



# ☆ BAT KOL NEWS ☆

מאי ססמגור? אמר רבי אבא: בת קול.

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## Mario Cuomo married strident liberalism and sensitivity to the Orthodox

Source: JTA-1/2/2015



(JTA) — Mario Cuomo, the three-term New York governor who died Thursday, was the rare politician who appealed to the Jewish tent's opposite poles. A strident liberal with a nuanced understanding of the sense of vulnerability among the deeply religious in a secular society, Cuomo died of heart failure just hours after his son Andrew was sworn in for his second term as governor. He was 82. Lopsided Jewish support helped propel Cuomo into the governor's office three times, in 1982, 1986 and 1990. The state's large Jewish community joined other liberal constituencies in celebrating the man who emerged in the 1980s as the most prominent vanguard against President Ronald Reagan. Cuomo, addressing a gathering of Holocaust survivors in 1985, faulted Reagan for all-too-blithely ignoring Germany's past when the president agreed to mark the 40th anniversary of D-Day at a cemetery containing the graves of SS officers. "The truth is, even those who are free of anti-Semitism — even those who are almost certainly sincere in their revulsion at the Holocaust — are tempted to forget, to declare this ugly chapter of human history closed, done with, over," Cuomo said. The jibe was of a piece with rhetoric that helped vault Cuomo to national prominence the previous year, when he keyed the Democratic national convention in San Francisco. Reagan's sunny conservatism was appealing, Cuomo acknowledged, but ignored harsh realities. "A 'shining city' is perhaps all the president sees from the portico of the White House and the veranda of his ranch, where everyone seems to be doing well," Cuomo said. "But there's another city, another part to the shining city, the part where some people can't pay their mortgages and most young people can't afford one, where students can't afford the education they need and middle class parents watch the dreams they hold for their children evaporate." Cuomo credited his sensitivity to the needs of the Orthodox to his childhood in Queens, where he served as a "Shabbos goy" for a synagogue up the street from the grocery owned by his Sicilian immigrant parents. The job clearly left an impression. He recalled sharing the experience with Branch Rickey, the baseball executive who integrated the sport when he hired Jackie Robinson for the Brooklyn Dodgers. He helped Kiryas Joel, an ultra-Orthodox enclave in Orange County, maintain a separate school district despite a U.S. Supreme Court ruling to the contrary. Cuomo's sensitivity to Jewish issues extended beyond the delicate church-state balance the observant must navigate. He was an unstinting Israel supporter, visiting the country in 1992. Cuomo banned the state from doing business with anyone who complied with the Arab boycott and expanded business relations with Israel. Cuomo criticized New York Mayor David Dinkins' handling of the 1991 riots in Crown heights, which pitted blacks and Orthodox Jews against one another and which resulted in the death of Yankel Rosenbaum. Cuomo appointed an investigative committee, which eviscerated the city's handling of the riots. "Mario Cuomo was someone who understood both the needs of the Jewish community on a practical level but also on an emotional one," said Ezra Friedlander, an Orthodox lobbyist. "Mario Cuomo was a man of faith who understood with every fiber of his body the accommodations that government has to provide to communities of faith to flourish including the Jewish community."

## Vayechi

Genesis 47:28-50:26

Jacob lives the final 17 years of his life in Egypt. Before his passing, he asks Joseph to take an oath that he will bury him in the Holy Land. He blesses Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, elevating them to the status of his own sons as progenitors of tribes within the nation of Israel. The patriarch desires to reveal the end of days to his children, but is prevented from doing so. Jacob blesses his sons, assigning to each his role as a tribe: Judah will produce leaders, legislators and kings; priests will come from Levi, scholars from Issachar, seafarers from Zebulun, schoolteachers from Simeon, soldiers from Gad, judges from Dan, olive-growers from Asher, and so on. Reuben is rebuked for "confusing his father's marriage bed"; Simeon and Levi, for the massacre of Shechem and the plot against Joseph. Naphtali is granted the swiftness of a deer, Benjamin the ferociousness of a wolf, and Joseph is blessed with beauty and fertility. A large funeral procession consisting of Jacob's descendants, Pharaoh's ministers, the leading citizens of Egypt and the Egyptian cavalry accompanies Jacob on his final journey to the Holy Land, where he is buried in the Machpelah Cave in Hebron. Joseph, too, dies in Egypt, at the age of 110. He, too, instructs that his bones be taken out of Egypt and buried in the Holy Land, but this would come to pass only with the Israelites' exodus from Egypt many years later. Before his passing, Joseph conveys to the Children of Israel the testament from which they will draw their hope and faith in the difficult years to come: "G-d will surely remember you, and bring you up out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."



Jacob blesses Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim

## Vayechi Haftarah

I Kings 2:1-12.

In this week's haftarah, King David delivers his deathbed message to his son and successor, Solomon, echoing this week's Torah reading that discusses at length Jacob's parting words and instructions to his sons. King David encourages Solomon to be strong and to remain steadfast in his belief in G-d. This will ensure his success in all his endeavors as well as the continuation of the Davidic Dynasty. David then goes on to give his son some tactical instructions pertaining to various people who deserved punishment or reward for their actions during his reign. The haftarah concludes with David's death and his burial in the City of David. King Solomon takes his father's place and his sovereignty is firmly established.

