



Ohr Yerushalayim News

לעלו נשמת דוב יצחק ב"ר אפרים אלחנן ז"ל - 11th August 2018 - Volume 11 - Issue 6

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Adrian Rodrigues-Pereira on the occasion of the Bas Mitzvah of their daughter Nomi.

Holiday Minyonim

During the holiday period the Rov requests that all who are remaining in town make every effort to join all Tefillos in Ohr Yerushalayim to ensure the continuation of our Minyonim.

The Tree Hugger

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

"At the end of seven years, you shall institute a sabbatical year." (15:1) Rabbi Mordechai Gifter related that during a shemittah (sabbatical) year, the Ponevezher Rav zt"l once walked over to a tree, gave it a hug and a kiss, and said, "Good Shabbos to you."

Using his dynamic style, the Ponevezher Rav taught us the amazing concept of shemittah. For an entire year, all the fields and orchards in Eretz Yisrael experience a Shabbos similar to the Shabbos we experience once a week. If we are fortunate enough to be in Eretz Yisrael during shemittah we should feel the holiness descend onto the Land just as we feel the holiness of Shabbos.

There is another aspect to shemittah that bears mention here. Physical objects generally do not contain holiness. A person has to consecrate an object in order to bring holiness to it. During shemittah, however, all fruits and vegetables grown in Eretz Yisrael are automatically sanctified simply because they grew from the holy land. As you drive through the country, every orange, esrog, and cucumber you see growing contains holiness.

I find a need to stress the extraordinary holiness of Eretz Yisrael because the secularist governments leading the State of Israel for nearly 60 years have made concerted efforts to eradicate any holiness associated with the Land, and unfortunately they have been highly successful in doing so. A visitor to modern-day Israel is likely to miss the kedushah of the Land, unless he or she makes a concerted effort to experience the holiness therein.

Following the signing of the Oslo Accords, National Public Radio broadcast a report about Israel. The report focused on the contrast between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. One of the people interviewed said, "Tel Aviv is a normal city, unencumbered by history. Tel Aviv is like Miami!"

To prove the point of the interviewee, the reporter visited Tel Aviv on a Friday afternoon and recorded the sounds one can hear on a typical Tel Aviv street. Indeed, when you close your eyes and listen to the recording, you can easily mistake it for downtown Baltimore, or any other city in the United States. They played a few moments of rap "music" — if you can call it music — blaring from the boom box of a group of teenagers hanging out on the street. "This is so normal," the reporter declares.

They went on to describe Jerusalem on a Friday afternoon. "Orthodox Jews, many of them dressed in broad-brimmed hats and long caftans, scurry through the streets preparing for the upcoming Sabbath."

לעלו נשמת דוב יצחק ב"ר אפרים אלחנן ז"ל

Elul

From the second day of Rosh Chodesh Elul, we blow the שופר each day after שחרית except on erev Rosh Hashanah. Blowing the שופר is intended to arouse us to repent.

It is also our custom, from that day until שמיני עצרת, to recite Psalm 27, מעריב and שחרית [“Of David, Hashem is my light and my salvation”] each day after שחרית and מעריב.

Please note: there is a comma and a pause after the word לדוד. The Midrash has: “ה' אורי” —on Rosh Hashanah; “וישעי” —on Yom Kippur; and “כי יצפנני בסכה” —alludes to Sukkos.

Jerusalem, the report implies, is not normal. Jerusalem is a city that must carry the weight of thousands of years of history and theology on its shoulders.

Tel Aviv is a modern city. Tel Aviv is a “normal” city. Jerusalem is not. Truthfully, attaining “normalcy” was the stated goal of secular Zionism. Early Zionist leaders considered the verse, “We will be like all the other nations” (1 Shmuel 8:20), their mantra. They developed the country through the blood, sweat, and tears of the Kibbutz movement, but all the while envisioned a country whose cities would look like all the “normal” cities in the world.

What they did not realize was that if Tel Aviv would look like Miami, their descendants might decide that it is not worth living in Tel Aviv if they could just as well move to Miami. And that is exactly what happened.

A reporter once traced the descendants of several of the founders of the Zionist state — names like Herzl, Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky, and others — and found that over seventy-five percent — seventy-five percent! — of their descendants live outside Israel.

To paraphrase Rabbi Emanuel Feldman, former Rav of Atlanta, Georgia, who now spends most of the year in Eretz Yisrael:

They abandoned the kibbutz in droves, physically and spiritually, for

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת ראה

- Mincha
- Candle Lighting
- Seder HaLimud
- Shacharis
- סוף זמן ק"ש
- 1st Mincha
- 2nd Mincha
- 3rd Mincha
- Rov's Shiur
- Motzei Shabbos
- Sun Rosh Chodesh
- Mon / Thurs
- Tues / Wed / Fri
- Mincha & Maariv
- Late Maariv

שבת ראש חודש אלול

- 7.30pm
- 7.49pm - 7.55pm
- 8.40am
- 9.00am
- 9.27am
- 2.00pm
- 6.00pm
- 8.39pm
- Following
- 9.44pm
- 7.00am / 8.00am
- 6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
- 6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
- 7.45pm
- 10.00pm

the less austere life — and ultimately the greater comforts and material opportunity — of Canada and the United States. The most sacred tenet of the secular Zionist canon — settling in Israel — is utterly ignored. As the secularists painfully realize, *Yerida* (emigration) from Israel is primarily a secular phenomenon, while *Aliyah* (immigration) to Israel is primarily Orthodox.

Realistic estimates show that there are close to half-a-million Israeli expatriates now living in the West. Those raised on a religion-less diet abandon Israel for the West, but those raised on mitzvah observance apparently do not find it difficult to abandon the luxuries of the West for a less-comfortable life in Israel.

