

# Newsbytes

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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

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## Will The Shofar Sound From The Temple Mount This Rosh Hashanna?



News Image BY ADAM ELIYAHU  
BERKOWITZ/BREAKING ISRAEL NEWS AUGUST  
25, 2020

A petition is currently being considered by the Prime Minister which, if accepted, will permit a Jew to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanna on the Temple Mount. Since the first day of Rosh Hashanna is on the Sabbath, it will be the only place in the entire Jewish world that a shofar will be blown and it will mark the first time since the destruction of the Temple that a Jew will be permitted to perform this powerful act at

the holiest site in the world.

The Organization of 70 Nations, headed by Rabbi Hillel Weiss, and the Land of Israel Organization (Mateh L'Maan Eretz Yisrael) headed by Aviad Vosoli, petitioned Prime Minister Netanyahu to permit the blowing of the shofar on the Temple Mount on the holy day of Rosh Hashanna.

Visoli explained his position to Breaking Israel News.

"Jews are only permitted to enter the Temple Mount five days a week: Sunday to Thursday. This year, the first day of Rosh Hashanna is on Saturday, the Sabbath. According to Jewish law, it is forbidden to blow the shofar on the Sabbath except for on the Temple Mount. So we submitted a request to permit a group of Jews to do so; to blow the shofar on the Temple Mount on the first day of Rosh Hashana."

If they succeed, this will be the first time a shofar will be blown on the Temple Mount since the destruction of the Temple 1,950 years ago. In contravention of the law, the Israeli police forbid any non-Islamic symbols, non-Palestinian national symbols, or non-Muslim rituals on the Temple Mount. This policy is an attempt to lessen Arab violence.

Visoli emphasized that according to the Israeli Basic Law of Human Dignity and Liberty which mandates equality and freedom of all religions, this should be permitted. He also noted that permitting Jews to perform this Biblical commandment on the Temple Mount is consistent with Trump's Peace Plan which states:

"People of every faith should be permitted to pray on the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, in a manner that is fully respectful to their religion, taking into account the times of each religion's prayers and holidays, as well as other religious factors."

The formal request was also submitted to the Minister of Internal Security, and the Chief of Police. They were promised by Friday and if they do not receive an answer or their request is denied, the group intends to submit a petition to the Magistrate's Court.

Not a legal issue

"This is not a legal issue," Visoli said. "The law mandates that we are permitted to do this. Our request is that the police be instructed to permit this religious ritual to take place."

Rabbi Hillel Weiss emphasized that on Rosh Hashanna the world is judged and that aspect of the holiday is taking on dire meaning under the current conditions.

"Our demand now is to apply the one true sovereignty onto Zion," Rabi Weiss said. " call out to the King of kings with the eternal voice of the shofar, to spread His Kingdom to every creature. We are calling on the current Israeli government to take their role in manifesting the universal desire for redemption, which is the real mandate of the State of Israel.

It is our role to enable all of the nations to pray before HaShem (God, literally 'the name') with one voice, as we did at Mount Sinai, like we did after creation like we are destined to do again in the end-of-days when the dead will be resurrected, the day of universal and true freedom."

A shofar call to all the nations

"Blowing of the shofar on the Temple Mount of Rosh Hashanna is not a simple ritual as it is done in synagogues around the world. This is not just for the Jews who are there to hear it. This is a shofar call to all the nations of the world.

Now, more than ever before, we are crying out to Hashem to bless us with life, peace, and an end to plagues. Every leader in the world who cares and who sees himself as a representative of one of the 70 nations should call on Netanyahu to permit this to take place."

"As political processes concerning Israel and the Temple Mount move forward, so much is being said about the Arabs but not a word is said about the rights and requirements of the Jews in their Biblical homeland and our holiest site. And no one is speaking about the true 'owner'; of the land and His kingship. One of the names of the Temple was Bet HaTkiya, the house of the sounding of the shofar. Politics is nothing when compared to that."

