



The Shofar

July-August, 2026

Congregation House of Israel

16 Tammuz - 18 Elul, 5786



Happy Independence Day

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The Shofar

Published bi-monthly by:

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Submissions due the 15th of the prior month. Distributed free to members, prospective members, local clergy and other interested parties.

Fall Holidays

By Sherrill Nicolosi

As we move into the Fall of 2026, we will be observing and celebrating a series of beautiful and meaningful holidays.

First, the New Year starts with Rosh Hashana- the Jewish New Year- September 11. Sometimes seen as the birthday of the World, Rosh Hashana begins the Days of Awe, to awaken us to reflect on who we are and who we will be in the coming year. Traditionally, Jews will enjoy apples and challah dipped in honey, commemorating the sweetness of the New Year to come.

Yom Kippur, falling ten days from Rosh Hashana, the tenth day of Tishri, is a day of fasting and prayer. It is considered the holiest day of the year (with the exception of Shabbat). During the ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, G_d passes judgment of each individual. It is why Jews greet one another with, "May you be inscribed in the Book of Life", and by the final hour of Yom Kippur, "May you be sealed in the Book of Life". It is a period of reflection, repentance, and introspection.

Sukkot, this year September 25-October 2, five days after Yom Kippur, the "Feast of the Booths" is celebrated. The holiday is commemorated by living

in a booth (sukkah) for seven days, in remembrance of the forty days Jews wandered in the desert to reach the Promised Land. The sukkot were the temporary dwellings or huts or shelters lived in during the "travel". It is seen as a harvest time festival, a time of thanksgiving, when Jews celebrate a bond of common history.

Simchat Torah, October 2-4, means rejoicing over the Torah, reading it each year as a cycle of events in the Torah. It is a time of merriment, singing and dancing, a reminder the Torah is forever, and learning never ends.

Hanukkah, December 4-12, is the "Festival of Lights", the story of the miracle of the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem after it was desecrated and defiled by Greek armies. Only a small vial of oil was available to light the Menorah, during the rededication, an amount believed would last only one day. Instead the Menorah remained lit for eight days, until new, pure oil was brought to the Temple.

The holiday also commemorates the small, ragtag "army" of rebel Jews, lead by Judah Maccabaus, who defeated the Greeks and forced them out of Jerusalem.

The fall celebrations allow all Jews to remember and cherish our history. Each holiday gives Jews a reason to be proud of our valorous heritage.

Reb Shelly's Desk



From the River To the Sea, Palestine Shall Be ...Auschwitz?

If you are following the world-wide debate about Israel and Gaza and especially the anti-Israel protests with the unholy alliance of some Muslims, all anti-Semites, and some progressives and I am ashamed to say, some Jews, you have heard the chant, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free".

Anyone with an elementary school education can look at a map and see that from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea there is only one country, and it is called Israel. To replace it with a free Palestine is a clear and obvious message. There will be no Israel, and the only way there will be no Israel is to wipe it off the face of the earth, because Israelis have not volunteered to give up their country. This is the obvious truth and reality not withstanding U.S. Congresswoman Rashida Talib's absurd explanation that "it is an aspirational call for freedom, human rights, and peaceful coexistence, not death, destruction, or hate...." This is a pile of (excuse me) B.S.

A recent study asked protesters what river and what sea are they chanting about? Almost 60% had no idea. They heard the chant somewhere, probably on social media and thought it was cool.

When informed that it meant the destruction of Israel many said that was not what they believed or wanted. They didn't realize that genocide of the Jews was what they were calling for.

We must ask ourselves what is it that these protesters want and why are they so angry at the Israelis? Do they want a ceasefire now so that down the road Hamas can retool and start all over again, and the population of Gaza can be human shields again and the next Israeli attack will be even deadlier?

Did you know that prior to the October 7th pogrom, the state between Gaza and Hamas was a ceasefire, and who broke it by attacking and killing over 1000 Israeli civilians? That is who Israel should again grant a ceasefire to?

So, what do the protesters calling for a ceasefire really want? They want an end to Israel because

they have been taught that Israel is a white colonial power that has stolen the land of brown and black people.

You have seen the continual world protests against the Russian invasion of the Ukraine and the obvious targeting of hospitals and schools where no soldiers are hiding? OF COURSE NOT!

