

FROM THE SHALIACH TO YOU THE SPECIAL YOM HA'ATZMAUT ISSUE!

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OPENING WORDS



Shalom Everyone - Yom Ha'Atzmaut Sameach!

Celebrating Home

It's that time of the year - Israel is celebrating its birthday! This year it's extra special because it's Israel's 75th Independence Day, or as I know it - Yom Ha'Atzmaut - always arrives with mixed feelings. The day before Yom Ha'Atzmaut, by law, is Yom HaZikaron, Israeli Memorial day. Growing up I was so confused - how does the law expects us to cry in the morning and then make that huge transition to celebration mode? How can we mourn our loved ones one minute and dance in the streets just minutes after? Yom HaZikaron was always really hard and emotional for me.

Ever since I joined the IDF, it's been way harder. It's our day to remember the soldiers, civilians, people, that died for and in the state of Israel. Those people have parents, siblings, loved ones - that from the moment they hear the knock at the door, announcing the loss of their loved ones, their lives changed. A lot of the soldiers are just 18-year-old kids who were sent to the front lines, as this is the Israeli reality. Those heroes are the reason I'm here today, they are the reason my family is still alive and well in Israel, and not just mine, million others. Only when I joined the IDF did I understood how important it is to serve - and how we shouldn't take for granted the existence of a Jewish state. The day got harder - I had real friends on the front lines, real recruits, and stories became things I saw and heard first hand, and not something distant that I saw on the news.

When thinking again about the timing of that day, I remembered a sentence one of my teachers in school told me, that the timing of all the Yom's (days) is to fulfill an idea - "משואה לתקומה" which means from the dark days of the Holocaust to rebirth and resurrection. We commemorate Yom HaShoah, followed by Yom HaZikaron, concluding with Yom Ha'Atzmaut, to remember who we lost prior to our celebration, to always remember that those people are the reason the Jewish Homeland prospers. This Joy mixed with sadness, is, in a way, the essence of Israeli life.

But life goes on. I would go back home, take off my uniform that I wore throughout the whole day for ceremonies, put on some festive clothes (trying to color coordinate blue and white as much as I can...) and go celebrate my home and the people that gave everything to protect it. This year it's really special, as we are celebrating Israel at it's 75th. Israel is more than a country - it's a culture, it's art, it's peoplehood, it's an environment, it's a feeling and, for the most part - it's home. Israel festivities are so big, it's such a unique feeling, everyone puts their differences aside and celebrates the place we call home. I'm really excited to celebrate our homeland's birthday with you - as I grew up there and it's home for me, and it is home for all of you too.

"במותם ציוו לנו את החיים - עם ישראל חי!"
יום עצמאות שמח!



With love,
Snir



Israeli Movie Recommendation

The Band/The Troupe

(Ha'Lehaka) - הלהקה

This classic is more than just a film - "The Band," released in 1978, was well received by critics and audiences alike, eventually developing a cult following. The film, which revolves around the tales of a well-known IDF military troupe, was the first big movie to talk about struggles in the army, and gave the people of Israel something to relate to, as almost everyone in Israel serve in the IDF. The movie shows the battles, emotions - sad and happy, moments of teens joining the army, and everything that unfolds in that. The film takes inspiration from the real-life Nahal troupe, and, in a way, criticizes the culture around them.



This movie, which falls under the drama and musical comedy categories, tells the story of three new members of the troupe, being hazed at first, as one of them falls in love with an old troupe member. The choir's leader, in preparation for a television appearance, rehearses the troupe so much they revolt. The music, intertwined throughout the movie, became the soundtrack of Israel - if you will. Those songs, originally sang by the Nahal troupe, gained massive popularity after the release of the movie, and are sung up until this day in important gatherings and ceremonies. For a lot of the actors, it was a breakout role, and they gained popularity because of this movie. Today it is an Israeli tradition to watch it every Yom Ha'Atzmaut. You don't want to miss this milestone of Israeli cinema! *This movie is available to rent on the Israeli Films Center website. Click the poster to watch.

