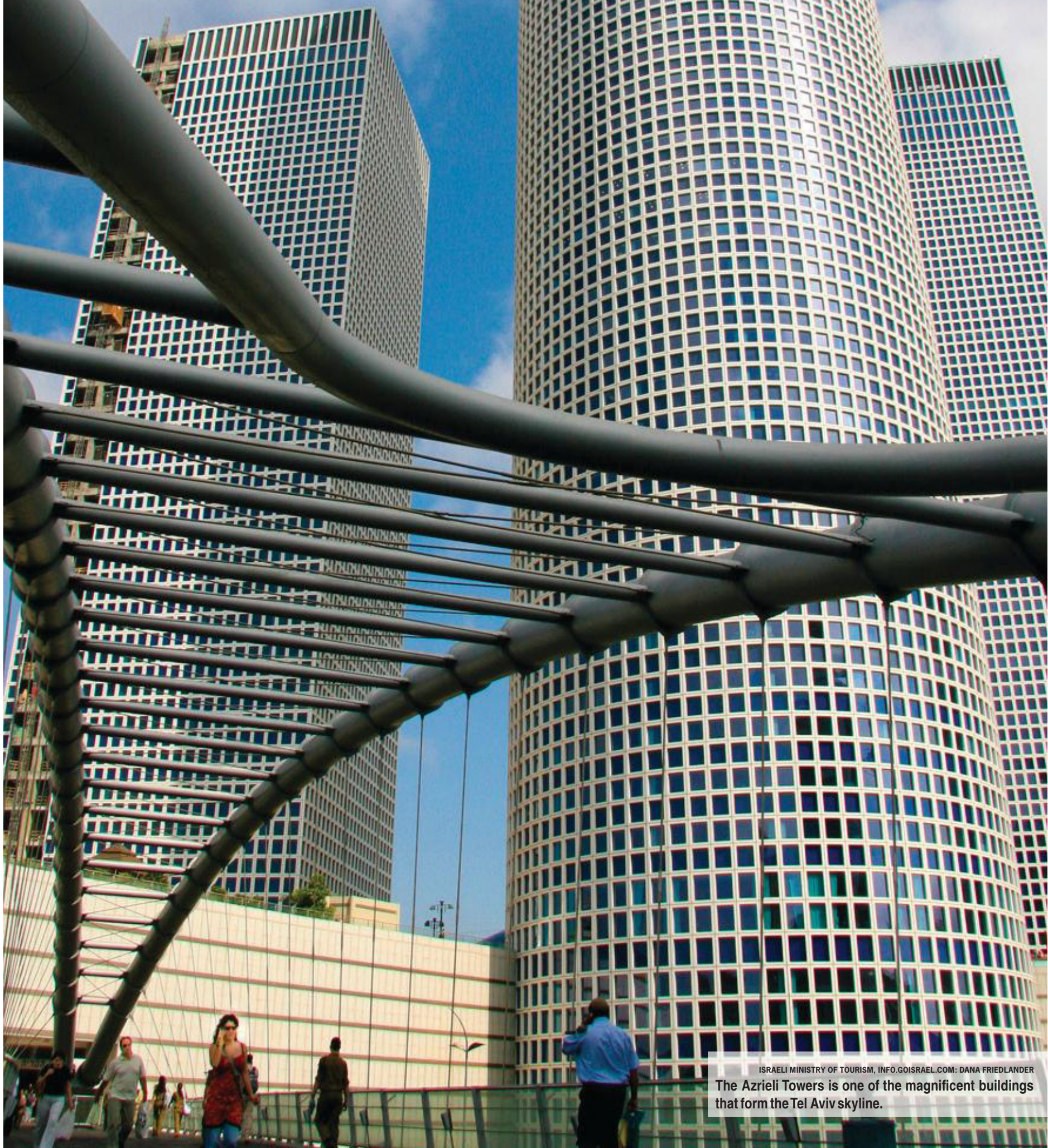


ISRAEL AT 73



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The Azrieli Towers is one of the magnificent buildings that form the Tel Aviv skyline.

JEWISH HERALD-VOICE



SECTION B



APRIL 8, 2021

Come one, come all: Celebrate Israel’s 73 birthday at the J

The Evelyn Rubenstein JCC is celebrating Israel’s 73rd birthday with programming for the entire community that covers fun from all angles.

At a time when so many are craving human interaction – and while still wanting to remain safe – the J is offering the community many interesting ways to celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut. From fitness challenges, to kids’ goody bags, and a drive-thru birthday parade, the J is hosting meaningful ways to connect with Israel and with the greater Jewish community.

“73” fitness challenge

Beginning Sunday, April 4, the fitness center began challenging the community to a “73” Family Fitness Challenge, which includes a variety of physical activities leading up to Israel’s 73rd birthday.

Do you have what it takes to compete in a challenge that includes 73 push-ups, 73 second planks, 73 burpees and more?

Israeli innovation

Interested in lectures and films with an Israeli twist? The J has the ‘intellectual’ covered, as well. On Wednesday, April 14, at 7 p.m., you are invited to join the JCC Association of North America for the lecture: “Yom Ha’atzmaut: Moments of Pride Through Israeli Innovation.”

Seventy-three years after its founding, Israel’s culture of innovation will be showcased through the eyes of three social entrepreneurs who are leaders in cyber security, agriculture and emergency health care advances.

Between Wednesday and Friday, April 14-16, view the film, “There Are No Lions in Tel Aviv.” In 1935, Max Shorenstein left his honorable position as Chief Rabbi of Copenhagen to fulfill a longtime dream: Build a zoo in Tel Aviv and teach local children about the love of animals. Against all odds, the zoo became the city’s greatest attraction. The film is offered in partnership with the JCCs of Austin, Dallas and San Antonio.



Shepard King, Rotem Cohen, Wyatt Standiford (standing) and Emma Becker and Malley Russell (seated) are ready for Yom Ha’atzmaut 2021.

Families and teens

The J’s regularly scheduled programs, such as Shabbat Family Field Day and the teen program, HC68, on Saturday, April 10, will celebrate Israel’s anniversary, too. At field day, families have the opportunity to learn Krav Maga, play gaga, make Israel-themed slime, create new Israel art for the home and enjoy the companionship of others, all while celebrating Israel’s birthday.

