

## IT'S TIME TO MAKE PEACE

Sheldon Amalekite

I TREMBLE as I write this. My ancestors, the Amalekites of old, are rolling in their graves at my appearance here before this holy audience of Jews, many of whom were orthodox atheists like we are but who now, through their own personal odysseys in the wilderness, have come to worship the One True G-d. And if I fear for my life it's not because I worry I'll be gunned down by an ideologue or a hit man from the Jewish Defense League or a celebrity wannabe who'd love to become The Assassin of Amalek, write a best-selling memoir, and go on Oprah. Rather, I fear my own family that loved, nurtured and sustained me but who see me now as a traitor.

Nevertheless, the time has come to wave the white flag and surrender. For I believe, indeed, that if you will accept peace with us, my people, the Amalekites, will turn around and, together with you and the rest of humanity, help usher in the beginnings of Redemption under the Kingship of the A-lmighty.

AS YOU KNOW, we are a proud people who first appeared on the scene following your Exodus from Egypt. Our heroes, before and after Egypt, have been from your tradition. Eve, the mother of all life, taught us that with unlimited knowledge, we might aspire to be like G-d. The generation of Noah taught us that with unlimited passion, we might aspire to enjoy the world more fully with even wild animals as our partners. At Kivrot HaTa'avah, you taught us to scornfully reject manna from heaven when great delicacies like fried quail, quail au vin, quail cacciatore, or quail pot pie are available to satisfy our unlimited appetites. And, last but not least, your exciting sexual worship of Ba'al Peor taught us the ennobling power in the unlimited worship of many great gods. It should be no wonder, then, that this philosophy of unlimited freedom, this *weltanschauung* of hedonism, gave us the morality of unlimited warfare. All in all, it was a helluva great life.

But then, after living our snugly comfortable lives in solitude, we suddenly hear the dramatic news of the ten plagues and we ask ourselves how on earth you people are able to control the forces of nature and manipulate them to change Egyptian public opinion. It has to be magic, we conclude, what else could it be? Then, 600,000 of you just pick up and leave a police state of slavery, infanticide, beatings, torture, and labor camps where you are spied on day and night. Clearly, you are escape artists of the highest order, practicing a sorcery unheard of before or since. And then, you split the Red Sea! Walk forth on dry land! And successfully order the sea to drown the pursuing enemy! We feared you would enslave us with your witchcraft and wizardry, imposing your new world order of universal principles on the nations who hold that all religion is local, each one appropriate to its own time and space. For we believed that *all* religions are created equal, endowed by *our* gods with certain inalienable rights to pursue moral relativism. You were a threat to our spiritual existence on this planet.

And so, I confess that we were born and raised to kill Jews. For hundreds of years after our assault on your women, your old and your young, we bided our time, and when the opportunity arose, well, let's say it was a 'no-brainer.' There you were in Shushan, after the fall of Solomon's Temple. And to us, it was as clear as day.

After such a terrible national and personal devastation, if you had a G-d, He either said *hasta lavista* and deserted you for another nation, or He was dead. The time was ripe. Once again, you were vulnerable. It was the moment to finish what Nebuchadnezzar started and prevent you from reestablishing your homeland in Israel. You could not be allowed to repeat what Joshua did when he dispossessed the indigenous population from their right to self-determination. As the major power in this region, only Persia



was poised to lead the forces against your Zionist imperialism. Our military intelligence, in a penetrating analysis of your defense capabilities, observed that despite your prolific talents in writing and speaking, none of you were activists. Nobody would demonstrate. After all, when Pharaoh enslaved you and the Jewish midwives were ordered to kill the male newborns, or when they announced the decree to drown all the male infants in the Nile, every single Jewish organization was out to lunch. Nobody took out full page ads in the *Egyptian Times*. If you feared the State then, you would fear it again. It took eighty years for Moses to appear, and we saw no Moses on the Persian horizon.

Oh, G-d...who knew you had a shrewd political operative named Mordechai who understood how to use the tools of the political campaign. Sure, he went out into the streets of Shushan, but while our analysts concluded correctly that he was having no impact on the public because you were all scared to death, who would have thought there was a mole inside the palace, and it was she who was the target of his soliloquy in sackcloth. His whole act was designed for an audience of one, Esther. For us, it was a massive failure of the imagination.

I have concluded, therefore, that your Hidden G-d will win every time and, that, therefore, I have no choice but to plead with you to accept our surrender and make peace. I have come to understand that at least three viewpoints exist within your community on the permissibility or advisability of such a treaty with us.

