

Shabbat Talks

BALFOUR AND BEYOND

The Balfour Declaration was issued November 2, 1917.

We rarely take the time to consider the importance of this declaration as a step towards Statehood or how international recognition facilitates the legitimacy of the Jewish State but these are not things that came easily and should not be taken for granted!

The anniversary dates relating to the declaration are an opportune time to reflect on the impact this declaration has had on the history of our people:

- July 14 -17 - first draft of the letter that would become the Declaration
- July 22 - League of Nations reaffirmed the Balfour Declaration as a part of international law.
- November 2 - the Balfour Declaration
- November 29 - UN Vote on the creation of the Jewish homeland in British Mandate Palestine

This Shabbat, as you gather with family and friends over challah and cholent / hamin, consider discussing the importance of Balfour for the Jewish people and our ancestral homeland!

LET'S TALK!

1. If you were a Jew in 1917 reading the Balfour Declaration for the first time how would you react to the document?
2. The Balfour declaration specifically calls for the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine. Why Palestine and not some other region?
3. The declaration uses the word home rather than state in reference to the Jewish presence in the land. Do you think this distinction is an important one to make?
4. Do you think the Balfour Declaration is a strong enough message to the world regarding the establishment of a Jewish state? If not what would you change in the document to strengthen it?
5. It's been 101 years since the initial draft of the Balfour declaration. Why do you think the declaration is still important now?
6. Can you think of any other declarations that formally changed or influenced international acceptance of Jewish rights in Israel or Jerusalem?
7. What would happen if a government declared their recognition of a Palestinian homeland in the Land of Israel? How should Jews react to that?