



## What Will It Take to Wake Jews Up?

By Dennis Prager

The citizens of San Francisco will be voting on a proposition that seeks to ban circumcision in that city. Though I am strongly opposed to the proposition, if it passes, some good may come of it.

Let me explain. I am a passionate advocate of Jewish ritual known as the *bris* — the ritual circumcision of 8-day-old Jewish boys. I am even an advocate of circumcision generally. I was recently in Africa — in Zimbabwe and Zambia — where I delivered mosquito nets and seeds to the poorest of Africa's poor. I saw giant billboards there, as well as in neighboring Botswana, exhorting men to get circumcised. The World Health Organization estimates that male circumcision reduces the rate of heterosexually transmitted AIDS by about 60 percent.

As regards Jewish ritual circumcision, I can only say that I cried like a baby at the *bris* of my two sons. All I could think of was that, like generations of Jews who came before me, I had been given the gift of transmitting an unbroken chain of Judaism that dates back to Abraham, 3,600 years ago.

I find the arguments of those who campaign against the *brit* either specious or ludicrous. The notion that some terrible, lasting pain is inflicted on the baby is simply over the top. The average time the baby cries is probably well under the time it cries — and far less frantic — when tired or desiring milk. I fully understand the conflicted feelings of the mother, and I see no reason for her to be present when the actual cutting of the foreskin takes place.

Does the baby experience pain and discomfort afterward? Yes. But it is temporary, and the baby heals quickly.

The advantages wildly outweigh the momentary pain. The *brit* uniquely strengthens a Jew's religious identification, and the ceremony instills in the family and the community a profound identification with the nearly four millennia of the Jews' world-changing history.

As for the argument that the foreskin is important, I can only say that in my most self-pitying

moments I cannot recall lamenting not having my foreskin. As I have told anti-circumcision activists on my radio show, you have to be pretty bored with life to be preoccupied with not having foreskin.

One might add that the same people who are profoundly upset over the removal of foreskin rarely have a problem with the removal of a living human fetus. San Francisco considers protecting the human fetus religious fanaticism, but it is seriously considering protecting a newborn's foreskin.

So, then, given my profound support for circumcision, what good could possibly come from San Francisco passing a ban on it?

If the most left-wing major city in America starts arresting Jews who have their children circumcised there, some American Jews might awaken to the threat to Jews posed by the left. Obviously, San Francisco's already existing bans on toys in Happy Meals, on soda in city-owned places and on plastic bags, and the city's proposed ban on the sale of pets, even goldfish, have not moved many Jews (or non-Jews) to begin wondering whether left-wing governance is dangerous. But perhaps a ban on circumcision will.

Of course, not everyone who is on the left — and certainly not the traditional liberal — is an enemy of the Jews. But, aside from Islamists, virtually all the enemies of the Jews are on the left.

The worldwide campaign to delegitimize Israel (i.e., to pave the way for moral acceptance of Israel's destruction) is virtually all on the left. Universities in America and elsewhere in the Western world, as well as the mainstream news media outlets around the globe, are all dominated by the left. They drum into their students', readers', listeners' and viewers' minds that Israel is one of the worst societies on earth.

The anti-Israel propaganda on the left is so great and so effective that according to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "Many of the youths who survived the (Norway) massacre said they thought the killer, dressed as a police officer, was simulating Israeli crimes against Palestinians in the occupied territories."

Yet, most American Jews still walk around thinking that Christians and conservatives are their enemies when, in fact, they are the best friends Jews have in the world today. From the present conservative Canadian government, which is probably the most vocal pro-Israel country in the world today, to every major conservative talk-show host in America (including the fiercely pro-Jewish and pro-Israel Glenn Beck, who has been libeled as an anti-Semite), to the leader of Holland's Party for Freedom and member of the Dutch parliament, Geert Wilders (one of the most eloquent pro-Israel voices in Europe today), to The Wall Street Journal's editorial page — the right is where the Jews' friends are.

What will it take for this generation of Jews on the left to realize what Arthur Koestler, perhaps the most prominent Jewish leftist of a previous generation, came to realize: namely, that leftism is "the god that failed"? Will it take a San Francisco ban on the oldest practice of the Jewish people? The City of Berkeley declaring Marines "unwelcome intruders"? PETA arguing that there is no moral difference between barbecuing chickens and cremating Jews? The ostracizing of the Jewish state from the world community by institutions dominated by the left?

Whatever it takes, the sooner the better.