

Israel at 63

By Rabbi Hagay Batzri
with Dafna Ezran

“This is the day the Lord has created to rejoice and be happy in it” (Psalms)

This Shabbat we read the Torah portion entitled “Behar,” which means “at the mountain.” What mountain were we at? Har Sinai, or Mount Sinai. At Har Sinai, the Jewish people had gathered to receive the Torah, and Hashem was in the process of giving and explaining the Torah to Moshe, so that he could teach it to Bne Yisrael, the Jewish people. In Parashat Behar, Hashem relates, specifically, laws pertaining to the land of Israel, or Eretz Yisrael.

As it happens, this year, on this Shabbat we are also celebrating Yom Haatzmaut. What a beautiful coincidence that this Shabbat the Torah portion contains mitzvot, or laws, that we can only keep in Eretz Yisrael. One example of such laws involves the Shmita, or the sabbatical year designated for the land of Israel. Specifically, the mitzvah of Shmita involves letting the fields in Israel lie fallow every seventh year. Shmita is just one example of how Hashem teaches us to care for ourselves and to take care of the land of Israel.

The mitzvah of “Shmita” involves several things.

First, as we mentioned, during the seventh year in a seven-year cycle, land in Israel must lie fallow. In addition, debts are canceled. The idea of the Shemita is like the Idea of Shabbat. When we keep Shabbat, we work for six days and rest on the seventh. When people in Israel keep the Shemita, for six years they control and work the land. During those six years, we enter into a partnership with the ground in order to produce. But, when the seventh year occurs in Israel, God is the King of our land. The state of human ownership is merely a temporary condition.

During Shemita we move beyond the confines of nature, beyond nature’s limitations, and trust in Hashem. Hashem promises that the Shemita year will be a year of rest, when we busy ourselves with worshipping God, learning the Torah and enjoying nature without intruding upon the land. Just as on Shabbat God commands the land to produce enough on Friday to take care of us during Shabbat, in the sixth year of the Shemita the land produces extra, an amount sufficient for three years—the sixth year, the Shemita year, and the following year while the next crop grows. During Shemita the ground rests, because the land needs to renew itself and replenish its natural fertilizers—the nutrients and minerals

necessary to grow nourishing crops. All that material needs to be put back into ground for it to produce well.

Shmita is a beautiful idea to care about the land. Hashem gives us a tool, a secret, for how to maintain Eretz Yisrael, for how we should treat and respect the land. This also tells us how we, the workers, should treat ourselves when we work the land and suggests how we should take care of ourselves when engaged in any occupation.

While this year is not a Shemita year for the land, it does complete another cycle of seven relating to Yom Ha’atzmaut. This year on Yom Ha’atzmaut, the 63rd Israeli Independence Day, we begin the ninth cycle of seven years since the establishment of the state of Israel in modern times, because 9 x 7 equals 63. According to Kabbalah, every cycle of seven is a cycle of new time, a new age. We should look forward to tremendous, amazing changes during the next seven years, and we hope and pray that they will be only for the good.

Sixty-three also correlates with the numerical value of Hashem’s holy name. (In Hebrew, each letter is assigned a numerical value through the system of gematria.) When we represent the name of God with the full letters yud / 20=י' (Continued on page 2)

Prayer Schedule

SHABBAT

PARASHAT BEHAR

Friday, May 13th, 2011

Shaharit 6:30 am

Minhah & Arbit 6:30 pm

Candle Lighting 7:27 pm

Saturday, May 14th, 2011

Shaharit 8:30 am

Blue & White Shabbat Kahol Lavan Celebration Israel’s Independence Day

Musical Tribute w/ Rabbi Batzri

“Sephardim in Israel Today”

Talk with Rabbi Bouskila &
Remarks from Israeli Consulate
during Morning Services and
Festive Israeli Kiddush

Tehillim 6:15 pm

Class w/R. Batzri 6:15 pm

Minhah & Arbit 6:45 pm

Motzei Shabbat 8:32 pm

WEEKDAYS

Sunday, May 15th

Shaharit 7:30 am

Monday, May 16th

Women’s Tehillim 11:30 am

Monday-Friday

Shaharit 6:30 am

PESAH SHENI

Wednesday, May 18, 2011

EREV SHABBAT

Friday, May 20th, 2011

Shaharit 6:30 am

Minhah & Arbit 6:30 pm

Candle Lighting 7:33 pm

Torah Readings

Parasha 531-539

Haftara 539-541

Submissions Deadline
Kol Mevasser Newsletter

Tuesdays at 6 pm

Thank You!

(continued)

, hay / 15=יח, vav / 13=וה, hay / 15=יה and add the numbers together, the total is 63. The kabalistic interpretation of the number sixty-three reflects this association with Hashem's holy name, connecting sixty-three with the idea of movement into a different world, in fact, into an entirely different dimension of existence.

