



# The Shofar

July - August, 2025

Congregation House of Israel

5 Tammuz - 7 Elul, 5785



*Independance Day*  
*Happy 4th of July*

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### The Shofar

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*In loving memory of Diane Goltz*

### Sisterhood Fund

**Siegel, Goltz and Bull Families**

*In loving memory of Dave Lockwood  
In loving memory of Anita Williams  
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## Henry S. Jacobs Camp

### By Sherrill Nicolosi

Several generations of CHI Congregants have had the enriching experiences as campers, counselors and Camp Staff of Henry S. Jacobs Camp. Located in Utica, Mississippi, HSJ has been the Union for Reform Judaism's summer camp for Jewish children since 1970.

CHI parents, grandparents, and now great grandparents have witnessed how the Camp provides an educational, spiritual, and creative experience for youngsters from the Deep South, including Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and the Florida Panhandle.

Campers and their parents consistently champion the Camp's "mission" to teach and enforce Jewish values, and promote the goal of enduring friendships with fellow Jews. Countless close relationships and

even marriages have resulted from the Camp Jacobs experience. Campers often come from small Southern Reform Temples, where interaction with other Jewish children is very limited. Campers and counselors frequently talk about Camp Jacobs giving them a feeling of being safe, and being a part of a group of people like themselves. Because all campers and counselors are Jewish, the Jacobs experience may be the only time they will not be a minority (with the exception of Shabbat services).

Ask an individual who attended Camp 20-30 even 40 years ago what their time at Jacobs meant to them, and most will say that the round-the-clock Jewish experience has helped mold their identity as a Jewish adult.

To support Jacobs, donations can be made to provide scholarships and maintain and upgrade the facilities, send an email inquiry to: [jacobscamp@urj.org](mailto:jacobscamp@urj.org), or call the business office, open year round at:

(601) 885-6042

## Reb Shelly's Desk



### Independence Day

#### *What Would Golda Do*

As you read this, we're approaching American Independence Day, the 4th of July. However, there's another Independence Day we should be thinking about.

I recently read an article, the source of which escapes me, in which the author rightly criticized PM Benjamin Netanyahu's government. He memorably articulated his wish that the current government search the Knesset and "find the box in which Golda Meir's balls are hidden."

I tried looking for the quote by simply googling that phrase. It turns out that Israel's fourth prime minister also had a matzah ball soup recipe, so that search turned out to be fruitless. Regardless of the source, the author is right. Israel—and the Jewish people as a whole—desperately need Golda Meir's brass balls.

Known as "the only man in Ben Gurion's cabinet," she had a well-earned reputation for being tougher than a diamond. Though her tenure was rocky as a result of the Yom Kippur War, she is nonetheless revered as a founder of the nation and an inspiration for all Jews.

Israel's Independence Day, which this year was May 5, was a very difficult one. In more peaceful conditions, the holiday (known in Hebrew as Yom Ha'atzma'ut) features parades, cookouts, military flyovers, and a general feeling of joy. It is held immediately after Yom HaZikaron, Israel's solemn Memorial Day, when the nation honors the 25,000+ soldiers and others who have given their lives for the sake of the world's only Jewish state.

There may have been some normal celebrations, but they were muted. It's hard to celebrate while the war continues and Israel's hostages are still in Hamas's captivity.

Though we can understandably mute the celebration of Israeli Independence Day under these circumstances, we must also boost the volume of the day's message. We have to focus on the meaning of Israeli Independence rather than its well-deserved joy.

And what, pray tell, is the meaning of Israeli Independence Day? We'll get that straight from the mouth of Golda Meir:

"On the question of 'to be or not to be?' each nation is required to come up with its answer in accordance with its customs. It is not possible for the Jews—and it is indeed forbidden for them—to ever depend upon someone else's permission to stay alive."

That is why we need an independent, free, and strong State of Israel. Without Israel, Jews will always have to ask, and sometimes beg, other people for the right merely to exist. In Israel, Jews do not ask anyone for permission to live.

I know, times feel rough for the Jewish people right now. There are micro-pogroms on our college campuses. A small but vocal minority in America wants us dead. But listen to me: *Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh?* (How is this night different from all other nights?) Do you really think that Israel's actions have created Jew-haters? Impossible—it's simply that those Jew-haters feel more emboldened now than they did before.

They will always hate us. We represent everything they hate, no matter which "they" we're talking about. There is no cure for this terminal hatred. We must not give up our identities or our support for Israel just because some ne'er do well blocking the street screams in our faces.

