



# The Shofar

July-August, 2023

Congregation House of Israel

12 Tammuz - 14 Elul, 5783



Happy 4th of July

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### The Shofar

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Distributed free to members, prospective members, local clergy and other interested parties.

## "Bibi"

**By Sherrill Nicolosi**

"Bibi, My Story", is the autobiography of Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's longest tenured prime minister (to date), who has served three times. While it is the story of "Bibi", as Mr. Netanyahu is called, it is as much a history of the dramatic and often challenged fight for the creation and world recognition of the State of Israel.

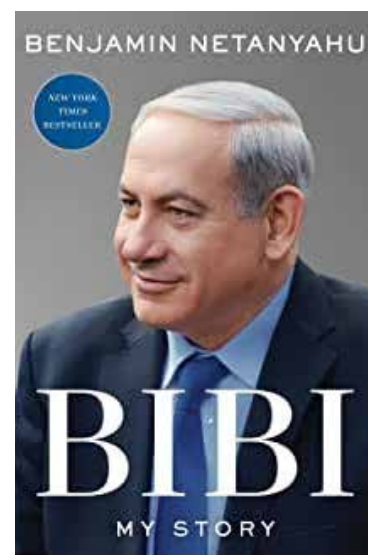
His biography begins with the telling of his early years with his very close-knit family—two brothers, Yoni and Iddot, and his parents, who raised their boys in Jerusalem, after Israel's War of Independence (1948).

The sons all served in the Israeli Defense Forces, in the elite special operations and forces unit. Bibi was seriously injured at age 22, fighting the war on terrorism. Brother, Yoni, died a few years later, leading the Entebbe hijacking/rescue mission. Brother, Iddot, published a book, "Yoni's Battle", chronicling Yoni's and the other heroic Israeli soldiers' battle in Entebbe.

Bibi, My Story, takes the reader through the political life of Mr. Netanyahu and his die hard devotion to Israel and the creation of Israel as a globally respected economic force. His commitment to fighting local terrorism in the Middle East, as well as international terrorism, was sometimes minimized by world leaders, some of whom could not (then and now) understand Is-

rael's unique situation. In the book, he stated his long held position: "In my long tenure as prime minister, I could never be tempted with a Nobel Prize to do things that I thought would endanger Israel".

This book, with its beautiful photos, maps and eloquent story telling, is a testament to the importance of never forgetting Jerusalem and Israel.



## Reb Shelly's Desk



### If You are a Jew Who is Apathetic to Israel, Look at Ukraine and Wake Up! – by Paul Plotkin

In 1894 Captain Alfred Dreyfus was framed and found guilty of treason for spying for Germany and sentenced to prison on Devil's Island. Dreyfus was an assimilated Jew, and a career officer in the French army. The trial was widely followed in and outside of France, that led to angry mobs in the street yelling antisemitic chants in the land of Liberty Fraternity and Equality; which it would appear did not apply to Jews.

An assimilated Jewish reporter for a Viennese paper named Theodore Herzl covered the trial and was profoundly disturbed by the mob's public display of hate for Jews. If this could happen to Jews who were given full citizenship in one of the most progressive countries in Western Europe, then the Jews would never be safe until they had a home of their own, and then would be equal amongst the nations of the world. They would no longer be seen as pariahs living off other nations, and they would have a place to go to if in danger. Thus, political Zionism was born.

In 1903 a horrific pogrom was unleashed against the Jews in a city called Kishinev in what is today called Moldavia. It was part of Czarist Russia, and it exposed the mortal danger that all Jews living in Czarist Russia faced. One of the first great poems in Hebrew, that I studied in Day school was called "Ir Haharega, The City of Slaughter" by Hayim Nachman Bialik. So powerful was his description of the horrors perpetrated on the Jewish population in Kishinev, that it unleashed a massive migration of Russian Jews mostly to America but also to Palestine. This was the next major event that raised the call for a Jewish state, where Jews would have a state of refuge. (An interesting side note, Mayim Bialik is a distant relative of the poet).

