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הַמִּזְרָחִי



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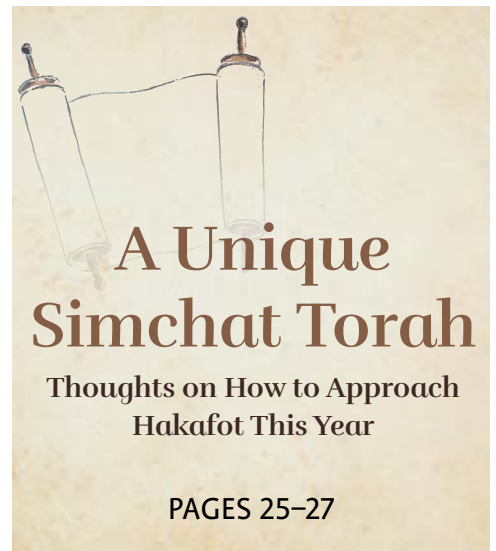
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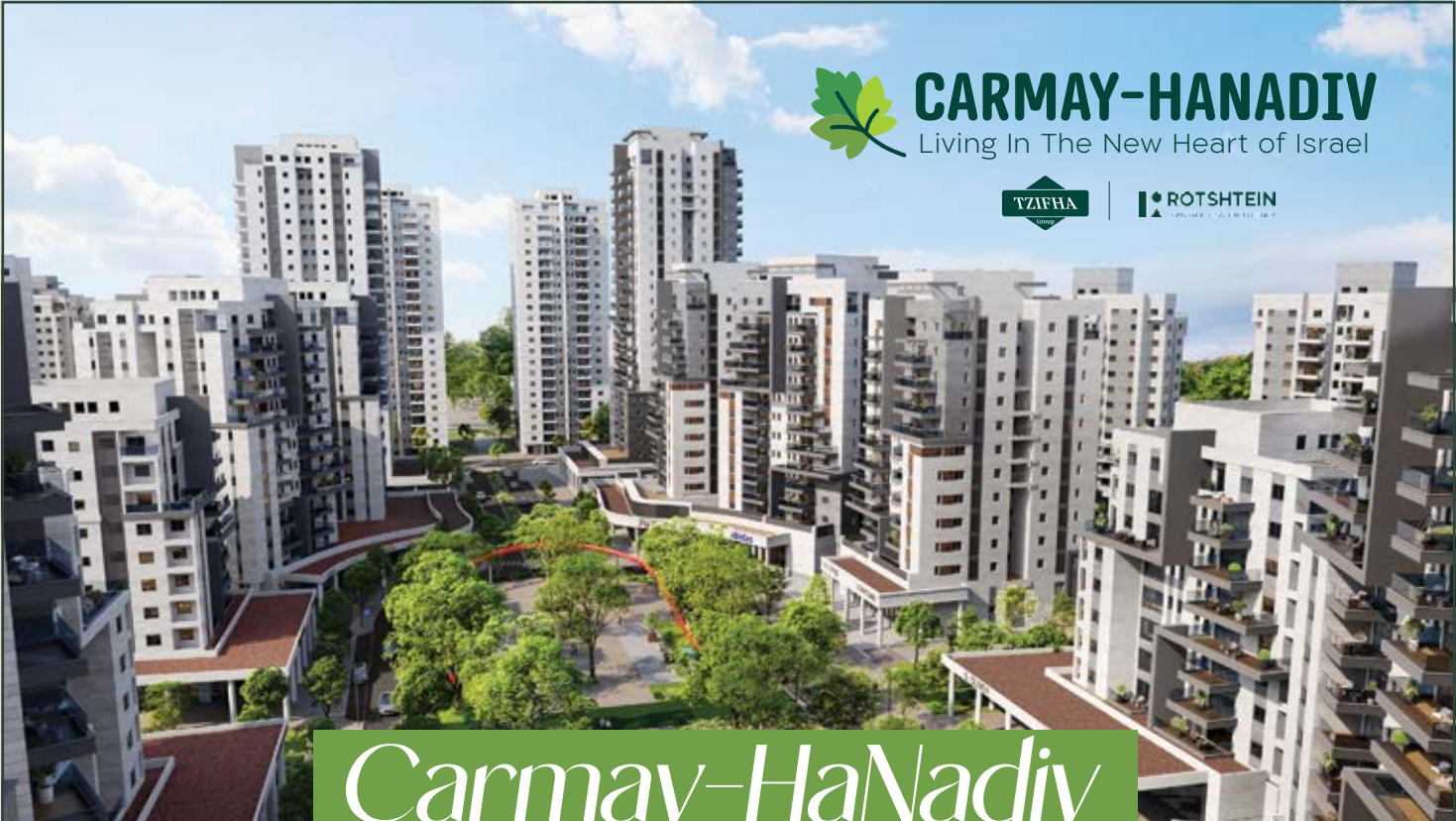
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Simchat Torah This Year

