



ISRAEL EDITION  
VOL 6 • NO 1  
YOM HA'ATZMAUT &  
YOM YERUSHALAYIM 5783

# המזרחי HAMIZRACHI

NOW IN OUR 6TH YEAR!

WITH GRATEFUL THANKS TO THE FOUNDING SPONSORS OF HAMIZRACHI  
THE LAMM FAMILY OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

## MIZRACHI CELEBRATES ISRAEL AT 75!

**The World Orthodox  
Israel Congress**

PAGES 8-14

**New book by  
Rabbi Doron Perez**

PAGES 4-7



Dedicated in memory of Lucy, Maia and Rina Dee הי"ד  
together with all the fallen soldiers and civilians that we lovingly remember on Yom HaZikaron.  
יהי זכרם ברוך





www.mizrachi.org  
www.mizrachi.tv  
office@mizrachi.org  
+972 (0)2 620 9000



PRESIDENT

**Mr. Kurt Rothschild z"l**

CO-PRESIDENT

**Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman**

CHAIRMAN

**Mr. Harvey Blitz**

CEO & EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN

**Rabbi Doron Perez**

DEPUTY CEO

**Rabbi Danny Mirvis**

EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORS

**Rabbi Reuven Taragin**

**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**

World Mizrachi is the global Religious Zionist movement, spreading *Torat Eretz Yisrael* across the world and strengthening the bond between the State of Israel and Jewish communities around the world.

Based in Jerusalem and with branches across the globe, Mizrachi – an acronym for *merkaz ruchani* (spiritual center) – was founded in 1902 by Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, and is led today by Rabbi Doron Perez. Mizrachi's role was then and remains with vigor today, to be a proactive partner and to take personal responsibility in contributing to the collective destiny of *Klal Yisrael* through a commitment to Torah, the Land of Israel and the People of Israel.

## HAMIZRACHI

PUBLISHED BY WORLD MIZRACHI IN JERUSALEM

EDITOR

**Rabbi Elie Mischel**  
editor@mizrachi.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**Rabbi Aron White**

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

**Leah Rubin**

PROOFREADER

**Daniel Cohen**

HaMizrachi seeks to spread *Torat Eretz Yisrael* throughout the world. HaMizrachi also contains articles, opinion pieces and advertisements that represent the diversity of views and interests in our communities. These do not necessarily reflect any official position of Mizrachi or its branches. If you don't want to keep HaMizrachi, you can double-wrap it before disposal, or place it directly into *genizah* (*sheimos*).

To dedicate an issue of HaMizrachi in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a *simcha*, or for other HaMizrachi enquiries, please email [production@mizrachi.org](mailto:production@mizrachi.org).

HaMizrachi is available to read online at  
[mizrachi.org/hamizrachi](http://mizrachi.org/hamizrachi)

# Yom HaAtzmaut Torah

PAGES 18–36



## Reveal the Light!

Miriam Peretz's acclaimed Israel Prize speech

PAGE 22



## A Tale of Two Cities

PAGE 52



## Building a Diaspora Style Community in Israel

An Interview with Rabbi Larry Rothwachs

PAGE 38



### REGULARS

- |                              |                           |                       |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 4 Rabbi Doron Perez          | 34 Rabbanit Shani Taragin | 46 Aliyah Diaries     |
| 26 Rabbi Elie Mischel        | 35 Rabbi Reuven Taragin   | 48 Sivan Rahav-Meir   |
| 32 Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l | 36 Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon  | 54 Hallel and Shammai |



# *The Mizrahi Legacy Initiative*

Make a Lasting Impact

Jewish destiny has always been intertwined with tzedakah and community.

Through leaving a legacy to Mizrahi, you will ensure a strong connection to Israel, and a steadfast Jewish identity for the next generation.



*We will provide access to independent estate planning advice – an initial consultation – for those who pledge a gift in their will to Mizrahi.*

**For more information please contact Eli Ovits  
+972-2-620-9000 | [legacy@mizrachi.org](mailto:legacy@mizrachi.org)**

**[mizrachi.org/legacy](http://mizrachi.org/legacy)**

# המִזְרָחִי HAMIZRACHI

**ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE!**

Your favorite articles are available  
to read and share online at  
**[mizrachi.org/hamizrachi](http://mizrachi.org/hamizrachi)**





# The Next Seventy-Five Years

**Rabbi Doron Perez**

*This month, Gefen Publishing House and Mizrahi Press will release **The Jewish State – From Opposition to Opportunity**, by Rabbi Doron Perez, Executive Chairman of the Mizrahi World Movement. World Mizrahi is grateful to partner with Gefen Publishing House in publishing this timely and important work. The following essay is adapted from the book's afterword.*

**N**etanel Ellinson, head of a pre-army academy in Israel and a gifted educator, makes the following sobering observation. In both prior Jewish commonwealths, a crisis ensued as the nation neared its seventy-fifth year of independence.

Quite remarkably, seventy-three years after David's coronation as king over all the tribes of Israel, the people of Israel tragically split into two separate kingdoms: Yehudah and Yisrael.

The same is true of the Hasmonean kingdom in Second Temple times. The Hasmonean kingdom was established by *Shimon HaChashmonai*, followed by Yochanan, and then King Alexander Yannai and *Shlomtzion HaMalkah*. In the seventy-third year, once again, a deep division ensued between the two princes Aristobulus and Hyrcanus. This became a family feud and a deep political divide, with one brother enlisting the support of the rising Roman Empire, giving Rome a foothold in Judea and eventually leading to the decimation of the Hasmonean kingdom and the destruction of the Temple.

In both cases, Ellinson notices a troubling trend within the first three generations of the establishment of statehood. The first generation is that of the founders, who rally all their resources to found the state and ensure its viability at the outset. The second generation is that of the builders, who build on the success of the founders to expand and enhance the national infrastructure and build sustainability for the generations to come.

He poignantly terms the third generation as "the generation of the destroyers." This generation by and large do not know firsthand the challenges of the founders but reap the benefit of their sacrifice and investment. Apathy sets in, then discord, and finally tragic divisiveness. This has happened not

once but twice in the history of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel.

As we celebrate Israel's seventy-fifth anniversary, we find ourselves at this very same juncture. The fate of the State is in our hands. Israel is grappling with the roiling and divisive issue of judicial reform, revealing deep fault lines and fissures in Israeli and Jewish society. How the State of Israel handles this and other divisive issues will define its long-term internal resilience and mutual trust. The currency of a functional society is the level of trust each person and group places in the other. We must find a recipe for Jewish unity and legitimate space for the different ideological perceptions of Jewish identity and destiny. Reclaiming the covenant at the heart of Jewish society and drawing on the dynamics of Davidian politics is crucial for the future of Israel.

As great as the external threats are to Israel – and indeed they are – in many ways the internal issues are no less and perhaps even more threatening. There is a significant spiritual correlation between the geopolitical reality facing the Jewish people in general and Israel in particular and its metaphysical state. It is impossible to separate the external historico-political circumstances of the Jewish people from their internal moral and spiritual state.

Israel is, in the words of historian Paul Johnson, "a pilot-project for the entire human race," and, in the words of Rav Kook, a microcosm of all the salient moral dilemmas and challenges facing human society. If Jewish society in Israel, which reflects an intense gamut of views, can find space one for the other, we may provide both the example and impetus for all of humanity to find space for one another. Rav Kook has highlighted that this unity is possible through the rubric of authentic inclusive Torah values.

Fascinatingly, Herzl's utopian novel *Altneuland* ends on this very note. The different characters in Herzl's imagined future state express what each one feels is the driving force of the new Jewish state – be it suffering, technology, knowledge, or willpower, among other suggestions. After each has given their opinion, the book ends with words of the final protagonist, Rabbi Shmuel: "But the venerable Rabbi Shmuel arose and proclaimed: 'G-d!'"<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, Israel's relationship with G-d is an inextricable part of the story. When we find space for others, we find space for the G-dliness in each other and in turn for Hashem's *shechinah* – His presence – to be felt in the rebuilt *Beit HaMikdash* in Jerusalem and throughout the world, may it be speedily in our days.

1. Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland*, 1916. The "Rabbi Shmuel" referred to here is either Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever, founder of the Mizrahi branch of Chibbat Tzion, or Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, one of the founders and leaders of the Mizrahi of Rabbi Reines.



**Rabbi Doron Perez**  
is the Executive Chairman  
of World Mizrahi.



Join me at the  
World Orthodox Israel Congress  
[orthodoxisraelcongress.org](http://orthodoxisraelcongress.org)





# NOW AVAILABLE

*"Everyone to whom Israel is dear should have this book in their library."*

*Rabbi Berel Wein*

“ Rabbi Doron Perez has authored a powerful and passionate call for civility and unity within the Jewish community.... He makes a compelling case for the central role the State of Israel can play and, in particular, the Mizrachi movement which he heads with such distinction can – and must – play in assuring the continued flourishing of the Jewish people.... Read this book carefully and be inspired to do your share.

**Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter**, University Professor of Jewish History and Jewish Thought, Yeshiva University

“ Rabbi Doron Perez has masterfully woven biblical sources with medieval commentaries and contemporary thinkers to create a magnificent tapestry of the unique Jewish state illustrating its past and future. From the teachings of Avraham Avinu through Rav Kook, he has highlighted the religious, national, and universal tenets embraced by the Jewish people, and the importance of incorporating these three principles as a cultural platform for unity.

**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**, Educational Director, Mizrachi; Rosh Beit Medrash for Women, YU Israel

“ The success and sustainability of the Jewish people is in many ways dependent on its internal unity. Rabbi Perez has written a critical book about this very topic.... As a person who dedicates herself to sharing a love of Judaism, Israel, and of all Jews, I strongly recommend reading this book about our beloved Jewish state.

**Miriam Peretz**, Recipient of Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement



*The Jewish State – From Opposition to Opportunity*, by Rabbi Doron Perez, will be launched at Mizrachi's World Orthodox Israel Congress. All Congress attendees will receive a complimentary copy of the book.

**TO PURCHASE THE BOOK,  
VISIT [MIZRACHI.ORG/PRESS](http://MIZRACHI.ORG/PRESS)**



# A Vision for Unity in Israel

David M. Weinberg

## BOOK REVIEW

Rabbi Doron Perez, *The Jewish State: From Opposition to Opportunity*

(Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House and the Mizrachi World Movement, 2023)

Readers of this magazine know Rabbi Doron Perez as a master organizer and motivator who has revitalized the World Mizrachi movement. In this new book, his second, he becomes known to us also as a fine historian, creative theologian, and uplifting educator committed to Jewish unity.

With a clairvoyance that precedes the current terrifying conflict over judicial reform, Rabbi Perez makes the case that internal disputes are more threatening than external threats to Israel. He argues that there is a significant spiritual correlation between Israel's metaphysical state and the geopolitical reality it faces.

The way forward is to build a society based on "authentic inclusive Torah values", "finding space one for the other" and "space for the G-dliness in each other." And then, perhaps, Israel can become "both the example and impetus for all of humanity to find space for one another."

"When Yerushalayim has a genuine space for all, then the *Beit HaMikdash* can be rebuilt because there is space for Hashem's *shechinah* – His presence – to be felt in Jerusalem, Israel, and indeed throughout the world."

"Yishayahu's vision of a Jewish state being 'a light unto the nations' means being a

positive example of how modernity and morality, statecraft and spirituality, particularity and universality can be woven together for the sake of a better spiritual and ethical world."

Perez presents a plethora of biblical and rabbinic sources, from the teachings of Avraham Avinu through the Vilna Gaon, Rav Kook, and Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, fashioning a broad cultural platform for Jewish unity. He reminds readers of their covenantal relationship with G-d and their responsibility to build a society involving real dialogue between Jews of all types.

In short, Rabbi Perez's solution to Jewish disunity is a renewed deep dive into a spiritual paradigm drawn from Tanach and reflecting the Divine mission with which the Jewish people have been bestowed.

MOST INTERESTING to me is the first half of this book (subtitled "Opposition"), where the author offers an ideological framework for understanding two thousand years of "opposition," meaning antisemitism and genocidal campaigns against Jews.

Essentially, he argues that the greatest spiritual endeavors of the Jewish people in every generation – such as the establishment of the State of Israel in our times – invariably are met with the greatest opposition and condemnation by her enemies.



And this opposition clarifies the holiness and spirituality of the enterprise itself.

Perez delineates three archetypes of historical antisemitism, based on a teaching of the Vilna Gaon: Moabite spiritual enmity (which expresses itself in opposition to Jewish values), Edomite physical destruction (opposition to Jewish nationality or race), and Philistine political denialism (opposition to Jewish governance



and sovereignty in the Land of Israel). Put differently, there is antisemitism that focuses on opposition to Judaism (Torah), to the Jewish people, and to the Jewish state, expressed at different times in history, mutating like a virus from one form of hatred to another.

Perez dwells at length on the ills of modern Palestinian nationalism, which he views as a movement infected with the antagonism of ancient Philistines about Jewish sovereignty anywhere in the Land of Israel. In fact, these are the longest chapters in the book. He demonstrates how antisemitism and anti-Zionism have morphed into one mad malady of Jewish/Zionist demonization, a “biological viral infection” which has deeply infected Palestinian national culture and indeed some Western elites.

“The unusual picture that emerges is this: Modern Palestinian nationalism has been less about self-determination and more about denying the right of others to self-determination. It has been less about their collective right to this land and more about rejecting any collective Jewish right. It has been about refusing any compromise to share sovereign control of the land in any way. It is a perplexing type of oppositional nationalism – not positively promoting oneself but negatively denying others.”

“The Vilna Gaon sees the spiritual antecedent of this oppositional, rejecting type of nationalism as reflecting the style of the ancient biblical Philistines. It goes beyond the realm of conventional politics and history. It lies in the spiritual realm, in a millennia-old spiritual and historical phenomenon known as the ancient Philistines. It is them of whom the Gaon observes that *lo henichu lahem shum mem-shalah v’shilton*, “They did not allow them, the Jewish people, any form of governance or sovereignty in the land.”

“Just as the Philistines committed themselves then, so too have the Palestinians of today created a form of nationalism that from its birth until today has one single-minded purpose from a spiritual point of view, and that is to deny the Jewish people any right to self-determination and governance in this Land.”

In short, there is a spiritual and cosmic nature to Palestinian denialism that can be successfully countered only by a spiritual and cosmic uniting of Jews in a renewed covenant of purpose.

IN THE SECOND HALF of the book (subtitled “Opportunity”), the author seeks to subsume the fissures of modern Israel and to overcome Israel’s external enemies by postulating a paradigm of community and destiny based on “Davidian politics” and fundamentals of Rav Kook’s weltanschauung, specifically the interlocking building blocks of religion, nationalism, and universalism (or ethical humanism).

Each of these foundations, he explains, can lead to extremism and conflict. But in proper balance and perspective, they can complement and complete each other, and build Jewish sovereign strength.

Rabbi Perez quotes an insight of the Malbim on Tehillim 122 that peace works from the inside out. “May there be peace at your walls, and serenity within your palaces,” meaning that peace with our enemies (at our walls) can only be achieved if there is internal peace within *Am Yisrael* (serenity within our palaces).

The pathway to serenity in our palaces, he writes, lies in a renewed sense of covenant and agreements on mutual responsibility to one another and for the good of society as a whole. “The idea of the covenantal relationship in Judaism is so positively transformative that it is seen as an ideal that the nations of the world will wish to emulate in aiming to build a better society, as per Yishayahu 42: “I, the L-rd, have called you to display My righteousness, and I will take you by the hand and guard you, and I will make you [the Jewish people] an exemplar of a covenantal nation, a light to the nations.”

The hankering for “covenant” does not mean coercive religion, Rabbi Perez emphasizes, “because any attempt to coerce the fulfillment of *mitzvot* would cause great backlash, hatred, and even, G-d forbid, civil war.” Rather, covenantal understandings must be brought about by wise political, spiritual, and educational leaders, acting in “Davidian” fashion, meaning leaders who forgive others for the sake of unity, who overcome tribalism and eschew extremism, and instead advance “synthesis and moderation.”

Here, Rabbi Perez sees the central potential contribution of Religious Zionist Jews, and of the World Mizrahi movement – in a healthy balancing of religion, nationalism, and universalism; a finely-tuned package which he terms “inclusive Torah values.” He argues that this package of values is “the fundamental rubric of

Jewish destiny,” and it holds the key to partnership between religious and secular Jews, and ultimately between Jews and non-Jews.

Overall, the spectrum of sources that Rabbi Perez marshals to make his case (from the *rabbanim* mentioned above to Greek political philosophers, historians, and Zionist leaders) is breathtaking. And his passion for Jewish unity is endearing and inspiring.

While this book is devoid of practical solutions to conflicts between religion and state, between the *batei din* and the secular courts, between *Charedim* and *chilonim*, between *chametz* laws and homosexual rights, and between annexationists and two-state solutionists – it stands as a manifesto, a *cri de coeur*, for newfound accord between all Jews in building and defending the first Jewish state in 2,000 years.



**David M. Weinberg**

is a student of Rabbi Chaim Yeshayahu Hadari zt”l of Yeshivat Hakotel and Rabbi Dr. Aharon Lichtenstein zt”l of Yeshivat Har Etzion. He is a senior fellow at the Institute for Zionist Strategy and National Security (Misgav) and at Israel’s Defense and Security Forum (Habithonistim). His op-ed articles appear weekly in The Jerusalem Post and Israel Hayom, and are archived at [davidmweinberg.com](http://davidmweinberg.com).



Join me at the  
World Orthodox Israel Congress  
[orthodoxisraelcongress.org](http://orthodoxisraelcongress.org)





# NETWORK, LEARN, AND WORLD ORTHODOX

**6 CONTINENTS • 50 COUNTRIES •**



The future of Israel-Diaspora relations • The rise of global antisemitism  
How to protect international religious freedoms • How can Judaism be relevant?  
Where will the Jewish educators of the future come from? • Understanding the future  
The latest trends and innovations for schools • In what areas should we focus?  
Global rabbinic leadership • Israeli educational resources • Fundraising strategies  
Women's leadership forum • Symposium on the year in Israel • Global perspectives  
How to educate spirituality • Mentoring workshops for future leaders



**LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER: ORTHODOX**

# DO BE INSPIRED AT THE ISRAEL CONGRESS



**250 CITIES • 1,000 ORGANIZATIONS**



ism • Judicial reform – good or bad for Israel and our communities?  
brought to the masses in Israel? • How can Olim be better integrated?  
standing halacha in modern times • Kiruv within our communities  
ld halacha influence public policy? • Judaism under fire in Ukraine  
raising workshop • Creating an international shidduchim network  
al kashrut coordination • How to bring a shaliach to your community  
ture leaders • Hundreds of young delegates • And more...



