



The Shofar

July, August 2022

Congregation House of Israel

2 Tammuz - 4 Elul, 5782

The Arrival of Summer By Vicki Hollander



As the world lies in greens...
as the light shimmers radiantly,
let the grace of this time wash through
you dear.

And grow... lush, rich, and juicy...
like the fruits ripening on the vines.

Invite in.... satiation...peace...
wholeness.

Rejoice in the glorious flowers
colors...
let these fill you.

Call your creativity to rise as does the
heat...
Do, shape, bring new forms to life.

As well.... vacate...curl round in a
sanctuary of cool.
Watch the sky glow at sunrise....
the stars and planets shimmer at night.

Luxuriate in the bounty of summer...
and embrace her blessings dear one.

Thank You

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The Mezuzah

By Sherrill Nicolosi

Growing up, my siblings and I wore a mezuzah on a chain. Each one was a small, simple rectangle with a Star of David. In our home, my husband and I have hung mezuzot at each entry way. The mezuzah is a very special piece of Judaica.

A mezuzah is a piece of parchment (known as a kief) with Biblical inscriptions from the Book of Deuteronomy, the Torah, and the Shema. The parchment is placed in a small case, and affixed to the right side of the doorpost of the Jewish home. (Translated, mezuzah means doorpost.) Although in ancient times, the mezuzah was hung only on homes where people ate and slept, it has become customary to place the



mezuzah on the doorposts of buildings other than dwellings, such as synagogues.

The mezuzah has become a popular form of jewelry, worn as necklaces, tie pins, cuff links, and on charm bracelets. For many Jews, it is another way of showing Jewish loyalty, a commitment to Jewish choices.

A special celebration or ceremony is often held when the mezuzah is hung. Called the *Hanukat Habayit*, blessings are said, and the home or building is “dedicated”.

The beauty of the mezuzah is not confined to the look of the object. It has long been a visual symbol of faith, a reminder that Judaism is more than a religious affiliation, it is a way of life.

Reb Shelly's Desk



It would be going too far to call Ukraine holy ground for Jews, as only Israel can be designated that way. It would be over the line to call Ukraine sacred, but it wouldn't be way over the line. The fact of the matter is that

Ukraine, although not holy to us in the technical sense, is indeed a place that holds an important place in Jewish history.

Ukraine is the country where you will find the towns and villages that were packed with our ancestors. It was the heart of the so-called Pale of Settlement, a zone created by the Russian czar to corral the Jews into one geographical area. Many of those Jews fled to America and other free countries after the pogroms became unbearable, including my grandparents and many of your grandparents and great-grandparents as well. Almost all who didn't were murdered in the Holocaust.

These places include Berdichev, Odessa, Kherson, Harkiv, and Kishinev. A lot of these were holy towns filled with deeply pious Jews. Odessa, in contrast, was a free-wheeling, more international city on the Black Sea, something like Florida for the Russian Empire.

You see, it doesn't matter where the Jews live, they always end up in Florida sooner or later!

Ukraine was a center of Jewish culture for a thousand years. So, while it may not be *kodesh* in the biblical sense of the word, it is certainly just as holy as Brooklyn, Vilna, and other places of vital importance on the Jewish timeline.

So whether you're looking for happy Jewish history or the tragic kind, you'll find it in Ukraine. That is why Jews should care what is going on there, in addition to the fact that many Jews live there today.

Now it just so happens to be the case that Russia did control Ukraine for centuries. That is why

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Sisterhood

The long hot days of summer have arrived and warm breezes float across the land. Summer is my favorite time of year, always reminding me of Gerswin's lyrics "Summertime, and the livin' is easy". Indeed summer is a treasured time and hopefully for the next two months we will bask (safely) in the summer sun,

In mid-August, Monday the 14th, we will hold our first Sisterhood meeting in Burgaur hall, thus turning to the upcoming shift of seasons. Ruth Sedler and Betty Kleinman will welcome us all with their "traditional" Taco luncheon and we will discuss and plan the upcoming Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur holidays. Thank you to all who have sent in their dues and we hope to see you for our first 2022/23 meeting! Until that date, I will share a blessing for summer, while adding friendship, ice cubes and an abundance of July tomatoes to these grateful words.

A Blessing for Summer

For the lengthening of days, stretching sunshine far past its winter bedtime.

For the bright blues and vibrant green and pops of color filling the warm world.

For the unrelenting humidity that reminds us to savor the sweetness of cooler breezes.

For all the sounds of summer - joyful shouts of children splashing, lingering laughter over meals shared on patios, the shuddering clap of thunderstorms demonstrating something more powerful than us.

For summer camps, vacations and time spent outside.

For good AC when we're stuck indoors....For sun.... For shade!

For all of these things and more, we thank You.

And may God bless us and keep the mosquitoes, ticks and chiggers..far, far away from us!

