

CD-1115 Transcription

WINS radio commentaries. undated.

MARC TANENBAUM: On January 18th the entire American nation will observe the birthday of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King's family has done me the great honor of inviting me to address that observance in Atlanta. I attach a special importance to this event, particularly in light of the ugly racist eruptions in our great city in recent days. Martin Luther King was one of the great moral prophets of our century. Like the Hebrew prophet, Isaiah, he was a great statesman who made towering and permanent contributions to advancing civil rights and social just for black people and for all Americans.

The power of Dr. King's moral magnetism rested on his conviction that justice was a seamless web. Anti-Semitism and anti-Catholic prejudice, like racial bigotry, were anathema to him. In March 1968 Dr. King declared to the nation, "We have made it clear that you cannot deal with one evil in society [01:00] by substituting another evil. We cannot substitute one tyranny for another. And for the black man to be struggling for justice and then turn around and be anti-Semitic, is not only a very irrational course,

but it is a very immoral course. Whenever we have seen anti-Semitism we have condemned it with all our might," Dr. King said.

The nation justly honors Martin Luther King, because unlike others, he saw the civil rights resolution not as a cause for hatred and prejudice, but as a covenant of white and black, Christian and Jew standing together for decency and justice. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: A network television commentator asked me last week, "How do you explain the anguish of American Jews over the Israel/Palestinian conflict?" With many others I've thought hard about that question, and I think I understand [02:00] how deep is that dilemma. For most of us raised on the Bible and 4,000 years of Jewish tradition, Israel is a dream image. It is the promised land, the land of milk and honey. The laboratory of social justice prophesied by the prophets and sages. The rabbinic Midrash speaks of

Jerusalem as the center of the universe where the Messiah will appear causing the lion to lie down the lamb in perfect harmony and peace. When the state of Israel was created in 1948 the dream image was transformed into a geopolitical reality. Suddenly the Jewish people had to cope not with an idealized utopia, but with the tough realities of every nation state: national security and defense, building a unified democracy out of a polyglot population, governing unruly minorities. The dissonance between the dream images of a perfect society and the complicated choices of defending a real nation with real weapons hovers over all the present anguished [03:00] debate.

In the midst of this emotional turmoil one thing remains clear, however, the majority of Israelis and American Jews want a peaceful resolution of the conflict with the Palestinians and Arabs. If the present peace initiatives will lead to responsible Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and beyond, most Jews will support such serious moves to end riots and bloodshed. For that has been the dream of Israel since its biblical days. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum  
of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Passover and Easter coincide again this year, as they do so often. But historical evidence shows that their similarities of ritual practices are more than an accident. The late professor Julian Morgenstern, a great Jewish biblical scholar, wrote an important but little-known book called *Some Antecedents of Christianity*. In that study [04:00] he demonstrates that the entire holy week observances simply cannot be understood, as Jesus and his early followers understood them, apart from their origins in Judaism. Thus the pilgrimage to Jerusalem with the waving of the palm branches, the *lulav*, was an early Israelite religious practice of the country Jews of Palestine, who began the Passover festival by such rites of purification.

Jesus and his disciples, who were mainly Galilean farmers, were a distinct Jewish sect who conformed to that time-honored folk ritual. Professor Morgenstern also stated that the theme of death and resurrection traces back to the Jewish tradition that King David went to the Mount of Olives before Passover where he struggled with and defeated

the Angel of Death. David was thus resurrected and then returned to Jerusalem in a joyous procession. Clearly Judaism and Christianity are today two distinctive, proud, and independent religions. But as history reminds us that there would be no Easter had [05:00] not the Jews faithfully observed their Passover across the centuries.

This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS news time 7:56. Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The hijacking of the Kuwaiti jumbo jet last Tuesday by a group of Shiite Muslim terrorists must fill all people of conscience with a profound sense of horror. This is not a case of Israeli Jews versus Palestinians, which has its own tragic qualities. Here are Muslim fanatics terrorizing fellow Muslims and threatening to kill all of them. What this airplane hijacking dramatizes for the world is how pervasive the culture of violence and fanaticism has become in the Middle East, threatening to destroy not only Christians in Lebanon, Jews in Israel, but also other Muslims. Anyone who knows anything about the

Quran and Islamic religion recognizing that Allah is called the compassionate one and that Islam teaches [06:00] human fraternity. But these terrorists and Shiite fanatics make a mockery of Islam's noted traditions and have converted their faith into weapons of human destruction.