**THODOXISRAELCONGRESS.ORG**



# WORLD ORTHODOX CONGRESS

## Thursday, April 27

7:45 AM	<b>Registration</b>	
8:00 AM	<b>Shacharit</b>	
8:45 AM	<b>Registration / Coffee and Cake</b>	
9:15 AM	Initial Meetings of Forums: Shul Rabbis, Shul Lay Leaders, Educators, Women's Leadership, Delegations	
10:00 AM	<b>Opening Plenary &amp; Book Launch</b>	
	<b>EDUCATING AND INSPIRING</b>	<b>PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY</b>
11:30 AM	Bringing Judaism to the Masses	Freedom of Religion: How to Work with the Government to Protect Our Traditions
12:45 PM	Guide to the Perplexed: Outreach in 2023	Combating the Politics of Defamation: Global Antisemitism Renewed
	Lunch/Mincha	
2:00 PM	Kiruv Kerovim – How Do We Keep Those Inside Within	Keeping the Fiddler on the Roof – War in Ukraine
	Lunch/Mincha	
3:00 PM	<b>Break/Group Photo</b>	
3:30 PM	Teducation – Five Presentations on Education and Innovation	From Torah Scrolls to Smartphones: How Technology is Reshaping Judaism
	Lunch/Mincha	
4:45 PM	The Worldwide Shortage of Educators and Rabbis	Transformation of Jewish Life Through Philanthropy
6:00 PM	The Halacha Learning Revolution	The Israeli and Kosher Wine Revolutions
7:15 PM	<b>Maariv</b>	
7:30 PM	<b>Dinner</b>	
8:45–11:30 PM	<b>Mishmar</b>	

## Friday, April 28

	<b>THE STATE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL</b>	
9:30 AM	Judicial Reform in Israel	
10:40 AM	The Abraham Accords: A Strategic and Spiritual Breakthrough	
11:50 AM	The Law of Return – The Grandchild Clause	

# ISRAEL CONGRESS

## SCHEDULE



on Heads

STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY		STRENGTHENING OURSELVES
Defining and Developing Women's Torah Leadership	Israel-Diaspora Relations During a Turbulent Time – A Conversation between Diaspora Community Leaders and Israeli Political Leaders	Museum Tour: Judaica Treasures
Bringing Spirituality to Your School and Community	The “Waze” of Matchmaking – Navigating Global Shidduch Challenges	Tour: Jewish History in the Imagination
Unifying the Chinuch Process to Empower Our Youth	Religious Liberty and Beginning/End of Life Care	Rooftop Tour: If I forget thee O Jerusalem Walking Tour: From King David to King George
Fundraising Focus: The \$1,000,000 Question – Causematch and Ne'eman Foundation	The Future of Small Communities Around the World	Rooftop Tour: If I forget thee O Jerusalem
Focus Groups/Discussions on Women's Torah Leadership	Reconnecting and Re-engaging post-Covid	
Professionalizing Our Communal Institutions	From Antisemitism to Ohr Lagoyim: Religious Zionism's Moment to Impact the Nations of the World	

### OUR CONNECTION WITH ISRAEL

Bonei Zion: The Impact of Olim – The Present and The Future

How Shlichim Can Benefit Your Community/School: Panel with Heads of Shlichut Organizations

(Tentative schedule – visit [orthodoxisraelcongress.org](http://orthodoxisraelcongress.org) for the most up to date information)





# *A Momentous Milestone*

**Israel at 75 and the  
World Orthodox Israel Congress**



As the Jewish people celebrate Israel's 75th birthday, World Mizrachi is marking this momentous time in history in a remarkable way – with four packed days of commemoration, celebration, and a unique global congress of Religious Zionist leaders. This Yom HaAtzmaut, hundreds of participants from over 40 countries will gather in Yerushalayim for these remarkable events. "Israel's 75th anniversary is a unique moment in history, and we are excited to both celebrate this historic milestone as well as collectively plan for the future together in Yerushalayim with our global Religious Zionist leadership," said Rabbi Doron Perez, Executive Chairman of the World Mizrachi movement.

World Mizrachi has marked previous milestones, such as the 50th Yom Yerushalayim in 2017 and the 70th Yom HaAtzmaut in 2018, by bringing hundreds of Jews from around the world to Yerushalayim to experience these powerful moments firsthand in the Jewish state. For Israel's 75th anniversary, World Mizrachi is going one step further, organizing events to mark both Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut, as well as a unique and unprecedented gathering, the World Orthodox Israel Congress. Delegates to this Congress will represent hundreds of Jewish organizations, from 250 cities in over 40 countries. The delegates will remember Israel's past, celebrate Israel's present, and then discuss and plan for Israel and the Jewish people's future.

During Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut, participants will experience the full rollercoaster of emotions that these days evoke. Yom HaZikaron events will include hearing from the "Mothers of the Nation," including Rabbanit Rachelle Fraenkel and Miriam Peretz. Together with tens of thousands of Israelis, they will visit Mount Herzl on Israel's most solemn day. And as Israel moves from mourning to joy, participants will take part in a joyous *tefillah chagigit*, a celebratory concert with Ishay Ribo and the IDF Rabbinical Choir, and *tiyulim* in the Jerusalem area.

As the Yom HaAtzmaut celebrations come to a close, World Mizrachi will kick off the World Orthodox Israel Congress. The Congress will be a unique gathering of Jewish leaders from around the world, providing a springboard for future collaboration and leadership across the Jewish community. The range of delegates is unprecedented. From a headteacher in Belgium to a lay leader from Montreal, from *shlichim* in Australia to community heads from Buenos Aires, hundreds of Jewish organizations will be represented at the Congress.

The Congress will address a full gamut of modern issues, including women's leadership, the future of Jewish education, the rise of global antisemitism, Jewish identity challenges on campus, and the *shidduch* crisis. Moderators and experts will also discuss the proposed judicial reforms, the nation-wide protests, and the implications of the current crisis for the future of Israel.







“Beyond the tremendous caliber of the delegates and the outstanding content of the sessions, what excites me most about the Congress is the way it is laying the groundwork for long-term, practical global partnerships. One example of this is the Shagririm BaLev *shidduchim* project,” said Rabbi Danny Mirvis, Deputy CEO of World Mizrahi. World Mizrahi are full partners of the Shagririm BaLev program, an innovative *shidduchim* platform that has already helped almost 150 couples find their soulmates in Israel. At the Congress, World Mizrahi will launch this program globally, helping Jews from all over the world connect with each other and meet their soulmate. “Shagririm BaLev, with constantly growing success in Israel, is well positioned to scale, and will be strengthened and powered by our global network. This is just one example of the immense potential for good that can come through coming together as a global Religious Zionist community.”



Two landmark books will also be launched at the Congress. Rabbi Doron Perez, Executive Chairman of the World Mizrahi movement, has published a timely work entitled “*The Jewish State: From Opposition to Opportunity*” (an excerpt from the book as well a book review are included in this edition of *HaMizrachi*). This work grapples with the contemporary issues facing Israel, providing a framework for understanding the rise of anti-Zionism and embracing Israel’s most salient opportunity – creating a unified Jewish society for the benefit of Jewish destiny and future of humanity more broadly.



Additionally, World Mizrahi has partnered with the OU Press in publishing previously unpublished and untranslated *derashot* of Rav Soloveitchik on the State of Israel and Zionism. Delivered at Mizrahi conferences from the late 1930s through the 1950s, these powerful *derashot* remain timely and relevant, and serve as fresh inspiration to Religious Zionists around the world.

The Congress will also bring community representatives together with young Religious Zionist educators preparing for *shlichut* overseas. “World Mizrahi runs five leadership programs with over 100 participants, training Religious Zionist leaders and teachers to go out into the world. The Congress will provide an opportunity for communities around the world to meet these developing leaders,” said Rabbi Hillel Van-Leeuwen, the head of Mizrahi’s Leadership Programs.

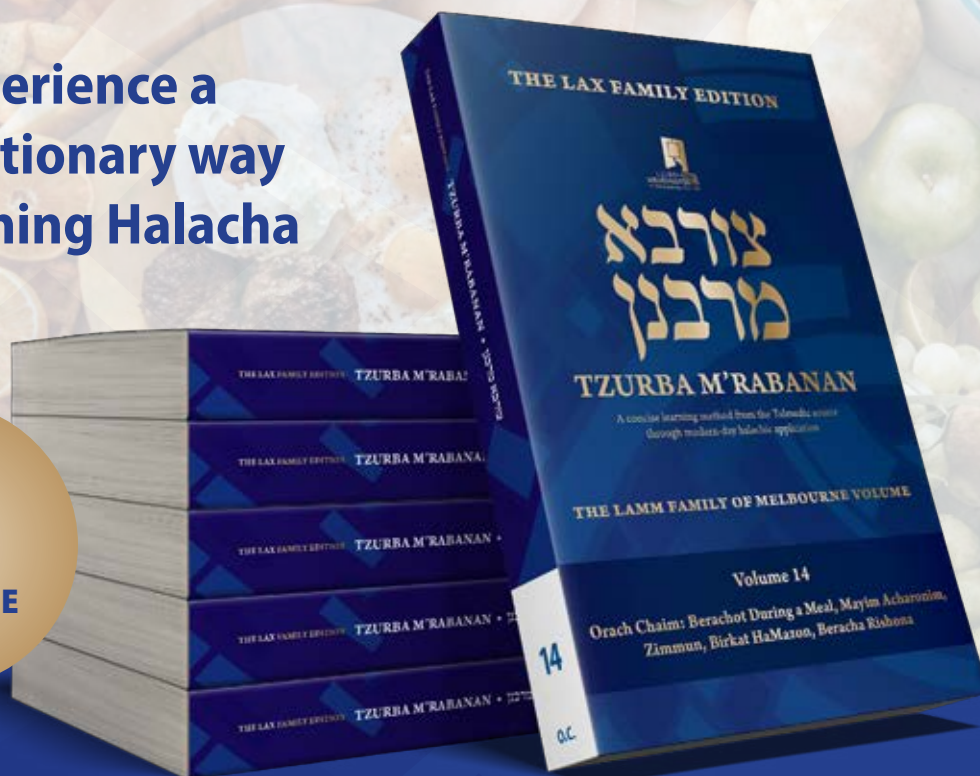


The Congress will also be a unique opportunity to create a global Jewish conversation between communities around the world, including lay leaders and rabbis, together with members of Israel’s Knesset and National Institutions. As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of Israel together in Yerushalayim, we will remember, celebrate and work together to build the next 75 years!

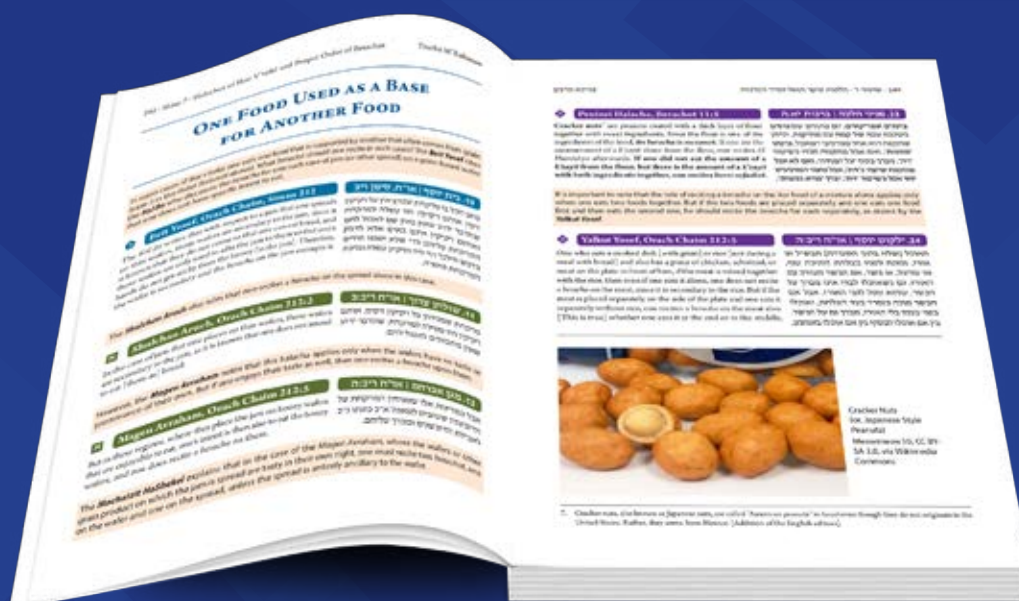


**Experience a  
revolutionary way  
of learning Halacha**

**VOLUME  
14  
AVAILABLE  
NOW!**



**THE LAX FAMILY EDITION**  
**TZURBA**  
**M'RABANAN**



## May a child help form a *zimmun*?

## What *beracha* is made on dessert?

# Are we obligated to wash *mayim acharonim* today?

**Order now at [www.tzurbaolami.com](http://www.tzurbaolami.com)**

**If you would like to start a chabura in your community, please email [eli@tzurbaolami.com](mailto:eli@tzurbaolami.com)**





 @tzurbamraban



# CELEBRATING



**Mrs. Nitsana Darshan-Leitner**  
UK



**Rabbi Meir Goldwicht**  
Young Israel of Oceanside, NY  
and Beth Jacob Atlanta, GA



**Mrs. Yael Leibowitz**  
Young Israel of Great Neck, NY



**Rabbi Menachem Leibtag**  
Keshet Israel Congregation,  
Washington DC  
and UK



**Mrs. Miriam Peretz**  
UK



**Rabbi Doron Perez**  
UK



**Mrs. Atara Eis**  
UK



**Rabbi Binny Freedman**  
UK



**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**  
Young Israel of Teaneck, NJ



**Rabbi Yamin Goldsmith**  
Congregation AABJ&D, NJ  
and UK



**Dr. Julie Goldstein**  
Congregation Ohr HaTorah, GA



**Rabbi Yehoshua Grunstein**  
UK



**Mrs. Pesha Fisher**  
UK



**Dr. Tova Ganzel**  
UK



**Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel**  
UK



**Rabbanit Tehila Gimpel**  
UK



**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**  
Congregation Ohav Shalom, NY



**Rabbi Shalom Hammer**  
UK



**Mr. Tamir Goodman**  
UK



**Rabbi Jesse Horn**  
UK



**Mrs. Devorah Kay**  
UK



**Mr. Avi Kay**  
UK



**Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg**  
UK



**Rabbi Danny Mirvis**  
UK

# ISRAEL AROUND THE WORLD

Between Yom HaAtzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim, Mizrachi's Israel360 program brings leading teachers from Israel to communities all over the world. Find out what is happening in your community at [mizrachi.org/israel360](https://mizrachi.org/israel360)



**Mrs. Sivan Rahav-Meir**  
UK



**Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon**  
Congregation Bnei Yeshurun, NJ  
and UK



**Rabbi Shalom Rosner**  
Congregation Ohav Zedek, NY and  
Congregation Bais Tefilah of  
Woodmere, NY



**Rabbi David Stav**  
Anshei Chesed Congregation, FL



**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**  
Congregation K.J.N.S. of West Rogers  
Park, IL, Young Israel of Century City,  
CA, and UK



**Rabbi Moshe Taragin**  
Young Israel of West Hempstead, NY



**Mrs. Karen Hochhauser**  
UK



**Rabbi Alex Israel**  
Kemp Mill Synagogue, MD  
and UK



**Rabbi Ari Kahn**  
Kingsway Jewish Center, NY  
and UK



**Rabbi Yonatan Rosensweig**  
Hebrew Institute of White Plains, NY



**Rabbi Dr. Sharon Shalom**  
UK



**Rabbi Reuven Taragin**  
Ahavas Achim, Highland Park, NJ,  
Young Israel of Fair Lawn, NJ,  
and UK



**Mr. Gil Hoffman**  
UK



**Rabbi David Katz**  
UK



**Rabbi Shlomo Kimche**  
UK



**Rabbi Anthony Manning**  
UK



**Rabbi David Milston**  
UK



**Rabbi Professor Jeffrey Woolf**  
Congregation Beth Torah, NY



**Rabbi Shimshon Nadel**  
Young Israel of Memphis, TN



**Rabbi Eliyahu Silverman**  
UK



**Rabbi Johnny Solomon**  
UK



**Rabbi Gidon Weitzman**  
UK



**Mrs. Sivan Ya'ari**  
UK



**Rabbi Reuven Ziegler**  
Congregation Or Torah, IL



# Yom HaAtzmaut – 75 Years The Third Generation

Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel

**T**ransitioning from Yom HaZikaron to Yom HaAtzmaut is like folding all of Jewish history into one frame in time. From our inception as a people, we were forged into being through pain, suffering and tyranny. The first Jewish *shtetl* we made for ourselves in Goshen became the first Jewish ghetto of slaves in ancient Egypt. That was the dark womb that gave birth to the Jewish people.

Every day we remember, “*zeicher liytziat mitzrayim*,” “To remember our exodus from Egypt.” Every day is a kind of Yom HaZikaron, for everyday we remember the struggle and sacrifice it took to achieve our freedom.

Each year at the *Seder*, we struggle valiantly to see ourselves as though we came out of Egypt. It’s hard to truly feel the pain of suffering we never knew. But everyone in Israel knows the pain of Yom HaZikaron.

We all know the story of Exodus, and the truth of “*ma’asei avot siman labanim*” – that somehow, the stories of our past are templates for what future generations will experience. Indeed, that is what we have seen in the modern era. The whole world watched as the Jewish people were

slaves in Auschwitz, only to witness their liberation and resurrection in the Land of Israel. From slavery to redemption, the Jewish people were saved and the oppressors defeated. In the time of Moshe they sang *shirat haYam*, the Song at the Sea. In 1948, we were singing *Hatikvah* in Tel Aviv.

But the Exodus has another deep message for us as we celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut. It took three days of freedom from Egypt until we started to doubt. We doubted ourselves and doubted our victory. “Is Hashem among us, or not?” (Shemot 17:7).

Chazal say that those three days represent three generations. After liberation, freedom and independence, we must be wary of what can happen after the third generation.

Before we entered the Land of Israel, Moshe repeated the warning once again. “For when you will have children and your children will have children and you will have been long in the Land, you will become corrupt...” (Devarim 4:25). The third generation, and all “third generations” to come, are given an eternal warning: “*venoshantem baAretz*,” “when you grow old in the Land.”

