



# Shir Notes

The Official Newsletter of Congregation Shir Ami Volume 22, Number 5, May 2024. Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

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## Events of the Month

### Shabbat services at de Toledo and via Zoom and Livestream

Saturday, May 25 - 10:30 am  
Birthday and Anniversary Shabbat

### Shabbat Torah Study Saturday, May 11, 10:30 am at the Schroeders'

Stan Schroeder leads our monthly study and discussion session. See flyer for more information.

יום השואה



### Yom HaShoah

Yom Hashoah  
Holocaust  
Remembrance Day  
Monday, May 6



Yom Hazikaron  
Israel's Memorial Day  
Monday, May 13



Sunday  
May 14

Memorial Day  
Monday, May 29



Visit our website:  
[www.shirami.com](http://www.shirami.com)

## Rabbi's Column



We began counting the Omer on the second night of Pesach, which we will continue to do daily for 49 days, right through this month of May. The fiftieth day will be in June-- Shavuot, the holiday commemorating the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people.

What is this counting all about? What is the connection between Pesach and Shavuot? Why are we counting down with such anticipation to *Z'man Matan Torataynu*—the season of the giving of the Torah?

Consider: The Jews are freed from Egyptian bondage, but don't feel completely free until they bind themselves to the mitzvot of the Torah. Freedom without the discipline of law is mere anarchy. And so our celebration of Pesach is incomplete. We need the Torah. We need to feel not only a connectedness, but a sense of ownership of the mitzvot.

How important is this for we who dwell in the USA? Vital, because the freedom of America is killing the Jewish people. We have so embraced the notion of freedom that Jews feel this is license to be free from religious obligations.

We forget that America is a country bound by law, with our freedoms detailed in our founding documents, but relying on constraints to protect citizens' property and our pursuit of happiness.

This country's laws are a series of "Thou shalt nots," with rarely a "Thou shalt." Judaism has its share of negative law (Thou shalt not murder, steal, gossip, etc.); in fact 365 of the 613 mitzvot in the Torah are framed in the negative. But among the Torah's positive laws are Thou shalt love your neighbor as yourself, not stand idly by the blood of thy neighbor and observe the Shabbat.

We will never find such laws among this country's statutes. We do better telling people what they can't do than telling them what they should do. Acts of tzedakah, whether through the giving of charity or assisting the elderly, the poor or the sick, will always remain off the legislative books.

But while we might feel "commanded" to pay our taxes, we don't feel "commanded" to observe Jewish ritual. We might keep them if they make sense to us, work within the constraints of our life style, or require minimal inconvenience. But few within the Jewish community feel that these are Divinely ordained commandments (the definition of mitzvah).

And so we count the Omer, from Pesach to Shavuot. But with how much eager anticipation to we truly approach Shavuot? Is there something else we should be doing other than marking off each day on our calendar (if we are even doing that)?

(continued on page 2)



Yom Ha'atzmaut  
Israel's Independence Day  
Tuesday, May 14

Sunday, May 26 (starts Saturday night)  
33<sup>rd</sup> day of the counting of the omer



## President's Report

Welcome to a very unique May. Because of the Rabbi and Rebbitzin's traveling plans, we will only have one Shabbat service this May, so make the most of it. In fact, with only one Shabbat service, we all have a free Saturday to show up at our monthly Shabbat Torah Study Session led by our Ritual Vice-President, **Stan Schroeder**.



Even so, we will have three services in June to make up for it. Never let it be said that we don't give our members what they want.

May is also the month of Mother's Day and we are collecting **\$10 Target Gift Cards** for the mothers in the domestic violence shelters. We have always been great supporters of this effort and there's no reason why that shouldn't continue.

Our Program Committee is actively seeking out programs to schedule for this year. If you have any ideas for a programming event, let the Board know about it.

As the weather starts to warm up, we suggest everyone spend May getting in shape for our restored **Walk Around Lake Balboa** Sunday, June 2.

As always, if you have any questions or want to provide your input, please feel free to email me at [JDPistol@aol.com](mailto:JDPistol@aol.com).

Shalom, **Jordan Pistol**, President

## Rabbi David and Bonnie Vorspan to Attend March of the Living, Poland and Israel

The International March of the Living is an annual educational program, bringing individuals from around the world to Poland and Israel to study the history of the Holocaust and to examine the roots of prejudice, intolerance and hatred.



Since its inception in 1988, more than 300,000 alumni from 50 countries have marched down the same 3-kilometer path leading from Auschwitz to Birkenau on Holocaust Remembrance Day – Yom Hashoah – as a tribute to all victims of the Holocaust.

