

Flushing-Fresh Meadows Jewish Center

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THE BULLETIN

May-June, 2016
Vol.14, No.4

Nisan/Iyar, 5776
Rabbi Gerald M. Solomon
Cantor Aaron Katz

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR MAY

Friday, May 6

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00 P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....7:38 P.M.

Saturday, May 7

Parashat Acharai - Shabbat Mevarchim
Services.....9:00 A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....8:48 P.M.

Friday, May 13

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00 P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....7:45 P.M.

Saturday, May 14

Parashat Kedoshim
Shabbat Services.....9:00 A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....8:54 P.M.

Friday, May 20

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00 P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....7:52 P.M.

Saturday, May 21

Parshat Emor
Shabbat Services.....9:00 A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....9:01 P.M.

Friday, May 27

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00 P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....7:58 P.M.

Saturday, May 28

Parashat Behar
Shabbat Services.....9:00 A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....9:07 P.M.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR JUNE

Friday, June 3

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....8:04 P.M.

Saturday, June 4

Bechukotai
Shabbat Mevarchim Services.....9:00A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....9:12P.M.

Friday, June 1

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....8:08P.M.

Saturday, June 11

Parashat Bamidbar
Shabbat Services.....9:00A.M.
SHAVUOT

Saturday, June 11 - Erev Shavuot

Mincha/Maariv.....T.B.A.
Candle Lighting Time.....9:17P.M.

Sunday, June 12

First Day Shavuot Festival Services.....9:00 A.M.
Mincha/Maariv.....T.B.A.
Candle Lighting Time.....9:17P.M.

Monday, June 13

Second Day Shavuot Festival Services.....9:00A.M.
Yizkor.....10:45 A.M.
Festival Ends.....9:17P.M.

Friday, June 17

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....8:11P.M.

Saturday, June 18

Parashat Naso
Shabbat Services.....9:00A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....9:19P.M.

SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

Friday, June 24

Mincha/Maariv.....7:00P.M.
Candle Lighting Time.....8:12P.M.

Saturday, June 25

Parashat B'haalotecha
Shabbat Services.....9:00A.M.
Shabbat Ends.....9:21P.M.



SISTERHOOD

Spring is here and Sisterhood has exciting plans coming up as well as the usual activities. We look forward to greeting all our friends at the Yom Ha'Atzmaut luncheon on May 12th. Come celebrate Israel Independence day with good food and special entertainment and with your FFMJC family.

On June 23rd we will bring to you an important program: "What's in your medicine cabinet". Learn about drug interaction, how to dispose of unwanted medicines and other pertinent information from a registered pharmacist.

The book club meeting on May 26th will be discussing "Go Set A Watchman" by Harper Lee. Looking ahead the book for June 30th is "The Japanese Lover" by Isabelle Allende. Books are always held for our group at the Fresh Meadows library.

The Tuesday morning exercise class continues each week at 11 AM. If you haven't tried it come down and see if it is right for you.

See you soon,

Marilyn and Joan, Co-Presidents

CENTER NEWS

We are pleased to announce the engagement of our own **Cantor Aaron Katz** to our dear friend **Judith Kohn**, daughter of our dear member **Charlotte Kohn**. We wish them much happiness and Mazel in the years ahead.

MAZEL TOV

To **David Nagan** on the birth of his first grandson, Asher Benjamin. Asher was born to David's son Michael Nagan and his wife Nancy. Mazel Tov, Mazel Tov to all.

THANK YOU

David Nagan for sponsoring the Kiddush in celebration of the Bris of his grandson Asher Benjamin on Shabbat, May 7.

CONDOLENCES

To Eva Beckhardt on the passing of her beloved husband, Walter. Eva and Walter were long-time members of FFMJC and Walter's gentlemanly presence will be missed.



RABBI'S MESSAGE

The months of May and June this year are replete with important dates of important religious events observed both here and in Israel. Please note the dates of these observances.

- 1. YOM HA-SHOAH - HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY - MAY 4th AND 5th
- 2. YOM HAZIKARON - DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ISRAEL'S FALLEN- MAY 11th AND 12th.
- 3. YOM HA-ATSMA-UT - ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY - MAY 12th AND 13th
- 4. SEFIRAH - PERIOD OF THE COUNTING OF THE OMER - BEGAN APRIL 23rd (LATE P.M.) THROUGH JUNE 11th (LATE P.M.)
- 5. LAG B'OMER - MAY 26th.
- 6. SHAVUOT - JUNE 11th (LATE P.M.) THROUGH JUNE 13th (LATE P.M.)

Elsewhere in this bulletin, there is information about these observances which I hope you will find useful.

Rabbi Benjamin Blech is a Professor of Talmud at Yeshiva University. In one of his essays he reminds us that in 1964, Look magazine ran a story entitled "The Vanishing American Jew." The article clearly explained that by all indicators, there would no longer be any Jews in the United States by the 21st century. Jews survived, but Look magazine disappeared. Once again those who predicted our early disappearance were once again, apparently mistaken.

Mark Twain had the experience of reading his own apparently erroneous obituary in the local newspaper, He quipped: "The report of our death was greatly exaggerated."

In fact, people have been writing our obituary almost from the time of our birth. Rabbi Blech, reminds us that : "The oldest recorded mention of the name Israel is in an Egyptian hymn of victory dating to Pharaoh Mer-nep-tah (about 1230 BCE), and it reads, 'Israel is laid waste, his offspring is wiped out.' Passover reminded us that it was Pharaoh and his people who were defeated by the miraculous intervention of God. And the Jews to this day, descendents of slaves in what was once a glorious empire, continue to write magnificent chapters in the story of mankind."

