

Kol THE VOICE OF Barrack

Kislev: Finding the Light

Hodesh Tov!

Though Kislev marks the darkest time of the year, it also coincides with the holiday of [Hanukkah](#), when a dire time in Jewish History is illuminated by light — the Maccabees' miraculous success in fighting against assimilation and persecution by the Assyrian Greeks. Kislev is also, according to some rabbinic sources, the month when the flood (as in Noah's ark) ended and life began anew.

The Hebrew (Jewish) month of Kislev overlaps with November this year. Several illuminating milestones in modern Israeli history have occurred in November, which was recently designated as Israeli History Month by the [Unpacked for Educators/Prizmah Collaborative](#): the [Balfour Declaration](#) (Nov 2, 1917), [UN Partition Plan](#) (Nov 29, 1947), and [Operation Moses](#) (Nov 21, 1984). While the end of the flood was the beginning of the establishment of new communities and the Hanukkah story is about the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in the ancient Hellenistic world, the three modern events highlight international recognition of Jewish connection to our homeland as well as the continuing story of *kibbutz galuyot*—bringing Jews from all over the world to Israel, the center of the Jewish world.

Although the Balfour Declaration has a complicated history, it was the first modern announcement that recognized the Jewish connection to the land now known as Israel, then called Palestine, and the goal of establishing a homeland for the Jews there.

"His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people..."

In November 1917 this statement was a major achievement for the young Zionist movement as it implicitly recognizes Jewish self-determination.

[UN Resolution 181](#), the Partition Plan of November 29, 1947, takes this recognition several steps forward, calling for the establishment of an independent Jewish State and is one of the steps that led David Ben-Gurion to declare the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. The UN Resolution was accepted by a strong majority, but the fact that the Arab world did not accept this plan continues to impact Israel, the Palestinians, the Mid-East region, and the world today. At the time, it was cause for major celebration in the Jewish community, as recollected in the video "[November 29, 1947: The Story of a Vote](#)."

During the first half of the 20th century Jews in the land of Israel were engaged in strategic "state-building," establishing communities and building the economic, political, and cultural infrastructure that made establishing the State part of a natural progression in conjunction with UN Resolution 181.

International recognition allowed the State of Israel to continue to develop as a safe haven and destination for Jews from around the world and to enable the Israeli government to bring Jews who are in jeopardy to the State. One story that exemplifies this achievement begins with the clandestine [Operation Moses](#) on November 21, 1984, part of various operations that brought tens of thousands of Ethiopian Jews (Beta Israel) to Israel. Today the Ethiopian Jewish Israeli community numbers over 140,000 and is an integral part of Israeli society from politics, to medicine, to fashion, to music. In fact, the Ethiopian Jewish holiday of Sigd, celebrated on the 29th of Heshvan, this year on November 4, is now officially recognized and observed in Israel.

To learn more about these events that bring us light in November, this year, the month of Kislev, check out the videos and podcasts about them here: <https://unpacked.education/program/israel-history-month/>

Enjoy Kislev...and find the light!

Kol Barrack (The Voice of Barrack) is a periodic publication that recognizes the new month in the Jewish calendar. In this edition, Meryl Sussman, Director of Israel Education, Experiences & Special Projects, reflects on the important and uplifting events in Jewish and modern Israeli history that have occurred during the darkest time of the year — in November (and Kislev).



Meryl S. Sussman

DIRECTOR OF ISRAEL EDUCATION, EXPERIENCES, & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Meryl S Sussman is currently in her third year as Barrack's Director of Israel Education, Experiences & Special Projects. Previously she was the Middle School Counselor of Saligman Middle School, first with Perelman Jewish Day School (2001-2013) and then with Barrack Hebrew Academy (2013-2019). She is the proud mother of two Barrack graduates, Rachel Lipton '14 and Avi Lipton '16. She enjoys power walking, listening to podcasts, cooking and the theatre. In the summer of 2021 she participated in the Hartman Institute's Summer Symposium, *Hope, Love & Compassion: Torah of Possibility for an Uncertain Future*. Currently she is participating in the ADL's course, *Breaking Down Bias: Championing Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms*.

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