



Flushing-Fresh Meadows Jewish Center
 193-10 Peck Avenue ✦ Flushing, New York 11365 (718) 357-5100

THE BULLETIN

May-Jun, 2015
 Vol.13, No.6

Iyar/Sivan, 5775
 Rabbi Gerald M. Solomon
 Cantor Aaron Katz

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR MAY

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR JUNE

Friday, May 1
 Mincha/Maariv.....6:30 P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....7:33 P.M.
Saturday, May 2 - Parashiot Acharei-Kedoshim
 Shabbat Services.....9:00 A.M.
 Shabbat Ends..... 8:43 P.M.

Friday, June 5
 Mincha/Maariv.....6:30P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....8:05P.M.
Saturday, June 6
 Parashat B'haalotecha - Shabbat Services.....9:00A.M.
 Shabbat Ends.....9:14P.M.

Friday, May 8
 Mincha/Maariv.....6:30 P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....7:40 P.M.
Saturday, May 9
 Parashat Emor - Shabbat Services.....9:00 A.M.
 Shabbat Ends.....8:50 P.M.

Friday, June 12
 Mincha/Maariv.....6:30P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....8:09P.M.
Saturday, June 13
 Parashat Shlach
 Shabbat Mevarchim Services.....9:00A.M.
 Shabbat Ends.....9:18P.M.

Friday, May 15
 Mincha/Maariv.....6:30 P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....7:47 P.M.
Saturday, May 16 - Parashiot Behar-Bechukotai
 Shabbat MevarchimServices.....9:00 A.M.
 Shabbat Ends.....8:57 P.M.

Friday, June 19 -
 Mincha/Maariv.....6:30P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....8:11P.M.
Saturday, June 20
 Parashat Korach - Shabbat Services.....9:00A.M.
 Shabbat Ends.....9:20P.M.

Friday, May 22
 Mincha/Maariv.....6:30 P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....7:54 P.M.
Saturday, May 23
 Parashat Bamidbar
 Shabbat Services.....9:00 A.M.

Friday, June 26
 Mincha/Maariv.....6:30P.M.
 Candle Lighting Time.....8:12P.M.
Saturday, June 27
 Parashat Chukat - Shabbat Services.....9:00A.M.
 Shabbat
 Ends.....9:21P.M.

SHAVUOT
Saturday, May 23
 Mincha/Maariv.....TBA
 Erev Shavuot Candle Lighting Time.....9:03P.M.
Sunday, May 24
 First Day Shavuot Festival Services.....9:00A.M.
 Mincha/Maariv.....T.B.A
 Candle Lighting Time.....9:04 P.M.
Monday, May 25
 Second Day Shavuot Festival Services.....9:00A.M.
 Yizkor.....10:45 A.M.
 Festival Ends.....9:05P.M.



CENTER NEWS

THANK YOU

My deepest thanks and appreciation go to the Staff and all our good and loyal friends at the Flushing-Fresh Meadows Jewish Center for their good wishes and the support they showed Jacqueline and me during my recent illness.

-Albert Kimmelstiel

NOTICE

We belatedly report on the death of **Mary Ruth Glucksman** who passed away in Ontario, Canada on April 21, 2014. A former member of Flushing Jewish Center she is survived by three daughters, their husbands and five grandchildren.

MAZEL TOV

Inge Berger on the birth of three great-grandchildren.

Charlotte was born to Michael and Jessica, Samuel was born to David and Dorel and Rose was born to Michael and Hannah.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

A prime function of a Synagogue is to provide Services at the prescribed times and with a minyan so that all the required prayers may be recited according to Jewish Law.

Unfortunately because of dwindling membership it has been extremely difficult to gather a minyan at the important Kabbalat Shabbat Service on Friday night.

Invariably we get 8 or 9 men at the Service and if there is no Minyan present certain prayers cannot be recited and if someone is observing a Yahrzeit, the Kaddish cannot be recited..

An easy solution presents itself.

We ask that you commit yourself one Friday night a month to attend that 45 minute Service which takes place at 6:30 PM.

Please call Zach Levine at 718-428-4120. He will make a list of all who volunteer and a schedule will be drawn up. You will be called in advance when you are scheduled to attend. You will not be called more than on time a month.

It was crisis enough to have had to cancel daily Minyanim; don't let this important Service welcoming the Sabbath fall by the wayside.

