



## **BAMIDBAR**

**Bamidbar / 2 Sivan**

The Jubilee of the Six-Day War: What Have We Learned?

May 27, 2017

CALL OF THE GREAT SHOFAR

THE JUBILEE OF THE SIX-DAY-WAR: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

ABSTRACT

Today is the 50th anniversary – the Jubilee celebration – of the miraculous victory of the Six-Day-War: Iyar 26-Sivan 2 5767/1967.

Let us look at this victory – what exactly did we win, and are we still winning? Was it a conquest of land alone, or was there a deeper significance to the victory? And perhaps the biggest question of all: Why were we unable to convert the great victory a half-century ago into a lasting peace? What went wrong, and what can we do about it today?

With Israel and the Middle East still in turmoil, with no signs of terrorism abating around the world, as tragically demonstrated in this week's brutal murders of innocent children in Manchester – what have we learned over the past 50 years? What lessons can the miraculous events of 1967 teach us today?

50 years is both a long time and a short time. In 50 years a person could accomplish worlds. For a people who have been around for 4,000 years, 50 years could seem like a drop in the bucket.

50 years is a Jubilee, a time when, as the Torah verse from last week states, *You shall proclaim with shofar blasts... And you shall sanctify the fiftieth year, and proclaim freedom throughout the land for all who live on it. It shall be a Jubilee for you, and you shall return, each man to his legacy, and you shall return, each man to his family.*

In the 50th year we are compelled and obligated to blast and proclaim liberty, to return to our inheritance and legacy, to reunite with our family. What can this Jubilee teach us about proclaiming liberty, returning to our inherent legacy, and reuniting with our family?

A combination of insights, anecdotes, and the prescient vision of the Lubavitcher Rebbe about the events that transpired 50 years ago – “the call of the great shofar” – provide us with tremendous, piercing insight and direction for our present turbulent times.

**Note: Due to the importance and relevance of the message to our times, this sermon is longer than usual, to give you more material to use for the coming week. For your convenience it is divided into two parts. (Additionally: some of the sections are marked optional). You can choose to use all (or part) of it for this Shabbos, or alternatively, use Part I for this Shabbos, and Part II for Shavuot.**

## PART I

**1. Win-Dow of Opportunity (Humor)**

The Israeli Knesset is a hotbed for arguments, debates, and shouting matches. There are also some very creative ideas that come out of these debates. The tiny country needs them to survive.

In the early days, when the newborn state was struggling for economic strength, a Speaker of the Knesset suggests a brilliant idea. Why don't we declare war on the United States. They would obviously defeat us in no time, and then they will build us up like they did Germany and Japan after WWII, investing in our markets, and turning us into a world economic power.

The whole place starts yelling and nodding and saying, "*Walla*, y'know, this is not such a bad idea..."

Amidst the din, up stands an old frail Jew, one of the founding members, raises his cane, and rasps in a Yiddish-accented chain-smoker's voice: "Dis iz all very good un nice. But I'm just having von kvestion – vot heppens if we win?"

**2. 50th Anniversary of the Six-Day-War: A Victory Like No Other**

Today is the 50th anniversary – the Jubilee celebration – of the miraculous victory of the Six-Day-War: Iyar 26-Sivan 2 5767/1967.

50 years ago today, on Shabbat Parshat Bamidbar, the Israeli Defense Forces – Tzahal – delivered a blistering defeat to Egypt, Syria and Jordan. The war freed and reunited Jerusalem, the Old City, the Temple Mount and the Kotel (the Western Wall), as well as tripled Israel's landmass overnight.

Yes, my friends, we celebrate and commemorate today 50 years since we Jews have been reunited with our eternal capital, the heart and soul of Judaism for 3,500 years, the holy city of Jerusalem.

On this historic day I would like to speak about this miraculous victory, which has forever changed Israel – and the world. At the time the tremendous triumph generated a wave of national and international euphoria. It's hard to describe how it positively impacted Jewish pride and awareness in the entire Jewish world, as well as a deep respect to Israel among the nations of the world.

Millions of Jews, at the time, turned to revisiting their Jewish identity and commitment. Synagogues were packed with record numbers, especially for the High Holidays. Hundreds of thousands donned Tefillin for the first time. It's hard to forget the image circulating at the time of Bob Dylan wearing Tefillin at the Western Wall, and he impact that had on Jews everywhere.