Following the March on Yom Hashoah, they go to Israel for a week over the Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut holidays.

## Rabbi's Column (continued)

I suggest we also count down to Shavuot as a personal challenge: will I, after study and preparation, bind myself to another mitzvah to show that I am truly free? Will I make discipline a part of my daily life by reading a chapter of the Torah, or study a Jewish text, or recite an evening prayer? Will Shavuot conclude the holiday of Pesach, or will we cut short our redemption, to wander aimlessly in the desert of American freedom?

Shavuot begins Tuesday evening, June 11<sup>th</sup>. We have until then to make up our minds.

## Rabbi David Vorspan

**Yom Hazikaron/Yom Ha'atzmaut Program at Valley Beth Shalom Monday, May 13 at 6:30 pm**  
by Stan Schroeder

Congregation Shi Ami is among 25 congregations and organizations sponsoring a community event at Valley Beth Shalom, 15739 Ventura Blvd. in Encino. Please see flyer, however it may be hard to read as the VBS website page didn't copy clearly. This is the essential paragraph.

**6:30-8pm Yom Hazikaron Commemoration followed by Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration with Performance by John Ondrasik, Five for Fighting**

Come together as a community to pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of Israel. Join with the Israeli Consul General, the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley Rabbis, Cantors and choirs and LA Jewish organizations to celebrate Israel's Independence, and share a hope for its future.

## Online Registration Required

**No charge - Bring ID - For security purposes, please register at [vbs.org/israel76](https://vbs.org/israel76)**

## WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL



# \$ DONATIONS

Congregation Shir Ami wishes to acknowledge the following donations:

## Yahrzeits

Nancy and Lonny Scharf for Dave Scharf, Rose Haas, and Merle Axelrod  
Bonnie and Rabbi Vorspan for Sandy Vorspan  
Judy Eisikowitz for Elsie Eisikowitz

## Birthdays

Lee Dollins  
Bonnie and Rabbi Vorspan for Ben Vorspan (44) and Yael and Gavi Sela (20)

## Anniversary

Bonnie and Rabbi Vorspan for Shaina Vorspan and Aaron Brenner (10)

## Other

Phyllis and Stan Schroeder for sale of Hametz

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### Birthdays

Debra Geffen..... 5/12  
Linda Tapper..... 5/19  
Jerry Kovar..... 5/21  
Gladys Sturman..... 5/30

### Anniversaries

Pat and Jerry Michaelson..... 5/15 36th

## Social Action Committee



We are collecting \$10 Target gift cards to the families in the domestic violence shelters for Mother's Day. This has been one of our Committee projects for many years. The mothers greatly appreciate your generosity. Either mail catds to

**Rebecca Finlay, 17603 Miranda St., Encino CA 91335**

or give them to a member of our Committee.

Our annual **Walk Around Lake Balboa** will take place Sunday, June 2nd at 9:00 am. This will be our first since Covid, and an oppurtunity to meet friends outdoors and support a community need. Registration required starting at 8:30 am All proceeds go to the **Rescue Alliance Valley Food Bank**. See the flyer for more information and to sign up and/or donate. You may call Becky at (747) 998-3804.

Please save all the greeting cards you do not need and bring them to services. **Claire Silverman** will accept them.

## Becky Finlay

Social Action Committee Vice President



## Congregational News

Get well wishes *rafuah schleimah* to:

- Phyllis Schroeder
- Steve Schuster
- Sheilah Hart
- Jerry Gort
- Lew Silverman
- Richard Kirshbaum



May they be blessed with a complete recovery in body and spirit.

## Congregation Shir Ami Tribute Cards

Our **Tribute Card Coordinator** will send your cards celebrating *simchas* and conveying your get-well and condolence messages.

Call **Helga Unkeless** at (818) 340-5751 or (preferably). email **Helgaunkeless@yahoo.com**

Minimum donation of \$5 per card is appreciated.



### **YOM HASHOAH 5784 May 6, 2024 (28 Nisan)**

**Stan Schroeder**

The tragedy of the Holocaust we can never forget;  
Six million Jews and countless more put to death.  
Millions of people whom I never met  
Slaughtered, butchered, gasping their last breath.

I must make certain they didn't die in vain.  
I must make certain their memory will last.  
I must ensure that their miserable trip by horrible train  
Is as real today as then, sixty years past.

Dachau, Auschwitz-Birkenau, other such places;  
Treblinka, Bergen-Belsen, Chelmno, to name a few.  
Millions of victims without any faces;  
Thousands of murderers as the mass graves grew.

