
Torah Portion: Chukat - Balak, Numbers 19:1–22:1, 22:2–25:9
Haftarah: Micah 5:6-6:8

Dependence Day*by John Daniel*

It would be a quieter holiday, no fireworks
or loud parades, no speeches, no salutes to any flag,
a day of staying home instead of crowding away,
a day we celebrate nothing gained in war
but what we're given—how the sun's warmth
is democratic, touching everyone,
and the rain is democratic too,
how the strongest branches in the wind
give themselves as they resist, resist
and give themselves, how birds could have no freedom
without the planet's weight to wing against,
how Earth itself could come to be
only when a whirling cloud of dust
pledged allegiance as a world
circling dependently around a star, and the star
blossomed into fire from the ash of other stars,
and once, at the dark zero of our time,
a blaze of revolutionary light
exploded out of nowhere, out of nothing,
because nothing needed the light,
as the brilliance of the light itself needs nothing.

Declaration of Independence (excerpt)

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. —That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. —Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government...

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States;

...And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

The New Colossus

by Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"