COMING UP

Sisterhood Luncheon and Program

Thursday, May 21 at 12 Noon

Featuring

THE BINTEL BRIEF

For details see enclosed flyer

SHAVUOTH DINNER

Sunday, May 24 at 6 PM

For details see enclosed flyer

ADULT INSTITUTE OF FFMJC

Continues with

“G-d, The Jews and History”

Wednesday, May 6 to May 27

10:30AM to 12 Noon

SISTERHOOD

On April 23rd, 56 people celebrated Yom HaAztmaut, with a delicious lunch and enjoyed the singing of Linda Miller. We joined with her in singing and dancing. It is always nice to be with our Center family to party. Thank you to Bette Glasser and Shari Zuber for arranging for this party.

Looking ahead, the next Sisterhood get-together is scheduled for May 21st at 12 noon for lunch followed by a program featuring Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe, an author and lecturer (and comedienne). We will have fun remembering the “Bintel Briefs” from the “Forvotz”.

The exercise class is resuming on Tuesday mornings at 11AM. It is low impact chair exercise and if you have not tried it, come and see how you can benefit from moving your body.

The monthly book club meetings are: May 28th... The Paris Wife by Paula McLain and on June 25th..The Secret Daughter by Shilpa-Sonaya Gowda. All are welcome to come at 10:30 AM.

We look forward to greeting you,

Marilyn Brown and Joan Levine, Co-Presidents



RABBI'S MESSAGE

Relearning The Israel Talks Leadership Statement How We Can Be Our Own Best Friends

The Statement:

The State of Israel, a vibrant democracy dedicated to the equality of all its citizens, embodies the 3,000-year connection of the Jewish people to its homeland. Israel has sparked a renewal of Jewish life both in the State and across the Jewish Diaspora, serves as a refuge for Jews anywhere threatened by anti-Semitism, stands as the international center of Hebrew language and culture, and is host to a new flowering both of a world of Torah learning and a world of extraordinary innovation in technology, science, arts, culture, business and medicine.

For American Jews to engage in active discussion and debate about Israel is healthy and welcome. In fact, it is the best guarantee of an enduring, meaningful relationship between Diaspora Jewry and the State of Israel and the surest antidote to the worrying trends of weakening relationships between these two worlds. We therefore embrace the reality that our community contains a wide range of perspectives on internal Israeli political and social issues, American foreign and domestic policy, religious affairs, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Israel's safety and security and many other issues. And we are proud that our community remains robust enough for all those who are committed to Israel's Jewish and democratic character to take their place within it.

Yet differences of opinion regarding the State of Israel now too often serve as a cause for American Jewish communal discord and even acrimony. When disagreement becomes hostile it frays the bonds of our community. The consequences of such disconnectedness are profound and severe. We must ask ourselves what we can do to listen with more patience, to hear each other and ourselves with greater clarity, and not to impugn the character or motivations of those with whom we disagree.

To that end, we commit ourselves to the following in our engagement with each other about Israel:

- We will see our fellow members of the Jewish community of New York, and of Jewish communities all over the world, as part of *Klal Yisrael*, the family of Israel, with a shared connection to the Jewish people and to Israel.
- We will treat others with decency, honor and resilience, be curious about our differences and cherish what we have in common, even if we agree to disagree with each other.

*We will be mindful of the Jewish teaching *Derekh Eretz Kadmah L'Torah*, that proper conduct precedes the Torah. Respectful speaking and listening are possible even in the midst of a heated exchange of ideas.

The Talmud (Brachot 58a) teaches that "just as people's faces all differ, so do their opinions." Just because we may differ over Israel's course is no reason for Jews to be disrespectful to one another. Committed to our community's vibrancy and diversity, we simply have too much to lose. May our love for Israel unite, rather than divide us.

As we observe the 67th anniversary of the rebirth of our Holy Land of Eretz Yisrael we cannot fail to note that the Jewish people in Israel and around the world have had a very difficult year. Growing anti-Semitism, (a shockingly high total of 766 **violent anti-Semitic attacks** were carried out in 2014 worldwide, representing an increase of 38% over 2013), the constant threat of war with neighbors, the threats of Hezbollah, the ongoing fear of Iran's nuclear capability threatening Israel's annihilation, the fear of sudden attacks by the likes of Isis and lone wolf terrorists lurking in the world's shadows, and now the strained relationship

between our beloved land of America and our beloved land of Israel have left us with great cause for concern.