Hitler and Himmler, Goebbels, Eichman, and Speer;  
Goring, Streicher, Heydrich, Donitz, and Hess:  
Men who dominated by instilling fear;  
Who controlled the Nazi party, military, and SS.

I must remember the places and names;  
I must remember the German Third Reich.  
The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games  
Was not what Germany was really like.

Because appearances can be deceiving  
And hatred and prejudice can be disguised;  
I must be vigilant, while always believing,  
Nazis are scheming to get history revised.

*Yom Hashoah* reminds us as well  
Of the tragedies we've lived through as Jews.  
Our brothers and sisters endured living hell  
So that we could now live as we choose.

From the ashes of the Shoah we've built a State,  
Israel will soon celebrate 76 years.  
And because of Israel we determine our fate,  
Not others to vanquish our fears,

Israel has survived through war after war,  
Many have fought and too many have died.  
Continuing to prepare for what is in store,  
We can look back with joy and with pride.

In Jerusalem *Yad Vashem* is a shrine,  
(Hebrew for a memorial and a name)  
The museum's exhibits follow a zigzag line;  
No experience is ever the same.

On this day I remember their stark terror,  
Of gas chambers instead of showers.  
And I vow never to make the fatal error  
Of not linking their situation to ours.

Hamas are the Nazis of our world today  
October 7 demonstrated the reason why  
We must support Israel in every way;  
Never again! Am Yisrael Chai!



## Mother's Day - My Yiddishe Momme

by Stan Schroeder

The Jewish religion and tradition honor mothers in many ways. The fifth commandment from Exodus 20:12 requires us to honor our father and mother that our days may be long upon the land that God gave us. We have four biblical matriarchs: **Sarah** (wife of Abraham, mother of Isaac), **Rebecca** (wife of Isaac, mother of Jacob and Esau), **Rachel** (wife of Jacob, mother of Joseph and Benjamin), and **Leah** (wife of Jacob, mother of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah). Apparently the mothers of Jacob's other four sons, **Zilpah** and **Bilhah**, handmaidens of Rachel and Leah, are not considered matriarchs. Other prominent biblical mothers include **Hannah**, **Bathsheba**, **Naomi**, and **Ruth**.

However, the most well known Jewish mother, your mother and mine, every Jewish person's mother, although created for **Sophie Tucker**, is **My Yiddishe Momme**. **Jack Yellen** and **Lou Pollack** wrote this iconic song for Sophie in 1925 following the death of her mother. Sophie was already a U.S. and European renowned singer. After her mother's death, she was so depressed she stopped performing. This sentimental ballad was seen both as a song of grief as well as the triumph of her immigrant, but courageous and powerful mother.



Here are a few excerpts about Sophie and her classic signature song.

The song was mostly played in large American cities where there were sizable Jewish audiences. Tucker explained, "Even though I loved the song and it was a sensational hit every time I sang it, I was always careful to use it only when I knew the majority of the house would understand Yiddish. However, you didn't have to be a Jew to be moved by *My Yiddishe Momme*. 'Mother' in any language means the same thing."

Tucker never forgot her Jewishness, even as she performed for broader, gentile audiences. On her 1922 tour of England, Tucker was welcomed by a London audience with a sign reading "welcome Sophie Tucker, America's Foremost Jewish Actress." Tucker noted, "I was prouder of that than of anything."

During the tour, she got to know many Jewish actors in London, and took pleasure, at a Palladium benefit for the Lying-in Hospital, in singing *Bluebird*, *Where Are You*, in her words, "as a *hazan* would." Tucker was immensely popular in England, amusing eager crowds with songs like *When They Start to Ration My Passion*, *It's Gonna Be Tough on Me*, and *I'm The Last of the Red-Hot Mamas*.

**Hanan Swaffer** of London's *Daily Express* described her as "a big fat blond genius, with a dynamic personality and amazing vitality." Tucker's reminiscences of several tours provide unique insights into pre- and postwar European culture.

Tucker described the terrible tension of playing for a 1932 French audience that included many Jews. Throughout her performance, they sent notes and called out requests for her to sing *My Yiddishe Momme*. She was wary but finally decided to sing the song, feeling that its emotion would touch everyone.

Tucker then began the song in English to a fairly receptive house. However, when she reached verse two, which is in Yiddish, anti-Semites began to boo and other audience members responded with shouts, begging for quiet. Tucker remembered, "The noise was so great I couldn't hear my own voice, nor could I hear **Teddy** [Shapiro, her accompanist and manager] at the piano. I thought: in a minute there'll be a riot. Quick as a flash I turned to Teddy and said 'Switch!' Before the audience knew what the hell was happening I was singing *Happy Days Are Here Again*. My God, I only hoped they were!"