The binding of Isaac

"Outside of the Temple, we blow a shofar made from a ram's horn. It is curved and reminiscent of the binding of Isaac. When the shofar was blown in the Temple on Shabbat Rosh Hashana, it was a goat's horn. It was a call to freedom, as hinted in Psalms."

The high mountains are for wild goats; the crags are a refuge for rock-badgers. Psalms 104:18

"Blowing the shofar that is specific to the Temple is a cry out to God to prevent the division of His land and the loss of His house. This shofar will topple anyone who is set on dividing God's land and opposing the establishment of a House of Prayer for All Nations in Jerusalem, just as the sound of the shofar toppled

the walls that stood between the Jews and entering the Promised Land."

The plan

The petitioners plan on pursuing every possible legal avenue to bring about this momentous act. If the Israeli government fails to allow the blowing of the shofar to take place, and alternative ritual will take place adjacent to the Temple Mount.

As noted, since the holiday falls on Shabbat, Jewish law prohibits blowing shofar however the Sanhedrin has ruled that it is permitted, even necessary, to hold a ritual blowing of the shofar adjacent to the Temple Mount on the Sabbath of Rosh Hashana. This is hinted at in Psalms.

*With trumpets and the blast of the horn raise a shout before Hashem, the King. Psalm 98:6*

## IDF prepares for escalation as Hamas threatens Israel

Terrorists in the Gaza Strip threaten mass attacks on Israel following latest round of rocket fire and IDF retaliations.

The IDF is increasing its presence in southern Israel Friday and preparing for a new round of fighting with terrorists operating out of the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip, after Hamas warned Israel it is prepared for an expanded conflict.

Israeli aircraft struck multiple Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip Friday morning, after seven rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip towards Israeli territory Thursday night.

In addition, dozens of fires broke out in Israeli territory near the border with Gaza Thursday, after terrorists operating in the Gaza Strip launched a number of incendiary devices attached to balloons.

Following the latest round of fighting, Fawzi Barhoum, a spokesman for the Hamas terror group said Friday morning that Hamas "would not hesitate to battle the Zionist enemy if the escalation continues".

Israel, Barhoum continued, needs to understand that if the attacks continue to destroy our positions, [Israel] will bear the cost and will pay a heavy price."

Channel 13 cited Palestinian Arab sources which claimed that the rockets fired Thursday night were launched after Egypt warned Hamas against further escalations, and were intended to signal Hamas' willingness to expand the conflict.

Following the string of rocket attacks Thursday, the IDF is gearing up for additional attacks, and advised farmers near the Gaza frontier not to work their fields Friday. According to a report by Israel Hayom Friday morning, Hamas is demanding Israel expand the fishing area allotted to Gaza fishing boats, and to allow an expansion of the payments allowed into the Strip from Qatar from \$30 million to \$40 million per month.

“—it’s apocalyptic in many ways.” :

## Fires, Blackouts, a Heat Wave and a Pandemic: California's 'Horrible' Month

August 20, 2020

VACAVILLE, Calif. — How many things can go wrong at once?

On Wednesday millions of California residents were smothered by smoke-filled skies as dozens of wildfires raged out of control. They braced for triple-digit temperatures, the sixth day of a punishing heat wave that included a recent reading of 130 degrees in Death Valley. They braced for possible power outages because the state’s grid is overloaded, the latest sign of an energy crisis. And they continued to fight a virus that is killing 130 Californians a day.

Even for a state accustomed to disaster, August has been a terrible month.

Across the state there were 23 major fires reported on Wednesday and more than 300 smaller ones.

In the San Francisco Bay Area alone there were 15 wildfires, most of them burning out of control and feeding off the grasses and shrubs desiccated by the extreme heat. Thousands of residents were ordered evacuated in the wine country of Napa County and from the hills above Silicon Valley in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties.

In Southern California, fires were reported in Ventura and Riverside counties — and sweeping through one of the world’s biggest collections of Joshua trees, burning a 43,000-acre stretch of the Mojave National Preserve. Images of the fire showed the iconic trees shooting flames into the air like blowtorches.

