



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

12th September 2015 - Volume 8 - Issue 10 - פרשת נצבים - ראש השנה - כ"ח אלול תשע"ה

## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Michael Brandies on the birth and Bris of a great-grandson, born to Mr & Mrs Ickowitz (nee Sonenberg)

### Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush this Shabbos after Davenning sponsored by Mr & Mrs Andrew Addleman on the occasion of their 10th anniversary - מזל טוב

### Rov's Yom Tov Appeal

Donations to the Rov's annual Yom Tov collection for local needy families will be gratefully received. Charity vouchers & cheques should be made payable to Ahavas Chesed

### Girls Group

Girls Yr5+ enjoyed a bagel lunch and clay modelling making honey jars for Yom Tov. Some Quotes from participants! "It was fun" & "I enjoyed designing and creating my own jar".



### A Final Note For The Year

The editor would like to take this opportunity to wish the Kehilla a טובה וחתימה and ask מחילה for any offence caused by, or for omissions from the newsletter during the past year.

## Holy History!

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

And it will be, when all these things come upon you the blessing and the curse which I have set before you that you will consider in your heart, among all the nations where G-d, your G-d has banished you (Devarim 30:1)

It is one of those rare years when Parashas Nitzavim stands alone, and not with Parashas Vayalech as is usually the case. It is so common for them to be read on the same Shabbos that they are often counted as a single parshah.

It is also being read on the last Shabbos of the year, so it must have something to say about Rosh Hashanah coming up this week, it should only be for good. It is always customary to add this blessing when mentioning an upcoming Rosh Hashanah, but this year we have extra reason to say it because all that is scheduled to occur in the coming months, b"H.

As many have mentioned, we are also approaching the end of a Shmittah year. As many have also pointed out, that usually results in something dramatic just after or close to the beginning of the new Jewish year. The last such year was 2008 when the housing market crashed and kicked off a worldwide recession.

The one before that, of course, was 2001. Rosh Hashanah of that year began the night of September 17, just one week after the terrorist attack that destroyed the Twin Towers on September 11. A businessman even made a video going back in time to show just how consistent the trend has been.

However, one of the most amazing things about this week's parshah is that it discusses something that was once only a distant dream and which today is already reality. A prophecy is being fulfilled right under our noses and most people just take it in stride. It is a remarkable thing that so many

## The Week Ahead

### פרשת נצבים

1st Mincha	6.00pm
Candle Lighting	Not before 6.15pm
2nd Mincha	7.20pm
Candle Lighting	No later than 7.20pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.50am
1st Mincha	1.45pm
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
2nd Mincha	7.13pm
Rov's Shiur	following
Motzei Shabbos	8.23pm

### ערב ראש השנה

Selichos	6.45am
Mincha & Kabbolas Yom Tov	7.15pm

### יום א ראש השנה

Shacharis	8.30am
Tekias Shofar	Approximately 11.00am
Mincha followed by Shiur from Rabbi B Sulzbacher שליט"א	7.10pm

### ליל ב ראש השנה

Maariv	8.18pm
Candle Lighting	Not before 8.18pm

### יום ב ראש השנה

Shacharis	8.30am
Tekias Shofar	Approximately 11.00am
Mincha followed by Shiur from Rabbi Y Goldblatt שליט"א	7.10pm
Maariv & Motzei Yom Tov	8.15pm

### צום גדליה

Ta'anis Starts	4.55am
Shacharis	6.00am / 6.30am / 7.45am
Mincha & Maariv	7.00pm
Ta'anis ends	8.07pm

### עשרת ימי תשובה

Thursday Selichos	6.00am / 6.30am / 7.45am
Mincha & Maariv	7.05pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm
Friday Selichos	6.00am / 6.40am / 7.45am

just see it as being another part of everyday life.

The Torah says: And it will be, when all these things come upon you the blessing and the curse which I have set before you that you will consider in your heart, among all the nations where G-d, your G-d has banished you, and you will return to G-d, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul, and you will listen to His voice according to all that I am commanding you this day you and your children, then, G-d, your G-d, will bring back your exiles, and He will have mercy upon you. He will once again gather you from all the nations, where G-d, your G-d, had dispersed you. Even if your exiles are at the end of the heavens, G-d, your G-d, will gather you from there, and He will take you from there. And G-d, your G-d, will bring you to the land which your forefathers possessed, and you [too] will take possession of it, and He will do good to you, and He will make you more numerous than your forefathers. (Devarim 30:1-5)

Part of the problem is the lack of emphasis on history in the Jewish education system, especially in more Orthodox circles. Most people are only familiar with recent history, and not the history of the Jewish people going back thousands of years. That's why the above verses do not make people think twice when they read them. They have little to compare them to in terms of past history.

Another problem is distraction. There are so many distractions, that people are more focussed on current issues and not the big picture issues. Rather than see the Israeli state as an amazing fulfillment of prophecy, they see it as the source of argument in the religious world, and as an object of scorn in the secular world. They are distracted away from the historical significance of the modern state in Biblical terms.

Furthermore, people do not know how Jewish history works. They may know that a lot of strange things have happened in the past, but not why, or what they mean in terms of recent history. I mean, who would have learned anything from the episode of Lot and his daughters that could be used to explain what is going on today?

People believe that Torah came from Mt. Sinai. They believe that G-d gave us every word of it, and they follow it religiously. Yet, they act as if its lessons about Hashgochah Pratis and historical trends no longer apply, as if the rules changed at some time. They don't see any connection between the rise of Pharaoh in Egypt and the rise of Obama in America. Maybe they just don't want to.

