

RABBIS FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS

حاخامين من اجل  
حقوق الانسان

שומרי משפט -  
רבנים למען זכויות אדם



## British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights

Supporting the work of Rabbis for Human Rights in Israel and the West Bank



## Chanukah: Festival of Rights, Festival of Lights

A companion with readings for each day of Chanukah



# Chanukah Sameach - Liturgy for Lighting the Chanukiah

## Before lighting the candle(s):

Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe, whose commandments make us holy, and who commands us to kindle the lights of *Chanukah*.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ  
הָעוֹלָם. אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו.  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנוּכָּה:

*Baruch attah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kidd'shanu  
b'mitsvotav, v'tsivvanu l'hadlik neir shel chanukah.*

Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe, who did wonders for our ancestors in those days at this season.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ  
הָעוֹלָם. שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וּבְזֶמַן הַזֶּה:

*Baruch attah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam,  
she'asah nissim la'avoteinu ba-yamim ha-heim uva-z'man ha-zeh..*

## On the first night add:

Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe, who has kept us alive and supported us and brought us to this season.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ  
הָעוֹלָם. שֶׁהַחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ  
לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה:

*Baruch attah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam,  
shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higgi'anu la-z'man ha-zeh.*

## After lighting the *Chanukiah*:

We kindle these lights to commemorate the wonders, the victories and the marvellous and consoling deeds which You performed for our ancestors through Your holy priests in those days at this season. During all the eight days of *Chanukah* these lights are holy and we are not permitted to make use of them, but only to see them in order to thank Your name for the wonders, the victories and the marvellous deeds.

הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּ אָנוּ מְדַלְקִים עַל  
הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל  
הַנִּפְלְאוֹת וְעַל הַנְּחֻמוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ  
לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וּבְזֶמַן הַזֶּה  
עַל יְדֵי כַּהֲנֵיךָ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים. וְכֹל-  
שְׂמַנְתָּ יְמֵי חֲנוּכָּה הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּ  
קֹדֶשׁ וְאֵין לָנוּ רְשׁוּת לְהִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ  
בָּהֶם אֲלָא לְרְאוֹתָם בְּלְבָד. כִּדְּבִי  
לְהוֹדוֹת לְשִׁמְךָ עַל-נִסֶּיךָ וְעַל-  
יְשׁוּעָתְךָ וְעַל-נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ:

*Ha-neirot hallalu anu madlikim al ha-nissim v'al ha-t'shu'ot v'al ha-nifla'ot v'al ha-nechamot  
she'asita la'avoteinu ba-yamim ha-heim uva-z'man ha-zeh, al y'dei kohanecha ha-k'doshim,  
v'chol sh'monat y'mei chanukah ha-neirot hallalu kodesh, v'ain lanu r'shut l'hishtameish ba-  
hem, ella lir'otam bilvad, k'dei l'hodot l'shimcha al nissecha v'al y-shu'atecha v'al nifl'otecha.*

## Day One: Raising the Light

The rabbis asked – “if there was only enough oil for one day, and it stayed alight for 8 days while new oil was being prepared, it is easy to understand the miracle of the last 7 days, but what was the miracle on the first day?” The miracle of the first day was that people still cared enough and believed enough to light the menorah at all, when they knew that realistically it should go out again within a few hours and they would find themselves in deep darkness again. The miracle of *Chanukah* isn't some supernatural extension of the burning properties of oil, but that very ordinary human beings lit the oil in the first place, determined to create light even if only in their own locality, even if only for a short time. It would have been so easy to have not bothered, to have said it would make no difference, to have given up.

Miracles are not really about heavenly interventions or supernatural experiences, but ordinary everyday things which we create and experience every time we choose to dedicate ourselves to the values we say we believe in, when we remind ourselves that we are one human race, when we recognise that what binds us is of more importance than what separates us. Miracles happen when people don't give in to despair or lethargy, or the belief that they can't make a difference anyway so they shouldn't even try.

<http://rabbisylviarothschild.wordpress.com/tag/festival-of-rights/>

“During all the eight days of *Chanukah*, these lights are sacred.” (*Chanukah* Liturgy)

During *Chanukah*, this time of year when the days are short and the night skies loom, Judaism commands us to do something simple and profound: to light candles; to challenge the darkness and cold with light and with warmth. As the *shamash* illuminates each candle in turn, help us to imagine ourselves, each one of us, as a bearer of light: just as the *shamash* brings its flame to the other candles, so too let us bring our light to those whose lives are darkened by poverty, violence and despair. As each flame flickers to life, help us to see that each one of us can bring light to our world.

