



Carnegie Shul Chatter

January 6, 2020

Shabbat Shalom



Zoom in for Services

We invite you to join in our abbreviated Shabbos service via Zoom, beginning at 10 am and lasting for approximately an hour.

We use our Birnbaum siddur, which you may find on line.

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81099313898>

Meeting ID: 810 9931 3898

This weeks parsha: Shemot

How Times (and Views) Change

As I have mentioned previously in the Chatter, this week's parshah, Shemos, was my Bar Mitzvah parshah.

How young and naïve I was back then. The United States had won the Second World War. Hitler and the Nazis had been defeated. The United Nations had created the State of Israel. Yes, there were the Commies and the Iron Curtain, but we were the Americans; we could beat anyone.

And Israel? What did they have to worry about? The Arabs were all a bunch of tent dwelling nomads and Israel and the U.S. could surely handle them. And if the U.N. had created Israel, wouldn't they and the United States protect Israel from any country that dared threaten her? Everything

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Shemot in a Nutshell

Exodus 1:1–6:1

Below is this week's Parshah in a Nutshell from chabad.org.

The children of Israel multiply in Egypt. Threatened by their growing numbers, Pharaoh enslaves them and orders the Hebrew midwives, Shifrah and Puah, to kill all male babies at birth. When they do not comply, he commands his people to cast the Hebrew babies into the Nile.

A child is born to Yocheved, the daughter of Levi, and her husband, Amram, and placed in a basket on the river, while the baby's sister, Miriam, stands watch from afar. Pharaoh's daughter discovers the boy, raises him as her son, and names him Moses.

As a young man, Moses leaves the palace and discovers the hardship of his brethren. He sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and kills the Egyptian. The next day he sees two Jews fighting; when he admonishes them, they reveal his deed of the previous day, and Moses is forced to flee to Midian. There he rescues Jethro's daughters, marries one of them (Tziporah), and becomes a shepherd of his father-in-law's flocks.

G-d appears to Moses in a burning bush at the foot of Mount Sinai, and instructs him to go to Pharaoh and demand: "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me." Moses' brother, Aaron, is appointed to serve as his spokesman. In Egypt, Moses and Aaron assemble the elders of Israel to tell them that the time of their redemption has come. The people believe; but Pharaoh refuses to let them go, and even intensifies the suffering of Israel.

Moses returns to G-d to protest: "Why have You done evil to this people?" G-d promises that the redemption is close at hand.



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seemed so simple.

I had never heard about the Exodus 1947 back then. The movie "Exodus" had not yet been released. There were still shows like "I Love Lucy," "Leave It To Beaver," and "Father Knows Best" on TV, and later in 1960, the year of my Bar Mitzvah, the Pirates even won the World Series.

When you are 13 years old and the toughest thing in your life is learning your Bar Mitzvah speech and haftorah, the world seems to be a pretty simple place.

A half century later, things seem a little bit more complex. Perhaps, I am still naïve, but even in today's ever-more-dangerous world, I still think that, with G-d at her side, Israel can — and will — survive and thrive.

The Real Exodus

This week we begin reading the Book of Exodus, the Book that recounts the miraculous events of the Jewish people's deliverance from bondage in Egypt and the beginning of their 40-year journey to the promised land.

But, sadly, we were eventually expelled from the promised land, and our years in the diaspora included many attempts to wipe out our people. And yet, despite the best efforts of villains such as Haman and Hitler, and many others, our people survived.

As the reading of the Book of Exodus was approaching, and as watching old TV series and movies has become somewhat our daily existence during these times of the pandemic, last week we decided to watch a movie appropriately titled "Exodus" and based upon Leon Uris's novel of the same name.

Uris's book and the movie are fiction, but they are based upon events that actually happened, as Jews who were displaced from Poland and Germany prior to and during World War II had nowhere to go at the end of the war and following the liberation of the concentration camps.

They could not return to Poland and Germany, and the United States would not accept many of them, and so they set their sights on Palestine, the promised land. But Britain, which was ruling Palestine at the time, was also opposed to allowing the Jews to emigrate, and was keeping many Jews who wanted to go there in settlement camps on Cyprus. Various Zionist organizations were doing their utmost to help the refugees find their way to Palestine, including smuggling Jews into Palestine despite a British blockade.