That's why we, as a people should never really be frightened by those premature predictions of our demise. G-d promised us immortality as a people. IF WE SURVIVED THE HOLOCAUST - WE WILL SURVIVE!! The historian Simon Rawidowicz described the Jews as "the ever- dying people." Yes, as our history appears to indicate: The Jewish People has always stood on the brink of extinction - only to later amaze history's onlookers with our super- human ability to survive, and not only to survive but contribute to the creation of a more civilized world.

We recently observed on Passover that during the enslavement in Egypt the much hoped and prayed for deliverance did finally come heralding the blessed event of redemption and freedom. During the horrible years of the Shoah, the much hoped and prayed for deliverance did finally come with a return to freedom and more, the restoration of Israel, the G-d given homeland of the Jews. G-d's people survived and even thrived. The dry, dead bones which we read about in the synagogue on many Passovers, came to life again. Who would have thought during the 1900 years of our exile that Israel would once again become real?

In Ezekiel's account of the Valley of Dry Bones we see how it is possible that the bones can be brought back to life, but only through the power and authority of the King of the Universe. If G-d is not a partner in the

planning for the future, there will be no future. G-d's promises ring true throughout history. This revival and resurrection of the Jewish people is evidenced in the freedoms and security that Jews experience today, throughout the world we see the evidence in our day and time that the dry, dead bones have come to life again.

There will always be those who will say that there is no hope, there is no future. The bones are dead. **There is, in fact no death.** Science teaches that if we can take just one microscopic cell from a dry dead bone, we can resurrect, we can create anew. In the creation story, what do we make of the statement that woman was created from a bone?

Even as G-d can, does and will resurrect the dead, we too can bring renewed life to many things in life. With the Almighty, all things are possible. A marriage believed to be over often can be resurrected. An individual suffering from severe physical or mental illness can be restored - dead bones can live again. This is an important lesson we learn from the Book of Ezekiel. It's a law of the universe. What has died can live again, and does. But even if we are being attacked and persecuted, or facing personal hardships, even if it looks like the end and there is no hope, Ezekiel said that there is a future for us and we will continue to live and even thrive.

As Ezekiel in the 6th century B,C,E, emphasized the certainty of revival for the Jewish People; Isaiah much earlier emphasized the means by which that survival would come about. Addressing the discouraged Jews of his time and prophesying into the future, (Isaiah 40:27), Isaiah says: "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (40:31). By the gift of faith G-d's people will be transferred from the Valley of Dry Bones to the land that flows with milk and honey because G-d's ways are wondrous even as we learned this in retelling the Passover story. Enslavement is followed by freedom, exile is followed by restoration. The darkness is always followed by the dawn, death is but a transformation to renewed life, bad times are followed by good times, tears are followed by joy, punishment is followed by reward. Purging of the soul is followed by Heaven. The dead bones can, do and will live again.

With all good wishes for ever-renewed life, for a joyous and productive summer, I am,
Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Gerald .M. Solomon

YOM HAZIKARON

Every country has its day of remembrance, and Israel - whose creation and survival as a state has been marked by so many losses - decided to designate the day preceding Yom Ha'atzmaut, Independence Day, as its day of commemoration for the fallen. On this day, we recall and mark the pain of our recent and not so recent losses in public and in private.

The term "Yom Ha'Zikaron" originates in another name for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish year marked by repentance, fasting and prayer. As each individual reviews his or her own deeds, the community is engaged in an act of collective remembrance, hoping also to be inscribed for a good year in the year to come.

The Jewish people is a people of collective memory: "Remember the Act of Creation", "Remember the Exodus from Egypt". In each generation, we retain the memories and the link to those alive who carry them. Today, we are coming to the end of one era, when the generation who survived the Shoah (Holocaust) and saw the establishment of the Jewish state is disappearing. With them, will go the personal memory and these crucial events will become part of the collective memory, whose meaning will continue to be interpreted in the context of the continuity of Jewish life and community.

In Jewish thought, each life is a world of its own and considered to be of inestimable value: in modern Israel, the untimely death of one loved person is a tragedy which marks the entire community. Indeed, there is hardly a family or friendship unmarked by loss as the population is so small that the seemingly modest numbers for each war assume tremendous proportions. As much as an individual act, this is also a collective act, rather than a formal gathering.

The ceremonies are simple on the eve of Yom Ha'zikaron and are not forgotten as we conclude the day the following night and merge into the festivities of Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Originally and essentially designated to commemorate the loss of those men and women who fought and were killed in the IDF, Israel's armed forces, the day has now also been accepted as the appropriate moment to bring together families and friends and official recognition of all those who lost their lives under any form of attack, including acts of terror.

As we are thankful for our years of independence, we carry with us the memory of those who helped make it possible and those who fell in their innocence because this was their dream.

ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

Every year on the fifth of Iyar, Israel celebrates Israeli Independence Day to commemorate the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. All over Israel there are parties and parades, and in the United States celebrations have included concerts, fairs, and film showings. Yom Ha'atzmaut comes after the close of Yom Ha'zikaron, which is a day of remembrance and mourning for those who died fighting for the state. After the somber candle-lightings, psalm recitations, and grave-site visits of Yom Ha'zikaron, the mood changes from sorrow to celebration with the onset of Yom Ha'atzmaut. The religious establishment has developed and introduced liturgical rituals in recognition of Yom Ha'atzmaut. These include readings of Psalms 98 and 100 or Psalms 107, 97, and 98 and the chanting of Maariv in the evening. Some congregations recite Hallel at night, and Shir Ha-ma'alot (Psalm 126) is sung to the melody of Hatikvah. A festive meal with singing and lighting of candles follows. The next day, some congregations read three aliyot from Deuteronomy 7:12-8:18, followed by a Haftorah of Isaiah 10:32-12:6. The prayer for the state is then recited. The traditional greeting of the day is *Moadim le-simhah* ("Have a happy festival") with a response of *Le-geulah sheleimah* ("Toward a complete redemption"). Yom Ha'atzmaut offers a rich opportunity for creating individualized services, particularly by drawing upon the Book of Psalms and the prophets, and general readings or meditations on the themes of Zion and Israel. Modern Israeli poets have also provided a great deal of wonderful material on the subject of Israel.