These words would soon come true. After Yehoshua died, we learn: “A new generation arose after them that did not know Hashem, nor the deeds that He had performed for Israel” (Shoftim 2:10). With the passing of the last of the children who survived the holocaust of Egypt and later entered the Land, the next generation forgot, became corrupt, lost their vision, veered from the path, and the fall began.

Years later, when Israel finally anointed kings – Shaul, David and Shlomo – it was after the third generation that the fall began and the nation split apart. During the second Temple era, it took three generations – Matityahu the *Kohen Gadol*, Judah the Maccabee and Shimon – for the Hasmonean dynasty to start to decay. When the living miracle of Chanukah became mere “history” to be commemorated, the fall began.

This year we are celebrating 75 years of our freedom and independence. We are modern Israel’s third generation. In our lifetimes, the child survivors of the Holocaust will be gathered unto their forefathers. *Venoshantem baAretz*, we have been long in the Land. Have we begun taking it for granted?



## Prophecy in our time

What is prophecy if not transcendent wisdom? It is wisdom that was true three thousand years ago and equally true today.

The warnings of the Torah and the lessons of our history point us to this moment in time. We have the task of passing on the whole of Jewish history to the next generation. That is the calling of our generation. But how do we do it?

Our parents and our grandparents witnessed unbridled evil and malevolence. They lived the nightmare, the pinpointing, gathering and annihilation of the Jewish people. Their generation saw it and knew it. They encountered evil face to face. And they certainly didn't need a siren to remember it.

In his final vision of the exile, Yechezkel saw what seems to have been the darkest time the world had ever known, when all hope was lost. He saw mass graves of the Jewish people as dry bones and ashes. They cried out, "Our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are doomed" (Yechezkel 37:11).

But like a burst of light from a womb of darkness, "*avda tikvateinu*," "our hope is lost," was transformed to "*od lo avda tikvateinu*," "our hope is *not* lost." The yellow star of our slavery was transformed into the blue *magen David* of our freedom. For generations, we prayed "*v'sa neis l'kabeitz galuyoteinu*," "raise the flag of Israel to bring our people back to our Land!" And then, under one flag and under the Star of David, the Jewish people united.

Underground, under-armed Holocaust survivors and Jewish refugees from Arab countries, with no tanks, no real air force, no battle plan and no chance stood against five trained armies on every border. From survivors and slaves, modern Maccabees were reborn in the Land of Israel – and we won our freedom. After millennia of exile, our generation has brought the Jewish

people back to the mountains of Judea and the kingdom of David, for the entire world to marvel at the greatest story humanity has ever told. It's hard to comprehend who we are and what we are living out in this generation.

In his commentary on Chanukah, the Sfat Emet (1847–1905) shares the following tradition: "The three pilgrimage festivals, Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot, which are explicit in the written Torah, are mirrored by three festivals in the oral Torah... and the three festivals of the Torah illuminate them just like the moon receives light from the sun... Chanukah is illuminated by Sukkot and Purim is illuminated by Shavuot." The Sfat Emet then writes that we are still waiting for one more festival to reflect the Biblical holiday of Pesach, as Michah says, "Like the days you left the slavery of Egypt I will show you wonders" (7:15).

Are we celebrating the third and final festival that draws its light from Pesach?

If only I could show all the Jews who lost hope in Auschwitz and Warsaw the scenes around my home in Israel, as we celebrate this Yom HaAtzmaut. They would see Jews living in the mountains of Judea, working the Land with blossoming olive trees and vineyards that cascade down the hills. They would see Jewish children speaking Hebrew tending to our flock of sheep. If they could see all this, what would they think?

If we can learn to look at Israel today through *their* eyes, we would squint our eyes and see that the redemption we yearned and prayed for is already here in the Land of Israel!

Whether they want to or not, every atheist, Christian and Muslim is watching the chosen people who have returned to their Land. And they are wondering: what will happen to the Jews of this generation?

All of Jewish history has culminated in our generation. Will we rise up to meet the challenge and fulfill our mission? Or will we be *venoshantem baAretz*? After the third generation, will we lose it all by losing sight of it all? Or will we regain our vision and learn to see with the eyes of our parents and grandparents?

We are the third generation. We have the privilege of facing the greatest challenge in Jewish history – the test that generations before us failed. As we enter modern Israel's 76th year, we stand at the edge of a new era, the threshold of Jewish history. The prayers of the Jewish people throughout all of our history were aimed at our generation. Now, it is up to us.

As we raise the flag of our people over Jerusalem this Yom HaAtzmaut, may we, as a people, rise to the occasion of this epic moment in history. *Am Yisrael Chai! Chag Sameach!*



**Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel**

is a teacher, a farmer, a pioneer and one of Israel's premiere Jewish media personalities. He is the founder of the Land of Israel Network, with millions of views and downloads from over 120 countries, broadcasting Torah, Zionism and the beauty of Israel to the world. Rabbi Gimpel, along with his wife Tehila and their children, founded the Arugot Farm and Educational Center, which has become a global destination for people seeking to experience modern Zionism fused with Torat Eretz Yisrael.



# SIX ADDITIONAL KNOCKS

RABBI STEVEN PRUZANSKY

On Yom HaAtzmaut in 1956 – Israel’s eighth Independence Day – Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt”l presented a memorable address later published as *Kol Dodi Dofek, The Voice of My Beloved Knocks*. The Rav highlighted six divine “knocks” on our communal consciousness to which Jews should pay attention – knocks precipitated by the establishment of the State of Israel that revealed G-d’s hand in history.

There was the “political” knock in which, uncharacteristically, the United States and the Soviet Union in the early years of the Cold War *both* voted in favor of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel; the “military” knock, in which a tiny outnumbered Israel prevailed over its powerful neighbors; the “theological” knock, in which the new State of Israel refuted Christianity’s theory of the eternal wandering Jew; the knock on the hearts of our youth, who perceived the divine role in history and redemption after the concealment of the Holocaust; the knock of “self-defense,” in which our enemies realized for the first time in two millennia that Jewish blood is not cheap and Jews will fight back aggressively; and finally, the creation of a refuge for Jews and the beginning of the end of the Exile.

The Hand of Providence was already visible then. In the ensuing decades, and now as we celebrate Israel’s 75th anniversary, it is appropriate to highlight six additional knocks in which G-d’s presence in Israel’s history and statecraft has been manifest.

The first knock was the capture, trial and execution of Adolf Eichmann, the architect of the Holocaust. It was a brilliant operation that defied international legal norms and was denounced by the United Nations and the New York Times. But it established a new norm: the State of Israel is the custodian of Jewish history, represents all Jews, and will exact justice against our past tormentors.

The second knock is perhaps the most obvious, as it has shaped Israel’s history ever since: the Six Day War. It was a miraculous victory of the few against the many that followed several weeks of dread and apprehension across the Jewish world as Arab armies massed on Israel’s borders. But the Arab nations were maneuvered into a series of fatal and foolish mistakes and Israel regained control over its biblical heartland and the Old City of

Yerushalayim. That we have unfortunately squandered many fruits of that victory and more than 90% of the territory does not detract one iota from the feelings of exultation at witnessing the triumphs of the *Ba’al Milchamot*, the true Master of War.

Nine years later came the third knock – the miraculous raid on Entebbe. After an Air France plane that departed Israel was hijacked and diverted to Uganda, Israeli special forces swooped into Entebbe Airport and rescued the hostages. UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, later revealed to be an ex-Nazi, condemned the rescue as a “serious violation” of Ugandan sovereignty, not having lifted a finger to save one Jew. But Israel did, reinforcing the notion that Israel is responsible for the fate of all Jews across the world.

The fourth knock is so blatant that we tend to gloss over it: *kibbutz galuyot*, the ingathering of the exiles. As pious Jews continue to pray for the realization of this majestic, prophetic vision, it is actually happening before our eyes. Jews have returned to the Land of Israel from well over 100 countries and forged a society that can get raucous at times but has become a melting pot of Jews of different backgrounds, customs and historical experiences sharing one common denominator: we are Jews who have come home, precisely as was prophesied by Yishayahu, Yirmiyahu, Yechezkel, Zechariah and many others. There is no louder knock that should cause us to open our eyes and behold G-d’s wonders.

The fifth knock is the religious revival that has occurred. Israel’s socialist founders assumed that devotion to *talmud Torah* and observance of *mitzvot* would wane in a generation or two, to be replaced by the new Jew, the secular Israeli. But the *yeshivot hesder* program began in 1953, the *Charedi* world was rebuilt and the religious population exploded. The Six Day War catalyzed a *teshuvah* movement that brought myriads back to Torah. There are more Jews learning Torah today in Israel than at any time in any place in Jewish history. And the full integration of *halacha* in a modern society is well underway, even if it is still a work in progress. Nonetheless, the unanticipated renaissance of Torah evokes Yechezkel’s vision (36:26) of the returnees to Israel being implanted with a “new heart... and a new spirit.” It is a Torah revolution that is only gaining strength and adherents.



The sixth knock is the Start-Up Nation, Israel as an economic and technological powerhouse that benefits the world with our creativity and drive. This too was unexpected, though prophesied. There is no surer sign of redemption that when Israel will yield its produce again (Sanhedrin 98a) and Rav Kook foresaw that a reborn Israel would expand and innovate in all worldly matters (*Orot HaTorah* 9:5). Israel is a world leader in high-tech, all so that the Torah can be brought to full expression in the modern world.

The voice of my Beloved “knocks” – in present tense! There are certainly additional manifestations of G-d's Providential Hand knocking on our doors. The questions are: do we hear it? And how do we respond?

Happy Yom HaAtzmaut!



**Rabbi Steven Pruzansky**

is Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Bnai Yeshurun of Teaneck, NJ, and lives in Israel where he serves as Israel Region Vice-President of the Coalition for Jewish Values. He is a member of Mizrachi's Speakers Bureau.



Join me at the  
World Orthodox Israel Congress  
[orthodoxisraelcongress.org](http://orthodoxisraelcongress.org)





# Reveal the Light!

## Miriam Peretz

*Five years ago on Yom HaAtzmaut, as Israel celebrated its 70th year, Miriam Peretz was awarded the Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement and Special Contribution to Society for her work with Israeli youth. Her story of faith, resilience and hope in the face of losing two sons in the IDF, as well as her husband, has captured the hearts of Israelis of all backgrounds. At the award ceremony, she delivered the following speech, broadcast throughout Israel on national television. Within a few weeks, it was announced that her speech would be incorporated into the educational curriculum of Israeli schools. We are honored to share the full speech translated into English.*

I feel both unworthy and deeply moved to stand here today and speak on behalf of the award recipients. I pray that I will not stumble in my words and that my simple language can properly express our deep gratitude to the State of Israel, who found us worthy of receiving this award, and to our families and close friends, who have supported us and encouraged us all along the way.

Much of the audience sitting here today are missing loved ones who did not have the opportunity to see us reach this moment. Two of them are my parents, Ya'akov and Ito Ohayon, who were

born at the foot of the  
Atlas Mountains  
in Morocco.  
They could  
not read or  
write, and did  
not speak

Hebrew. If they were sitting here today they would understand only a few of my words, words which for them were a code: Jerusalem, *shalom*, Torah, and *todah* (thanks). Every night, my father told me about a city he didn't know, that he never saw in pictures, and whose description was passed from father to son – Jerusalem, where there are trees dripping with milk and honey, and at their feet lie lions and lambs. Every time my father spoke the word “Jerusalem,” he put his two fingers to his lips and solemnly mumbled her name in holiness, as he kissed each one of its letters.

One night in the summer of 1963 my father announced that the *Mashiach* would come tonight. When I asked him how I would recognize him, he answered, “He will wear an open shirt, shorts and sandals.” I met the *Mashiach* – the *shaliach* of the Jewish Agency – who took us out of the *Mellah* (Jewish Quarter) of Casablanca, where I lived as a girl until I was 10, and brought us to “Jerusalem” – to an apartment complex in Be'er Sheva, where I lived until 1969. We lived without gas, without a refrigerator, with beds made of iron, and the struggle of *klitah* (absorption) and a new language. But there was also great joy, that we had merited to come to *Eretz Yisrael*.

I learned to love the country through its songs, thanks to a radio that my father received from his job as a road sweeper. Every Wednesday, I waited with intense anticipation at the door of our shack, notebook



and pencil in hand, ready to write the lyrics of the songs taught by Effi Netzer on his program. That's how I came to know the Land; the Chermom, through "Malchut HaChermom," Beit Lechem via "Re'i Rachel Re'i" and Emek Yizrael through "Shir HaEmek."

But one song is burned into my memory, "Shir HaBoker" ("Morning Song") by Natan Alterman, which opens with the words, "In the mountains the sun is already hot..." One line from the song's chorus echoed in my head and wouldn't leave me: "What else have we not given? And we will give it..." Even then, as a child, I felt that I had done nothing for my country. I came to a land that was already prepared and complete. I didn't know that a day would come when I would give what was most precious to me for my Land – my sons, Uriel and Eliraz.

But a homeland is not built with only pain and tears, but also with labor and continuous giving over the course of years. I am proud to belong to a group that chose to engage in education, believing that this is the way to break through the walls of ignorance and poverty, understanding that education opens opportunities for self-realization and for personal development, as it opened for me.

To my work in education I brought the values I absorbed in my parents' house. These are the foundations on which I raised my six children with my beloved Eliezer z"l: Uriel, Eliraz, Hadas, Avichai, Eliasaf and Bat El.

Honored guests: I stand here today in front of you, embarrassed. Next to my colleagues – extraordinary people who created, wrote, researched and invented, people of vision and action, people of faith – I am small. I have not created anything, I cannot point to a discovery I made or a formula I solved. All I have is one heart that was broken three times by terrible news. The fall of my son Uriel in battle in Lebanon, the death of my husband Eliezer from heartbreak, and the death of my second son Eliraz in battle in Gaza.

With this heart I went out to my people, and in simple words, in the language of a broken heart, I spoke about the land and its legacy, about choosing good, about joy, about attaching oneself to life, about duty, and taking responsibility for our society.

From this heart, which beats with faith in this country and in this people, and from the abyss of pain, flowed springs of love. When the heart is full of faith, it can withstand difficult challenges, and it can create great works. This is my creation; it is rooted in hearts. I turned my suffering into a new *niggun*, a new tune. And so, too, did every one of those sitting on this honorable stage – each one with their unique heartbeats, each one with their upbringing and training, each with their own Jerusalem, each one with the springs of their own creation.

Among the recipients of the award are many who have experienced loss, and yet their spirits were not broken. They continue to make a difference in society, each according to their own way, to make it better. And the others – they do not act only for themselves but for the sake of the State of Israel, to develop it and empower it in a wide variety of fields through all the diverse shades of human experience.

I have had the privilege of meeting Israeli society in all its many colors, through face-to-face meetings and heart-expanding meetings that allowed me to experience new thoughts and achieve new understanding. If only all of us could go out to experience this diversity, to get to know and feel the "others," to see the pained and happy eyes, to hear the different voices and sounds.

And even if there are chasms between us – we can build bridges over them, if only we recognize that there is more that binds us than what separates us.

We all want life. We all desire peace. This land is home for all of us; the love of our people and our homeland is not the exclusive possession of only one side. We all want to see our grandchildren build their homes here, travel the country safely and enjoy its beauty. We all long for a model society in the spirit of the vision of the prophets of Israel.

Because of this, we all bear responsibility for the character, values and future of our home. We cannot ignore its challenges nor stand on the side. In this puzzle we have created in the State of Israel, there is room for all of us, for the entire rainbow of colors. And if even one piece of the puzzle is missing, the picture will not be complete. And so I am not ready to give up on any part of our people, even if the work of bringing all the pieces together takes time – I will not despair.

To succeed in creating this mosaic, we must respect everyone in the way we speak. We must create a discourse that is restrained and patient, that allows for the expression of opinions without fear or threats, and makes room for forgiveness. We need a discourse that strengthens our commitment to the love of humanity, "for in the image of G-d He created man." A discourse that respects our heritage, that increases goodness, light and hope, and does not focus only on darkness.

In the words of the 'sweet singer' of Israel (*David HaMelech*): "Who is the man who desires life?... Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile. Turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."

This is the Torah of life! Let us choose the path that increases light, as I chose to carry on the values of my sons Uriel and Eliraz and their friends. Their values of friendship and brotherhood are my guiding light, and their call of "brother" to all of their friends is my call. We are brothers, for better and for worse.

As my son Uriel wrote: "With all the thorns and barbs that have scratched my body, you could put together a three-foot hedge. But these aren't just ordinary thorns – they're thorns from the Land of Israel. And the thorns of my country are better to me than all the flowers of the world."

Honored guests: We have been privileged to see the rise of the state and its prosperity. Now, in its 70th year, our mission is to reveal the hidden lights in the vast "togetherness" of all the tribes of Israel. As Bialik wrote in his poem "To the Volunteers of the Nation" (לַמְתַּדְבָּרִים בָּעָם):

Unearth the light! Reveal the light!

Even if we've been buried under mountains of darkness,

The sparks have not been extinguished.

From mountains of darkness we will carve out light,

Revealing layers of illumination.

Oh, sons of the Maccabees!

Help your people stand upright, build up the generation!

Unearth the light! Reveal the light!

*Chag Sameach* to us all!

● Translated by Rabbi Elie Mischel.



Nefesh  
B'Nefesh

Life!

# YOUR ALIYAH FLIGHT



WWW.NBN.ORG.IL • 1-866-4-ALIYAH • ALIYAH@NBN.ORG.IL

Nefesh  
B'Nefesh  
FACILITATE • CELEBRATE • ADVOCATE • EDUCATE

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO BUILD A STRONGER ISRAEL THROUGH ALIYAH



הסוכנות היהודית  
JEWISH AGENCY  
FOR ISRAEL



Ministry of Aliyah  
and Integration



JEWISH  
NATIONAL  
FUND  
USA



# The Friday Night of Independence

On 15th May 1948, Shabbat was witness to another creation – that of the modern State of Israel. Due to Shabbat's sanctity, the ceremony was brought forward to Friday afternoon, even though the British Mandate did not end until midnight.

Yehuda Avner, in his book *The Prime Ministers*, recalls that awesome Shabbat in the trenches just outside Jerusalem:

Daylight was fading fast. Far to the west, the sun's last rays were receding behind the hilltops of Judea, heralding Shabbat. Grimy, exhausted diggers assembled in the glow of a hurricane lamp hanging on the door of a stone ruin, hidden from enemy view, to recite *Kabbalat Shabbat*. It was a heavenly pause: Shabbat stillness suddenly seemed to reign over everything.