The evening breezes that many Californians rely on to chase the heat from their homes had vanished. And for those with air-conditioning, the power outages were a constant threat to that remedy.

But closer to the fires, residents had more urgent concerns.

Edie Kansas left her home outside Vacaville, northeast of San Francisco, at 1 a.m. on Wednesday as a wall of fire traveling down hillsides threatened the cattle ranch that has been in her family since the 1860s. When wildfires struck in past years, inmate fire crews from nearby prisons quickly arrived to help protect homes. But this year, partly because of the coronavirus, the number of inmate crews has been slashed. Some prisoners are under quarantine and others were released early to mitigate the spread of the virus in prisons.

The fires, the power outages and the threat of the coronavirus have conspired to make 2020 the worst year Kansas can remember.

“This year,” Kansas said. “It’s just so horrible.”

On Wednesday, a helicopter pilot taking part in firefighting operations in Fresno County died in a crash while attempting to drop water, according to a Cal Fire spokesman. The wildfires threatening Vacaville are known together as the LNU Lightning Complex, and have destroyed more than 50 homes and are threatening nearly 2,000 more buildings, the authorities said.

West of Vacaville on Wednesday afternoon, houses along Pleasants Valley Road were consumed by flames, ash was flying through the air and smoke poured from vast rows of fire plodding down forested hills.

In just 12 hours, from Tuesday evening to Wednesday morning, the area’s fires, which have injured four

people, grew by more than 14,000 acres. They now cover more than 46,000 acres in Napa, Sonoma and Solano counties — larger than the size of Washington, D.C. — and are completely uncontained.

California has had 6,754 fires this year, Gov. Gavin Newsom said on Wednesday, compared with just more than 4,000 at the same time last year.

But Newsom, who declared a state of emergency on Tuesday to access out-of-state resources, emphasized that California was painfully familiar with the challenges of a busy wildfire season, and that officials have been bracing for months. “This is what the state does,” he said.

Newsom thanked other governors for sending additional resources, including Gov. Doug Ducey of Arizona and Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas. “We’re putting everything we have on these fires,” he said.

Newsom also mobilized the California National Guard to assist with relief efforts.

The cause of the fires is still under investigation but many appear to have been started by an unusually large number of lightning strikes over the weekend. Chief Jeremy Rahn, a Cal Fire spokesman, said California had experienced “a historic lightning siege” over the past 72 hours that resulted in about 11,000 lightning strikes, igniting more than 367 new wildfires.

Even before the season began, Mark Ghilarducci, the director of the state’s Office of Emergency Services, said the pandemic was bringing “an almost oppressive level of complexity” to fire planning, from evacuation plans to reductions in manpower, notably among inmate fire crews. Cal Fire said it usually had about 190 inmate fire crews but this year had only 90 deployed or ready to deploy. Inmates currently make up about 1,300 of the 6,900 firefighters deployed across the state.

While it is too early to say whether climate change influenced this heat wave, warming linked to human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases has generally contributed to the state’s worsening fires. Climate change has also expanded the fire season, once largely confined from August to November, to nearly year-round.

“And if that’s not bad enough,” Ghilarducci said, “now we have to deal with a worldwide pandemic. In a fire season. With the power off. What else do you want from us?”

New fire precautions were announced in July by Newsom. Among them: protocols to beef up fire crews and to prevent the virus from spreading in evacuation centers. The new evacuation rules include health screenings upon entry to a shelter, extra cleaning, prepackaged meals, cordoning off evacuees with coronavirus symptoms, and the repurposing of college dorms, Airbnb houses, campgrounds and hotels into evacuation shelters.

“We have to think differently,” Ghilarducci said. “We know sticking everybody into a big room at a fairground isn’t going to work this year.”

In Riverside, Nevada and Contra Costa counties, dozens of evacuated families are being sent first to emergency hotel lodging rather than to the high school gyms that usually serve as evacuation centers.

In the coastal town of Pescadero, south of San Francisco, authorities used the high school as an evacuation center on Wednesday. Normally, cots would be set up for people to spend the night. But no one is allowed inside now, so aid workers have been setting up displaced residents at nearby hotels.