Yom Ha'atzmaut also offers ample opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the state of Israel and the concept of the return of the Jewish people to their homeland. The holiday raises important issues concerning the Diaspora and its relation to Israel; the significance of nationalism and how it should be practiced so that it does not represent a form of idolatry, as some critics have cautioned; and the kinds of symbolism that are meaningful and appropriate in acknowledgment and celebration of the state.



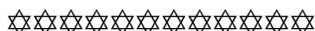
SEFIRAH

What are the Sefirah days?

During the Temple days, the Israelites brought an Omer (name of a measure) of barley to the Temple on the 2nd Day of Passover. The Jews celebrated the barley harvest with this offering of thanks. The Torah commands that we count the days beginning with the 2nd day of Passover until the 50th day (seven full weeks) when we celebrate the holiday of "Shavuot" (Pentecost, which means the 50th). These days are called Sefirah (counting of the Omer).

Why are the Sefirah days considered sad days?

During the Roman War with the Jews in Israel and during the Crusades of the 11th century in Europe, these days were especially troublesome and full of sorrow. Thousands of Jews were killed by the enemy. Another reason for mourning is said to be the sorrowful period in which many of Rabbi Akiva's pupils died as a result of an epidemic. We commemorate these days by refraining from joyous celebrations, such as weddings, concerts, etc.



LAG B'OMER

Lag B'OMER means "the 33rd day of the (counting of the) Omer. This day is observed as a day of rejoicing because on this day, the students of Rabbi Akiva did not die. We therefore are permitted on that day to take haircuts, listen to music, hold weddings, etc., because the signs of mourning which we have been observing are not necessary on this day of great happiness.

Lag B'omer, the 18th day of Iyar, also corresponds to the date of the death of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, one of the great sages from the era of the Mishna. Although the death of a great sage is usually not marked with rejoicing, but rather with sadness, we treat Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai differently. The Zohar in Parshas Ha'azinu tells us that on the day Rabbi Shimon passed away, a great light of endless joy filled the day because of the secret wisdom he revealed to his students. That secret wisdom was written down and recorded in the holy Zohar. The happiness on that day was to him and his students like that of a groom while standing under the canopy at his wedding.

On that day, the sun did not set until Rabbi Shimon had revealed all that he was permitted to. As soon as he was done, the sun set, and his soul returned to its Maker. Because of the happiness back then, we celebrate with happiness now, as well.

In Israel, people flock to the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the city of Meron. There is dancing, singing, and bon-fires are lit. Many people wait until their son is three before cutting his hair, and on the Lag B'Omer of his third year, they cut the boy's hair. There is also a custom that children play with bows ("keshet" in Hebrew) on Lag B'Omer. A reason given for this is that in all the days of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's life, a rainbow was never seen. A rainbow is a sign that the world was due for a flood of the proportion of that in Noach's time. In the merit of Rabbi Shimon, the world was never deserving of such punishment in his generation, and the appearance of a rainbow was never necessary. Therefore, children play with bows, which in Hebrew share the same word as rainbow.



A PRAYER FOR ISRAEL

May 14th is the secular date of the 68th anniversary of Israel's statehood. It behooves us at this time to offer our continued love and support to both Israel and the United States as well as our talents to encourage our families and friends, our neighbors, and our leaders to do their share in seeing to it that the relationship between Israel and the United States does not deteriorate any further. It must be stopped in its derailment tracks and reversed. It must be put back on its rightful tracks and returned to its former mutually enriching, qualitative relationship.

For American Jews, celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut has been a way to express solidarity with the state of Israel and to strengthen their alliance with it. In many communities, it is one of few occasions in which Jewish organizations and synagogues of different ideologies and denominations cooperate in forming a common celebration. Let us show our love and support for Israel at this time by celebrating its 68th anniversary even as we affirm our devotion to our beloved America.

A PRAYER FOR ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES (PLEASE SAY)

"Our Father in Heaven, Protector and Redeemer of Israel, as we observe the 68th anniversary of the State of Israel's independence, we ask that you bless the State of Israel which marks the dawn of our deliverance. Shield it beneath the wings of Your love. Spread over it Your canopy of peace; send Your light and Your truth to its leaders, officers, and counselors, and direct them with Your good counsel.

O G-d, strengthen the defenders of our HOLY LAND. Grant them salvation and crown them with victory. Establish peace in the land, and everlasting joy for its inhabitants.

Remember our brothers and sisters, the whole house of Israel, in all the lands of their dispersion. Speedily let them walk upright to Zion, Your city, to Jerusalem Your dwelling-place, as it is written in the Torah of Your servant Moses: 'Even if you are dispersed in the uttermost parts of the world, from there the Lord your G-d will gather and fetch you. The L-rd your G-d will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it.'

Unite our heart to love and revere Your Name, and to observe all the precepts of Your Torah. Shine forth in Your glorious majesty over all the inhabitants of Your world. Let everything that breathes proclaim: The L-rd G-d of Israel is King; His majesty rules over all." Amen.