The first perspective, as expressed by your most esteemed Biblical and Talmudic commentator, Rashi, says that the commandment in Deuteronomy 20:10, to make peace with the nations in the Holy Land, applies only to those with whom you might undertake a voluntary war for territorial expansion or wealth, but in a so-called Obligatory War of Conquest, your only option is to wipe us all out. Too bad. But fortunately, on the other side, the great Rambam -- "from Moshe to Moshe there is none like Moshe" -- allows for peace with everyone, including us! Thank G-d! In the middle of this spectrum of opinion stands a critic of the Rambam, the Ra'avad, who would allow for a Covenant of Peace if we Amalekites unconditionally accept the Seven Commandments Given to the Children of Noah, or the basic principles of morality.

Perhaps Rashi believes that *t'shuvah* on our part is impossible. That is, who we were...is who we are...is who we will be. Character can't change. And maybe the Rambam believes that what counts are the acts of repentance, that by a declaration of surrender, we have, in effect, changed. As to the Ra'avad, well, let's say he appears to be more practical. Show me the money, he is saying. He wants to know, what exactly are you committed to change?

So I say to you now, enough bloodshed. It need not be tomorrow, of course, or the day after tomorrow, but my dream is peace in our time. I have in one hand an olive branch, and in the other a grogger, and propose that I lay down the grogger once and forever and exchange confidence-building measures with you. International guarantees, Nobel Peace Prizes. As the most public Amalekite to date, I believe that once my people see the advantages of peace, I will be able to bring them around. But we must have partners who see a glorious opportunity to make history. A rendezvous with destiny. What do you say, Beginners? Trust me. I am the man.

*The author is a graduate of the Lincoln Square Synagogue Beginners Service.*

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

**Thu April 17, 2008 - 12th of Nisan  
TA'ANIT BECHOROT MUKDAM**  
Morning Services . . . . .6:30 & 7:30 AM

**Fri April 18, 2008 - 13th of Nisan  
EREV EREV PESACH**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:10 & 7:50 AM  
Latest time to burn Chametz . . . . .11:21 AM  
Candle Lighting . . . . .7:20 PM  
Mincha . . . . .7:25 PM

**Sat April 19, 2008 - 14th of Nisan  
Achrei Mot EREV PESACH**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 8:30 AM  
Latest time to eat Chametz . . . . .10:04 AM  
Mincha . . . . .7:10 PM  
Yom Tov candles after . . . . .8:20 PM  
Maariv . . . . .8:20 PM  
Begin seder after . . . . .8:20 PM

**Sun April 20, 2008 - 15th of Nisan  
PESACH**  
Morning Services . . . . .8:00 & 9:00 AM  
Mincha . . . . .7:25 PM  
Yom Tov candles after . . . . .8:21 PM  
Maariv . . . . .8:21 PM  
Begin seder after . . . . .8:21 PM

**Mon April 21, 2008 - 16th of Nisan  
PESACH**  
Morning Services . . . . .8:00 & 9:00 AM  
Mincha . . . . .7:25 PM  
Maariv . . . . .8:21 PM  
Yom Tov ends . . . . .8:21 PM  
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . .7:30 PM

**Tue April 22, 2008 - 17th of Nisan  
PESACH (CHOL HAMOED)**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 7:30 AM

**Wed April 23, 2008 - 18th of Nisan  
PESACH (CHOL HAMOED)**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 7:30 AM

**Thu April 24, 2008 - 19th of Nisan  
PESACH (CHOL HAMOED)**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 7:30 AM

**Fri April 25, 2008 - 20th of Nisan  
PESACH (CHOL HAMOED)**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 7:30 AM  
Earliest Candle Lighting . . . . .6:21 PM  
Candle Lighting . . . . .7:28 PM  
Mincha . . . . .6:45 & 7:35 PM

**Sat April 26, 2008 - 21st of Nisan  
PESACH**  
Morning Services . . . . .8:00 & 9:00 AM  
Talmud Class . . . . .6:30 PM  
Mincha . . . . .7:15 PM  
Yom Tov Candles after . . . . .8:28 PM  
Maariv . . . . .8:28 PM

**Sun April 27, 2008 - 22nd of Nisan  
PESACH**  
Morning Services . . . . .8:00 & 9:00 AM  
Talmud Class . . . . .6:45 PM  
Mincha . . . . .7:30 PM  
Maariv . . . . .8:28 PM  
Yom Tov ends . . . . .8:28 PM  
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . .7:35 PM

**Fri May 2, 2008 - 27th of Nisan  
YOM HASHOAH**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:10 & 7:50 AM  
Earliest Candle Lighting . . . . .6:23 PM  
Candle Lighting . . . . .7:35 PM  
Mincha . . . . .6:45 & 7:40 PM

