

## Sounding the Shofar

BY RABBI WILLIAM BERKOWITZ

Without question, the most popular symbol of the Rosh Hashanah season is the Shofar. And, while we think of it today as a religious object suitable for the synagogue alone, in truth, the Shofar served a much wider role in ancient times. The Shofar was the sound which alerted, aroused -- and warned. It was used in battle as well as in prayer. Today, too, we should learn to hear it as a call to action and not just reflection.

To illustrate such relevance, let us take a balanced look at the world events of the past year -- as citizens and as Jews. This past year has been one in which we have been witness to a wide variety of events and trends for which we must be grateful. In the United States, the start of a new Administration in Washington was the signal of a new beginning, with fresh approaches and different ideas. Whether we agreed with them or not, we certainly felt a sense of dynamism and renewed strength. For the State of Israel, this was a year in which peace was maintained between herself and her largest Arab neighbor, Egypt. The Camp David Peace process, while still incomplete, nonetheless, maintained the needed stability on Israel's southern border. The new Administration, including the President, his Secretary of State, his U.N. Ambassador, all display an attitude and approach to Israel which can only hearten supporters and friends of Israel everywhere: they decidedly view it as an important strategic asset as well as the only democratic ally which the U.S. has in the Middle East.

And yet, as we look at the world approaching 5742, we must raise a Shofar to sound the alarm which will awaken and arouse us to the critical challenges of the day.

We see Soviet Jewry still imprisoned behind the Iron Curtain; refuseniks -- male and female -- languish in jails, pawns in a drama of power politics. Syrian Jewry's fate still remains in perilous doubt; and the future of Ar-

gentinian Jewry is hotly debated. Unbelievably enough, on the very European continent where such an attitude should have been put to rest forever, neo - Nazism rears its ugly head. Who can forget the sight this year of the bombed French synagogue at Rue Copernic? And it was not an isolated act.

That such events can occur should not come as a total shock. For the past several years, the denial, distortion and dilution of the Holocaust -- both as Event and Event directed

against the Jew -- has manifested itself. And such hate - filled actions and ideologies have not been confined to Europe. Even in America we meet this anti - Semitic monster. And while the quality and quantity and motivation of anti - Semitism in America is vigorously discussed and analyzed, even the most dispassionate observers will admit that this year has seen in the U.S. a rise in anti-Semitic incidents and situations.

Yes, the challenges are great all over the world but particularly in the volatile Middle East.

Nevertheless, we must approach the new year of 5742 with increased resolve and commitment. American Jewry must continue to stand strongly behind the State of Israel which still exists in a sea of Arab hatred. We must reject any attempts to divide or diminish our support for the Jewish state. As American Jews we must continue to show our stake in the land by raising funds and raising our voices on behalf of a strong and secure State of Israel.

At the same time, we must continue our battle against the forces of hatred and anti-Semitism -- whether in the East or the West.

Yes, much work remains to be done and when we hear the Shofar sounded let it be to our ears as it was to those of our forebears in ancient days, a clarion call summoning us not only to meditate on justice and peace but to do battle for those same supreme values as Jews, as Americans and as citizens of the world.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

## A NEW YEAR WITHOUT SHELTERS

BY SAM ROTHBERG  
GENERAL CHAIRMAN, ISRAEL BONDS

Three years have passed since the Camp David agreements. The peace process moves forward slowly in Washington, Jerusalem and Cairo.

At Kiryat Shmona and Nahariya, there is still the possibility that some inhabitants may have to spend the New Year or part of it in underground shelters. The terrorist threat remains alive.

As we observe the New Year, we must assume a greater responsibility and a deeper personal involvement in helping Israel solve its major problems.

The economy is in difficulty because of the heavy demands of defense and triple - digit inflation. Relieving these pressures is a task of the highest priority, for an improved economic situation, like peace, is the key to reducing emigration and increasing immigration from Soviet Russia and elsewhere.

The development of new areas of economic growth is a central purpose of the Israel Bond program which has been in the forefront of expanding Israel's economic horizons for the past thirty years.

In the New Year, Israel Bonds will face the challenge of providing the seed money for one of the most ambitious development projects in Israel's history. Prime Minister Begin has asked the Bond Organization to bring to realization Theodor Herzl's vision of a canal from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea to help meet Israel's energy needs.

Our prayers for peace in the year 5742 must be accompanied by the resolve to give Israel the economic means to achieve a better life for its citizens and for all those who come to its shores in the year ahead.

Let us all hope that no Israeli children will have to spend even one hour in an underground shelter in the coming year.

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