When the British imposed the White Paper on pre-ww2 mandate Palestine, that refused Jews the right to immigrate especially from Nazi held countries to Palestine, the need for a Jewish State as a refuge was made 6 million times clearer.

On July 4th, 1976, when America was celebrating its Bicentennial, a plane load of Jews was being held

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in an airport at Entebbe, separated from the freed non-Jewish passengers and threatened with death if the hijackers' demands (protected with Ugandan government support) were not met.

Israel sent in commandos to save the hostages and bring them to safety in Israel. Not all the saved passengers were Israelis, but all the saved passengers were Jews. Proof positive that Herzl's fears and hopes were now achieved by a sovereign Jewish State.

All of this came to mind when I read a NY Times article about how Israel was helping Ukrainian Jews and others flee the horrific and criminal war that Putin has unleashed on the country. The dateline was Chisinau Moldavia, which meant nothing to me until the article said that it was also known as Kishinev. It was like a 100-watt bulb turned on right in front of my eyes.

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# The Menorah and the Olive Branch

By Josh Weinberg

*He said to me, "What do you see?" And I answered, "I see a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl above it. The lamps on it are seven in number, and the lamps above it have seven pipes; and by it are two olive trees, one on the right of the bowl and one on its left."*

*(Zechariah 4:2-3 – from the Haftarah of Shabbat Parashat Beha'alotcha read on July 10th /*

Symbols are important. They represent us. They are often the forward facing image that permeates the subconscious towards a lasting image. Images grab attention, make a strong first impression, and represent one's identity. They are memorable and serve to distinguish a particular group from others.

It's easy to understand why the emerging Jewish State adopted the Menorah as its national emblem. The menorah has been a central Jewish symbol since antiquity. In addition to its role in the Mishkan, the Beit HaMikdash, and the Chanukah story, images of the menorah have been found in synagogues, cemeteries, mosaics, and seals throughout Jewish history.



The official symbol of the State of Israel is a menorah flanked on each side by an olive branch. This well-known image was designed by Gabriel and Maxim Shamir, two brothers from Latvia who studied graphics and design in Berlin prior to making Aliyah

and were responsible for creating a number of emblems, medals, stamps, and currency for the fledgling State. Their menorah was adopted as the official emblem by the Provisional Council of the State of Israel on February 10, 1949. The decision to surround the menorah with olive branches is based on the prophet Zechariah's vision of a menorah flanked by olive branches (Zechariah 4:3) which is read as part of this week's Haftarah (in the Diaspora).

The purpose of a symbol (like a logo or a brand) is to communicate and tell the story of who we are.

The Menorah, as the Symbol of the State of Israel, does this beautifully. It associates the modern State of Israel as a direct continuation of the Biblical kingdom and the rabbinic period during the Second Temple period. The olive branches, while also mentioned in the biblical verse, represent our aspirations as a people. The symbol says that we are firmly rooted in our past, but also look to the future as we aspire for peace in this land with all of the multi-layered complications that arise with olive trees and branches.

But the menorah depicted on Israel's national emblem is also the same menorah that appears on the Arch of Titus in Rome, the one that the Romans historically carried out of Jerusalem after its destruction. Thus the menorah serves as a symbol also of our frailty and as a warning not to let what happened to us in ancient times repeat itself.

This is a warning for today. The ruling coalition is making clear that its definition of Zionism is what



Avraham Burg described in a recent op-ed:

"... as a movement that went through changes from the revival movement to the politics that defines the racists of 2023. Zionism in Israel has become the main tool of discrimination and exclusion. This is the tool used by the neo-Zionist Eli Yishai to persecute migrant workers and asylum seekers ("Is the State of Israel ready to open its doors and become a state of immigration and lose the Zionist enterprise?"). This is the spoken language of 'Smotrichism' from the delivery room of his children to the state budget. Their Zionist pride is their racism."

Burg, a self-described former Zionist (as one who believes that once the State of Israel was declared, the goal of Zionism was fulfilled and was no longer necessary or relevant), has given up on the concept of Zionism and expresses his identity as an Israeli citizen. For many Diaspora Zionist Jews who are

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## ARZA - World Union

*Continued from page 4*

not Israeli citizens, what does Zionism now mean?