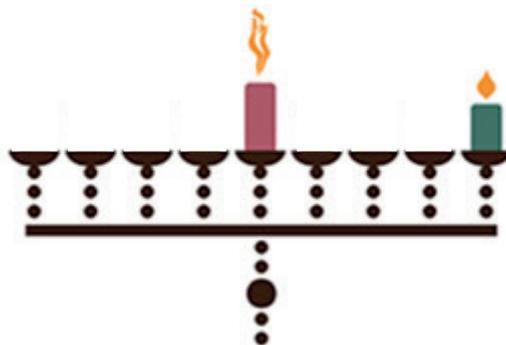
Help us to know that the work of our hands can bring warmth to those in need.

Help us to carry the radiance of our hearts to all of the dark places on this planet.

Help us to believe that through our sacred service the world will be illuminated.

Renew in us a sense of hope in the miraculous and help us to imagine the wonders that might be kindled by our actions and our resources.

[ajws.org/what\\_we\\_do/education/.../holiday.../chanukah\\_reading.pdf](http://ajws.org/what_we_do/education/.../holiday.../chanukah_reading.pdf)



## Day Two: Human Rights and the Revelation of the Hidden

“One of the central lessons of the holiday of Hanukkah is that religious communities must reveal what ordinarily remains hidden. The Hanukkah menorah is lit by a window so that everyone passing by will see the candles and remember -- or learn about -- the miracle that gave rise to this holiday.

Many other Jewish holidays centre around miracles: Passover celebrates the unlikely redemption of 600,000 people from slavery; Purim commemorates the rescue of the Jewish community from a royal death sentence. But only Hanukkah carries this requirement of *pirsumei nisa*, making the miracle public.

This fact seems even more surprising when we think about what the miracle of Hanukkah was. Depending on which story we like better, the miracle was either that a small group of scrappy guerrilla fighters defeated an imperialist army, or that God caused a small vial of oil to burn for eight nights.

In comparison to a sea splitting, frogs falling out of the sky and the overturning of certain genocide, neither of these miracles seem especially spectacular. We could chalk the military victory up to superior strategy or an unparalleled knowledge of the terrain. As for that small vial of oil, the priest who opened the jar might easily have concluded that he had misjudged the amount of fuel.

But the apparent insignificance of these miracles is the very reason that the celebration of Hanukkah includes the requirement of *pirsumei nisa*. By placing the menorah in our windows, we reveal these barely perceivable miracles to the world.

I joined the board of directors of Rabbis for Human Rights-North America because this organization commits itself to making public what much of the world chooses not to see. RHR reveals the horrifying and the ugly: trafficked workers held in near servitude; Israeli settlers blocking Palestinians from harvesting their olive trees; U.S. prisoners secretly tortured. And RHR also reveals the tiny miracles that offer a glimmer of light in a dark world: religious leaders who speak on behalf of trafficked workers; Jews who risk their own safety to help Palestinians pick olives; religious institutions that refuse to be silent about state-sponsored torture..... Through revealing both good and bad, we will move closer to the greatest miracle of all: a world that safeguards the dignity of every human being.

Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Executive director of T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights.

Posted: 12/06/2010 Updated: 05/25/2011 Huffington Post Blog



## Day Three: *Chanukah* and Our Obligation to Human Rights

“Ness gadol hayah sham.” “A great miracle happened there.” This phrase, abbreviated on each side of the dreidel, epitomizes why we celebrate Chanukah. In a miraculous event for religious freedom and rights, a minority (the Maccabees) was able to overcome a majority (the Syrians) and assert their right to worship and live as they pleased. Liberty won out over oppression. It was a ground-breaking struggle for its time: no wonder we call it a miracle!