Israeli TV Recommendation

Be Happy and Rejoice

(Sisu VeSimchu) - שישו ושמחו

From one IDF troupe to the other - this musical comedy is about the IDF's Rabanut Band. Their mission is to perform in front of the units and raise the army's spirit. But the choir hasn't been performing lately, not in front of soldiers and even not at their favorite event: The International Bible Contest. A new rockstar and troublemaker joins the band, and this may change everything for them... This sweet, heartfelt gem is exactly what you need for a pre-Yom Ha'Atzmaut binge! *This series is available to watch on the Kan11 Website. Click the poster to watch.



Israeli Book Recommendation

A Trumpet in the Wadi

(Hatzutzra Ba'Wadi) - חצוצרה בוואדי

My first encounter with this novel was when I was a junior in high school, when I choose to take AP literature. I love reading books, but the ones I choose, and not the ones school chooses for me. Reading a novel about a love story set in Wadi Nisnas in Haifa didn't seem really interesting to me. I started reading it and I understood I was terribly wrong. This novel, written by Sami Michael and published in 1987, details a love story between a Russian Jewish immigrant and an Arab Christian woman, the complexity of their love and life in Israel. This novel is an honest and heartbreaking story of impossible love and the strength of family.



Using the tool of storytelling through the eyes of Huda, the main character, we navigate through life in Israel, and learn about its beauty and depth. Michael's internationally-acclaimed novel is a major achievement, illuminating the vast range of interlocking relationships between Jews and Arabs, Muslims and Christians, men and women. The novel gained wide recognition and has been adapted for the stage five times in Israel, as well as for a film in 2001. I'm a big believer in art as a bridge that can connect cultures and people - and this novel does just that. You can purchase a copy by clicking the poster above.

☆ What's Happening in Israel? ☆



In light of [Yom HaZikaron](#), I invite you to watch a special music video of the song "Sad Roses", dedicated to Daniel Pomerantz z"l. Daniel was killed during the 2014 Operation Protective Edge. The music video is followed by a recording of Daniel's last phone call with his mother. May his memory be a blessing. [Watch HERE.](#)

The calendar images are clickable and have more details! Also, for more information about those special days, please don't hesitate to reach out! (Contacts on the last page).

Israel News

Good Deeds Day is Taking Over Israel (and the World!)



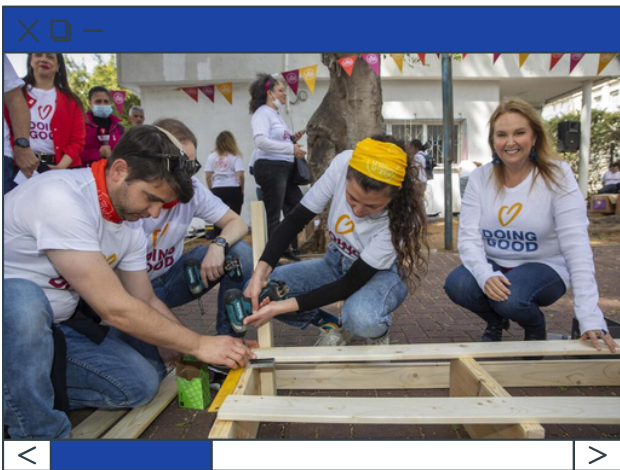
Back in 2007, Israeli businesswoman and philanthropist Shari Arison, launched a day of community service through Ruach Tova (Good Spirit) - a non-profit organization connecting people with volunteer opportunities. the first Good Deeds Day kicked off with 7,000 volunteers in Israel. Every year since, Good Deeds Day unites people from around the world for one day dedicated to Doing Good. Speaking about the day, initiator Shari Arison said: "I believe that if people will think good, speak good and do good, the circles of goodness will grow in the world."