Rita Mancera, the executive director of Puente, a social services organization helping evacuees, said people have been bringing their pigs, turkeys, goats, cows and horses to the school parking lot.

Masked volunteers were handing out water, food and hand sanitizer. People waiting at the school have to sit outside or in their cars. Dealing with the evacuees during a pandemic was “kind of overwhelming,” Mancera said. “We’re asking people to be social distanced.”

Power cuts have added an extra layer of complexity to the multiple crises in the state.

Newsom blamed a lack of planning in an angry letter to the energy agencies on Monday. “Collectively, energy regulators failed to anticipate this event and to take necessary actions to ensure reliable power to Californians,” Newsom said, adding, “This cannot stand.”

The state’s electrical grid is deep in transition from a fossil-fuel-driven system to one increasingly reliant on renewable energy. Dozens of workhorse power plants have been shuttered. Some had grown old, inefficient and environmentally hazardous to the air and marine life. Others proved uneconomical as the state pushed carbon-free sources like solar and wind.

With the threat of even more destructive and aggressive fires in the fall, when faster winds propel them across the parched landscape, some health officials are concerned that smoke pollution could make people more susceptible to respiratory infections like COVID-19.

The fires in California are already spreading smoke across a wide region, with the National Weather Service’s Bay Area office warning that air quality in the area will be “very poor for the foreseeable future.”

In many parts of the Bay Area, the air quality index, a measure of the level of air pollution, was higher than 200 on Wednesday.

That number is high compared with other cities known for poor air quality like New Delhi, which had an index of 154, and Beijing, where that number has hovered around 150 this week. The air quality index scale goes up to 500, but anything above 100 is considered unhealthy, and above 200 is “very unhealthy,” according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Studies have also shown that in areas with poor air quality, people are more likely to die if they contract the coronavirus. And coughing, difficulty breathing and headaches are symptoms that both the virus and wildfire smoke exposure can cause, making it more difficult to know which may be the source.

Solano County, which includes Vacaville and has about 450,000 residents, has been averaging about 76 new coronavirus cases a day over the last two weeks, according to a New York Times database.

For some Vacaville residents, losing power made the situation even more treacherous. As a wildfire approached his home, Philip Galbraith did not receive any type of alert when his power shut off on Tuesday night. He assumed it was part of intentional blackouts meant to lower power usage.

Then a neighbor began “desperately banging” on his door, alerting him to the evacuation.

At 2:45 a.m. he fled. “I got out of the house, in pretty much what I had on,” he said. “I got my son and we left.” A two-hour drive southwest, in Pescadero, Lynne Bowman gestured to the trailer where she slept. “This is where I live now,” Bowman said. She, her husband and her daughter evacuated their house on Tuesday in 45 minutes, bringing clothes, jewelry and their two dogs, Viggo and Hedy. Just days earlier, Bowman was celebrating her daughter’s wedding, a 20-person socially distanced affair. Now, she is contemplating the confluence of catastrophic events in the area.

“Yeah, pandemic, fire,” she said. “I mean, it is apocalyptic in many ways.”

# The ashes of Jerusalem's biblical fall still show at dig near Old City

The researchers have been able to pin down the moment of the destruction to 586 BCE, when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and devastated its temple.

By ROSSELLA TERCATIN AUGUST 20, 2020



Givati Parking Lot Excavation at the City of David, Jerusalem. (photo credit: ROSSELLA TERCATIN)

What would happen if archaeologists could excavate tears? Looking at burned stones and beams clearly visible in the ruins of a building recently exposed at the excavation known as the “Givati Parking Lot” while touring the site, I could not help asking myself the question.

Those blackened remains have been there for more than 2,600 years. The researchers have been able to pin down the moment of their destruction to

586 BCE, when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and devastated its temple, which stood just a few minutes away from the prominent two-story building.

shed, how many cries could be heard during that blaze which likely added torridness to the already proverbially hot Jerusalem summer days?