At the HC68 program that evening, teens will compete alone or in a group through a series of games, including bingo and trivia.

Seniors and little ones

Seniors will be treated to a special Israeli dessert during the drive-thru on Thursday, April 15. For the youngest community members, the J has Yom Ha’atzmaut to-go gift bags, free of charge. These goody bags are filled with age-appropriate Israel activities that bring Israel into your home.

Drive-thru parade

The celebration of Israel’s 73 birthday will culminate with a “Happy Birthday Israel” Drive-Thru Parade on Thursday, April 15, at

the Merfish Teen Center (9000 S. Rice Ave). The J, along with community partners, will host a parade that will fill parade cars with lots of party favors and your heart with Israeli spirit.

Individuals and families are invited to decorate their cars and wave and cheer through the parking lot. There will be several stops along the “parade route” to say hi to your favorite Jewish organizations, synagogues and businesses.

Community partners include Beth Yeshurun Day School, Camp Young Judaea-Texas, Congregation Beth Yeshurun, Greene Family Camp, Israeli-American Council, Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, Jewish Herald-Voice, PJ Library Houston, area Jewish Federations and The Bagel Shop Bakery.

Be sure to look for the “Happy Birthday Israel” yard sign in the Merfish courtyard from Wednesday, April 14, through Friday, April 16. The community is invited to stop by and take pictures.

Rotem Cohen, Israeli *schlich* (emissary), is excited to celebrate with the community. “Yom Ha’atzmaut is a big celebration and one of my personal favorite national holidays. It is inspiring to see everything that happened in this small country with amazing people in only 73 years, and I can’t wait to see what the future brings us.

“One of my favorite parts of Yom Ha’atzmaut is to do *al ha’esh* (barbecue) with my family and friends. It is a big tradition is Israel. You can see people barbecuing and celebrating in many parks all over the country. I can’t wait to celebrate with all of you here in Houston this year.”

All Yom Ha’atzmaut events are free and open to the public, though registration is required. These programs are supported by the Israel Engagement Fund: A JCC Association of North America Program Accelerator, made possible by the generosity of several committed donors. For more information and a list of the J’s programs celebrating Yom Ha’atzmaut, visit erjchouston.org. □



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On Israel's 73rd Independence Day

By CONSUL GENERAL GILAD KATZ

Yom Ha'atzmaut – Israeli Independence Day.

Most people see Israel as a nation among nations, an independent country among other independent countries. This sense of normalization is one of Israel's greatest victories.

Celebrating our 73rd Independence Day gives us the opportunity to remind ourselves that the Modern State of Israel, the one and only Jewish state, is nothing less than an ongoing miracle.

Thank G-d, in the last decades Israel has become an increasingly powerful country. We recognize the fact that Israel is one of the leading countries in a variety of fields: technology, med-tech, cybersecurity, agriculture, water and more. However, we shall never forget that our strength and resiliency comes from our values, beliefs, traditions and morals. These are the foundation of the Jewish state.

The founding of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, changed the course of history for the Jewish People. Living in a sovereign independent state enables us to control our own fate. No longer do we have to rely on the protections, mercy and good will of others. The times when the Jewish People had to look over their shoulders were over the day that David Ben-Gurion proclaimed

the establishment of the State of Israel on that incredibly important May 14th day.

However, it has to be said – throughout history, we have seen repeatedly, countries and states have had to face the moral dilemma of right vs. might. It has been said that "might is right." Meaning, those who are powerful can do what they wish, even if their action is unjust. I believe that the only true sustainable path for thriving is by remembering that right comes before might.

Or, in other words, doing what is right and just is the most important thing. To use the power that you have for the good of others.

Israel is known to be a divided society. Unfortunately, there is no greater evidence to that than the extreme division within the Israeli political system, as we all have seen over the last two years. Even so, I can guarantee that Israeli leaders from all parties and all governments agree that the only way we can ensure our existence is by acting in accordance with our values and beliefs, to prioritize right (justice) over might (power).

In our very violent and merciless neighborhood, sometimes it is extremely difficult to preserve this fragile combination of right and



Consul General of Israel Gilad Katz

might. There are times we intentionally are willing to pay heavy and precious prices for maintaining our values and restraining our power.

As an Israeli, I am proud to say that Israel has stood up to the challenge. We never gave up on our values and beliefs. There were times where it was tempting to choose the shortcut, but I thank G-d and my people that we always had the courage and patience to pave our way, armed with our sense of justice, love and understanding.

This last year was a challenging year for all of humankind. Even though we have increasing access to vaccines, COVID-19 still remains a prevalent issue in our society. However, Israel has become a global leader in COVID-19 vaccinations. In fact, more than 50% of the population in Israel already has been vaccinated twice. This is incredible progress, but the coming years will focus on healing our affected economy.

This is why it is extremely important for Israel to reconnect with all of its friends and communities in American society. We want to see our brothers, sisters and friends back visiting Israel. We also would like to see Israelis visiting here in the U.S. Of course, it

still will take time to fully recover from this pandemic, but what an exciting time it is.

As we head into Israel's 73rd Independence Day, we are starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel; we are starting to think of the day after.

This time of the year, according to the Hebrew calendar, is our national holiday. Year after year, during these special days, I feel blessed to live in the one and only Jewish state.

During the last year, I unfortunately lost two of my beloved role models: my dad and my grandfather. Each one of them was a passionate Zionist, who believed that it was their obligation to make a difference. I learned from them the power of love towards Israel. I learned from them the endless passion towards the Jewish People.

On a final note, this summer, after four fruitful years, I am ending my tenure as the consul general of Israel to the Southwest. It was a great privilege and honor for me to represent the State of Israel. I met so many friends and partners that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

All I can say is thank you, G-d, for giving me the opportunity to serve my country. I can say from the depth of my heart, that I did my best to promote and stand for my country. With a great sense of humility, I hope I succeeded in making a little difference.

ISRAEL: Happy 73rd Independence Day!

Gilad Katz is consul general of Israel to the Southwest, located in Houston. □



Happy 73rd Birthday Israel!