Christians, Jews, and Muslims all have problems of coping with extremists who exploit their high religions for low political ideological purposes. The time is past due for a far more effective assertion of biblical humanism by all religious leaders, Muslims, Christians, and Jews to stand against the epidemic of violence and terrorism, and to defend the dignity of every human life. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Last Thursday was Holocaust Memorial Day. Next Thursday is Israel Independence Day, whose fortieth anniversary will be observed by today's [07:00] salute to

Israel parade. In many ways that convergence reflects Pascal's notion of the misery and grandeur of the human condition. One of the searing lessons the Jews learn from the trauma of the Nazi Holocaust was to take seriously their enemies' threats. Hitler and his criminal gangs repeatedly declared that their aim was to exterminate the entire Jewish people. There were a good number of emancipated Jews who thought that Hitler was a clown, a joke, who would quickly disappear. That delusion caused Jews the lives of a third of our people. In Israel and among many American Jews today that debate continues.

Numerous Palestinians publicly declare that they want not only a homeland in the West Bank and Gaza, but all of Palestine: Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv, the whole country. Some liberal Jews tend to regard that as typical excessive Arab rhetoric, like flamboyant bargaining in an Arab bazaar. Many other Jews remembering the delusions of Nazi threats insist on taking [08:00] seriously the PLO's declarations about destroying the Jewish state. Like many others I support real justice and autonomy for the Palestinian people who have suffered more than enough. But until the Palestinians change their ideology and rhetoric from destruction to peaceful coexistence, I fear that the

future of Arab/Israeli relations will not be a very promising one. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS news time is 7:56. Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Beginning last night at sundown, the Jewish people started the observance of Shavuot, the Jewish festival of weeks, or Pentecost. Originally Shavuot was observed as a biblical festival of thanksgiving for new crops in ancient Palestine, thus indicating how profound is the historic linkage of the Jewish people with a holy land. But what has elevated [09:00] this agricultural festival into a holy day of great moral and spiritual importance has been its association with the giving of the Torah to Israel. The Bible tells us that the Israelites reached Mount Sinai exactly seven weeks after their exodus from Egypt. In the midst of that desert place of awe and majesty the Israelites received the Ten Commandments, which transformed the moral consciousness of mankind. What a

divine human drama that was. Yesterday the Israelites were slaves, the untouchables of ancient Egypt. But by virtue of committing themselves to the moral laws received at Mount Sinai, they were to strive to become a kingdom of priests in a holy nation. They were to be transformed into a Messianic people, upholding the dignity of human life with the redemptive task of seeking to build a society of justice, equality, and liberty.

In a world pockmarked with disrespect for moral law, with violence, fanaticism, aggression, repression of human rights, [10:00] and nuclear threats to human survival itself, Shavuot with its proclamation of moral commandments and respect for human dignity has just as compelling a claim today on the Jewish conscience and the conscience of mankind as it had on the Israelites in the desert wastelands some 4,000 years ago. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS news time is 7:56. Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Next Sunday the Jewish people throughout the world will observe Tisha B'Av, the ninth day of the Jewish month of Av. Tisha B'Av is the most important of the four historical fast days that commemorate the destruction of the ancient temple, and of Jerusalem some 2,500 years ago. [11:00] Among pious traditional Jews the fast of Av is observed with all the solemnity of the day of atonement. In addition to avoiding all celebrations and sensual pleasures, observant Jews pray like mourners, sitting on the ground of the synagogue and reciting Jeremiah's lamentations over the passing of the temple. Jerusalem is mourned as a religious and national symbol and embodiment of the Jewish people.