עֵת סְפִיד וְעֵת רִקוּד

Rabbi Doron Perez



This essay is an excerpt from “Days of Awe in Times of War” a booklet recently published by Rabbi Doron Perez.

To read a digital copy, scan the QR code or visit tinyurl.com/DaysOfAwePerez



This Simchat Torah, the last of the festivals of Tishrei, will be the hardest one that any of us have ever experienced. No festival will capture this duality of life more than this one.

On the one hand, we are celebrating – holding and dancing with the Torah, the source of our life and meaning. What are we as a people without the values of the Torah? It is impossible to understand the Jewish mission without the unique vision of life and light that Hashem has bestowed upon us through the Torah. We dance and celebrate this privilege in both the night and the day. As we complete the reading of the Torah and begin it at the very same time, the Torah encompasses us from beginning to end and we celebrate this privilege.

At the same time, this is the most painful Simchat Torah that any of us can ever remember. Perhaps amongst the most painful in our people's history. There will be around 1,300 families across Israel mourning the loss of their beloved on this day. Some people lost multiple family members from different generations, brothers and sisters, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren. Many were butchered and tortured in the most barbaric way. Our son, Daniel, was shot at 9:01am while his head was out of the tank after he and his brave Tzevet Perez did all they could to save their fellow soldiers of the Nachal Oz base and the members of the adjacent *kibbutz* bearing the same name. At the time that we will hopefully be taking out the Torah this year and dancing in the morning of Simchat Torah, we

will be thinking about what happened that exact moment precisely one year before.

How can we celebrate both the completion of the Torah and at the same time commemorate the pain of loss?

In general, and during our great festivals of Rosh Hashanah and Pesach in particular, celebrating both the birth of humanity and the birth of the Jewish people are built around the symbols of the *shofar* and the *matzah* – the celebration and crying, the suffering and salvation.

Life is somehow a package deal and we are called to draw upon superhuman strength when facing challenges. Ours is not a history littered only with great suffering but also punctuated with the greatest spiritual and moral moments in human history. We will need to draw on our deepest

reservoirs of faith and strength to balance these strong conflicting emotions. Indeed, the Zohar calls the *matzah* of the month of Nissan and the *sukkah* of the month of Tishrei articles of faith: מִיִּזְרַחֵי אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְעַד אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְעַד אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.

In facing the enormous challenges ahead, we will need to dig very deep into the dual symbolism of the *matzah* and the *shofar*. Our ancestors faced at times impossible challenges, and every time they somehow managed to find a way to bounce back. The exodus from Egyptian slavery; miraculously breaking the stranglehold of Sancheriv [Sennacherib], the siege of Jerusalem which threatened the entire city; surviving the Temple's destruction and ensuing exiles; rebuilding a sovereign Jewish state and the Torah world so soon after Auschwitz and returning to unite Jerusalem after the imminent threat of a second holocaust in 1967. Somehow each time we have bounced back and rebuilt the Jewish world. We cried and we sang, we ate the bread of suffering and salvation, we were exposed to the destructive elements of those who wished to destroy us, and we were protected by the divine clouds of glory. We always found a way.

When we somehow managed to get through the celebration of our son Yonatan's wedding with his brother Daniel missing, only 10 days after that tragic day, I understood the dichotomy of suffering and celebration. It helped me understand something we had just read during Sukkot in the book of *Kohelet* [Ecclesiastes]. King Solomon, the wisest of all men, highlights in chapter 3 that for every time, and every hour beneath the sun, there are different experiences: a time of life and a time of death, a time to plant and a time to uproot, time of peace and a time of war, time to mourn and a time to celebrate. I had always previously understood that Solomon was talking about different times in our lives. Life can be divided into good times and bad times – sometimes it's a time for happiness and growth. Sometimes, it's a time for mourning and destruction. I understood for the first time in my life that this is not necessarily the case. Perhaps King Solomon, in his great wisdom, was teaching us that sometimes all of these things happen together. They literally happen at the same time. Life is a package deal.