By contrast, the song was generally well received in Vienna. Tucker was recognized at a record store and asked to sing *My Yiddishe Momme* to an audience that seemed hungry for the images the song evokes. She reflected, "It is a commentary on Berlin in 1931 that... it was *My Yiddishe Momme* that the Berlin Broadcasting Company asked for!"

Several years after Hitler came into power, Tucker's recordings of *My Yiddishe Momme* were ordered smashed and the sale of them banned by the Reich. The song had the power to evoke a reverence for Jewish culture and a cultural memory of more peaceful times and was thus threatening to Hitler's regime. Shortly after the war broke out, Tucker talked with actor **Elizabeth Bergner**, a German in London exile, who informed Tucker, "There isn't one of us in Germany who hasn't this record of yours."

Tucker was known for her reverence of the Hebrew principle of *zedaka*, charity and acts of good will toward others. In 1945, she established the **Sophie Tucker Foundation**, donating time, energy, and resources to an ecumenical assortment of causes. Tucker's financial independence was important to her and as a philanthropist she included personal, as well as, institutional contributions to actor's guilds, Jewish and Zionist causes, synagogues, and hospitals.

In 1959, on the first of several trips to Israel, Tucker dedicated the **Sophie Tucker Youth Center** at Beit Shemesh in the Judean Hills, and later the nearby **Sophie Tucker Forest**. She sponsored another youth center at Kibbutz Be'eri near Gaza.

## Ceasefire—War Now?

by Lou Loomis

Last month, Iran attacked Israel with armed drones, potentially killing thousands of Israeli civilians: Jewish, Moslem, and Christian. It was broadcast to much of the world as Iran defending itself against a war-mongering Israel. However, Israel defended itself with weapons such as its Iron Dome, and other weapons with help of the US, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. This is interesting because prior to the Iranian attack, it was widely thought that Israel was isolated, abandoned by former allies and other neutral countries. But nothing could be further from the truth. Peace with Israel is the desired outcome by Israel's Sunni Moslem neighbors, Jordan and the Saudis, who seek to join the Alliance of the Abraham Accords.



Remember the Abraham Accords? This alliance of Arab Muslim countries and Israel was brought about by threats from Iran (a Shia Moslem country) who wants to dominate the middle east and replace all Sunni/Saudi-allied governments. The wealth and power of the West are trying to stop Iran, but efforts appear to have weakened in recent years. The first obstacle to Iran's goal is little Israel.

It should be noted that Israel has a Jewish population of about seven million, and the total world Jewish population is approximately 16 million. The total Muslim world population numbers around 1.4 billion.

Iran funds terror groups like Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis of Yemen, in the hope that a weakened Israel will push the world into allowing Iran to build nuclear weapons and cripple the Abraham Accords' Mideast dominance. Yes, it wants conquest.

The pluck and stubbornness of Israel has so far been able to stop terrorism from those three terror groups and shown the West how to deal with the threat, funded by Iran. By the way, Iran has other terror-enabling allies, including Qatar, Turkey, and less visibly Russia and China. Some European countries as well are financially helping Iran, perhaps out of fear of the large numbers of Mideast immigrants now in their country. International terror politics also has a local face, with such campus groups like BDS (Boycott, Divest, and Sanction), Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), and numerous other more obvious organizations calling for "Peace for Palestine" but really death for Jews.

Unfortunately, much of the recent rise of antisemitism has been funded by well-intentioned local, American-based, groups advocating for lofty ideals such as justice, peace, equality, and the rights of certain minorities in the name of "intersectionality." The concept of intersectionality equates a concept of "white" entitlement, as racist, and at the same time Jewish entitlement, which is also seen as white and racist. In other words, if you are Jewish, you are automatically racist, even if you don't think you are and have never done a racist thing in your life. It's a lose-lose position for Jews: ***even the most generous Jewish donors to worthwhile (in their opinion) organizations are racist on some level or another. It may be unconscious, but Jews are born racist.***

As for success in a gentile society, Jews are generally proud of their (our) accomplishments. We understand that there were many obstacles to achieving any kind of success in a mostly Christian country, but we have persevered. However, the preachers of intersectionality explain Jewish success as our "passing" as white gentiles and hiding our Judaism. Without irony, they claim Jews are "white adjacent." "People of color" they explain, can't fit in due to their color. Of course, that is pure racism.

