



The Shofar

July-August, 2024

Congregation House of Israel

25 Sivan - 27 Av, 5784



Happy 4th of July

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The Shofar

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4th of July and the 5th of Iyar

By Sherrill Nicolosi

As we approach the 248th Anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence, July 4th, we are reminded of the similarities of Israel's celebration of its Declaration of Independence, Yom Ha'atzmaut, the 5th of Iyar (on the Hebrew calendar), 76 years ago.

Yom Ha'atzmaut is a national celebration, commemorating the Israeli Declaration of Independence, proclaimed by David Ben-Gurion, the future prime minister, on the 5th day of Iyar. It is the anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. (To avoid interference with the Sabbath, Israel Independence Day is celebrated between the 3rd and 6th of Iyar.) In 2024, Israel celebrated on May 13-14; in 2025, the holiday will be celebrated on April 30-May 1. In 1951, Israel Independence Day was given the status of a "minor" Jewish holiday.

The American Independence Day, known colloquially as the Fourth of July, commemorates the date the Second Continental Congress issued

its statement that the Thirteen Colonies were now the United States of America, a separate union, free from British rule. In 1938, the U.S. Congress made July 4th a federal holiday.

Both countries have similar traditional ways of celebrating their Independence Days. Families have picnics, gatherings, barbecues, concerts, and parades, as well as fireworks displays.

Homes and businesses sport balloons, flags, and clothing in their respective flag colors.

In Israel, on the Eve of Independence Day, an official ceremony at Mount Herzl, called Yom Hazikaron, honors the memory of Israelis who have died defending Israel. This is one distinct difference from the U.S., which has a wholly separate Memorial Day at the end of May.

The patriotic displays by the citizens of both the United States and Israel recognize the intense importance of freedom and sovereignty. May their respective flags fly forever.

Reb Shelly's Desk



The Month of *Ima*?

As I'm writing this, we've just celebrated Father's Day and we'll shortly say the special blessing for the coming month of Av, which means, "Father".

So, is it just a coincidence that next month we celebrate the 4th of July where we remember the trials and tribulations of our Founding Fathers?

But let me ask you something, what about the Mothers? Well, again, is it just a coincidence that an upcoming Torah Parsha (Pinchas, July 27) talks about a group of women, sisters at that, who go to Moses to complain that it is wrong that they, as women, have no rights of inheritance?

I can't help but think of Patrick Henry's famous line, "Give me liberty or give me death". But, just in case you forgot, when he said those words, he was only referring to men and, remember, at that time the term, "Men" did not include Native Americans, Blacks, or Jews; and, it also failed to include women.

And yet, it was one of the Founding Fathers, John Adams's wife, Abigail (who is one of the Founding Mothers, to me. I saw the Broadway production of 1776) penned a letter to her husband to make sure to remember the ladies or, there would wind up being another revolution of women fighting for their rights. And again, we'll be reading about women who had to remind Moses, long before the War of Independence, that those of the female gender should also have rights, dare I say, God given rights.

Don't fool yourself, the battle is still on and, sadly, it seems like far too many people in positions of power are trying to go back, not to The War of Independence, but to the Middle Ages.

Oh, I know, we give note to Betsy Ross for sewing the American Flag. Unfortunately, there is a good chance that that is not exactly true.

And yet, while we tell and retell the story of The Ride of Paul Revere, have any of you ever heard of a 16 year old (see image) girl by the name of, Sybyl Ludigton? How odd that we don't teach her

story in our schools. Sybyl rode twice as far as Paul Revere...and, she did so in the midst of a deluge; alerting members of the militia that they were being called to muster as the British had attacked nearby Danbury Connecticut.

Biblically, we have women who were warriors leading others into the heat of battle. And, for those of you who might be wondering about The Modern State of Israel, let's not forget that women were fighting alongside men from before Israel's own Declaration of Independence.

But that does not mean that women were treated as equals. Still, Israel has a mandatory stint in the Army for both men and women. And, while women had full combat status during the War of Independence, once that was achieved, from 1948, to the late 1990's, women were not allowed in combat roles. But from then on, women are permitted to serve in most types of combat positions, including as members of the special forces and as combat pilots.



David Ben Gurion knew the importance of not only permitting, but of requiring women to serve, not just because they were needed to fill the ranks, but as Ben Gurion is quoted as saying; "Since you rightly believe that the security of the State must be pursued night and day,

I want you to know that that security will not exist if our nation's women do not know how to fight. We are few – and our enemies are many...."

Oddly enough, even when women weren't allowed to serve in battle, they wound up serving as field instructing jobs within the IDF.