In short the Six-Day-War miracle resulted in an unprecedented Jewish awakening.

Let us look at this victory – what exactly did we win, and are we still winning? Was it a conquest of land alone, or was there a deeper significance to the victory?

And perhaps the biggest question of all – as in the opening joke: Do we know how to win? Do we know what to do when we win? Why were we unable to convert the great victory a half-century ago into a lasting peace? What went wrong, and what can we do about it today?

With Israel and the Middle East still in turmoil, with no signs of terrorism abating around the world, as tragically demonstrated in this week’s brutal murders of innocent children in Manchester – what have we learned over the past 50 years? What lessons can the miraculous events of 1967 teach us today?

50 years is a Jubilee, a time when, as the Torah verse from last week states, *You shall proclaim with shofar blasts... And you shall sanctify the fiftieth year, and proclaim freedom throughout the land for all who live on it. It shall be a Jubilee for you, and you shall return, each man to his legacy, and you shall return, each man to his family.*<sup>1</sup>

In the 50th year we are compelled and obligated to blast and proclaim liberty, to return to our inheritance and legacy, to reunite with our family. What can this Jubilee celebration teach us about proclaiming liberty, returning to our inherent legacy, and reuniting with our family?

### 3. Do We Know How to Win?

Let’s begin with the biggest question: Do we know how to win? Do we know what to do when we win?

As sad as it is, the fact remains that after the unequivocal miraculous victory of the Six-Day war, too many of our “leaders” became apologetic and defensive. Instead of behaving like winners, they behaved like losers. And with time, empowered our enemies, giving them the impression that they were actually the “winners.”

Bear in mind, that the Six-Day-War, though initiated by Israel, was a defensive war meant to pre-empt the massing Arab armies on all of Israel’s borders.

Anyone that remembers what Israel looked like after 1967, all the way through the mid 70’s, will tell you, that Israel was the most peaceful place to live, with virtually no fear of Arabs. The Arab world knew it had lost the war, and the Arabs within the Israeli borders accepted their lot, without any resistance. You could actually travel anywhere, even in the most populated Arab villages, with no fear or concern.

What changed? Some Jews began challenging Israel’s right to its own land.

Do you know what happens when you win a war over your enemies and then make them feel that you are “surrendering” to them? You actually make them feel like the victors. And then their demands begin to grow.

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 25:9-10.

And things began decelerating from there. Fast forward to 2017, and Israel is now forced to be on the defensive over the territories it “occupied.”

Just look at the growing and incessant attacks on Israel – in the media, on campuses, in various countries around the world, not to mention the anti-Israel ridden UN.

It’s one thing when these attacks come from our enemies. It’s quite another when they are coming from our own people, and from those that claim to be “objective.”

#### 4. Is This a Winning Attitude? (Optional)

Consider this: A book review essay published in this week’s New York Times, which reviews six books on this topic, compares the fifty years post the Six Day War, as the “seventh” day, one that has challenged the very fabric of Israel itself.

I do not believe a rabbi should spend the holy day of Shabbat and the holy time of his congregants referencing an article with an extreme biased slant. But I feel the need to do so only to emphasize the distorted view of so many, and place into stark contrast these prejudices with reality.

Every single human being, Jew or non-Jew, who opens a bible – deemed sacred and divine by Jews, Muslims and Christians – reads clearly that since the times of King David Jerusalem was the Jewish capital. There is not a single human alive who reads the bible account differently.

With this in mind, the only way to view the miraculous victory of the Six-Day War and the reunification of holy Jerusalem with its people and its people with it, is as nothing short of a prophetic and divine celebration.

And, yet, the Times book review begins (and again I quote not to besmirch the holy Shabbat but only to emphasize the dire importance of this conversation):

What new insight can a bunch of Very Important Writers provide about the Israeli occupation of the West Bank? Phrased a little differently — Michael Chabon and Ayelet Waldman call these novelists and essayists “storytellers” — this is the question the two editors of KINGDOM OF OLIVES AND ASH: Writers Confront the Occupation (Harper Perennial, paper, \$16.99) decided to pose on the occupation’s 50th anniversary.<sup>2</sup>

Is there anything sadder than Jews referring to the miraculous events of the Six-Day War – a resounding victory of Jews over their enemies – as nothing more than an... occupation?! Which self-respecting Jew and which self-respecting journalist can refer to a Jubilee celebration of a victory as “the occupation’s 50th anniversary”?

