

BETH EL ISRAEL BOND APPEAL 2015

Robert, thank you for that inspiring appeal on behalf of Federation.

Rabbi Werbin/Harris, thank you for your kind introduction.

Dear Friends, why do we always make a plea for the purchase of Israel Bonds on Yom Kippur?

The simple explanation is that more people come to Shul on Yom Kippur than at any other time of the year. We repent, return to our spiritual roots and vow to do better in the coming year. A marketing expert would define us as the perfect captive audience. On the other hand, is it wise to be asking people for money when they are fasting, renouncing all physical pleasure and may have a headache? Probably not.

Permit me then to offer a deeper explanation, centering on our response to the Shofar. The sound of the Shofar rivets our attention like no other sound in Judaism. In the Nitaneh Tokef prayer on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we recite: "The great Shofar is sounded; a small, still voice is heard." We respond to the Shofar not with loud shouts, but quietly, reflectively.

This Yom Kippur, Jews in America, Israel and around the world, are hearing very different loud blasts, shocking and threatening. They are the words of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran proclaiming that Israel will cease to exist in 25 years. They are the calls of the BDS movement, to boycott, divest and sanction Israel, reverberating on college campuses, in some churches and across social media. They are the amplified echoes of ancient antisemitism heard across Europe.

I suggest to you that there is one quiet yet extraordinarily effective response to these bellicose blasts that each and every one of you can make: buy an Israel Bond. By purchasing an Israel Bond, you reaffirm your commitment to an Israel that not only will survive but thrive. By purchasing an Israel Bond, you counter directly the demands to divest from Israel; you INVEST in Israel. By purchasing an Israel Bond, you reassure European Jews that, unlike in centuries past, they can find refuge in the State of Israel. By purchasing an Israel Bond, you say to your fellow Jews: "Regardless of the tactical, strategic or philosophical differences that

may occasionally divide us, we stand together as Am Yisrael, united in our love of Israel.

Israel bonds do not have an ideology. They are the indispensable, economic underpinnings for the miracle that is the modern State of Israel. They finance heightened security, major infrastructure projects, technological innovations in renewable energy and health care, and humanitarian missions.

I ask each and every one of you, as we hear the sound of the Shofar, to listen to that small, quiet voice speaking from deep within our Jewish souls. Remember the first appearance of the Shofar—the ram’s horn—in the Torah. When G-d called to Abraham to test his faith by sacrificing Isaac, and, then again, when an angel commanded that Abraham spare his son, Abraham responded: “Heneini—Here I am”. Let us similarly respond to the call of our brothers and sisters in Israel: “Heneinu—Here we are.” We have faith in you and in the State of Israel.

Please remove the Israel Bond pledge card from your prayer books. In addition to the denominations on the card, please note that you may purchase an Israel gift bond on-line for as little as \$36. Pull down a tab and place a business card or your High Holiday ticket together with your Israel Bond pledge in the envelope provided. As we join now with the Hazzan in chanting the prayer for Israel, accompany your prayer with action. Pass the envelope to the aisles where ushers will collect them.

Thank you and G'Mar Hatimah Tovah.