As far as this concept relates to the land of Israel--so far, so good. Israel is one of the smallest countries on earth with of 1/1000 world's population. Israel is an extremely young country; it is only 63 years old. Moreover, Israel remains under constant threat. Yet, despite these challenges, Israel leads the world in many ways.

Israel is first in the world in collecting immigrants, increasing by 350% its population in the last 63 years.

Israel is the only country that has successfully and completely revived an unspoken language.

Since the founding of the state, Israel has received more Nobel prizes per capita than any other country—more than China, Mexico, and Spain combined.

Israel has the 8th longest life expectancy in the world. Despite the wars and terror attacks, people can expect to live 80.7 years in Israel—which is more than in the U.S., U.K., or Germany.

Israeli scientific institutions are, as a group, 3rd in the

world and ranked 2nd in space sciences. Israel leads the world with the most patents for health medical equipment.

Israel also leads the world with more companies listed on the NASDAQ stock exchange than any country other than the U.S. In fact, Israel lists more NASDAQ companies than all of Europe, India, China and Japan put together. In proportion to its population, Israel has the greatest number of start-up companies in the world.

Israel is the only country where the population returned to its homeland after 2000 years in exile.

There are 26 Muslims countries, 18 Christian official states, but there is only one Jewish state.

This year we finish another circle of seven years for Israel—and each year is a miracle. Hashem has given us the blessing of another seven years in Israel, just as He has given us the blessing of each Shabbat, and just as he gives us the blessing of every Shmita year.

There is no doubt that our Jewish state is a miracle from a to z, from day one of its existence until today. The eye of Hashem is there, watching over us, watching over the land with care, and giving us extra protection. Israel is a miracle—and all of Israel's accomplishments are part of that miracle.

Happy Birthday Israel!

SEUDAH SHLISHEET

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in memory of

Iran bat Monavar, z"l

by
Sholeh & Moussa
Shaaya
and
The Rojhani Family

THANK YOU

To all who sponsored
Shabbat Kahol Lavan for
Israel's Independence Day

**Tooraj Aghalar
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Nicole & Abe Mathalon
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SEC: Sephardic Educational Center & Rabbi
Daniel Bouskila**

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David Kohan, Yvette Dabby

**Elsa Singman and the
Sisterhood** of Kahal Joseph
for the amazing food

**Natalie Kohan and
Sharlynn Newman** for the
beautiful decorations

and everyone who helped
with this special event.

PARENTS

1. Children under 5 years old must be supervised by a parent when using our KIDS ZONE upstairs.
2. No child is allowed in the synagogue lobby without the constant supervision of a parent or guardian.
3. We are not responsible for children walking out the front door.

In Memoriam

It is customary to light a memorial candle and to donate tzedakah.

Shabbat / 10 Iyar

Rahmah bat Lulu Khatoon
Abraham Amir Saed Zoghee

Sunday / 11 Iyar

Irving Rosen
Eliyahu Rahamim Solomon

Monday / 12 Iyar

Sarah bat Sarah
Mesuda bat Aziza
Aharon ben Elisha
Rabbee Shadi

Tuesday / 13 Iyar

Devorah bat Aharon
Joseph Robert Saul
Violet Aziza Sheeri

Wednesday / 14 Iyar

Salha Matana bat Matooka
Tala bat Javaher
Amir Ghouliah
Saliman ben Kadoori Shaby
Eliyahu Hai ben Avraham Shamash*

Thursday / 15 Iyar

Rivka Matana bat Miriam
Rahel bat Chana

Friday / 16 Iyar

Aziza bat Chana
Albert Abraham Gazal Sassoon
Yoseph ben Yehudah*

To update, please call the office
at 310.474.0559.

Refuah Shlemah

Yonatan ben Alizah • Mazal Tov bat Sulha Mitana • Matilda Louisa • Yaheskel ben Regina • Ayala bat Naomi • Khayah Noa bat Sara • Haim ben Mordechai • Pnina bat Esther • Yosi ben Esther • Victor ben Latif • Ramah Regina bat Farha • Aziza bat Sara Judith bat Malka • Ofek ben Yochoi • Efrayim Zev ben Fayga • Sulha Matana bat Mozelle • Gershon ben David • Farangis Miriam bat Touran • David ben Leah • Avraham Haim ben Miryam • Yaakov ben Freda • Rachel bat Mazal Tov • Avraham ben Rabbe • Mazal Sigalit bat Rivkah • Orit bat Tikvah • Yaakov ben Aliyah • Chana Leah bat Reiza • Victoria Cohen • Avraham Moshe ben Miriam