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/22/books/review/new-books-about-six-day-war.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/22/books/review/new-books-about-six-day-war.html?_r=0)

The article continues:

...It is 50 years since the Six Day War, in which the young state of Israel administered a blistering defeat to Egypt, Syria and Jordan. The war tripled Israel's landmass overnight and gave it dominion over the lives of more than a million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Which leads us to the second anniversary: the occupation that followed. Tellingly, only one of these new books is actually about the war itself. Most of them are concerned with the seventh day, the one in which all of us are still living. It appears now to be a never-ending day.

The anniversary is a moment, in fact, to acknowledge that the Six Day War produced a grand delusion, one that five decades later reveals itself in these books. Israel's occupation of large swaths of Arab land to which it had no legitimate right besides brute force was a problem.

This "preoccupied" way of thinking, an "occupational" hazard one might say, is diametrically opposed to the global Jewish euphoria that rang high and true across all denominational, religious affiliation, or political lines in 1967. Then, Jews were one with Israel and proud. We had just survived annihilation, for yes, the Arabs did not go to war against Israel to liberate the Jews from any oppression; they went to war to march Israel and its Jews into the Mediterranean Mikvah.

It was and is a miracle that we were victorious. And then no one questioned the righteousness and celebration of the miracle. Today, things have changed.

And therein lays the first and most important lesson from this 50th anniversary: We must begin thinking like winners, not like losers. We need to appreciate the miracles G-d did for us a half-century ago, as well as the continuing miracles He does for us today.

## **5. Current Events: Terror, Jubilee, Trump, and the Middle East**

It's also interesting to note that this week of the 50th anniversary of the victory of the Six-Day War, US President Donald Trump visited the Holy Land and Jerusalem. Trump was on a Middle East tour – one day in Saudi Arabia, the next praying at the Western Wall.

This week saw heinous terror as well. In Manchester, England, a suicide bomber blew up and murdered 22 young people attending a concert. A horrible reminder – as far too many Israelis are all too aware – of the brutal methods used by these terrorists, with ball-bearings and nails packed into a vest to rip flesh and cause maximum damage.

Our hearts and prayers go out to all those lost and wounded, and to their grieving families. But does this outrageous attack on children, happening this week when we honor the 50th anniversary of the Six-Day War, not serve as a rude reminder of the mistakes made when winners of a war empower and enable losers to raise

their heads in aggression?

While the blame for the epidemic of Islamic terrorism lays squarely on the perpetrators and their sponsors and environments, the events that transpired 50 years ago this week – both the miracles and the mistakes – teach us much about the strong and unwavering stand all good people need to take against any form of terror or attack on the innocent.

The attacks began first on Israel. And have since spread around the world.

An Israel under attack, makes for a world under attack. A strong Israel makes for a strong world.

The great triumph of the Six-Day-War is a celebration of victory over all forces of oppression and hate. That's what it meant 50 years ago, and that is its meaning and significance today.

The lesson learned from the Six-Day-War is that, just as we won 50 years ago, is that we must always think and behave like winners. When we vigilantly march with confidence and resolve, we can vanquish any enemy. Just as we vanquished our enemies and the enemies of all decent humans a half-century ago, so too we can and we will win today.

## PART II

### 6. Eternal Events: The Torah Jewish Take

But how does one think and behave like a winner? What causes us to lose confidence and weaken our resolve and confidence on our righteous cause? What can we do to always stand strong?

Let us take a trip back fifty years ago to the resounding words of the Lubavitcher Rebbe that summer of 1967. In a most dramatic and revolutionary fashion, the Rebbe spoke at length about the spiritual awakening that consumed the world at the time. Here are a few points the Rebbe shared<sup>3</sup> that may lend perspective to us today:

I was reading, the Rebbe began, a discourse from my father-in-law [the Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak (1880-1950)], titled "*V'hoyo yitoka b'shofar gadol*," which was written in 1943 and published again in 1945. Studying the discourse, I realized that in it the Rebbe [Yosef Yitzchak] was addressing the events of our times.

<sup>3</sup> In his 1967 talks of Shabbat Bereishit (2) and Yud Tes Kislev 5728.