The movie, an all-time classic starring Paul Newman, Eva Marie Saint, Peter Lawford, and Sal Mineo, tells the story of a group of Jewish immigrants bound for Palestine who are being off-loaded on Cyprus. An Intelligence officer succeeds in getting them back on board their ship only to have the harbor blocked by the British with whom they must negotiate. Eventually they are allowed to depart for the promised land, shortly before the State of Israel is officially created by the United Nations, and Israel is attacked by its Arab neighbors, starting the War of Independence.

There actually was a ship named the Exodus 1947, upon whose story the movie may be loosely based. According to jewishvirtuallibrary.com, "The ship, known as the President Warfield, was purchased secretly in Baltimore by Haganah operatives in 1946 for \$40,000. It had been used for pleasure cruises by the Baltimore Steam Packet Company from 1928 until 1942 before being requisitioned by the U.S. Navy for operations in World War II. After the war, it was sold for scrap.

The Haganah, which had been using smaller ships for their clandestine Jewish immigration,





decided it needed a larger ship to start moving thousands of refugees. The ship was 330 feet long with a capacity of roughly 500 passengers. It was renamed the Exodus 1947 at the suggestion of Moshe Sneh, who at the time headed illegal immigration for the Jewish Agency.

The initial crew of more than 40 men, consisting mostly of American Jews with no sailing experience, boarded the ship in Baltimore. They were later joined by members of the Haganah and Palmach

commanded by Aliya Bet veteran Yossi Harel. Yitzhak “Ike” Aronovitz, a 23-year-old sailor, originally from Danzig, was the captain.

The Haganah retrofitted the ship to accommodate more than 4,000 people, added defensive measures, such as netting, fencing and pipes for oiling the deck to slow down boarding soldiers, and loaded it with provisions for a seven-day voyage from France to Palestine.

The Haganah also brought onboard Rev. John Stanley Grauel, a Methodist minister who was sympathetic to the Zionist cause, to be a witness to the voyage. According to a *Baltimore Jewish Times* report from July 25, 1947:

“Grauel was put on the ship for one purpose — because it was very probable the British were going to be able to take the Exodus. It was the largest effort ever done in terms of movement of refugees. So, if the ship was taken, somebody has to get the information out,” Klinger said. “They said he was a journalist. What his real job was, if the ship was taken, was to tell the story. Because they knew people wouldn’t believe the story if a Jew told it. But what if a Christian told the story? It would be received differently, and that’s exactly what happened.”

The ship sailed from the port of Sète, near Marseilles, on July 11, 1947, with 4,515 immigrants, including 655 children, on board. Several babies were born during the week-long journey. One woman, Paula Abramowitz, died in childbirth. Her infant son died a few weeks later, in Haifa.

According to Israeli historian Aviva Halamish, unlike other illegal immigrant ships, the Exodus was never meant to sneak into Palestine, but rather “to burst openly through the blockade, by dodging and swiftly nipping through, beaching herself on a sand bank and letting off her cargo of immigrants at the beach.”

As soon as it left the territorial waters of France, British destroyers accompanied it. On July 18, near the coast of Palestine, but outside territorial waters, the British rammed the ship and boarded it, while the immigrants put up a desperate defense.

Arie Itamar was only eight-years-old when he boarded the Exodus. In his 2007 book about his experiences, *Misty Mists*, Itamar recalled the British boarding the ship:

“Explosions and gunfire were heard, bumps and shocks were felt as the British ships knocked

our ship. Tear gas bombs penetrated the inner decks. My dad pulled out some handkerchiefs, wetted them with water from the canteen and handed them to us.... The jerking grew more and more frequent, more tear gas penetrated the ship, more shooting occurred. Suddenly we saw people covered in blood streaming towards the inner deck.”

During the fighting that ensued after the British boarded, American Mahal volunteer Bill Bernstein was clubbed to death in the wheelhouse. Two immigrant passengers died of gunshot wounds and dozens were wounded. To avoid further bloodshed, ship commander Harel and captain Aronovitz surrendered the ship and the British towed it to Haifa.