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and a great friend of Israel'*
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Praying for the welfare of the State of Israel

While following a tradition of praying for the government, this prayer has some significant differences

BY RABBI ED SNITKOFF | MyJewishLearning.org

A prayer for the welfare of the national government and its leaders has been part of the Jewish liturgy from ancient days. This tradition can be traced in practice to the daily sacrifices made in honor of Caesar at the end of the Second Temple period more than 2,000 years ago.

The importance of praying for the welfare of the ruling body was established by the prophet Jeremiah after the first exile from Jerusalem, in 586 B.C.E. He tells the exiled Jews, "Seek the welfare of the city where I have caused you to be exiled, and pray to G-d on its behalf, for in its prosperity you shall prosper" (Jeremiah 29:7).

By instructing the Jews to pray for Babylonia, Jeremiah is teaching them to recognize that in exile they were physically, economically and politically dependent upon Babylonia and the good will of its rulers. The situation of powerlessness and dependence demanded that G-d be implored to direct the leaders of the country to rule the Jewish population in a just and merciful way.

The first siddur including a prayer for the government is from the 14th century, and the practice is described there as an “established custom.” Hundreds of different prayers for various governments under which Jews have lived (and live) exist today and are valuable windows to these Jewish communities.

This background is important to understand the thinking of the authors of the Prayer for the Welfare of the State of Israel.

Composing the prayer

On the 5th of Iyar – May 15, 1948 – the Jewish People became sovereign rulers in the Land of Israel. This new situation posed many challenges to the Jewish People, a people that had lived most of its history under the direct control of others. Confronting and understanding the meaning of sovereignty and independence created a high level of political, cultural and religious creativity during the early years of the state.

For the first time since antiquity, Jewish religious leaders had the opportunity to compose a prayer for the Jewish leaders of a Jewish state. Should the prayer express the ideology, hopes and aspirations of the Zionist movement? Or, should it be a prayer for the leaders of Israel (treating them like any other political leaders of any country), without taking into account the profound meaning of Israel to many Jews?

Here is the translation of the prayer:

*"Our Father Who art in Heaven, Protector
and Redeemer of Israel, bless Thou the State*



A small group of socially distanced kohens, or Jewish high priests, take part in Passover prayers by the Western Wall last year.

of Israel which marks the dawn of our deliverance. Shield it beneath the wings of Thy love. Spread over it Thy canopy of peace; send Thy light and Thy truth to its leaders, officers and counselors and direct them with Thy 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 brethren, the whole House of Israel, in all the lands of their dispersion. Speedily, let them walk upright to Zion, the city, to Jerusalem Thy dwelling-place, as it is written in the Torah of Thy servant Moses: ‘Even if you are dispersed in the uttermost parts of the world, from there the L-rd 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 Thy Name, and to observe all the precepts of Thy Torah. Shine forth in Thy glorious majesty over all the inhabitants of Thy world. Let everything that breathes proclaim: The L-rd G-d of Israel is King; His majesty rules over all." Amen.

This is much more than a prayer for the government. It is a proclamation of belief that:

- 1) The establishment of the State of Israel is a Divine event and that this event is the fulfillment of G-d's promise to the Jewish People and part of the Divine plan to redeem the world.
- 2) The maintaining of the state and its defense is a matter for G-d's intervention.
- 3) G-d will bring all Jews to live in Israel from the Diaspora.

The ideology that is the basis of the prayer is expressed best by Rabbi Yehudah Amital, a former government minister and leading religious leader in Israel. He writes that Zionism is "... the L-rd's vehicle

for preparing Israel for its redemption. The habitation of the Land of Israel by a group of its children, transforming wastelands into gardens, and the establishment of independence within its borders, are stages in the process of redemption ... and even though they are accompanied by suffering and tribulation, the strides are certain, and the course is clear ...”

The authorship of the prayer is unclear. Some say it was written by Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Herzog and Ben Zion Uziel, with the assistance of other rabbis. Others suggest that the prayer was revised by the rabbis after suggestions made by Nobel Laureate Shmuel Yosef Agnon, one of the pioneers of modern Hebrew literature. Still others are convinced that Agnon wrote the prayer himself and that it later was adopted by the Chief Rabbinate.

Community acceptance

A prayer for the State of Israel is recited in synagogues of most religious streams in Israel and the Diaspora (outside of the ultra-Orthodox communities). In Israel, most use the text of the Chief Rabbinate, although there are congregations that use their own versions and variations. In the Diaspora, there is even less conformity and, while many communities use the text of the Chief Rabbinate, many utilize other prayers.

There are many reasons why all congregations haven't adopted the Chief Rabbinate's prayer.

Most of the arguments surrounding the prayer concern the Messianic role of the state. The first line of the prayer pleads, "Bless Thou the State of Israel which marks the dawn of our deliverance." The belief that the Jewish state is the first step in redemption is seen by Rabbi Amital as "certain"

and “clear,” but the fact is that not everyone is certain and clear on this point.

For most Haredim (ultra-Orthodox), no matter where they live, redemption will not be brought by the establishment of a secular state, but by the observance of Torah. Although the vast majority in this community are deeply connected to the state and are proud of it in many ways, they do not see the state in Messianic terms.

They are not alone. The notion that Israel is the “dawn of our deliverance” sits uncomfortably with many Jews of all streams of Judaism. Some say that while we may hope and pray that Israel is the “dawn of our deliverance,” it is pretentious to proclaim that this is a known and proven fact.

Others hold that Messianic beliefs in G-d's impending intervention in history are fine for the realm of the spirit, but have no place in the affairs of a sovereign state. They point to many examples in Jewish history when Messianic ideas caught the imagination of the people and led to disaster, such as the war against the Romans that ended in the destruction of Jerusalem.

There are other problematic passages in the prayer. Jews in the Diaspora, who are quite comfortable in their homes, may not relate to a prayer that pleads with G-d to speedily return them to Israel. Such an idea may be acceptable in a spiritual, theoretical sense, but when tied to a prayer for the sovereign Jewish state, it may be difficult to accept.

