

2007 Kol Nidre Honor Roll

Yasher Koach and Thank You to the members of our **2007 Kol Nidre Honor Roll**. There is still time to join by pledging \$180 or more towards this year's important campaign. We will update our Honor Roll weekly. We look forward to 100% participation from all our members and friends. The funds raised will literally support all the wonderful programs that make our synagogue such a special place. All contributions are very much needed and greatly appreciated.

Rabbi David Algaze
Rachelle & David Alkalay
Eileen Alter
Edith Althausen
Norman Antis
Maria & Leo Batash
Michelle Bernstein
Ruth & David Better
Ed Fale
Edward Finfer
Shulie & Jack Goldhaber
Neva Goldstein
Fred Hellman
Miriam & Bruce Jacobs
Elvera Joseph
Seymour Kaplan
Tova & Rafi Katz
Cathy & Ira Kleiman
Ephraim Krupnik
Karen & Charles Kuttler
Renee & David Leibowitz
Peter Lichtenthal
Linda & Serge Merkin
Rachel & Louis Ordentlich
Yaakov Presworky
Michelle & Larry Polonetsky
Gloria Rapoport
Michael & Marina Rapoport
Karen & Marc Rose
Judy & Stuart Rosen
Arlene Ross
Mark & Gail Silverman
Adrian Smilovici
Debbie & David Sosnowik
Jane Stiefel
Cynthia & Eric Suben
Paulina & Maurice Szteinbok
Judith Tenzer z"l
Rosalie Tenzer
Gita & Yossi Tocker
Jay Waitzman
Cheryl Wasserman
Daniel & Carol Yaghoubian
Simone & Ephraim Zakry

THE FIRST GHETTO By Rabbi David Algaze

"Then you are to say (to Pharaoh), 'Your servants have been cattlemen from our youth till now...' so that you may be able to settle on the region of Goshen, since all shepherds are abhorrent to Egyptians." (Beresheet 46:34)

It is clear that Joseph wants to place the brothers far away from Pharaoh's palace and direct them to a distant land, Goshen. One may ask why did Joseph not wish to have his brothers nearer to him or why he did not bestow upon them a more prestigious place in Egyptian society? Not one of them is even given a ministerial or government position or offered to participate in the life of the most important empire in the world. On the contrary, Joseph continues to highlight their occupation as mere "shepherds" and "cattlemen" in order to force the Egyptians to allow them to settle in a distant land.

Joseph reveals here his vision as a leader. His actions are not merely positive for his brothers and families, but serve as a lesson for all Jewish history in the future. In reality, Joseph is building here the first Jewish ghetto. He is establishing a separate experience for his brethren, apart from the Egyptian culture and society. His goal was to prevent assimilation and ultimate disappearance of Israel's descendants. In the land of Goshen the brothers would be able to establish their own life style, to be able to keep the traditions of their forefathers and to remain faithful to their heritage.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch says about this verse, that the barriers the nations erected (to prevent the Jews from integrating into their societies) preserved Israel away from the moral turpitude of the nations for centuries." The emphasis on their occupation as shepherds makes the same point. Rabenu Bahya adds that urban societies have the additional dangers of excessive luxury, immoral social intercourse, gossip, falsehood, crime and theft. By distancing them from this environment, Joseph was actually stressing the positive aspects in the shepherds' life, namely separation, the time to reflect and meditate, the avoidance of social contacts that lead to immorality and the possibility of achieving higher and more spiritual states.

Joseph did not want Israel to engage in luxury, consumerism and party-making. His vision as a leader was to provide the Jewish people with the type of environment that would allow the genuine spirit of Abraham Isaac and Jacob to flourish.

As Rabbi Yoseph ben Kisma said (Avot 6), "If you were to give me all the money in the world, I would not live except in a place of Torah."

Throughout history, Jews made the same declaration over and over again. More than riches and material success they sought to develop the proper environments for them and their children where the legacy of Torah would continue. While the first ghettos were created in order to punish and discriminate against the Jews, the experience of separateness actually preserved Am Israel in its purity. This is the legacy of Joseph and his great statesmanship and its effects and philosophy have endured till this very day.