After a first tumultuous stage in preparing for Redemption, represented by the World Wars, there will be second stage of preparation for the Redemption that will not be a terrifying tempest, but a gentle awakening, like the loving call of a father to his child. This stage is described by Isaiah (27:13) in the verse that the discourse is based upon, *V'boyo yitoka b'shofar gadol: And it shall be on that day, that a great shofar shall be sounded, and those who were lost in the land of Ashur and those who were banished in the land of Mitzrayim shall come and bow down to G-d on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.*

One of the most fundamental consequences of spiritual dissonance is called “galut” (exile) – displacement. Galut is a physical and spiritual sense of not feeling “at home” in this world (“because of our sins we were exiled from our land”).

Therefore, one of the great developments at the end of days will be the “gathering of the exiles.” “G-d will bring back your exiles... He will gather you from all the nations, where He had dispersed you. Even if your exiles are at the end of the heavens, G-d will gather you from there.”<sup>4</sup>

This is what the prophet Isaiah is telling us, in the previous verse (27:12), “And you will be gathered up, one by one, O children of Israel.” As Rashi explains, the “gathering of the exiles” will be such a monumental and difficult process, “that it is as though G-d Himself must literally take each individual with His very hands,” taking him out of his place in exile.

Since souls on this earth “were lost in the land of Ashur” and others “banished in the land of Mitzrayim”<sup>5</sup> – the question begs: How is it possible to reach people who are so locked and trapped in their own limited perception? Even if G-d Himself will gather His children up “one by one,” still, this gathering cannot be done through coercion. The process requires the cooperation and receptivity of those being gathered. They must have some interest in discovering their spiritual destinies.

Answers Isaiah: *V'boyo yitoka b'shofar gadol.* “And it shall be on that day, that a **great** shofar shall be sounded, and those who were lost in the land of Ashur and those who were banished in the land of Mitzrayim shall come and bow down to G-d on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.”

A regular shofar cannot reach the hearts of the “lost” and “banished.” It can wake up those who are drowsy, but not completely asleep. It can also keep people semi-awake. But, they may fall back into sleep. There will be those who are in a deep slumber, utterly unaware of their own souls and inner spirituality, totally consumed

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 30:3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Spiritual displacement can occur in two ways: Through prosperity and through poverty. These are the two forms of exile that Isaiah refers to: 1) “Those who were lost in the land of Ashur and 2) those who were banished in the land of Mitzrayim.” “Ashur” is the Hebrew word for pleasure, referring to all the material pleasures in which people indulge. Prosperity and success are blessings. However, when they lead to self-indulgence, they can cause a person to become “lost in the land of Ashur” – becoming utterly insensitive and complacent, lost in self-interest. “Mitzrayim” means constraints, embodying all the oppressive forces in life that trap and overwhelm us. Diametrically opposed to the prosperity of “Ashur,” “Mitzrayim” denotes the suffering state to which some people may be “banished.”



with their lives – either in prosperity or in struggle. The only way they can be awakened is through the “great shofar,” an all-powerful call from above that pierces even the hardest armor and deepest levels of “loss” and “banishment.”<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of the “Great Shofar’s” call is to prepare the world for redemption by awakening the innermost levels of spirit embedded in the darkest corners of the world. The souls that are “lost in the land of Ashur” and “banished in the land of Mitzrayim,” after their initial inspiration, “shall come and bow down to G-d on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.”

The call of the “Great Shofar” is the second stage of preparation for personal and global redemption. It follows the first stage, “G-d shall sound the shofar and march forth in a southerly storm-wind,” which refers to the two World Wars.

In my humble opinion, the Rebbe declared, this second stage, the call of the “Great Shofar,” took place several days before Shavuot, in the summer of 1967.

The miraculous victory of the Six-Day War evoked an unprecedented spiritual awakening amongst people of all backgrounds. Religious and secular alike, believers and cynics, could not contain their tears when touching the stones of the newly reclaimed Western Wall. Regardless of their previous life choices, regardless of education or lack of education, people from all over the world – even those “lost in the land of Ashur” and “banished in the land of Mitzrayim,” even people who a moment earlier had no idea or interest in Israel – suddenly felt a surge of connection and were drawn to travel from the world over to “the holy mountain in Jerusalem,” ready to “bow down to G-d.”