More often than not, all of these things happen at the same time. Parts of our life are being planted and grown, and other parts are being uprooted and unraveled. In some parts of our lives, we have *shalom*, peace and harmony, and in others conflict,



Rabbi Doron Perez and Rabbi Andrew Shaw, Chief Executive of Mizrahi UK, holding one of the me'ilim that will be used this coming Simchat Torah, in memory of those who fell last Simchat Torah.

confrontation, and turmoil. We have so much blessing and so much to be grateful for, but at times so many curses and so many challenges.

At practically every wedding celebration there is also the pain of loss and hardship. Either a beloved close family member has passed away or perhaps there is debilitating or fatal illness being faced. Sometimes there are great challenges of *shalom bayit* and painful arguments tearing families apart. At the height of our happiness we need to put in the background these painful challenges to allow ourselves to appreciate the moment of gratitude and celebration. We are often called upon to juggle these contrasting experiences and emotions. This is what we had to do as a family at Yonatan's wedding, and this is what many other families have had to do as they forge ahead a life with so much pain and loss. This is what our people is called upon to do time and time again.

Many hostages still need to return home. Our son needs to be buried. Many of us live with anxiety as our children are on the front lines. And many of us seek comfort. As we enter 5785 we know that this year ahead has many question marks. We face many challenges, not only in Gaza, but in

the north, and in the east where the roots of the Iranian evil lurks.

This Simchat Torah, we are going to have it both ways. We will dance with every fiber of our being, celebrating the privilege of being a Jew and at the same time, we will cry, yearn, and feel the pain of this last year and what happened last year at this time.

עַתְּ סִפּוּד וְעַתְּ רִקּוּד – it will be both a time to mourn and a time to dance. A time to feel the pain and a time to celebrate the privilege. A time to laugh and a time to cry. A time to feel close and a time to yearn from a distance.

We live in Hashem's world. In Hashem's world somehow things are always okay, even when they are not.



Rabbi Doron Perez
is the Executive Chairman
of World Mizrahi.

Gearing up for the World Zionist Congress 2025 Elections

How to Establish a State in a Few Simple Steps: The Vision of Zionism

In the late 19th century, a young Jewish journalist posed a bold question: “How do I establish a state?” This visionary was none other than Theodor Herzl, the father of modern Zionism. His answer was clear – a state needs a people, land, and resources. While the Jewish people existed, they lacked both territory and funds. However, Herzl, ever the optimist, believed that with enough faith in the idea, anything was possible.

Herzl’s first step? Uniting the Jewish people behind a common cause. He envisioned the First Zionist Congress, a groundbreaking event that brought together Jewish representatives from all corners of the world. In 1897, 208 delegates from 16 countries gathered in Basel, Switzerland, igniting a flame of hope and national revival. The Congress marked a crucial moment in Jewish history, as the dream of establishing a Jewish homeland in Israel began to take shape.

But discussing ideas wasn’t enough; Herzl understood that action was needed. The Congress established the World Zionist Organization, tasked with executing its decisions. Three key institutions soon followed: Keren Hayesod, which focused on raising funds; the Jewish National Fund (JNF), responsible for purchasing land in Israel; and the Jewish Agency, which took charge of immigration, settlement, and education.

Over the years, the Zionist Congress met regularly to address pivotal questions such as the choice between settling in the Land of Israel or Uganda, and the struggle for independence from the British. These discussions shaped the future of the Jewish people, and figures like Berl Katznelson, David Ben-Gurion, and



Every 5 years, global Jewry has the opportunity to make its voice heard at the World Zionist Congress. This Congress has a huge impact on Israel and Jewish life around the world – stay tuned for more details of how to vote for the Mizrahi-led Orthodox Israel Coalition in the 2025 elections!

Chaim Weizmann emerged as leaders of the Zionist movement.

Fifty years later, Herzl's vision culminated in the creation of the Jewish state. On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel. But even as the fledgling nation was born, the connection between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora remained vital. The Zionist Congress continued to serve as a bridge between Jews in Israel and those around the world.

Today, over 120 years after the First Zionist Congress, elections for the Congress still take place every five years. The Congress now includes 525 representatives, with 200 from Israel, 153 from the U.S., and 172 from other countries. Each community's representation is based on the size of its Zionist population.