"May He Who granted victory to kings and dominion to princes, His kingdom is a kingdom of all ages; He Who delivered His servant David from the evil sword, He Who opened a road through the sea, a path amid the mighty waters - may He bless and protect, help and exalt **THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT AND ALL THE OFFICERS OF THIS COUNTRY**

May the Supreme King of kings, in His mercy, sustain them and deliver them from all distress and misfortune. May the Supreme King of kings, in His mercy, inspire them and all their counselors and aides to deal kindly with us and with all Israel. In their days and in our days Judah shall be saved, Israel shall dwell in security, and a redeemer shall come to Zion. May this be the will of God; and let us say AMEN.

YOM YERUSHALAYIM WHAT IS YOM YERUSHALAYIM AND WHEN DO WE CELEBRATE IT?

Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day, also known as Jerusalem Unification Day falls on 28th of Iyar, this year corresponding to Sunday, June 5th. It commemorates what is, in our era, without doubt the most noble moment in the historic love between Jews and Jerusalem: the liberation of the Old City of Jerusalem and the reunification of all Jerusalem during the Six Day War, on the 28th of Iyar 5727.

The State of Israel - The Early Days - A Remembrance

The birth of the State of Israel is, historically, one of the most remarkable events not only in Jewish history but world history. As all events in Jewish history, it has great religious overtones, in addition to its enormous psychological and sociological overtones. Even so, at this juncture it is very difficult to assess it properly in its full perspective; aspects of it have not yet clearly been settled.

All the events leading up to the state – e.g. the Partition Plan, the beginning of the war in December 1947, retaliations by the Stern Gang, Irgun and Hagannah – came to a head in the spring of 1948 when it became apparent that England was going to leave and its departure was going to result in chaos and a vacuum of leadership. The Jews would have to fend for themselves. It also became very evident that the surrounding Arab countries fully intended to invade Palestine and destroy the Jewish population.

Within three years of the Holocaust in Europe, the Jewish people faced the prospect of another holocaust. It had the potential to be such an aftershock that there would be no telling what the accumulated effect would have wrought.

The Jews took up the struggle with a great deal of heroism, not to mention a great deal of help from Jews abroad. Jewish soldiers who served in the European theater joined their brothers in Palestine. Jewish businessmen in the United States arranged to bring weapons to Israel illegally. Many of them ended up sitting in jail for violating the neutrality and embargo laws. There was a sense of urgency. It was a ‘do or die’ attitude.

The day before the state was proclaimed, the Etzion bloc, which consisted of four kibbutzim, fell to the local militia and Jordanian army. Almost all the Jewish males were killed and a great many of their bodies mutilated. When they fell, it was not only a military defeat, but a psychological one.

At the same time, the Jews were also driven out of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Jordanian army took civilians as prisoners and destroyed all 42 of the synagogues in the Old City, including the one purchased by Nachmanides in 1270. The great Hurva Synagogue was made into a way station for donkeys, until it simply collapsed. All of the houses of prayer and learning that had been so infused with Jewish life and Jewish warmth fell to the marauding invaders.

Even with all that, the thing that remains most indelibly marked on the memories of those who lived through this time was the announcement of the declaration of the state. The emotions of even simple non-religious and non-Zionistic Jews stirred like never before in their lives. Even non-Jews were caught up in the euphoria: the non-Jewish mayor of Chicago wept at a public event, bowled over with emotion when he recognized the historical moment he was experiencing.

The Invasion

However, as Jews the world over acknowledged the magnitude of the event, they shuddered from the dangers that abounded. No one knew what the future would bring.

During the broadcast proclaiming the new Jewish state one heard Egyptian bombers in the background bombing Tel Aviv. On that day five major Arab armies invaded: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Saudi Arabia also sent a token brigade. Facing them was a handful of defenders. Ben Gurion wrote that they had only 35,000 people mobilized. They initially had no heavy machine guns, artillery, armored vehicles, anti-tank or anti-aircraft weapons, nor military aircraft or tanks.

The Arabs, on the other hand, were led by the Arab Legion, which was a British-trained and British-officered army. It was the best army in the Middle East and commanded by an Englishman, Sir John Bagot Glubb, known as Glubb Pasha. Jerusalem had been under siege for many months and its main road had been cut off by the Arab Legion, making it impossible for Jewish forces to get to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv.

As the Jordanians choked Jerusalem, the Egyptian army advanced north. They hoped to capture Jerusalem themselves, as well as Tel Aviv, thereby winning the war. Almost as much as the Egyptians wanted the Jews out of the country, they wanted King Abdullah of Jordan out of the country.

The Egyptians came north in two prongs. One headed toward Beersheba, which was on the path to Jerusalem. They were supposed to coordinate their efforts with the Arab Legion. Had they done so, the Egyptians almost certainly could have broken through. However, the Jordanians and Egyptians did not cooperate with each other, and the Egyptian army was stopped five miles south of Jerusalem.

The other Egyptian prong broke off at the Gaza Strip and attacked north along the coast toward Tel Aviv. They had enough men and were well equipped, but they, too, fell short of their objectives. One reason was corruption. It started at the top with the king of Egypt, Farouk, who in addition to being a serial pedophile was also an arms dealer that sold faulty weapons to his own army. Every third Egyptian gun failed to fire; every other Egyptian bullet did not have enough powder in it. This war would be the end of Farouk in Egypt once it was revealed that he sold out his own army to make a profit.

