

ISRAEL SHELANU ישראלי שלנו

This newsletter is a nonpolitical, informational and educational publication. Informing about news that does not always make the US headlines. We aim to educate about institutions, constitutions, organizations, history and other small things that makes Israel, Israel Shelanu - Our Israel.

Vol. 1 no. 11

A publication of the Community Kollel of Dallas

March 7th, 2008 / I Adar 30, 5768

News

חדשות

Shabbat Start/End Jerusalem: 4:44 / 6:03 Tel Aviv: 5:05 / 6:04

Tzippi and George Clooney

Tzippi Cedar passed by George Clooney and John Travolta. Clooney, she said, is much more handsome in person than on the movie screen, while Travolta, "was wearing more makeup than anyone else." But the red carpet, she said, is deceptively long and it took 30 minutes to get from one end to another. Tzippi, had traveled from Israel to attend the Oscar award ceremony. When "The Counterfeiters," the Austrian film about a master forger forced to work in Nazi concentration camps, was declared the winner - beating her son's entry - she insisted that she didn't feel disappointed. "I was glad it was over," the proud mother said. (Haaretz)

Good numbers

182,000 tourists visited Israel in January 2008, 57% more than in the corresponding month in 2007, and 7% more than in January 2000, the previous all-time high. The Ministry of Tourism has set a target of 2.8 million tourists for 2008, against 2.1 million in 2007. This target has not been changed for the time being, although sources in the tourism sector fear that the economic crisis in the US could reduce the number of tourists over the year. The Tourism Ministry intends to tackle this by stepping up its marketing campaigns in countries across Europe. (Globes)

Political Monopoly

Hasbro the manufacturers of Monopoly are holding an online poll to decide which cities should be in their forthcoming "World Edition" of the game. Last count, "Jerusalem, Israel" was fifth, sandwiched between "Riga, Latvia" and "Paris, France." Jerusalem became the only city to be listed without a country name. However, following complaints, all country names were removed from the list. (JPost)

Royal treatment

Israeli tennis player Shahar Peer, 20, made diplomatic history when she stepped on court at the Qatar Open last week. Peer has suddenly acquired a global focus, received round-the-clock security, and apparently been given a promise that she would be treated "like the Emir's wife." The emirate is bidding for the 2016 Olympics. (Usa Today)

Israel, always there to help.

Last month Israel sent three tons of medical aid and equipment to Kenyan hospitals after recent riots. (MFA)

Did you know?

הידעת?

Religious Zionism (modern)

Religious Zionism can be traced to the "augurers of Zion" (Mevasrei Zion, precursors of Hibbat Zion), including Rabbis Yehudah Alkai, Zvi Kalischer, Shmuel Mohilever, and Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin. Based on a fusion of Jewish religion and nationhood, it aims to restore not only Jewish political freedom but also Jewish religion in the light of the Torah and its commandments. In 1902, in response to the decision of the Fifth Zionist Congress to consider cultural activity as part of the Zionist program, Rabbis Reines and Ze'ev Yavetz established the Mizrahi organization (mizrachi being the Hebrew abbreviation of merkaz ruhani-"spiritual center"). Mizrahi held its first world convention in 1904 and composed the movement's platform, which concerned itself principally with observance of the commandments and return to Zion. In Palestine, Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacoen Kook gave Religious Zionism his personal and spiritual endorsement, regarding settlement in the Land of Israel as the beginning of Redemption. Hapoel Hamizrahi branched away from the main movement (1922) to focus on Orthodox rural settlement in Palestine under the slogan "Torah va-'Avodah" (Torah and Labor). In 1956, the two movements, Mizrahi and Hapoel Hamizrahi, united under the umbrella of the National Religious Party (NRP). The NRP is largely responsible for the fact that parents can choose to send their children to state-funded religious schools, the establishment of religious courts endowed with legal authority over all issues of personal jurisdiction in the Jewish community and the exclusive use of kosher food in the Army and government functions.

Source: AICE



R' Naftali Tzvi
Yehuda Berlin



R' Zvi Hirsch
Kalischer



R' Avraham
Yitzhak Kook



Being Strong, Being Strengthened - חזק חזק ונתחזק

Rav Benjy Myers

This Shabbat we complete the second of the five books of the Torah. At the conclusion of each of the five books, the congregation rises to its feet and exclaims: "Hazak, hazak venithazeik." "be strong, be strong and let us be strengthened."