Others find the triumphant nature of the prayer problematic. In my own congregation in Israel, there is a constant debate over the words that ask G-d to grant the defenders of the land with "victory." Why do we need to ask for military victory in addition to peace, as if war is an inevitable, permanent part of living in Israel?

These tensions have led many religious leaders to rewrite the prayer in a way that expresses love and devotion to the State of Israel, without the Messianic overtones and with less of the triumphant spirit of the original.

The Prayer for the Welfare of the State of Israel is the product of one of the great creative avenues within Judaism: the crafting of religious poetry and liturgy that expresses our basic desires and beliefs. Over the centuries some of this literature has touched the community deeply and has made its way into the liturgy. Whether or not the Prayer for the Welfare of the State of Israel (in its present form) will be universally adopted still is an open question. In any case, this prayer is an eloquent and moving religious expression of the Zionist dream. □

J

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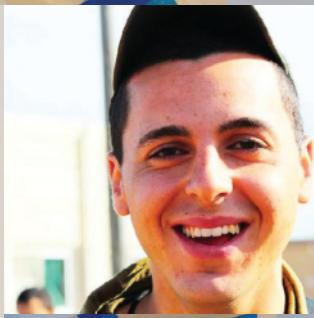
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Taste of Memories Project

In Memory of Sean Carmeli

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This project brings together memories of a fallen IDF soldier through cooking and storytelling. The first 50 families to register will receive FREE ingredients!



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BGU's new school tackles global climate change

BEERSHEVA, Israel – Ben-Gurion University of the Negev has created Israel's first School of Sustainability and Climate Change, an interdisciplinary research and innovation initiative to tackle the world's most pressing environmental issues.

"The School of Sustainability and Climate Change is based on five decades of accumulated knowledge, experience and scientific research in the Negev," said BGU president, Prof. Daniel Chamovitz. "It is a natural step for the university, acknowledged globally for its environmental, energy and sustainability research, to harness that research in service to humankind's greatest challenges. We will be investing resources and recruiting partners to create the next generation of climate and environmental solutions."

"BGU has been a leader in climate-change research since its inception, due in part to the remarkable talent among its faculty and students, as well as the university's location in Israel's Negev Desert," said Doug Seserman, chief executive officer of American Associates, Ben-Gurion university of the Negev. "By realizing David Ben-Gurion's vision, BGU plays a critical role as a driving force of sustainable growth in the region. AABGU is proud to partner with BGU on The School of Sustainability and Climate Change."



Volunteers from Ben-Gurion University, including President Prof. Daniel Chamovitz, clean up tar from the Nitzanim beach after the recent catastrophic oil spill in the Mediterranean off the coast of Israel.

The new school will incorporate internationally renowned scientists from BGU's Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, as well as those in various

departments including Geography and Environmental Development, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Life Sciences, Health Sciences and Environmental

Engineering. They will collaborate with students on a range of areas, such as renewable natural resources, environmental and sustainability policy, and management. The multidisciplinary approach will strengthen research being carried out in numerous fields, including water, food security, clean energy, environmental engineering, public health and social justice.

"Researchers have a critical role to play in tackling climate change," said Prof. Yaron Ziv, School of Sustainability and Climate Change steering committee member. "We will offer attractive dual-department degrees for graduates and undergraduates, and we are already working on creating collaborations with industry, the government and international organizations."

"Climate change is this generation's great challenge," said Prof. Chamovitz. "What was once a local problem has transformed into a global crisis. Large-scale desalination and drip irrigation, climate-adapted agriculture and advanced-energy technologies emerged out of necessity here in the Negev. Survival in the desert has always been predicated on human ingenuity and, given the challenges facing the world, we are committed to sharing our knowledge through the creation of the BGU School of Sustainability and Climate Change." □



Israel Independence Day

Yom Ha'atzmaut

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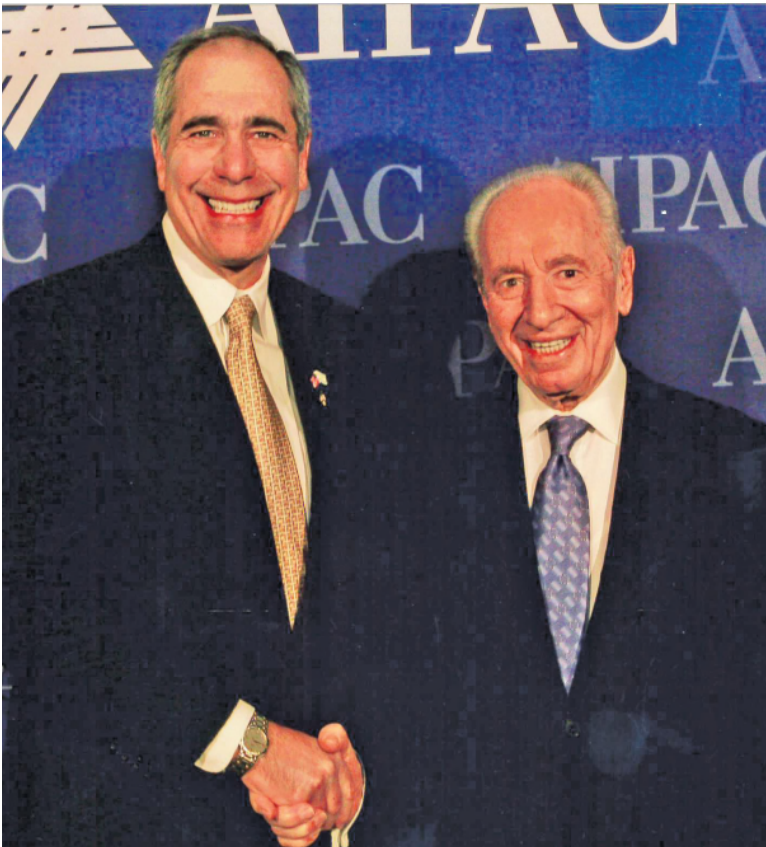
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Roger Sofer with Israeli President Shimon Peres



Roger Sofer inside an Israeli Apache helicopter. Sofer had been in the Air Force and was fascinated by the Israel jet p



Sarah and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with Roger Sofer



Roger Sofer with United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair



Roger and Linden Sofer with Israel Ambassador to the United States Michael and Sally Oren