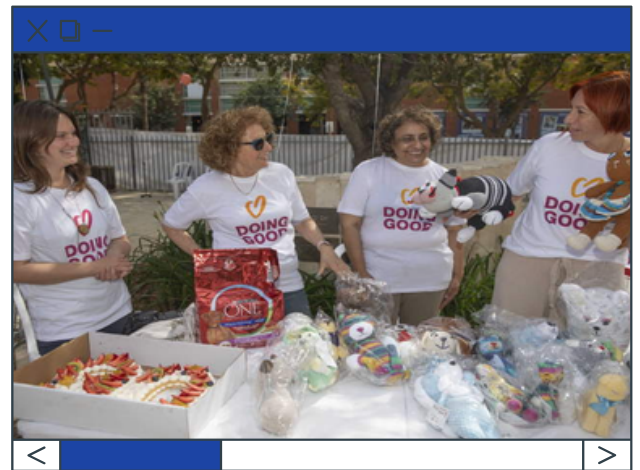
Good Deeds Day Kids Volunteers

Sixteen years later, over 2 millions Israelis are taking a part in this year's Good Deeds programs. The slogan for this year is "חושבים טוב, מדברים טוב, עושים טוב" which means "Think Good, Talk Good, Do Good" with the idea of creating a critical mass of people doing good, with everyone doing something, big or small, according to their ability. "Good Deeds Day has the power to create bridges of love. Everyone carries their own truth, but together we can spread affinity and fulfil the cause of doing good," said Arison about this year's Good Deeds Day.

Good Deeds Day has been around for a while, and it is observed all over the world, including Washington D.C.! The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington has been offering a variety of volunteer options with some still ongoing! You can check [their website](#) and see where you can give back.



Shari Arison with Good Deeds Day volunteers



Good Deeds Day volunteers in Israel

What's Going on?

★KESTY Weekend!

Just before we left for spring break, it was important to us to send off our Temple youth with a bang! For the KESTY weekend, we had events for all age groups, and it was a blast!

NFTY x KESTY event on 3/25

We had great time with Jewish teens from all around the DMV area! We played games, made care kits for the Grate Patrol (as part of Good Deeds Week and March Mitzvah Madness!), made arts and crafts (tie-dye, blackout poetry and reusable water bottles), did Havdalah together and enjoyed great food and s'mores, and so much more! It was so much fun and we can't wait for our next lounge night on 5/2!



KESTY Katan Movie Screening on 3/26

Right before Passover, we sat down to watch the classic movie - "The Prince of Egypt", and it was so much fun! We had a huge variety of snacks with a popcorn and candy bar and we enjoyed watching this amazing movie with friends!



KESTY 3456 Tie-Dye Blowout on 3/26

Our 3rd-6th Graders enjoyed some creativity time in the form of a Tie-Dye Blowout! We got to design our own shoes, hats and so much more, and the results look beautiful! It was so much fun, can't wait for the next one!



On The Horizon



Weekend - April 28-30

Israel is turning 75 - and it's a big deal! We invite you to join us for this monumental occasion. It is a time to celebrate Israel's culture, peoplehood and legacy. We are offering events and programs all weekend long, so grab your white and blue articles of clothing and celebrate with us all weekend!

4/28 @ 6PM - Israeli Dinner with Panel - Israel at 75: Pitfalls and Promise

Our Israel @ 75 celebration weekend kicks off with a delectable Israeli dinner followed by a panel discussion. Come learn from our panel of experts about what is happening in our homeland and how we can have a voice in Israel's next 75 years. The Shabbat Service will ask you to consider, "what does Israel mean to you?" The service will be celebratory and include special prayers and songs to mark the occasion. (Dinner cost: \$18/adult, \$10/under 10) [RSVP HERE!](#)

4/29 @ 10AM - Simchat Shabbat and Israeli Brunch

Our Simchat Shabbat service on April 29 will be Israel-themed and feature Israeli music and participation by our 7th Grade students. The oneg lunch will feature delicious Israeli food. Please join us for Shabbat services and a celebration of Israel's 75th anniversary!

4/30 - Israel at 75 Fair for our Religious School

Temple Emanuel's Religious School is taking a field trip to Israel! All morning, students and parents will enjoy activities, displays, and an virtual Israel Museum. You'll meet Sergeant Jonah, an IDF Drill Sergeant in full uniform, taste Israeli food, learn about Israeli culture, and dance with the University of Maryland's Israeli dance troupe, Avirah. All of this takes place during Religious School hours (9-11 AM). No RSVP necessary - just bring your ruach (spirit), wear your blue and white spirit colors, and help us celebrate the State of Israel's 75th anniversary!