Amen

Patti

Us and Them

By Josh Weinberg

During my freshman year of college, I enrolled in a Hebrew literature course dedicated to the literary works of A. B. Yehoshua. After spending time with his landmark novels *Mr. Mani* and *The Lover*, essays on the “Normality” of the Jewish condition, and the short story “Facing the Forests,” Yehoshua spent time with us on a visit and shared his political outlook conveyed through his characters. As a novelist, Yehoshua transgressed taboos and crossed the red-lines of his time through fictional relationships and scenes that became part and parcel of the changing Israeli societal tapestry. One of the first Israeli writers that I got to know and appreciate, I loved the journeys on which he took me, and how Israeli I felt through a familiarity with the fruit of his pen that sat at the center of the modern Israeli canon.

A decade after that formative freshman seminar, A.B. Yehoshua sat on – a now-infamous – AJC panel and blathered on about American Jewish identity vs. Israeli Jewish identity. “Judaism for me [as an Israeli] is my skin, while for you [as a Diaspora Jew] it is a jacket that can be taken on and off.” He blew up the panel causing a huge reverberation around the Jewish world with his Diaspora-negating radical Zionism left over from yesteryear. The *Haaretz* newspaper dedicated the entirety of its op-ed pages for three Fridays in a row inviting a smorgasbord of Jewish personalities to weigh in in response to this disturbing disruption. American Jews certainly did not like being told that they are “partial” Jews and that even Arab Israelis have a stronger Jewish identity than they do because they speak a Jewish language and live in Jewish time. He did not back down and adamantly insisted that Israel is the only place in the world in which one can live a Jewish life that is “total” – in which, there is no compartmentalization between the inner and the outer, between what is Jewish and what is not. It is the only place in the world in which Jews are totally responsible for the society they live in, for the environment that surrounds them, and for the government that rules them. It is the only place in the world where Jewish culture is not a subculture in a greater culture but is rather that greater culture itself.

Politeness was not A.B. Yehoshua’s forte. This week we mourn the loss of this giant. As fate would have

it, on the day on which Yehoshua breathed his final breath, the leadership of the URJ sat in Israel’s Knesset with a number of MKs and Israel’s Minister of Diaspora Affairs, hosted by the Knesset’s first Reform rabbi MK Gilad Kariv. Their message could not have been more different. We sat together and listened to Min. Nachman Shai, in a gruff Israeli style, lament the lack of Diaspora exposure in Israel’s education system, and how Israelis have much to learn from the Diaspora experience. We heard in beautiful poetic language from MK Ruth Wasserman-Lande (*Blue and White*) that her Jewish identity was developed in South Africa and was the key formative experience influencing her Israeli identity.

We announced the largest and most expansive partnership between the Israeli government and the Reform Movement with the goal of developing leadership and learning from each other’s shared experiences.

Wait, what?

Israel should learn from the Diaspora experience!? Israelis acknowledging that there might be something useful and powerful from their cousins in the Diaspora!? Could it be that with the passing of A.B. Yehoshua, we also see the sunset of the disdain and scorn that Israelis have for Diaspora Jewry? As we mourn the loss of one of Israel’s and the Jewish world’s greatest story-tellers, we are also in a moment of political crisis in which the experiment of a broad sweeping coalition – with seemingly little in common beyond the fear of a Bibi/Haredi/ultra-Nationalist monster takeover – is teetering like a fragile Jenga tower that cannot survive pulling out one more piece.

But maybe Yehoshua had it wrong? Perhaps this tension-filled political gear-grinding moment is not about “Us” Diaspora Jews vs. “Them” Israeli Jews at all. No, this moment is about a different “Us” and “Them”. Transportation Minister Merav Michaeli, head of Israel’s Labor party, shared with us this week that “the Labor Party is absolutely committed to the Kotel accord and will not allow it to be turned into a political football. To achieve it, along with civil and non-Rabbinate marriage and equality in other spheres of life, we must invest in building our political power. If we want to advance a progressive government in Israel, if we want the Israel that we promised ourselves in the Declaration of Independence, then we have to make it happen. You are our indispensable partners in this.”

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Rabbi's Desk

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we used to call it "THE Ukraine," to describe it as a region of Russia rather than an independent country, just as we would "The Midwest" or "The South" or "The Catskills." The very name Ukraine means "On the border," the only question is which side of the border is it on?

The problem with Putin's argument is that he is talking about the past, not the current reality. Yes, Russia used to own Ukraine. And Turkey used to own Israel. The past is not necessarily a determinant of what should always be. Putin sounds like an abusive ex-husband who thinks that he should be able to dominate his ex-wife simply because they used to be married.

As for the ethnic Russian citizens of Ukraine in Donbas who want Putin to be their leader, there is a simple solution. Move across the border to Russia, nobody is stopping them.

"All the Russia's" is a term that includes not just Ukraine but Poland, the Baltic States, Georgia, Armenia, and even Finland! To assume that Putin just wants a bite of Eastern Ukraine is to be dangerously naive.

We can't go to war with Russia, it's simply too dangerous. But there is one thing we can do that is safe and, I think, effective. When a child misbehaves, you take away his toys and send him to his room.

There are a few hundred Russian oligarchs, and they own tons of property in America. They're ghost properties, fabulous apartments all over the country that are empty and exist only for investment. They have billions of dollars in our banks, both in hard currency and gold bars. Both can be confiscated and frozen until Putin gives up.

