

# BREAKING ISRAEL NEWS

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## SANHEDRIN REVIVES 2,000-YEAR-OLD BLESSING FOR COUNTING OF JUBILEE YEAR

By Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz September 27, 2016 , 11:30 am

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*“And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a Jubilee unto you.” Leviticus 25:10 (The Israel Bible™)*



Fireworks seen over the Temple Mount and the Old City of Jerusalem. (Nati Shohat/Flash90)

Amidst the shofar blasts, this Rosh Hashana will include a *mitzvah* (Biblical commandment) that hasn't been performed by the Jews in almost 2,000 years: counting the Jubilee. It is a simple mitzvah, reciting just a few lines, but performing this mitzvah is a declaration that the prophesied return of the Jews to Israel has been fulfilled, thereby establishing a basis for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple.

Unbeknownst to all but a few witnesses, as Rosh Hashana ended eleven months ago, the nascent Sanhedrin concluded months of deliberation by ruling that certain conditions had been met requiring the Nation of Israel to begin counting the Jubilee cycle. Rabbi Avraham Dov Ben Shor recited the blessing and the 49-year cycle began again.

When Rosh Hashana – the Jewish New Year – ends next Tuesday evening, it will be time for Jews to count the second year of the Jubilee cycle. The blessing and the count are as follows:

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ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם אשר קידשנו במצותיו וצונו על ספירת שמיטים ויובלות.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, Asher Kidshanu B'Mitsvotav, V'Tsivanu Al Sfirat Shemittim v'Yovalot.*

*Blessed art thou, Ruler of the Universe, who sanctifies us in his commandments, and has commanded us to count the sabbaticals and the Jubilees.*

השנה הזאת היא השנה השנייה ליובל הראשון והשנה השנייה לשמיטה ראשונה ביובל הראשון.

*Hashana HaZot Hee Hashanna Hasnia La'Yovel Harishon v'Hashanna Hashnia LaShmitta Rishon Bayovel Harishon.*

*This year is the second year of the first Jubilee, and the second year for the first sabbatical in the first Jubilee.*

Specific conditions outlined in Jewish law had to be considered by the Sanhedrin before reinstating this mitzvah. Unlike most Torah commandments being observed today which are incumbent on an individual, the Jubilee is a national mitzvah. Its observance is dependant upon most of Israel being in the land of Israel.

To begin counting the Jubilee last year, the Sanhedrin, as a *bet din* (rabbinic court), [ruled](#) that the Jews have returned to inherit the land as a nation, and not just as individuals. This requires at least 600,000 Jews, equal to the number of Israelites that returned to Israel from Egypt under [Joshua](#).

Rabbi Hillel Weiss, spokesman for the Sanhedrin, explained to *Breaking Israel News*, “The Sanhedrin ruled that we are now clearly in the prophesied third inheritance of the land, the first being by Joshua, the second after the Babylonian exile.

“There are 5 mitzvot connected to the Jubilee: counting the Jubilee, letting free slaves, returning land, blowing the [shofar](#), and forgiving debts,” Rabbi Weiss explained. “We have reinstated one: the counting of the Jubilee.”

Rabbi Weiss added that blowing the shofar, performed on Yom Kippur, has not yet been reinstated as part of the mitzvah of Jubilee, but if an individual feels so inclined, he can do so without a blessing.

It has been exactly one complete Jubilee cycle since the Six-Day War and the unification of Jerusalem. Had the Jubilee cycle not been interrupted 2,000 years ago by the Diaspora, the first year of the ongoing Jubilee cycle would have been in 1967, the year Jerusalem was unified, and again last year,

when the Sanhedrin reinstated the Jubilee. The next Jubilee will be declared in 2065, 48 years from now.



The jubilee medallion issued by the nascent Sanhedrin. (Courtesy)

To signify the reinstatement of the Jubilee, and also to commemorate the Jubilee of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin has issued a [medallion](#). One side is engraved with an image of Solomon's Temple, flanked by two shofars, symbolizing the Jubilee. The other side shows a lit seven-branched menorah, two cherubim, and a Hebrew inscription stating that the third inheritance of the land of

Israel by the Jews has officially been declared. The Sanhedrin is selling the medallion and setting aside the proceeds for use in the Third Temple.

“Sale of this medallion will serve as the basis for the mitzvah of the half-shekel, which was collected from every Jewish male,” Rabbi Hillel Weiss explained. “As such, the money will go towards acquiring animals, grain, oil and wine, for sacrificial purposes. It will also be used for building and maintaining the temple.”

The rabbi specified that the medallion does not fulfill the requirements outlined in the Torah for the [half-shekel](#), and should not be considered sacred, but all of the funds will be reserved by the Sanhedrin for Temple use.