Roger Sofer with Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces Moshe "Bogie" Ya'alon

“It was Roger’s passion and unyielding dedication for a strong alliance between the United States and Israel that defined his community work and made him an iconic leader in Houston and beyond.”
– Israel Bonds Houston



Israeli Amb



Roger Sofer with U.S. Senator John and Sandy Corn



Mr. Israel

Roger Sofer remembered as best friend of Israel



Roger Sofer and his wife Linden

It is fitting, on Israel's anniversary, to honor a Houstonian who devoted more than 40 years to supporting Israel. Affectionately known by friends as "Mr. Israel," Roger Sofer died of a rare form of leukemia on March 10. "Yes, Roger has left us," said longtime friend Gary Swartz, "but he left a community of people that he has educated and encouraged to be more pro-Israel, not just in our Jewish community, but nationwide. He is gone, but his legacy is still there."

"Roger had many heroes in his life – but the greatest hero of them all was his father, Hyman Sofer. Roger always reminded us of what his father taught him. 'Don't worry about your business, Roger. Because if there is no Israel, there is no business.' His father's words meant everything to Roger, and he shared that line with everyone."

Swartz said, "Roger met all of the political leaders of the Israeli government and many of the military over the past four decades. ... He was 'ALL IN' for Israel, and his passion knew no bounds."

"At Israel Bond dinners ... and other gatherings, Roger would tell stories about Jews enduring difficult times for over 2,000 years, and prayed for a return to Israel! He would always get emotional and cry – and then make a pitch for Israel Bonds. When he finished ... people were wiping the tears from their eyes with a handkerchief in one hand, while filling out their pledge cards with the other."

Israel Bonds Houston Council reflected on the loss of Roger Sofer: "It was Roger's passion and unyielding dedication for a strong alliance between the United States and Israel that defined his community work and made him an iconic leader in Houston and beyond."

Roger first got involved in AIPAC in the early 1980s. His mentor was long-time strong advocate for Israel and AIPAC national board member, Melvin Dow. AIPAC regional executive, Elias Saratovsky, shared that Roger joined the AIPAC national board a year after 9/11. "Roger felt the weight of his responsibility as an AIPAC national board member during this very precarious time in history," said Saratovsky. "Roger's passion, decency, razor-sharp wit and unrelenting 'get-it-done' attitude were exactly what the pro-Israel community needed."

"... No one built genuine personal relationships better than Roger. Roger knew and often used the famous quote from Teddy Roosevelt: 'Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.' Roger cared deeply about providing reliable and accurate information to members of Congress and other political and business leaders."

"'OUR Israel' embodied Roger's perspective of Israel. It was OUR Israel. It was OUR Israel to enjoy. But, it was also OUR Israel to defend. It was OUR Israel to safeguard. It wasn't enough to enjoy Israel. It was also OUR responsibility to ensure it would thrive for future generations. Roger felt that responsibility every single day."

In Rabbi Brian Strauss' eulogy, he said Roger's "No. 1 goal was to create, inspire and mentor young leaders. Ones that would take his place one day! What an extraordinary legacy that will continue to bless this family, our community, the State of Israel and the entire Jewish world for many, many years to come. His memory will remain as a valued example for future generations."

A special THANK YOU to Roger's devoted wife Linden who supported and participated in his many efforts in behalf of Israel!

May the memory of Roger Sofer, Shmuel Zavel ben Chaim haLevi v'Raisel, always be for a blessing!



Roger Sofer at a Jewish National Fund event



ambassador to the United State Danny Ayalon with Roger Sofer



Roger Sofer with U.S. President George W. Bush and Linden Sofer



yn in Israel



Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak with Roger Sofer



Linden Sofer with U.S. Rep Mike McCaul and Roger Sofer



The Declaration, establishing the State of Israel in May 1948

From MYJEWISHVIRTUALLIBRARY.ORG

On the day the British Mandate over Palestine expired – Friday, May 14, 1948 – the Jewish People's Council gathered at the Tel Aviv Museum to declare the establishment of the State of Israel. There is no record of who attended the meeting, but 350 invitations were sent out, instructing the recipients to keep the information secret.

Word got out, however, and people started singing Hatikvah in the streets, even before David Ben-Gurion began reading the declaration he had written.

The ceremony was held at 4 p.m., before the British left, to avoid making the declaration on Shabbat. It took 17 minutes to read the entire document in a 32-minute ceremony. Some people signed the declaration later, and one person signed twice. Four hours later, Egypt bombed Tel Aviv. The new state was recognized that night by the United States and three days later by the USSR.

The Declaration

ERETZ-ISRAEL (the Land of Israel) was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, ma'pilim (immigrants coming to Eretz-Israel in defiance of restrictive legislation) and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.

This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people – the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe – was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the community of nations.

Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Israel, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland.

In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom- and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations.

On the 29th November, 1947, the United

Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

ACCORDINGLY WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER ERETZ-ISRAEL AND, BY VIRTUE OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC RIGHT AND ON THE STRENGTH OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HEREBY DECLARE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH STATE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

WE DECLARE that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel."

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

WE APPEAL – in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months – to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