The elite Russia send their young adult children and their Ph.D. students to Harvard and Yale and Princeton and other top schools. Those students should be deported today. And they should be forced to fly in coach class back to Russia. When the oligarchs see that they are losing their toys and that their children can no longer live their best lives on our shores, Putin will be under pressure to relent.

I think that taking away their toys and sending them to their room can be more effective than firing cruise missiles, which Putin will use as a pretext for an even crueler war. It's time for the West to tell Putin "Nyet!" which means "No!" No, he can't rewind the world back to the Cold War. No, he can't just declare an independent country to be his property. And no, he can't start a war for the purpose of greed and power.

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Refuah Shelemah

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

- Ken Baim
- Sam Banks
- Kathy Bracke
- Mitch Boley
- Camy Crank
- Hy Fishman
- Oded Grenman
- Stephanie Kleinman
- Mindy Lingo
- Pat McCarthy
- Mike Richardson
- Steve Story
- Misty Stricklin
- Steven West
- Anita Williams

Birthdays & Anniversaries

July, August Anniversaries

Yossi and Kim Baron Aug 16

July Birthdays

Lou Siegel July 3
Les Surfes 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 Surfes 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

ARZA - World Union

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Rabbi Shaul Judelman of Roots/Shorashim/Judur, eloquently explained to us, that conflicts are not about “Israelis” and “Palestinians” but rather about shattering the assumptions of “Us” versus “Them”. Today’s moment is about a different “Us” vs. a different “them”.

Geographical lines are increasingly irrelevant as the breakdown of this fragile puzzle will depend on whether the Jewish world embraces or rejects a myopic and uncompromising brand of jingoistic and harsh nationalism, that seeks to fan the flames of intolerance and suppression of the Other, or a vision of a world in which we recognize the simple and fundamental principle that every human being is entitled to the same rights, access, and dignity.

This. Is. Not. New.

Whether we call it “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” or “Liberté, égalité, fraternité,” doesn’t matter. The political hawks like PM Naftali Bennett, Ministers Gideon Saar, Yoaz Hendel, Zeev Elkin, and even Avigdor Lieberman – who left the Right-wing bloc to join the current coalition understand that pragmatism is preferable to oppression and racism.

And the hero of the day turns out to be a devout Muslim politician named Mansour Abbas who preaches a Torah of fairness, justice, and equality for society at large, that will lead to fairness, justice, and equality for each of our communities.

Spending this week in the different States known as Israel, Palestine, the West Bank, Judea and Samaria, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv, I come away with a sense that those of “Us” in the world who believe in the need to protect human dignity and liberty, and that a Jewish State should do the utmost to preserve life, body, and dignity, as stated in Israel’s 1992 Basic Law of Human Dignity and Liberty, are in an existential battle with “them” who believe that self-preservation can come at the expense of other human beings.

Seeing the issues up close this week reminds us that if we don’t forge strong partnerships and work to build our power base, the report of the Biblical 10 scouts will come to fruition and this will be a land that devours its inhabitants. So let us be like Caleb and Joshua and imagine that by working together we can make the land of Israel a Land that flows with milk and honey for all its inhabitants.

July-August Yahrzeits

Kaddish Recited July 1

Vicki Seligman

Mother of Diana Surfes

Morris Nathan Bauman

Father of Cynthia Rephan

Louis Brown

Father of Betty Forshberg

Roxanne Smalley Capotosto

Sister of Kim Baron

John Hearn

Husband of Phyllis Hearn

Sely Simon Seligman

Father of Diana Surfes

Kaddish Recited July 8

Dorine Calcote Williams

Mother of Dennis Williams

Ruth Holtzman

Mother-in-law of Fred Korngut

Kaddish Recited July 15

Annette Baim

Wife of Kenneth Baim

Kaddish Recited July 24

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

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 5

Nelly Kass

Mother-in-law of Lynda Kass

Israel Barenblat

Father of Betty Kleinman

Grandfather of Ira Kleinman

Rachel Barenblat

Mother of Betty Kleinman

Grandmother of Ira Kleinman

Kaddish Recited August 12

Jonathan Byrd Morgan

Husband of Barbara Morgan

Philip Taxer

Father of Sheldon (Shep) Taxer

Lee Staffin

Mother of Myrna Taxer

Kaddish Recited August 19

Herman Glen Hobbs

Father of Glenda Kirsch

Paula Hirsch

Sister of David Kirsch

Selma Schneider

Grandmother of Elaine Wolken

Kaddish Recited August 27

Albert Louis Ruskin

Father of Phyllis Hearn

Herbert Erwin Harris

Father of Barbara Morgan

July Parshiot

Korach

July 2, 2022

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 9, 2022

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. Aaron dies at Hor Hahar and is succeeded in the high priesthood by his son Elazar. Venomous snakes attack the Israelite camp after yet another eruption of discontent in which the people "speak against G-d and Moses";

Balak

July 16, 2022

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. Balaam also prophesies on the end of the days and the coming of Moshiach. 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 23, 2022

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 30, 2022

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.

August Parshiot

Devarim

August 6, 2022

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 13, 2022

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 20, 2022

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 27, 2022

"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