Adult Ed Classes with me - 4/19 and 4/26

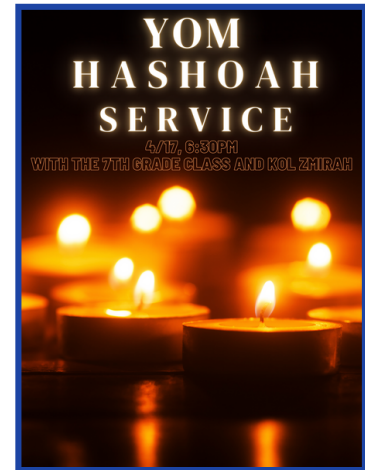
Our Adult Ed class conversations are going great, and I invite you to join us on 4/19 and 4/26, 12-1:30pm to learn more about Israel culture and peoplehood! 4/26 is also the date of Yom Ha'Atzmaut, so come celebrate with us! [RSVP HERE.](#)



On The Horizon

Yom HaShoah Service - 4/17 @ 6:30PM

Join us on the evening of 4/17 at 6:30pm as we commemorate Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, in a special, touching service led by our 7th graders.



KESTY Lounge Night - 5/2 @ 7:30PM

For the last Lounge Night of the year - join us for a special Bonfire, some hot cocoa and S'mores, while learning about our upcoming Board Elections! It'll be a great night filled with music, friends and fun! Hope to see you all there!

KESTY Elections - 5/13!

As we're getting ready for another great year of KESTY, I invite you to come and vote for your 2023-2024 Board! More details soon!



An Opportunity to Give Back for Israel 75th Friends of the IDF - FIDF

It's no secret that my IDF service changed my life. It's one of the most challenging and empowering experiences I ever had, and it's not just me - it's thousands of other soldiers. Those heroes are the reason we are celebrating Israel's Birthday, and I think we should thank them.

Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF) is a non-political, non-military organization, established in 1981 by a group of Holocaust survivors, that provides for wellbeing of the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), veterans, and family members.

Friends of the IDF is the sole organization authorized to collect charitable donations on behalf of the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces across the United States of America. FIDF's mission is to transform their young lives through empowering educational, financial, well-being, and cultural initiatives. Every day, the young people of the IDF put their lives on the line to protect the Jewish homeland. FIDF is wholeheartedly committed to providing these courageous young people with a better everyday life and brighter future.

I invite you to check the FIDF's website and see how you can change the lives of our brave soldiers -

www.fidf.org



Time for Food!

Israeli Falafel and Hummus Recipe

I share with you a recipe from Israel every month, but for this special issue, it feels mandatory to include a falafel and hummus recipe. Israeli cuisine is a mixture of cultures from different parts of the world, and although both dishes are not "originally" from Israel, they became a synonym for Israeli cuisine, and for a reason. Those delectable dishes are addictive and easy to make, no surprise they are so popular! My grandmother's recipe is delicious, but nothing beats a pita with falafel from an unknown tiny stand in the shouk. Until you go to Israel - the recipes you'll find here are close to the real deal, they're really simple (the food processor basically does all the work for you) and can bring the flavors of Israel and Yom Ha'Atzmaut to your home. Have fun and Bon Appetit ! בתאבון



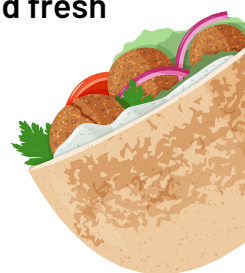
Ingredients

For the Falafel:

- 2 cups of dry garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
- A handful of cilantro
- A handful of parsley
- 2 medium sized onions, cut into quarters
- 5 cloves of garlic
- 2 teaspoons of cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 3 teaspoons of water
- Vegetable oil for deep frying

Directions

- Soak the dry garbanzo beans in water for at least 12 hours and up until 24 hours.
- Rinse the beans and transfer into a food processor.
- To the food processor, add the parsley, cilantro, onion and garlic and blend until a homogenous batter forms.
- Transfer the batter into a different bowl and add all of the other ingredients. mix well and let sit for 20 minutes.
- After the batter has rested, make small balls and set aside; in the meantime, heat up the oil.
- When the oil is hot, fry until the falafel balls are golden, serve immediately with pita, some tahini and fresh vegetables ! בתאבון



Time for Food!