Then there are things that they should know but don't know because they come from a realm of Torah learning that many people do not even entertain the idea of learning. This is why a few verses in next week's parshah which have everything to do with our period of history and what to expect at the End-of-Days, will be read as if they have nothing to do with our period of history and what to expect at the End-of-Days.

Consider the words of the verses above, and try to imagine what they must have sounded like at the time the Torah was given, when all remaining Jews (four-fifths died in the Plague of Darkness) were all part of one camp. They had not even conquered the Land and moved in, and yet the Torah talked about exile:

And it will be, when all these things come upon you the blessing and the curse which I have set before you that you will consider in your heart, among all the nations where G-d, your G-d has banished you . . .

Eight hundred and fifty years later, when the Jewish people were exiled to Babylonia, these words finally had meaning. And, at that time "nations" meant only Assyria and Bavel, because that is where the Jewish people had been taken. Ten of the tribes from the Kingdom of Israel were first exiled to Assyria and went missing. The remaining two tribes were later exiled to Bavel.

No one at that time, except perhaps the prophets, knew to just how many nations the Jewish people would eventually be exiled. At that time they didn't even know about the other continents. They probably thought that the following was just a metaphor:

. . . then, G-d, your G-d, will bring back your exiles, and He will have mercy upon you. He will once again gather you from all the nations, where G-d, your G-d, had dispersed you. Even if your exiles are at the end of the heavens, G-d, your G-d, will gather you from there, and He will take you from there.

Even before World War II, Jews were not everywhere, but basically concentrated in two main areas, Eurasia, and America. Going beyond these places was costly and dangerous and meant building entire

communities from scratch. So, it was not going to happen without a good reason, and therefore, every year, for thousands of years, these verses remained only a metaphor.

Though Jews starting gravitating back towards Eretz Yisroel in the 1800s, it was only in small numbers. The goal was the fulfillment of the following verse, but few expected to see it accomplished in their lifetime:

And G-d, your G-d, will bring you to the land which your forefathers possessed, and you [too] will take possession of it, and He will do good to you, and He will make you more numerous than your forefathers. (Devarim 30:1-5)

And they didn't. They saw the beginning of its fulfillment, but not the end of it. Until 1917, Eretz Yisroel was Arab-controlled, and barren. The yishuv was growing, but slowly. There was tremendous hardship and rulership of the Land did not seem likely to change any time soon. The idea of Eretz Yisroel becoming the Jewish homeland once again was a far off dream, and Europe, as dangerous as it was becoming, seemed likely to be the place of the majority of Jews for years to come.

It took World War II and the Holocaust to change all of that, and quickly. Ten years after the Holocaust was over and Jews read this week's parshah they did it from all over the world. They read the parshah from within a new Jewish state, voted into existence by the international community. But, it was also a country under constant attack and very dependent upon other nations for survival.

As for Kibbutz Golios, after WW II Jews were just starting to build up their communities around the world. Constant war and third world technology did little to entice Jews to leave their foreign places of residence and make aliyah. The ones who might have, Russian Jews, were denied the right to emigrate. The new Jewish homeland wanted people but the people did not yet want the new Jewish homeland.

Kibbutz Golios got a big kick in the 1980s, once again thanks to history (read: Divine Providence). Between the airlifts of stranded Ethiopian Jews and the collapse of the USSR, the Israeli government found itself with more new immigrants than it knew how to handle. Twenty-five years later and Israel is about to have the majority of world Jewry living within its border. This is the fulfillment of a prophecy going back thousands of years to the actual giving of the Torah.

Yawn. Granted that Israel is back in Jewish hands once again after thousands of years, but it had to happen at some time, right? Granted that there are more Jews living in Israel than there has been for millennia, and that this usually works in reverse for other nations, but hey, does that make it special, as in miraculous? True, the rest of the world is becoming less hospitable for Jews, as one might expect during Kibbutz Golios, but doesn't that usually happen in every exile at some point?

Many asked similar questions about the circumstances in advance of the Holocaust and decided that the signs were not actually signs. They chose the status quo over moving on. When they asked the same question after the Holocaust, those who survived realized that they had erroneously downplayed what ended up being signs that the world was about to undergo tremendous upheaval.

Here we are again, exactly 70 years after World War II ended, a number that represents potential major historical change. The world is upside down. Right is wrong and wrong is right, from a Torah perspective. Our enemy has become best buddies with our once staunchest ally, who is at odds with our leader because he fights for Jewish security. The forces of chaos are getting stronger in the name of peace. The last time that happened was in Munich in 1938.

Did I mention that it is the end of a Shmittah year? Did we also mention that as far as the Talmud is concerned, it is the lead-in to the Messianic Era (Sanhedrin 97a)? Did we also say that all of the signs that the Messianic Era is imminent, as mentioned in the Talmud, have come true?

Yawn again. Has this not been going on for some time now, and so many times before? How many predictions of Moshiach's arrival have come and gone, going back at least to Talmudic times? Remember Bar Kochbah and his crusade, and how it ended up in unmitigated failure? Aren't we better off just sitting tight and waiting for Moshiach to tell us what to change and when?

Good question. History has a good answer. If the signs are correct, we'll know it soon. Something to think about this Rosh Hashanah, b"H, may it come upon us for good. Shannah Tovah, really.