The Shabbat silence was broken only by the crunch of rushing feet, panting breath and the winded cry of Leopold Mahler running out of the blackness into the light of the hurricane lamp shouting, "I have news, I have news!!"

"Has Ben-Gurion declared independence – yes or no?" asked Elisha Linder, beside himself. Mahler took a deep breath and solemnly said, "David Ben-Gurion declared independence this afternoon in Tel Aviv. The Jewish state comes into being at midnight."

There was dead silence. Even the air seemed to be holding its breath. And then the air exploded into joyful tears and laughter. Every breast filled with exultation as we pumped hands and embraced and roared the Hatikvah at the tops of our voices.

"Hey Mahler," shouted Elisha, cutting through the hullabaloo. "Our state – what's its name?"

The violinist stared back blankly, "I don't know. I didn't think to ask."

"You don't know!" Mahler shook his head. "How about Yehuda?" suggested someone, "After all, King David's kingdom was called Yehuda."

"Zion," cried another. "It's an obvious choice."

"Israel" cried a third. "What is wrong with Israel?"

"Let's drink to that," said Elisha with delight, breaking open the bottle of Carmel wine and filling a tin mug to the brim. "A *l'chayim* to our new State, whatever its name!"

"Wait," shouted a *Chassid* whom everyone knew as *Nussen der chazzan* – a cantor by calling, and a most diligent volunteer from Meah Shearim. "It's Shabbos, *kiddush* first."

Our crowd gathered around him in a hush as *Nussen der chazzan* clasped the mug and, in a sweet cantorial tone, began to chant "*yom haShishi*," the blessing for the sanctification of the day.

As *Nussen's* sacred verses floated off to a higher place of Shabbat bliss his voice swelled, ululated, and trilled into the night, octave upon octave, his eyes closed, his cup stretched out and up.

And as he concluded the final consecration, "Blessed are Thou O L-rd Who has hallowed the Shabbat," he rose on tiptoe, his arm stiffened, and rocking back and forth, voice trembling with emotion, he added the triumphantly exulted blessing to commemorate this first day of independence: "... *shehecheyanu vekiyemanu vehigianu lazman hazeh*" – "Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe Who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this time."

"Amen!"

● Published by The Toby Press,  
an imprint of Koren Publishers  
Jerusalem.



# The Right and Wrong Ways to Encourage Aliyah

Rabbi Elie Mischel

**I**t is the great disappointment of our time.

In the 75 years since the establishment of the State of Israel, we have witnessed miracles upon miracles. Though surrounded by enemies, Israel has flourished and grown. Prophecy after prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes. And yet, after 2,000 years of longing for the Holy Land, hundreds of thousands of Orthodox Jews around the world have said: “thanks but no thanks, we’ll stay right where we are.”

Many *olim* struggle to understand why so many of their friends and family refuse to make the leap and move to Israel. Once you are here, once you’ve experienced Yom HaAtzmaut with our people in our Land, it all becomes so clear. This is where we belong; this is home.

Unsurprisingly, the longer you live in Israel, the harder it becomes to relate to those who choose to live in exile. And so it’s not shocking that every few weeks another article written by an exasperated *oleh* appears on Arutz Sheva, excoriating Diaspora Jews for not returning home. The arguments are familiar: “Jews in America have no future! How can they be blind to the sky-high assimilation rates and

rising antisemitism?!” “They are repeating the failure of the Babylonian Jews who refused to return to Israel and build the *Beit HaMikdash*!” Some frustrated *olim* have gone so far as to pick fights on social media, accusing people of making South Florida the “new Jerusalem” and hypocritically praying for the building of Jerusalem three times a day while expanding their synagogues in the Diaspora.

I agree with many of these points. I also believe that G-d is sending us all a clear message to come home. But it is also obvious that attacking Diaspora Jewry has achieved little more than resentment and frayed relationships, counterproductively making it harder for Jews living in exile to absorb the teachings of Religious Zionism. Telling an older woman that she should make *Aliyah* now, since “you don’t want to make *Aliyah* in a box,” as someone recently told my friend’s mother (really!), likely won’t have the desired effect. People don’t appreciate being yelled at – even if you’re making a fair point.

How, then, can Religious Zionists encourage more Jews to come home? What is the best way to convey our message? The answer can be found by looking backwards, to a time when *Am Yisrael* was still young in the Land and struggled with

many of the same challenges we face today.

## Elkana: unique in his generation

When we think of Elkana, the father of *Shmuel HaNavi*, it is usually as one of many “supporting actors” in Tanach. He is generally known as Chana’s husband, the man married to two warring wives who somehow did not jump out of an open window. But as the Sages emphasize, there is far more to this man than meets the eye.

“There was one man (אֶחָאד) from Ramatayim-tzophim... and his name was Elkana” (*Shmuel I* 1:1). Honing in on the unusual description of Elkana as “one man,” the *midrash* states that “whenever a verse describes a person as the ‘one,’ it means this person was unique in his generation” (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 10:5). But what, precisely, made Elkana so unique?

## A Mishkan abandoned

Elkana’s greatness can only be understood against the backdrop of his generation. He and Chana lived at the very end of the era of the *shoftim*, when the elderly Eli served as both the high priest and the last of the judges. Although the *Mishkan* still stood in





Shiloh, the corrupt men who held sway there – Chofni and Pinchas, the sons of Eli – abused their status and took advantage of the people who came to worship and bring sacrifices to G-d.

As the experience of visiting the *Mishkan* grew increasingly unpleasant, a competing religious institution was established close by. With silver from his mother, Micha forged an idol and set up a “*beit elohim*,” a “house of god” in his home, with his very own *ephod*, *teraphim* and a Levite to serve as the priest. In sharp contrast to the bad behavior of the priests in the *Mishkan*, Micha’s “house of god” was warm and welcoming, offering hearty meals to travelers. Unsurprisingly, fewer and fewer people went up to the *Mishkan*, choosing instead to worship at Micha’s house, only a few miles away (Sanhedrin 103b).

Can you imagine? The *Mishkan* stood in Shiloh, at the center of Israel. Hundreds of thousands of Jews lived only a short distance from the very building that Moshe and Betzalel built with their own hands in the wilderness – and almost nobody went to see it! Imagine living only a few miles from the *aron haBrit*, G-d’s Ark of the Covenant, and choosing instead to enjoy a good meal at Micha’s “house of god!”

What would become of such a lowly generation?

### Do not despise your people

“Do not despise your mother when she is old,” “וְאֶל-תְּבוֹרָךְ כִּי-זָקְנָה אִמְךָ” (Mishlei 23:22). Making a play on the word “אִמְךָ,” Rabbi Zeira taught: “If your *nation* (אִמְךָ) has grown old [do not despise them, but rather] stand up and support them as Elkana did, for he would guide the people of Israel [to the *Mishkan*] for the pilgrimage festivals” (Yerushalmi Berachot 68a).

A nation “grown old” is a nation that has lost its way and forgotten its purpose. Elkana’s generation was spiritually tired and cynical, willing to trade G-d’s house for a warm welcome and a bowl of hot soup at Micha’s house of idolatry. And so the elders and rabbis of the generation gave up on their people and came to terms with their lowliness. Only Elkana, “unique in his generation,” refused to despise his people.

“And this man went up out of his city from year to year to worship and to sacrifice to Hashem the L-rd of hosts in Shiloh” (Shmuel I 1:3). Malbim writes that Elkana was the *only man* from his entire city to go



up to Shiloh. But as the *midrash* explains, Elkana refused to accept the status quo:

“Elkana used to go up to Shiloh... His wives and sons, the members of his household... came up with him. On the way he would camp out in town squares... Wherever they went, people would notice them and ask, ‘Where are you going?’ ‘To the house of G-d in Shiloh,’ [Elkana would reply]. ‘Why don’t you come with us and we shall go up together?’ Thereupon [the people] would shed tears and say, ‘We shall go up with you.’ The following year five households would go up, the next ten, and the year after, all would assemble to go up... Elkana did not go up by the same route twice. Finally, all of Israel would go up to Shiloh” (*Tanna Dvei Eliyahu Rabbah* 8).

Elkana didn’t rebuke his fellow Jews or look down upon them with condescension. He didn’t grab the pulpit in local synagogues or stand on a street corner to castigate the townspeople for abandoning the *Mishkan*. Instead, he simply traveled from town to town, and when people asked him where he was going, he shared his excitement about going up to the *Mishkan*. “We are going to G-d’s house; it would be great if you came with us!” Elkana’s passion for the *Mishkan*, combined with his overflowing love for his fellow Jews triggered powerful, deep-seated emotions among the people. Their cynicism and disillusionment melted away, and they broke down in tears.

Alone among the leaders of his time, Elkana believed in his people. “He did not scorn the nation and the generation that had grown old with sin and weakness and lost faith in itself and its abilities, a generation full of doubt and hesitation that lived in fear of its enemies. He believed in the One who is *נוֹתֵן לְיָגֵר כֹּחַ*,’ the One ‘Who gives strength to the weary.’ He believed in the great potential hidden in the soul of his generation. And he understood that they were unable to hear words of *mussar* and rebuke because they were not yet aware of the inner greatness of their souls” (Rav Zvi Yisrael Thau, *L’Emunat Iteinu*, 105).

Elkana was discouraged by the outer appearance of his people. He did not hate, he did not scorn and he did not elevate himself over the community. He would not rebuke his fellow Jews, even *l’sheim shamayim*. And ultimately, with joy and confidence, Elkana succeeded in actualizing the hidden greatness of his generation.

## Awakening a nation

Somehow, somewhere along the line, our Diaspora communities “grew old.” The miracles of ‘48 and ‘67 and the magic of Israel’s rebirth no longer inspire us the way they once did. As a *shul* rabbi in Livingston, New Jersey, coaxing people to attend the community wide annual Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut event felt like pulling teeth. The blue and white cookies and falafel balls have grown stale, and the hassle of attending the Israel Day Parade (have you ever tried finding a bathroom for your 6-year-old at the parade? *Hashem yerachem!*) no longer seems worthwhile. We have grown sleepy.

*Am Yisrael* desperately needs Diaspora Jewry to awaken and come home. As Nadia Matar often points out, if another million Jews make *Aliyah*, the world will see that this Land is ours. But how can we help our brothers and sisters find the strength to uproot their lives and move across the ocean?

In describing the way Elkana encouraged his fellow Jews to join him at the *Mishkan*, the *midrash* repeatedly uses the words “*oleh*” and “*Aliyah*.” Reading the *midrash* as a new *oleh*, the message is clear. Elkana’s approach to inspiring others to join him at the *Mishkan* must be the playbook for inspiring *Aliyah* in our own generation.

Like Elkana, we must not, G-d forbid, speak arrogantly, with frustration or anger. We must remember that many Jews yearn to make *Aliyah*, but are understandably afraid – afraid of leaving a secure job or switching careers, afraid of uprooting children and abandoning elderly parents, and afraid of the unknown. Have we been in Israel so long that we’ve forgotten our own pre-*Aliyah* panic attacks?

Many others were never educated to appreciate the critical importance of Jewish nationhood and the profound significance of the awesome events of the last 130 years. Diaspora Jewry needs us to believe in them, to give them encouragement, and the transformative Torah of Religious Zionism – not self-righteous *mussar*!

This past summer, after our first year living in Israel, I returned with my wife and kids to the US to visit family. On a Sunday afternoon, while enjoying some ice cream with my son at Votee Park in

Teaneck, New Jersey, I ran into an old friend I hadn’t spoken to in years. He had all sorts of questions for me about *Aliyah*, the kids’ adjustment, high schools in Gush Etzion and job opportunities. And all of a sudden, like the Jews that Elkana met on his way to the *Mishkan*, I could see his eyes start to tear up. The conversation became more open; he spoke about how badly he wanted to make *Aliyah*, and the many road-blocks that stood in his way. I sat there, my ice cream melting, with a newfound respect for this Jew who refused to give up on his dream of *Aliyah*.

We Anglo *olim*, like immigrants everywhere, lack the influence in Israeli society that our numbers suggest we should have. It’s hard to make an impact in the culture or the Knesset when most of us are still struggling to understand our electric bills. But if there is one mission for which we are uniquely suited, it is this: encouraging and inspiring our brothers and sisters around the world to come home. Check in with old friends and share the joys of life in Israel with them. Offer advice, practical help and emotional support if they seek it, and remain silent when they do not. And most of all, be the friend who truly believes in them and their inner love for the Land.

“We believe in our people, a great, lofty and righteous nation... All we must do is arouse the ancient sleeping giant of Israel!” (Rav Yitzchak Nissenbaum hy”d, *Derushim v’Chomer l’Drush*, *Drush Chamishi*).



**Rabbi Elie Mischel**  
is the Editor of HaMizrachi magazine.



Join me at the  
World Orthodox Israel Congress  
[orthodoxisraelcongress.org](http://orthodoxisraelcongress.org)







SAVE THE DATE

The Beit Shemesh Community Beit Midrash Initiative in conjunction with YU Israel and Yeshiva University-RIETS is proud to invite the community to mark

# the 30<sup>th</sup> Yahrtzeit of Rav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik zt"l

FEATURING MANY OF THE TALMIDIM OF THE RAV AND HIS FAMILY

**THURSDAY, APRIL 13 • אור לכ"ג ניסן**

7:00 p.m. at Bet Midrash Torani Leumi  
(Reuven 5, Beit Shemesh)

**Rav Moshe Lichtenstein**

**Rav Meir Lichtenstein**

**Rav Avishai David**

Topic TBA

**THURSDAY, APRIL 20 • אור ל"ל ניסן**

8:00 p.m. at Ohel Yonah Menachem  
(Derech HaRav Spektor 17, Beit Shemesh)

**Rav Kenneth Brander** "Memories of a Giant"

**Rav Chaim Ilson** "My first month in the Rav's shiur:  
The journey, vastness and profundity of Torah"

**FRIDAY, APRIL 21 • ל' ניסן**

9:30 am at Kehilat Nofei Hashemesh  
(Sitvanit 1, Beit Shemesh)

**Rav Aharon Rakefet**

"Joseph and his Brothers in Relation to  
Theodore Herzl and Zionism"

**FRIDAY, APRIL 28 • ז' אייר**

9:30 am at Bet Midrash Torani Leumi  
(Reuven 5, Beit Shemesh)

**Rav Hershel Schachter**

Topic TBA

**THURSDAY, MAY 4 • אור ל"ד אייר**

8:00 pm at Netzach Menashe  
(Reuven 18, Beit Shemesh)

**Rav Aharon Adler**

"Pesach Sheni"

**Rav Dovid Miller**

"קנין קדושה – Acquiring Kedusha"

**THURSDAY, MAY 11 • אור לכ"א אייר**

8:00 pm at Beit Knesset Feigenson  
(HaNarkis 29, Beit Shemesh)

**Women's Beit Midrash Initiative**

Speakers and Topics TBA



Yeshiva University in Israel  
ישיבה אוניברסיטה בישראל





# The Curse of the Eighth Decade

Menachem Rahat

*The threat of national disintegration, which destroyed the two sovereign Jewish states that preceded ours, remains an ever-present danger in the third iteration of Jewish sovereignty.*

**“B**lack Shabbat” – that’s what the media called the bloody attacks in Jerusalem on January 27–28 in which seven innocent Israelis were murdered and others were seriously injured – reminding us once again that from the point of view of the murderers who fulfill the curse of תְּחִיָּה עַל חֶרֶב, “by your sword you will live,” there is no difference between different groups of Israelis. We are all destined for slaughter, G-d forbid, from their perspective.

But we must not be confused by the Palestinian criminal gangs. Ultimately, they are not the true threat to the sovereign Jewish state in *Eretz Yisrael*. Far more threatening and dangerous to our future is the division and polarization within Israeli society.

The same brotherly hatred that came down to the world in the days of Kayin and Hevel, which was repeated in the lives of Yitzchak and Yishmael and Ya’akov and Esav, and exploded again with the brothers’ hatred for Yosef – this is the hatred that burns among us and threatens to overwhelm the Zionist enterprise.

Above the entrance gate to one of the pavilions in the Auschwitz death camp, I read with trembling a quote from the American philosopher Santayana (1863–1952): “Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it.” And I remembered then the dark prediction of

former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba: “The Arabs should not fight Israel; the Jews in their internal quarrels will destroy themselves.”

The State of Israel, now in its eighth decade of life and about to celebrate its 75th birthday, is today closer than ever before to the danger of a fratricidal war, each man against his brother. This is the moment to learn from history, before we destroy ourselves through the fire of hate.

We have much to learn from history. Twice before there existed here, in the Land of Israel, sovereign Jewish kingdoms, and the beginning of the collapse of both kingdoms began in the eighth decade of their existence. Both kingdoms existed for about 220 years, but the beginning of their end sprouted – with incredible timing! – in the eighth decade of their sovereignty. It is the duty of Israelis here and now to ensure that the situation here does not become a rerun of the terrible movie we’ve already seen twice before.

The first Jewish state, founded by King David, accomplished phenomenal achievements and survived united for 80 years. In the 81st year, due to internal conflicts, the kingdom of the House of David disintegrated into the separate kingdoms of Yehuda and Yisrael, and so began its fall. In the process, we lost millions of our brothers, the members of the Ten Tribes, who, according to Rabbi Akiva, “will not return in the future.”

The second Jewish state was the Hasmonean kingdom during the Second Temple era. It existed for 77 years as a united and sovereign kingdom. In the eighth decade of its life, the kingdom was torn apart by infighting, which led the representatives of the two camps claiming the crown to approach Pompey in Syria, each one begging him to agree to make them vassals of Rome. And so the sovereign Hasmonean state became a degraded protectorate state of Rome, devoid of proud Jewish sovereignty.

The establishment of the State of Israel 75 years ago is the third attempt to overcome the “curse of the eighth decade,” which defeated the two previous Jewish states. We are currently in the midst of our third opportunity, but it is uncertain whether we will survive it. Before our eyes, we are witnessing fratricidal hatred – and right now it really doesn’t matter who started it, because both sides bear equal responsibility for the terrible social chaos that is eating us apart, just as Bourguiba predicted. All the warning signs of a national catastrophe are flashing red. And don’t under any circumstances count on the possibility of a fourth chance.

Small comfort can be found in the fact that other nations have also experienced the “curse of the eighth decade” in a very painful way. The bloody American Civil War broke out 85 years after the adoption of the Constitution (oh, what luck – it happened to them in the ninth decade!).

Italy became fascist and Germany became a Nazi terrorist state in the eighth decade after each nation's unification. The Third Republic of France, founded in 1871, surrendered to the Nazi boot in 1940, in its eighth decade, while the communist monster that was born in the October Revolution of 1917 began to disintegrate in the 1980s and was finally shattered into pieces 74 years after its founding in 1991.