There are few protests because these are two white populations fighting each other, so why should we care how many innocent civilians are killed? And if that hypocrisy was not enough to get your attention, the majority of the Israelis are not white Ashkenazi but Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews who have the same melanin as Hamas. Moreover, Israel saved the Ethiopian Jews who are not brown but black. But does this matter to the "from the river to the sea" crowd? Not a bit.

Chanting is what matters, not facts, history, or the obvious reality. Israel is also accused of being an apartheid state. "Look at how the white power class built a fence on the West Bank to separate themselves from the poor, brown Palestinian population."

Did that wall get built when Israel captured the West Bank in a defensive war against the Arab states that threatened their destruction? NO. It was built only after Palestinian terrorists kept entering Israel from the West Bank and planted bombs and sent suicide bombers to blow up civilians in restaurants and at bus stops and in schools.

When Israel totally left the Gaza strip in 2005, they did not build a fence around Gaza. They left behind a population that could have built a peaceful and prosperous country. Instead in a short period of time they started lofting missiles at their neighbors.

Israel had an Israeli Arab, Khaled Kabub on the Supreme Court. Many of the doctors at its hospitals are Arab Israelis. The previous Israeli government had the head of the largest Arab Party as a minister in the cabinet. How apartheid does that sound to you?

From the River to the sea is antisemitism, it is a call for genocide, and when a Jew says it, I don't have words to express my disgust. All I can say to them is that after they come for me, they won't remember what you chanted. They will be too busy taking you away as well.

In Israel I Taught Them To Swim

By Rabbi Lindsey Danziger

After a beautiful evening at a playground in Tel Aviv with my three kids, I came back to our rented apartment in the city center and got everyone ready for bed: teeth brushed, showers taken, pajamas on. I threw in a load of laundry and climbed into bed with a cup of tea and my book, looking forward to the next morning—a relaxing beach day before heading out of town on a *tiyul* with friends. As I settled in for the night, I reflected with some satisfaction on how right I was to bring my children to Israel for an extended summer trip. We had spent the past week seeing Israeli friends, trying new foods, and acclimating to Tel Aviv life.

Zionism is central to who I am—as a Jew, a rabbi, an organizer at the RAC, and especially as a mother. I feel most alive and connected to God in Israel. My husband and I had been eager to bring our children here for years and begin their relationship with Israel as a living, breathing Jewish state—not just an idea they read about or hear discussed. They already have deep connections to Israel through their Jewish day school and their many summers at URJ Camp Jacobs, where they learn Israeli history, meet Israelis, and experience the connection between Judaism, Torah, and the Jewish state. But there is no substitute for being here: walking the trails, *shvitzing* through June, hearing Hebrew all around, and feeling the pulse of a nation speaking the ancient language of our people.

In our first week, it was wonderful to hear their own observations. Eleven-year-old Ben noted that some things in Israel are incredibly high-tech—the gleaming towers of Tel Aviv and the innovations coming out of them—while other things, like shower doors, seem determined to leak water across the entire bathroom floor. Seven-year-old Noa declared that the fruits and vegetables taste better here. Nine-year-old Aviva informed me that “the men in Tel Aviv are really buff.” All three were endlessly fascinated by the dual-flush toilets and spent an alarming amount of time discussing the respective merits of the two buttons.

So, as I settled in for a quiet Sunday night, I felt good about our decision and excited about the weeks ahead.

Then my phone started buzzing.

Rockets incoming from Iran. The entire northern half of the country was on alert.

Our close friends, who are like family, called immediately. “Pack a bag. If this continues tonight, we’ll come get you.”

In an instant, my mind shifted into go-mode. I packed what we might need for a few days at our friends’ apartment in the suburbs, where rocket fire is less frequent, and they have a private safe room instead of our shared shelter three flights down in the basement. I filled water bottles, charged iPads, and lined up three pairs of little shoes by the door.

In one moment, plans for a beach day became plans for protecting my children from incoming missiles intent on killing them. Once everything was packed and the phone stopped buzzing, my mind had room to wander. It filled quickly with fear, doubt, and guilt.