This trend results in an interesting juxtaposition: You can hear Hebrew spoken in electronics stores on 42nd Street in New York or on Pico Boulevard in Los Angeles, while English is spoken in Israeli yeshivos such as Brisk and Kerem B'Yavneh.

The Orthodox in Israel today ask a troubling question of the secularists: Who are the real *Chovevei Zion*? Who really loves Zion?

Only those who observe Torah and mitzvos want to live in Israel. Only they are willing to live in the “abnormal” land.

Eretz Yisrael is not normal. It is not “normal” to have to consider fruit holy simply because it grew in a certain year. But that is what Eretz Yisrael is all about. Moreover, that is what being a Jew is all about. A Jew is encumbered by history. A Jew is encumbered by theology. It is not surprising that those who don't realize the significance of being Jews are not interested in living in a country that was, is, and will always be, encumbered by history and theology.

Ironically, the segment of society that secularists consider “abnormal” is willing to live in Israel, the abnormal country.

An article in *The New York Times* documented the secular reaction to American olim (immigrants) to Israel. The spirit of the article was that secular Israelis could not understand how a sane individual who was living in the United States, had a livelihood in the United States, and owned a house in the United States, could come to the ridiculous conclusion that is worthwhile to pack up all his belongings and move to Israel.

In the eyes of secular Israelis, people who make aliyah from North America nowadays must be out of their minds, the article concluded.

In a sense, the secular Israelis are correct. People who are willing to give up living in the lap of luxury in favor of a land with far less material opportunity simply because it is a mitzvah to do so are not normal. But only abnormal people can live in an abnormal land.

It might have seemed strange to see the great *Ponevezher Rav* hugging a tree. The *Ponevezher Rav* was not involved in *Green Peace* or any other “save the earth” movement. He had a message to impart with his unconventional behavior. Eretz Yisrael is a land governed by abnormal standards, and it can only be inhabited by people who are equally “abnormal.”

It is that abnormality we should all admire and for which we should all strive.

Vitamin See

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

See, I set before you today a blessing and a curse . . . (Devarim 11:26)
WHEN WE REACH Parashas Re'eh, I can really feel Rosh Hashanah breathing down my neck. I think it also has to do with the fact that the parsha itself is very Rosh Hashanah-like in nature, dealing with blessing and curse and judgment overall. Moshe Rabbeinu is in his final approach for the World-to-Come, and he is trying to leave behind a nation intensely loyal to God.

Last Shabbos, I was told that the Vilna Gaon said that he could not even imagine what a simple thought was like in the mind of a Jew from the Temple period of time. As much as they seem similar to us, their spiritual level was VERY different from ours, and if the Gaon meant from the Second Temple of time, how much more so from the First Temple period.

The same thing can be said about us and the Vilna Gaon. We know he was a great rabbi. We know he was an amazing human being. If we could be in his presence today, we would accord him GREAT honor, even more than we do our current Gedolim who, themselves, would humble themselves before the Gaon from Vilna.

But it would still be like greeting an alien. As great as the spiritual and intellectual gap is between the average Jew and the Torah leaders of this generation, it is not nearly as great as the gap between the greatest of our generation, and the GR”A (the other name for the Vilna Gaon). It's like comparing humans to aliens.

It's hard to fathom, for two reasons. It's like trying to appreciate a nuclear explosion from a small burn mark on a wall miles away. They're connected, but so much exists between the two extremes. Secondly, it's hard for us to imagine how, being so technologically advanced, some people from the past, who were technologically unsophisticated, could be so much smarter than we are.

But that's only because people have a much greater appreciation of material wisdom than they do spiritual wisdom. They can see how to apply for the former, and have already benefited tremendously from it. They do NOT see any practical value in spiritual wisdom. Can it make a phone smarter? Can it make a car better? Does it make a person more financially independent? Not as far as man can see.

Not as far as man can SEE.

Everything in life comes down to what a person SEES. It is seeing, in whatever form it takes, that makes a person aware of the world of which they are part, and what they have to deal with. That awareness is crucial for knowing how to adequately respond to the opportunities of life, and very often how to avoid making a fool of ourselves.

It has happened on occasion that I have been in the same vicinity as a person who thought they were alone. I did not realize it until they did something, like talk to themselves, that they probably would not have done had they been aware of my presence at the time. That's usually when I have ducked out, lest they discover me there and feel embarrassment.

But, at least the physical reality is one that CAN be seen. It would be a completely different life if we could see the spiritual one as well, as this story points out:

The king of Aram was greatly disturbed about this matter, and he summoned his servants and said to them, “Will you not tell me who of ours [reveals my secrets] to the king of Israel?”

One of his servants said, “No, my master, the King, but Elisha the prophet who is in Israel tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.”

He said, “Go and see where he is, and I will send and take him.”

He was told, “Behold, he is in Doshan.”

He sent horses, chariots, and a great army there. They came at night and surrounded the city. The servant of the man of God arose early and went out, and behold an army with horses and chariots was surrounding the city. His attendant said to [Elisha], “My master! What shall we do?”

[Elisha] said, “Have no fear, for those who are with us are more numerous than those who are with them.”

Elisha prayed and said, “O God, please open his eyes and let him see.” God opened the lad's eyes and he SAW, and behold the mountain was full of fiery horses and chariots around Elisha. (II Melachim 6:11-17)

We may not be able to see what Elisha caused Gchazi to see, but the request is just as relevant today.

We have to pray for God to open our eyes so that we can see where He is, what He is doing, and why as much as possible. That is the kind of vision that makes it possible to go through life achieving levels of personal greatness that others only dream about, or don't even consider at all.