With the rebirth of the state of Israel in our lifetime, many Jews now ask whether Tisha B'Av should not be abandoned or updated. One orthodox Jew in London gave this reason for observing it today. "What do I mourn over?" he asked. "I mourn over the causeless hatred which finds people slandering each other needlessly. I mourn over the lack of social justice, business integrity, and corrupt

behavior among those in high places. And finally I mourn over all the serious moral evils that do more to undermine human existence than any sword raised against us from the outside." Tisha B'Av then is a balance [12:00] wheel for our moral sanity in a stretched out world. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding --

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: -- is a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Wise men be guarded in your words. That is a teaching in the ethics of the synagogue fathers. That instruction came to mind as I watched, with everybody else, the summit meeting last week between Mayor Ed Koch and the Reverend Jesse Jackson. I don't know what exactly went on between them, but for me it suggested that there is an important lesson to be learned by many leaders from family therapy. The surest way to undermine a family or a marriage is to engage in the unbridled use of toxic language. Toxic language poisons the family atmosphere and it can just as surely poison and undermine relations between racial and religious groups. Studies in prejudice instruct us that the

danger of verbal violence is that frequently it leads to physical violence.

[13:00] Without minimizing real problems, both blacks and Jews need to be aware that the strongest cooperation and respect in the United States Congress exists between the Black Congressional Caucus and the congressmen who are Jewish. Predominantly Jewish voters helped elect black mayors in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Detroit, and Atlanta. We have had more than enough examples of hostility and toxic words. Leaders of both communities are needed who are healers and who believe in therapy for our larger human family. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Here is a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: This evening at sundown the Jewish community will mark the observance of the last two days of the festival of Sukkot or Tabernacles. The highlight of the eight-day holiday takes place tomorrow night and Tuesday on Simchat Torah. Simchat Torah means literally "rejoicing with the

Torah." And on this festival the sacred Torah scrolls are taken [14:00] reverently from the Holy Ark and the congregants circle the synagogue joyously seven times chanting special prayers. The rabbis observe that these processions recall the biblical image of Joshua circling the walls of Jericho seven times and the walls then collapsing. Modern Jewish commentators suggest that the walls of Jericho also symbolize walls of hatred and prejudice that close people off from each other.

In Brooklyn and among Jews elsewhere, the Simchat Torah will take on poignant meaning. The joyous Torah processions will be affected by the searing images of the scrolls that were desecrated by two young boys before Yom Kippur. All of us need to reflect on who helped build these walls of anti-Semitic hatred for these children, their families, their schools, the streets. The seven Torah processions will go on, but it will take some basic reeducation, and decency, and human respect for these ugly walls to finally fall.

This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not [15:00] necessarily the views of WINS.  
WINS news time is 7:58.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Now, a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The recent decisions of major television networks to curtail or end completely their religious programs is, I believe, a serious mistake that should be reconsidered. I say that as one who has worked closely with the networks over decades, and who has little patience with mindless media bashing. What is at stake in restoring mainstream religious programming is the future character of America's pluralistic society. My experience over three decades persuades me that ABC, CBS, and NBC, among other media, have made major contributions to promoting religious and racial harmony through their weekly religious television programs. Thoughtful discussions and documentaries on key moral and social issues, involving major Christian and Jewish leaders, provided strong images to the nation of mutual respect and cooperation.

Today many local affiliates are selling [16:00] television time to fundamentalist preachers, many of whom teach messages of intolerance, fanaticism, and money hustling.

The networks and their affiliates should not be capitulating to preachers of parochialism just because they can buy expensive air time. All of us, including the media, have a critical stake in strengthening the messages of mainstream groups who advance religious coexistence and respect, the keystone of America's pluralist democracy.

This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS. (break in audio)  
Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The approval by the United States Senate last Friday of the international treaty outlawing genocide deserves the appreciation of every American who cares about preserving human life. The treaty makes it an international crime to kill or injure members of national, racial, ethnic, or religious groups. While some 97 countries have ratified the treaty, it has taken [17:00] the United States some 40 years to finally take this action. Better late than never. The father of the Genocide Convention in 1948 was Dr. Raphael Lemkin, himself a survivor of the Nazi Holocaust. Dr. Lemkin was persuaded and had the international community agree decades ago to outlaw mass

murder and establish mechanisms to punish criminal nations, it might've been possible to prevent Hitler and the Nazis from massacring 6,000,000 Jews, and millions of other human beings.

