Declaration of Independence (May 14, 5 Iyar, 1948)

A MOST DIFFICULT DECISION

The British were to leave the territory of Palestine on May 15 at midnight. The Jewish leaders planned to announce the Declaration of Independence as soon as the English left.

The Arabs also had their plans: when the British were gone, they would invade and attack Israel. They had a powerful army from five nations: Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. And Jordan, which joined at the last moment. They had modern, powerful weapons and enough ammunition acquired from European countries.

On May 12, the Jewish leaders met in Tel Aviv to assess the situation.

Moshe Sharet reported that the United States demanded that Israel NOT declare its independence. And they warned that if Israel would, the United States would NOT help with soldiers or weapons.

Golda Meir also brought bad news: the king of Jordan, who had previously agreed to the creation of a Jewish State, changed his mind: he gave in to the pressure of other Arab countries, and now his army would join the invasion of Israel.

GERMANS vs. ARABS

The Jewish military leaders were very pessimistic: possibly the 600,000 Jews living now in Palestine will not survive the Arab invasion, they thought. The memories of the Holocaust were still very fresh.

A thought that did not leave the minds and hearts of the Jewish leaders was this: If Germans, a civilization that was

the cradle of modern European culture, systematically exterminated all Jewish men, women, elderly, and children that they could, what would the Arabs do with us if we lose this war?

After 13 hours of deliberations, in the darkest hour, where life, death, and the possibility of a second Holocaust were at stake, David Ben Gurion, miraculously managed to convince the majority of those present to declare the establishment of the State of Israel.

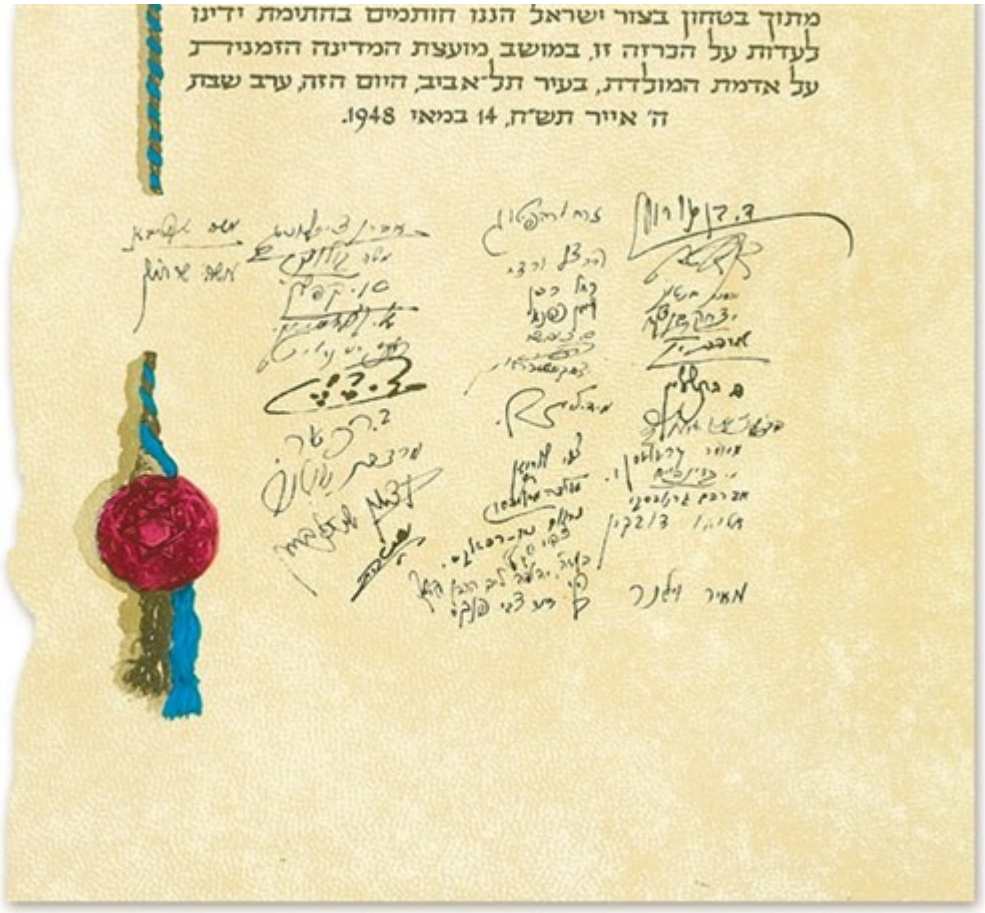
OUR BIGGEST ALLY

The chances of surviving were small… but HaShem was with us!

We survived. And against all odds, we WON the war, which took a year of battles and cost the lives of 1% of Israel's population.

As David Ben Gurion himself famously said,

"When it comes to Israel, he who does not believe in miracles is not a realist."


מתוך בטחון בצור ישראל הננו חותמים בחותמת ידינו
לעדות על הכרזה זו, במושב מועצת המדינה הזמנית
על אדמת המולדת, בעיר תל־אביב, היום הזה, ערב שבת
ה' אייר תש"ח, 14 במאי 1948.

UNITY BRINGS MIRACLES

We Jews never stood out for thinking all in the same way. We love to discuss, dissent, and to debate. It is not uncommon for us to disagree on almost everything. This stimulates us intellectually, but sometimes it also divides us. And unfortunately, we usually focus more on what differentiates us than unites us …
Perhaps, one of the reasons for God's miraculous intervention in winning the War of Independence, the most difficult of all Israel's war, was that we Jews were united in proclaiming the Independence of the State of Israel.

A RARE EVENT

The Declaration of Independence of Israel was signed by representatives of the entire political and religious spectrum of that time. I believe the "Declaration of Independence" was also a "Declaration of the UNITY of the Jewish people".
Among the signatories were, for example, representatives of

the socialist party leftist; secular Jews; Jews from the center; Jews to the right, and religious Jews. It is worth remembering the presence and signatures of important rabbinical personalities. Israel's Declaration of Independence was signed by five rabbis: Rabbi Moshe Maimon, Rabbi Saadia Kubashi, and Rabbi Zeev Gold; these three rabbis belonged to the religious Zionist Organization Mizrahi. And the Declaration was also signed by Rabbi Kalman Kahana and Rabbi Yitzhak Meir Levin, both rabbis of the religious movement "Agudat Israel".

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On Friday, May 14, 5t of Iyar, Rabbi Moshe Maimon, who can be seen in this film on the right side of Ben Gurion, recited with great emotion, on behalf of all Am Israel, the blessing SHEHECHEYANU VEQIYEMANU VEHIGIYANU LAZEMAN HAZEH!
"Blessed are you, HaShem … that You have granted our existence, and You have allowed us to be alive in this special moment".