing his view of the matter (below).

This is a very complex matter. I have spoken to several Israelis now living in Pittsburgh who are strong in their belief that Israel was created as a Jewish State and should be a Jewish state, but that the "Nation State" Basic Law, as passed, does not do enough to recognize the contributions of Israeli Arabs, Druze and others who may feel rejected or isolated as a result of this Law despite their many contributions to Israeli society.

American Jews continue to speak out for and against the Law, but it is, after all, the Israelis who must make and live by the laws of their own sovereign state.

See full details on last page.

# Making Trouble:

## Three Generations of Funny Jewish Women

Wednesday, August 29 - 7 pm • The Hollywood Theater



# We Will Make You Invisible

*By Rabbi Danny Schiff*

I write these words from my home in the magical city of Jerusalem. Regrettably, this summer's magic is largely of an unbecoming variety, and it is centered around one recurring sleight of hand: a trick called "we will make you invisible".



The most troubling example is, of course, the "Nation State" Basic Law just passed by the Knesset. On the face of it, the law seems largely unobjectionable. Since Israel has no constitution, the enactment of "Basic Laws" serves to enshrine the fundamental vision, structure, and institutions of the state. The "Nation State" law is designed to anchor the Jewishness of the Jewish state in explicit legislation. That impulse is worthy of support. Israel was designed to be a Jewish state where only the national aspirations of the Jewish people would be fulfilled. Expressing the Jewishness of the state in legislative terms, as well as determining that the Hebrew calendar and festivals will prevail, encouraging the creation of new Jewish communities, and giving priority to Jewish symbols is all appropriate.

And yet. And yet this law is decidedly problematic. Why? Because if you read its text, it is all about us... It is all about the Jews, as if nobody else existed. Apart from a gratuitous demotion of Arabic to the status of a "special" – rather than an "official" – language, and an acknowledgement that non-Jews can observe whatever Sabbath they want, there is no mention whatsoever of those with whom we share the state. Let's remember that Jews make up 75% of the Israeli population, meaning that there is a sizeable 25% minority of non-Jews, predominantly Israeli Arabs.

How can a law that explicitly conveys the Jewishness of the state, and the unique rights of the Jewish people to self-determination, and the legitimate aspirations of all things Jewish within the state, be silent on what all that means for millions of non-Jews? How can it overlook the fundamental call of Israel's Declaration of Independence for the equality of all citizens, an equality that is never explicitly articulated in any Basic Law yet is a fundamental feature of all real democracies?

What is our position on the standing of minorities in a Jewish state? Are they to be regarded as fifth columnists – the enemy within? Are they to be tolerated, but only at a distance? Or could they be neighbors, or even perhaps valued fellow citizens with whom we potentially have much in common? The truth is, we have no coherent theory. Contrary to the Torah's demand to love strangers and neighbors, and to have one law that is applicable to all, we are acting as if we are not responsible for one quarter of the population.

The message to Israel's minorities is unambiguous: this is all about us. We have nothing to say about you. We don't need to be too concerned about you. We, the majority, will do as we please. We will make you invisible.



The ongoing Kotel dispute is another case in point. There is, after all, one group that has dominant power at the Kotel. When confronted with women's prayer minyanim, or calls for egalitarian opportunities, their response is unambiguous: we won't even consider minority expressions in the area over which we have control ... go somewhere else where we can't see you and where we won't have to deal with you.

We will make you invisible.

And then, when the minority accepts the compromise that they should disappear somewhere out of sight – by accepting a less recognized area – even that isn't good enough. Those with the power now express the view that the desecrations represented by non-traditional forms shouldn't be allowed anywhere in the public domain...

We will make you completely invisible.

A Conservative rabbi was recently detained by the police for performing a wedding that he had not registered with the official Orthodox rabbinate that is the gatekeeper for Jewish weddings in Israel. The incident calls to mind the substantial minority of Israelis who wish to sanctify their marriages legally and Jewishly but not under the auspices of the rabbinate. The response of the authorities? We don't need to be too concerned about your wishes. We will do as we please without regard to you.