Tragically, such killings continue today, with thousands of Afghans, Kurds, Mozambicans, and other innocent victims. President Regan and Secretary Schultz supported Congress' action. But the real hero is Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin who lobbied every single day over years for its adoption. He spoke the conscience of America when he said, "This treaty dramatizes the revolution of our nation against massive crimes against all peoples and our commitment to human rights." This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed [18:00] are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: If there is a central idea which represents the core of Jewish tradition, it is that of *tikkun olam*, the

repair and healing of the world. That basic value has been given new life in the Jewish community in recent years. A relatively young Jewish organization, the American Jewish World Service, has been working modestly but effectively to relieve human suffering, hunger, illness, and poverty in famine and drought-ridden countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The brainchild of industrious Larry Phillips, and former Oxfam development expert Larry Simon, the Jewish World Service is creating lifesaving projects in the third world side-by-side with major Christian and voluntary groups. AJWS professionals cooperate with Israeli desert agricultural experts in providing development knowhow that has already relieved much hunger and tragedy in Bangladesh, [19:00] Mozambique, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and in other troubled countries.

Some of the humane activities have been carried out by the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and domestically by [Mozan?] and other Jewish service groups. It is simply reassuring to know that among many caring Jews, *tikkun olam* means something redemptive and real in the world, and is more than a pious liturgical phrase. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: The time's 7:36. And now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Everyone in the Jewish community with whom I have spoken last week is deeply troubled by the riots on the temple mount in Jerusalem. The death of Palestinians brings no joy to Jewish hearts. But the organized Palestinian riots to maim and wound thousands of Jewish worshipers at their holiest shrine on a holy day fills all Jews with outrage. That sense of being violated was intensified by the inexplicable Bush administration's resolution at the United Nations condemning [20:00] Israel in a one-sided matter. Can anyone see that that act of appeasement is anything but a victory for Saddam Hussein and PLO's Arafat? That unjust resolution also reveals the hypocrisy of the United Nations. In recent months, thousands of human beings were murdered in Lebanon, Rwanda, Punjab, even at Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Not a single word of protest, certainly no resolutions, came before the United Nations. Can anyone explain why that moral paralysis exists for everyone, except for Israel? This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

(break in audio)

TANENBAUM: A few years ago I was invited by Pentagon officials to speak at a breakfast meeting in the defense of American democratic values. It is difficult to reconcile that positive experience with the contradictory behavior of the Defense Department in Saudi Arabia. Last week we learned that defense issues pamphlets [21:00] to all military personnel in Saudi Arabia warning them not to offend Saudi Islamic culture. Christians cannot wear a crucifix; Jews cannot display a star of David. There is to be no discussion of US/Israeli cooperation. I can understand the need not to flout sensitive issues. But this is not flouting. This is profound self-denial of American democracy. I would think that our mission is to help educate peoples about the virtues of democratic pluralism, rather than capitulate to Saudi feudalism. At the cost of billions, we are defending the Saudi monarchy from collapse. They must not be allowed to undermine the democratic character of thousands of our finest young people. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio file)

ANNOUNCER: WINS news time 7:37. Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: With the lighting of the first candle this [22:00] coming Tuesday evening, the Jewish people begin the celebration of the eight-day festival of Hanukkah or the Feast of Lights. Hanukkah commemorates the victory of Judah the Maccabee over the massive invading armies of the Syrian empire. It also marks the rededication of the holy temple in Jerusalem, which the pagan Syrians had defiled. The Maccabean victory was the first successful triumph in the struggle for freedom of conscience in the history of mankind. Had the Syrians defeated the Maccabees, Judaism might have perished, and quite conceivably Christianity and Islam might never have emerged. Hanukkah this year hopefully will rekindle the Maccabean spirit in today's troubled world. That spirit calls for resistance to modern day tyrants, such as Iraq's Saddam Hussein. Hanukkah is a time to light a candle for freedom and not capitulate to the darkness of dictators. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS news [23:00] time is 7:36. Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: When I was a child I lived in Baltimore, Maryland. My parents were devout Orthodox Jews who owned a small grocery store in a poor working class neighborhood. All of us, Irish, Italian, blacks, and Jews had suffered desperately together through the Depression. On the afternoon of a Christmas day in the 1930s I found my mother packing groceries into baskets and tying them with red and green ribbons. I asked her what she was doing and she answered that she had just found out that several of our Christian neighbors did not have money to buy food for Christmas dinner. "It is Christmas," my mother said, "and it will be terrible if our neighbors would go hungry on their holiday." And this Orthodox Jewish woman went through our neighborhood, handing out Christmas baskets as if she were Santa Claus. I often think of that lovely moment and wonder why the spirit of people caring spontaneously for other people prevails mainly from December to January, and

why not as much from January to December? This is [24:00]