According to the intersectional philosophy, Israel is the most extreme example of racism. And Moslems or Christians living peacefully in Israel are also infected with racism due to their proximity to Jews.

Does this sound anything like Nazism? It does and it is.

One more *minor* fact:

Israel's enemies accuse it of genocide. In 1948, the Arab/ Palestinian population in Israel was 150,000. Today the Arab/ Palestinian population is over two million. In poll after poll, Palestinians say they would not wish to live in any other country, that they are happy living in Israel. They are well- integrated into Israeli society.

**Conclusion: No genocide.**

So where do we go from here?

Israel is still facing annihilation on a nearly daily basis, but most Israelis are happy in Israel and are stubborn in defense of their homeland. As American Jews, we too face dangers from the rise of the new home-grown anti-semitism. Our children and grandchildren face daily dangers in schools, as well. But we have many "secret weapons." As reflected in Israeli society, our Jewish community is an extended family; it stands strong to give us the emotional support we need to not melt in fear when faced with danger.

(continued on page 8)

## The May Yom Holidays 5784

by Stan Schroeder

### *Yom Hazikaron HaShoah*

*ve-laG'vurah* ('Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day'),

known colloquially in Israel and abroad as **Yom HaShoah** and in English as **Holocaust Remembrance Day**, is observed as Israel's day of commemoration for the approximately six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust as a result of the actions carried out by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, and for the Jewish resistance in that period. In Israel, it is a national memorial day. The first official commemorations took place in 1951, and the observance of the day was anchored in a law passed by the Knesset in 1959. It is held on the 27th of Nisan, unless the 27th would be adjacent to the Shabbat, in which case the date is shifted by a day. This year it falls on Monday, May 6. Sirens are sounded at the beginning (nightfall) and 11:00 am.

The first Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel took place on December 28, 1949, following a decision of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel that an annual memorial should take place on the Tenth of Tevet, a traditional day of mourning and fasting in the Hebrew calendar. The day was marked by the burial in a Jerusalem cemetery of ashes and bones of thousands of Jews brought from the Flossenbürg concentration camp and religious ceremonies held in honor of the victims. A radio program on the Holocaust was broadcast that evening. The following year, in December 1950, the Rabbinate, organizations of former European Jewish communities and the Israel Defense Forces held memorial ceremonies around the country; they mostly involved funerals, in which objects such as desecrated Torah scrolls and the bones and ashes of the dead brought from Europe were interred.

After World War II the nations of the world (in particular the United Nations) recognized the need for the Jews of Palestine to have a nation of their own. The UN voted for a partition plan that would divide Palestine (administered by Great Britain since the end of World War I under a League of Nations mandate) into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The Jews of Palestine accepted the partition plan and established the State of Israel. The Arabs of Palestine and the other Arab nations rejected the partition plan and attacked the fledgling State the following day. Actually fighting had been going on between the Jews and the Arabs since the UN vote, while the British looked the other way or actually aided and abetted the Arabs.

As we know Israel survived the onslaught of the Arab armies and a succession of truces were declared.



However over 4,000 fighters and 2,000 civilians were killed before the final truce. That was almost one percent of the entire population. To honor those fallen in the War of Independence and subsequent wars, Israel commemorates the holiday of *Yom Hazikaron* (Day of Remembrance or Memorial Day). At first it was combined with the anniversary of the declaration of the State, but since 1951 this solemn holiday has been the day before *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* (Independence Day).

*Yom Hazikaron* (May 13 this year) now honors members of security and paramilitary units who were killed fighting Arab attacks going back to 1860 when *Mishkenot Sha'ananim*, the first modern Jewish settlement outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem was built. These civilians were murdered by acts of terrorism. Last year there were 24,213 military and civilian terror victims honored. This year the victims of the Gaza war will be included. The custom of sounding air-raid sirens throughout Israel is carried out twice for *Yom Hazikaron*: a one-minute siren at 8:00 pm in the evening at the start of the holiday, and a two-minute siren at 11:00 am on the day, itself. There are ceremonies at military cemeteries throughout the country. Almost everyone visits a cemetery as almost everyone has a relative who fought and died during Israel's 76 years.

This brings us to the next of the "Yom" holidays, *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* (Independence Day, May 14 this year). At nightfall (when three stars are visible in the sky) following *Yom Hazikaron*, the mood changes from solemn to joyous as Israelis celebrate their anniversary of independence. The journey we have followed: from slavery to redemption, from the ovens of the *Shoah* with the murder of six million Jews to the ultimate sacrifice of Israel's brave men and women in gaining a State and preserving it, to the celebration of the only Jewish State in the world.