We will make you invisible.

In Jerusalem, the race to replace Nir Barkat as mayor is underway. One of the more interesting candidates is Rachel Azaria, currently a member of the Knesset. Azaria, who is modern Orthodox, has no more than a slight chance of winning; it's far more likely that the city is going to get an ultra-Orthodox mayor. Nevertheless, she is running prominent advertisements on public buses that feature photos of



her. But in Jerusalem, the face of a woman on a bus poster is too much for some. Pictures of Azaria have been defaced or torn down by ultra-Orthodox Jews. Once again, the tactic is clear: "We don't need to be concerned about you..."

We will make you invisible ... literally.

Let me be clear: Israel remains a robust democracy, and an unprecedented success story that is worthy of firm Jewish backing. We are privileged to live in this extraordinary time of renewed

Jewish sovereignty. The great majority of the world's countries could learn a lot from Israel's track record on how it deals with all its citizens.

But this reality is insufficient. Making minorities invisible is not the mark of a strong and confident society. Israel cannot be exemplary if it does not actively incorporate the principle of coexistence at all levels and across all institutions. Coexistence does not imply that one has to accept somebody else's truth or give up on one's own. It does not require blessing another's views or agreeing with them. It does, however, necessitate accepting that other groups exist and that they deserve to be heard, seen, acknowledged, and given reasonable pathways to self-actualization. Naturally, there will be some groups that are so antithetical to the fundamental tenets of society that such openness should not apply to them ... but none of the minorities mentioned above fit into that category.



*The vast majority of Israeli Druze serve in the IDF, and the community is very loyal to Israel.*

Visionary leaders of strong nations inspire their people to be generous, and to raise their sights beyond the narrow expression of the desires of those with power. Jerusalem is sorely in need of some visionaries who could lead Israeli society to think more broadly about equality, minorities, and dealing with difference.

We Jews emerged, after all, from the first society ever to envisage a world in which the disenfranchised were given recognition, voice, and dignity. Let's continue to work for an Israel that is secure enough to champion that ideal.

## Yahrzeit Plaques

Commemorate a loved one by dedicating a yahrzeit plaque in his or her memory at the Carnegie Shul. These beautiful plaques, mounted on the sanctuary walls, are lit on the loved one's yahrzeit, Yom Kippur, and days when Yizkor is recited. The names are also read aloud from the Bimah during services on the Sabbath of the yahrzeit and on Yom Kippur. To purchase a plaque, for only \$175, please email Mike Roteman at [mrmike7777@yahoo.com](mailto:mrmike7777@yahoo.com).



Please consider sponsoring a Kiddush in honor or in memory of a loved one, for only \$36. Your sponsorship will be announced from the bimah and in the weekly Chatter. To sponsor a Kiddush, email [mrmike7777@yahoo.com](mailto:mrmike7777@yahoo.com).



*Wednesday, August 29 - 7 pm*

Doors open 6:30

*The Hollywood Theater*

1449 Potomac Avenue, Dormont  
Free on-street parking after 6 pm

*Free and open to the public*

Free popcorn and soda

*For tickets visit*

[www.southhillsjewishpittsburgh.org](http://www.southhillsjewishpittsburgh.org)

*Presented by*

Congregation Ahavath Achim (The Carnegie Shul)  
in cooperation with  
South Hills Jewish Pittsburgh



SOUTH HILLS  
JEWISH PITTSBURGH

*Meet 6 of the greatest female comic performers of the last century:*

Molly Picon • Fanny Brice • Sophie Tucker  
Joan Rivers • Gilda Radner • Wendy Wasserstein

*Making Trouble: Three Generations of Funny Jewish Women*

features interviews with experts, scholars and entertainers and delightful and rare film and television clips

**"Hilarious and instructive..."**  
— Bay Area Reporter

**"This is a seriously funny film... Rich in entertainment history..."**  
— JewishBoston.com

**"Empowering, side-splitting laughs ..."**  
— Kansas City Jewish Chronicle

**"...the film is like a standing ovation for performers who have earned one."**  
— Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



*Co-Sponsors*