The structure offering such a vivid testimony of one of the greatest catastrophes ever befallen on the Jewish people, which also marked the beginning of their first exile, is located just outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem on the western slope of the Tyropoeon Valley.

Excavated for more than a decade, the Givati dig is considered part of the National Park of the City of David, located just across the street, and it offers traces of many of the most iconic periods of Jerusalem’s history.

The current expedition, headed by Prof. Yuval Gadot of Tel Aviv University and Dr. Yiftah Shalev of the Israel Antiquities Authority, has focused on researching times that have been less documented in the intense archaeological activity that is carried out in the numerous sites around the city, and specifically, the Iron Age, the Persian and the Hellenistic eras.

The cooperation between the two institutions has been especially fruitful in advancing the project, also in consideration of its sensitive location, the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan, many residents of which oppose the excavation as well as the whole City of David site.

Because of the coronavirus crisis though, in 2020 most of this activity is not happening. However, at Givati, the expedition managed to organize a few weeks of digging to complete excavating the destroyed building, as Gadot explained on a bright August morning.

“One of the features that makes this area special is that we can really look at it as a ‘tel,’” he said, referring to a mound formed from the remains of several periods accumulating on top of each other. “We can identify the layers dating back to as early as the ninth century BCE in the Iron Age to the 10th century CE and the Abbasid period, which in Jerusalem is extremely unique.”

The scholar also highlighted that the excavation at Givati represents the largest exposure of archaeological remains of the western slope of the valley, after for decades researchers focused on the eastern one. Looking at the excavation from above, an inexperienced eye will only spot a maze of walls erected in typical golden white Jerusalem stones of different sizes.

Routinely, the ruins also give back inestimable treasures: a trove of golden coins, rare seals and seals impressions, pottery and other objects bearing witness to the daily life of ancient Jerusalemites.

“The expedition before us exposed a market from the Abbasid period; below it they found a Byzantine mansion and under it a late Roman villa, almost complete, with a courtyard and several rooms,” Gadot said. “They also unearthed another villa and several Jewish ritual baths from the early Roman period as well as fortifications which date back to either the Hasmonean period or the Seleucid one.”

One element that seems to have remained consistent through the ages is that by virtue of its exclusive location, just a few minutes from the Temple Mount, the area was devoted to either private houses for prominent families or public buildings.

This is the case of the building burned down by the Babylonians, which has offered the archaeologists also unprecedented insights on the next chapter of the story, the one that followed the destruction, as Shalev explained to The Jerusalem Post.

“We were intrigued to discover that later on, during the fifth century BCE, people came back to Jerusalem and established themselves in the ruins, cleared out part of the structure and settled inside it, which we take as an indication of the poor state in which both them and the city found themselves at the time,” he explained. Artifacts uncovered from this period include coins and pottery vessels as well as modest quality construction materials.

Were those people Jews returning to their promised land after the exile and driven to settle where their ancestors had lived and thrived? Or perhaps members of the small group of Jews allowed to remain? At this juncture, it is impossible to say with certainty.

“What we can say for sure is that this period of poverty did not last long because we also found traces of another large public structure dated to the late third/early second century BCE, so we know that by this point Jerusalem, its status and its economy were rising again,” Shalev said.

“There is still much we don’t know, but the long black hole we had before that stretched from the early sixth century to the late second century is at least narrowed down,” he added.

The Hellenistic building unearthed is the first one found in Jerusalem. Partially exposed in the previous excavations, the expedition led by Gadot and Shalev has uncovered several new parts of it, including a large room presenting pottery vessels on the floor, within the floor and under the floor, which allowed researchers to reach very precise dating. Many artifacts, including a gold ring and numerous seals, were also found in the construction.

As meaningful as the findings exposed so far have been to understand more about the history of Jerusalem, the researchers highlighted that there is still a lot to do in the area.

“We know there is another structure to the north of the one we have already dug, for example, and we still have plenty of questions,” Shalev concluded. “We will hopefully address some of them in the future, and some we will leave for the generation after us, as it is always important to do in archaeological excavations.”