Round Two

By the end of June, the Arab offensive had run out of steam. It was then that the Security Council of the United Nations

called for a cease fire. The Israelis also agreed to it because they had used up virtually all their ammunition. The United Nations appointed a mediator, a Swedish count, by the name of Folke Bernadotte. During the war, he and other members of the Swedish royal family had helped save Jews from Hitler. When he arrived, he was assassinated by members of the Stern Gang. As a result, the mediation collapsed. Both sides prepared for a second round of fighting. There was no place in the world for Israel to buy modern arms. They were under embargo throughout the West, including the United States, France and Britain. The only option they had was to turn to the Soviet Union. Incredibly, the Soviets permitted the Israelis to buy arms from a manufacturer in Czechoslovakia, one of the largest armament companies in the world. They were able to buy old Messerschmitt planes, B-17 bombers, mortars, anti-tank guns, ammunition, etc. All this was acquired during the cease fire – a brief period of less than 30 days. The second round of fighting began on July 8, 1948. The Arabs were hopeful, but within two weeks they realized that they were about to suffer a complete and total defeat. The Israeli army was on the offensive on all fronts. The Israelis even had the temerity to invade the Sinai. When they captured Eilat, Ben Gurion received a letter from the British, he records in his memoirs, saying that if he did not stop they would intervene. It would take a number of years before the relationship between Israel and Great Britain would warm up again. The only Arab army not defeated was the Jordanian Arab Legion. Other than that, the entire ring around the Jews dissolved. Realizing they had no choice, the Arabs sued for peace.

The Arab Refugee Problem

The Arab population had long been propagandized by Arab leaders that the combined might of the Arab armies would drive the Jews into the sea. If, the Arab leaders told their fellow Arabs, they moved out of the war zone to safety then they could return to take all the loot and new homes they wanted after the Jews were annihilated. Thus began the Arab refugee problem. Hundreds of thousands of Arabs fled. Some fled with Israeli encouragement, but the basic encouragement came from fellow Arabs. When they arrived among their brethren they were not treated as welcomed guests. They were instead assigned terrible living conditions, and became wards of the United Nations. With Israel having successfully repelled the armies of the Arab states that attempted to destroy it, the anger, humiliation and frustration of the Arab masses was violently vented against the Jews of Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. In a chilling description of the atrocities perpetrated against the Jews of those countries, Sir Martin Gilbert (In Ishmael's House) details the full horror of those developments. As he wryly notes there were 726,000 Arab refugees from Palestine after the War of Independence while there were 850,000 Jewish refugees from Arab lands. The difference in the world's treatment of these different groups of refugees is startling and disheartening.

Fire, Flame and Blood

Dr. Ralph Bunche, who later would win the Nobel Prize, was appointed by the United Nations to mediate. He negotiated armistice agreements between each of the individual Arab nations and the State of Israel. From the Jewish point of view, if the agreements were imperfect and the borders established indefensible, at least there was a Jewish state. They had triumphed. The State of Israel came into being – however, at a great cost. The Jews suffered over 6,000 losses – 1% of the population – the equivalent of three million Americans.

The problems of the new country were enormous – but it existed. In fire, flame and blood Israel had survived. And this triumph created a new focal point in Jewish history, one which we are still in the midst of.

(Berel Wein adapted by Yaakov Astor)

Israel Acts as a Strategic Partner to America - Yoram Ettinger (in Focus Quarterly-Jewish Policy Center)

*The annual U.S. investment in Israel - erroneously defined as "foreign aid" - has yielded one of the highest rates of return on U.S. investments overseas. At a time when the Pentagon is experiencing draconian cuts in its defense budget, Israel has been the most cost-effective laboratory for U.S. defense industries, sharing with the U.S. unique intelligence, battle experience, and battle tactics.

*Israel's Air Force, which flies American-made aircraft, shares with the U.S. Air Force and U.S. manufacturers real-time, daily operational maintenance and repair lessons derived from Israel's daily battle experience. For example, the plant manager of General Dynamics/Lockheed Martin, which manufactures the F-16, asserted that Israeli lessons have spared the manufacturer 10-20 years of R&D, leading to over 700 modifications in the current generation of the F-16, "valued at a mega-billion dollar bonanza to the manufacturer."

*Similar lessons have been shared with the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps and the U.S. manufacturers of tanks, armored personnel carriers, missile launchers, missiles, night navigation systems, and hundreds of additional military and homeland security systems manufactured by the U.S. and utilized by Israel.

(Continued on page 13)



SHAVUOT

The Festival of Shavuot or "Weeks," is one of the Shalosh Regalim (Exodus 23:14); one of the three main pilgrimage festivals. It comes at the end of the seven-times-seven (a "week of weeks") cycle of the Omer, which begins on the second day of Pesach. This year Shavuot begins on Saturday evening, June 11th. Candle lighting (from pre-existing flame) is 9:17P.M.

The Festival of Shavuot is somewhat unusual. Not only is it not assigned to a specific date, but there is no real explanation given in Torah as to the meaning of the day, nor how it is to be observed ritually. In Biblical times, the period of counting seven weeks marked the transition from the very first

grain crop (barley) of early spring (at Pesach) to the beginning of the summer grain (wheat) harvest (at Shavuot). Thus names for Shavuot given in the Torah are Chag Ha-Katzir - the Festival of the Harvest - and Chag Ha-Bikkurim - the Festival of the First Fruits (Cf. Exodus 23:14-19;

Leviticus 23:9-22). The day is identified as a holy occasion to be observed as a Sabbath, and specific sacrificial offerings are to be brought to the Temple. But beyond that, there is no special ritual prescribed.

These agricultural origins of Shavuot probably sufficed for the agrarian society of ancient Israel while they lived in the promised land. But they didn't really allow for a meaningful holiday for Jews once they were outside the Land of Israel, where farming was on a different cycle and there was no Temple to which one could bring the seasonal offerings. In exile, Jews were left with a commanded festival with no apparent meaning. But tradition abhors a vacuum. So what inherent meaning could be found for Shavuot?