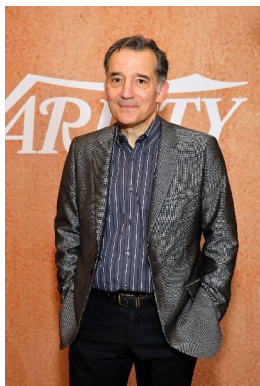
And it is in our lifetime that we can see these events in context. So as we tell the story around our seder tables, we appreciate what we have, because the freedom from slavery in Egypt has led inevitably to the freedom we enjoy in America. And on *Yom Hashoah* as we remember our people murdered in Europe, and recognize their suffering brought the attention of the world to our plight. And the opportunity to have a Jewish State was created. On *Yom Hazikaron* let us pause to recognize the terrible price already paid, and Israel's men and women are continuing to pay, so that a Jewish State guarantees us a safe home if we need it. And finally on *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* let us celebrate Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, and their achievements of which we can all be proud.

## Ceasefire—War Now? (continued)

That has been our secret to survival. And yes, it's no secret, actually— starting with our learned **Rabbi Vorspan**, and onto the wonderful warm synagogue members. Jewish society at-large is actually world-wide. It's the same wherever you go. But here in the West Valley (and in some cases, through zoom) we're here for each other. We truly are either lucky, or blessed, or maybe both.

—David Wolpe, Rabbi Emeritus of Sinai Temple wrote the following:

“Antisemitism is protean. Whatever you hate, you can transfer to the Jew. Today colonial-settlerism is the evil of choice, so Jews are colonial settlers. Nazism is a perennial hatred, so Jews are Nazis. If you hate communism, Jews are communists, if you hate Capitalism, Jews are capitalists.



You can hate Jews because they are weak and stateless or because they are strong and ethno-nationalists. Because they wear 'regular clothes' and blend in or because they wear long black coats and sidecurls and refuse to assimilate. Because they are subhuman (the Nazis called them 'vermin') and because they are superhumans who control the world. Because they are resolutely secular or stubbornly religious. Because they went like lambs to the slaughter or because they fight too vigorously. The image of the Jew shapeshifts as a dark psychic threat in the hater's mind. One thing the antisemite is sure of, however, whether marching at a Klan rally or just hanging out on campus: there is a good reason. They would NEVER hate Jews just because they are Jews.”

—Remember, this year we celebrate the 76th Independence of Israel (Yom Haatzmaut) on May 13. Enjoy in good health!!



**BRING THEM HOME - NOW**



## My March of the Living Experience 2006

by Stan Schroeder

With **Rabbi David and Bonnie Vorspan** participating in the March of the Living this month, it brings back memories of my participation in 2006. I went with an adult group arranged by their office in New York City. There were about 40 of us from all parts of the world: Australia, South Africa, South America, Europe, and the U.S. We met in Poland a week before Yom Hashoah and had a tour of various Holocaust sights and camps. Our tour guide was **Tali Nates**, Founder and Director of the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre.

Tali's father **Moses Turner** and uncle **Henryk Turner** were both Holocaust survivors, their names were included on **Oskar Schindler's** famous list, which inspired **Steven Spielberg's** Oscar winning film *Schindler's List*. Her mother was also from Poland and all moved to Israel after World War II. Tali was born in Israel in 1961. She studied at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and met her future husband, South African **Clive Nates** in 1985 and they moved to South Africa.

Tali took us to Schindler's factory in Krakow, already a small museum, now part of a museum complex. We also went to Majdanek, a former concentration camp on the outskirts of Lublin. In 2005 the Majdanek museum brought four survivors of the camp and they were able to locate some 50 objects that were buried by inmates including watches, earrings and wedding rings.

We also toured Auschwitz. The camp (Auschwitz I) was an army barracks converted to a prisoner-of-war camp in August 1939. It is where the famous gate is. There is an arch with the inscription *Arbeit macht frei* (*Work sets you free*). It is now a museum, originally created in 1939 as a Prison-of-war camp. Construction of Auschwitz II (Berkeinau) death camp, about 3 miles away, started in September 1941 and from 1942 - 1944 over one million people were gassed, including 960,000 Jews.

The next day was Yom Hashoah and we walked from Auschwitz to Berkeinau where a stage is set up for a program of about two hours with speeches by various dignitaries, prayers and musical selections, and six torches lit by selected individuals or groups. The six torches represent the six million victims of the Shoah. The program ended with the Kaddish and Hatikvah. For me it was the most moving day in my life.