May this year see a new birth, a rebirth of peaceful pursuits in the land, in our holy land of Israel and a growing quest for peaceful coexistence by all the nations of the Middle East and the world. May they all learn that peace is better than war. May they fulfill at long last the prophecy of Isaiah of beating their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. May we see a true spirit of reconciliation between two friends, America and Israel. May they both see the birth of a new mutual love, admiration and respect.

May the difficulties experienced by Israel and World Jewry at this time be our birth pangs, the prelude to our ultimate joy of giving birth to a new and wonderful world and may our history at last be transformed into the blessing of our God-promised destiny. Amen.

Dear friends, May 14th is the secular date of the 67th 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 but improves with the passage of time.

For American Jews, celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut on the Hebrew date or the secular date, May 14th, 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 67th anniversary in various appropriate ways throughout the year even as we affirm our devotion to our beloved America.

**Best wishes to all for a joyous summer.
Happy 67th Birthday to Israel!
Rabbi Gerald M. Solomon**

**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, May 17th. 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.

LEARNING LESSONS FROM THE HOLOCAUST

In May 1981, a group of young American Jewish leaders asked Prime Minister Begin what he thought were the lessons of the Holocaust. The following was his answer. There is much truth and good guidance in his response.

First, if an enemy of our people says he seeks to destroy us, believe him. Don't doubt him for a moment. Don't make light of it. Do all in your power to deny him the means of carrying out his satanic intent.

Second, when a Jew anywhere is threatened, or under attack, do all in your power to come to his aid. Never pause to wonder what the world will think or say. The world will never pity slaughtered Jews. The world may not necessarily like the fighting Jew, but the world will have to take account of him.

Third, a Jew must learn to defend himself. He must forever be prepared for whenever threat looms.

Fourth, Jewish dignity and honor must be protected in all circumstances. The seeds of Jewish destruction lie in passively enabling the enemy to humiliate us. Only when the enemy succeeds in turning the spirit of the Jew into dust and ashes in life, can he turn the Jew into dust and ashes in death. During the Holocaust it was after the enemy had humiliated the Jews, trampled them underfoot, divided them, deceived them, afflicted them, drove brother against brother, only then could he lead them, almost without resistance, to the gates of Auschwitz. Therefore, at all times and whatever the cost, safeguard the dignity and honor of the Jewish people.

Fifth, stand united in face of the enemy. We Jews love life, for life is holy. But there are things in life more precious than life itself. There are times when one must risk life for the sake of rescuing the lives of others. And when the few risk their own lives for the sake of the many, then they, too, stand the chance of saving themselves.

Sixth, there is a pattern to Jewish history. In our long annals as a nation, we rise, we fall, we return, we are exiled, we are enslaved, we rebel, we liberate ourselves, we are oppressed once more, we rebuild, and again we suffer destruction, climaxing in our own lifetime in the calamity of calamities, the Holocaust, followed by the rebirth of the Jewish State.

So, yes, we have come full circle, and with God's help, with the rebirth of sovereign Israel we have finally broken the historic cycle: no more destruction and no more defeats, and no more oppression – only Jewish liberty, with dignity and honor. These, I believe, are the underlying lessons to be learned from the unspeakable tragedy of the Holocaust.

WHY JERUSALEM MATTERS

by Shraga Simmons

For millennium of exile, Jews always turned toward Jerusalem. What memory were they eager to preserve?

Jerusalem has no strategic significance. It has no commercial or industrial importance, and it is not a cultural center.

How has this ancient city, unimportant as it appears, crept to the heart of contention between Israel and the Palestinians over the future of the land of Israel? Why should we care what happens to Jerusalem?

We need to begin by understanding the importance of memory. Memory isn't history or dead memorabilia. By defining the past memory creates the present. Repression of memory creates mental disease. Health comes from memory's recovery. Dictators consolidate power by altering memory. Stalin airbrushed Trotsky and Bukharin out of photographs. Revisionists deny the Holocaust ever happened. Why does it matter?

In Hebrew, the word for man is "zachar." The word for memory is "zecher." Man is memory. People who suffer memory loss through illness or accident don't just misplace their keys. They lose their selves. They become lost and adrift in time, because without memory, the current moment has no context, and no meaning.

