

Chief Rabbis of Israel say, 'Killing fetuses

By Thaddesus Baklinski

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Israel's two chief rabbis have again issued a letter to all synagogue and community rabbis urging them to **condemn abortion and to support the work of Efrat, the country's pro-life organization. In stronger language than they have used in their previous messages, Chief Rabbi of Israel Yona Metzger and Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel Shlomo Amar called the killing of the child in the womb "murder."**



Israeli Chief Rabbis Yona Metzger, left, and Shlomo Amar.

The Jewish Press

"As in past," the letter reads, "**we call on all rabbis in Israel**" to "**raise in their words and sermons in synagogues...the severe prohibition of abortion.**"

The chief rabbis called for an increased effort in "making the wider public aware of the **extreme seriousness** involved in killing fetuses, which is like **actual murder.**"

The chief rabbis time their letters condemning abortion to coincide with the reading of a portion of the Torah (*Parashat*) known as ***Shemot***, which describes the **genocidal attack on Hebrew newborn boys** by the Egyptian pharaoh, and the efforts of the Hebrew midwives to save them.

Last year the rabbis wrote they were working to "**encourage births among the Jewish people and to prevent unnecessary abortions.**"

In previous years, the chief rabbis focused their letter on a passage of the Talmud, which states, "The redemption does not take place until all the souls are brought out of their storing place." This, they say, means that **widespread abortion in Israel is delaying the coming of the messiah. Abortion in Israel is "a real epidemic, as tens of thousands of Jewish souls are being lost each year,"** they wrote. "In addition to the enormity of the **transgression**, it is also **delaying redemption.**"

Abortions in Israel are authorized by hospital committees, but their approval criteria is quite broad: Abortions are allowed in cases of rape, incest, adultery, if the woman is under 17 years of age or over 40, if the woman's health is at risk, or if the baby is suspected to have a physical or mental handicap. Such broad parameters have essentially established **abortion on demand.**

Such a view is possible, because most Jewish teachers do not teach that the inviolable right to life begins at conception but varies according to development and circumstance.

(Click "like" if you want to end abortion!)

Dr. Eli Schussheim, director of Efrat, has pointed out that the demographic implications of abortion in Israel make it one of the nation's **greatest dangers.**

"Israel has lost more than one and a half million Jewish children to abortion since 1948. In a country of about 5.5 million Jews, this number has great demographic significance. Imagine how much stronger Israel would have been today with one million more Jews," a statement from Efrat says. Rabbis Metzger and Amar praised the efforts of **Efrat** to help women contemplating abortion by providing emotional and material support.

"We see great importance in the work of the Efrat association to save the lives of Jewish children," the rabbis wrote. "Over its 30 years of activity, tens of thousands of fetuses were saved, and in the past year alone, the lives of **4,000 children were saved.**"

They also urged that, "every rabbi who holds a conference on abortion or birth, or acts on this issue in any forum, should invite Efrat chairman Dr. Eli Schussheim to participate in the event, or consult with him as the country's leading expert in this field, since it has been proved that **[Efrat] actually saves lives.**"