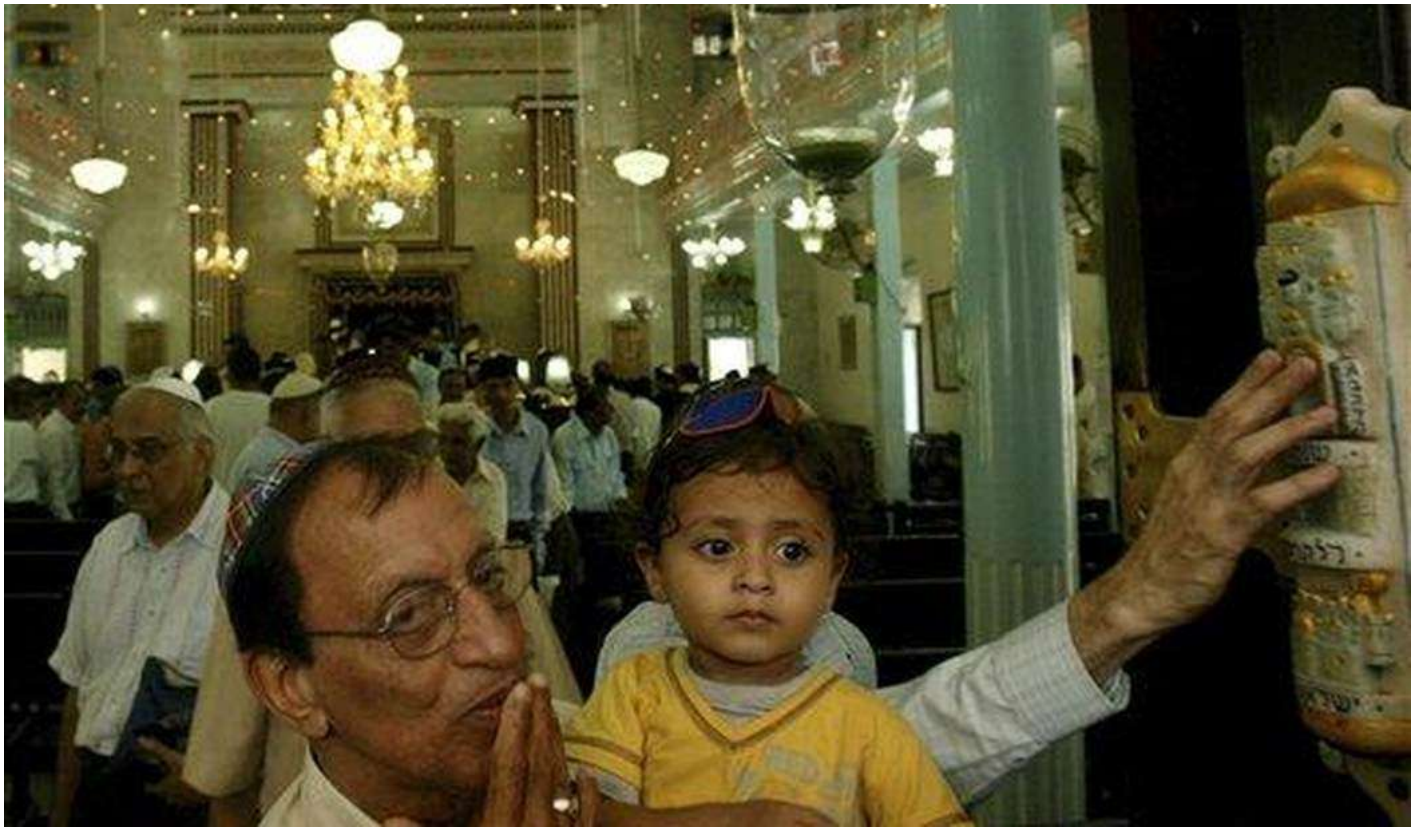


The Little Box that Could Change America

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In my long life, I have never personally experienced antisemitism in America.