That fight for equality to protect Eretz Yisrael continued and it wasn't until three years later, in the year 2000, that Israel passed the Equality amendment to the Defense Services Law which would make it known that women had the right to serve in any role that the Israel Defense Forces had.

Today, I would like you to remember this; while America and Israel still have work to do on women's rights and equality, there are other countries out there that still seem to be living in the Dark Ages when it comes to women's rights.

We always talk about America being a beacon of light, a country that sets an example for others to follow. Let's work together toward the goal of achieving not just a semblance of, but of real equality for the woman in our ranks.

Lift Up Your Heads

By Rabbi Josh Weinberg

June 14, 2024 –

This week our emotions ran high after the heroic and inspiring rescue of Noa Argaman, Shlomi Ziv, Almog Meir-Jan, and Andrei Kozlov, and the tragic loss of Arnon Zmora. This week we watched MK Benny Gantz leave Netanyahu's war cabinet. This week Jews around the world learned Torah and ate cheesecake. And this week New Yorkers were privy to a different moment highlighting their Jewish/Zionist identity. This week many of us were put on edge after verbal attacks and vandalism peppered the streets and subways of New York City. On one particular ride, masked, keffiyeh-wearing protesters boarded the NY subway train and began chanting, *"Raise your hand if you're a Zionist... this is your chance to get out..."*

These protestors spilled into the subway after protesting an exhibit that recreated the layout of the Nova Dance festival and documented the murder, rape, and abduction of hundreds of Israelis.

The anti-Israel and antisemitic protesters gathered Monday evening, steps away from the New York Stock Exchange building in Lower Manhattan, lit flares and repeated shouts including "Long live the intifada" and "Israel, go to hell," according to videos posted to social media.

It's one thing for those who disagree with U.S. support for Israel to be critical of Israel's conduct in the war and to criticize the Biden administration. However, it's quite another to shout chants outside a memorial for those brutally murdered, barbarically raped, and hauled off as hostages in Gaza. Could we imagine a massive protest outside the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., or White Supremacists protesting outside the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama?

I recently visited the Nova exhibit in Lower Manhattan. The exhibit makes no mention of any political message or recommendation for what Israel's response should or shouldn't be after the massacre of October 7. It simply, and heart-wrenchingly, documents what the music and dance festival was, its

hopes for spreading peace and love, and how horrible what Hamas did.

Some protestors have no redlines, leave nothing alone that is sacred without desecrating it, and feel the need to spout hatred, shouting over our need to mourn for and memorialize the victims of a murderous antisemitic and anti-Israel terrorist organization.

Across town, the vandalism and harassment continued with the defacement of the private home of the Brooklyn Museum's director Anne Pasternak, as well as several other [relatively] minor incidents across Manhattan.

Whether we characterize what these people did as antisemitic (which I believe it is) we need to see this as an important pivot point in North American Jewish life. We should not have to tolerate this kind of behavior from anyone anywhere.

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) issued a responsible and significant statement against antisemitism on a webinar with Jewish Council for Public Affairs. Uncharacteristically, she called upon her constituency and the progressive public at large to recognize when "... criticism crosses the line into real harm against the Jewish community." One does not have to be an AOC Hasid to laud her comments – which have largely been unheard from recognizable Progressive American politicians and leaders. Her remarks were noticeable because as a leading young progressive politician herself, she said them loudly and clearly, to her credit. They are also a potential indicator of the dire nature of this situation that even AOC chose to weigh in.

AOC explicitly condemned the protests outside of the Nova exhibit in a tweet:

"The callousness, dehumanization, and targeting of Jews on display at last night's protest outside the Nova Festival exhibit was atrocious antisemitism – plain and simple ... Antisemitism has no place in our city nor in any broader movement that centers human dignity and liberation."

When antisemitism is normalized in progressive spaces we need to be concerned just as we must be concerned when it is normalized in conservative and right-wing extremist spaces. We will say time and time again that raising one's voice in support of Palestinian rights is legitimate. Celebration and endorsement for Hamas, however, is never legitimate.

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Birthdays & Anniversaries

July, August Anniversaries

Yossi and Kim Baron Aug 16

July Birthdays

Harold Castillo July 1

Lou Siegel July 3

Les Surfas July 12

Sue Koppel July 13

August Birthdays

Neal Gladner Aug 8

Melissa Lax Aug 8

Millie Baron Aug 12

Anthony Nicolosi Aug 21

Fran Rephan Aug 21

Diana Surfas Aug 24

Cynthia Rephan Aug 28

Hal Koppel Aug 30

Fred Korngut Aug 30

Sheldon (Shep) Taxer Aug 30

Hannah Reagler Aug 31

Miriam (Mimi) Reagler Aug 31

Ruth Sedler Aug 31

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Arza - World Union

Continued from page 4

This brings us to Zionism.