The next day we left for Israel and a week of celebrating.





## TREE OF LIFE

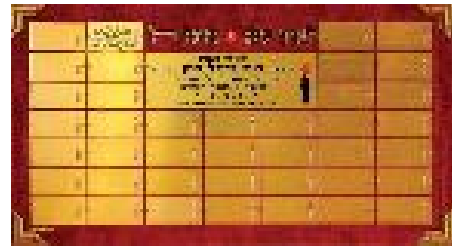


This beautiful Tree of Life, with leaves priced at \$100 and rocks at \$250 (one remaining), makes a perfect way to celebrate family occasions and support Congregation Shir Ami.

The Tree is on a rosewood background and consists of gold-colored leaves and rocks. It is displayed at all Congregation Shir Ami services and events.

For more information or to place an order, call Helga Unkeless at (818) 340-5751.

## Congregation Shir Ami Memorial Board



If you would like to honor the memory of your loved ones by dedicating plaques on our new Memorial Board, please call Helga Unkeless at (818) 340-5751 so she may mail you an order form. The cost of each plaque is \$36.

Each plaque may contain up to three lines of engraving: English name, Hebrew name, and the years of birth and death. Both of our Memorial Boards are displayed at all our services.

## TWO HOLIDAYS – ONE ISRAEL

by Stan Schroeder

Many have fought, too many have died;  
We commemorate their sacrifice with pride.  
That we are here proves they've not died in vain -  
And we must share their sorrow and pain.

It is up to us on *Yom Hazikaron*  
To remember that we are not alone.  
The legacy of the fallen in war after war  
Is carried by Jews from every shore.

This day of remembrance and sorrow  
Is followed each year by a glorious tomorrow.  
The day we proclaim a Jewish State  
Where our people know freedom instead of hate.

A State where our values to our children are  
passed,  
And they can be sure their children won't be  
gassed.

On *Yom Haatzmaut* all our voices must cry:  
The people of Israel live, *Am Yisrael Chai* !!!



Now we celebrate sixty years  
Of hard fought victories and many tears.  
Six decades of our people on our land  
Working to sustain the place where we stand.

Six decades a source of inspiration,  
Young and old, our Jewish nation.  
Let us all pray from our heart  
That sixty years is only a start!

Started in Israel during the March of the Living  
Yom Ha'atznaut May 2, 2006 4 Iyar 5766

Concluded in Israel with Hadassah 60<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Mission

Yom Ha'atzmaut May 8, 2008 3 Iyar 5768

## Shop at Ralphs - Earn Money for Shir Ami

by Maralyn Soifer

Here is an easy way to earn money for our Temple. We are now officially a **Ralphs' community agency**. All you have to do is follow these simple instructions to help earn money for Congregation Shir Ami.



1. If you don't have a Ralph's rewards card already, go to the store or go to website [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com) and select **Order a Ralphs reward card**.
2. Once you have your card, go to the website: [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com) and select **Create an account**
3. If you have an account, your email address is your account ID. If you forgot your password, select **Forgot your password?** and you will receive an email with instructions to reset it. Follow the instructions to enter your email address and create a new password.
4. If you already have a Ralph's reward card and an account, you will see Account Summary when you login. You can change to our Temple by clicking on **Edit** within **Community Rewards**.

You can do a search for Congregation Shir Ami by putting in the number **92785**. Our congregation will pop up and click on the button next to the name. Click on the button that saves the changes.

5. You should also check the bottom of your receipt when you shop. It should say "**At your request, Ralph's is donating to CONGREGATION SHIR AMI**".
6. If all else fails, call me in the evening at (818) 704-0306. I'll be happy to walk you through it.
7. Start Shopping!

**Make sure that the clerk swipes your card each time you shop. Verify that your receipt shows a contribution to Congregation Shir Ami at the bottom.**

**Important Note: All participants must confirm their selection annually starting in September. On or after September 1, sign into your account and reconfirm Community Rewards selection.**

Congregation Shir Ami  
P.O. Box 6353  
Woodland Hills, CA 91365

## “Around the Rabbi’s Tisch” via Zoom Our Spring semester is concluded.



This popular Shir Ami educational series has ended its Spring semester. Our weekly discussion of Rabbi Vorspan’s selected topics of Jewish interest will resume in the fall.