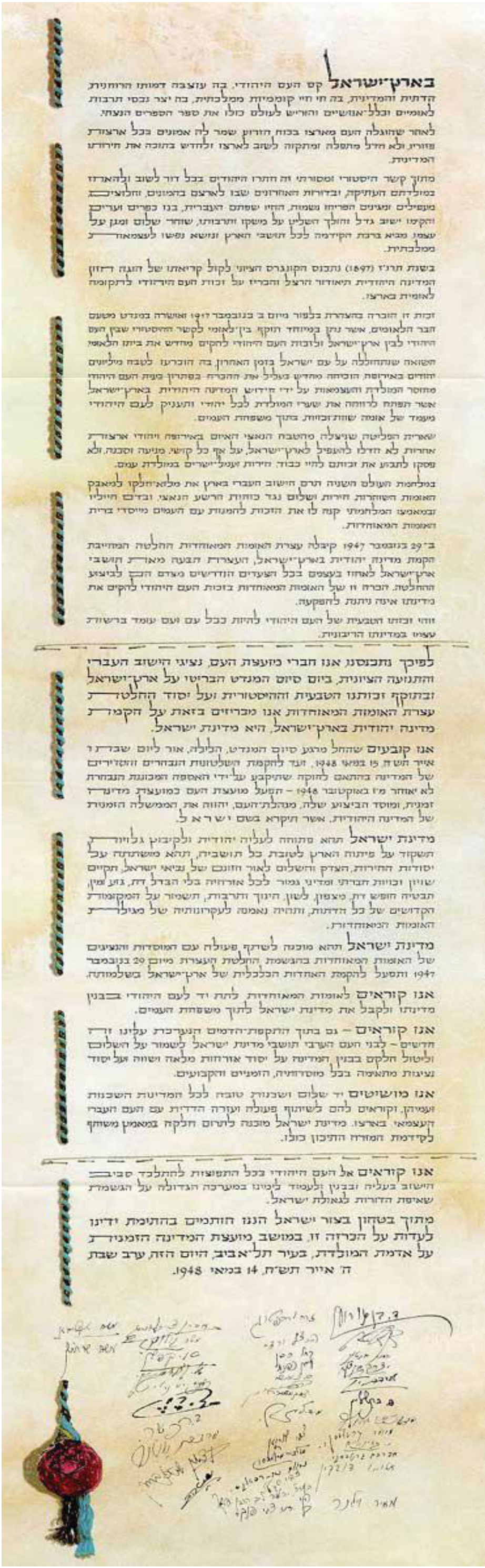
WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream – the redemption of Israel.

PLACING OUR TRUST IN THE A-MIGHTY, WE AFFIX OUR SIGNATURES TO THIS PROCLAMATION AT THIS SESSION OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE, ON THE SOIL OF THE HOMELAND, IN THE CITY OF TEL-AVIV, ON THIS SABBATH EVE THE 5TH DAY OF IYAR, 5708 - 14TH MAY, 1948.

Nachum Nir
Ben Zion Sternberg
Eliyahu Dobkin
Zvi Segal
Bekhor Shitreet
Meir Wilner-Kovner
Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hacohen
Fishman
Moshe Shapira
Zerach Wahrhaftig
Moshe Shertok
Herzl Vardi

David Ben-Gurion
Rabbi Kalman Kahana
Aharon Zisling
Yitzhak Ben Zvi
Sa'adia Kobashi
Daniel Auster
Rachel Cohen
David Zvi Pinkas
Mordechai Bentov
Moshe Kolodny
Eliyahu Berligne
Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Levin
Eliezer Kaplan

Fritz Bernstein
Abraham Katznelson
Rabbi Wolf Gold
Meir David Loewenstein
Felix Rosenbluth
Meir Grabovsky
David Remez
Yitzchak Gruenbaum
Zvi Luria
Berl Repetur
Dr. Abraham Granovsky
Golda Myerson
Mordekhai Shattner



March is marked by mega investments in Israeli companies

By ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN |
ISRAEL21C.ORG

March 2021 saw an unusual number of funding rounds for Israeli companies, topping \$100 million.

The most money was raised by Next Insurance, which completed a \$250 million funding round at a valuation of \$4 billion.

Next brings affordable, tailored insurance products to small businesses and self-employed people in the United States, and recently began a partnership with Amazon to offer digital insurance for the first time through the Amazon Business Prime platform.

It was the second \$250 million raise for Next in the past six months and brings the five-year-old startup's total investments to \$881 million. This round was led by FinTLV Ventures and Battery Ventures.

Next Insurance employees celebrate a \$250 million funding round, bringing the company's valuation to \$4 billion.

Ecommerce marketing platform developer Yotpo got \$230 million in Series F funding, led by Bessemer Venture Partners and Tiger Global.

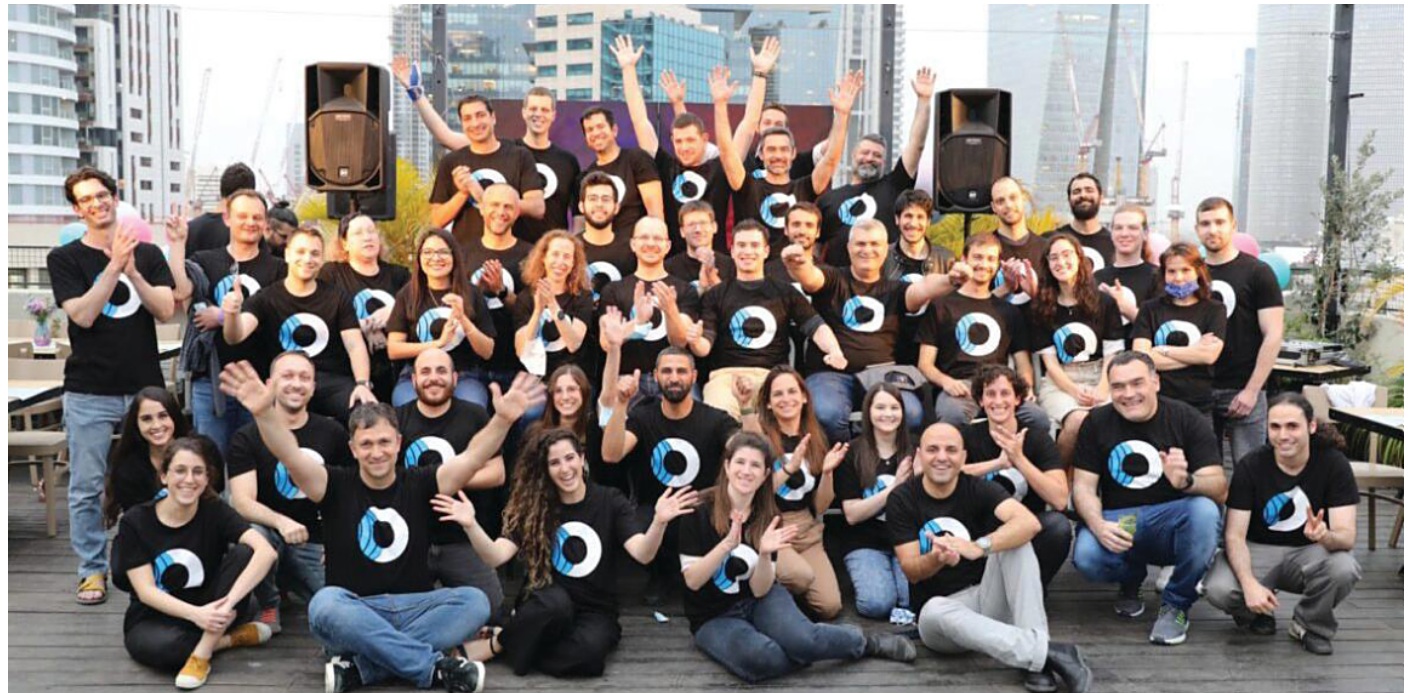
At a valuation at \$1.4 billion, Yotpo now joins Israel's fast-growing list of unicorns.