When the Jews were first exiled from Jerusalem, King David said, "If I forget you Jerusalem, let my right hand lose its strength. Let my tongue cling to my palate if I fail to recall you, if I fail to elevate Jerusalem above my highest joy." The memory of Jerusalem somehow is linked to our current vigor as a people. But how? What is the memory of Jerusalem, and what does it contribute to who we are?

London comes from a Celtic word which means "a wild and wooded town." Cairo is an anglicized version of the Arab name for Mars, the Roman god of war. Paris is named for the Paris of Greek myth, who was asked by the gods to choose between love, wisdom, and power. He chose love — the love of Helen of Troy.

The Talmud says Jerusalem was named by God. The name has two parts: Yira, which means "to see," and shalem, which means "peace."

Jerusalem was the place of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, and Abraham said of Jerusalem, "This is the place where God is seen."

Elsewhere, God is a theory, but in Jerusalem, God is seen, and felt, as a tangible presence. In Jerusalem we reach beyond the frailty and vulnerability of our lives, and we sense and strive for transcendence. Elsewhere we grope for insight. In Jerusalem we anticipate clarity. Paris may be for lovers, but Jerusalem is for visionaries.

Jerusalem is a metaphor for a perfected world, and it gives us perspective on our lives. When Aldous Huxley said, "we have each of us our Jerusalem," he meant much more than a temporal city of taxi cabs and traffic jams. He meant a vision of what life might be.

The vision of life's promise is one we surrender at our peril, because it gives us the will to live. In exile for two thousand years Jews said "Next year in Jerusalem," and amidst poverty and oppression they preserved the dream of a world in which love and justice, not power and self-interest, would be the currency men live by.

Part of the name Jerusalem is "vision." The other part of the name is peace, but the peace of Jerusalem is not the absence of strife. Jerusalem has rarely known anything but strife. The peace of Jerusalem is the peace at the center of the spokes of a wheel, where opposing forces may be delicately balanced and reconciled.

The Talmud says that creation began in Jerusalem, and the world radiated outward from this place. Medieval maps show Jerusalem at the epicenter of Asia, Europe, and Africa. The world flows into this spot, and all life's forces resonate here. From this place, the whole world is cast into perspective.

Jerusalem, the center, which gives perspective to the rest of the world. Jerusalem where God is seen. Jerusalem the perfected world. Humanity has long understood that he who controls Jerusalem controls the world's memory. He controls the way God is seen. He controls the way life's forces are cast into perspective. He controls the way we collectively see our future.

Once the Temple Mount was the highest point in the city of Jerusalem, but in the year 135, Roman slaves carried away the dirt of the mountain, and turned it into the valley we now look down on from the Old City. The Romans expelled Jews from Jerusalem and barred them from reentering on pain of death. Jewish life, they proclaimed, has now ended.

The Crusaders rewrote Jerusalem's importance, the center no longer of Jewish national drama, but the site of the passion and death of Jesus. Like the Romans they expelled Jews, and destroyed synagogues.

The Muslims came after, and as those before them rewrote the memory of Jerusalem, expelling Jews and Christian. They systematically built mosques on every Jewish holy site. They airbrushed the past.

In rewriting the history of Jerusalem each of these cultures rewrote our place, the Jewish place, in history. They consigned us, they believed, to the dust bin of history — a once great people, now abandoned by God; bypassed by time. But Jews preserved Jerusalem as a memory. When we built our houses we left a square unplastered, and we broke a glass at weddings in memory of Jerusalem. From all over the world we turned and prayed toward Jerusalem, and because memory was kept alive, the Jewish people lived.

When Jerusalem was liberated, time was conflated. The past became present. What we had longed for became ours. What we had dreamed of became real, and soldiers wept because an adolescent Mediterranean country suddenly recovered a memory lost for 2000 years. The past was instantly present, incredibly, transcendently, transforming who we knew ourselves to be.

Who are we? We are not despised and impoverished itinerants, surviving on the fickle goodwill of other nations. We are not a nation of farmers recovering swamps, nor of warriors — though when we need to be we are all these things. We are a nation of priests and of prophets, a light unto mankind. We taught the world "to beat their swords into plowshares," "to love your neighbor as yourself," equality before justice, and that admiration belongs not to the rich and powerful, but to the good, the wise, and the kind. Hitler said, "The Jews have inflicted two wounds on humanity: Circumcision on the body and conscience on the soul." How right he was and how much more we have to do. How tragic when we fail ourselves.