What is the source for this statement? The answer lies way back in our history, even before we entered the Promised Land.

Moshe has been told that he will not lead the people into the land, but rather Yehoshua. In the ceremony that bestowed upon Yehoshua the mantle of leadership, Moshe turns to Yehoshua in front of all the people and says: "Be strong and courageous! For you shall come with this people to the land which the Lord swore to their forefathers to give them" (Devarim 31:7). The mantra "be strong and courageous" is repeated a number of times to Yehoshua by God, Moshe and the Jewish people in Devarim 31 and Yehoshua 1.

The commentators give varying opinions as to the meaning of each phrase, depending on its individual setting. These explanations include charging Yehoshua to be strong in leading the people properly, in pursuing worldly matters and apportioning the land, in observing the Torah and mitzvot, and in war.

The phrase "be strong and let us be strengthened" appears in Shmuel II, 10:12. Yoav, King David's general, turns to his fellow general and brother, Avishai, and as they prepare to begin a war against Aram and Ammon, says: "Be strong, and let us strengthen ourselves on behalf of our people, and on behalf of the cities of our God: and [then] may God do what is good in his eyes."

Ralbag (R' Levi b' Gershon, 1288-1344) comments that we learn from here that one may not rely on miracles, but instead one must do whatever is possible, and rely on God to do what is good in HIS eyes.

As in days of yore, it is in God, and the ongoing process of the study and keeping of the Torah and mitzvot that we find the strength to build our nation and rebuild our homeland - physically, politically, religiously and spiritually.

חזק חזק ונתחזק**The Timeline**

ציר הזמן

This week we will start a new heading called "The Timeline". Each issue will present a major event that has shaped the modern state of Israel.

Israeli War of Independence - 1947 - 1949

On November 29, 1947, the UN voted to partition Mandate Palestine and created the State of Israel. The Arab nations rejected the partition and the Arab Liberation Army comprised of volunteers from various Arab countries began attacking Israel after the UN vote. Israel officially declared independence on May 14, 1948, at which time five Arab armies from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Iraq invaded the nascent state of Israel. Israeli forces managed to repel all of the invading armies from its territories and signed armistice agreements with all warring parties by July 1949. Israel suffered 6,373 fatalities during the war - 1 percent of its population.

Source: *The Israel Project*

Finally...

Egypt has started exporting gas to Israel in accordance with a 2005 deal. "Egyptian gas has been flowing to Israel since last week," and the pipeline would be fully integrated into the Israeli network "in a few days." The new underwater pipeline runs 100 km. from the Egyptian city of El-Arish to Ashkelon, supplying gas from a field in northern Sinai. (AFP)

Who said anything about a recession?

Israel's economic growth accelerated to an annualized 6.4% in the fourth quarter of 2007, with exports jumping 15.5%, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported. (Bloomberg)

We are staying home

Israel will boycott the United Nations "Durban II" conference on human rights. The decision followed an assessment by the Foreign Ministry, and other Western governments, that it will be impossible to prevent the conference from turning into a festival of anti-Israeli attacks. South Africa hosted the first Durban conference in the summer of 2001 under the auspices of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The United States and Israel responded by lowering the level of their diplomatic representation and eventually quit the conference, which culminated in a resolution equating Zionism and racism. (Haaretz)

Canadian logic

A Canadian Jew has lost his court battle to have his birthplace, Jerusalem, recognized as part of Israel on his Canadian passport. The Supreme Court of Canada has refused to hear an appeal by Elyahu Veffer, who wanted his passport to show that he was born in "Jerusalem, Israel," rather than "Jerusalem.". Lawyers for the Canadian government argued that Canada did not want to show favoritism to either side in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or prejudice a peaceful political settlement. (Haaretz)

Delusional candidates

Jimmy Carter and Kofi Annan have offered to broker a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. According to Army radio the former U.S. president and former U.N. secretary-general recently proposed to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert that they act as go-betweens in truce talks between Israel and the Hamas. Israel opposes the initiative but has yet to make a final decision. (JTA)

**...And speak of them**

...ודברתם בם

If you teach your children 2 facts a week for the next 120 years they will know 12,480 facts about Israel.

- The highest point in Israel is Mt. Hermon, located in the Golan. It is 9,220 ft. above sea level
- The lowest point in Israel (and on earth) is the Dead Sea. It is 1,300 ft below sea level.