The meaning of Shavuot became apparent after considering the relationship of Shavuot with Pesach and Sukkot. All are Biblically ordained festivals. All have an agricultural connection, assigned to a specific harvest season. But Pesach and Sukkot both have historical associations as well. Pesach commemorates the Exodus and the liberation from Egyptian bondage. Sukkot, and the dwelling in the Sukkah, recall the Israelite's experience while wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. So, our sages opined that Shavuot must fit into this paradigm as well. But how? Well, 50 days after leaving Egypt, and before they set out to wander in the desert, the Israelites found themselves camped out at the base of Mt. Sinai, awaiting the revelation of God's teachings. And so, in this historical sequence, Shavuot naturally became associated with an extraordinary and significant event: the revelation of the Torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai. While Shavuot had no 'historical' event associated with it in the Torah, and the event of Revelation had no holiday to mark it, it was a perfect match. Conveniently, since Revelation and Shavuot both do not have an actual date in the Torah, the Rabbis were able to determine that Revelation coincides with Shavuot. The Rabbis had a vested interest in this transformation as well. They saw themselves as the legitimate heirs to the Temple and priestly leadership. Instead of sacrifices, Torah learning must be at the center. How could there not be a holiday to acknowledge the giving of the Torah?

The sages came to refer to Shavuot as "**Z'man Matan Toratenu**"- "**The Time of the Giving of our Torah.**" As the anniversary of revelation, Shavuot evolved into a celebration of Torah. In the synagogue, the account of the revelation at Sinai and the Ten Commandments are read as part of the service. Among Ashkenazic Jews, a custom also developed associating the Megilat Ruth- the Book of Ruth with Shavuot. There are a number of links that make this an appropriate text. Particularly, the setting of the story is at the harvest time, and Ruth's conversion to Judaism is seen as analogous to the Israelite's acceptance of the covenant at Sinai. In addition, King David, who tradition teaches was born and died on Shavuot, is identified in the book as being descended from Ruth.

Another popular custom, which originated with the Jewish mystics in Safed in the sixteenth century, is the practise of staying up all through the night of Shavuot studying Torah. This practice, called Tikkun Leil Shavuot is based on a Midrash that explains that the Israelites slept late on the morning of the revelation at Sinai, and thus almost missed the giving of Torah. By staying up all night, we atone for this lapse of our ancestors, and demonstrate our appreciation of revelation and our eagerness to recommit ourselves again and again to Torah.

Rituals and Customs

There is a custom on Shavuot to eat dairy foods, such as cheese blintzes. This custom is of uncertain origin; perhaps it is an ancient echo of the agricultural seasons when in the early summer the calves and kids would be old enough to wean, so there would be plenty of milk for the farmers. Another explanation suggests that Torah is like milk and honey (see Song of Songs 4:11). Another theory suggests that prior to the Revelation on Shavuot, the consumption of meat would have been inappropriate because of the laws of kashrut which were to be given in the Shavuot Revelation of the Torah. There is a beautiful Sephardic custom of erecting a Chuppa (bridal canopy) over the lectern on which Torah is read on

Shavuot and honoring recently married couples. The custom extends from the notion that Shavuot is like a wedding between God (the groom) and Israel (the bride), with Torah serving as the Ketubah- (marriage contract). Special Shavuot ketubot are also written and read.

Other customs include decorating the synagogue for Shavuot with flowers and green plants, again echoing the ancient holiday of the “first fruits,” and “Confirmation,” a relatively new ritual (only a hundred years or so) through which teenagers are given the opportunity are given the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to Jewish life and living.

It has often been asked why Shavuot is known as "The Season of the of Our Torah," when perhaps it's more important for us as Jews to recall that not only did G-d give Torah to Israel, but that we freely accepted and committed ourselves to it. Shavuot, then, becomes not only Z'man Matan Toratenu - the time of the giving of our Torah, but also Z'man Kabbalat Toratenu - the time of the of our Torah. The giving of Torah is an historical event, that happened just once. But the acceptance of Torah by individual Jews is a continual process that happens every day, anytime a Jew makes a decision based on Jewish values, wholeheartedly recites a Jewish prayer, or makes a conscious effort to better the world. Each and every experience of our lives provides us with a new context to learn and understand Torah and put it into action in our lives. This is referred to as progressive revelation. We were given Torah just once, thus allowing for this yearly anniversary of Shavuot. But we “accept” Torah continually, allowing us to live a renewed Jewish life every day.

THE JUXTAPOSITION OF MEMORIAL AND INDEPENDENCE DAY IN ISRAEL

Ron Jager

The weeks following Pesach are always an emotionally charged period in Israel. From celebrating the redemption of the Jewish nation during Pesach, we move on to Yom Hashoah, the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day. We then move on to Yom Hazikaron when Israelis pay tribute to the country’s fallen soldiers in a solemn day of mourning. On this official Memorial Day, Israel also mourns the loss of civilians who were killed as a result of terrorism.

For many of us in Israel, this time period encompasses the price that we pay for being Jews, then and now. We in Israel are defending and dying on the front lines on behalf of every Jew in the world. To date approximately 24,000 soldiers have died since the establishment of the State of Israel. On this day, we commemorate each and every one of them. We witness how a whole country ceases its work, freezes and remembers those who have given their life to defend Israel. Yet, that very evening, as the sun begins to set once again, the country undergoes a transformation. The streets are suddenly filled with people celebrating *Yom Haatzmaut*, Israel’s Independence Day. The celebrations continue into the next day. Making this switch so suddenly has always seem to me as odd. Have we forgotten that but moments before, our hearts were heavy with grief for the family and friends that we lost, and continue to lose every year?