The Congress elections differ from traditional political races. Instead of a winner-takes-all approach, the outcome is a broad-based coalition. The roles each party assumes are distributed based on election results, ensuring a wide range of voices and perspectives are heard. For instance, in the most recent Congress, the right-wing faction secured key positions, enabling them to implement policies related to settlement and religious affairs.

In the early 2000s, a major shift occurred. Israel had become the largest Jewish community in the world, transforming from a state in need of support to one capable of offering aid. Israel now extends a helping hand to Jewish communities worldwide, from combating antisemitism to fostering Jewish identity and supporting those in need. The institutions founded by the Zionist movement continue to

play a crucial role, both in Israel and abroad, addressing challenges like assisting Ukrainian refugees and supporting Jewish students at prestigious universities.

The Jewish National Fund (JNF), once dedicated solely to purchasing land, now manages a budget in the billions. Its funds are directed toward projects benefiting Israel and the Diaspora alike. Those who participate in Zionist Congress elections help determine how these resources are allocated, influencing the future of Jewish communities globally.

For Jews around the world, participating in Zionist activities means choosing a party that reflects their beliefs. Reform Jews might vote for the Reform list, while Zionist Orthodox Jews would likely support the Mizrahi list. The Reform and Conservative movements have long recognized the importance of these elections, resulting in their large representation in the Congress. However, the Mizrahi movement has also gained strength due to its active role in Jewish communities worldwide.

To ensure the continued influence of Zionist Orthodox Jews, it's essential to mobilize as many voters as possible. Supporting the Mizrahi list helps safeguard the Jewish character of the State of Israel and ensures the continuity of the Jewish people.

Herzl's dream may have been realized with the founding of Israel, but the Zionist movement's work is far from over. Today, as ever, the connection between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora remains a cornerstone of Jewish identity and survival.

THE WILLOW THAT BINDS TOGETHER

RABBI DANNY MIRVIS

The *arba'at ha-minim* are known for their beauty, but when considering the beauty of the four kinds, there seems to be an odd one out. The *lulav* is majestic in its height and stature. The *etrog* has a beautiful appearance and taste. The *hadass* has a pleasant aroma and intricate leaves. And then there's the *aravah* (willow). The *aravah* is not particularly aesthetic to behold. It has no pleasant aroma.

Where is the *hiddur* (beauty) in taking a lowly and simple *aravah*? This question is strengthened when we consider the *Mishnah* in *Masechet Sukkah* (4:5) which describes how on Hoshana Rabbah, we would encircle the *mizbe'ach* in the *Beit HaMikdash*. On Hoshana Rabbah, the *mizbe'ach* was decorated with long *aravah* branches. And the *Mishnah* tells us that as people were leaving and took in the sight of the *mizbe'ach*, they would declare, “יְפִי מִזְבֵּחַ; יְפִי לְךָ, יְפִי מִזְבֵּחַ – Beauty unto you, altar, Beauty unto you, altar.” And even as we find ourselves between *Batei Mikdash*, the *aravah* still receives great attention on Hoshana Rabbah, as we take a bunch of willow in our hands.

How did the *aravah*, seemingly the simplest and humblest of the *arba'at ha-minim* reach such prominence and praise for its beauty? In order to understand the beauty of the *aravah*, we have to understand its role in the context of the *arba'at ha-minim*. The Gemara teaches us that in the first instance, the four kinds need to be in an *egged* – bound together. (The Israeli bus company is called Egged because it is a cooperative owned by its members. It was also created as an *egged* in 1933 by the merger of four smaller bus companies coming together). In order to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *arba'at ha-minim*, all four species must be present. Despite their individual qualities, none of them alone can be used to perform the *mitzvah* – they can only be used when they are together as part of a full set. The real beauty of the *arba'at ha-minim* is not in their individual aesthetic qualities, but the way they come together.

The *lulav*, *hadassim* and *etrog* are far more beautiful when joined by the *aravah*, and the *aravah* takes on new beauty and significance when placed with the other three. So it was on the *mizbe'ach* as well. The *aravot* in and of themselves are not particularly beautiful, but when placed alongside the *mizbe'ach*, offsetting the *mizbe'ach* with refreshing greenery, they contributed to an overall pleasing experience.

