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NYC Candle Lighting Time

January 2, 2026 – 13 Teves 5786

4:22 p.m. NYC E.D.T.

- Sabbath Ends: 5:27 p.m. NYC E.S.T.
Sabbath Ends: Rabbenu Tam 5:54 p.m. NYC E.S.T.
Weekly Reading: Va'yechi
Weekly Haftara: Va'yikrevu Yemei Dovid (1 Kings 2:1-12)
Daf Yomi: Zevachim 110
Mishna Yomit: Bechoros 9:7-8
Halacha Yomit: Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayyim 128:40-42
Rambam Yomi: Hilchos To'en v'Nitan chap.13-15
Earliest time for Tallis and Tefillin: 6:24 a.m. NYC E.S.T.
Sunrise: 7:19 a.m. NYC E.S.T.
Latest Kerias Shema: 9:39 a.m. NYC E.S.T.
Earliest Mincha: 12:29 p.m. NYC E.S.T.
Plag Hamincha: 3:41 p.m. NYC E.S.T.
Sunset: 4:40 p.m. NYC E.S.T.

(Continued on page 62)

**Candle Lighting Times In North America
January 02 and January 09, 2026**

Atlanta 5:22, 5:28	Hartford 4:13, 4:20	Phoenix 5:14, 5:20
Baltimore 4:36, 4:43	Houston 5:16, 5:21	Pittsburgh 4:47, 4:53
Boston 4:05, 4:12	Kansas City 4:49, 4:55	San Diego 4:36, 4:42
Buffalo 4:34, 4:41	Los Angeles 4:37, 4:43	San Francisco 4:44, 4:50
Chicago 4:11, 4:18	Memphis 4:42, 4:47	Seattle 4:11, 4:19
Cincinnati 5:08, 5:15	Miami Beach 5:23, 5:28	St. Louis 4:33, 4:39
Cleveland 4:50, 4:57	Milwaukee 4:10, 4:17	St. Paul 4:24, 4:32
Dallas 5:14, 5:20	Montréal 4:04, 4:12	Toronto 4:34, 4:41
Denver 4:29, 4:35	Newark 4:22, 4:29	Washington 4:39, 4:46
Detroit 4:53, 5:00	Philadelphia 4:29, 4:35	Winnipeg 4:21, 4:29

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Editorials



Mamdani and Da Costa's Resignation

NYC's incoming socialist mayor, Zohran Mamdani, triggered a flurry of speculation as to why he so quickly accepted the resignation of Catherine Almonte Da Costa within hours of appointing her as his director of appointments. In that role, she would have been responsible for identifying and recruiting true believers in his agenda to serve in his administration.

However, as has been widely reported, she offered her resignation soon after some of her social media posts from 2011 and 2012 containing antisemitic comments were brought to public attention by the ADL

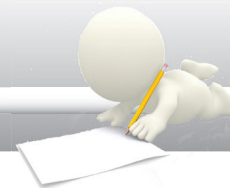
– and Mamdani promptly took it.

Yet this was a classic case for him not to have done so. The comments were made when Da Costa was in her late teens, and she has insisted that they do not reflect who she is now. To be sure, though her comments *did* include such references as “money-hungry Jews,” “working alongside these rich Jewish peeps,” and the “Far Rockaway train is the Jew train.”

She was a natural for the role of Mamdani's personnel gatekeeper given her teenage woke proclivities

Continued on p.107

Letters to the Editor



A Pre-State Religious Zionist Icon in America

I was deeply touched by Rabbi Aaron I. Reichel's narration of the life of his eminent grandfather, Rabbi Dr. Herbert S. Goldstein, in his opinion piece, “A Model of Pre-State American Zionism” (Dec, 26, 2025). Espousing Torah values and a religious way of life as a *sine qua non* to the Zionist dream, Rabbi Goldstein effectively mounted a strong resistance to the prevailing views of Zionism in the first half of the twentieth century wherein secularity took precedence over religion.

Responding to the currents of those times, his grandfather preciently transformed his shul, later known as the West Side Insti-

tutional Synagogue, into a major center for Jewish life. He did so by bringing in a multitude of athletic, social, and literacy “clubs,” which drew large numbers of Jews to his shul and prevented them from slipping into the perilous anonymity of secular life. In essence, the shul served as the greatest weapon against the forces of assimilation that washed over much of American Jewry at that time, while imbuing community members with a Zionist zeal that had so remarkably shaped the lives of his illustrious grandfather and his children.