What is the spell that brings crisis and breaks up kingdoms in a nation's eighth decade?

Historians point to several factors, whose cumulative impact can lead to a crisis. One explanation posits that a nation's eighth decade ushers in the era of its third generation. While the first and second generations are acutely aware of the great responsibility placed upon their shoulders and are prepared to sacrifice and make major concessions for the good of the nation ("Anything but a civil war!", as Menachem Begin said after the Altalena attack), the members of the third generation take the existence of the nation for granted and focus on their faction's narrow agenda.

This is exactly what is happening today. The existence of the State is self-evident, even if there are serious threats from the outside: murderous Palestinian terrorism, Hezbollah missiles, Iranian nukes, and the like. With Hashem's kindness, we will overcome all of these threats. On the other hand, the tsunami of hatred and factionalism may cause the vision of the Third Temple to collapse from within, in the spirit of Bourguiba's twisted vision.

Against the backdrop of this devastating threat, right and left, *Charedim* and Arabs, veterans and new immigrants, anti-Zionists and post-Zionists, the religious and unbelievers, *Mizrahim* and

*Ashkenazim*, citizens of the 'state of Tel Aviv' and citizens of the rest of the country must learn to forgo, compromise and come together in peace under the same umbrella. Only by following this path can we peacefully thrive – not only in the eighth decade, but also in all the decades to come, for eternity.

● This essay was originally published in Hebrew in *Matzav HaRuach*.



**Menachem Rahat**

was the political reporter for Ma'ariv, and now writes as an independent journalist for a variety of online and print platforms.



# Israel

## The Heart of Judaism

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ל"צ

*This article was first featured in the inaugural edition of HaMizrachi in April 2018.  
We republish it here in honor of Israel's 75th anniversary.*

**S**eventy years since the establishment of the modern State of Israel is a fitting moment to remind ourselves of a mystery at the heart of Judaism.

Why Israel? Why does the Hebrew Bible so resolutely and unerringly focus on this place, what Spinoza called a mere 'strip of territory'? The G-d of Abraham is the G-d of the whole world, a G-d unbounded by space. Why then does He choose any particular space, let alone one so small and vulnerable?

The question, 'Why Israel?' is the geographical way of asking 'Why the Jews?' The answer lies in the duality that defines Jewish faith and constitutes one of its most important contributions to civilization. Judaism embodies and exemplifies the necessary tension between the universal and the unique, between everywhere in general and somewhere in particular.

If there were only universals, the world would consist of empires, each claiming the totality of truth and each demonstrating that truth by attempting to conquer or convert everyone else. If there is only one truth, and you have it, then others do not. They are living in error. That has been the justification of many crimes in the course of history.

If on the other hand there are only particulars – only a multiplicity of cultures

and ethnicities with no universal moral principles to bind them – then the natural state of the world is a ceaseless proliferation of warring tribes. That is the risk today, in a post-modern, morally relativistic world with ethnic conflicts, violence and terror scarring the face of many parts of the globe.

The Abrahamic covenant as understood by Judaism is the only principled way of avoiding these two scenarios. Jews belonged somewhere, not everywhere. Yet the G-d they worship is the G-d of everywhere, not just somewhere. So Jews were commanded to be neither an empire nor a tribe, harboring neither universal aspirations nor tribal belligerence. Theirs was to be a small land, but a significant one, for it was there, and there alone, that they were to live their destiny.

That destiny was to create a society that would honor the proposition that we are all created in the image and likeness of G-d. It would be a place in which the freedom of some would not lead to the enslavement of others. It would be the opposite of Egypt, whose bread of affliction and bitter herbs of slavery they were to eat every year on the festival of Passover to remind them of what they were to avoid. It would be the only nation in the world whose sovereign was G-d Himself, and whose constitution – the Torah – was His word.

Judaism is the code of a self-governing society. We tend to forget this, since Jews have lived in dispersion for two thousand years, without the sovereign power to govern themselves, and because modern Israel is a secular state. Judaism is a religion of redemption rather than salvation: it is about the shared spaces of our collective lives, not an interior drama of the soul, though Judaism, in the books of Psalms and Job, knows this as well.

The Jewish G-d is the G-d of love: You shall love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart, all your soul and all your might. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. You shall love the stranger. The Hebrew Bible is a book suffused with love – the love of G-d for humanity, and the love of a people for G-d. All its tense emotions of anger and jealousy are part of the story of that often unreciprocated love.

But because Judaism is also the code of a society, it is also about the social emotions: righteousness (*tzedek/tzedakah*), justice (*mishpat*), loving-kindness (*chesed*) and compassion (*rachamim*). These structure the template of biblical law, which covers all aspects of the life of society, its economy, its welfare systems, its education, family life, employer-employee relations, the protection of the environment and so on.

The broad principles driving this elaborate structure, traditionally enumerated



as 613 commands, are clear. No one should be left in dire poverty. No one should lack access to justice and the courts. No family should be without its share of the land. One day in seven, everyone should be free. One year in seven all debts should be canceled. One year in fifty all land that had been sold was to revert to its original owners. It was the nearest thing the ancient world had ever seen to an egalitarian society.

None of this was possible without a land. The Sages said, 'Whoever lives outside Israel is as if he had no G-d.' Nachmanides in the thirteenth century said that 'the main purpose of all the commands is for those who live in the land of the L-rd.' These are mystical sentiments but we can translate them into secular terms. Judaism is the constitution of a self-governing nation, the architectonics of a society dedicated to the service of G-d in freedom and dignity.

Without a land  
and state,

Judaism is a shadow of itself. G-d may still live in the heart, but not in the public square, in the justice of the courts, the morality of the economy, and the humanitarianism of everyday life.

Jews have lived in almost every country under the sun. In 4,000 years, only in Israel have they been able to live as a free, self-governing people. Only in Israel have they been able to construct an agriculture, a medical system, an economic infrastructure, in the spirit of the Torah and its concern for freedom, justice and the sanctity of life.

Only in Israel can Jews today speak the Hebrew of the Bible as the language of everyday speech. Only there can they live Jewish time within a calendar structured according to the rhythms of the Jewish year. Only in Israel can Jews once again walk where the prophets walked, climb the mountains Abraham climbed and to which David lifted his eyes. Israel is the only place where Jews have been able to live Judaism in anything other than an

edited edition, continuing the story their ancestors began.

The reborn State of Israel in a mere 70 years has surely exceeded even the highest hopes of the early pioneers of the return to Zion, and this despite the fact that it has had to face almost ceaseless threats of war, terror, delegitimation and defamation. Despite all this, it stands as a living testimony to Moses' great command: "Choose life, that you and your children may live."

May the light of the State of Israel, which shines a little brighter each year, continue to be a blessing, not just to the Jewish people, but also to the world.





# Lech-Lecha

## 75 years of Landmark Rebirth of National Identity

Rabbanit Shani Taragin

**W**hat an honor to contribute to *HaMizrachi's* celebration of 75 years of Israel's independence as a sovereign Jewish state! As we share our dreams for the future of *Am Yisrael* in *Eretz Yisrael*, it is also appropriate to appreciate the unique significance of Israel's milestone 75th birthday.

In Tanach, most numbers are usually "rounded off" to the nearest ten or hundred. Tanach and Tannaitic literature are replete with teachings about the significance of the number 70, which represents the many languages and nations of the world, facets of Torah, names of Jerusalem, and more. Yet there is a remarkable 75 year landmark in Jewish history which marks a significant stage in our national development and warrants celebration and reflection.

"Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the Land that I will show you" (Bereishit 12:1). At the advanced age of 75, *Avraham Avinu* made his landmark entrance to the land of Canaan. Avraham forfeited his entire past – his Mesopotamian identity, his birthplace, and, most challengingly, his family – to forge a new identity in an unknown destination. For 75 years, Avraham lived with his father and was known as one of the "toldot," "generations," of Terach, together with his brothers Nachor and Haran (11:27). But then everything changed. At 75, Avraham entered Canaan and was promised: "To your seed I will give this Land" – that he would have children who would inherit the Land. Avraham then endured 25 years of trials, tribulations, famines, battles and family tension, while also securing Divine covenants of national history (*brit bein haBetarim*) and religious identity (*brit milah*). Finally, at the age of 100, G-d fulfilled His promise and blessed Avraham with a son from Sarah who would inherit the Land and perpetuate Avraham's national-religious identity.

Yitzchak's birth begins the next era of Avraham's life – 75 years of living in the Land with his promised progeny! Avraham lived 75 childless years outside of Canaan, then 25 years in a new land without father or child, edifying himself and others in monotheistic belief and values, and finally, at age 100, he begins a new era of 75 years in the Promised Land with the promised child!

During the final 75 years of his life, what does Avraham do to chart a trajectory for generations to come? He casts out Yishmael to properly invest in Yitzchak, clarifying and forging his family's identity, and signs "Abrahamic accords" with his Philistine neighbors. He undergoes another "*Lech-Lecha*" moment, this time to Mount Moriah, demonstrating his willingness to sacrifice his son for G-d and forfeit not only his past and present values, but also his entire future, subsequently meriting an unconditional oath from Hashem that his descendants will inherit the Land. Following the death of Sarah, he actively secures his covenantal legacy of land and nation through purchasing a burial plot in Chevron and finding a wife for Yitzchak.

The birth of Yitzchak heralded the second stage of Avraham's life as a personal and national patriarch, a "founding father" of our nation and land. Avraham passed away 75 years later as an "אב הָמוֹן גּוֹיִים," a "father of a multitude of nations," buried by both Yitzchak and Yishmael in the *Me'arat HaMachpelah* he painstakingly purchased for his descendants.

*Chazal* explain that the calculations of G-d's everlasting promise of inheritance of the Land following exile, formalized in the *brit bein haBetarim*, began with the birth of Yitzchak (*Rashi*, Bereishit 15:13 and Megillah 9a). Like the 75 ensuing years of Avraham's life, the 75 years since our national rebirth in 1948 were fraught with great sacrifice and difficult decisions to assure the future of our family / national identity. Like Avraham our father, we have witnessed the fulfillment of Divine

promises over the past 75 years, accompanied by challenges within our own family and struggles with neighbors of different faiths and values.

During his final 75 years of life after the birth of Yitzchak, Avraham rejected complacency and refused to passively await the materialization of G-d's dreams and promises. Instead, Avraham chose to write history together with G-d and actively pursue and secure his destiny. Similarly, the 75 years since our national rebirth have taught us essential lessons: that security comes with sacrifice, forfeiting land for peace has consequences, building homes for the future is essential and forging family identity within the Jewish people is critical to our survival.

With G-d's help, may the next 75 years bring us, the children of *Avraham Avinu*, greater brotherhood, security and international influence. And may we continue the journey of "*Lech-Lecha*," planting, perpetuating, educating and building, for the generations to come!



**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**

is Educational Director of Mizrachi  
and the Director of the Mizrachi-TVA  
Lapidot Educators' Program.



Join me at the  
World Orthodox Israel Congress  
[orthodoxisraelcongress.org](http://orthodoxisraelcongress.org)



# HOW WE KNOW

## Rabbi Reuven Taragin

**M**any non-observant Jews celebrate Israel from a secular perspective, much like citizens of other nations celebrate their own states. At the same time, many religious Jews consider the State to be religiously insignificant, or only important because it enables Jews to live in the Land. But as Religious Zionists, we have a very different perspective. We view our return to *Eretz Yisrael* and the existence of the State of Israel as critical elements of the redemptive process.

Still, life in the Jewish state is complex. Though Jews throughout the generations would certainly have considered an independent State of Israel with over 7 million Jews as the manifestation of *ge'ula*, they did not envision a *ge'ula* that includes a majority non-observant population, a government that does not function according to Jewish law, and a mosque on the *Har HaBayit*. How are we meant to understand our situation when we live in such a complex reality?

Though the redemption is not yet complete, there are four central components of the State of Israel that reflect its religious significance and support the view that we are currently at the beginning of the redemption process.

### Kibbutz Galuyot (ingathering of the exiles)

"Even if your dispersed are at the ends of the world, from there Hashem your G-d will gather you, from there He will fetch you. And Hashem your G-d will bring you to the Land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your fathers" (Devarim 30:4-5).

Yishayahu vividly describes the future ingathering from all four corners of the world (43:5-6), a prophecy we pray for three times a day ("raise a banner to gather our exiles, and bring us together from the four corners of the earth into our Land") and which has been fulfilled in our times, with Jews returning home from over 100 different countries!

The *geonim* and *rishonim* wrote extensively about the ingathering as a critical part of the redemptive process. In fact, a student of the Ramban argued that the *Mashiach* can only come once Jews have returned to Israel and to Yerushalayim. If we only merited to see the ingathering, *dayeinu!*

### Jewish life in Israel

"There shall yet be old men and women in the squares of Yerushalayim... And the squares of the city shall be crowded with boys and girls playing in the squares" (Zechariah 8:4-5). "Again there shall be heard in this place... the sound of mirth and gladness, the voice of bridegroom and bride" (Yirmiyahu 33:10-11).

Children playing and the elderly sitting in the streets of Yerushalayim may not seem extraordinary, but these mundane moments – now a daily reality in the State of Israel – were mere dreams for generations of Jews exiled and often barred from entering the city.

The *midrash* emphasizes the significance of these "mundane" moments, stating emphatically that the Jewish people will not resettle in their land until the time of the eventual *ge'ula* (*Tanchuma Shoftim* 9). If we only merited to see the return of normal daily Jewish life in the Land of Israel, *dayeinu!*

### The flowering of the land

*Parashat Bechukotai* describes how the Land will lie desolate while we are in exile, while *Parashat Nitzavim* predicts visitors will be shocked by its absolute desolation. Throughout the millennia of our exile, visitors were aghast at the devastation.

"He has made her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the Garden of Hashem..." (Yishayahu 51:3). The *nevi'im* repeatedly prophesied that when the Jewish people return home, the Land would once again flower. Later, Rebbe Abba would point to the flowering of the land the *clearest* sign of the end of days (Sanhedrin 98a). Seeing this firsthand, Rav Kook concluded the *ge'ula* had already begun 100 years ago (*Iggrot HaRa'aya* 3:155), and the extraordinary development of the Land since then only strengthens his argument.

If we only merited to see the flowering of the Land, *dayeinu!*

### Jewish independence

Living in an age of democracy, we may not fully appreciate the significance of self-rule. The *amora* Shmuel felt that our freedom from foreign monarchs would be the definitive change heralding the times of the *Mashiach*. The Rambam adopts Shmuel's position, using it to explain the significance of the Hasmonean dynasty and the Chanukah miracle. Setting aside the three aforementioned blessings facilitated by the State, Israel is *intrinsically* significant as an expression of Jewish sovereignty in *Eretz Yisrael*.

The realization of these four components identified over thousands of years by the Torah, *nevi'im*, *amora'im*, *geonim*, and *rishonim* as signs of the *ge'ula* are reason enough to celebrate the State of Israel at the beginning of *ge'ula*.

Let us celebrate and reflect on how we can help facilitate the completion of the *ge'ula sheleimah!*



Scan here to join Rabbi Taragin's daily Divrei Torah WhatsApp group



**Rabbi Reuven Taragin**  
is Educational Director of Mizrahi  
and Dean of the Yeshivat Hakotel  
Overseas Program.



Join me at the  
World Orthodox Israel Congress  
[orthodoxisraelcongress.org](http://orthodoxisraelcongress.org)





# From Disgrace to Praise

## Yom HaZikaron to Yom HaAtzmaut

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

**Y**om HaZikaron, the Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of the Wars of Israel and Victims of Actions of Terrorism, was established on the 4th of Iyar, the day Kfar Etzion fell (May 13, 1948). In this battle, the last battle of Gush Etzion, the Arabs massacred the Jewish soldiers, killing 127 of them (only four soldiers survived the battle). In 1951, the Israeli government established this as a day of remembrance for those who fell in war defending the State of Israel.

But even before the fall of Kfar Etzion, the 4th of Iyar served as a day of remembrance. My father, Rav David Rimon z"l, was one of the central figures involved in *Kofer HaYishuv*, the fund responsible for raising money to finance the Haganah before the establishment of the State. In 1940, the leadership of the *Kofer HaYishuv* proclaimed the 4th of Iyar as a "Heroes Memorial Day" following the Arab attacks of 1936 in which hundreds of Jews were murdered.

The establishment of these memorial days on the 4th of Iyar attaches them to Yom HaAtzmaut, which is celebrated the next day. This format, in which sadness and mourning precedes joy, exists in many situations, most notably the Pesach Seder – the evening of redemption which is founded on the principle of *מִתְחִיל בְּגִנוּחַ וְיֵאָסֵף בְּפֶסַח*, "Begin with disgrace and end in praise."

Why is it important to reflect on redemption through a framework of disgrace that is followed by praise? When we begin with disgrace, we feel and understand the praise that follows far more deeply than we would if we began with praise. When we understand the price that we have paid to reach this joy, we cherish the joy immeasurably more and appreciate the suffering required to bring us to this place.

The words of the *midrash* are well known: "A parable of a father and son who were on a journey. The son became weary, and he said to his father: How far do we have to go? He replied: Remember this sign: When you see a cemetery, you are almost there. And that is what the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Yisrael: When you see many troubles piling up, that is the moment you will be redeemed. "G-d will respond to you in a day of need" (Tehillim 20:2)" (*Midrash Shocher Tov* 20).

The proximity of the days of remembrance for the Holocaust and the soldiers of Israel to Yom HaAtzmaut emphasize the point that the establishment of the State of Israel was not a simple matter and that, to this day, its existence cannot be taken for granted. The State of Israel was established in the merit of those murdered in the Holocaust and in the merit of those who fell in battles and terror attacks.

In addition, remembering those who were murdered in the Holocaust and those who died in battle teaches us how great the miracle of our existence, survival and independence truly is – a miracle that accompanies us every day and at every moment. We are not always sufficiently aware of how the existence of the State of Israel is a unique expression of G-d's Divine providence over us: "Hashem has done great things with these people" (Tehillim 126:2). The reminder of Yom HaZikaron before Yom HaAtzmaut emphasizes G-d's providence and the dedication and sacrifice of those who fell. May their memory be a blessing to all of *Am Yisrael*.



**Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon**

is Head of Mizrahi's Educational Advisory Board and Rabbinic Council. He serves as the Chief Rabbi of Gush Etzion, Rosh Yeshivah of the Jerusalem College of Technology and is the Founder and Chairman of Sulamot and La'Ofek.