Yom Hazikaron and *Yom Haatzmaut* are purposely back-to-back for a purpose. The celebrations of Independence Day (*Yom Haatzmaut*) are incomplete by themselves. We celebrate these two events with the acute awareness that without the incredible sacrifice of those we have lost, there would be no State of Israel. *Yom Hazikaron* gives our *Yom Haatzmaut* meaning and perspective. We are forced to confront and remember the terrible price we have had to pay for our existence as a Jewish state, and because of this price, we value that freedom all the more intensely.

Yom Haatzmaut gives *Yom Hashoah* a greater meaning than ever before. We in Israel are defending and dying on the front lines on behalf of every Jew in the world. For the Jews of the diaspora, Israel has become a very real safe haven for every Jew to escape to and call home, only because he is a Jew. This is the very opposite of the not-so-distant past when entrance to a safe haven was denied only because one was a Jew. Unfortunately, historical events as earth-shattering and history-ending as they seem at the time can eventually fade from the forefront of public consciousness and become memory.

When Holocaust survivors will no longer be around, and when there is no more opportunity to let children and educators hear firsthand testimony of the Holocaust, will the Holocaust be just another event studied in world history classes? With all of the effort that has gone into recording testimonies of the Holocaust be enough to preserve historical memory in terms of the magnitude and uniqueness of the Holocaust? At the recent ceremony at the Yad Vashem Memorial, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke passionately about the failure of today’s democracies to learn the lessons of the Holocaust. In doing so, he directly compared appeasement of the Nazis with contemporary efforts to engage Iran and its nuclear threat via diplomacy.

However, it is likely that much of what passes for liberal and enlightened opinion in both Europe and the United States will dismiss these analogies between the Shoah and the modern day existential threat that Iran poses for the future security of the State of Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu is absolutely right when he points out that talk about the horrors of the Holocaust and vowing “never again” is meaningless when it is bound by policies that essentially empower those who not only deny the reality of the Shoah but also seek the means to perpetrate a new one.

Iran is not Germany, but on a day when the lessons of history should be uppermost in our minds, the burden of proof lies with those defending appeasement of a government that seeks to complete the work Hitler started, not with those lamenting this disgraceful attempt to make a devil’s bargain with a violent hate-filled theocratic regime. We are unable to escape the modern day interconnectedness between *Yom Hashoah*, *Yom Hazikaron*, and *Yom Haatzmaut*.

In Israel, Jews are a sovereign power and enjoy the dignity of Jewish self-government: they are keepers of their own land, speakers of their own language, shapers of their own national destiny. The old-world problems of the Jews—living in segregated conditions, burdened by humiliating legal restrictions, often impoverished and dispirited—are no longer Jewish problems in the modern State of Israel.

The message of the Passover Haggada, the event that began this period of *Yom Hazikaron* and *Yom Haatzmaut* is that there are no shortcuts to freedom. To gain and keep it, you have to be willing to fight for it. You must be will to make the ultimate sacrifice.

As Eric Cohen has recently written: “In this light, the sheer existence of modern Israel is an incredible fact and to some nothing short of a miracle. That from a few fragile settlements, and out of the ashes of the Holocaust, it has in only a few decades become the center of the Jewish people is one of the greatest political achievements in human history. This new Jewish civilization has created a permanent fighting force to defend itself. It survives through military strength, but hardly through that alone. Its real strength resides in the spirit of its people, one of the most optimistic, enterprising, and resilient citizenries on earth.”

ISRAEL DENIERS

According to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the second most serious threat to Israel, after the Iranian nuclear program, is the global campaign to delegitimize Israel. For the last several years, individuals and organizations have joined the Israeli government in responding to this danger. In doing so, however, they have largely been on the defensive, constantly forced to define delegitimization and mocked when its proponents are accused of anti-Semitism. It is time to adopt a more accurate and utilitarian term for the people seeking Israel’s destruction by means of boycotts, divestment, sanctions (BDS) and other political, economic and cultural measures – “Israel Deniers.”

Anyone who has spent any time listening to the BDS proponents or reading their propaganda can see that they have no interest in peace, a two-state solution or changing Israeli policy. They have one overriding interest – to deny Israel the right to exist.

On campus, students who care about human rights and sympathize with the plight of the Palestinians are often deceived by Israel Deniers who spin a tale about the evil Israelis persecuting the saintly Palestinians. They don’t explain how any of their efforts will benefit the Palestinians or acknowledge the role the Palestinians have played in making their own beds.

The rank hypocrisy of the Israel Deniers starts with BDS leader Omar Barghouti who trots around the world screaming about Israeli injustice and calling for academic boycotts against Israeli universities and other punitive measures before returning home to pursue a graduate degree at Al-Quds University. No, that’s not it. Birzeit University. No, that’s not it either. Wait for it: Barghouti was a student at Tel Aviv University. Yes, Barghouti enjoys all the freedoms Israel has to offer, and received a world-class education from a school he wants everyone around the world to boycott.

The more fundamental double-standard employed by the delegitimizers is to insist that Palestinians have a right to self-determination, but that the Jewish people do not. They could not be more transparent: Jews have no right to a state; therefore, Israel has no right to exist.

