

YOM HaSHOAH APRIL 15, 2007

Yom HaShoah was established by Israeli law in 1959, and was signed by David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, then Prime Minister of Israel and President of Israel, respectively. It was originally proposed to be commemorated on the 15th of Nisan, the anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising (April 19, 1943), but this was deemed problematic, it being the first day of Pesach (Passover). Instead, the 27th was chosen, being eight days before Yom Ha'atzma'ut, or Israeli Independence Day.

Most of the Jewish community consider the day a Jewish religious holiday. Anti-Zionist religious Jews do not, instead remembering the victims on days that were already days of mourning before the Holocaust, such as Tisha b'Av in the summer, and the Tenth of Tevet, in the winter.

Most Jewish communities hold a solemn ceremony on this day. Orthodox Rabbi Avraham (Avi) Weiss has created a ritual for the holiday. The Masorti (Conservative Judaism) movement in Israel has created Megillat HaShoah, a scroll and liturgical reading for Yom HaShoah, a joint project of Jewish leaders in Israel, the United States and Canada. It was written by Hebrew University professor Avigdor Shinan. In 1984, Conservative rabbi David Golinkin wrote an article in Conservative Judaism journal suggesting a program of observance for the holiday, including fasting. Ismar Schorsch, former Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary suggested, however, that Holocaust commemoration take place on the Jewish holiday of Tisha b'Av. In 1988, the Reform Judaism movement published a book called Six Days of Destruction, co-authored by Elie Wiesel and Rabbi Albert Friedlander.

Those Jews in the Diaspora who observe Yom HaShoah may observe it within the synagogue, as well as in the broader Jewish community. Commemorations range from synagogue services to communal vigils and educational programs. Many Yom HaShoah programs feature a talk by a Holocaust survivor, recitation of appropriate psalms, songs and readings, or viewing of a Holocaust-themed film. Some communities choose to emphasize the depth of loss that Jews experienced in the Holocaust by reading the names of Holocaust victims one after another dramatizing the unfathomable notion of six million deaths. Many Jewish schools also hold Holocaust-related educational programs on, or towards Yom HaShoah.

On the eve of Yom HaShoah in Israel, there is a state ceremony at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes Authority. At 10:00am on Yom HaShoah, throughout Israel, air-raid sirens are sounded for two minutes. Public transport (including virtually all highway vehicles) comes to a standstill for this period, and people stop and stand silent. During Yom HaShoah, public entertainment and many public establishments in Israel are closed by law. Israeli television and radio channels broadcast mourning songs and documentaries about the Holocaust, without commercials. All flags on public buildings are flown at half mast.

Also during this day, tens of thousands of Israeli high-school students, and thousands of Jews from around the world, hold a memorial service in Auschwitz, in what became known as "The March of the Living", in defiance of the Holocaust Death Marches. This event is endorsed and subsidized by the Israeli Ministry of Education and the Holocaust Claims Conference, and is considered

THANK YOU

Words cannot express the gratitude I have towards the members of the South Florida Shomrim Society and my relatives, friends, co-workers and their families for coming to OUR Picnic this year. Not only was this event combined with my retirement celebration, but it was my wedding anniversary also. To be able to share in these good times with so many people is surely a sign that my family and I have been blessed to be associated with this organization. There are too many names to try to thank you individually, so let me do it as group. You should all only have *nachas and joy* in your lives and be proud to be a part of the South Florida Shomrim Society.

Steve Leibowitz
Past President, 1999 - 2004

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CHUTZPAH:

According to the Funk & Wagnall's Standard Desk Dictionary - US slang meaning: brazen effrontery, nerve, impudence, gall, cheekiness. The word ...is Hebrew in origin.

Bill Gates decides to organize an enormous session of recruitment for a chairman for Microsoft Europe. The 5000 candidates are all assembled in a large room. One of the candidates is Maurice Cohen, a little Parisian Jewish Tunisian.