According to the rabbis, one of the mitzvot (commandments) associated with Chanukah is the concept of *pirsumah d'nisa* or “publicizing the miracle.” This is why we light Chanukah candles in a public place (such as our front window): the whole world should know about the miracle of freedom. This message feels especially important today, when the rights of many are restricted or denied, and as Jews, we have a special imperative to work to realize universal human rights. After all, when we light the candles, we thank God by saying “We kindle these lights [to commemorate] the saving acts, miracles and wonders which You have performed for our ancestors, in those days and at this time.” Just as the Maccabees, our ancestors, fought to preserve freedom, it is incumbent on us to continue their legacy. Shortly before Chanukah begins this year is International Human Rights Day (December 10th), which commemorates the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. Among the concepts and rights encompassed by the UDHR are universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the principles of non-discrimination and civil and political rights, as well as social, cultural and economic rights. These rights remind us of the Jewish principle of *tzelem elohim*, that every human being is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). If we are all created in God’s image, than to deny another their basic rights as humans, to degrade and humiliate them, is like degrading God as well. The rabbis teach that one of the most important lines in the Torah is Genesis 5:1, “God created Adam in the likeness of God,” because it ensures that no one person can claim to be inherently better than another and to assume rights and privileges based on that position of power. We have a long way to go as a planet before universal human rights, this “highest aspiration of the common people,” are realized. To publicize this ongoing miracle, think again of the dreidel. Outside of Israel, the dreidel reads “A great miracle happened there.” The miracle happened somewhere else, in another time. But in Israel, it reads “A great miracle happened here.” The miracle of liberty is immanent and ongoing. Our dreidel of human rights could have both phrases, celebrating the miracle of the recognition of human rights in the past and our commitment to making them a reality in the here and now.

This Chanukah, what are some steps that you can take both to publicize the modern miracle of universal human rights and to make this ideal into a reality?

Read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at: <http://un.org/Overview/rights.html>. When you light Chanukah candles each night, discuss one of the rights mentioned, whether it has been achieved, and the steps we can take to achieve it.

Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster is the Director of Education and Outreach, Rabbis for Human Rights-North America. This post first appeared as a Ten Minutes of Torah in 2009.



## Day Four: Economic Justice

One of the foundations of a just society is that relationships between workers and employers be based in mutual respect. This means, at the very least, that the employers recognize that a worker is different from a cash register or the stock on the shelves. The worker is a person, not merely an expense line on the budget. The implication of this, is that part of the obligation of an employer is to pay a salary on which a worker can live. That type of living wage ..would allow a worker to afford food and shelter, education and healthcare. (It would of course be higher if we were to take into account the ability to raise children.) It is the obligation of a just society to ensure that this happens. When it does not, society must be held responsible. The Talmud states this in an unequivocal fashion: All who can protest against something wrong ... that any resident of their city is doing and does not protest, is held accountable for what those residents are doing. (Tractate Shabbat 55a)

The Rabbinic tradition is clear about the right to organize, and the prohibition against abusive labour practices. As the Rishon Le-Tzion, the Chief Rabbi of the Land of Israel wrote in 1938:

Reason also dictates that we should not leave the worker alone, isolated as an individual, so that he would have to hire himself out for minimal wages in order to satisfy his and his family's hunger with bread and water in meagre quantities and with a dark and dank apartment. In order to protect himself the law gave him the legal right to organize, and to create regulations to his fellows for the fair and equitable division of labour amongst them and the attaining of dignified treatment and appropriate payment for his work—so that he might support his family at the same standard of living as other citizens of his city. It makes sense that included in this is also a cooperative organization to establish cultural institutions in order to enrich his scientific and artistic education and his Torah knowledge. Institutions of healing and convalescence in order to renew his strength which was utilized for work and to heal the wounds which were caused by it. Also to create a savings plan for his old age or if he becomes an invalid. For with every passing day the worker's strength is dissipated and he cannot continued in his labours at the same pace as in his youth. Scripture explicitly notes this: "but at the age of fifty they shall retire from the work force and shall serve no more." (Numbers 8:25) All these matters cannot be accomplished except by way of an organization of workers or craftsmen. Therefore the Torah of Israel conferred complete and legal right upon this organization even though it could cause losses to owners.

Mishp'tei Uziel Vol. IV – Hoshen Mishpat 42  
as quoted by Aryeh Cohen <http://www.justice-in-the-city.com/?p=742>



## Day Five: The Stranger Amongst Us

The Torah reading of *Chayei Sarah* begins with Abraham, in Hebron, attempting to find a burial site for his recently deceased wife, Sarah. He ends up buying *Ma'arat HaMachpela*, the Cave of Machpela, and burying her there. What is so interesting to me is why he chooses Hebron, in the biblical land of Canaan, as the burial site for his wife, and eventually himself as well. He only recently journeyed to Canaan, to the land that God promised to show him, and yet, it felt like home. It was the destination of his journey. It was where he believed things would be better.