It means exactly what we did this week. We showed up in Manhattan to march in the Israel parade because we are Zionists. We Zionists love Israel, and Israel is central to our Jewish identity.

After the march, I ran to mid-town to speak at a protest against the delegation of members of the current ruling coalition visiting NYC. To clarify, we were not protesting Israel. We are protesting what we have said on these pages many times, that the coalition is pushing an anti-Zionist agenda. The coalition is all menorah with no Olive Branches. Theirs is a Zionism of chauvinism and supremacy, as Professor Shaul Magid commented to me, an “admixture of ethnic domination and statism whereby one ethnic group rules over another by dint of ideology and law.”

Ours is the menorah embraced by the olive branches, the symbol to remind us that our Zionism must be not about domination as a political project. Our Zionism must aspire to a real promise of equality for “all its citizens,” beyond a mere respectability to its non-Jewish populace, but dignity and a sense of belonging[1].

To give up on Zionism because of Ben Gvir and Smotrich, Rothman and Levin, and even PM Netanyahu, would be a tragic acquiescence to their distortion of Zionism and failure on our part to demonstrate our commitment to this core tenet of Jewish life.

Let me be clear. Universalism is NOT the opposite nor the enemy of particularism. Particularism is the shape of one’s particular identity, while universalism is an adherence to an ideology. One can be both particularistic and universalist at the same time, and one’s universalism – loosely defined as the philosophical and theological concept that some ideas have universal applicability – should be seen as a fulfillment of one’s particularism. Is it a threat to our Jewishness to say that we believe that all humans should be treated equally because they are created in the divine image? Or to even say that as Zionists we are also Palestinian nationalists? We not only believe in their right to have a viable State, but also can have a feasible nationalist identity even as citizens of Israel.

So as liberal Zionists we proudly embrace the symbol of Israel, connect to and see the menorah as representing our particularistic identity and the olive branches as representing our values and aspirations. I suggest that each of us take this symbol with us to the next protest –in Tel Aviv, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, or Boston – and with it reclaim our Zionism.

## Rabbi’s Desk

*Continued from page 3*

The article began with an Israeli social worker, Omer Hod, in a synagogue in Chisinau who had a case of “historical vertigo”. He had come with Israelis from governmental and social agencies in Israel to save Jews from violence and death. The “vertigo” was because Omer’s ancestors had lived in Chisinau over a hundred years ago. Now through him his family had returned not as victims but as rescuers. His family had left Chisinau to go to Jerusalem, he had left Jerusalem to save Jews in Chisinau. He may have vertigo; I have chills and tears just thinking about it.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said that Kishinev,” was a very central event that drove modern Zionism. In the same Kishinev, right now we’re saving Jews...The *raison d’être* of Israel is to be a safe haven for every Jew in danger. We didn’t have it in 1903. We have it now”.

Since the start of the war more than 2000

Ukrainians have already been flown to Israel, nearly 500 of whom have at least one Jewish grandparent. The significance of that is also ironic as Israel uses this non-Halachic definition of being Jewish to qualify for citizenship and in this case to be saved. Ironic because this is the definition that Hitler invented to qualify you as being Jewish enough to be gassed and cremated as a Jew.

Jill Shames is another Israeli social worker who has come to help on behalf of the agency, United Hatzalah. Her ancestors escaped nearby pogroms in the late 1800s. She said, “We are doing now what we couldn’t do then....I feel like history has been turned on its head.”

A Moldovan woman approached her and asked,” From Israel?”

Then she smiled and unbuttoned her jacket to reveal her necklace. It was a Star of David.

Somewhere looking down Theodore Herzl was smiling as well.