I can relate. My mother was a lifelong friend of Herman Wouk, whom she came to know as a fellow camper up in Milton, Vermont in the late 1920s. According to my

mother's account, the camp director, Sam Borowsky, who served as president of the Borough Park Zionist Organization, instilled in the campers both religion and Zionism as inextricably tied. Herman Wouk was a great admirer of Rabbi Goldstein, principally because he was able to so persuasively infuse Zionism, religion, and a balanced form of secularism into all those who came within his orbit. Rabbi Reichel's illuminating op-ed captures the passion of his grandfather's unflagging commitment to Zionism – including enduring a long and difficult nautical voyage in the 1950s which he made into a yearly occurrence – which enabled him to serve

Continued on p.107

E-mail your thoughts to letters@jewishpress.com.

Letters chosen for publication may, at the editor's discretion, be shortened and/or edited.



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and subsequent series of jobs in the woke social work and nonprofit worlds embraced by Mamdani.

And, not to put too fine a point on it, she is also married to a deputy N.Y. comptroller who identifies as Jewish and has children with him whom she identifies as Jewish.

So, more than in most other circumstances, Mamdani had some cogent reasons for not letting her leave his administration without a fuss. Why, then, did he go along so easily and, in the process, disappoint, and perhaps alienate, a big part of his base? Some have suggested an overarching need to disabuse the pub-

lic perception that he harbors a deeply ingrained antisemitism.

Others see a desire to show the world that he is pragmatic and fully capable of moving his political center of gravity.

Thus, throughout his campaign, Mamdani was characterized as a “turbocharged” version of the city’s previous progressive leaders, with a victory speech often described as “laced with identity politics” and “resentment.” However, to some, the Da Costa incident demonstrates a burgeoning practical strain.

Thus, they say, by moving swiftly to distance him-

self from antisemitic rhetoric, Mamdani is not only attempting to soothe the 58% of Jewish voters who supported his opponent, Andrew Cuomo, but also that he is prepared to govern from the center.

But we rather think that Mamdani was up to something else as well. Plainly, he now has some measure of deniability as to claims of antisemitism. Yet we remain persuaded that he is still committed to a reinvention of New York in an Islamic image. So he is positioned to argue that he is moved by principle and not old-style anti-Jewish bias.

Time to Take No for Their Answer: Hamas Will Never Voluntarily Disarm

We are hoping against hope that President Trump’s fulsome statement of support for Israel in any confrontation with Iran, following his meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu this past Monday, will convince Hamas that the clock has finally run on their rope-a-dope sham to avoid voluntarily laying down their weapons.

In recent weeks, statements from their leaders have been making it painfully clear that they are duplicitously using the current truce period of relative calm as cover to rebuild their shattered military. In fact, Hamas has deftly turned that disarmament – which was supposed to be a prerequisite – into a ne-

gotiating point.

The Trump plan for Gaza was premised on the notion that Gaza must become a deradicalized, terror-free zone. Yet Hamas officials have recently declared disarmament a “red line,” falsely claiming that it was never part of the original negotiations.

So we seem to be close to reading the tea leaves and acknowledging that voluntarism is a non-starter with that crowd and there is now a strategic necessity for taking action against Hamas before the cost of doing so grows exponentially. Indeed, its principal patron, Iran, is now proclaiming a massive rebuilding effort, but that only acknowledges that it is currently in a his-

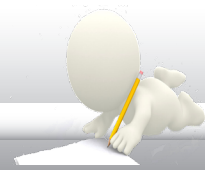
toric moment of weakness.

Plainly, the significant June 1, 2025, Israeli “Operation Rising Lion” against Iranian nuclear and military infrastructure has made the argument for taking military action now a virtual no-brainer. Following the June conflict, Iran emerged strategically paralyzed with its own military capacity – and that of Hamas and Hezbollah – at greater risk from Israeli military action than at any time in memory.

We wish it weren’t so, but all indications are that the time to act is now, and that President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu get it.

Letters

Continued from page 7



as a role model both during his time and for generations later.

Commitment and zeal never fade with time. And neither will the name “Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein.”

Amy Neustein, Ph.D.
Fort Lee, N.J.

The writer is the author/editor of 16 academic books and is currently working on her parents’ memoir.

Public Shiva Provides Supreme Mitzvah Opportunity

I appreciate, admire, and support virtually everything Rabbi Rothwachs wrote in his initial article on the private *shiva* (“A Private *Shiva*? Comforting a Subject, Not Handling an Object,” Oct. 31, 2025) and in his well-thought-out response (Dec. 12, 2025) to what I wrote (“The Many Benefits of a Public *Shiva*,” Nov. 21, 2025), as well as the gracious tone of his response.