He was not a citizen of the land. He was not truly settled and familiar with his surroundings. Yet, he dwelt there; he considered it home. He did not return to his birthplace of Ur Kasdim to bury Sarah, or to Haran where they had settled for many years. He chose Hebron, and in Genesis 23:4 he referred to himself as a *Ger Toshav*, a resident alien, there. A stranger. A dweller. Someone who feels at home even if others treat him as an outsider. Abraham remarkably identifies himself as a *Ger Toshav*. The Hittites, even more remarkably, welcome him in with open arms, offering him land before Abraham insists on buying it. I think it is important that we remember that our patriarch Abraham referred to himself as a *Ger Toshav*, as a resident alien. We cannot ignore, neglect, or dehumanize the *Ger Toshav* among us.

We are commanded to welcome the stranger more times in the Torah than any other commandment. With each command, we are reminded that we were once strangers in a strange land. That is true for the Jewish people... We were each once a *Ger Toshav*. In some ways, we all still are. Just as the Hittites did with Abraham, we have a responsibility.. to welcome in those immigrants in our midst, who are a part of our culture, our society, and our workforce, regardless of how they arrived in this country.

Rabbi Jesse M. Olitzky taken from

<https://rabbiolitzky.wordpress.com/2014/11/18/the-ger-toshav-the-jewish-community-and-immigration-reform/>



## Day Six: The Bedouin of the Negev

As the Begin/Praver Bill moves through the Knesset legislative process, there is mounting evidence that, when the disinformation is stripped away, the majority of Israelis oppose this plan. It is not in our nature to destroy tens of Negev Bedouin villages, transfer up to 40,000 Israeli citizens from their homes to poverty and unemployment wracked townships, or to dispossess them from most of their lands. Our Torah teaches, “And you shall not oppress the non-Jew who lives among you, for you know the soul of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 23:9)

There are three wide spread myths about the Bedouine. They are as follows:

1. The Bedouin are taking over the Negev. “Panels Ltd.” recently conducted a poll for Rabbis for Human Rights. Initially, 87% of Jewish Israelis agreed that “The Bedouin are taking over the Negev,” on an average believing that the Bedouin claim 43.9% of the Negev. After learning that the Bedouin claim only 5.4% of the Negev, a majority indicated that this was fair (47 %, vs. 34.6%)
2. The Bedouin never owned the land. Many Bedouin do not have “Western” proofs of ownership. However, their meticulous land ownership system was honoured by the Ottomans and the British and recognized by the pre-State Zionist Movement. The British kept a written record of Bedouin land ownership that mysteriously disappeared in the State archives. Scholars have found part of these records. In 1920, the PLDC of the Zionist Federation recorded 2.6 million dunam of land in the Negev was owned by the Bedouin. Today, the Bedouin are claiming a mere 650,000 dunam. These documents are available for all to see. We cannot say that the Bedouin did not own their lands...
3. This plan is for the Bedouin’s own good. Many argue that Israel must concentrate the Bedouin to provide water, electricity, jobs and training. In the Negev there are smaller and more far flung Jewish communities receiving services – even single family farms. More communities are planned. We wouldn’t refuse water and electricity to Jewish communities. The State would not tell me, “We are going to move you for your own good.” Furthermore, government statistics show that poverty and unemployment are four times higher in the townships than in the recognized villages. Recognizing the 35 “Unrecognized” villages is simply better policy than transfer to the townships....MK Issawi Freij summed it up best, “We will give you water if you give us your lands.” Ya’akov once said to Esau, “I will give you food if you give me your birthright.” He thought he was being clever, but the price was anger, enmity, and 20 years of exile and estrangement from his brother.

Rabbi Arik Ascherman <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/three-myths-about-the-bedouin/>



## Day Seven: Caring for the Whole Society

In the coming weeks the government is expected to approve the final budget for the coming year. This budget, however, ignores more than 1.755 million people living in poverty in Israel. For these people, they will continue to live without essential rights, including the right to shelter, educational stipends, and the right to search for employment without impediments. In a preliminary examination of the draft budget, the Forum for the Struggle Against Poverty concluded that despite slogans and statements from elected officials that say otherwise, it seems the government intends to continue to neglect both the people in Israel living in poverty, as well as the problem of poverty in general that plagues our state.