Besides, we have faced worse, far worse. Now is not the time to go crying to mommy that the meanies are bullying us. We have to put on our big boy and big girl pants and declare proudly that we are Jews and we love Israel and all of our Israeli brothers and sisters, especially when the chips are down.

Israel is not guilty of genocide—that shame belongs only to the enemy. In fact, Israel exists to prevent a genocide. Golda Meir put it this way:

"Israel itself is the strongest guarantee against another Holocaust."

## Rising Lions: Israel's Attack on Iran

Israelis were awoken at 3 am Friday to country-wide sirens urging them to head to safe rooms and shelters. Israel carried out a massive attack on Iran dubbed Operation "Am K'Lavi" – "Rising Lion" – taken from the biblical verse of Numbers 23:24,1 and chock-full of symbolism. Our regular newsletter this week deals with seemingly more mundane issues and focuses on the internal Jewish question of how we as a Jewish people and as Reform Jews struggle to be accepted, with an emphasis on the recent hate speech against Reform Jews in Israel's Knesset. After the game-changing events of the past 12 hours, that seems like a distant and alternate reality.

Israel is awaiting a response, which the Iranians have vowed will be severe.

There will no doubt be those who rush to condemn Israel's actions and see them as aggressors, and those who rush to Israel's defense, as Iran has been behind nearly every major terrorist attack for the past four decades, including the funder and backer of the October 7th massacres. Iran has been the source of armed proxies throughout the region, including Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis in Yemen, who have wreaked havoc on Israel and threatened to cause regional and even global harm. No independent sovereign State should have to live under constant threat of annihilation, and Iran has not softened its determination to destroy the Jewish State. Its behavior through the continued development of its nuclear and ballistic capability has only reflected its determination.

While we may never fully know the full extent of the calculation and reasoning behind last night's timing, Prime Minister Netanyahu justified his latest military campaign by saying that Iran was a "clear and present danger." And Iran was indeed enriching uranium to worrisome levels. It's believed to be just weeks from having enough fissile material to make several bombs.

What we know so far is that Iranian state television confirmed that the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, Gen. Hossein Salami, was killed in Israel's strikes. Also killed was Mohammad Bagheri, the commander-in-chief of the military and the

second-highest commander after the supreme leader, according to the Israeli army and Iranian media, as well as several other top security officials and nuclear scientists.

Israel attacked the Natanz nuclear facility, with its many subterranean levels, which is thought of as the beating heart of the Iranian nuclear program. The Israeli military said it had "caused significant damage" at Natanz and hit an underground compound housing centrifuges.

The Israeli military says 200 warplanes participated in the overnight attack in Iran, dropping hundreds of bombs across the country and striking over 100 targets. The attack on Tehran was the biggest since the Iran-Iraq war decades ago.

The IDF, in an official statement issued soon after Israel began attacking Iran's nuclear program, described the resort to force as a "preemptive strike."

David Horowitz, Editor of The Times of Israel, asks,

"Why preemptive? Because, in the assessment of Israel's security chiefs, Iran's nuclear weapons program had advanced to the point of an existential threat, from a regime avowedly seeking to bring about Israel's destruction. After years of vows to take military action, the IDF's Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir, in a statement to the nation, declared that the situation had "reached the point of no return."

While we will still learn more about the Israel-U.S. coordination, Israel is operating under the assumption that the United States will have Israel's back.

President Donald Trump initially said that "the U.S. will defend itself and Israel if Iran retaliates," hours after Israel launched airstrikes across Iran. This morning, in a post on "Truth Social," President Trump commented on the Israeli strikes, saying he gave "Iran chance after chance to make a deal...but no matter how hard they tried, no matter how close they got, they just couldn't get it done."

Many questions remain, the most stressful of course is regarding the anticipated Iranian response, which they have vowed will be severe.

### More Questions Than Answers

Many questions are up in the air, to which we do not have answers.

The immediate fear element is regarding Iran's anticipated retaliation.

According to Haaretz diplomatic correspondent

*Continued on page 5*

# Arza - World Union

*Continued from page 4*

Amir Tibon, many in Israel suspect that Iran, fearing to look like a paper tiger, will respond far more forcefully than it did after Israel's previous strikes in October 2024. Then, Iran sent over 300 drones and ballistic missiles, most of which were intercepted or landed in open areas, causing at least \$40 million worth of property damage in Israel.