Heartbreakingly close to their homeland, the immigrants were forced onto three deportation ships, the Runnymede Park, Ocean Vigour and Empire Rival, on July 19. Instead of sending them to Cyprus, where other illegal immigrants were imprisoned, British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin decided to make an example of the Exodus to try to discourage future attempts to reach Palestine and ordered the refugees to be sent back to France.

At Port-de-Bouc, in southern France, the would-be immigrants remained in the ships' holds for 24 days during a heat wave, refusing to disembark despite the shortage of food, the crowding and the abominable sanitary conditions. The French government refused to force them off the boat.



Ruth Gruber was the only American journalist allowed onto the Runnymede Park, which had 1,500 of the refugees from the Exodus. “When the refugees learned that they had an American Jew on board,” she said, “they raised a banner. They had painted the swastika on top of the Union Jack.”

After three weeks of the standoff, the British decided to return the would-be immigrants to Germany, and on August 22 the ship left for the port of Hamburg, then in the British occupation zone. The immigrants were forcibly taken off and transported to two camps, Poppendorf and Am Stau, near Lubeck.

The site of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust being forcibly relocated to Germany caused an international uproar. World public opinion was outraged and the British changed their policy. Illegal immigrants subsequently

were not sent back to Europe; they were instead transported to detention camps in Cyprus.

The British knew their actions would be unpopular. John Coulson, a diplomat at the British Embassy in Paris, cabled the Foreign Office in London in August 1947: "You will realize that an announcement of decision to send immigrants back to Germany will produce violent hostile outburst in the press. ... Our opponents in France, and I dare say in other countries, have made great play with the fact that these immigrants were being kept behind barbed wire, in concentration camps and guarded by Germans."

On September 29, 1947, the Irgun and Lehi blew up Central Police headquarters in Haifa in retaliation for the British deportation of the Exodus passengers. Ten people were killed and 54 injured.

The deportees were moved in November 1947 to Sengwarden near Wilhelmshaven and Emden. Of the 4,500 would-be immigrants to Palestine there were only 1,800 remaining in the two Exodus camps by April 1948. Many of the former passengers retried to reach Palestine and most succeeded by the time Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948. Others ended up in detention in Cyprus. All the detainees of the Cyprus internment camps were transferred to Israel when Britain formally recognized the State of Israel in January 1949.

The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine was in Palestine conducting its investigation to determine how to resolve the conflicting demands of the Zionists and Arabs. The treatment of the Exodus refugees apparently influenced some members to advocate a solution that would allow Jews to immigrate freely to a state of their own.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum noted the significance of the Exodus saga:

Displaced persons in camps all over Europe protested vociferously and staged hunger strikes when they heard the news. Large protests erupted on both sides of the Atlantic. The ensuing public embarrassment for Britain played a significant role in the diplomatic swing of sympathy toward the Jews and the eventual recognition of a Jewish state in 1948.

The captain of the Exodus, Ike Aronovitz, later founded his own shipping company. He died in Israel on December 23, 2009, aged 86. Yossi Harel, the commander, went on to serve in Israeli intelligence and became a successful businessman. He died in Tel Aviv on May 1, 2008, aged 90.

On July 18, the 70th anniversary of the British attack, a memorial to the Exodus was unveiled in the International Cruise Ship Terminal in Haifa. Among the guests were Yossi Harel's daughter and Ike Aronovitz's family."



Although Uris's book and the movie were outstanding and are well worth reading and watching, the true story of the Exodus 1947 is even more remarkable. And there is an excellent documentary, *Exodus 1947*, that you can watch for free if you have Amazon Prime. Go to www.exodus1947.com for more information.

But the Torah Book of Exodus is even better!

Thank You

A few months ago, as the High Holidays were approaching, there was concern that our annual High Holiday fund raising drive might fall below normal levels, since many people would not be attending services in our Shul due to the pandemic. And with some major expenses facing us, including replacing our HVAC systems, this was a real cause for concern.

But we need not have worried. This year we actually raised more money in holiday donations than we raised the previous year, with donations of \$6,200 this year as compared to \$5,900 the previous year.

And so to all who donated, the Carnegie Shul says, "Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!" Your tzedakah is truly appreciated.