## 7. 50 Years Later

These are the unforgettable words uttered by the Rebbe fifty years ago.

We are now in 2017. Fifty years have passed since the '67 summer of awakening. Now, we can look back, blessed with the wisdom of experience that 50 years bring, and analyze what happened in the interim. Was the inspiration of the summer of 1967 actualized?

What deeper understanding do we have today about the events that transpired 50 years ago? Have we become smarter or stupider?

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<sup>6</sup> This explains why Isaiah says simply “yitoka,” without defining who is blowing the shofar, unlike Zechariah who says “The Lord G-d shall sound the shofar.” The names of G-d imply defined and revealed levels of Divine expression. They have the power to reach. A regular shofar reaches only those who are themselves conscious and sensitive (at least somewhat) to the world of spirit. But to reach the deepest recesses of the souls that are “lost” and “banished,” with no revealed spiritual consciousness and awareness, requires the call of the “great shofar.” The Great Shofar is rooted in the Divine Essence, beyond any name or definition.

Above all, will we learn the appropriate lessons of the past five decades, to chart a new course for the future?

What went wrong? And what can we do about it today?

Terrorism is now the norm in the Middle East, and, as we tragically just experienced, in the world at large. It began in Israel, but now it has spread to the entire world – in all its hemispheres.

Even more bizarre and ironic is the fact that today's Islamic terror campaign is driven by misplaced faith. Faith – the power that was stirred in 1967 – now is regularly abused by others to wreak destruction on innocent people...

How could things have changed so drastically?

## 8. A Divine Victory or Human?

Let's revisit 1967 and take a closer look at the events that followed the Six-Day War. There was an undeniable awakening at the time that electrified the world. But the big question, of course, is what happened next?

What happened next is perhaps the most important story of our modern times.

Initially, in the immediate aftermath of the Six-Day War, everyone recognized and marveled at the hand of G-d, eliciting a profound faith-inspiring euphoria. But just after a few days, the wonder began to wane and people began to dismiss the miracle by explaining the events away. They began to take credit for the smashing victory – arguing that it was due to the great training and discipline of the Israeli Army.

This is the nature of all success: After the initial appreciation, we usually gravitate to taking it for granted and feeling that we are self-made successes. The same with every inspiration: It dissipates unless it is kept alive.

Therein – the denial of G-d's miracles and hand in victory – lays the undoing of all great successes, throughout history. Arrogance, the delusional sense of all-powerful invulnerability, brought down many an empire and many a leader in centuries past.

The Torah warns us of this human tendency:<sup>7</sup> *[When you achieve success and prosperity be careful that you not] say to yourself, "It was my own strength and personal power that brought me all this prosperity." You must remember that it is G-d who gives you the power to become prosperous. He does this so as to keep the covenant that He made with an oath to your fathers, even as [He is keeping it] today.*

Why is it a problem to feel self made? If a child wants to be foolish and convince himself that he is self made – let him be; why should it matter what he thinks? Does it have any negative impact?

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 8:17-18.

The answer is absolutely yes. Besides for the fact that we shouldn't be living in delusions, and we shouldn't be ungracious in acknowledging those that helped us achieve success, there is a deeper issue at stake. By denying your blessings and cutting G-d out of the picture, you end up creating a self-defeating prophecy. Attributing success solely to yourself basically renders you into a vulnerable creature, with no strength but your own. Once you refuse to recognize the "hand inside the glove," even the "Hand" itself cannot do anything to show its strength.

In psychological terms: A mortal creature needs nurturing and love. In this cruel world, every one of us must have an unwavering foundation that holds us up. Without it – our conscious and unconscious never develop the strength and confidence necessary to navigate life. Witness the profound effects that an un-nurtured (or abused) childhood has on a person's self esteem and inner security. Without the fortitude provided by a higher power, we are left to our own vulnerable schemes, with the existential fears, insecurities, loneliness of our psyches – left alone, relying on our own, weak selves.

The humility of recognizing the Divine blessing of your success opens up the channels to manifest and contain these blessings. Which in turn give you the strength to face any challenge.

This is both the great gift – and power – of free will: We have the ability to open or close the channels of blessings.

This is true anywhere, anytime in every life experience, in every part of the world. How much more so in the Promised Land, which is so much more dependent on the Divine covenant, without which Jews would have no right or chance of survival, surrounded by hundreds of millions of enemies.