What business did I have bringing my children to a war zone when so many people here have no choice? How privileged were we to be able to relocate from a shared shelter to a private one when there are Bedouin communities without adequate protection and elderly people who cannot make it down the stairs in time? And then there was the question that lingered: in trying to give my children a deeper connection to Israel and the Jewish people, would I instead give them memories defined by fear? Would war obscure the beauty and magic of this place?

After a fitful night, I woke a little after five in the morning to a blaring alarm. Rockets were headed toward Tel Aviv. “Okay,” I thought. “It’s time.” I rushed into the kids’ room, trying to move them quickly without frightening them. My fears were completely unnecessary.

“I need five more minutes.”

“I’m tired.”

“Can I bring my iPad?”

“Guys!” I said. “There are rockets!”

Ben rolled his eyes and continued moving at the speed of continental drift.

Noa, meanwhile, was thrilled.

“Rockets? Can I go outside and see?”

“No, sweetheart. That’s actually the opposite of what we’re trying to do.”

Eventually, we made it to the *miklat* – shared bomb shelter- in the basement with the rest of our

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ARZA- World Union

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neighbors.

There was a large, friendly pug making the rounds, demanding belly rubs from every group in the room. A young couple sat huddled together over a bassinet, looking exhausted as they stared anxiously at their newborn. A homeless man was asleep in the shelter when we arrived. One child asked his mother why he was there if he wasn't their neighbor. She responded, "He is another kind of neighbor, and he needs shelter too."

Two elderly women spent nearly the entire day in the cold, leaking shelter because they couldn't keep making the trip up and down the stairs.

Over the course of the morning, we went down several more times. Twice for missiles from Iran and once for a launch from Yemen. When neighbors realized it was "only the Houthis," many immediately left the shelter with a collective shrug. Perspective is a remarkable thing.

By late morning, we relocated to our friends' home in Hod Hasharon. The text messages poured in from Reform rabbis and IMPJ friends throughout the country, checking on me alone with my kids, offering homes to stay in, and resources to help out. There is no end to the hospitality of Israelis and the way our Movement shows up for one another.

The day unfolded with ten children, two dads named Shai, countless cups of coffee, and a steady stream of news alerts. One Shai's wife was two weeks from giving birth and needed some rest. The other Shai's wife was a physician who had driven to the hospital that morning, pulling over on the side of the road and covering her head with her hands as sirens sounded.

We spent the day moving between the playground—conveniently located beside a concrete shelter—and the *mamad* – a room in the apartment that doubles as a bomb shelter, a colorful room lined with mattresses. Neighbors and friends drifted in and out. Kids were assigned jobs: collect water bottles, wash dishes, and clean up snacks. It felt strangely familiar. Very COVID.

The question on everyone's mind was simple: How long will this last? The two Shais spent much of the day refreshing Signal groups and news apps, tracking the latest statements from officials in Washington, Jerusalem, and Tehran whose decisions would shape the lives of millions of parents and children across

the region.

Who would sleep peacefully, and who would run for shelter?

Who would go to school and birthday parties, and who would spend days at home in uncertainty?

Who would be called to fight, and who would remain with their families?

By afternoon, the prevailing assumption was that we were headed toward a prolonged war. Schools were canceled for another day. Flights out of the country were selling out. And then, almost as suddenly as it began, with one utterance from one of the men in power, it was over. One headline and the mood shifted. Schools reopened. Stores resumed business. People returned to the streets. That evening, we took the kids to the local sports club. As we stood beside the crowded pool, my friend told me to look around. Families were swimming, arguing, relaxing. A scout troop was gathered nearby for an activity. Teenagers were having a pizza party on the lawn. Our daughters had already found friends and disappeared into a game in the water.

My friend pointed at them. "Those nine-year-olds walked to the pool by themselves today. On the day of a war. Can you imagine that happening in America?" I could not.

I understood something about Israeli life that day. Israeli kids grow up quickly. They learn resilience early. They learn that life can change in an instant, and that when it does, communities adapt. A friend later referred to the entire episode as "the warlet."

For me, it was easier to switch from vacation mode to survival mode than back again.

Standing by the pool, I found myself thinking about the Talmudic teaching (Kiddushin 29a) that one of a parent's obligations is to teach their child to swim.

I looked at my children in the water. They had lived through a day of sirens, uncertainty, fear, sheltering, and disruption.

And they were swimming.

