

Rabbi's Column

Israel turns 70 this week.

A lot can happen in 70 years. In America, our 70th year saw the Mexican-American war, the decision as to where our border with Canada should be, the acceptance of Iowa as the 29th State, the beginning of the Mormon migration and the first official baseball game played by actual rules. President Polk was in charge of all this.

A lot has changed in Israel over the past 70 years. Some ideals have not been met, and other ideals are being lived daily, even if the news does not focus on the good stuff all that often. There will probably be some changes made over the next 70 years, both in terms of Israel itself and in terms of the relationship between Israel and the rest of us. Just for the fun of it, I predict that in 70 years:

If the melody for the Israeli national anthem remains the same, the words will change to a combination of Hebrew and Arabic, where the hopes for a fundamentally moral state will be able to be sung by all citizens of Israel.

As Arabic is one of Israel's national languages, efforts will be made outside of Israel to teach both liturgical Hebrew and spoken Arabic.

Observance of the Nakba will be moved to Tisha B'Av, as another example of a disastrous event that enabled growth that comes with change. This will be made possible by a generation and leadership that turns Gaza into the Monaco of the southern Mediterranean

Jewish villages in the Jordan valley become so useful economically that other Arab countries compete to invite Jews back in.

The United Nations places a 30 year moratorium against discussing Israel to make up for so much discussion about it earlier.

The world does not completely embrace peace, but it has convinced all leaders to refrain from chemical and biological warfare on their own people.

Life cycle events are no longer completely under religious control.

The Law of Return is tweaked to only apply to Jews under oppressive regimes, from war-torn areas or places where antisemitism is active, violent and tolerated by the government and police.

American Jews no longer need to prove Judaism to move to Israel - they simply have to become citizens like anybody else would.

Outdoor areas in Jerusalem become available to private prayer only. Life cycle events must take place indoors or on a congregation's property.

Active membership within Judaism includes volunteer service in another country for 2 years, within a religious strand that is not the same one as a person grew up in. Whether this is before or after college depends upon the individual. Funding for this comes from the same place that Birthright Israel used to use.

Judaism, in all of its many strands, will still be alive and vibrant, and will be filled with people certain that this will be the last generation of Jews.

The good news is - this is so far off that I feel certain I will never know if I am right or not.

Israel's birthday always comes with a reminder that people have died for Israel to continue to exist. May the day come when all militaries will be used to battle the aftermath of natural disasters throughout the world, without the need to worry about the enemy at the gates.