

KOL MEVASSER

The “Nones” Have It: Do We?

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

Professor Daniel C. Dennett of Tufts University recently published an article, “Why the Future of Religion is Bleak.” He argues that religious institutions have survived historically by controlling what their adherents know, but today that is next to impossible. He points out that the influence of religion has been waning, especially in Europe and North America. In the United States, one out of six Americans identifies as a “None,” a person without a religious affiliation. And the number of Nones is on the increase.

Bad news: Professor Dennett is right. The number of “Nones” in the world has grown rapidly during the past several decades.

Good news: Professor Dennett is wrong. The future of religion is not at all bleak. Human beings are spiritual beings, seeking transcendence and cosmic understanding. Even those who list themselves as “Nones” are generally not devoid of spiritual aspirations. They simply are not finding that their aspirations are being fulfilled within “establishment” religious contexts.

As people become more educated and as they depend less on clergy for information and truth, it is inevitable that there will be a change in how they approach religion. Among highly educated

individuals whose minds have been shaped by secular universities and culture, there is surely a greater emphasis on self-reliance and individualism. There is a greater weight given to science than to metaphysics. There is less internal pressure to affiliate with a religious institution. The “Nones” are a natural result of an increasingly secular, science-based, and individualistic society.

Compounding the problem of current-day religion is the “success” of fundamentalism and authoritarianism within religious institutions. The more extreme groups in Judaism, Christianity and Islam are flourishing. Whereas the “Nones” choose to have few or no children, the “right wing” religionists have lots of children. Whereas the “Nones” are content to disconnect themselves from bastions of religious life, the “right wing” religionists flock to their religious centers. Whereas the “Nones” tend to rely on their own ability to make judgments, the “right wing” religionists line up behind charismatic and authoritarian religious figures.

If the future of religion is indeed problematic, it is not because of the increase of “Nones” but because of the root causes that drive thinking people away from religion. Too often, religion is identified with ignorance, superstition, and subservience to all-powerful authorities.

The hope for religion is the growth of religious institutions that actually take their parishioners seriously, that don’t insult their intelligence, that

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KJ Schedule Emor

Erev Shabbat

Friday, May 8th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 6:30 am
Minha / Arvit..... 6:30 pm
Candle Lighting 7:24 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer, Thirty-fifth Night

Shabbat

Saturday, May 9th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 8:30 am
Mr. Kamy Eliassi, Guest Speaker
Minha & Arvit..... 6:30 pm
Havdalla..... 8:28 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer, Thirty-sixth Night

Weekdays

Sunday, May 3rd

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 7:30 am
Talmud Torah 10:00 am
Sefirat Ha'Omer, Thirty-seventh Night

Monday to Friday, May 11th to 15th
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am
Sefirat Ha'Omer, 38th to 42nd Nights

Erev Shabbat

Friday, May 15th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 6:30 am
Minha / Arvit..... 6:30 pm
Candle Lighting 7:29 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer, Forty-second Night

Torah & Haftara Readings

Vayikra / Leviticus: Emor

513 to 528

Haftara Yehezkel /Ezekiel 528-530

Welcome

Mr. Kamy Eliassi

KJ Shabbat Guest Speaker
who will be delivering this week's
Dvar Torah on Parashat Emor
during morning services

Shabbat Shalom U'Mevorah

Seudah Shlisheet

is sponsored
in memory of

Iran bat Monavar, z"l

by

Hilda & Tooraj Rojhani

Refuah Shlemah

Moselle Amron • Maurice Ovadia • Tilda Levy
Esther Duke • Abe Abraham • Sassoon Ezra

In Memoriam

We remember these yearzeit anniversaries May 9 to
16, 2015. It is customary to light a memorial candle,
donate tzedaka, & attend Shabbat services.

21 Iyar / Sunday, May 10th

Lulu Ezra Azoory *Tala bat Javaher*
Michael David Adrian Meyer *Michael David ben*
Yoseph Meir
Murad Saddick *Mordechai ben Sasson Saddick*
Maisie Solomon

22 Iyar / Monday, May 11th

Rachel Bar *Rachel bat Miriam*
Ezekiel Joseph *Yehezkel ben Itzhak Yoseph*
Grace Mussry *Grace bat Toba*
Iran Rojhani *Iran bat Monavar*

23 Iyar / Tuesday, May 12th

Moshe Bensabat *Moshe ben Clara*
Sally Saul *Salha bat Simcha*

24 Iyar / Wednesday, May 13th

Judah Freddy Bekhore *Yehuda Faraj ben Yosef*

25 Iyar / Thursday, May 14th

Simkha bat Michael

26 Iyar / Friday, May 15th

Sarah Elias *Sarah bat Ester*

27 Iyar / Shabbat, May 16th

Sassoon Elisha *Sassoon Yoseph Elisha*

Kahal Joseph Talmud Torah Lag Ba'Omer



Kahal Joseph Membership

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enjoyed our Shabbat speakers? Join our
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speak to their spiritual needs. Educated people are not—or should not be—looking for a religion that depends on ignorance and subservience, or that fosters superstitious beliefs and practices. Serious people seek meaningful religious experience, not entertainment or commercialism, or vapid pontifications.

Fortunately, there are vibrant communities of highly educated, highly individualistic people who find great strength and happiness in their religious institutions and in their communities.

In this week's Torah portion we read: "And you shall keep My commandments and do them: I am the Lord. And you shall not profane My holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel; I am the Lord who hallows you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the Lord" (Vayikra 22:31-33).

In this passage, we read of the aspiration of living a holy, upright life; of avoiding behavior that profanes God's name. We are to live in a manner that reflects sanctity and spirituality, righteousness and goodness. But what do these things have to do with the fact that God took us out of the land of Egypt? Why is that fact included in the admonition to live a holy life?