I do not regret bringing them here. I still want them to love felafel and Hebrew. I want them to hike this land and see its ancient stones.

But more importantly, they experienced something essential about Israeli society: its vulnerability and its resilience, its capacity to absorb fear without surrendering to it, its determination to keep living even under threat.

I taught them to swim.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

July, August Anniversaries

Yossi and Kim Baron Aug 16

July Birthdays

Harold Castillo July 1

Lou Siegel July 3

Les Surfes July 12

Sue Koppel July 13

August Birthdays

Neal Gladner Aug 8

Melissa Lax Aug 8

Millie Baron Aug 12

Anthony Nicolosi Aug 21

Fran Rephan Aug 21

Diana Surfes Aug 24

Cynthia Rephan Aug 28

Hal Koppel Aug 30

Fred Korngut Aug 30

Hannah Reagler Aug 31

Miriam (Mimi) Reagler Aug 31

Ruth Sedler Aug 31

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Refuah Shlemah

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

- Aria Baron
- Shoshana Baron
- Adam Bierman
- Terri Carr
- Diane Dove
- Jerry Fager
- Francine Gordon
- Oded Grenman
- Dennis Jennings

- Sue Koppel
- Pat McCarthy
- Palma Ortiz
- Mike Richardson
- Lori Roslawski
- Kirsten Whitman
- Steven West
- James Woodfork

July - August Yahrzeits

Kaddish Recited July 3

Louis Brown

Father of Betty Forshberg

Roxanne Smalley Capotosto

Sister of Kim Baron

John Hearn

Husband of Phyllis Hearn

Sely Simon Seligman

Father of Diana Surfus

Dorine Calcote Williams

Mother of Dennis Williams

Ruth Holtzman

Mother-in-law of Fred Korngut

Kaddish Recited July 10

Carol Levi

Wife of Lary Levi

Kaddish Recited July 17

Annette Baim

Wife of Kenneth Baim

Hyman Clapman

Uncle of Sheldon Kleinman

Stella Gottlieb

Grandmother of Barbara Morgan

Kaddish Recited July 24

Bernice Lockwood Goltz

Mother of Susan Siegel

Mother of Diane Goltz

Eugene Kirsch

Father of Steven Kirsch

Uncle of Stuart Fleischner

Uncle of Mark Fleischner

Flora Meyer Lockwood

Grandmother of Susan Siegel

Grandmother of Diane Goltz

Sandra Boley

Sister of Sherrill Nicolosi

Kaddish Recited July 31

Herbert Levy

Father of Jerry Levy

Rose Gladner

Wife of Neal Gladner

Jerry Tanenbaum

Father of Jay Tanenbaum

Father of Al Tanenbaum

Nelly Kass

Mother-in-law of Lynda Kass

Israel Barenblat

Father of Betty Kleinman

Grandfather of Ira Kleinman

Rachel Barenblat

Mother of Betty Kleinman

Grandmother of Ira Kleinman

Kaddish Recited August 7

Jonathan Paul Castillo

Son of Harold Castillo

Son of Laura Castillo

Jonathan Byrd Morgan

Husband of Barbara Morgan

Malcolm Rosenthal

Father of Brian Rosenthal

Kaddish Recited August 14

Lee Staffin

Mother of Myrna Taxer

Herman Glen Hobbs

Father of Glenda Kirsch

Kaddish Recited August 21

Meier Baron

Father of Yossi Baron

Paula Hirsch

Sister of David Kirsch

Selma Schneider

Grandmother of Elaine Wolken

Kaddish Recited August 28

Albert Louis Ruskin

Father of Phyllis Hearn

Herbert Erwin Harris

Father of Barbara Morgan

July Parshiot

Pinchas

July 4, 2026

Aaron's grandson, Pinchas, is rewarded for his act of zealotry in killing the Simeonite prince Zimri and the Midianite princess who was his paramour: God grants him a covenant of peace and the priesthood.

The five daughters of Zelophehad petition Moses that they be granted the portion of the land belonging to their father, who died without sons; God accepts their claim and incorporates it into the Torah's laws of inheritance.