The *aravah* itself, in its name and in its nature, represents this concept of interdependence and harmony. Of all the 4 kinds, the willow is the most dependent on water for its growth. It cannot survive alone but must grow alongside rivers, streams or sources of water. The name *aravah* means mixture,

indicating the *aravah*'s natural inclination to blend and mix with other elements. The *aravah* alone does not have much beauty but must be in the context of other ingredients to shine.

In the *halachot* of what qualifies as a kosher *aravah*, one of the requirements is that it is not allowed to be *ke-masor* – like a saw with jagged edges. This fits in with the symbolism of the *aravah*, which represents unity and harmony, as opposed to a saw which represents division. As the *Midrash* in *Vayikra Rabbah* points out, each of the four kinds represents a different kind of Jew. The *etrog*, with both a pleasant taste and pleasing aroma, represents Jews who have both Torah and good deeds. The *lulav*, with a pleasant taste but no aroma, represents Jews with Torah but no good deeds. The *hadass*, with a pleasant aroma but no taste, represents Jews who have good deeds but no Torah. The *aravah*, with no taste and no aroma, represents Jews with neither Torah nor good deeds. Ultimately, the *mitzvah* can only be performed when all four kinds are brought together. The *Sefat Emet* explains that this is why the *aravah* is granted such prominence on Hoshana Rabbah. It is specifically because it represents those who lack Torah and good deeds, in order to highlight the value of every single person.

On the one hand, it is essential to welcome and appreciate the value of every single individual. At the same time, the *aravah* teaches us that great beauty is not just about accepting or tolerating others. True beauty is found when a group can enable everyone within it to shine. Not only do they shine themselves, but they enable the overall group to achieve a level of beauty that could never have been achieved without their presence.

Sukkot is all about coming together. We invite *ush-pizin* and others into our *sukkot*. We share our *simcha* with those less fortunate than ourselves. By internalizing the lesson of the *aravah*, may we merit the fruition of our prayer during the Yamim Nora'im: “*V'ye'asu chulam agudah echat la'asot retzoncha be-levav shalem* – may we all become one “*agudah*” – one group bound together to perform the will of Hashem.”



Rabbi Danny Mirvis

is the CEO of World Mizrahi and the Rabbi of Ohel Moshe Synagogue in Herzliya Pituach.

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290

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88 million

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27 million

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2 million

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5

new communities established: Meital, Shibolet (North) and Mevo'ot Arad Yatir, Hiran and Ir Ovot (South)

4,000

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600

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Mizrachi's Religious Zionist global movement
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Sadly, around 50% of the fallen soldiers
since October 7th are from the
Religious Zionist community –
a painful privilege.

We are **ON THE FRONT LINES** of striving for
unity and cohesiveness today. We are often
the bridging and balancing voice in the WZO
where pushing to the extremes on both sides
is common. As we face external enemies who
seek our destruction, our unifying approach is
critical now more than ever.



Holding a Community Together: Shlomi's Year-Long Evacuation Story

On October 18, 2023, the Israeli government ordered the evacuation of 43 towns along Israel's northern border, deeming them too dangerous for civilian habitation. This decision affected 61,000 residents, who were relocated to hotels and other temporary accommodations across the country.

Among the largest evacuated towns was Shlomi, home to 8,500 people and situated just a few kilometers from the Lebanese border. Nearly a year after the evacuation, Rabbi Aron White interviewed Chagit Maman, director of Shlomi's Community Center, to understand how the community is trying to stick together despite being displaced from their homes for such an extended period.



When did the residents of Shlomi have to evacuate?

The week after the start of the war, the decision was taken that we were evacuating the town of Shlomi, and we moved 6,000 people, out of our population of 8,500, in 3 days. As we were talking about thousands of people, we were split into hotels in different cities in the country. Our residents went to Jerusalem, Haifa and Tiberias. As a municipality, we had a representative in charge of our residents in each city, with a team of people to help them upon arrival. We had to do everything from working out social services and education in these new locations, to day-to-day things like where people were going to get their food from, and how they were going to be able to do laundry.

We essentially had to create a "city in a hotel." In the first few months, we set up medical clinics, kindergartens, elementary schools, social activities for elderly residents, and more, to make sure we were taking care of our residents. After a few months, the older students began to move to continue their education in the existing schools in the towns where they were now living. In general, initially we were providing all the services to the thousands of displaced people from our town, but gradually the host towns were able to integrate the residents of Shlomi into their services.