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### July, August Anniversaries

Yossi and Kim Baron Aug 16

### July Birthdays

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

## Refuah Shelemah

*The following people are in our thoughts and prayers for healing. Please offer prayers that they have a full and complete recovery.:*

- Sam Banks
- Millie Baron
- Mitch Boley
- Camy Crank
- Ellen Eubanks
- Oded Grenman
- Stephen Kirsch
- Randy Lewis
- Pat McCarthy
- Ellen Rephan
- Mike Richardson
- Misty Stricklin
- Larry Taub
- Shep Taxer
- Steven West
- James Woodfork

## Mazel Tov



Challah Baking birthday celebration for **Mushka Ciment-Kramer**, with Young Jewish Professional Women's Group and Little Rock Chabad women.

Mushka and Sally Nicolosi, seated far right

## July - August Yahrzeits

### Kaddish Recited July 7

**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 14

*(No member yahrzeits for the week of July 14)*

### Kaddish Recited July 21

**Annette Baim**  
*Wife of Kenneth Baim*

**Bernice Lockwood Goltz**  
*Mother of Susan Siegel*  
*Mother of Diane Goltz*

**Eugene Kirsch**  
*Father of Steven Kirsch*  
*Uncle of Stuart Fleischnor*  
*Uncle of Mark Fleischnor*

### Kaddish Recited July 29

**Flora Meyer Lockwood**  
*Grandmother of Susan Siegel*  
*Grandmother of Diane Goltz*

**Marcia Prushansky**  
*Mother of Carol Kleinman*

**Sandra Boley**  
*Sister of Sherrill Nicolosi*

**Jerry Tanenbaum**  
*Father of Jay Tanenbaum*  
*Father of Al Tanenbaum*

### Kaddish Recited August 4

**Nelly Kass**  
*Mother-in-law of Lynda Kass*

**Jonathan Paul Castillo**  
*Son of Harold Castillo*  
*Son of Laura Castillo*

**Israel Barenblat**  
*Father of Betty Kleinman*  
*Grandfather of Ira Kleinman*

**Rachel Barenblat**  
*Mother of Betty Kleinman*  
*Grandmother of Ira Kleinman*

### Kaddish Recited August 11

**Jonathan Byrd Morgan**  
*Husband of Barbara Morgan*

**Philip Taxer**  
*Father of Sheldon (Shep) Taxer*

### Kaddish Recited August 18

**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 25

**Meier Baron**  
*Father of Yossi Baron*

**Albert Louis Ruskin**  
*Father of Phyllis Hearn*

**Herbert Erwin Harris**  
*Father of Barbara Morgan*

# July Parshiot

## Chukat - Balak

July 1, 2023

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, 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 8, 2023

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: G d 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; G d accepts their claim and incorporates it into the Torah's laws of inheritance. Moses empowers Joshua to succeed him and lead the people

## Matot - Masei

July 15, 2023

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

July 22, 2023

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

July 29, 2023

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.



## August Parshiot

### Ekev

*August 5, 2023*

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 12, 2023*

"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.



### Shoftim

*August 19, 2023*

Moses instructs the people of Israel to appoint judges and law-enforcement officers in every city; "Justice, justice shall you pursue," he commands them, and you must administer it without corruption or favoritism. Crimes must be meticulously investigated and evidence thoroughly examined -- a minimum of two credible witnesses is required for conviction and punishment.

The Parshah concludes with the law of Eglah Arufah - the special procedure to be followed

when a person is killed by an unknown murderer and his body is found in a field - which underscores the responsibility of the community and its leaders not only for what they do but also for what they might have prevented from being done.

### Ki-Teitzei

*August 26, 2023*

Seventy-four of the Torah's 613 commandments (*mitzvot*) are in the Parshah of Ki-Teitzei. These include the laws of the beautiful captive, the inheritance rights of the first-born, the wayward and

rebellious son, burial and dignity of the dead, the returning of a lost object, sending away the mother bird before taking her young, the duty to erect a safety fence around the roof of one's home, and the various forms of kilayim (forbidden plant and animal hybrids) and the procedures for yibbum ("levirate marriage") of the wife of a deceased childless brother or chalitzah ("removing of the shoe") in the case that the brother-in-law does not wish to marry her.

Ki Teitzei concludes with the obligation to remember "what Amalek did to you on the road, on your way out of Egypt."