Already divided by language, by geography, and even by religion, our people is bound only by threads of memory and of hope. These threads are exquisitely fragile. If they sever we will fragment, and the long and bitter exile of our people — not yet fully ended, is consequence, says the Talmud, of the dissensions which sunder us from one another. To this threat, Jerusalem provides counterpoint, for Jerusalem embodies our memories and hopes. Jerusalem is a living memory, a vision of God in our lives, an image of a perfected world. Jerusalem gives us the strength to achieve what we as a people must do, to unite ourselves, and to sanctify this world.

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, May 23rd. Candle lighting (from pre-existing flame) is 9:03P.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 to reaffirm their commitment to Jewish life and living.

It has often been asked why Shavuot is known as "The Season of the giving 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

Arutz Sheva, Apr. 20, 2015

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, 23,169 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.”

CURRENT IRAN FRAMEWORK WILL MAKE WAR MORE LIKELY

Moshe Ya'alon

Washington Post, Apr. 8, 2015

The framework concluded last week on Iran’s nuclear program was doomed to disagreement. Even the “fact sheets” issued by the United States, France and Iran — all parties to the talks — didn’t agree on the facts.

Israel has made clear its grave concerns about the framework’s fundamental elements and omissions. The vast nuclear infrastructure to be left in Iran will give it an unacceptably short breakout time to building a bomb. Iran’s long-range ballistic missile program — a threat to Israel as well as the rest of the Middle East, Europe and the United States — is untouched. The sanctions on Iran will be lifted (quickly, according to the Iranians; gradually, according to the United States), while restrictions imposed on the Islamic republic’s nuclear program will expire in about a decade, regardless of Iran’s campaign of murderous aggression in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere across the Middle East; its arming, funding, training and dispatching of terrorists around the world; and its threats and violent efforts to destroy Israel, the region’s only democracy.

To justify the risks inherent to the framework, its supporters have posited three main arguments: that the only alternative is war; that Iranian violations will be deterred or detected because of “unprecedented verification”; and that, in the event of violations, sanctions will be snapped back into place. These arguments have one important feature in common: They’re all wrong. The claim that the only alternative to the framework is war is false. It both obscures the failure to attain better terms from Iran and stifles honest and open debate by suggesting that if you don’t agree, you must be a warmonger. It also feeds and reflects the calumny that Israel in particular is agitating for war.

As Israel’s minister of defense, as a former Israel Defense Forces chief of general staff and as a combat veteran forced to bury some of my closest friends, I know too well the costs of war. I also know that Israelis are likely to pay the highest price if force is used — by anyone — against Iran’s nuclear program. No country, therefore, has a greater interest in seeing the Iranian nuclear question resolved peacefully than Israel. Our opposition to a deal based on the framework is not because we seek war, but because the terms of the framework — which will leave an unreformed Iran stronger, richer and with a clear path to a bomb — make war more likely.

The framework is supposed to prevent or detect Iranian denials and deception about their nuclear program by means of inspections and intelligence. Unfortunately, the track record of inspections and intelligence makes the framework’s outside reliance on them both misguided and dangerous. In many ways, the Iranian nuclear crisis began and intensified after two massive intelligence failures. Neither Israeli nor other leading Western intelligence agencies knew about Iran’s underground enrichment facilities at Natanz and Fordow until it was too late. As good as our intelligence services are, they simply cannot guarantee that they will detect Iranian violations at all, let alone in time to stop a dash for a bomb.

Twenty years ago, inspectors were supposed to keep the world safe from a North Korean nuclear bomb. Today, North Korea is a nuclear weapons state, and Iran isn’t complying with its existing obligations to come clean about its suspected efforts to design nuclear warheads. There is no reason to believe that Iran will start cooperating tomorrow, but

Finally, there are the sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table in the first place. These took years to put in place and even longer to become effective. Once lifted, they cannot be snapped back after future Iranian violations. It is fantasy to think the sanctions can be restored and become effective in the exceedingly short breakout time provided by the terms of the framework.

Though we have a serious policy disagreement with the United States regarding the framework and its implications, I am nevertheless confident that the friendship and alliance we share will not only weather this difference of views but also emerge even stronger from it. This is precisely what has happened in the past. Israelis know that the United States is Israel's greatest friend and strategic ally. No disagreement, not even about this critical issue, can diminish our enduring, profound gratitude to the president and his administration, Congress and the American people for all the United States has done to enhance the security of the Jewish state.