Also, especially as people are going through a difficult time, and they are away from home, taking care of emotional and psychological needs is very important. From psychological support to running extracurricular activities for children, it was important that these needs were taken care of as well.

Now, a year later, where do things stand?

Firstly, many people have now moved out of hotels to private apartments around the country, but this means that we lose our sense of community. For the start of the school year, we opened up educational services for the community in Nahariya, Akko and Ma'alot, so at least we could start regathering



the community in the north of the country. We opened three schools, one of which is a special needs school. We basically have buses picking up kids from around Haifa, and Krayot, Akko and the surrounding area and taking them to school, so it keeps the community together.

What is the mood like?

It is really not easy – people really want to go home, but they understand it is just not possible, as they don't feel safe in Shlomi at the moment. No matter how many services we provide, in the end people want to be in their homes. People want to be in their house, on their street, at their regular job, with their kids in the schools where they belong. By the way, even when people are able to go back, the houses themselves are also in a really bad condition. Think about hundreds of homes not being lived in for a year – animals start coming in, there are plumbing issues – these homes were abandoned in the middle of a war, and it will take a long time to clean up the mess.



You said that some people remained in Shlomi – why did they stay?

At the beginning there were about 1,000 people who didn't want to leave, and some people have been staying there throughout and more have gone back now. They are still in the city now, but the city as a whole feels deserted, waiting for its residents to be able to come home. ■



Special thanks to the Municipality of Shlomi for the photos in this article.

Listen to the Midwife

“ Shalom Sivan,

My name is Leah Melamed, I'm a midwife at Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva. At the beginning of the war, ten months ago, you interviewed me in the delivery room together with the dear midwife Hila Azulai.

On that day, I made myself a promise to update you regarding the 'baby boom' of which we spoke in that interview during those difficult days.

Births since the outbreak of the war were emotionally draining. Evacuees gave birth, those who survived the hell of October 7th gave birth, as well as those who were grieving the loss of family members. Every midwife was overcome by a wave of emotions, both joyful and sad.

And now, 10 months later, there is a different wave of births. I sense that there is something more in the air. Couples arriving now are those who decided to bring new life into the world at a time of crisis. This is a choice that from a certain perspective lacks all logic. How is it possible to think about bringing new lives into such a world?

When you asked me 10 months ago from where do I derive my strength, I answered that I draw inspiration from the Hebrew midwives in Egypt who had "reverence for G-d."

They saw beyond the brutal decree of Pharaoh to throw all Jewish baby boys into the Nile. The midwives lived by one truth that exalted the value of life even at the price of endangering their own lives. The midwives knew then, and know also today, how to see growth from within challenge and crisis even when others have difficulty believing that such growth will indeed come. Today I can say that I derive strength from the mothers I witness giving birth. From these women who can see into the future with the same strength displayed by their forebears in ancient Egypt. They remind me of Yocheved challenging Amram, her husband, who refused to bring other children



into that world of Egyptian exile after Miriam and Aaron were born. She demanded that he rouse himself with newfound faith and have another child. The result was the birth of Moses.

I am attaching two photos. A wonderful couple from Kibbutz Nir Oz, Nofar and Amit Gore, taught me about hope alongside crisis. Their kibbutz suffered a brutal fate, with dozens murdered and kidnapped. I accompanied them throughout the delivery of their daughter, Eli. Amit is a farmer and after planting again in the fields of Nir Oz, he left a sack of potatoes that he grew on the kibbutz next to my front door. This was an expression of return to life, a first step of hope. I broke down in tears when I saw this gift next to my door. How my spirit gained strength from this gesture.

I asked them for permission to tell their story. There is also a triumphant photo of the family that I look at every day in our hospital's delivery room. Perhaps it will give strength to others too.

Am Yisrael chai.

● Translation 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 a weekly radio show on Galei Tzahal (Army Radio). She is a member of the Mizrahi Speakers Bureau (www.mizrachi.org/speakers).

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SHAGRIRIM BALEV

Friends Setting Up Friends



14 matches!

Five years ago Oriel Lax was a single guy searching for his soulmate. After hearing about Shagririm Balev, he decided to join as a candidate himself – but also as an ambassador for others. Very quickly he realized that he had a deep passion for matchmaking and became one of the most active volunteers in the organization. His natural honesty and his good eye for people helped him foster the matches which he believed had a lot of potential. Lo and behold – he has successfully set up 14 couples, all of whom are now married! Not only did he set up his friends, he also managed to find a husband for his sister and, most recently, a wife for his brother – all through Shagririm Balev.