Join me at the  
World Orthodox Israel Congress  
[orthodoxisraelcongress.org](http://orthodoxisraelcongress.org)



# Young Olim Making an Impact



**Gabi Katz** was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, and he moved to Chicago with his family when he was three years old. They settled in a community that valued Judaism and the Land of Israel, and so it was no surprise that Gabi ended up making *Aliyah*.

At 17, Gabi took a year to learn at Yeshivat Hakotel, where the emphasis on Torah, the Jewish people, and the Jewish homeland quickly made him fall in love with Israel. After learning for a year and a half, Gabi drafted into the IDF to Combat Engineering 603 with nine of his good friends and other Israelis from his *yeshiva*.

During his time in the army, Gabi wrote a journal entry almost every day, which he sent to friends and family. He is currently organizing these daily entries into a book to motivate and inspire others (check out his GoFundMe campaign).

After finishing his service, Gabi returned to Yeshivat Hakotel, where he is learning, teaching, and giving back to guys who are just like him and helping them through their next steps. He is a participant in World Mizrahi's *semicha* program and also works at Aish Global as part of the development department. Being in Israel has helped Gabi grow in ways he never thought were possible. Israel is the world's greatest miracle, and he feels incredibly fortunate to experience it firsthand. His happiest moment since making *Aliyah* was when his younger sister told him she was making *Aliyah* too.

In Gabi's words, "Never stop dreaming! Never forget that amazing feeling you had on the first day you followed your dreams, how excited you were for what the future holds."

**Shira Wiesenfeld** made *Aliyah* in May 2022 and currently works at Keren Or, a *gan* and school for children with special needs and visual impairments. Originally from Pittsburgh, PA, Shira moved to Israel because she could not picture her future anywhere else. She wants to build a family and a life in Israel and is delighted by people's reactions when they hear she is a lone *bat sherut* and made *Aliyah* by herself.

Shira decided to serve in *sherut leumi* because she wanted to immerse herself in Israeli society and learn more about the culture while making a meaningful contribution to her country. At Keren Or, she works with children who are lower functioning and have cerebral/cortical visual impairment (CVI). She participates in their therapy sessions, sets up their assistive technology, prepares food, plays with them, and more.

Shira clearly loves working at Keren Or and enthusiastically recommends it to anyone interested in doing *sherut leumi*. Her admirable dedication to bettering the lives of these children is a testament to the impact even the newest *olim* can have on Israeli society. To those who not only want to make *Aliyah*, but also want to make a difference in their homeland, Shira's story is an inspiration.





# Building a Diaspora Style Community in Israel

An Interview with  
Rabbi Larry Rothwachs



*This past February, Rabbi Larry Rothwachs wrote to his community in Teaneck, New Jersey that he would be making Aliyah over the next few years to build a new community in Israel. A leading pulpit rabbi in America for over 20 years, he is currently the Rabbi of Beth Aaron in Teaneck, NJ, the Director of Professional Rabbis at RIETS, and a licensed social worker. Rabbi Aron White spoke with Rabbi Rothwachs to hear more about the vision for his new community and the future of religious Aliyah.*

## When did your dream of Aliyah begin, and what made you decide to take this step now?

My wife and I both considered Aliyah when we were newly married and planning our future together. However, as our professional careers evolved, first in Jewish education and then in the rabbinate, we ultimately concluded that remaining in the US was the most appropriate choice for our family. We recently announced that we hope to make Aliyah in a few years. While there is certainly some personal motivation involved – two of our children are living in Eretz Yisrael and a third has plans to do so soon – we have decided to move in this direction at this time, as we have been offered an opportunity to spearhead a new community in Israel.

We were approached by representatives of the Rotshtein Company, well-known developers, who are building a new project in Ramat Beit Shemesh called Rotshtein Heights. They had a vision to create an Anglo community from the ground up and enlist the support of an American rabbi to encourage a broad base of prospective olim to join in establishing this community. The beautiful neighborhood that has been planned and is currently being developed, includes 1,300 residential units, schools, shuls, parks and commercial areas. We have been incredibly impressed with the dedicated vision of

the principal parties and with the quality and thoughtfulness of their planning and implementation.

## What are your plans for the Rotshtein Heights community?

My vision for our new community, which will be called Meromei Shemesh (מְרֹמֵי שֶׁמֶשׁ), has been shaped and inspired by my experience of over two decades in the rabbinate. During the years that I have been privileged to serve as the rabbi of Congregation Beth Aaron in Teaneck, I've had the good fortune (and, in other respects, the challenge) of witnessing 20% of our shul make Aliyah. While none of them have reported that they regretted their move, many have shared that they miss various aspects of communal life in America. Although this may mean different things to different people, many have expressed that they miss belonging to a community with a shul at its core, serving as the center of their spiritual and social lives. While I am sure there are exceptions, many have expressed that they feel that the shul experience in Israel is not the same as the American model. Many American Jews are fortunate that their shul provides them with a social, spiritual, and educational infrastructure. They appreciate the value of living and growing within a multigenerational kehillah; one that provides

a range of programming and opportunities, from an active youth department to meaningful programs for retirees. To be clear, I am not attempting to transplant my *shul*, or any *shul* for that matter, but I believe that members of my *shul* and the broader American community, as well as many people looking for a community in Israel, will gravitate towards this vision. Our community here in Teaneck speaks to many people, and I am excited at the prospect of being able to assist in the creation of a similar home for people in Israel.

Another innovative feature of our budding community is that there will be a designated and structured space for a *shul*, available to our new residents from the first moments that they settle in their homes. While it will understandably take time for the full construction of the *shuls* and schools which will hopefully populate the area, the developer has generously designated commercial space for the use of a *shul*, for as long as it is needed. Conversations and planning with municipal leaders have already begun, allowing for the creation and strengthening of important and strategic relationships. It is incredibly exciting to see a community begin to take form and develop, even as the project is still under construction.

### **You mentioned the difference between communities in Israel and the Diaspora, which is something many olim struggle with. How can more Diaspora-style communities flourish in Israel?**

It would be presumptuous of me to attempt to answer this question, as I have yet to settle in Israel myself. That being said, you have challenged me with this question, and I will share a few thoughts. On the surface, it seems somewhat ironic that some have reported difficulty in building *shul*-based communities in Israel. While there may be many reasons for this challenge, it is worth noting at least one difference between communities in Israel and America – the relationship between religion and state. In America, the separation of religion and state means all of our Jewish communal institutions – schools, *shuls*, and *mikvaot* – are private initiatives built by the community. In Israel, it is the government that provides many of these services. The *Misrad HaChinuch* (Ministry of Education) builds the schools, the *Iriya* (local municipality) builds the preschools, and the *Misrad LeSherutei Dat* (the Ministry for Religious Services) builds the *mikvah*. The community is tasked with one primary responsibility: to build a *shul*. While one would think these incredible benefits would make it easier to galvanize resources and enlist dedicated communal support, it is possible that it is precisely because the government is so involved, that a different type of culture evolves. Whereas Diaspora Jews know that they have no choice but to collaborate in the creation and development of their entire communal infrastructure, Israeli communities often rely on the wealth of government resources that assist them in their growth and development. While there is no question that these benefits constitute an incredible blessing which should not be taken for granted, they may also contribute to a vacuum, with community members feeling less engaged, motivated, and incentivized. Many of the people who make *Aliyah* spent decades giving of their time and resources to their Diaspora communities. However, in Israel, some do not succeed in finding similar outlets for this type of communal involvement. I am hoping that we will be able to offer our community members opportunities that they may be seeking to make their mark and to contribute through Torah, *chesed*, communal involvement and more.

This past January, I enjoyed the privilege of meeting the new Minister of *Aliyah* and Absorption, Ofir Sofer, together with several colleagues from America. I was incredibly impressed with the minister, a sincere and genuinely humble individual who expressed interest in learning more about how Israel can help facilitate American *Aliyah*. He has plans to visit our community in Teaneck in the coming weeks to learn more about American communities and how the Ministry of *Aliyah* and Absorption could do more to support prospective and current *olim*.

There is no question that it is fascinating to navigate the various channels and pathways of community building in Israel. As I mentioned, the environment is different from what we are familiar with in America. At the same time, this is part of what it means to function as a Jewish state. The Torah itself envisions different and overlapping roles within structured communal leadership: *malchut* (government), *nevuah* (prophecy), and *kehunah* (religious leadership), or three unique zones of leadership, necessitating a blend of political and spiritual leadership. It seems that this is part of life in our renewed Jewish state.

### **Many Jews in the Diaspora are blessed to live rich spiritual lives in strong communities. How can people in this situation keep the dream of Aliyah alive?**

There is no question we have built strong Diaspora communities that are rich in Torah observance. But our religious observance should make it obvious to us that we are not meant to be in *chutz laAretz*. It is true that on some level, we have everything we “need” in the Diaspora. But almost a third of our *shemoneh esrei* is about our return to Israel – the ingathering of the exiles, the restoration of judges, the building of Yerushalayim, the arrival of *Mashiach*. It is true that in respect to certain short-term needs we have created opportunities for a rich Jewish life for individuals and communities in exile. But as a people, if we take what we say seriously, then we must acknowledge that our eventual return to *Eretz Yisrael* is literally what we pray for three times a day.

For over 20 years, I have shared with the members of my community that as individuals and families, *Aliyah* is a personal choice and must be respected as such. There are many different factors that are relevant to the question as to whether one should make *Aliyah*, and, if so, when. This reality must be met with respect and individuals who choose to live outside of Israel should be supported and their personal choice validated. Nobody should be made to feel guilty for living in the Diaspora. But as a community and as a people, we must hold ourselves to a different standard. From a national perspective, there is great value in promoting *Aliyah* and I believe that rabbis in the Diaspora should be clear and unapologetic in their messaging. There should be no discomfort, nor hesitancy, in proclaiming the message that the future of the Jewish people is in *Eretz Yisrael*, and thus, as a community, we should be able to plan passionately and, when appropriate, self-reflect critically. We must be willing to acknowledge and wrestle with the reality that despite the fact that we have a thriving State of Israel, the *Aliyah* rate from America is still close to 0%! How can we take ourselves seriously if we say for generations that we want to return to the Land, but don’t take the opportunity when it presents itself?!

There is another difference between life in the Diaspora and in *Eretz Yisrael*, that bears mentioning in the context of this conversation. In the Diaspora, our focus is on *preservation* and *survival*. Our primary objective is (and should be) to protect ourselves from assimilation, the most extreme manifestation of



which is intermarriage. We must also contend with more subtle expressions of assimilation, and cultural indoctrination. In the Diaspora, we focus on preserving the integrity of our heritage. Community development in the Land of Israel has somewhat of a different focus. The model shifts from one of preservation and survival to one of building and developing the infrastructure of our future. In a certain sense, we have “arrived.” The miraculous events of the past 75 years represent the unfolding of a vision that was foretold many centuries ago by our prophets. Jewish life in Israel is not focused on preservation, but rather realizing and actualizing our nation’s ultimate destiny.

There was a time in history when the State of Israel served as a haven for thousands of Jews who were seeking refuge from death and persecution. And, for Jews in some places in the world, it still is. In his monumental essay, “*Kol Dodi Dofek*,” Rav Soloveitchik zt”l listed the miracles of modern Israel, and taught that the sixth miracle (“knock”) was that Jews now have a safe haven and can escape persecution. Despite the alarming rise in antisemitism in the United States and around the world, we do not seem to be at a point where people feel that they need to run and escape.

Nevertheless, our goal should be to run *to* Israel, not merely to run away from where we are. Rabbi Yissachar Teichtal hy”d, the famous author of *Eim Habanim Semeichah*, shares a beautiful *vort*. We read in *Shir HaShirim*: מְשִׁיכֵנִי אַחֲרֶיךָ נְרוּצָה, “pull us towards you and we will run” (*Shir HaShirim* 1:4). In *halacha*, there is a legal transaction called “*meshicha*” which allows you to take ownership of something. There are two ways of performing a *kinyan meshicha* when acquiring an animal. A person can call an animal so that it follows his command or, alternatively, the one who is seeking acquisition can hit the animal, causing it to run ahead. According to Rabbi Teichtal, this verse is saying – “Hashem, acquire us, pull us towards You through a *kinyan meshicha* – but let it be the kind of *meshicha* where You call us and we run to You, rather than us being hit and having to flee!”

### What is your elevator pitch for your future community?

We are looking to establish a community that is growth oriented. *Aliyah* means ascent, which is, of course, geographical, but is also intended to reflect a process of spiritual growth. Although I have not yet taken permanent residence in Israel, I have been fortunate to lead a community of “*bnei Aliyah*,” of people who are growing. Our goal in *Meromei Shemesh* is to create an environment that is conducive to growth as individuals, as families, and as a community. At times, we encounter a lot of pain and confusion in life and in the world. There are many families that are disjointed and relationships in need of repair. As part of my mission as a *rav* and as a teacher and in my role as a mental health professional, I have tried, in some small measure, to assist some in healing some of those wounds. This is a core Torah value. If people are looking for that kind of community, I believe they will find it in *Meromei Shemesh* at Rotshtein Heights. Another feature of the Teaneck community of which I am quite proud, is the sense of peace and harmony within the broader community. I hope and pray that we will be *zocheh* to build a community that has similar aspirations and achievements.

*Aloh Na'aleh!*





# ROTSHTEIN HEIGHTS

A NEW COMMUNITY NEAR  
RAMAT BEIT SHEMESH ALEPH!



ROTSHTEIN HEIGHTS IS A UNIQUE COMBINATION OF EVERYTHING YOU ARE LOOKING FOR.

ROTSHTEIN  
**HEIGHTS**  
RAMAT BEIT SHEMESH

TO SCHEDULE A MEETING CALL : 052-455-9492

EMAIL: HEIGHTS@ROTSHTEIN.CO.IL



**YIGAL REALTY**  
The key to your home in RBS



**ROTSHTEIN**  
CONSTRUCTION EXCELLENCY





# Remembering Rav Chaim Drukman זצ"ל

Yedidya Meir

*Rav Chaim Drukman זצ"ל, who passed away on the 7th night of Chanukah (December 25, 2022) at the age of 90, was Israel's senior Religious Zionist leader. Born in 1932, he survived the Holocaust by hiding with his parents, making Aliyah in 1954. Over the course of his lifetime, he was a leader of almost every major Religious Zionist institution. He was the head of the Or Etzion Yeshiva, head of Yeshivot and Ulpanot Bnei Akiva, rabbi of World Bnei Akiva and also served in the Knesset for the National Religious Party. He received the prestigious Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement in 2012. Most significantly, Rav Drukman inspired thousands of students, playing a key role in the growth of the Religious Zionist movement in Israel and around the world. May his memory be a blessing for all of Am Yisrael.*

Although Rav Drukman was well known, it is only now that we have begun to truly grasp the full scope of his character. From his early days as a Jewish child in the town of Kitov, Poland – a child who, statistically speaking, was not supposed to survive at all – until his funeral ninety years later, as an elder of the tribe, a revered leader, and a beloved teacher. Tens of thousands of mourners accompanied him to his final resting place in tears.

A few months ago, I had the privilege to host an event in his memory. So many significant things were said. Not only “לְעֹלֵי” “for the ascension of his soul,” but also “לְהַעֲלוֹת נְשָׁמוֹתֵינוּ,” “for the ascension of our souls,” here in this world. This was the feeling we experienced during every story told about Rav Drukman. It almost doesn't matter which story or memory you heard or when the story occurred during Rav Drukman's long life, the “punch line” was always the same and is summed up by the six words on his simple tombstone: “כָּל חַיָּיו קָדֵשׁ לַתּוֹרָה, לְעָם וּלְאֶרֶץ” “His entire life was sanctified for Torah, the nation and the land.”

In the winter of 1969, about a year and a half after the great victory of the Six Day War, Rav Drukman published an article in *HaTzofeh* in which he called for the Israeli public to draw spiritual conclusions from the results of the Six Day War. He wrote that there is a great thirst for faith among large sections of the people, and that we are obligated to satiate it. “The youth in the farms and in other places are thirsty for faith. If we do not act at this moment, we will be judged for it... we must go everywhere throughout the land and bring the word of G-d. For if we do this in the right way, surely many hearts will be open to receive it.”

Rav Drukman did just that, giving classes in *kibbutzim* and summer camps, bringing the word of Hashem to those places. And the hearts were indeed open to receive. Many *ba'alei teshuva* were born from those meetings. One of them was a young woman from Jerusalem, an 11th grade high school student who came to Rav Drukman's class at Machon Meir in Jerusalem. Meeting Rav Drukman changed her life. At the memorial event, she spoke about her connection to Rav Drukman with great emotion. Her name is [Minister of National Missions] Orit Strock.

“I am one of those people who merited to receive the light of the Torah and values that Rav Drukman instilled in people who came from far away – from really, really far away. When I ask myself, what was it about him that made me and others open up and draw closer to Judaism, I think that the most fundamental thing, even before his love of the Torah, people and land, was Rav Drukman's love of G-d. His closeness to G-d was at such a level that it was impossible not to be drawn to it.”

And then Minister Strock pulled out her cell phone and said: “With your permission, I want to play you something from Rav Drukman himself. This is one of the first things I heard when I first came to his house. I play it for you so that you can feel it together with me.” She put the phone closer to the microphone, and from it emanated the raspy voice of Rav Drukman reciting the prayer of *ribon kol haOlamim*, “Sovereign of the Worlds,” that many recite on Friday night. Listening to Rav Drukman's *tefillah*, Minister Strock closed her eyes devoutly. She said: “That's how Rav Drukman's *kiddush* sounds. Every time he said “מֶלֶךְ,” “King,” it made us feel that the King was there with us around the Shabbat table. And that's not the Yom Kippur prayer; it's



the Friday night *kiddush* we say every week. To me, that was the basis of everything – Rav Drukman’s closeness to G-d, his awareness that G-d is here with us all the time. It obligates us, empowers us, and uplifts us.

“And when Rav Drukman would open a book to teach a lesson – many books, a pile of books – he would read a verse from each book, two sentences, a short passage, almost nothing. But he read every word with reverence, love and admiration, as if he had found a special pearl and was examining it from all directions. This is not love of Torah – this is *falling in love* with Torah! This is what it was like with him; he was in love with every word of Torah. Just as he was in love with every person who came to him. In love. And it was impossible not to feel this love. He simply loved each one of us in his soul, and we felt this love. And he had the same love for the Land of Israel. When he would say *al haMichyah*, the after blessing – oh, how he would say it! “וְהָעֵלָנוּ, לְחוּכָה,” “bring us up to [the Land],” “וְשִׂמְחָנוּ, בְּבִנְיָנָה,” “let us rejoice in its rebuilding,” “וְנֹאכַל מִפְרִיָּה,” “let us eat from its fruit,” “וְנִשְׂבֵּעַ מִטוֹבָה,” “let us be satiated with its goodness.” With every phrase you felt that he was falling in love with the Land of Israel all over again.