The choice is not between this bad deal and war. The alternative is a better deal that significantly rolls back Iran's nuclear infrastructure and links the lifting of restrictions on its nuclear program to an end of Iran's aggression in the region, its terrorism across the globe and its threats to annihilate Israel. This alternative requires neither war nor putting our faith in tools that have already failed us. *(Moshe Ya'alon is Israel's Minister of Defense)*

Jews Have Good Reason to Be Wary of Tehran's Rhetoric

Shahrzad Elghanayan (Washington Post)

(Abbreviated)

*During recent talks in Switzerland, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told NBC's Ann Curry: "We have a history of tolerance and cooperation and living together in coexistence with our own Jewish people."

*That's not quite right. Iran's Jews did have something of a golden age relatively recently, but Zarif can't take credit for it. That era was a brief period when the conservative Shiite clergy were stripped of their power - after the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 gave Iranians of all religions and ethnicity equal rights, and before Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in 1979.

*Jews have lived in Iran since 586 BCE. In the 16th century, conservative Shiite scholars and clergy under the Safavid dynasty had restrictions placed on all minorities, including Jews, to bar them from economic activity and to prevent them from passing their "ritual impurity" to Muslims.

*It was during that window of relative Jewish affluence that my grandfather, Habib Elghanian, became one of Iran's most famous industrialists after he and his brothers introduced the plastics industry to the country in the late 1940s. In 1959, he was elected the chairman of the country's Jewish association. In 1962, when my family built the country's first private sector high-rise, the 17-story Plasco Building in Tehran, Shiite cleric Mahmoud Taleghani objected to the idea that a Jew had built the tallest building of its time in Iran.

*In a 1964 address, Ayatollah Khomeini spoke about how: "The entire country's economy now lies in Israel's hands; that is to say it has been seized by Israeli agents. Hence, most of the major factories and enterprises are run by them." That speech singled out two people in particular: One was my grandfather, and the other was Baha'i industrialist Habib Sabet.

*When Khomeini returned from exile in February 1979 as the head of the Islamic revolution, my grandfather was among the first civilians he went after. On May 9, 1979, my grandfather was executed after a 20-minute trial on trumped-up charges that included being a "Zionist spy." After a firing squad killed him, the new regime stole what he had spent his lifetime building.

MAY 2015
IYAR/SIVAN, 5775

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		Low-impact Exercise Class Tuesdays, 11:00 to Noon			1  7:33	2 ¹² Iyar Achrei-Mot <i>Ends 8:43</i>
3	4	5	6 Adult Institute "G-d, Jews and History." 10:30-Noon	7 Lag B'Omer	8  7:40	9 ¹⁹ Iyar Emor <i>Ends 8:50</i>
10	11	12	13 Adult Institute "G-d, Jews and History." 10:30-Noon	14	15  7:47	16 ²⁶ Iyar Behar- Bechutokai <i>Ends 8:57</i>
17 Yom Yerushalayim	18	19 ¹ Sivan Rosh Chodesh	20 Adult Institute "G-d, Jews and History." 10:30-Noon	21 Sisterhood Luncheon & Program "The Bintel Brief" 12 Noon	22  7:54	23 ⁵ Sivan Bamidbar Erev Shavuoth Shavuoth Dinner 6:00pm  9:03
24 <i>Memorial Day</i> Shavouth  9:04	25 Shavuoth Yizkor <i>Ends 9:05</i>	26	27 Adult Institute "G-d, Jews and History." 10:30-Noon	28	29  8:00	30 ¹² Sivan N asso <i>Ends 9:05</i>
31						

JUNE, 2015

SIVAN/TAMUZ, 5775

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 ¹⁹ Sivan Beha-alotcha <i>Ends 9:14</i>
					 8:05	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 ²⁶ Sivan Sh'lach <i>Ends 9:18</i>
					 8:09	
14	15	16	17 ³⁰ Sivan Rosh Chodesh	18 ¹ Tamuz Rosh Chodesh	19	20 ³ Tamuz Korach <i>Ends 9:20</i>
					 8:11	
	22	23	24	25	26	27 ¹⁰ Tamuz Chukat <i>Ends 9:21</i>
					 8:12	
28	29	30				