Beyond that we are struggling with many questions:

- How long will this last?
- What is Israel's deterrence capability against an Iranian response?
- How much damage was actually done to Natanz and the Iranian capability to enrich uranium and to continue to develop an expanding ballistic missile program, which could themselves present a serious, if not existential, threat?
- How deeply is America involved?
- What will be the reactions of the international community?

In addition to the life and death matters, we are all watching closely the closing of schools and activities, amidst the prohibition for in-person gatherings, the airline cancellations, leaving many people stranded both in Israel and abroad, and the impact this will have on summer trips and tourism, and the long-lasting impact of war.

In the meantime, we offer our support and solidarity to the people and the State of Israel, and let us pray for a future where we can have power and restraint, and that the people of Israel can live in peace with its neighbors. As we read in this week's Torah Portion, Behaalotecha:

"When the Ark was to set out, Moses would say: Advance, Adonai! May Your enemies be scattered, And may Your foes flee before You!" (Numbers 10:35)

And let us pray:

"May Adonai grant strength to God's people;

May Adonai grant God's people with peace." (Psalm 29:11)

## Sisterhood



Sisterhood has wrapped up another fun and productive year.

We are looking forward to doing it all over again in the fall, but we have taken a well deserved break over the summer.

At the May meeting, we elected officers for 2025-2026.

**Laura Castillo** will be our president; **Barbara Morgan** has taken over as treasurer, and **Karen Reagler** graciously agreed to continue as our secretary.

Many thanks to **Ruth Sedler** for her faithful service to Sisterhood as Treasurer for over a

decade!

Enjoy some fun in the sun this summer. We will be planning the High Holiday events before you know it.

So, ladies, BRAVA!

Glenda

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### July Birthdays

Harold Castillo	July 1
Lou Siegel	July 3
Les Surfas	July 12
Sue Koppel	July 13

### August Anniversaries

Yossi and Kim Baron	August 16
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### August Birthdays

Neal Gladner	August 8
Melissa Lax	August 8
Millie Baron	August 12
Anthony Nicolosi	August 21
Fran Rephan	August 21
Diana Surfas	August 24
Cynthia Rephan	August 28
Hal Koppel	August 30
Fred Korngut	August 30
Shep Taxer	August 30
Hannah Reagler	August 31
Miriam (Mimi) Reagler	August 31
Ruth Sedler	August 31

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## Refuah Shlemah

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

- Shoshanah Baron
- Bill Cobb
- Oded Grenman
- Kerry Lockwood Owen
- Randy Lewis

- Pat McCarthy
- Mike Richardson
- Susan Siegel
- Larry Taub
- Misty Stricklin
- Shep Taxer
- Steven West
- James Woodfork
- Tamara Keith
- Israeli Hostages



## July - August Yahrzeits

### Kaddish Recited July 4

**John Hearn**

*Husband of Phyllis Hearn*

**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 11

**Carol Levi**

*Wife of Larry Levi*

### Kaddish Recited July 18

**Hyman Clapman**

*Uncle of Sheldon Kleinman*

**Annette Baim**

*Wife of Ken Baim*

### Kaddish Recited July 25

**Bernice Lockwood Goltz**

*Mother of Susan Siegel*

*Mother of Diane Goltz*

**Eugene Kirsch**

*Father of Steven Kirsch*

*Uncle of Stuart Fleischner*

*Uncle of Mark Fleischner*

**Flora Meyer Lockwood**

*Grandmother of Susan Siegel*

*Grandmother of Diane Goltz*

**Sandra Boley**

*Sister of Sherrill Nicolosi*

### Kaddish Recited August 1

**Jerry Tanenbaum**

*Father of Jay Tanenbaum*

*Father of Al Tanenbaum*

**Nelly Kass**

*Mother-in-law of Lynda Kass*

### Kaddish Recited August 8

**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*

**Jonathan Byrd Morgan**

*Husband of Barbara Morgan*

### Kaddish Recited August 15

**Herbert Levy**

*Father of Jerry Levy*

**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 29

**Meier Baron**

*Father of Yossi Baron*

**Albert Louis Ruskin**

*Father of Phyllis Hearn*

**Herbert Erwin Harris**

*Father of Barbara Morgan*

**Bruce Staffin**

*Brother of Myrna Taxer*

**Sam Taub**

*Father of Betty Feir*

## July Parshiot

### Chukat

July 5, 2025

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 12, 2025

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 19, 2025

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

### Matot - Masei

July 26, 2025

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 2, 2025*

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 9, 2025*

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 16, 2025*

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 23, 2025*

"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 30, 2025*

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.