<http://rhr.org.il/eng/category/media/>

Poverty: Who Really Cares About It? The Elaluf Committee's Chance of Success?

Today (26 November), the Elaluf Committee convenes. The committee was appointed by the welfare minister to "combat poverty". It is not the first committee that the State of Israel has appointed to deal with the matter; the Bachar Committee was appointed in 2005 and the Trajtenberg Committee was appointed in 2011. Their recommendations were never implemented and the number of people living in poverty in Israel continues to grow. This is no mistake – it is policy.

Over the past ten years I've seen the State of Israel's conduct when it comes to people who live in poverty – the results of its policies are the growing number of poor. So too in the most recent budget that it passed, when child benefits were cut, it was promised to the Israeli public that families who live in poverty "will receive compensation" from the state through the allocation of a food security budget. Child benefits were cut and yet no single plan that was supposed to assist families has been launched.

Rabbi Idit Lev <http://rhr.org.il/eng/2013/11/poverty-does-anyone-care/>



## Day Eight: What Can We Do?

The root meaning of the word from which Chanukah comes is “to train up / to dedicate”, so the celebration which commemorates the historical rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem also reaffirms the continuing training of ourselves to live in a Jewish way. How we try to do that is very important – and the dedication of ourselves to live our Jewish values is one of the most serious aspects of Chanukah.

One of the oldest customs of Chanukah is to give ‘gelt’ – either real coins or chocolate ones. In the Hasmonean period the symbolic importance of coins was huge. The First Book of Maccabees records that in 142 B.C.E., 22 years after the Temple was recaptured, Simon the Maccabee, the surviving son of Mattathias, finally brought independence to Judea. Syria’s King Antiochus VII declared to Simon: “I turn over to you the right to make your own stamp for coinage for your country.”

Giving money on Chanukah harks back to this symbolism of autonomy, and because in medieval times it was traditional to give to teachers and students of Torah, the importance of Jewish education – was established.

So how do we make sure that in our time we are able to use Chanukah as a way to remember the importance of autonomy and of Torah? Maybe by giving some of the gelt we receive as tzedakah, by giving some of what we have to others who need it to be able to make their own autonomous decisions. Chanukah is a time of to remember the importance of dedication to God’s work, a time to remember what it felt like to be the undervalued group in society. Lighting the candles this year, please bring more than some symbolic light into the world – and give of your gelt to help others.

In the rededication of the Temple (Chanukah means dedication) the lamp had only enough oil to burn for one night. The miracle is that the oil burned for eight nights. That’s the miracle of this season, and with our Chanukah lights, we light up our homes and synagogues during this dark time of the year. On the other hand, perhaps the miracle also is that a small group of individuals, seriously outnumbered, but dedicated to promoting religious and political freedom, can beat the odds and prevail. We can also light up our homes and synagogues for this miracle as well.

The Maccabees fought for human rights. They fought for the right to hold their beliefs and their religious practices and to express those beliefs and practices. Freedom of expression, how basic is that? It’s not too different today. Small groups, still outnumbered, are still fighting for the same human rights and personal freedoms – the right to be ourselves, and the right to express ourselves, without the threat of persecution.

<http://www.truah.org/resources-91356/holidays/chanukah.html>

“We live in a dark time. In a world ravaged by war, prejudice, disease, and now, an economic crisis that will put hundreds of thousands of people at risk of suffering. We need to bring more light. And to bring the light, we need to become the Maccabees- a people of faith who believed that liberty is worth fighting for, that human dignity is worth fighting for, and that justice is worth fighting for.”