“From all this love, from all these deep feelings, came his incredible *mesirut nefesh*, and his hospitality. Everything he accomplished stemmed from this – from a life full of love, faith, of immense gratitude. He constantly lived in gratitude, doing more and more for G-d, because he was constantly thankful to have lived in this generation.

“When Shimon Peres was prime minister, it seemed like every two weeks he gave another city to Yasser Arafat. He started in the north: Jenin and Tulkarm, then Ramallah. We knew that Bethlehem was next. We decided to organize a demonstration to protest giving away Bethlehem, and I was assigned to call Rav Drukman and ask him to come to the demonstration. I remember calling, and that Rav Drukman wouldn’t answer the phone. I called again and again – I’m very stubborn – but still he didn’t answer. Finally, he answered and said: ‘Orit, I’m not able to speak,’ and hung up the phone.

“I said to myself: ‘OK, so Rav Drukman is sitting by the phone. All I have to do is call again and explain what an important issue we’re dealing with, and then he’ll speak with me.’ I dialed again, and he answered



Rabbi Drukman and Rabbi Doron Perez at a Mizrahi event for outgoing shlichim in 2018.

again and said, ‘Orit, I’m not able to speak. Rav Neria passed away,’ and hung up.

“Unable to speak! Without speaking, he spoke so much. All of a sudden I understood what it meant that Rav Neria had passed away. Rav Drukman was unable to speak! Because that’s how Rav Drukman was. He lived life fully and intensely; he absorbed everything, nothing passed him by.

“I merited one last word of strength,” she concluded. “In his final days, when I realized the condition he was in, I came to visit him every day. I arrived on the night of Chanukah before the Rav passed away, and to my delight he recognized me and said hello. Then I talked with him a little and prayed next to him. But then I had to return to the Knesset; what could I do? So I said: ‘*HaRav*, I need to go back to the Knesset, I will come again tomorrow.’ Then I saw Rav Drukman struggling very hard to speak, and he finally said: “מְצִיָּוִי!”, “Excellent!” Just as he would always say “מְצִיָּוִי”... He put all his effort into this word. And it was the last word I heard from him.”

Minister Stroock reminded me of the conversations I had with Rav Drukman when I was very young and would ask him for advice about all kinds of things. When I spoke with Rav Drukman, he always let me speak and would sit there, listening, listening and listening. He would guide me in the

right direction, but he made sure that it always came from me and from within me. And when I would come to a conclusion, he would always say “מְצִיָּוִי.” For me, too, that was the last word I heard from him.

I am truly grateful to G-d for giving me the privilege to know a person who was so alive, who brought so much light, like Rav Chaim Meir Drukman.

● Originally published in Hebrew in B'Sheva.



**Yedidya Meir**  
is a journalist and radio broadcaster.  
He is a weekly columnist for B'Sheva.



# The Old-Young Nation

Rabbi Yitzchak Nissenbaum hy”d

**“A**nd Avraham was old, advanced in years” (Bereishit 24:1). Old age overtakes a person for four reasons. Yehoshua, for example, grew old because of the many battles he fought, while Eli the *Kohen* grew old because of the evil reports he heard about his sons – “he heard all that his sons did to the people of Israel” (Shmuel I, 2:22). David grew old because of his fear of the sword, while Shlomo grew old because of the gentile wives he brought into his home (*Tanchuma, Chayei Sarah*).

But why did Avraham grow old? He did not fight many wars, nor did he hear evil reports about his children, for “Yishmael repented during his lifetime” (*Bereishit Rabbah* 59) and his grandson Esav did not rebel in his lifetime (*ibid.*, 63). He did not live in fear of the sword and women did not turn his heart away from Hashem. So why did he grow old?

According to the view that says: “And Hashem blessed Avraham with everything (בְּכָל),” this means that “Avraham had a daughter whose name was ba-kol (בְּכָל)” (Bava Batra 16b), then it is possible that Avraham grew old from the challenges of raising a daughter... But according to those who interpret the verse differently, why did he grow old?

The truth is that Avraham prayed that old age should come to the world, so that people would be able to distinguish fathers from sons and the old from the young. “Until Avraham there was no old age in the world... Avraham came and prayed for old age” (Bava Metzia 86a).

*Am Yisrael* is old, advanced in years. We are certainly advanced in years, being over 3,200 years old! Compared to the nations among whom we dwell, we are extraordinarily old. Yet we are also an eternal nation; our days are like those of the heavens and the earth. Compared to eternity we are like young children! Why, then, has old age sprung upon us? Why do we exhibit the surest sign of age: “The old one is like a monkey” (*Kohelet Rabbah* 1:2), copying the actions of others, as if we have lost our own identity?

It is easy to explain our old age, for we have suffered from all four causes of aging, alongside many others that have dried the marrow of our bones and dimmed our vision. For two thousand years, the swords of destructive angels have been waved before our eyes. We have fought many painful wars that threatened our very survival against thousands of kings, ministers and princes, tens of thousands of their servants and innumerable servants of servants.

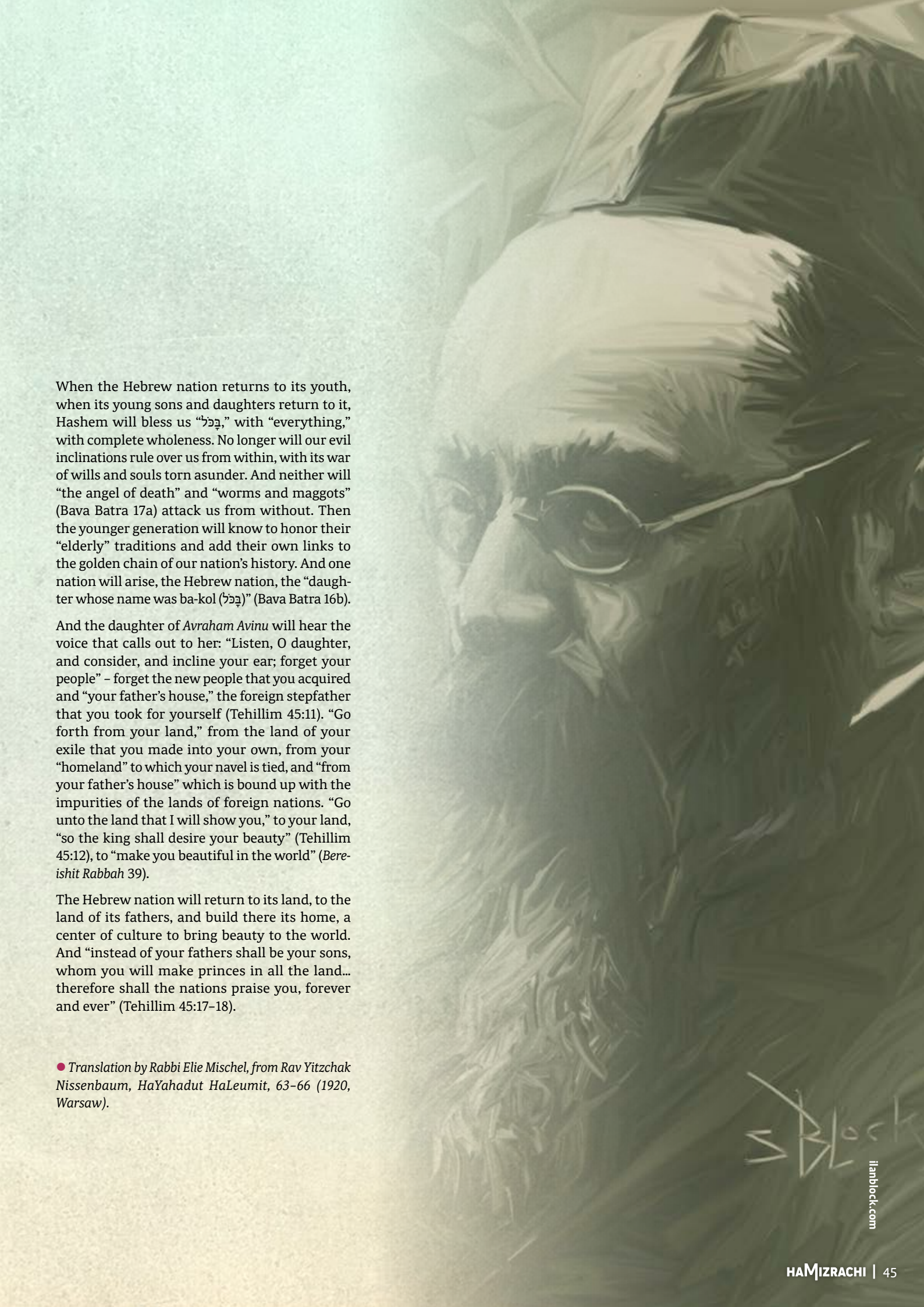
Our children have distanced themselves from their nation and from holiness; their whole desire is to be like the sons of Eli, to grab a good, fat slice of meat with their forks. Our wives are foreigners to their people and their culture, bringing the idols and culture of other nations into our homes. We have been “blessed” with “everything,” “בְּכָל,” with daughters who possess all the virtues and talents, who know seventy languages and how to sing, play music and dance (particularly at non-Jewish weddings!). “How beautiful are your steps in sandals, O prince’s daughter!” (*Shir HaShirim* 7:2), daughter of Avraham Avinu! There is only one thing these perfect daughters do not know: *all that belongs to their nation!* The language of their people embarrasses them, its wisdom is scornful in their eyes, and when they are reminded that they are Jewish women, it arouses within them disgust.

Even one of these things is enough to bring old age upon a nation, or even to bring a people to its grave, and it is only more likely when all these things and more descend upon a nation from every side. And so we should not wonder at our nation’s old age, but rather we should wonder that we are still alive!

Perhaps, however, there is a silver lining to our old age. Perhaps, like Avraham, we *need* old age! Until the Hebrew nation arose, there were no old nations in the world. A nation would live for a few hundred or a thousand years, and then disappear from the world. Go and look at the histories of the nations of the world and see how long they have existed. How many years have passed since they were formed as nations with their own cultures and national life? Are they not like children compared to the Hebrew nation? *Am Yisrael* brought old age, the agedness of nations, to the world. If we show some signs of age today, so be it! On the contrary, let everyone recognize our nation’s extraordinary longevity; let them appreciate the nation that left Egypt and stood at Mount Sinai, the nation that conquered its land and produced prophets and poets; prophets and poets who have illuminated the entire world!

Ultimately, these signs of old age are only one side of the “coin of Avraham Avinu” (Bava Kamma 97b), the revealed side of the coin of the Hebrew nation in our time. The other side of the coin, though it has been hidden for a long time, is our freshness of youth, the bubbling currents of life that flow within us and our great ambition for a full and complete national life! And now we are drawing close to the day when this side of the coin will be revealed before the eyes of the world. The movement for the revival of the Hebrew nation is bringing a revolution!





When the Hebrew nation returns to its youth, when its young sons and daughters return to it, Hashem will bless us “כָּל־” with “everything,” with complete wholeness. No longer will our evil inclinations rule over us from within, with its war of wills and souls torn asunder. And neither will “the angel of death” and “worms and maggots” (Bava Batra 17a) attack us from without. Then the younger generation will know to honor their “elderly” traditions and add their own links to the golden chain of our nation’s history. And one nation will arise, the Hebrew nation, the “daughter whose name was ba-kol (כָּל)” (Bava Batra 16b).

And the daughter of Avraham Avinu will hear the voice that calls out to her: “Listen, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget your people” – forget the new people that you acquired and “your father’s house,” the foreign stepfather that you took for yourself (Tehillim 45:11). “Go forth from your land,” from the land of your exile that you made into your own, from your “homeland” to which your navel is tied, and “from your father’s house” which is bound up with the impurities of the lands of foreign nations. “Go unto the land that I will show you,” to your land, “so the king shall desire your beauty” (Tehillim 45:12), to “make you beautiful in the world” (*Bereishit Rabbah* 39).

The Hebrew nation will return to its land, to the land of its fathers, and build there its home, a center of culture to bring beauty to the world. And “instead of your fathers shall be your sons, whom you will make princes in all the land... therefore shall the nations praise you, forever and ever” (Tehillim 45:17–18).

● Translation by Rabbi Elie Mischel, from Rav Yitzchak Nissenbaum, *HaYahadut HaLeumit*, 63–66 (1920, Warsaw).





# ALIYAH DIARIES

## On Moving to Israel

Odelia Glausiusz

**I**t's strange how the Hebrew language can give you an uncanny insight into the people who live here in Israel. I learned a new expression in *ulpan* this morning. To say, "I want to have a private conversation," you say you want to have a conversation "*b'arbah einayim*" – literally, "with four eyes." It's a weird phrase, conjuring a surreal image of two sets of disembodied eyes talking to one another. It implies that a private conversation means speaking to someone with your eyes as well as your words. "Four eyes," or two sets of interlocking eyes, implies that two minds are interacting, rather than just two voices colliding. It lends a sense of gravity to the conversation. It suggests that there is an art to two people talking. And that art is connecting to the person in front of you, speaking to them with your eyes as well as with your mouth.

I moved to Israel from London this past November. I can't lie and say that I've felt like I'm "living the dream" every day. Sometimes it's hard. I get really homesick and wish I could teleport my family and

friends here with me. I speak to them all the time, but it's the everyday moments I miss – watching my younger brothers messing around in the kitchen, chatting to my mum in the car, and laughing at one of my dad's unique one-liners. I miss the comforting ease of having my best friends all living around the corner from me. At the same time, I can't fully express myself in Hebrew. The bureaucracy is baffling. And of course, people stream onto the train before letting you get off (in London you'd get death stares for doing that!).

But if life can be harder here, it is also richer. There is an underlying current of connection that courses through the daily rhythm of life, a depth that shines through those quirky Hebrew phrases like "*b'arbah einayim*." It has a lively warmth that twinkles through everyday slang as well. "*Chayim sheli, ahavah sheli*," young Israelis squeal upon seeing their friends. "*Todah, neshama sheli*," old ladies say affectionately in supermarkets. In England, if you casually called people "my life," "my love" or "my soul," they'd probably think you were high.

When I was in seminary in 2019, the news broke that Zechariah Baumel's body had been found. Zechariah was a tank commander who went missing in the 1982 Battle of Sultan Yacoub in Lebanon, at the age of 21. Intelligence officers searched for his body for nearly 37 years, and now, finally, he was returning home. I went to his *levaya* on Har Herzl, and was struck by the sheer number of people there. I'm not sure that there's another country whose military is prepared to go to such lengths for its fallen soldiers. I'm not sure there's another country where thousands of people feel a strong enough connection to a stranger who died close to 40 years ago to make the journey to honor that strangers' memory. But that's the thing – the people who went to Zechariah's *levaya* didn't see him as a stranger. They saw him as a person, a person who sacrificed everything for them, a person they could have known. A person they might have called "*chayim sheli*" or "*neshama sheli*."

I write this as I sit in *Casa Lavi*, one of my favorite cafés in Jerusalem. The girl opposite me is sipping tea and annotating





The bookshelf at the Casa Lavi café.

a page of *gemara*. A boy is sitting cross-legged, absorbed in his book. A group of friends are softly chatting. An elderly couple is sipping their coffee. I don't know anyone here, but somehow, I belong among them. Last time I was here, I noticed that the bookshelf inside the café has a wonderfully incongruous selection of books. *The Coffee Dictionary* is sandwiched in between *Orot* by Rav Kook and the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*. *What I Know About Running Coffee Shops* sits beside *The Story of Rabbi Akiva and his Times*. It's one of those small details you come across here that make you smile and feel connected to this extraordinary land and its beautifully eclectic mix of people. The daily fabric of life here is one that resonates with me as a Jew, a setting where I feel at home. I'm not blind to the extreme polarization in Israeli society. And maybe I'm naïve or overly optimistic. But however our views might differ, I believe that all of these people around me in the coffee shop would be there for me if I need them, as I would hope to be there for them.

Connection here takes other forms too. At Zechariah's funeral, his sister, Osna Haberman, said, "I can't even embrace you. So I thought to turn to the ground and ask the land to embrace you. After a few minutes I understood that I didn't even need to ask. The land embraces you so strongly... there is absolute love between the son that gave everything for the land and the Land itself... You are together now." While I will always

feel connected to England and to British culture, a connection to the land itself is something I never felt there. To live here is to be part of an ancient love story between Jews and the Land of Israel. In the 75 years since the establishment of the State, our people have revitalized this land and built up a high-tech democracy in the very place where, thousands of years ago, our ancestors first became a self-determined nation. It's hard not to see the daily miracles and how, in Osna's wording, having returned to Israel and embraced the land, the land has embraced us back.

And then there is our connection with Hashem. In *Eim Habanim Semeichah*, Rabbi Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal writes: "The essential point is that Hashem is waiting for us to take the initiative, to desire and long for the return to *Eretz Yisrael*... when we, of our own volition, truly and with all our strength, desire and strive [to return to the land], then G-d will bring our work to a successful end." Somehow, being here, I find myself just talking to Hashem more, noticing His hand in my daily life. After a hard day, He sends me whispers of encouragement: a warm hug from a friend, an old man with a peaceful smile joyfully playing his violin on the street, a chance to meet someone new and wonderful. These small boosts of love push me forward, and I'd like to think they're a sign that Hashem is happy that I'm here, and that He wants me to be happy here.

I recently returned to London for one of my best friends' weddings and was out

with my mum one day on Marylebone High Street. We walked into a café for a quick coffee and began chatting with the couple next to us. As you'd expect, the man was Israeli – you hear snatches of Hebrew everywhere in central London! – and we began speaking in Hebrew. He'd been living in London for the past forty years. When I told him that I live in Yerushalayim now, his eyes widened. "At *meshuga'at*?", "Are you crazy?", he asked me. The truth is, sometimes I think I am a bit crazy for moving here. But I can't help thinking that sometimes in life, we need to be a little crazy. Life may be a little chaotic here, but it is also exciting. It's full of life, full of meaning, full of promise of a vibrant Jewish future.



**Odelia Glausiusz**

is a graduate of English Literature from Kings College London. She recently moved to Jerusalem, and is currently in ulpan learning Hebrew and working as a freelance writer.