Tragically, this is what happened back in 1967. People began to feel that huge victory was due to their own great power. *Kochi v'otzem yodi* – "It was my own strength and personal power that brought me all this prosperity."

Ironically, both left wing and right wing extremists assumed the same position and cut G-d out of the picture: The secular left, denying the Divine hand, by arrogantly taking credit for their own successes. Some religious extremists argued that the victory did not come from G-d but from the "other side." They felt that G-d would not work miracles through the secular "Zionists" who defy G-d.

And this is the root of all the problems: By denying the Divine hand and not actualizing the call of the "great shofar," we actually make it more difficult to manifest the channels of blessing.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> A strange Midrash illuminates this point even further: The Talmud states that "the world is like a balcony without the fourth, northern, wall" (Baba Batra 25b). Why? Explains the Midrash: Should someone claim to be the Creator, he will be told to finish the northern wall (Pirkei D'Rabbi Elozor ch. 3).

What is the meaning of this cryptic statement? Who in their right mind would suggest that he is the Creator?!

The Midrash is telling us, that every person at times may be tempted to feel that he is a self-made entity. In order to remind us all that as great as we may be, we must always appreciate our blessings from above, the universe was created in a way that there always remains one vulnerable corner – the northern border – which can allow in problems, "out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land" (Jeremiah 1:14).

No matter how successful a person may be, even if all "three sides" of your life are covered, we always remain vulnerable creatures.

Indeed, the lack of healthy faith in the Divine hand at work, has created a vacuum which has allowed for a distorted faith to emerge – yet another ironic twist – the misplaced faith of Muslim extremists, who in the name of faith, are wreaking havoc and murdering innocent people.

Conversely, this also teaches us what we need to do to achieve and maintain success: We need to recognize the Divine hand affecting our lives, and ensure that we actualize our Divine calling in our daily lives.

In the words of Isaiah: Following the call of the “great shofar” comes the second half of the verse and the challenge: Will the call lead us to “come and bow down to G-d on the holy mountain in Jerusalem”? The victory 50 years ago sounded a “call” that touched millions. But, as it is with every inspiration, the challenge is maintaining the inspiration. As the inspiration dissipates we tend to take our miracles and gifts for granted. Will we utilize this awakening to its fullest? Will we act upon it and allow it to change our lives?

## 9. Peace Core

True peace between peoples is only possible when there is a fundamental respect for the sanctity of every life and every human being. Self-made people will compete for dominance and superiority. When people feel that they are self made, it is not a far step to abuse the rights of others. But when we accept that “all people were created equal” and by virtue of our Divine souls each of us has unalienable rights, then respect for each other is a given. In G-d we trust creates a firm foundation that allows for coexistence, despite our differences.

Many ideas have been presented suggested to bring peace to the Middle East. One way that has not been explored is the path of faith – healthy faith.

While it is true that we are witness to profound intolerance in the name of faith – both today and over the centuries, yet a similar level of intolerance is practiced by those without faith. Without respect for the sanctity of each and every life, ultimately “self-made” men will follow the “survival of the fittest” dictum. When success is seen as self-made, with no need to humbly acknowledge a higher presence, how can people ever treat each other as equals? Hence, there will never be permanent peace.

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Everyone should always be blessed, but we can never know when or where a “curveball” may come. Never, ever forget that we need every blessing we can get. If you ever feel self made, be careful, because you may be then challenged: Ok, you think you’re an all powerful, self created individual, let’s see what you can do with the vulnerable (“north”) areas of life... Go ahead, show us how you can close up and protect that open border.

But if you recognize the true Creator, then He will do what is necessary to protect us from the “north,” he will finish and seal the vulnerable points.

In a most uncanny fashion, this Midrash is literally being played out in Israel: Despite the great success of the Six-Day war, which basically eliminated the enemy in the South (Egypt), East (Jordan), Northeast (Syria) and West (the Mediterranean) – Israel’s northern border (Lebanon) has always remained a vulnerable sore point.

Fifty years have passed since the ’67 war, people have argued that our strength is “self made,” and till this day the “northern front” – Syria and Lebanon – remains a source of festering misery.

