

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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America the Beautiful

On July 4, we should once again recall our extraordinary good fortune. For almost twenty years I have met once a week with Kirk Douglas to study Torah. He is now 98 years old. I once asked him in his remarkable life, what was his greatest blessing? "No doubt about it," he answered, "my greatest blessing is that my parents came to America."

Surely many of us can say the same. My great grandparents decided almost a century ago to immigrate to America. They came from Russia and Poland and Lithuania. Risking everything on a long and difficult journey, they arrived in this unique and shining land, which enabled people from all over a benighted globe to

make a better life for themselves and their children. All of us, the wretched refuse of her teeming shore.

In Jewish history this nation stands alone. Like every human endeavor, America has a lot to answer for, sins and crimes and shortsightedness. But unlike every other human endeavor, it saw the Jews and others as equal citizens and enabled us to rise and flourish. Any American Jew who is not patriotic is ignorant of history. The fireworks on the 4th light up a landscape that should move us all to prayer and thanks. God bless America.