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The migration of hundreds of Soviet Jews to Germany has given rise to a deeply emotional debate in the Jewish community. Survivors of the Nazi Holocaust cannot understand how any Jews would want to live in Germany, whose soil is soaked Jewish blood. They view Germany from 1945 backwards and do not trust the democratic evolution there during the past 50 years. Beyond that survivors feel that Soviet Jews should go to Israel and help strengthen the Jewish state against their Arab enemies. Other Jewish leaders share the same feelings about Israel, but raised in the democratic traditions of individual freedoms, this view holds that Soviet Jews should have the right to choose where they want to go. Essentially this is a conflict between individual rights and group responsibility for Jewish survival. What complicates the issue is that there is truth in both positions. It would take a [25:00] large measure of patience, compassion, and wisdom to help Soviet

Jews serve both their individual and group responsibilities. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS news time is 7:37. Now, a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Our first president, George Washington, whose birthday we observe tomorrow, would probably have been both pleased and troubled by much that is going on in the world today. A father of the American Revolution would clearly have welcomed the collapse of repressive communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and the rise of pluralist democracies. At the same time, I believe our first American president would have been deeply disturbed over how much religious, racial, and ethnic conflict exist in so many parts of the world. In almost every struggle in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and elsewhere one finds an absence of any commitment to religious or racial tolerance [26:00] and pluralism. The genius of the American Revolution is that it gave birth to respect for difference for every group in our society. The

experience of not just live and let live, but live and help live may well be America's most important export to building a world community. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

(break in audio)

TANENBAUM: It was a most welcomed symbolic action for this week of Passover and Easter observances. Some 40 Catholic bishops, meeting recently in the Vatican, unanimously adopted a resolution opposing sainthood for Queen Isabella of Spain. A sainthood project was undertaken by several ultra conservative priests who wanted to embarrass the progressive leaders in the Spanish church and government. These progressives had supported religious liberty for Jews and Protestants. The Isabella proposal triggered off a storm of protests from informed Catholics, Jews, and Muslims. Queen Isabella was [27:00] the mother of the Spanish Inquisition in the 15th century. She presided over one of the cruelest reigns of terror in history. Thousands of Jews and Muslims were burned alive or tortured. And in 1492 more than 200,000 Jews and later Muslims were cruelly driven out of Spain. If Isabella deserves to become a saint, so does

Adolf Eichmann. It is encouraging that enlightened Catholic leaders recognized this moral absurdity and stopped it before it offended nearly everybody. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER:        Commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM:       The failure of President Bush to prevent Saddam Hussein from massacring thousands of Kurds and Shiite Muslims is morally indefensible. The president showed courage and brilliance in mobilizing massive military power to save Kuwait from Saddam's savagery. How is it that the lives of Kurds and Shiites are suddenly expendable? We have agreed finally to send food and medical aid to these innocent [28:00] victims. So are we now helping to save their lives while Saddam is free to destroy them? I think I understand the risk of destabilizing Iraq. But there is a much larger moral issue, and that is the destabilizing the value of human life. Jews paid the ultimate price for governments and churches who chose impartial politics over moral resistance to killers. If we let that happen now in

Iraq we will have snatched sure defeat from victory. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS news time is 7:36. Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: News reports last week of Nazi videogames being sold in Germany and Austria have been met with shock and outrage. The so-called parlor games invite the player to pretend that he or she is manager of a Nazi death camp. The player wins points for gassing prisoners, [29:00] selling gold fillings and lampshades. The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles performed a service in disclosing these pathological games as a means of countering them. But we need to recall that they are not novelties. Hitler and the Nazi bureaucracy had prepared an entire school curriculum, which included anti-Semitic textbooks and children's toys. Their purpose was to dehumanize the Jewish people and reduce them to hated caricatures available for destruction. It is instructive that neo-Nazis and skinheads demonstrated in East German the week before using similar anti-human

