

WINNIPEG JEWISH COMMUNITY TO TACKLE ETHICS OF WAR ON TERROR

Tapping into ancient Jewish wisdom to consider modern dilemmas of war and justice

Winnipeg, MB —In the weeks and months following 9/11, the Bush administration launched what it named the “War on Terror” against militant Islam. With the realization that the West was doing battle not with a particular nation-state, but a world-wide terror network, many conventional methods of warfare suddenly became obsolete, as did the traditional definition of war.

Almost immediately controversy erupted surrounding the advanced interrogation techniques used by the CIA to elicit information from suspected terrorists. Today, some contend that those interrogation techniques were actually torture, and thus illegal, adding that they were ineffective as well. At the same time, there has been significant pushback from the intelligence community, much of which continues to maintain that the techniques did, in fact, save lives.

How can the inherent conflict between maintaining national security and protecting civil liberties be resolved? With the recent destabilization of much of the Middle East and the dawn of ISIS, this question has never been more relevant.

On Thursday, February 15 2018, the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) in partnership with B’nai Brith Canada, will present *Justice and the War on Terror*, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at Pitblado Law, 360 Main Street.

The workshop, accredited as a CPD activity, will feature a panel of experts including Mr. Howard Morry, Senior Lawyer at Pitblado Law, Mr. Ran Ukashi, Director of B’nei Brith Manitoba, Rabbi Shmuly Altein of Chabad, and Mr. David Matas, internationally recognised human rights lawyer and advocate.

“The questions being asked in this series are unfortunately very pertinent today,” says Rabbi Shmuly Altein. “We will be discussing the legal issues involved from the perspective of US, Canadian law, and Israeli law, and compare them with concepts laid out in Talmudic law.”

The seminar will also focus on negotiating with terrorists for hostages. From Israel’s exchange of 1,027 prisoners for one captured IDF soldier, to the United States government’s insistence that ransom payments made by family of those kidnapped by ISIS were illegal, these life and death situations have real world bearing.

“The Jewish people have experienced similar situations throughout our arduous history,” explains Rabbi Zalman Abraham of JLI headquarters in New York. “When Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg was imprisoned for ransom in the Middle Ages, he ruled on his own abduction in light of Talmudic law.”

The rabbi refused to allow his students to pay his ransom, and he died in prison after seven years, where his body remained for a further 14 years until it was redeemed by a wealthy German Jew.

“His was a devastating, but principled course of action.”

Like all previous JLI programs, *Justice and the War on Terror* is designed to appeal to people at all levels of Jewish knowledge, including those without any prior experience or background in Jewish learning. All JLI courses are open to the public, and attendees need not be affiliated with a particular synagogue, temple, or other house of worship.

Interested students may call 204-339-8737 or visit www.ChabadWinnipeg.org for registration and other course-related information.

The **Jewish Learning Institute** is the adult education arm of Chabad-Lubavitch and a partner agency of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg. As the preeminent provider of adult Jewish learning in Winnipeg, JLI's mission is to make Jewish learning accessible and personally meaningful to every Jew, regardless of background or affiliation.

B'nai Brith has advocated for Canadian Jewry and championed the cause of human rights since 1875. B'nai Brith is recognized as a vital voice in promoting Jewish unity and continuity, a staunch defender of the State of Israel and global Jewry, a tireless advocate on behalf of senior citizens and a leader in combating antisemitism and racism. B'nai Brith's wide-ranging educational and social programming, community and volunteer services, and human initiatives provide a source of connection, continuity and support to Canada's Jewish community.