Not all Jews are Zionists and not all Zionists are Jews. However, when folks call out “Zionists,” as these protesters did, it is not about support for Israeli policies or the Israeli coalition government. Rather, they are using “Zionists” interchangeably with “Jews.” An angry mob running through a subway car yelling for “Zionists” to identify themselves hits too close to home for us, as it carries hints of Nazism and Holocaust memories. No one would tolerate a mob yelling for Gays, Black people, Asians, or any other national identity to separate themselves from the majority. Watching this arguably antisemitism unfold, how can we Zionists lift our heads and stand proudly as Zionists and know precisely what we mean by it? If we have to tuck our Magen David necklaces into our shirts, cover up our kippot, and think twice about wearing Hebrew on our shirts, then we have let this vile hatred best us. This mob action taken by these antisemites in the New York subways undermines true freedom of expression that is foundational in the values of the United States and Canada.

This week’s parasha Naso asks us to lift up our heads and be counted –

This millennia-old verse calls upon us to proudly be counted as Jews and as Zionists when we feel safe certainly, but also when we feel threatened.

I don’t know what I would have done had I been in that subway car leaving the Nova exhibit. But, I wonder what would have happened if I had raised my hand. Would I have subjected myself to mob violence and assault? Would I have looked around for allies and supporters to come to my aid and not found any? The news reports don’t shed light on whether anyone spoke up against these antisemitic protestors. According to the report, the subway train came to a stop, the car’s doors were opened, and the leader of the chant concluded, “OK, no Zionists – we’re good.”

I was reminded of the famous quote from Pastor Martin Neimoller:

*First, they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist.*

*Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist.*

*Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me.*

Sadly, this threatening type of protest and gross mob behavior can result in some Jews closeting their Zionism and Jewish identity. It may also result in the mainstream public coming to regard Zionism as taboo and a legitimate target for hate speech and violence.

We need to listen closely to this week’s parasha and be proud of our Zionism as we lift up our heads to be counted....

(Note: Rabbi Josh Weinberg serves as the Vice President of the URJ for Israel and Reform Zionism and is the Executive Director of ARZA, the Association of Reform Zionists of America.)

July - August Yahrzeits

Kaddish Recited July 5

Sely Simon Seligman

Father of Diana Surfas

Dorine Calcote Williams

Mother of Dennis Williams

Ruth Holtzman

Mother-in-law of Fred Korngut

Kaddish Recited July 13

(No member yahrzeits for the week of July 13)

Kaddish Recited July 19

Annette Baim

Wife of Kenneth Baim

Hyman Clapman

Uncle of Sheldon Kleinman

Kaddish Recited July 26

Bernice Lockwood Goltz

Mother of Susan Siegel

Mother of Diane Goltz

Eugene Kirsch

Father of Steven Kirsch

Uncle of Stuart Fleischer

Uncle of Mark Fleischer

Flora Meyer Lockwood

Grandmother of Susan Siegel

Grandmother of Diane Goltz

Sandra Boley

Sister of Sherrill Nicolosi

Kaddish Recited August 2

Jerry Tanenbaum

Father of Jay Tanenbaum

Father of Al Tanenbaum

Nelly Kass

Mother-in-law of Lynda Kass

Jonathan Paul Castillo

Son of Harold Castillo

Son of Laura Castillo

Kaddish Recited August 9

Israel Barenblat

Father of Betty Kleinman

Grandfather of Ira Kleinman

Rachel Barenblat

Mother of Betty Kleinman

Grandmother of Ira Kleinman

Jonathan Byrd Morgan

Husband of Barbara Morgan

Kaddish Recited August 16

Philip Taxer

Father of Sheldon (Shep) Taxer

Lee Staffin

Mother of Myrna Taxer

Herman Glen Hobbs

Father of Glenda Kirsch

Paula Hirsch

Sister of David Kirsch

Selma Schneider

Grandmother of Elaine Wolken

Kaddish Recited August 23

Herbert Levy

Father of Jerry Levy

Israel Barenblat

Father of Betty Kleinman

Rachel Barenblat

Mother of Betty Kleinman

Albert Louis Ruskin

Father of Phyllis Hearn

Herbert Erwin Harris

Father of Barbara Morgan

Kaddish Recited August 30

Bruce Staffin

Brother of Myrna Taxer

Sam Taub

Father of Betty Feir

July Parshiot

Korach

July 6, 2024

Korach incites a mutiny challenging Moses' leadership and the granting of the *kehunah* (priesthood) to Aaron. He is accompanied by Moses' inveterate foes, Dathan and Abiram.