## Members of Congress warn of repercussions for Palestinian ICC move

Source: JTA-1/2/2015

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Republican and Democratic lawmakers said there would be repercussions for the Palestinian Authority in the wake of its joining the International Criminal Court. “Congress must do everything in its power to block funds to the P.A. and to any U.N. entity that recognizes a non-existent State of Palestine to make it clear to Abu Mazar that there will be consequences to his schemes at the United Nations and other international organizations like the International Criminal Court,” Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), the chairwoman of the U.S. House of Representatives Middle East subcommittee, said in a Dec. 31 statement. Abu Mazar is the nickname of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who signed the treaty on Dec. 31. Joining the court is a step toward allowing the investigation of alleged Israeli war crimes. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) said the move “deeply frustrated” her. “This move only sets back the peace process even further,” Gillibrand said in a Dec. 31 statement. “I will work with my colleagues in Congress to make it clear to the Palestinian Authority that they will be held accountable for these kinds of actions.” The Obama administration has said it was “deeply troubled” by Abbas’ action, calling it counterproductive. On Jan. 1, Canada called Abbas’ move “dangerous.” “Such a provocative decision only furthers the divide between Palestinians and Israelis, and will carry unfortunate consequences,” John Baird, the Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister, said in a statement.

## Jerusalem shelter for religious battered women to double capacity

Source: JTA-1/1/2015



JERUSALEM (JTA) — An organization that runs two shelters for religious battered women will double its capacity and wipe out its current waiting list. Bat Melech currently serves over 1,000 women and children each year who require a kosher and Shabbat-observant atmosphere. With the acquisition of a building next to its existing Jerusalem shelter, Bat Melech will double the number of victims of domestic violence that it can help, the organization announced Wednesday. Bat Melech also runs a shelter in Beit Shemsh.

## O.U. boosting effort to bring gov’t funding into Jewish schools

Source: JTA-12/30/2014



TARRYTOWN, N.Y. (JTA) — The Orthodox Union is launching a multimillion-dollar advocacy campaign to increase government funding for Jewish day schools in New York. New York state has about 151,000 Jewish day school and yeshiva students — about 60 percent of the nation’s total, according to an Avi Chai study published in October. Tuition fees at some day schools run in excess of \$30,000 per year. While U.S. courts generally forbid government funding for religious education, Jewish schools access hundreds of millions of dollars in government funding per year, ranging from reimbursement for the cost of mandatory attendance-taking to funding for technology and special-needs education. In November, voters in New York state passed a schools bond act that may provide up to \$38 million in reimbursements to Jewish day schools and yeshivas for educational technology equipment and facilities, the construction and renovation of pre-kindergarten facilities and the installation of high-tech security features in school buildings. The O.U. was among several Jewish groups — mostly Orthodox, but including UJA-Federation of New York — that lobbied in favor of the bill. Agudath Israel of America, which represents the haredi Orthodox community, also has been a longtime advocate of increased government funding for schools.

## WEEKLY HEADLINES RELATING TO JEWISH CONCERNS

Source: JTA-1/2/2015

Of the 26,500 new immigrants to Israel in 2014, nearly 7,000 came from France, the highest total of any individual country.

Israel pledges \$8.75 million to fund Ebola fight

Arab countries ban release of ‘Exodus: Gods and Kings’

The only state without a Chabad is South Dakota

## Spiritual leader of the African Hebrew Israelites dies

Source: JTA-12/29/2014



Shimon Peres and Ben Ammi Ben-Israel

(JTA) — The spiritual leader of the African Hebrew Israelites, a group of African-Americans living in Israel who believed they were descendants of the biblical tribe of Judah, has died. Ben Ammi Ben-Israel, born Ben Carter in Chicago, died Saturday in the Negev town of Dimona. He was 75; the cause of death was not announced. Ben-Israel believed that some African-Americans were descended from the Judah tribe who migrated to West Africa and were sold as slaves in the United States. In 1966, he and a few hundred followers settled in Liberia before moving three years later to Dimona, in southern Israel. Before forming the movement, Ben-Israel dropped out of high school and joined the U.S. Army. He also worked as a metallurgist. In 1966, he claimed that the angel Gabriel told him to “return to the Holy Land” by the way in which he came. The approximately 3,000 remaining African Hebrew Israelites, also known as Black Hebrews, make their own clothes, practice polygamy, and avoid eating meat, dairy, eggs and sugar. They have established craft and tailoring businesses and vegan restaurants. The Black Hebrews did not officially convert to Judaism and the Chief Rabbi in Israel does not consider them Jewish, but they were granted permanent residency in Israel in 2003. Ben-Israel is survived by four wives and over 20 children.

## Israel’s population at 8.3 million at close of 2014

Source: JTA-12/30/2014

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel’s population on the eve of 2015 stands at 8.3 million. Some 6.2 million of that population are Jewish and 1.7 million are Arabs as 2014 comes to a close, Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics reported Monday. The population’s percentage breakdown is 74.9 percent Jewish, 20.7 percent Arab and 4.3 percent others, including Christians and people who do not identify with any religion or nationality. Israel’s population grew by 2 percent in 2014, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. Some 176,600 babies were born during the year and some 23,000 new immigrants arrived. At the end of December 2013, Israel’s population was estimated at some 8,132,000.

## AMIT needs your help! צדקה



Founded in 1925, AMIT educates and cares for Israel’s youth, including the most vulnerable children in Israel. The AMIT schools promote religious tolerance, service to the state and the recognition that every child is blessed with unique talents and abilities.

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שבת שלום

## BAT KOL NEWS

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## NEXT WEEK’S SERVICES\*

|                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| FRIDAY Minha / Maariv   | 4:30 PM |
| SATURDAY morning        | 9:30 AM |
| SATURDAY Minha / Maariv | 4:30 PM |
| SUNDAY                  | 8:10 AM |
| TU B'SHVAT              | FEB 4   |

\*Subject to change per Rabbi’s announcements.  
\*\* See article above “IN JEWISH HISTORY”