**Sat May 3, 2008 - 28th of Nisan  
Kedoshim**  
Daf Yomi . . . . .7:00 AM  
Bible Class . . . . .8:30 AM  
Morning Services . . . . .7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . .6:25 PM  
Mincha . . . . .7:25 PM  
Maariv/Shabbat Ends . . . . .8:35 PM  
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . .7:45 PM

**Mon May 5, 2008 - 30th of Nisan  
ROSH CHODESH**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 7:40 AM

**Tue May 6, 2008 - 1st of Iyyar  
ROSH CHODESH**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 7:40 AM

**Wed May 7, 2008 - 2nd of Iyyar  
YOM HAZIKARON**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:10 & 7:50 AM

**Thu May 8, 2008 - 3rd of Iyyar  
YOM HAATZMA'UT**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 7:50 AM

**Fri May 9, 2008 - 4th of Iyyar**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:10 & 7:50 AM  
Earliest Candle Lighting . . . . .6:30 PM  
Candle Lighting . . . . .7:42 PM  
Mincha . . . . .6:45 & 7:45 PM

**Sat May 10, 2008 - 5th of Iyyar Emor**  
Daf Yomi . . . . .7:00 AM  
Bible Class . . . . .8:30 AM  
Morning Services . . . . .7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . .6:30 PM  
Mincha . . . . .7:30 PM  
Maariv/Shabbat Ends . . . . .8:42 PM  
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . .7:50 PM

**Fri May 16, 2008 - 11th of Iyyar**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:10 & 7:50 AM  
Earliest Candle Lighting . . . . .6:37 PM  
Candle Lighting . . . . .7:49 PM  
Mincha . . . . .6:45 & 7:55 PM

**Sat May 17, 2008 - 12th of Iyyar Behar**  
Daf Yomi . . . . .7:00 AM  
Bible Class . . . . .8:30 AM  
Morning Services . . . . .7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . .6:40 PM  
Mincha . . . . .7:40 PM  
Maariv/Shabbat Ends . . . . .8:49 PM  
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . .7:55 PM

**Mon May 19, 2008 - 14th of Iyyar  
PESACH SHENI**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 7:50 AM

**Fri May 23, 2008 - 18th of Iyyar  
LAG B'OMER**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:10 & 7:50 AM  
Earliest Candle Lighting . . . . .6:39 PM  
Candle Lighting . . . . .7:56 PM  
Mincha . . . . .6:45 & 8:00 PM

**Sat May 24, 2008 - 19th of Iyyar  
Bechukotai**  
Daf Yomi . . . . .7:00 AM  
Bible Class . . . . .8:30 AM  
Morning Services . . . . .7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . .6:45 PM  
Mincha . . . . .7:45 PM  
Maariv/Shabbat Ends . . . . .8:56 PM  
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . .8:05 PM

**Mem May 26, 2008 - 21st of Iyyar  
MEMORIAL DAY**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 8:30 AM

**Fri May 30, 2008 - 25th of Iyyar**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:10 & 7:50 AM  
Earliest Candle Lighting . . . . .6:44 PM  
Candle Lighting . . . . .8:01 PM  
Mincha . . . . .6:45 & 8:05 PM

**Sat May 31, 2008 - 26th of Iyyar  
Bamidbar**  
Daf Yomi . . . . .7:00 AM  
Bible Class . . . . .8:30 AM  
Morning Services . . . . .7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . .6:50 PM  
Mincha . . . . .7:50 PM  
Maariv/Shabbat Ends . . . . .9:01 PM  
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . .8:10 PM

**Mon June 2, 2008 - 28th of Iyyar  
YOM YERUSHALAYIM**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 7:50 AM

**Wed June 4, 2008 - 1st of Sivan  
ROSH CHODESH**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:00 & 7:40 AM

**Fri June 6, 2008 - 3rd of Sivan**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:10 & 7:50 AM  
Earliest Candle Lighting . . . . .6:49 PM  
Candle Lighting . . . . .8:06 PM  
Mincha . . . . .6:45 & 8:10 PM

**Sat June 7, 2008 - 4th of Sivan Nasso**  
Daf Yomi . . . . .7:00 AM  
Bible Class . . . . .8:30 AM  
Morning Services . . . . .7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  
Talmud & Bible Class . . . . .6:55 PM  
Mincha . . . . .7:55 PM  
Maariv/Shabbat Ends . . . . .9:06 PM  
Daily Mincha & Maariv . . . . .8:15 PM