With offices in New York, London, Israel and Bulgaria, Yotpo serves customers such as Patagonia, Revolution Beauty, Brooklinen, Steve Madden and Princess Polly.

Orca Security also became a unicorn, landing \$210 million in Series C funding at a \$1.2 billion valuation. The cloud cybersecurity company has raised a total of nearly \$300 million since its founding two years ago.

By the end of 2021, Orca Security plans to have nearly tripled its R&D and sales teams since its A round in May 2020. The company also aims to expand its sales offices in Europe and open an office in Australia.

Another cloud security startup, Wiz,



Orca Security celebrates its \$210 million funding round, March 2021.

COURTESY OF ORCA SECURITY

raised \$130 million in March, at a valuation of \$1.7 billion. It's only been four months since Wiz emerged from stealth with the announcement of a \$100 million funding round.

Headquartered in Tel Aviv and Palo Alto, Wiz was founded in March 2020 by a group led by Assaf Rappaport, formerly head of Microsoft's Cloud Security Group.

Software development acceleration platform Incredibuild, founded in 2018, raised \$140 million from Insight Partners to help expand its U.S. operations.

More than 800 customers, including Microsoft, Amazon, Citibank, Barclays, Adobe, Disney, Intel, Samsung, EPIC Games and Nintendo, use Incredibuild to accelerate the development cycle, from code compilation to testing to release automation.

See Investments on 11B



Yotpo COO Omri Cohen and CEO Tomer Tagrin.

MOR SHANI

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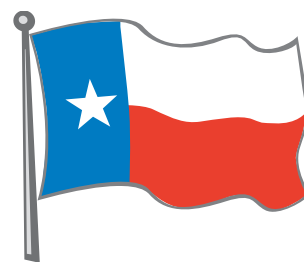
I am very proud and humbled to have the privilege to serve through at least 2024!

– Judge Mike Engelhart

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BGU US-based study: High-level radiation can be healthful

BEERSHEVA, Israel – Surprisingly, exposure to a high-background radiation might actually lead to clear beneficial health effects in humans, according to Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Nuclear Research Center Negev scientists. This is the first large-scale study that examines the two major sources of background radiation (terrestrial radiation and cosmic radiation), covering the entire U.S. population.

The study's findings recently were published in Biogerontology.

Background radiation is an ionizing radiation that exists in the environment because of natural sources. In their study, BGU researchers show life expectancy is approximately 2.5 years longer among people living in areas with a relatively high versus low background radiation.

Background radiation includes radiation emanating from space and radiation from terrestrial sources. Since the 1960s, there has been a linear, no-threshold hypothesis guiding policy that any radiation level carries some risk. Hundreds of billions of dollars around the world are spent to reduce radiation levels as much as possible.

"Decades of scientific theory are potentially being disproven by the remarkable researchers at BGU," said Doug Seserman, chief executive officer, American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. "These findings might even provide a sense of relief for those who reside in areas in the U.S. with higher-than-average background radiation."

According to BGU Profs. Vadim Fraiefeld and Marina Wolfson, along with Dr. Elroei

David of the Nuclear Research Center Negev, lower levels of several types of cancers were found when the radiation levels were on the higher end of the spectrum, rather than on the lower end.

Among both men and women, there was a significant decrease in lung, pancreatic, colon and rectal cancers. Among men, there were additional decreases in brain and bladder cancers. There was no decrease in cervix, breast or prostate cancers or leukemia.

Using the United States Environmental Protection Agency's radiation-dose calculator, the researchers retrieved data about background radiation from all 3,129 U.S. counties. The study's data regarding cancer rates was retrieved from the United States Cancer Statistics. Life-expectancy data was retrieved from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington Medical Center.

"It is reasonable to suggest that a radiation threshold does exist, yet it is higher than the upper limit of the natural background radiation levels in the U.S. (227 mrem/year)," the researchers write. "These findings provide clear indications for reconsidering the linear no-threshold paradigm, at least within the natural range of low-dose radiation."

Fraiefeld and Wolfson are members of the BGU Shraga Segal Department of Microbiology, Immunology, and Genetics in the Faculty of Health Sciences and members of the Center for Multidisciplinary Research on Aging. David is a BGU graduate and now is a senior scientist at the Nuclear Research Center Negev. □



International March of the Living to hold virtual Israel birthday

Enabling communities to experience Yom Ha'atzmaut as one global community, the International March of the Living program, "Salute to Israel's 73rd Birthday," sponsored by Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael, includes panoramic views of Israel's natural beauty and a special performance by Israel Army Choir and Chief Cantor Shai Abramson. The event will take place on Thursday, April 15, 6:30 p.m. Additional broadcasts, to be announced later, will take place in multiple languages.

"This first-ever virtual celebration for Israel's Yom Ha'atzmaut has been entirely produced by alumni of March of the Living, for the benefit of our global Jewish community and friends of Israel," lauded March of the Living president, Phyllis Greenberg Heideman.

The broadcast will focus on Holocaust survivors who helped establish the State of Israel "and we remember, respect and cherish their unique contribution for the Jewish state in the Land of Israel," added Heideman.