Moses empowers Joshua to succeed him and lead the people

Matot - Masei

July 11, 2026

Moses conveys the laws governing the annulment of vows to the heads of the tribes of Israel. War is waged against Midian for their role in plotting the moral destruction of Israel, and the Torah gives a detailed account of the war spoils and how they were allocated amongst the people, the warriors, the Levites and the high priest. The tribes of Reuben and Gad (later joined by half of the tribe of Menasseh) ask for the lands east of the Jordan as their portion in the Promised Land, these being prime pastureland for their cattle. Moses is initially angered by the request, but subsequently agrees on the condition that they first join, and lead, in Israel's conquest of the lands west of the Jordan.

Devarim

July 18, 2026

On the 1st of Shevat (37 days before his passing), Moses begins his repetition of the Torah to the assembled Children of Israel, reviewing the events that occurred and the laws that were given in the course of their 40-year journey from Egypt to Sinai to the Promised Land, rebuking the people for their failings and iniquities, and enjoining them to keep the Torah and observe its commandments in the land that G-d is giving them as an eternal heritage, into which they shall cross after his death.

Va'etchanan

July 25, 2026

Moses tells the people of Israel how he implored God to allow him to enter the Land of Israel, but God refused, instructing him instead to ascend a mountain and see the Promised Land. Moses predicts that, in future generations, the people will turn away from God, worship idols, and be exiled from their land and scattered amongst the nations; but from there they will seek God, and return to obey His commandments. Our Parshah also includes a repetition of the Ten Commandments, and the verses of the Shema, which declare the fundamentals of the Jewish faith.



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August Parshiot

Ekev

August 1, 2026

In the Parshah of Eikev (“Because”), Moses continues his closing address to the Children of Israel, promising them that if they will fulfill the commandments (*Mitzvot*) of the Torah, they will prosper in the Land they are about to conquer and settle in keeping with God’s promise to their forefathers. Moses also rebukes them for their failings in their first generation as a people, recalling their worship of the Golden Calf, the rebellion of Korach, the sin of the Spies, their angering of God at Taveirah, Massah and Kivrot Hataavah. But he also speaks of God’s forgiveness of their sins, and the Second Tablets which God inscribed and gave to them following their repentance.

Re’eh

August 8, 2026

“See,” says Moses to the people of Israel, “I place before you today a blessing and a curse” -- the blessing that will come when they fulfill God’s commandments, and the curse if they abandon them. These should be proclaimed on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eibal when the people cross over into the Holy Land. A Temple should be established in “the place that God will choose to make dwell His name there” where the people should bring their sacrifices to Him. A false prophet, or one who entices others to worship idols, should be put to death; an idolatrous city must be destroyed. The mitzvah of charity obligates a Jew to aid a needy fellow with a gift or loan. On the Sabbatical year (occurring every seventh year) all loans are to be forgiven. All indentured servants are to be set free after six years of service

Shoftim

August 15, 2026

Moses instructs the people of Israel to appoint judges and law-enforcement officers in every city; “Justice, Justice you shall pursue,” he commands them, and you shall administer it

without corruption or favoritism. Crimes must be meticulously investigated and evidence thoroughly examined--a minimum of two credible witnesses is required for conviction and punishment.

Ki-Teitzei

August 22, 2026

Seventy-four of the Torah’s 613 commandments (*mitzvot*) are in the Parshah of Ki-Teitzei. These include the laws of the beautiful captive, the inheritance rights of the first-born, the wayward and rebellious son, burial and dignity of the dead, the returning of a lost object, sending away the mother bird before taking her young, the duty to erect a safety fence around the roof of one’s home, and the various forms of *kilayim* (forbidden plant and animal hybrids) and the procedures for *yibbum* (“levirate marriage”) of the wife of a deceased childless brother or *chalitzah* (“removing of the shoe”) in the case that the brother-in-law does not wish to marry her.

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



Ki Tavo

August 29, 2026

Moses instructs the people of Israel: When you enter the land that G-d is giving to you as your eternal heritage, and you settle it and cultivate it, bring the first-ripened fruits (*bikkurim*) of your orchard to the Holy Temple, and declare your gratitude for all that G-d has done for you.

Our Parshah also includes the laws of the tithes given to the Levites and to the poor, and detailed instructions on how to proclaim the blessings and the curses on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal—as discussed in the beginning of the Parshah of Re’eh. Moses reminds the people that they are G-d’s chosen people, and that they, in turn, have chosen G-d.