**Sun June 8, 2008 - 5th of Sivan  
EREV SHAVUOT**  
Morning Services . . . . .7:10 & 8:30 AM  
Candle Lighting . . . . .8:07 PM  
Mincha . . . . .8:10 PM  
Maariv . . . . .8:56 PM

**SAVE THE DATE**  
Beginners Shabbat Luncheons  
Sat., 12:30 PM - \$20  
May 3, June 7  
All Night Shavuot Learn-a-thon  
Sun., June 8, 11:30 PM - 7:00 AM

**CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV**

**ENGAGEMENTS**

Shira Yehudit Rothkopf and Daniel Yerachmiel Neuman  
Mazal Tov to parents Tzipora and Dr. Moshe Rothkopf

Shira Schonfeld and Naphtali Buchwald  
Mazal Tov to parents Aidel and Ephraim Buchwald



**MARRIAGES**

Ruthie Zerwitz and Marc (Elimelech) Berenson  
Rochel Keller and Boruch Ritholtz  
Mazal Tov to parents Laurie and Rabbi Dr. Chaim Keller

Rivky Kreizel and Avroham Tzvi Spitzer  
Mazal Tov to parents Miriam and Yochanan Kreizel, and to grandmother Ann Kreizel

Dr. Cathrin (Rivkah) Schulz and Edward Marc Weinstein

**BIRTHS**

Sara Steinhart and David Berman, on the birth of a boy, Nathaniel

Polly and Gabriel Bousbib, on the birth of a girl, Nava Miriam

Bracha and Yitzchak Gluck, on the birth of twin girls, Yocheved and Chani  
Mazal Tov to grandparents Miriam and Sam Gluck

Sandra and Howard Hoffen, on the birth of a boy, Steven Alexander

Amy (Nelkin) and Mitchell Kase, on the birth of a girl, Liana Alex

Dr. Victoria Chernyak and Stas Krasinski, on the birth of a boy, Aaron Eli

Dr. Tina Sichrovsky and Dr. Boaz Kurtis, on the birth of a boy, Davion Reuel

Yocheved and Avraham (Aram) Nadell, on the birth of a boy, Yehuda Noam

Aileen and Dr. David Smolanoff, on the birth of a boy, Eliyahu

**BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

Sarah Sophia Dunn  
Mazal Tov to parents Wendy and Brandon Dunn

Max Farkas  
Mazal Tov to parents Leslie and Peter Farkas

Naim Gavriel Kaplan  
Mazal Tov to parents Drs. Chava and Steven Kaplan

Effie (Aharon Ephraim Simcha) Landau  
Mazal Tov to parents Bobbie Sue Daitch and David Landau

Joshua Rowan  
Mazal Tov to parents Carolyn and Marc Rowan

**SPEEDY RECOVERY/REFUAH SH'LAIMA**

Ariella Pazit Ronit bat Yael Netania  
Elisheva bat Miriam  
Reuven ben Bailah

**CONDOLENCES**

Mordechai Beilis, on the loss of his father, Aron Beilis

Family of Deborah Fliss (12/06)

Roberta Hadi, on the loss of her mother, Sally Fink

Janice Horowitz, on the loss of her father, Dr. Sidney Horowitz

Sara Lee Kessler, on the loss of her father, Dr. Edward Kessler

Yosef (Jose) Melendrez, on the loss of his father, Marcelino Melendrez

Joseph Morris, on the loss of his mother, Frances Morris

Arlene Ross, on the loss of her father, Jack Ross

Jeanne Weisberg, on the loss of her husband, Gerald Weisberg

Richard Wigler, on the loss of his father, Philip Wigler

**TSETCHEM L'SHALOM (To live and/or study in Israel)**

Dr. Mark Arkovitz  
Asher Anshel (Allan) Leicht

**CONGRATULATIONS**

Sonia Pauline Beker, on the publication of her book *Symphony on Fire - A Story of Music and Spiritual Resistance During the Holocaust*, published by The Worsmithy, LLC

Phyllis (Perel) Blackman, on the release of her favorably reviewed album of spiritual songs, "Come Home"

Barbara Ribakove Gordon honored at the Jewish Heritage Celebration for her work with Ethiopian Jewry

Didi & Adam Huff, honored by North Shore Hebrew Academy

Kellie (Price) & Elisha Rothman, honored at MJE's annual dinner

Neal Shapiro named one of Los Angeles' top ten "Menches" by the *Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*

**THANK YOU**

Meredith Lerner, for writing and directing this year's fabulous Purim schpiel

All the wonderful Purim schpielers