The 16th century sage, Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, was among those who

pointed out that the name of Egypt, "mitsrayim," is related to the word "tsar," narrow, constricted. The Torah's frequent mention of our Exodus from Egypt is a reminder for us to leave the narrowness and constriction of the enslaved lives we led while we were in ancient Egypt. The Exodus not only brought physical freedom, but also psychological, emotional, intellectual and spiritual freedom.

The commandment to be holy is not intended to stifle us, but to expand our horizons. We are to feel the liberation that comes with overcoming physical and psychological constraints. The Torah offers a religious vision which expands our lives, not one that constricts our lives. A religious personality lives in relationship with an Eternal God.

When religion is identified with ignorance, superstition, authoritarianism and commercialism, then it is no surprise that thinking people will be repelled by it. But when religion fulfills its true mission of elevating our souls and sanctifying our lives, then it is at the very source of human happiness and fulfillment.

Shabbat Shalom

Errol Levi Social Hall & Ballroom

Kahal Joseph has one of the most beautiful ballrooms on the Westside for events and celebrations up to 200 guests.
Contact Sarah at 310.474.0559

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Jerusalem began to thrive once more in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Growing numbers of Jews returning to their land, waning Ottoman power and revitalized European interest in the Holy Land led to renewed development of Jerusalem.

The British army led by General Allenby conquered Jerusalem in 1917. From 1922 to 1948 Jerusalem was the administrative seat of the British authorities in the Land of Israel (Palestine), which had been entrusted to Great Britain by the League of Nations following the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. The city developed rapidly, growing westward into what became known as the "New City."

Upon termination of the British Mandate on May 14, 1948, and in accordance with the UN resolution of November 29, 1947, Israel proclaimed its independence, with Jerusalem as its capital. Opposing its establishment, the Arab countries launched an all-out assault on the new state, resulting in the 1948-49 War of Independence. The armistice lines drawn at the end of the war divided Jerusalem into two, with Jordan occupying the Old City and areas to the north and south, and Israel retaining the western and southern parts of the city.

Jerusalem was reunited in June 1967, as a result of a war in which the Jordanians attempted to seize the western section of the city. The Jewish Quarter of the Old City, destroyed under Jordanian rule, has been restored, and Israeli citizens are again able to visit their holy places, which Jordan had been denied them between 1948-1967. *(from Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs)*

A Brief History of Jerusalem

in honor of Yom Yerushalayim, May 17, 2015

*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its cunning.
May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.*
(Psalms 137:5-6)

King David made Jerusalem the capital of his kingdom, as well as the religious center of the Jewish people, in 1003 BCE. Some forty years later, his son Solomon built the Temple (the religious and national center of the people of Israel) and transformed the city into the prosperous capital of an empire extending from the Euphrates to Egypt.

The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem in 586 BCE, destroyed the Temple, and exiled the people. Fifty years later, when Babylon was conquered by the Persians, King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and granted them autonomy. They built a Second Temple on the site of the First, and rebuilt the city and its walls.

Alexander the Great conquered Jerusalem in 332 BCE. After his death the city was ruled by the Ptolemies of Egypt and then by the Seleucids of Syria. The Hellenization of the city reached its peak under the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV; the desecration of the Temple and attempts to suppress Jewish religious identity resulted in a revolt.

Led by Judah Maccabee, the Jews defeated the Seleucids, rededicated the Temple (164 BCE), and re-established Jewish independence under the Hasmonean dynasty, which lasted for more than a hundred years, until Pompey imposed Roman rule on Jerusalem. King Herod the Idumean, who was installed as ruler of Judah by the Romans (37 - 4 BCE), established cultural institutions in Jerusalem, erected magnificent public buildings and refashioned the Temple into an edifice of splendor. Jewish revolt against Rome broke out in 66 CE, as Roman rule after

Herod's death became increasingly oppressive. For a few years Jerusalem was free of foreign rule, until, in 70 CE, Roman legions under Titus conquered the city and destroyed the Temple. Jewish independence was briefly restored during the Bar Kochba revolt (132-135), but again the Romans prevailed. Jews were forbidden to enter the city, which was renamed Aelia Capitolina and rebuilt along the lines of a Roman city.

For the next century and a half, Jerusalem was a small provincial town. This changed radically when the Byzantine Emperor Constantine transformed Jerusalem into a Christian center. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher (335) was the first of numerous grandiose structures built in the City.

Muslim armies invaded the country in 634, and four years later Caliph Omar captured Jerusalem. Only during the reign of Abdul Malik, who built the Dome of the Rock (691), did Jerusalem briefly become the seat of a caliph. The century-long rule of the Umayyad Dynasty from Damascus was succeeded in 750 by the Abbasids from Baghdad, and with them Jerusalem began to decline.

The Crusaders conquered Jerusalem in 1099, massacred its Jewish and Muslim inhabitants, and established the city as the capital of the Crusader Kingdom. Under the Crusaders, synagogues were destroyed, old churches were rebuilt and many mosques were turned into Christian shrines. Crusader rule over Jerusalem ended in 1187, when the city fell to Saladin the Kurd. The Mamluks, a military feudal aristocracy from Egypt, ruled Jerusalem from 1250. They constructed numerous graceful buildings, but treated the city solely as a Muslim theological center and ruined its economy through neglect and crippling taxes.

The Ottoman Turks, whose rule lasted for four centuries, conquered Jerusalem in 1517. Suleiman the Magnificent rebuilt the city walls (1537), constructed the Sultan's Pool, and placed public fountains throughout the city. After his death, the central authorities in Constantinople took little interest in Jerusalem. During the 17th and 18th centuries Jerusalem sunk to one of its lowest ebbs.