Rabbi Sid Schwarz <http://www.truah.org/resources-91356/holidays/chanukah.html>



## Chanukah Sameach - Songs for Chanukah

### *Maoz Tsur*

Fortress, rock who sets me free,  
how fine it is to sing Your praise.  
When my house of prayer shall be,  
our offerings of thanks we'll raise.  
the time You end all slaughter,  
enemies shall falter.  
I'll complete  
a song to greet

מַעֲזוֹז צוּר יְשׁוּעָתִי  
לְךָ נָאֵה לְשַׁבַּח  
תִּכּוֹן בַּיִת תְּפִלָּתִי  
וְשֵׁם תּוֹדָה נִזְבַּח  
לְעֵת תְּשׁוּבַת מַטְבַּח  
וְצָר הַמִּנְבַּח  
אֶז אֶגְמֹר  
בְּשִׁיר מִזְמוֹר  
חֲנֻכַּת הַמַּזְבֵּיחַ:

*Ma'oz tsur y'shu'ati l'cha na'eh l'shabei'ach,  
Tikkon beit t'fillati v'sham todah n'zabei'ach,  
L'eit tashbit matbei'ach mitsar ha-m'nabei'ach,  
Az egmor b'shir mizmor  
Chanukat ha-mizbei'ach.*

### *Mi Y'malleil*

Who can relate  
the heroic deeds of Israel,  
who can count them?  
Behold, in every generation  
a hero has arisen,  
a saviour of the people.

Listen! in those days at this season  
the Maccabi saved and rescued.  
And in our days  
all the people of Israel  
will unite, arise and be redeemed.

מִי יִמְלֵל גְּבוּרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אוֹתָן מִי יִמְנֶה  
הֵן בְּכָל-דּוֹר יִקּוּם הַגִּבּוֹר  
גּוֹאֵל הָעָם:

שְׁמַע. בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה  
מִכְּבִי מוֹשִׁיעַ וּפּוֹדֵה:  
וּבַיָּמֵינוּ כָּל-עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל  
יִתְאַחַד יִקּוּם לְהַגְאֵל:

*Mi y'malleil g'vurot yisra'eil otan mi yimneh,  
Hein b'chol dor yakum ha-gibbor go'eil ha-am.*

*Sh'ma, ba-yamim ha-heim ba-z'man ha-zeh makkabbi moshi'a ufodeh,  
Uv'yameinu kol am yisra'eil yitacheid yakum l'higga'eil.*

## **British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights**

The British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights (BFRHR) supports the work of Rabbis for Human Rights in Israel and the West Bank (RHR) both ideologically and financially. BFRHR also actively supports the advocacy work of RHR and provides education for the British Jewish community regarding human rights issues arising in Israel and the West Bank.

BFRHR – like RHR in Israel – draws members from both Progressive (Liberal and Reform) as well as Masorti and Orthodox rabbis. BFRHR in fact welcomes anyone – not only rabbis – from the Jewish community who wants to help to support the work of RHR both financially but also by publicising its activities throughout the Anglo-Jewish community.

BFRHR organises visits to Israel and the Occupied Territories to see the work of RHR. BFRHR also arrange visits to Britain for RHR executives; including a 2014 visit of Rabbi Arik Ascherman. BFRHR supports RHR's advocacy work on behalf of the people in Israel and the West Bank who are experiencing human rights violations.

In the near future, BFRHR also hopes to initiate a programme of education on Jewish ethical teachings, similar to the one run by RHR in Israel. This will be aimed both at adults and youngsters in our schools and synagogues.

To learn more about the activities of British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights visit our website: [www.rhruk.co.uk](http://www.rhruk.co.uk). If you are interested in membership of BFRHR or want to know more about how to support the work of Rabbis for Human Rights through BFRHR, you can contact us on: [info@rhruk.co.uk](mailto:info@rhruk.co.uk)

### **A Brief Introduction to Rabbis for Human Rights**

Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR) is the only rabbinic voice of conscience in Israel, defending human rights of marginalized communities within Israel and the Palestinian Territories. The organization was founded in 1988, and today has over 100 members-all Israelis and all ordained Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Renewal rabbis.

The work of RHR expresses the view that as Jews, we are obligated to protest against every injustice enacted against any other person, a view based on the belief that man and women was created in God's image. RHR members believe that it is our obligation to inform the Israeli public about human rights violations, and that it is our role to pressure the State institutions to fix these injustices.

RHR members derive their authority from two main sources- from the humanistic Jewish tradition and from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In parallel to their efforts to prevent violations of human rights, RHR brings a humanistic understanding of Jewish sources to the Israeli public discourse. In a time in which a nationalist and isolationist understanding of Jewish tradition is heard frequently and loudly, RHR gives expression to the traditional Jewish responsibility for the safety and welfare of the stranger, the different and the weak, the convert, the widow and the orphan.

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