Joining them are 250 distinguished members of the community, who offer the sacrosanct *ketoret* (incense) to prove their worthiness for the priesthood.

The earth opens up and swallows the mutineers, and a fire consumes the *ketoret* offerers. A subsequent plague is stopped by Aaron's offering of *ketoret*.

Aaron's staff miraculously blossoms and brings forth almonds, to prove that his designation as high priest is divinely ordained

Chukat

July 13, 2024

After forty years of journeying through the desert, the people of Israel arrive in the wilderness of Zin. Miriam dies, and the people thirst for water. G-d tells Moses to speak to a rock and command it to give water. Moses gets angry at the rebellious Israelites and strikes the stone. Water issues forth, but Moses is told by G-d that neither he nor Aaron will enter the Promised Land.

Balak

July 20, 2024

Balak, the king of Moab, summons the prophet Balaam to curse the people of Israel. On the way, Balaam is berated by his ass, who sees, before Balaam does, the angel that G-d sends to block their way. Three times, from three different vantage points, Balaam attempts to pronounce his curses; each time, blessings issue forth instead. The people fall prey to the charms of the daughters of Moab, and are enticed to worship the idol Peor. When a high-ranking Israelite official publicly takes a Midianite princess into the tent of the Tabernacle,

Pinchas kills them both, stopping the plague raging among the people.

Pinchas

July 27, 2024

Aaron's grandson, Pinchas, is rewarded for his act of zealotry in killing the Simeonite prince Zimri and the Midianite princess who was his paramour: God grants him a

covenant of peace and the priesthood.

The five daughters of Zelophehad petition Moses that they be granted the portion of the land belonging to their father, who died without sons; God accepts their claim and incorporates it into the Torah's laws of inheritance.

Moses empowers Joshua to succeed him and lead the people



August Parshiot

Matot - Masei

August 3, 2024

Moses conveys the laws governing the annulment of vows to the heads of the tribes of Israel.

War is waged against Midian for their role in plotting the moral destruction of Israel, and the Torah gives a detailed account of the war spoils and how they were allocated amongst the people, the warriors, the Levites and the high priest.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad (later joined by half of the tribe of Menasseh) ask for the lands east of the Jordan as their portion in the Promised Land, these being prime pastureland for their cattle. Moses is initially angered by the request, but subsequently agrees on the condition that they first join, and lead, in Israel's conquest of the lands west of the Jordan.

Devarim

August 10, 2024

On the 1st of Shevat (37 days before his passing), Moses begins his repetition of the Torah to the assembled Children of Israel, reviewing the events that occurred and the laws that were given in the course of their 40-year journey from Egypt to Sinai to the Promised Land, rebuking the people for their failings and iniquities, and enjoining them to keep the Torah and observe its commandments in the land that G-d is giving them as an eternal heritage, into which they shall cross after his death.

Va'etchanan

August 17, 2024

Moses tells the people of Israel how he implored God to allow him to enter the Land of Israel, but God refused, instructing him instead to ascend a mountain and see the Promised Land. Moses predicts that, in future generations, the people will turn away from God, worship idols, and be exiled from their land and scattered amongst the nations;

but from there they will seek God, and return to obey His commandments. Our Parshah also includes a repetition of the Ten Commandments, and the verses of the Shema, which declare the fundamentals of the Jewish faith.

Ekev

August 24, 2024

In the Parshah of Eikev ("Because"), Moses continues his closing address to the Children of Israel, promising them that if they will fulfill the commandments (*Mitzvot*) of the Torah, they will prosper in the Land they are about to conquer and settle in keeping with God's promise to their forefathers. Moses also rebukes them

for their failings in their first generation as a people, recalling their worship of the Golden Calf, the rebellion of Korach, the sin of the Spies, their angering of God at Taveirah, Massah and Kivrot Hataavah. But he also speaks of God's forgiveness of their sins, and the Second Tablets which God inscribed and gave to them following their repentance.

Re'eh

August 31, 2024

"See," says Moses to the people of Israel, "I place before you today a blessing and a curse" -- the blessing that will come when they

fulfill God's commandments, and the curse if they abandon them. These should be proclaimed on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eibal when the people cross over into the Holy Land. A Temple should be established in "the place that God will choose to make dwell His name there" where the people should bring their sacrifices to Him. A false prophet, or one who entices others to worship idols, should be put to death; an idolatrous city must be destroyed. The mitzvah of charity obligates a Jew to aid a needy fellow with a gift or loan. On the Sabbatical year (occurring every seventh year) all loans are to be forgiven. All indentured servants are to be set free after six years of service

