

GEMAR CHATIMAH TOVA

“Z'CHOR YEMOT OLAM BINU SHENOT DOR VADOR” [REMEMBER THE DAY OF OLD, UNDERSTAND THE YEARS OF GENERATION AFTER GENERATION [32:7]

Moshe, in his farewell talk, is charging us to study and remember our history. The study of history is not considered *Bitul Zeman*, [waste of time from learning Torah] but is a vital and relevant aspect of knowing who we are now and where we came from in the past. According to RambaN, understanding history gives us a better perspective of appreciating G-d and how He regulated the course of the world according to the needs of the Jewish people.

Rav Elchanan Wasserman wrote in his memoirs before he was murdered by the Nazis at the beginning of the Second World War, that when the Treaty of Versailles drew a new map of Europe at the end of the First World War, the borders were already drawn in Heaven.

One does not have to be politically astute to appreciate the impact of the breakup of the Soviet Union on the Jewish people. We sometimes think the smaller details of world history do not really affect us. What difference does it make to the yeshiva students who are involved in solving a dispute between two individuals holding an object and each claiming that it is his [Shenayim Ochazim Betalit], whether Azerbaijan goes its own way or whether Chechnya declares its independence? But this is a mistake. It does make a difference –even if we don't see it.

What difference did it make to the yeshiva students in Persia if the non-Jewish queen Vashti refused to appear before King Achash'veirosh? It made the headlines in the Times of Persia- but hardly a ruffle behind the wall of the yeshiva. Yet we now know the consequences of that event. It led to the rebuilding of the Second Beit HaMikdash.

What difference did it make if the Ottoman Empire sided with the Allies or the Germans during the First World War? Which of the Kollel students gave it a second thought from the perspective of the Jewish people? But in retrospect, it was a crucial decision. By choosing the wrong side, the Ottoman Turks were forced to surrender their possession in the Middle East, including a dusty strip of land called Palestine. Great Britain received the mandate for Palestine, which opened the way for the establishment of modern-day Israel.

Moshe Rabbeinu is saying, ZECHOR YEMOT OLAM,- pay heed to what has happened in world history, Binu Shenot Dor Vador- and pay particular attention to Jewish history. When we see maps changing, we need to hold our breaths. Somehow or other, this will affect us, either for the good or, Chas VeShalom, otherwise. WE are always on center stage, because we are the protectorate of the Master of the Universe.

Shabbat Shalom and **GA'MAR CHATIMAH TOVA** from Yerushalayim,
Rabbi Aharon Ziegler