Bill Gates thanks all the candidates for coming and asks that all those who do not know JAVA program language rise and leave.

2000 people rise and leave the room. Maurice Cohen says to himself, "I do not know this language but what have I got to lose if I stay ? I'll give it a try".

Bill Gates asks all the candidates that those who have never had experience of team management of more than 100 people rise and leave. 2000 people rise and leave the room. Maurice Cohen says to himself, "I have never managed anybody but myself but what have I got to lose if I stay ? What can happen to me ?" So he stays.

Then Bill Gates asks all the candidates who do not have excellent college diplomas to rise and leave. 500 people rise and leave the room. Maurice Cohen says to himself, "I left school at 15 but what have I got to lose if I stay? So he stays in the room.

Lastly, Bill Gates asks all of the candidates who do not speak the Serbo-Croat language to rise and leave. 498 people rise and leave the room. Maurice Cohen says himself, "I do not speak Serbo-Croat but what the hell! - have I got anything to lose?" So he stays in the room.

He finds himself alone with one other candidate - everyone else has gone. Bill Gates joins them and says: "Apparently you are the only two candidates who speak Serbo-Croatian, so I'd now like to hear you both have a little conversation in that language!

Calmly Maurice turns to the other candidate and says to him: "Baroukh ata Adonai." The other candidate answers: "Elohénou melekh ha'olam ."

SOUTH FLORIDA SHOMRIM SOCIETY MARCH 2007 MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS & MAZEL TOVS

Please let US know your announcements & Mazel Tovs in so WE can all share in your Nachas.

MAZEL TOV:

To Brother Steve Leibowitz on his retirement. WE wish him the best, but won't let him go completely. Steve is OUR New Historian documenting the Shomrim Society from its humble beginnings.

GET WELL:

To Brother Matthew Kaplan recovering from a recent illness. Matt is assigned to the NW Station, Miami Dade Police Department

To Brother Bob Novack of the Simon Wiesenthal Center OUR continued prayers and wishes.

WELCOME

To new member and Brother Emmanuel Galimidi is a Attorney here in Miami and is a long time friend of Brother Ben Furer, OUR Sergeant at Arms. Emmanuel looks to lend his support to the South Florida Shomrim Society.

To new member and Brother Irving Weinsoff is a long time supporter of OUR Shomrim. WE have participated for years with Irv and his comrades of the 82nd Airborne at the Yom Hashoah ceremonies at the Holocaust Memorial.

To new member and Brother Bruce Fishbein, President and CEO of The Produce Connection Inc. Bruce is a longtime friend of OUR Brother & Sister, Philip Vova and Mindy Gross, OUR First VP. Bruce is very involved and has received numerous awards for community involvement.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SISTERS & BROTHERS, FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE SOUTH FLORIDA SHOMRIM SOCIETY I have to tell you that this month my message is going to be short for several reasons. One I am in a hotel room in Orlando (Alone) attending training and I actually have to study for a test tomorrow. Yes I am the typical overachiever - Got to do good, excuse me, do well. Secondly, this is a bitter sweet month. OUR Machin A Piknik was planned and executed to perfection (OK I know it will go off without a hitch on Sunday). WE will say Mazel Tov to OUR dear friend and Brother Steve Leibowitz as he retires. Over the years Steve has become one of my dearest friends. When I call him Brother it is not just relative to Shomrim, but in my heart. It has been said that a man is judged by the people that he calls friend. If that is true I will be judged as one of the greatest men in the world because I call Steve my FRIEND. I wish him and Linda a wonderful life in Longwood and Cecile and I have made reservations at the Leibowitz B&B just after Pesach.

Next month I will have much more to report.

Ze! Gezunt (Good-Bye), Ze! Mir Frailich, (Be Happy), Ze! Mir Gezunt, (Be Well)

Thoughts from a Synagogue Bulletin Board

Don't give up. Moses was once a basket case.