In this time slot I will create presentations/discussions of selected subjects of Jewish interest. We will discuss the upcoming Yom holidays and the Jews in various fields who given us so many things in our lives we take for granted. Sessions will be on Zoom selected Thursdays 7:30 - 8:30 pm and announced by my weekly emails. The link is

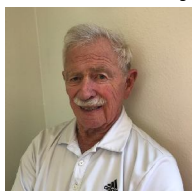
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86440082040?pwd=bG4venRKTW9lVzhwVWVSRGgraEFJdz09>

**Meeting ID: 864 4008 2040 Password: 677588**

### **Saturday May 11, 10:30 am Torah/Shabbat Study at Schroeder home**



Stan Schroeder in his 11th season of Shabbat study sessions one Saturday morning a month at 10:30. We discuss the weekly Torah portion, the Shabbat prayers that are included in our Contemporary service, and various subjects relevant to Conservative Judaism.



The parsha is *Kedoshim* Leviticus 18:1 - 20:27. It begins with “You shall be holy ...” followed by many *mitzvot* to perform to achieve holiness. We will also discuss Israel’s Memorial Day and Independence Day holidays that occur the following week.

This session will be at the Schroeder home, 8450 Winnetka Ave. #14. It will also be on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86440082040?pwd=bG4venRKTW9lVzhwVWVSRGgraEFJdz09>

**Meeting ID: 864 4008 2040 Password: 677588**

Call Stan at (818) 718-7466 or email [stanpacbell@gmail.com](mailto:stanpacbell@gmail.com) for more information.



## Let's go for a walk around Lake Balboa!

Join Congregation Shir Ami's Social Action Committee on **Sunday, June 2nd at 9:00 am.**  
 Registration required starting at 8:30 am

### All proceeds go to the Rescue Alliance Valley Food Bank

**Minimum donation: \$10 per person, NO MAXIMUM!** Following the walk, a brunch will be provided by our Social Action Committee near the lake. Please bring vegetarian salad, side dish, or dessert to share, and remember to wear your Mitzvah Patrol shirt.

The Rescue Mission Alliance Valley Food Bank provides emergency food for families, individuals, couples, and seniors who live in the San Fernando Valley. They serve over 180,000 people in need per year.

Also, please bring non-perishable and non-breakable food for SOVA. Sit-down activities are available for those who don't walk. Call **Becky Finlay** at (747) 998-3804. Sign up by returning this tear-off with your check (payable to **Congregation Shir Ami**) for \$10 (or more) per person to Congregation Shir Ami, P.O. Box 6353, Woodland Hills, CA 91365.

Total Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Walker Names: Brunch (y/n)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount: \$10 [  ] \$18 [  ] \$36 [  ]  
 \$72 [  ] Other [  ]

Phone no. \_\_\_\_\_

Number of participants \_\_\_\_\_

I will bring: Salad [  ] Dessert [  ] Side dish [  ]



WE STAND IN  
SOLIDARITY  
WITH ISRAEL



# HAZIKARON YOM HA'ATZMAUT

A COMMUNITY EVENT

MONDAY, MAY 13, 2024

## 5-6<sup>30</sup>pm Family Israel Festival

- Face-Painting • Israeli Crafts • Games
- Falafel or Shawarma Dinner for Purchase - Pre-Order Highly Encouraged

Dinner Pre-Order

## 6<sup>30</sup>-8pm Yom Hazikaron Commemoration followed by Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration

With Performance by John Ondrasik, Five for Fighting  
Come together as a community to pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of Israel. Join with the Israeli Consul General, the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley Rabbis, Cantors and Choirs and LA Jewish organizations to celebrate Israel's Independence and share our hope for its future.

## 8pm Israeli Dancing

With Orly Star

Online Registration Required

Bring ID • No charge • For security purposes, please register at [vbs.org/israel76](https://vbs.org/israel76)

### In Partnership with

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 30 Years After                          | JIMENA                    |
| American Jewish Committee               | Kol Tikvah                |
| Club Z Zionism for Teens                | Los Angeles Jewish Health |
| Congregation Or Ami                     | Shalom Institute          |
| Congregation Shir Ami                   | Stand With Us             |
| Creative Community for Peace            | Stephen Wise Temple       |
| Hamakom                                 | Temple Ahavat Shalom      |
| Israeli American Council                | Temple Beth Hillel        |
| Consulate General of Israel Los Angeles | Temple B'nai Hayim        |
| The Jewish Agency                       | Temple Judea              |
| Jewish Federation Los Angeles           | Temple Ramat Zion         |
| Jews United for Democracy & Justice     | USC Shoah Foundation      |
|   | Valley Beth Shalom        |
|   | Valley Outreach Synagogue |

Hosted at  
Valley Beth Shalom  
15739 Ventura Blvd.  
Encino, CA 91436  
(818) 788-6000