imagery to attack Turkish guest workers and even Kurds. These are clearly mental sicknesses that the German and Austrian governments and all of us need to contain before they infect another generation. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The Crown Heights tragedy last week demonstrates what can happen when reason and [30:00] law are abandoned and raw hatreds and emotions run amok. The tragedy began with the accidental and deeply unfortunate death of the seven-year-old black child. It was compounded by the intentional murder of an Australian Hasidic student. The riots, looting, and near pogrom that followed confirmed long established social truths. One of these truths is that unrestrained verbal violence inevitably spills over into physical violence. For months now the air has been saturated with the anti-Jewish verbal violence of Farrakhan, Leonard Jeffries?], and some anti-Semitic rap lyrics. While Hasidic Jews have not rioted or looted, these unsettling experiences have confirmed many in their

rational fear of black hostilities. There is a crying need for all responsible leadership in the streets of Crown Heights and elsewhere to stand vigorously against the epidemic of verbal violence and hateful stereotypes before any more blacks or Jews become innocent victims of random lawlessness. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum. [31:00]

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Next Sunday evening the Jewish people begins the observance of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year. A dominant theme of these holy days centers on the creation of the world and belief that every human being is a creature fashioned in the divine image. In the Jewish religion over centuries black, brown, red, or white people have been accepted as converts and became full Jews without discrimination. Judaism is [less?] a community of faith and fate and has no categories of racial superiority. That is one reason why the conflict in Crown Heights is so painful. The demagogic salesmen of hate specialize in fomenting racial hatred. If they were truly faithful to biblical teachings, they would acknowledge that neither Jews nor

Christians can call themselves believers and preach racism in the same breath. Pogroms, looting, and racial slanders violate everything that America and the biblical tradition stand for. [32:00] This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: When I was a child I lived in Baltimore, Maryland and my parents owned a small general store in a poor working-class neighborhood. My father and mother were immigrants from czarist, Russia, and as devout Orthodox Jews they took their religion seriously. All of us in that neighborhood, Irish, Italians, Blacks, and Jews had suffered desperately together through the Depression years. On the late afternoon of December 24th, 1940 I found my mother in the back of our store taking down and groceries from half bare shelves. She was packing them into baskets and tied red and green ribbons around them. I asked her what she was doing, and she answered that she had just found out that several of our Christian neighbors were stone broke and did not have enough money to buy food for Christmas dinner. "It is Christmas," my mother said, "and

it would be terrible if our neighbors would go hungry on their holiday." And this Orthodox [33:00] Jewish woman and her son went out into the neighborhood handing out Christmas baskets as if they were Santa Claus. I often think of that lovely moment as I walk the streets of New York at the season and wonder why this spirit of people caring spontaneously for other people prevails mainly from December to January, and why not from January to December? This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary --

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: There remains something deeply unsettling about the Joel Steinberg, Hedda Nussbaum trial. I am not talking about the legal decision itself. The democratic virtues of the jury system again worked effectively. What troubles me is that the central moral and social issues that this entire tragedy represent seems to get confused with the technical legalisms. Look at the moral magnitude of this human drama. Two apparently intelligent highly educated people become sucked into a culture of drugs. Whatever role

their cocaine fix played, their moral conscience in fact were drugged into [34:00] oblivion. They became human robots who [unfearingly?] engaged in people battering, and in fatally abusing Lisa, their adopted child. That is one of the starker and cruelest morality plays of our times. The social human issues should not be forgotten with yesterday's headlines. We should be pursuing relentlessly how our social agencies and schools can be helped to intervene in such obvious tragedies. What can all of us do to transform our culture in demythologizing the chicness of drugs? How can we teach better and demonstrate by personal example the precious value of each human life? The trial is over, but these critical ethical issues must remain before us if civilized life is to prevail over domestic barbarism. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Two religious lies which have wrought much havoc in western civilization were powerfully repudiated last week. One religious lie is that [35:00] of apartheid, which

has resulted in the terrible oppression of black people in South Africa. The other religious lie was that of deicide, the canard that the Jewish people are collectively responsible for the death of Christ. That absurd teaching became the engine for nearly 2,000 years of anti-Semitism, which destroyed millions of Jewish lives. The Vatican Secretary for Justice and Peace issued in Vatican City a major document on the church and racism. The declaration rejected apartheid racism in all its forms as a sin and urged that it be uprooted. Calling anti-Semitism the most tragic form that racist ideology has assumed in our centuries with the horrors of the Jewish Holocaust, the Vatican called for the complete elimination of that ancient prejudice. This latest Vatican instruction could go a long way in countering the racist ideologies of both apartheid and anti-Semitism. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American [36:00] Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The death sentence pronounced for the Indian British writer, Salman Rushdie, by Iran's Ayatollah