This suggests a third path – neither the path of faithlessness nor the path of fanatical faith. Rather the path of a faith in G-d who created all life, thus a faith that dictates the sanctity of every life, Jew, Christian or Muslim, black or white.

In essence, the lack of humble recognition in the Divine miracles ultimately is the greatest cause for the escalation of hostilities. Left on our own, without acknowledging G-d's gift of life, we will be at each others throats, either in the name of (misplaced) faith or in the name of faithlessness.

Obviously, there are other factors necessary to consider in order to achieve peace in Israel. I am not naively suggesting that faith alone will solve all the deep distrust and animosities. However, the question should be posed the other way: Can peace be achieved without healthy faith? So, in addition to all the other political and diplomatic means being employed, it would be a good idea to introduce the element of humble faith.

Looking back at the events of 1967 and seeing what transpired over the last four decades, perhaps we now have the wisdom and experience to launch a new offensive – one built on humility and appreciation of the miracles in our lives.

Now, fifty years later, blessed with the insight and maturity of a half-century of experience, the lessons are relevant more than ever as we have witnessed, in retrospect, the consequences of ignoring or denying the Divine hand.

We can now appreciate that we must do everything possible to reintroduce the Higher power behind the script of world events, and especially those in the Middle East.

It is never too late. With our accumulative experience, we now can reignite *V'boyo yitoka b'shofar gadol* – the call of the “great shofar,” which reaches those “lost in the land of Ashur” and those “banished in the land of Mitzrayim.” And above all – to ensure that this call will cause them all to “come and bow down” not to themselves and their self-made illusions, but “to G-d on the holy mountain in Jerusalem”, and do so not once, but on a permanent basis.

This is the lesson for the summer of 2017: Recognize the great hand of G-d in our lives, and allow His blessings to take hold.

This in turn will open up the channels of blessings, drawing them down into every aspect of our lives.

Leading, finally, to the ultimate blessing: Peace in our lives, in our communities, in the Middle East and in the world at large.

## 10. Timeless People (Optional)

The Israeli Ambassador at the United Nations began, “Ladies and gentlemen before I commence with my speech, I want to relay an old Passover story:

“When Moses was leading the Jews out of Egypt toward the Promised Land, he had to go through the nearly endless Sinai desert.

“When they reached the Promised Land, the people had become very thirsty and needed water. So Moses struck the side of a mountain with his staff and a pond appeared with crystal clean, cool water. The people rejoiced and drank to their hearts’ content.

“Moses put down his staff and went to a solitary corner of the pond to drink, and meditate in prayer. But once Moses returned, he found that his staff had been stolen.

“I have reason to believe, ladies and gentlemen of the UN, that the Palestinians stole the staff of our great Prophet Moses.”

The Palestinian delegate to the UN, hearing this accusation, jumps from his seat and screams out, “This is a travesty. It is widely known that there were no such thing as ‘Palestinians’ at that time!”

“And with that in mind,” continued the Israeli Ambassador, “let me now begin my speech.”

## 11. Conclusion: We Are Won! We Are One!

We Jews do not have to prove anything to anyone. We have been here before the United States was the United States, before Europe was Europe, and before any conceived notion of Palestine or a people thereof.

We Jews don’t have to prove anything to anyone. We Jews simply have to be ourselves, proud of our legacy, of our family, of our land, of who we are, while demonstrating to the world what we have always demonstrated and will always continue to demonstrate: what it means to be a divine human being. And to serve as a “light unto nations” and be a living example of how each person on earth should live up to his and her divine calling, to live a life of virtue, kindness and justice.

This has always been the true story and destiny of the Jewish people. And 50 years ago we – and the entire world – saw it come alive, in the revealed miracles that G-d made leading to the miraculous victory at the time.

Now 50 years later, we are challenged to rise to that occasion. In the 50th Jubilee year we are compelled and obligated to blast and proclaim liberty, to return to our inheritance and legacy, to reunite with our family.

This is the call of the Great Shofar and this is the call of the Jubilee – we proclaim across the land, and remind one and all, that we Jews return to our rightful inheritance and legacy, that we all return and reunite with our extended family. This is the true essence and proclamation of liberty.

And what began with the 6-Day War, will culminate with a 7th and eternal day of peace, a day that is completely and utterly and perpetually Shabbat, with the coming of the redemption and the rebuilding of our Temple, amen!

Shabbat Shalom!