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**POINT OF VIEW**  
 Each issue of the CJN features an article written by one of the rabbis active in the Charlotte community.

*This month:*

**Rabbi Yossi Groner of Congregation Ohr HaTorah**

**"THIS ROSH HASHANA, WE PRAY FOR PEACE"**



According to the High Holiday liturgy, Rosh HaShanah celebrates the anniversary of the creation of the world. On this day, which represents the beginning of God's creation, God blesses the world with a renewed infusion of spiritual light that sustains the world for the entire year.

This explains why we pack our houses of worship on Rosh HaShanah and implore God to provide us all of our needs and to grant us all of our hearts' desires. Every Jew recognizes the importance of the Days of Awe and feels the urge to be part of this monumental experience.

Yom Kippur is the Day of Judgment when God seals his verdict of what the new year will bring — hopefully life, health, success, and prosperity.

The past year of 5761 lacked the important elements of peace and security for the people in the Holy Land of Israel. In fact, the entire year will go down in Israel's history as one of the bloodiest and costliest years in its modern history.

The violent disturbances began at the very beginning of the year. At first the Israeli media referred to the violence as the High Holiday riots, but it soon became clear that it was a war waged against the people of Israel with no apparent end in sight.

Much has been written about the war, the terrorism, the hateful incitement against Israel, and the helplessness that many Jews feel when they see Israel maligned in such a cruel and vicious way. Through editorials, op-ed pieces, lectures, and documentaries, people in the know (or who think they know) try to make sense of the chaos that has penetrated our homes through electronic and

print media.

As we approach the New Year of 5762 and we gather as a community to pray for peace and stability in Israel, I would like to address a point that I think lies at the foundation of the crisis. Without this point we can never come to any sense of what we are really asking for.

The sense of what is right and what belongs to the Jewish people as an eternal gift from God affects the self-confidence of the Jew in Israel and for that matter, Jews all over the world. This self-confidence is what led to the establishment of modern Israel with its main purpose of providing a safe and secure haven for the exiled and oppressed Jew. Arriving on the shores of Israel was a homecoming for the Jews in the Diaspora.

Contrary to popular belief, Israel did not become the Jewish homeland in 1948. Rather, the Torah documents that Israel was gifted to the children of Israel by God when they stood at the foot of Mount Sinai at the giving of the Torah. In 1947, a majority of nations of the world with their vote in the United Nations granted the Jewish request that there should be a sovereign Jewish Government in Israel.

There should never be a question in our mind whether Israel has the right to exist or the right to protect itself from terrorism, war, and all kinds of assault. This is a basic human right that every sovereign nation lives by.

Israel always was and will always be a Jewish land. Never in its history since becoming a Jewish land was it an Arab land. Although it was occupied and controlled by various empires, such as the Roman, the Greek, and the Turkish, it was still always referred to as Eretz Yisrael. Yes, Arabs dwelled there, and so did Jews. Since the Jews settled the land in the days of Joshua, there has never been a point in history that Israel has been devoid of Jews.

The fact that the early settlers in modern history in their kindness did not uproot the Arabs who lived in Israel should not be interpreted to mean that they accepted that the Land of Israel belongs to the Arabs as well. Their sincere and maybe naive wish was that the Jew and the Arab should coexist peacefully. The only time that Arabs were in control of part of Israel (Judea and Samaria) was

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