# Rabbi Simcha HaKohen Kook זצ"ל An Appreciation

Sivan Rahav-Meir

**R**abbi Simcha HaKohen Kook, who passed away one year ago on the 23rd of Iyar at the age of 92, did so many great things: He was the beloved chief rabbi of the city of Rechovot for decades and rabbi of the “Hurva” Synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem. He was President of the “Meor HaTalmud” yeshiva in Rechovot and stood at the head of many other educational institutions throughout the years. He was an eloquent speaker who was much sought after by audiences both in Israel and abroad, and led many public initiatives, especially in building bridges between the non-observant and religious sectors. But among his most memorable deeds, personally speaking, was his officiating our wedding.

He was the brother of the grandfather of Yedidya, my husband, and hosted us in his home in Rechovot on the Shabbat before the wedding. It was difficult to keep up with him as he quickly walked between so many synagogues on Shabbat. At the third meal (*seuda shlishit*), he sat down to speak with us. I remember the picture of his famous uncle, Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook זת”ל, on the wall behind him. You could see his uncle’s special qualities in him, his nephew, as well: sensitivity, compassion, and love for every individual, at times to the point of tears, yet together with an uncompromising steadfastness regarding his values and his faith.

The pre-marriage advice he gave us came from a story in the Talmud. It concerned the wicked Yerovam ben Nevat. G-d grabbed his garment and entreated him to retreat from his evil ways. If he would return to the proper path, then G-d and



Rabbi Simcha HaKohen Kook officiating the wedding of Sivan Rahav-Meir and Yedidya Meir.

Yerovam and King David would stroll together in *Gan Eden*. But then Yerovam asked: Who will go first? G-d answered that King David would go first. Yerovam responded: If so, I do not need to go. And so, instead of walking in *Gan Eden* together with G-d and King David, he chose *Gehinnom*.

His message to us was clear: Ego is an enemy. The desire to prevail over the other person and prove that you are better can spoil and destroy everything. This is true in marriage, in children’s education, and in all areas of life.

After 92 years of concern for the honor of heaven, and never for his own, Rabbi Simcha went up to G-d, in *Gan Eden*, together with King David.

• Translated by Yehoshua Siskin.



**Sivan Rahav-Meir**

is a media personality and lecturer. She lives in Jerusalem with her husband, Yedidya, and their five children, and serves as World Mizrahi’s Scholar-in-Residence. She is a primetime anchor on Channel 2 News, has a column in Israel’s largest newspaper, *Yediot Acharonot*, and has a weekly radio show on Galei Tzahal (Army Radio).



Join me at the  
World Orthodox Israel Congress  
[orthodoxisraelcongress.org](http://orthodoxisraelcongress.org)





Tradition Renewed

NOW  
AVAILABLE



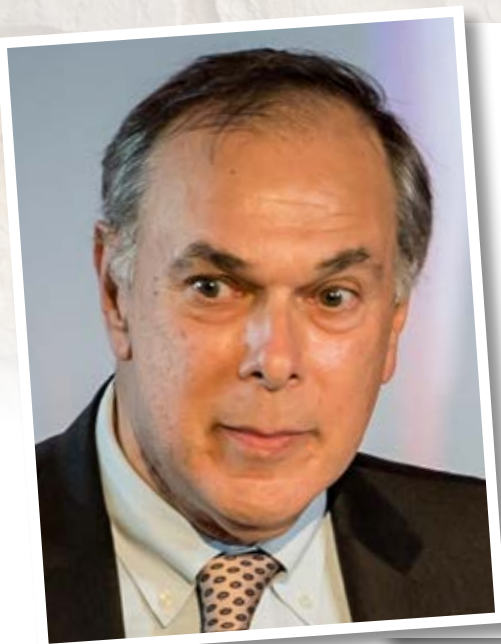
State of Halakha  
by Aviad Tabory



# JERUSALEMITES

*An occasional series of interviews with notable veteran olim  
who make their homes in Jerusalem.*

David Olivestone



## MATTHEW MILLER

*Since Matthew Miller bought Koren Publishers Jerusalem in 2007, he has turned it into one of today's most successful and well-known Jewish publishing houses, with a particular niche in the Religious Zionist world. Urbane, witty and self-deprecating, he is lanky, with a domed intellectual forehead, and could easily be mistaken for the professor he once aspired to become. Matthew and his wife Renée live in Jerusalem's Greek Colony neighborhood.*

**You and your company have had a profound influence on the Religious Zionist / Modern Orthodox world. Was this something that evolved from your background?**

No, not at all. Growing up, my family was Reform, at best. My grandparents, who all came to the USA before World War I, were either Bundists or Socialists. At university I was studying Thomas Aquinas before I had even heard of the Rambam, on whose trailblazing work a century previously Aquinas based much of his work. So no, Judaism was something that came into my life as an adult.

**What did you want to become as you grew up?**

A history professor. When I was younger and still had a functioning brain, I skipped a couple of grades, so I was only 20 when I graduated college. I was accepted into

a master's program at Oxford University, and I remember when I submitted my first essay, it was written American-style, full of quotes from eminent thinkers. My tutor insisted that I tell him not what others thought, but what I knew and what I thought, and no one had ever told me that before. At the end of my two years at Oxford I had my degree, but I found poring over things like medieval Latin texts very boring, and I realized that I wasn't cut out for a career in academia.

**So you went into the family business?**

Yes, my father had started the business in the early 1950s, and we manufactured some industrial machinery. After a few years based in the US, I took over the manufacturing and sales operations in Europe. So in 1981, when Renée and I were married, we moved to England, ostensibly for six months, but we ended up living in Leeds for ten years and then in London

for eight years until we sold the European business.

**Were you religiously observant by this point?**

Renée was already quite observant, as she had grown up in Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan, under the influence of Rabbi Shlomo Riskin. But I believe I would not have become *frum* myself if we had remained in America, where there are so many highly fragmented streams. Before joining a *shul* you have to define yourself as Reform or Conservative or Egalitarian or Modern Orthodox or Charedi, or whatever. If you want to move from this to that, you have to, in effect, reject where you are coming from. But in England in the 1980s, almost all the *shuls* were Orthodox, and you had some very *frum* and learned people there, and you also had people who would drive there on Shabbat and leave the car parked around the corner. Renée



encouraged me to find my own religious level. I consider myself a very rational person, but I took some courses with a rabbi who challenged me to think about the universe and its purpose and order. I became fully Orthodox gradually, but it felt comfortable as I was able to stay in the same *shul*, with the same friends.

### What came first, the idea of going into publishing or the idea of making Aliyah?

We didn't want to stay in England or go back to the States, and we both loved Israel and had a lot of friends here and used to visit a lot, so it was a logical decision. We made *Aliyah* in the summer of 1999 and it was the best move we ever made. Since I was blissfully out of a job, I needed to reinvent myself. I had always loved books, but I knew very well that I didn't have the capacity to write them myself. So instead, I decided to enable others to write, and I started The Toby Press. The best-known title I published under this imprint was Yehuda Avner's *The Prime Ministers*.

### How did you become involved with Koren Publishers?

After a few years, I began to feel that what I was doing was not very satisfying. I had heard that Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l, whom I had gotten to know a little while I was still in England, was looking for a Jewish publisher to produce his *siddur* internationally and also his Jewish-themed books in English. At about the same time, I learned that the families that owned Koren were looking to sell. Koren had always pushed all my buttons; its beautiful typography – which is something with which I've always been obsessed – its very high academic standards, and its Zionist identity.

### What attracted you about Rabbi Sacks' siddur?

I am my own target audience, and I felt that combining the elegance and logic of the Koren design with the profound learning, moral depth, and sheer eloquence of the Sacks translation, and also his extensive commentaries, would make it a *siddur* that would appeal to the intellect, the thirst for spirituality and to the eye. The *Koren Sacks Siddur* was a great success, as it clearly filled a niche that people were looking for.

Then we went on to publish the festival *machzorim* with Rabbi Sacks' translation and commentaries, and many of his other highly popular books under our Maggid imprint.

### Rabbi Sacks once said of you that you have reinterpreted the classic works of Judaism for our time, and you've done so brilliantly. Did you have a special relationship with him?

I think I had an excellent professional relationship with Rabbi Sacks. We didn't do small talk; he was my moral *rebbe*. In fact, many of the meetings and conversations we had were more like private classes. By the way, I worked very hard to promote Rabbi Sacks as a serious thinker in Israel. He wasn't known much here in the early 2000s, but now, for example, the huge Steimatzky bookshop chain, which doesn't really stock much Judaica, is selling large quantities of Rabbi Sacks' works in the Hebrew translations that we publish.

### What came next?

We started putting out a wide range of books for a broad tent Orthodoxy under the Maggid imprint, and many of the most prominent scholars and writers began to publish with us. I was soon approached by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz's son and advisory staff and we became his sole Hebrew and English publisher. Rav Steinsaltz zt"l, who had spent over four decades creating his monumental elucidation of the entire Talmud in modern Hebrew, partnered with us to launch the groundbreaking *Koren Talmud Bavli*, which is both elegant and user-friendly in the Koren style. It includes a new English translation, together with Rav Steinsaltz's explanations, color illustrations and many other tools to aid in understanding the text. I never thought in my wildest imagination that I would ever be publishing a Talmud, but it's been very successful.

### Do you have a hand in everything that you publish?

I know where I'm good and I know where I'm not. In my previous 25-year business career, I learned how to get things done, so I think I'm good at visualizing the right projects, choosing the right people and empowering them to get them done.

But as I said, I'm only a wannabe academic, so I have little-to-zero editorial input. We publish over a hundred books a year and we have a fabulous team of editors on whom I can totally rely, and I have absolutely no interest in getting involved in something that's going well.

### So how much of Matthew Miller is there in Koren?

I talk to many people and I get to hear what they are looking for. This helps me contribute ideas for various new series. But in general, I want to publish books that address issues we're wrestling with in the Orthodox world. We need to know how to talk to our children, and to ourselves, about issues of moral value. You're not going to get that from the secular world. Some parts of the Orthodox world tend to talk down to you, whereas what we need is a way to talk *with*, not down.

### Do you have a sense of pride that you've created all this?

That's not how I think... but I don't want to sound disingenuous. I know that this is important; of course I know that I'm enabling great thinkers to communicate their thoughts to a broad public. That's what I do. I don't create; I'm an enabler for creation. And I'm never satisfied.



**David Olivestone**

was director of communications at the Orthodox Union in New York before making *Aliyah* to Jerusalem with his wife Ceil in 2013. He has published numerous articles on Jewish cultural and historical topics.



An aerial photograph of Jerusalem, showing the city's dense urban landscape, green hills, and the Temple Mount in the distance. The title 'A Tale of Two Cities' is overlaid in a large, white, handwritten-style font.

# A Tale of Two Cities

Rabbi Dr. Avi Rockoff

**T**wo cities, fused. Both are Jerusalem.

I will call the first *Yerushalayim Aleph*. This city is *Yerushalayim ir HaKodesh*. Built around the *even haShtiyah*, the foundation stone of the world, where *Shlomo HaMelech* built the first *Beit HaMikdash* as the focus for all prayers. Where the *Sanhedrin* met and issued rulings. Where throngs on Sukkot celebrated the *simchat beit haShoevah*. Where Jews suffered and mourned the tragedies of two destroyed *Batei Mikdash*. Where Jews, dispersed in exile for millennia, dreamt of returning to. Where so many fought and gave their lives in 1948. Where Rav Shlomo Goren blew the *shofar* when the city was reunified in 1967.

The second city, *Yerushalayim Bet*, is the capital of the modern State of Israel. People live and work there. They fight traffic and honk at each other for getting in the way. They tend their gardens and shop for hardware or high fashion, eat falafel at kiosks and drink lattes at cafés. They walk their dogs and step around stray cats. They ferry their kids to school and take in a movie at the Cinematheque. They help complete strangers with heavy packages or flat tires, or refuse, on point of high principle, to pay *va'ad bayit* building maintenance bills they think unjust.

People everywhere live everyday lives. Few need to do that against a background of cosmic historical and religious

significance. Though some might relish such an opportunity, many others would prefer otherwise.

The fellow who comes to assess our possessions for renter's insurance – Shuli's flute, my *tefillin* – grew up in Jerusalem but lives in Yavneh. "I come here for work sometimes," he says, unasked. "But I leave as soon as I can. I don't like it here."

I am walking past the entrance to the Mamilla Mall when a group of high-school kids on a field trip walks by. A boy of about 14 with light hair stops me. "Do you live in Jerusalem?" he asks. I tell him I do. "Why?" he asks.

Jerusalem does not do well in surveys of urban satisfaction. A survey from 2018 placed it 13th out of 14 Israeli cities.

Respondents voice practical objections: housing is hard to find and costly; traffic is tough, parking impossible. The city is said to be dirty. Some complaints strike class notes: too many *charedim*, too many Anglos, too many Arabs. Nightlife is poor.

All these sound plausible, justified to those who express them. Yet it seems to me that they express them with more asperity than needed (is Jerusalem really 12 rungs lower than Bat Yam?). I may be wrong, but something else is going on here. Perhaps too much sanctity, too close by.

People appreciate sanctity, in principle. They value it, in its proper time and place – but not necessarily where they hang out every day. Having sanctity close by all the time can be irritating.

I first sensed this not from growing up in Jerusalem, but from being raised in a rabbinical household. Those of us who did call ourselves PKs – Preachers' Kids. PK mutual understanding is deep, and ecumenical. Progeny of rabbis, ministers, imams can all relate in surprisingly similar ways (though it's trickier if Pop is Catholic).

Clergy themselves bask in imputed purity. They chose their vocation or answered their call. Yet shall the piety of the parents be visited upon the children?

So we PKs sometimes find ourselves unwillingly putting off pals who want to tell an off-color joke without lowering their voices, or pursue a pastime of no redeeming social importance without the company of those presumed to be focused always on loftier things.

Likewise, there are times and places for spiritual significance. In Jerusalem, these are hard to avoid. Holy places, and the people who run and patronize them, are everywhere. And time – historical time, transcendental time – weighs heavily. All the time.

Of course, it can be awkward to complain about that out loud. It can be



uncomfortable even to think about it. Easier, perhaps, to talk about heavy traffic, poor trash collection, and subpar nightlife.

A *Shana Tova* email from a relative who lives in the US: “It must be an amazing experience,” he writes, “to be at the holy city during this time of the year.” He means this in the kindest, most sincere way, yet needs to define his distance, spatial and spiritual. It would perplex, not edify, him to hear that picking up a few pre-*chag* items can mean dodging grocery carts in supermarket aisles, only to find that the checkout computers have crashed yet again. This triggers feelings, none of them amazing – even in the holy city.

The *gemara* says that there is a Jerusalem in heaven that matches the one on earth. A lovely thought. Many regular folk might still choose the one down below. Where would those who dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem direct complaints about municipal services?

A great deal has been written about Jerusalem, most of it about *Yerushalayim Aleph*, the first city. Much of this evokes glory, splendor, kings in regal garments, *kohanim* in holy vestments, pageantry, triumph, the agony of destruction and exile, the consolation of hope and its fulfillment. Thus, Yishayahu: “Awake, awake, *Tzion*! Clothe yourself in splendor; Put on your robes of majesty, Jerusalem, holy city!” (52:1)

But even in Tanach there is a passage, often quoted, that strikes an apparently banal note, one that at least at first seems more suitable to *Yerushalayim Bet*, city of everyday life. This appears in Zechariah, a prophet given to mystical, even grotesque images: red horses, flying tubs, flesh melting in empty eye sockets. Yet he also says this: “There will yet be old men and women in the squares of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. And the streets of the city will be crowded with boys and girls playing in the squares” (Zechariah 8:4).

These days you don’t see many oldsters out and about leaning on canes. For one thing, joint replacement surgery has put off for many the use of canes until walkers or wheelchairs are needed. For another, air conditioning keeps elders indoors on warm, sunny days, of which there are many here.

Still, the image’s apparent banality can be misleading. The vision Zechariah evokes is

a prophecy, not a postcard. It shows three generations doing what each generation is supposed to be doing: children running around playing games, parents absent from the picture, busy doing what people in midlife do to keep families afloat, and old-timers sitting around to watch.

His prophecy is not that this might happen. His prophecy is that it will be expected to happen, and to keep happening. The key word is the first: *tiy*, “again.” Once again. Again and again. Not just soon, but always. Two generations hence, the children running around should be the ones leaning on their canes. Zechariah’s prophecy is not of kids playing in the street. It is about autonomy and social stability.

Zechariah applies this prophecy to one specific place: Jerusalem, to which the exiles he was speaking to in Bavel yearned to return.

To put it this way is to make clear what everyone knows but prefers not to talk about: that the first flowering of redemption is not the final version, and that ongoing stability and peace, for the children now playing as their elders watch, are anything but assured. Knowing this may lend the sight of a pleasant and utterly banal tableau an aching poignancy that can be all but unbearable.

Which is not of course to suggest anything like despair or loss of hope. Nobody who spends ten minutes around here would discern either of those. The fellow who added the words *od lo avda tikvatenu*, “our hope is not yet lost” (once again: *tiy*, yet,

again) to what would become our national anthem wrote them when a nation that would need an anthem was barely a flight of fancy. Yet here it is, bursting with life, riotous energy, and youthful enthusiasm, despite everything, then and still now.

Jews have learned nothing if not how to wait and hope. Lately, we have also learned to take action to bring about what is waited and hoped for.

“Our feet stood inside your gates, Jerusalem. Jerusalem built up, a city knit together” (Tehillim 122:2–3).

Two cities, both on earth, knitted so tight they cannot be pried apart. With vistas terrestrial but heavenly.

We have been everywhere. Now we are here. Where else would we go?



**Rabbi Dr. Avi Rockoff**  
and his wife Shuli have lived in Newton, Massachusetts for many years and are currently engaged in participatory research on the complexities of making Aliyah.



## Hallel and

**Shammai**  
are in different  
parts of Israel  
each praying  
turned toward  
the direction of  
Jerusalem.

**Jews all over  
the world pray  
toward  
Jerusalem  
no matter where  
they are  
located.**

A MIZRACHI YOM HANIZIMAUT MAP

WRITTEN BY  
SHIRA GREENSPAN

ILLUSTRATED BY  
Yael Harris Resnick  
[WWW.YAELHARRISRESNICK.COM](http://WWW.YAELHARRISRESNICK.COM)







# ברוכים הבאים

**Mizrachi welcomes the hundreds of participants joining us from around the world to celebrate Israel's milestone 75th anniversary and the inaugural World Orthodox Israel Congress.**