I was raised by Jewish parents who believed that the best place Jews ever lived (other than in their own country in the Holy Land) was the United States of America. When the most prominent Jew of the 20th century, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, the head of the Chabad movement from 1950 until his death in 1994, came to the United States from East Europe in 1941, he sometime thereafter declared that America was a *medinah shel chesed*, “a righteous country.”

Yes, there have always been individual antisemites in America; yes, there have been antisemitic policies (quotas on Jews at Harvard, country clubs barring Jews from membership, law firms closed to Jewish lawyers, among other examples) and there have always been Jews who believed American Christians were no different from Europe’s. But the fact is, even with the aforementioned flaws, America has always been a blessing to its Jews.

It is therefore nothing less than tragic — as much for America as for its Jews — that for the first time in American history, many American Jews are afraid. They watch the Jew-hatred on college campuses, the large demonstrations featuring calls to wipe out Israel, police guarding schoolchildren attending Jewish schools, and see armed guards at virtually every synagogue in the country.

They worry.

So much so that many religious Jewish college students, who until very recently wore a kippah with nary a thought, now wear a baseball hat or some other head covering that does not identify them as Jews, and some Jews are removing the mezuzah from the doorposts of their homes and apartments.

This time therefore presents America's non-Jews with an opportunity to do something powerful for the Jews of America. And many would like to.

Unlike during the Nazi era, when helping Jews often entailed hiding a Jew and thereby risking one's life and family, helping Jews now can be done with little or no risk. And if many millions of Americans do this, America and the world will be profoundly affected for the good.

Americans should put a mezuzah on the doorposts of their homes and apartments. In effect, they will be saying, "We are all Jews."

There are powerful precedents.

One took place during World War II in a Nazi prisoner of war camp.

As reported by the Army:

"Sometime in January 1945, German forces instructed all Jewish POWs to report the next morning. Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds (the senior noncommissioned officer) was in charge of the prisoners, which included Jews and non-Jews. He ordered all of his soldiers to stand together when the Jewish prisoners were to report.

"When the German officer in charge saw that all the camp's inmates were standing in front of their barracks, he turned to Edmonds and said, 'They cannot all be Jews.'

"'We are all Jews,' Edmonds replied.

"The German officer drew his pistol and threatened Edmonds," but Edmonds stood firm, and no Jewish soldier was hurt.

Another example took place in Billings, Montana in 1993. During Chanukah of that year, a Jew-hater tossed a brick through a window displaying a Chanukah menorah. The home belonged to a Jewish physician and his family. Jews traditionally place the Chanukah menorah in a window for all the world to see the lights of the eight-day holiday.

When word of what happened spread, the citizens of Billings bought or made replicas of menorahs and placed them in their own windows. There is a powerful photo representation of this showing people of every religion, ethnicity, and race in Billings holding up a menorah, photographed through a broken window.

In the Nazi POW camp and in Billings, America's Christians and other non-Jews responded to Jew-hatred by saying, "We are all Jews."

Once again, a time has come for Americans — especially, but not only, Christians — to announce, "We are all Jews."

Put a mezuzah on the doorpost of your house or apartment.

The mezuzah is a small box that Jews place on the right doorpost of their home. The commandment to do so is thousands of years old, coming, as it does, from the Bible. In the fifth book of the Torah, in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, it is written:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

Those words are written on parchment (just as are the words of the Torah scroll) and placed inside the mezuzah. When written by a scribe on parchment, the mezuzah is considered a "kosher" mezuzah.

However, there is no need for a non-Jew to buy a "kosher" mezuzah. For considerably less money, one can buy the mezuzah box with nothing inside or with the Hebrew words inside printed on paper rather than handwritten on parchment. Just use the internet to search on "mezuzah."

Ideally, once you've done this take a photo of it with your cellphone and post it on your social media account. Let the world know where you stand.

What matters is that non-Jews put this distinctive Jewish item on their doorpost. If enough Americans did this, the message of solidarity with Jews would reverberate around the world, that in this time of greater antisemitism than any since the Holocaust, "We are all Jews."

This column was originally posted on [Townhall.com](https://www.townhall.com).