What part of "Thou shalt not" don't you understand?

My mother is a typical Jewish mother. Once she was on jury duty. They sent her home. She insisted SHE was guilty.

Any time a person goes into a delicatessen and orders a pastrami on white bread, somewhere a Jew Plotzes.

It was mealtime during a flight on El Al. "Would you like dinner?," the flight attendant asked Moshe, seated in front. "What are my choices?," Moshe asked. "Yes or no," she replied.

An elderly Jewish man is knocked down by a car and is brought to the local hospital. A pretty nurse tucks him into bed and says, "Mr. Gevarter are you comfortable?" Gevarter replies, "I make a nice living...."

YOM HA'ATZMAUT APRIL 22, 2007

Israel's Independence Day is celebrated on the fifth day of the month of Iyar, which is the Hebrew date of the formal establishment of the state, when members of the "provisional government" read and signed a Declaration of Independence in Tel Aviv. The original date corresponded to May 14, 1948. Most of the Jewish communities in the Western world have incorporated this modern holiday into their calendars, but some North American Jewish communities hold the public celebrations on a following Sunday, in order to attract more participation. In the State of Israel it is a formal holiday; so almost everyone has the day off.

Yom Ha'atzmaut in Israel is always preceded by Yom Hazikaron--Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers. The message of linking these two days is clear: Israelis owe their independence--the very existence of the state--to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for it. The official "switch" from Yom Hazikaron to Yom Ha'atzmaut takes place a few minutes after sundown, with a ceremony on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem in which the flag is raised from half staff (due to Memorial Day) to the top of the pole. The president of Israel delivers a speech of congratulations, and soldiers representing the army, navy, and air force parade with their flags. In recent decades this small-scale parade has replaced the large-scale daytime parade, which was the main event during the 1950s and '60s. The evening parade is followed by a torch lighting (*hadlakat masuot*) ceremony, which marks the country's achievements in all spheres of life.

Other than the official ceremonies, Israelis celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut in a variety of ways. In the cities, the nighttime festivities may be found on the main streets. Crowds will gather to watch public shows offered for free by the municipalities and the government. Many spend the night dancing Israeli folk dances or singing Israeli songs. During the daytime thousands of Israeli families go out on hikes and picnics. Army camps are open for civilians to visit and to display the recent technological achievements of the Israeli Defense Forces. Yom Ha'atzmaut is concluded with the ceremony of granting the "Israel Prize" recognizing individual Israelis for their unique contribution to the country's culture, science, arts, and the humanities.

The religious character of Yom Ha'atzmaut is still in the process of formation, and is still subject to debate. The Chief Rabbinate of the State (which consists of Orthodox rabbis) has decided that this day should be marked with the recital of *Hallel* (psalms of praise), similar to other joyous holidays, and with the reading of a special *haftarah* (prophetic portion). Most ultra-Orthodox Jews, in Israel and abroad, have not accepted this ruling, and some Orthodox Jews chant the Hallel psalms without the blessing which precedes it.

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. In many North American congregations, the joint public celebration often is augmented by a religious service. In some cases, this would occur on the Shabbat closest to Yom Ha'atzmaut and would consist of additional readings added to the service and, usually, the singing of *Hatikvah* (the Israeli national anthem).

There is not yet an accepted "tradition" of how to celebrate this holiday, and only time will tell whether certain customs, foods, prayers, and melodies will be linked in the Jewish mind with this holiday, as with holidays that emerged many centuries before Yom Ha'atzmaut. For Jews around the world, joining with Israelis celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut has become a concrete link in the Jewish connection to the land of Israel.

OY

Three Jewish women get together for lunch. As they are being seated in the restaurant, one takes a deep breath and gives a long, slow "Oy." The second takes a deep breath as well and lets out a long, slow "Oy." The third takes a deep breath and says impatiently, "Girls, I thought we agreed that we weren't going to talk about our children."

NEXT MEETING

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