Oriel has some unique tips to help people find their match. For example: He encourages every couple to go to an escape room together for their fourth date. He explains that it takes three dates to get to know each other on a basic level, and an escape room on the fourth date allows the couple to examine their interaction with one another as well as their ability to work together. So many couples that Oriel has guided attest to this, saying that this tip indeed helped them a lot – either to understand that best to break things off for lack of potential, or the opposite – to understand that the relationship is special, and something worth pursuing.

Besides his constant efforts to set others up – Oriel was also able to find the love of his life through Shagririm Balev. His ambassador was looking out for him just like he was looking out for others – and set him up with Menucha. And yes – Oriel followed his own advice and spent their fourth date at an escape room!

In the Lax family there are 3 siblings – who all found their soulmates through Shagririm Balev! In the photo: Oriel, Yael and Yisrael Lax and their spouses – Menucha, Betzalel and Tzvia, with Shlomi who was the photographer in all 3 weddings. Mazal Tov to the newlyweds!



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THE TEMPORARY HOME OF BE'ERI

Visiting the new town now hosting the community

Rabbi Aron White

The attacks of October 7th left tens of thousands of people homeless. Communities were destroyed, the Gaza envelope became a war zone, and overnight tens of thousands of people had to evacuate to the unknown.

A year later, many of those communities have returned home, but many still cannot. In September of this year, Rabbi Aron White visited the kibbutz of Chatzerim, where a new neighborhood has been built to house the community of Be'eri. The project, spearheaded by the WZO's Rural Growth and Development Division (Chativa LeHityashvut), headed by Mizrachi's Gael Grunewald, is one of many such new neighborhoods built in the past year – providing temporary homes to those whose homes are yet to be rebuilt.

As I drove from Be'er Sheva to the kibbutz of Chatzerim, I passed Israeli Air Force bases, JNF forests planted in the desert, and newly added signs leading to “Shchunat Be'eri” (Be'eri neighborhood). In January, this was an empty sand dune on the edge of an existing kibbutz. Six months later, it had transformed into a large neighborhood with 300 homes, multiple kindergartens and schools, and most importantly, dozens of families already settled.

Be'eri was one of the worst-struck kibbutzim on October 7th. With over 1,200 residents, it is the largest kibbutz in the Gaza envelope and became a symbol of the horrendous events of that day. 101 members of the kibbutz were murdered, and a further 31 were taken hostage – at the time of writing, 12 remain in captivity, of whom 7 are no longer alive. In January of this year, I visited Kibbutz Be'eri with a Mizrachi UK mission, standing inside the burned homes and destroyed pathways of the previously idyllic locale.

When the army regained control of Be'eri and evacuated the residents, many were temporarily housed in hotels by the Dead Sea. While some communities have been able to return to their homes, for Be'eri this is still not possible, and that temporary stay in hotels stretched from weeks to months. Their kibbutz became part of a closed military zone for months, and it may take years to rebuild. Over 150 homes were destroyed, burned, or made



uninhabitable on that day. Beyond the physical destruction, residents say that the trauma will also take time to heal. On an individual and communal level, it's not easy to return to the site of such an atrocity. How does a family move back into the home where their family members were murdered? How does a community walk the familiar paths of their town, now full of memories of unspeakable horrors?

In September, I had the opportunity to visit the new, temporary community built for the residents of Be'eri in Kibbutz Chatzerim. Chatzerim is five minutes from Be'er Sheva and 50 minutes from Be'eri. The kibbutz is famous for running Netafim, Israel's world-famous drip irrigation technology company. Despite their geographic differences – Be'eri being in

the verdant fields of the Gaza envelope compared to the desert surrounding Chatzerim – the two kibbutzim are remarkably similar. Both were founded on the same day, *Motzai Yom Kippur* of 1946, as part of “the 11 dots,” an organized operation to settle the Negev. Both kibbutzim are relatively large, with about 1,200 residents. And both represent the curious mix of the old and the new in the 21st-century kibbutz – they remain fully collectivist, with all salaries going to the kibbutz and clothes and other amenities being split equally, while also running large, modern companies. Be'eri runs one of Israel's most high-tech printing operations, producing specialized items like passports and government documents, while Chatzerim runs Netafim.