Many Holocaust survivor stories have never been told, others forgotten with time – yet their relevance and impact remain profound. These include the story of Brigadier Gen. (Ret.) Dr. Yitzhak Arad, past chair of Yad Vashem, and former Soviet partisan, who fought in Israel's 1948 War of Independence and later in the 1967 Liberation of Jerusalem.

"Salute to Israel's 73rd Birthday" also features Olympic athlete Henry HersHKovitz, who survived the 1972

Munich massacre, and Avraham Carmi, an educator who was taken captive by Jordanian forces during the War of Independence.

Dr. Shmuel Rosenman, chair of March of the Living, stressed that "this year's broadcast will enable March of the Living alumni, who have taken on the custom to travel to Jerusalem and Latrun each Independence Day, to join with Jewish communities and friends of Israel and celebrate together."

More than 25 countries and dozens of MOTL communities will participate in the program – sharing video and photo submissions that capture the essence of Israel – while MOTL representatives commemorate Israel's 73rd anniversary in a festive tree-planting ceremony. In addition, new immigrants, who made aliyah following their participation in MOTL, will share their special stories.

The complimentary 45-minute program will utilize a state-of-the-art broadcasting studio. It will launch on April 15 at 6:30 p.m., and will be available on-demand, earlier on April 15, for European and other audiences

March of the Living has taken place 33 times since 1988, attracting more than 265,000 alumni from 40 countries. During COVID times, MOTL continues to offer virtual programming to commemorate Yom Hashoah as well as Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Register in advance at motl.org/israel73/#form. □

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Next Insurance employees celebrate a \$250 million funding round, bringing the company's valuation to \$4 billion.

Investments

From 9B

Cyber is hot

The large investments won in March by cybersecurity companies such as Orca, Wiz and CYE (which raised \$120 million in February) – plus others, such as SecuriThings, Vulcan Cyber and Cynet that raised less than \$100 million each – adds up to a record-breaking \$1.5 billion for Israeli cyber startups in the first quarter of 2021.

In all of 2020, which was a record year, Israeli cyber raised a total of \$2.9 billion.

Kobi Samboursky, founder and managing partner at Glilot Capital Partners – Israel's first cybersecurity venture fund, started about 10 years ago – acknowledged that the sector is sizzling, thanks to the pandemic.

"With COVID, many people managing public and private money realized technology is the way to go, and cyber defense, specifically, became stronger because, just like the good guys are going more digital, so are the bad guys," Samboursky told ISRAEL21c.

He explained that until about two years ago, cybersecurity was about

protecting endpoints and networks.

"Now, because of the move to the cloud, companies need to redo their security solutions, and there's a real opportunity to create big companies because you're getting into an empty space and have a big advantage over traditional companies," he said.

"There may be bubbles and inflated valuation here and there, but all in all, there is merit to what is happening now, given the need to rebuild the security stack for cloud-native security."

Samboursky expects cyber to remain a strong sector in Israel "because of the talent coming out of the military and a strong base of internationals here. It's the perfect place to start a cyber company. I would dare to say we are not even second to Silicon Valley in this sector. Israel became like a brand name in cyber."

For more than 16 years, ISRAEL21c has brought readers the faces and places of Israel every day, spreading the word about Israel to millions of people in virtually every country around the globe. First of its kind, ISRAEL21c content is originally researched, written and produced by seasoned experts directly from Israel. For more content, go to israel21c.org. Copyright israel21c.org.



Immigrants and independence days

It sure helps to be an immigrant when it comes to celebrating your country's independence day.

Immigrants, especially if they have come as adults, are especially appreciative of their new country. They have a sense of what their lives would have been like in their native countries; they see what their lives are like now; and they almost always conclude that their immigration was an excellent move. For me, as an immigrant to Israel, a country with so many other immigrants, Yom Ha'aztmaut is joyous indeed.

Yom Ha'aztmaut actually marks two independences. Like several other nations in the mid-20th century (such as Algeria from France, Libya from Italy, and India from Britain), Israel broke free from old-world colonialism and achieved independence. But, Israel's independence also is celebrated by Jews the world-over as a day when the Jewish People became independent.

Yom Ha'aztmaut festivities emphasize this transition of the Jewish People from exile to sovereignty. Again and again, many of the people given honors during the course of Yom Ha'aztmaut (whether in lighting a torch at night or as recipients of the Israel Prize during the day) mention either their own immigration or their parents' or their grandparents'. The millions of Israelis tuning in to these festivities cannot help but sense a feeling of deep gratitude and appreciation for Israel as an ingathering of exiles.

The aspect of Yom Ha'aztmaut as "Jewish" independence continues to be particularly vibrant: Every immigrant to Israel has moved from a country with a Jewish minority culture to the world's only Jewish majority culture. Gone are our Jewish noses and our Jewish appearances in general; gone is our Jewish stinginess and our money-grubbing ways; gone is our physical weakness, our wimpiness and our unattractiveness.

With our aliyah, we are judged independently and not as representatives of the Jewish People, and we realize now how so many of the stereotypes about Jews are both incorrect and laced with antisemitism.

America, too, is known as a land of immigrants, but as with Irish Americans and Italian Americans, the Jewish immigrant generation almost completely has died out. For the vast majority of American Jews, therefore, the immigrant experience is a thing of the past – too far removed to make the Fourth of July into a meaningful independence day.

This sense is not to take away from the love that American Jews (myself included) have for America. And, on the Fourth of July, we are happy to feel and express this love in parades, fairs and fireworks, and to get a

lump in our throat when the "Star Spangled Banner" is played. But, joy for America's independence? Not really – that's too much of a given for us.

In mentioning the passing on of the American-Jewish immigrant generation, I want also to note that we are witnessing the end of a staple of American comedy: the Jewish accent. From Mel Brooks to Billy Crystal to Jerry Seinfeld, any time you wanted to play a Jewish person, you would signal this with a kind of Yiddish-accented English.

Millennial American Jews hardly will have run across such a speaker in person, and certainly their children won't. Part of me is wistful about this, though there is nothing particularly endearing about calling attention to a person's accent. At any rate, from here on in, if comedians want their audiences to laugh, they are going to have to be a lot more creative when they depict Jewish characters.

Happy Yom Ha'aztmaut!

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Notes from the homeland
TEDDY WEINBERGER

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