Six for Six: How the World Changed in Six Days

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The actual state of Israel was established 72 years ago in 1948. However, the modern state of Israel as we know it, was launched in 1967. The six-day war was so revolutionary and so transformative, that in many ways, it was more groundbreaking than 1948. Thousands of years ago, God created our natural world in six days. Fifty-three years ago He reshaped history in six quick days. Here is a list of the six major revolutions which occurred during those 6 days in June: Six for Six!

1. The Return to the Biblical “Corridor”

In 1948, Jews were graciously “permitted” to return to a carved-up parcel of Israel. This immigration soothed the world’s conscience after the horrors of the Holocaust and, additionally, solved the ugly issue of unwanted Jewish refugees. By contrast, in 1967, we returned to the Biblical corridor – a passage of land which cuts through the heart of Israel and the heart of Jewish history. This territory stretches from Shechem in the north, snakes its way through Jerusalem, bends toward Beit Lechem and Chevron finally levels off in Be’er Sheva in the south. Jewish history, narrated in the book of Bereishit, emerged in these lands and our return to this Biblical passageway signaled the resurgence of the History. Jews actually living in the provinces of original Jewish history signals the acceleration of history in a way that the important but indefinite events of 1948 did not.

2. An Emergent Superpower

Life in Israel between 1948 and 1967 was harsh and unforgiving - riddled by food rationing, numerous wars of attrition and by stifling diplomatic isolation. Indeed, our beloved state provided a respite from the tumultuous and tragic years of the Holocaust and certainly fulfilled a centuries-long dream of resettling our homeland. However, life continued to be difficult and conditions were austere. The miracles of 1967, the courage of our soldiers, and, of course, the palpable Divine intervention created a swell of national pride or “komemiyut” which transformed the fabric of Israeli society. Israel’s successful handling of the corona virus (so far, and with God’s help it will continue) has confirmed the strong feelings of pride which Israelis sense in their country. Societies with pride and national unity will navigate this medical and financial crisis more successfully than countries which are either disunited or disillusioned. The restoration of our national pride began in 1967. Ironically, the War of Independence in 1948 is sometimes referred to as *komemiyut* because, for the first time in thousands of years, Jews defended themselves from military aggression. In truth, the miraculous events of 1967 established far greater *komemiyut* than the ambiguous victory of 1948.

3. Jews Flocking Home

The return to Yerushalayim and the surrounding environs beckoned international Jewish interest in their homeland. Prior to 1967, much of the emigration to Israel consisted of aliya of distress - Jews fleeing persecution in Arab countries. Between 1948 and 1967 the financial hardships in Israel were so severe that more people emigrated from Israel than to Israel. That all changed in 1967 - the magnetizing effect of Yerushalayim as well as the slow but steady economic improvement in Israel drew the interest of Jews from across the globe. Many made aliya and still more became more embedded in Israeli life - whether through purchasing real estate or increasing their frequency of visits. The worldwide Jewish stake in Israel spiked after 1967.

4. Gradual Diplomatic Acceptance

Prior to 1967, Israel was a diplomatic pariah. Despite the broad support afforded Israel during the UN votes of the ’40s, Israel was soon plunged into diplomatic isolation. Much of the third world was aligned with Arab interests and the large Communist bloc which dominated Europe, China and parts of Latin America routinely exhibited diplomatic hostility toward our country. The US arming of Israel began in earnest only after the military victory in 1967. In 1967, we literally, stood “alone” on one side of the river, facing off against an entire world; we had assumed the role of our ancient grandfather, Avraham, who had also opposed an entire world of idolatry. If our mission in Israel is to inspire an entire world toward utopia, then international acceptance of Israel is a crucial element of that vision. Though full embrace of the Jews in their homeland will only be achieved when history ends, the slow but steady diplomatic progress witnessed over the past twenty years is part of our redemptive advance. Over the past few weeks, as the enduring tensions between the USA and China flared, it was interesting to witness each country reinforcing its relationship with our state of Israel. Israel’s standing among nations transformed after 1967.

5. Religious Revival

The legendary scenes of Israeli soldiers sounding the shofar while standing at the newly liberated Kotel galvanized an entire people. Witnessing God’s explicit intervention in the historical process prompted a revival of religious sentiment. Over the past 50 years Israel has rightly established itself as the epicenter of worldwide Torah study. The euphoric aftermath of 1967 launched the national religious world of *yeshivot* and Torah institutions, which, alongside the Charedi Torah world, has dramatically augmented the spread of Torah study. Beyond the advances in Torah and halakhic observance, our country has also witnessed a revival of ‘traditionalism’ amongst a majority of Israeli Jews who identify as “Masorati”. They may not may not adhere to strict halakhic regulations but they believe deeply in God and in His historical mission for His people. 1967 altered the religious landscape of Israel!

6. The Confidence Index of Worldwide Jewry

Over the past fifty years, Jews across the world have become more engaged in local governance, culture and society. Previously, Jews envisioned themselves as living along the margins of society - barred from prestigious schools, law firms and country clubs. Modern Jewish communities generally display far more confidence and participate more extensively in their local societies far more than Jewish communities of the past. Much of this confidence stems from the *komemiyut* achieved in Israel during the 1967 war. Knowing that we have constructed a strong and successful Jewish state feeds Jewish confidence across the globe.

Six days and six seismic shifts in Jewish history!