

## A mistake in transliteration

To The Editor:

I enjoyed reading the article about the bus tour of Pittsburgh, "In the footsteps" and I wish I could participate. I should like to correct an often repeated error. Bes Almon means "House of the widower." It should be Bes Almin, "House of eternity," a traditional Jewish name for a cemetery. It is the Aramaic form of the more common Hebrew Bet Olam (Beys Oylem).

According to the *Allegheny County Deed Book*, Volume 79, Page 52, the land for the cemetery was bought on June 12, 1847, from Thomas Lonsdale and wife. In the original, the name appears as "Besalmen," a close approximation to Bes Almin. The misspelling, Bes Almon, was probably due to the way it was spelled by William Frank in his memoirs, written in German in 1891 when he was 70 years old.

In the original manuscript, photocopied for me by James A. Frank, his great-grandson, the name of the cemetery is spelled "Bes alomon." The memoirs were partially translated into English by William Frank's son Isaac W. Frank. The manuscript of this translation is on deposit at the American Jewish Archives.

It was used by Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus for the book he edited, "Memoirs of American Jews, 1775-1865" (Philadelphia: JPS, 1955), volume 1, where on page 308 he quotes the English translation: "We were there but six months when Ephraim [Frank's son] died, and we buried him in the Troy Hill Cemetery which Mr. Strasburger, Emanuel Reis, and I had recently purchased for the Congregation Bes Almon (Cemetery Society)."

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

I have inspected the manuscript and the word actually reads "Besalmen." I have also gone through the extant minute books of the society and have discovered that its secretaries have spelled it variously Bes Almin, Besalomon, Bes Alman, but most correctly as Bes Almin. On December 11, 1881, however, when the bylaws were adopted, it was stated that the "name of this Association shall be Bes Almon Cemetery Association of Pittsburgh."

It seems to me that it is time to correct this error, due to ignorance rather than design, and return to the correct transliteration (Ashkenazic pronunciation) of Bes Almin.

Dr. Ida Cohen Selavan  
Cincinnati

### End the suffering

To The Editor:

As Jews gather together in synagogues around the world during the High Holy Days of 5753, my brother, Jonathan Pollard, will once again be alone in solitary confinement. It is time to bring an end to his senseless suffering.

There is now an emerging consensus within the American Jewish community demanding the long overdue termination of the gross miscarriage of justice in my brother's case. This consensus has been achieved largely through efforts of rabbis and their rabbinical groups and associations

cutting across the entire spectrum of the American Jewish community.

The latest major group to join in this call for justice is the B'nai B'rith International which, over the Labor Day weekend, urged President Bush to commute Jonathan's sentence.

The coming couple of months present a window of opportunity that has not existed before and may not be available again any time soon. Accepting this sense of urgency, I can think of no better time for mobilizing American Jews than at this time of the year during the High Holy Days.

I therefore urge you to help spread a special message during this period to your rabbis and fellow congregants: urge them to mobilize during services this Rosh Hashana to help bring about Jonathan's freedom.

Letters or phone calls urging commutation of Jonathan's sentence to the seven years he has already served must be immediately sent to the following individuals: President George Bush, The White House, Washington, DC. 20500, (202) 456-1111, Gov. Bill Clinton, Clinton for President, P.O. Box 615, Little Rock, AR 72203, (501) 372-1992.

U.S. senators and congressmen also need to hear from their constituents on this matter in order to mobilize a successful drive in Congress for Jonathan's freedom. Congregants can reach their senators at the U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510 and their representatives at the House

of Representatives, Washington, D.C., 20515. The phone number for the Capital switchboard where all calls to any senator or representative can be made is (202) 224-3121. Send them information on the case.

Please urge your rabbis to place an empty chair on the bima of their synagogues with a sign that reads "Reserved as a symbol of compassion and commitment to justice for Jonathan Pollard."

Please write to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, The Prime Minister's Office, Jerusalem, Israel, to urge him to act on compassionate and humanitarian grounds to intercede with the President to have Jonathan's sentence commuted.

Carol Pollard  
New Haven, CT

### Special program

To The Editor:

How nice to see the front page picture of the young cancer patient during his '92 summer camp in Israel -- a first for Camp Simcha, a project of New York-based Chai Lifeline.

Pittsburghers might like to know, or be reminded, that Pittsburgher Shanen (Bloom) Werber is the Israel director of Chai Lifeline. This year, instead of transporting 120 children from Israel to join the 30 here, the reverse was done and so Shanen was in charge of this special camp.

Special kids, a special camp, and special Israel memories.

Evelyn G. (Mrs. Albert W.) Bloom  
Pittsburgh