Khomeini, is morally disturbing in itself. No less frightening than the incitement to murder is what this turbulent event reveals to the world about the basic authoritarian character of some Muslim extremists and its threat to fundamental democratic values. If Rushdie has unfairly maligned the high religion of Islam in his novel, *Satanic Verses*, then he deserves to be publicly criticized and corrected. The notion, however, that a work of fiction justifies an international campaign whose purpose is the killing of the author, smacks of medieval fanaticism. Instead of book burning we have had wholesale terrorism that once emptied bookshelves. This tragic episode discloses the core of a fanatic worldview which defines mankind as pitted in a clash between the children of light and the satanic children of darkness. In their worldview Satan must be destroyed. The present campaign is not only a threat to Rushdie's life, but an attack on the Satan [37:00] of western civilization. The United States and major western powers understand that if they capitulate to this fanatic explosion, they will be inviting for greater cataclysms against the west in the near future. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: On the surface it appeared to be a moral contradiction. Last Thursday the Pentagon sponsored a national day of prayer. The anomaly I first thought was that the Pentagon and the military branches have one primary mission, the defense of national security. Military training prepares people to kill in order to protect our nation. But prayer at its deepest levels affirms the precious value of life, the pursuit of peace, and social justice. I was the keynote speaker at that Pentagon observance, and I sensed again something special in this experience. The generals and the soldiers, [38:00] airmen, and sailors I met are no [Prussian Junkers?], nor mercenaries given to obsessive killing or imperial domination. This is a military of American democracy. Its legitimacy derives from its defense of human dignity, civil and political liberties, and social justice. However, corruption and fraud could compromise its moral mission. The military chaplaincy which sponsored this prayer day is an important force in America's religious pluralism. The

chaplain's motto is "community without compromise." It demonstrates that every religious group has the right to be entirely committed to its own traditions, while at the same time being responsible for the common welfare. That Pentagon prayer day was a healthy demonstration that the American genius of unity in the midst of diversity is alive and well. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not --

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: -- Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Mother's Day is a warm and wonderful national [39:00] observance that helps bring families closer together. Like most other Americans, I enjoy giving flowers and other gifts to mothers and mothers-in-law who surely deserve these displays of love and affection. But I must confess that frequently a shadow hovers over Mother's Day for me. In 1978 I was in Thailand on an international rescue committee mission to Indo-Chinese refugees. In one refugee camp a young Vietnamese mother in her mid-twenties was trying to breastfeed her malnourished infant. They were

both wasted by hunger and disease, and they soon died before my eyes. I think about that mother and her child, and I often wonder what connection that has with our Mother's Day. Well, one connection I think is that in the midst of our Mother's Day celebrations today we should be finding a place in our thoughts about millions of such destitute, hungry, and homeless mothers and their families. And I wonder if our mothers themselves would not welcome our earmarking some of our Mother's Day expenditures to help relieve the poverty and suffering of so many other mothers here and overseas. [40:00] That would make Mother's Day a day to really remember. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary --

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: -- Rabbi Tanenbaum.

TANENBAUM: Beginning at sundown this Thursday evening the Jewish people will observe Shavuot, the festival of weeks or Pentecost. Originally a biblical festival of thanksgiving for new crops in ancient Palestine, Shavuot assumes great spiritual significance through its celebration of the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount

Sinai. The rabbis speak of Shavuot as the concluding festival to Passover. The physical freedom won at Passover became humanly meaningful through the spiritual freedom realized by Israel's accepting the moral law. Every human society requires law and moral respect for the law as the foundation of civilized life. The notion that true religion and morality are a matter of private conscience or good feelings alone, and that law, discipline, and ethical standards are a burden [41:00] ultimately contribute to anarchy. This anti-law mentality which exists in many parts of our world's society may well explain the spread of crime, violence, corruption, and terrorism. When Jews recite the 120 words of the Decalogue on Shavuot, they are in fact calling prophetically on themselves and on all peoples to a society in which respect for moral law is the surest guarantee for all human liberties. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

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