It respectfully seems to me that all the objectives served by the “private” *shiva*, and all the concerns raised by Rabbi Rothwachs so eloquently and movingly, are actually addressed and resolved within the framework of the public *shiva* as observed by adhering to the letter and spirit of Jewish laws and customs; this was noted by Rabbi Rothwachs himself in his original article, in my response, and in his follow-up reply to my response.

Just one more point: Although the primary purpose of the *shiva* may indeed be to satisfy the needs of each individual mourner, as noted by Rabbi Rothwachs, the act of *nichum aveilim*

(consoling mourners) is widely considered to be not only a mitzvah in itself, but also one of the greatest *mitzvot* of all. It derives from the idea of *chesed* and emulating G-d, who comforted Yitzchak after his father passed away (*Sota* 14a). Rabbeinu Yonah actually stated, toward the beginning of the third chapter, that comforting mourners is a Biblical obligation of doing *chesed* (although Rambam writes that the obligation is rabbinic (*Hilchos Avel*, Chapter 14)).

Either way, a private *shiva* disenfranchises all Jews who know or care to console the mourner – except perhaps a select few – from observing this mitzvah. And unlike most *mitzvot*, this one is considered not just adhering to the word of G-d, but actually emulating the example set by G-d.

Nevertheless, I agree that the main objective is to satisfy the needs of each individual mourner. I simply believe that the legitimate concerns raised by Rabbi Rothwachs about the feelings of the mourner – which of course are primary – are adequately addressed within the framework of the public *shiva*, especially with all the accommodations discussed by Rabbi Rothwachs and by me.

Rabbi Aaron I. Reichel, Esq.
Kew Gardens, N.Y.

Mamdani’s Fake-Friendly Chanukah Video

I would like to comment regarding your recent incisive article by Stephen Flatow entitled “Mandy Patinkin’s Chanukah Cameo: A Cover for Mamdani’s

Record?” (Dec. 26).

A few weeks ago, I wrote a letter to *The Jewish Press* in response to President Trump’s meeting with Mamdani at the Oval Office in which he failed to lecture Mamdani on his anti-Israel and antisemitic views. I proposed that our Orthodox rabbinic leaders should instead be the ones to meet with Mamdani and to fill that void within our Orthodox Jewish community that is desperately needed.

Unfortunately, since then I have not read of any rabbi representing our mainstream Orthodox rabbinic institutions such as the Orthodox Union, Agudath Israel, National Council of Young Israel, Yeshiva University, Touro University, etc., meeting with Mamdani to address concerns regarding our community. Instead, Mamdani recently met with a delegation of rabbis representing the Conservative and Reform branches of Judaism that would be more favorable to his overall policies and worldviews. However, interestingly, one of the Reform rabbis from the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, namely Ammiel Hirsch, left that meeting even more disillusioned than before, convinced that Mamdani’s strong ideological, jihadist convictions will not bode well for many NYC Jewish residents.

In order to help counteract the Rabbi Hirsch’s post-meeting negative report, Mamdani then chose a safer Jewish venue to help endear himself to his Jewish constituents. Namely, he posted a warm, cuddly Chanukah menorah-lighting video with a non-rabbin-

ic, well-known Jewish celebrity, Mandy Patinkin. He not only lit the Chanukah candles while Patinkin recited the *berachos*, but also was seen wearing an apron and making potato latkes along with Patinkin. In the video, Patinkin, sporting a long white beard, actually looks and sounds very rabbinic (though without his head covered). (Many years ago, he appeared in a movie entitled *Yentl* along with Barbra Streisand, in which he portrayed a yeshiva student.) This also proved to be a safe choice by Mamdani because Patinkin had recently been interviewed blaming Netanyahu for all the antisemitism in the world rather than Hamas, due to how Israel reacted to October 7. I assume this interview alone endeared Patinkin to Mamdani.

I do hope, like Mr. Flatow, that our Jewish leaders will not be fooled by this video to think that it will at all foretell a warm embrace and support by Mamdani of his Jewish constituents.

I plead with all our Jewish leaders to pay attention and not remain complacent or believe that what occurred recently on Chanukah in Australia cannot occur here, as we may be facing a very dangerous situation here in New York City as well. All our Orthodox Jewish leaders must very strongly and unequivocally present their issues and concerns on behalf of our entire community directly to our new mayor as soon as possible to hopefully avert any new catastrophe. The time to act on this is now!

Josh Rosenthal
Queens, N.Y.