Are Jews ineligible for statehood because the deniers do not believe they are a people? Are Jews disqualified from independence because of their treatment of Palestinians in the disputed territories? The response to the first question is that no one has the right to define the Jewish people except the Jews themselves. The Palestinians don’t accept the idea that others have a right to decide whether they are entitled to self-determination. The answer to the second question is that

few, if any, countries in the world would be eligible for statehood if they were judged by their treatment of minorities or people they defeated in war. The fact that Israel is imperfect does not mean it has no right to exist. The Israel Deniers also conceal the radical Islamic agenda behind their rejection of Israel. The conflict in the Middle East is not based on the cliché of two peoples fighting over one land. The conflict, at heart, is neither political nor geographical; it is religious. Radical Islamists, perhaps the most rabid Israel Deniers, plainly state their objection to a Jewish state in "Palestine" or anywhere else in the Middle East: Jews cannot have sovereignty over any land in the Islamic heartland and it is inconceivable that they should rule over Muslims. Israel, for them, is a cancer that must be excised. Inevitably, some will ask if Israelis or other Jews who call for a selected boycott of Ariel or goods in the West Bank are Israel Deniers. Clearly not. With perhaps a few exceptions, these are people who do not challenge Israel's right to exist, only the wisdom of the government's policy toward the disputed territories. Nevertheless, these well-meaning individuals play into the hands of the Israel Deniers who use them to justify their own calls for boycotts. Forget the terms delegitimization (it's too hard to say anyway) and anti-Semitism when discussing the international campaign to turn Israel into a pariah. The correct term to use for the BDS crowd is "Israel Deniers" and they should be treated with the same contempt as Holocaust Deniers. *(The Blogs - Mitchel Bard - The Times of Israel)*

Anti-Zionism Is Indeed a Form of Anti-Semitism

Andres Spokoiny (Ha'aretz)

*Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. It holds that Jews, like any other people, have the right to national self-determination.

*Denying that right to Jews, and only to Jews, can't be called anything other than anti-Semitism. Anti-Zionism isn't directed at any other national movement but that of the Jews.

*Most anti-Zionists wholeheartedly embrace other national movements, or at least fail to condemn the existence of any nation state other than Israel. Most notably, anti-Zionists often champion Palestinian national aspirations, but the stark double standard seems to escape them.

*Zionism restored freedom and dignity to a people oppressed for two millennia. Zionism is profoundly liberal and democratic.

*It was rooted in Jewish humanistic principles and in progressive ideas of 19th century national democrats like the Italian Giuseppe Massini, who understood that true democracy and freedom can only take place in the context of a sovereign national state.

*The Zionist movement's creation of the modern State of Israel was, and is, a triumph for human rights.

(The writer is President and CEO of the Jewish Funders Network).

(Continued from page 9)

Israel Acts...)

*According to Gen. George Keegan, a former U.S. Air Force intelligence chief, the value of intelligence shared by Israel with the U.S. - exposing the air capabilities of adversaries, their new military systems, electronics, and jamming devices - "could not be procured with five CIAs....The ability of the U.S. Air Force in particular, and the Army in general, to defend whatever position it has in NATO owes more to Israeli intelligence input than it does to any other single source of intelligence."

*In 2014, Gen. (ret.) Chuck Krulak, former Commandant, USMC, stated: "The U.S. battle tactics formulation at Fort Leavenworth, KS - the intellectual Mecca of the U.S. Army - is based on the Israeli book."

*Recently, Israel's Air Force developed a groundbreaking method of identifying, repairing, and preempting cracks in old combat planes, such as the F-16, using ultrasound machines, and promptly shared that information with the U.S. Air Force and the manufacturer. Instead of grounding planes for six months and preoccupying hundreds of mechanics, the Israeli-developed system requires two weeks and only a few mechanics, yielding significant economic and national security benefits.

*Israel is the only stable, reliable, predictable, capable, democratic, and unconditional ally of the U.S. Israel constitutes a critical obstacle to Islamic imperialism, enhancing the security of the U.S. and its Arab allies. Unlike Europe, Israel is able and willing to flex its muscles. Thus, Israel acts as a special strategic partner to America.

MAY, 2016

NISAN/IYAR, 5776

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">On-Going Low-impact Exercise Class Tuesdays !!:00-Noon</div>	<i>4</i> Rabbi's Class "Jewish Women who Made History" 10:30-noon	<i>5</i> Yom Hashoah	<i>6</i>  7:38	<i>7</i> ^{29 Nisan} Acharai Ends 8:48
<i>8</i> ^{30 Nisan} Rosh Chodesh	<i>9</i> ^{1 Iyar} Rosh Chodesh	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i> Yom Hazikaron Rabbi's Class "Jewish Women who Made History" 10:30-noon	<i>12</i> Yom Hatzmaut Sisterhood Luncheon 12:30 PM	<i>13</i>  7:45	<i>14</i> ^{6 Iyar} Kedoshim Ends 8:54
<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i> Rabbi's Class "Jewish Women who Made History" 10:30-noon	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>  7:52	<i>21</i> ^{13 Iyar} Emor Ends 9:01
<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i> Rabbi's Class "Jewish Women who Made History" 10:30-noon	<i>26</i> Lag BaOmer Book Club "Go Set a Watchman" 10:30 AM	<i>27</i>  7:58	<i>28</i> ^{20 Iyar} Behar Ends 9:07
<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>				

JUNE, 2016

IYAR/SIVAN, 5776

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		On-Going Low-impact Exercise Class Tuesdays 11:00-Noon	<i>1</i> Rabbi's Class "Jewish Women who Made History" 10:30-noon	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>  8:04	<i>4</i> <i>27 Iyar</i> Bechutokai Ends 9:12
<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i> <i>1 Sivan</i> Rosh Chodeash	<i>8</i> Rabbi's Class "Jewish Women who Made History" 10:30-noon	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>  8:08	<i>11</i> <i>5 Sivan</i> Bamidbar Erev Shavuoth  9:17
<i>12</i> Shavouth  9:17	<i>13</i> Shavouth Yizkor Ends 9:17	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>  8:11	<i>18</i> <i>12 Sivan</i> Naso Ends 9:19
<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> Sisterhood Meeting & Luncheon 12 noon	<i>24</i>  8:12	<i>25</i> <i>19 Sivan</i> B'haalotecha Ends 9:21
<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i> Book Club 10:30 AM		