Israeli Falafel and Hummus Recipe

Ingredients

For the Hummus:

- 2 cups of dry garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ a cup fresh lemon juice
- ¾ a cup tahini
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 teaspoons of cumin

Directions

- Soak the dry garbanzo beans in water with a tablespoon of salt for at least 8 hours or overnight.
- Rinse the beans and transfer into a big pot.
- Cover the beans with water, add the baking soda (no salt!) and cook for a least an hour, up until the beans are soft and skins are floating.
- Scoop the skins and let the pot cool.
- Transfer the beans to a food processor with some cooking water (at least half a cup), add the garlic and gradually add the lemon and tahini, to your desired consistency. make sure not to over-process.
- Taste and add spices to your liking.
- Serve immediately with a drizzle of olive oil, tahini and paprika. I recommend "scooping" or as we say in Israel "wiping" (לנגב) the hummus with fresh pita or onion (it's amazing!).
- Happy Yom Ha'Atzmaut and **בתאבון!**



The Way to Israel 75th - It's Here!

It's right around the corner! As we get closer to the big day (4/26, or 5 of Iyar, ה' באייר) I will share some fun facts, songs, videos and more about the beloved Jewish state!

I hope to see you at our Israel at 75 Weekend, 4/28-4/30!

Every year we celebrate Israel, while remembering the ones that gave their lives for our home, the Jewish homeland. Miriam Peretz is a mother that lost two of her sons during their service. Miriam is a role model and inspiration to me for her strength and way that she took what changed her life and used it to spread messages of hope and peace. Miriam won the Israel Prize in 2018, and you can watch her amazing [acceptance speech here](#).



ISRAEL'S 75TH BIRTHDAY
COUNTDOWN: 12 DAYS!

BABIES IN ISRAEL ARE 10 TIMES LESS LIKELY TO BE ALLERGIC TO PEANUTS THAN IN OTHER COUNTRIES. STUDIES SUGGEST IT'S BECAUSE THEY EAT BAMBA PEANUT SNACKS FROM AN EARLY AGE.



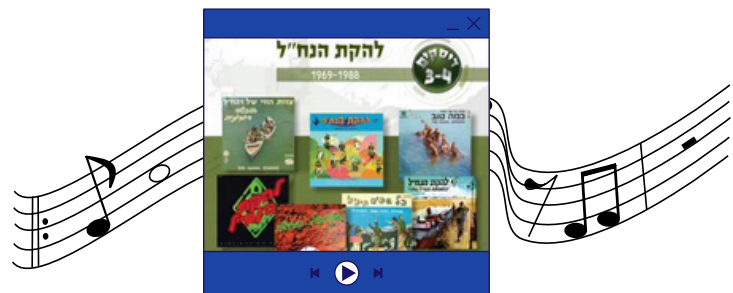
See You Later & Keep In Touch!

For any question or just to chat:
 Mobile: +1-240-204-3033
 WhatsApp: +972-54-984-6312 (Add to contacts and then you'll see me on the app)
 Email: youth@templeemanuelmd.org

That's it for this time!
 Hope you enjoyed this special Yom Ha'Atzmaut issue!
 I hope you're as excited as I am to celebrate Israel - our Jewish homeland.



Israeli Music Recommendation



The Song "Shir La'Shalom", שיר לשלום in Hebrew, or Song for Peace in English is a song that was composed during the War of Attrition in 1969 for the IDF Troupe Lehakat HaNahal. The song expressed the longing for peace and became a staple in Israeli culture. The song gained extra popularity when it was featured as the closing song of the Israeli pop culture hit movie "The Band" and ever since associated with Israeli Ruach. You can read the translated lyrics [here](#).