I traveled to Chatzerim with Gael Grunewald, one of Mizrachi's representatives in the World Zionist Organization (WZO), who is intimately involved with the project. Gael currently heads the Rural Growth and Development Division (*Chativa LeHityashvut*) of the WZO, which for decades has developed villages and towns in Israel's periphery - the Negev, the Galilee, and Judea and Samaria. Following the disengagement from Gaza in 2005, this division was also involved in building new towns to house the 8,500 Israelis forced from their homes. As a department experienced in building towns across Israel, it was tasked by the government with constructing seven temporary neighborhoods across Israel in the past few months to temporarily house *kibbutzim*. The town of Ruchama is housing Nir Oz. The town of Mishmar HaEmek is housing Nir Oz. And the kibbutz of Chatzerim is hosting Be'eri.

Arriving in Chatzerim, we were met by two members of Kibbutz Chatzerim who have been leading the project. Ran Shivek heads the economic side of the *kibbutz*, so all construction projects run through him. Osi Moritz is a school principal in the nearby *kibbutz* of Beit Kama, who was taking a sabbatical last year. She has spearheaded the communal aspect, preparing Kibbutz Chatzerim for welcoming Be'eri into their community.

The new neighborhood is on the outskirts of Chatzerim and contains 300 homes built in the past few months. It is so large that we used a golf cart to tour the area. Driving around, it's almost impossible to believe that only a few months ago this was literally empty desert. Ran explained how the project began: "Our first meeting about this project in the *kibbutz* was on October 11th," he says. "Two members of our *kibbutz* said that these *kibbutzim* in the envelope won't be able to return home for a long time, and we have to build them somewhere temporary to live. A few days later, we had our first meeting with members of different *kibbutzim*. By October 15th, we had an architect's rendering of what the new neighborhood might look like. We didn't have a budget, didn't know how we would build something like this, but we had started to make a plan for what it would look like." To me, it is mind-boggling that anyone had the presence of mind to think about this plan in the first week of the war, when the whole country was still reeling, and the IDF had only just finished neutralizing the terrorists in the Gaza envelope.

Osi described some of the conceptual underpinnings that also began to take shape. "At every turn, there are many sensitivities, even in terms of how we



"The Chativa LeHityashvut that I lead has played a critical role in building up Israel and building towns throughout the country. Mizrachi is at the forefront of *yishuv Eretz Yisrael*, and this now translates into the reconstruction after October 7. It is also a tremendous *kiddush Hashem* for us as a religious movement to be involved in the rebuilding of diverse communities, in spite of our differing outlooks."

— Gael Grunewald

frame this project. Are we 'hosting' Be'eri? 'Adopting' them? These were terms that didn't seem fitting - we had to get the balance right between respecting the independence and integrity of Be'eri while recognizing that this was a community that had been deeply wounded and traumatized. We decided on '*Kehillot Shechenot*, Neighboring Communities.' Here in Kibbutz Chatzerim, we have built a neighborhood called *Shechunat Be'eri*, where the community of Be'eri can live and have much of its own communal life. We have built them their own play areas, kindergartens, and are now building them their own dining room, which serves as the beating heart of a community, especially in a collectivist *kibbutz*. We created a dynamic that maintains the



independence of Chatzerim and Be'eri in many aspects while bringing us together in others."

Osi also explains the huge amount of work done within Chatzerim to prepare people for the influx of a new community to their neighborhood. "It doesn't work to just have a whole community of Be'eri move in one day. While the construction was taking place, we were preparing Chatzerim for this influx. Take young children as an example - how do you prepare an eight-year-old girl in Chatzerim to meet a new friend from Be'eri, who was kidnapped to Gaza and held in Hamas captivity? This is just one of hundreds of daily interactions. And when the people of Be'eri would arrive - how would we welcome them? Do we give them their own space, so they don't



feel that we are overly doting on them, or do they want to feel that warm hug from us when they arrive? It is also really important to think long-term. When the decision to undertake this project was taken, 97% of Kibbutz Chatzerim voted for it. We knew that when the people of Be'eri first arrived, Chatzerim residents would understand and find meaning in small inconveniences, like longer lines at the local grocery store. But we had to consider the long-term impact. If our community doesn't deeply understand the importance of what we're doing, tensions and frustrations could arise weeks or months down the line."

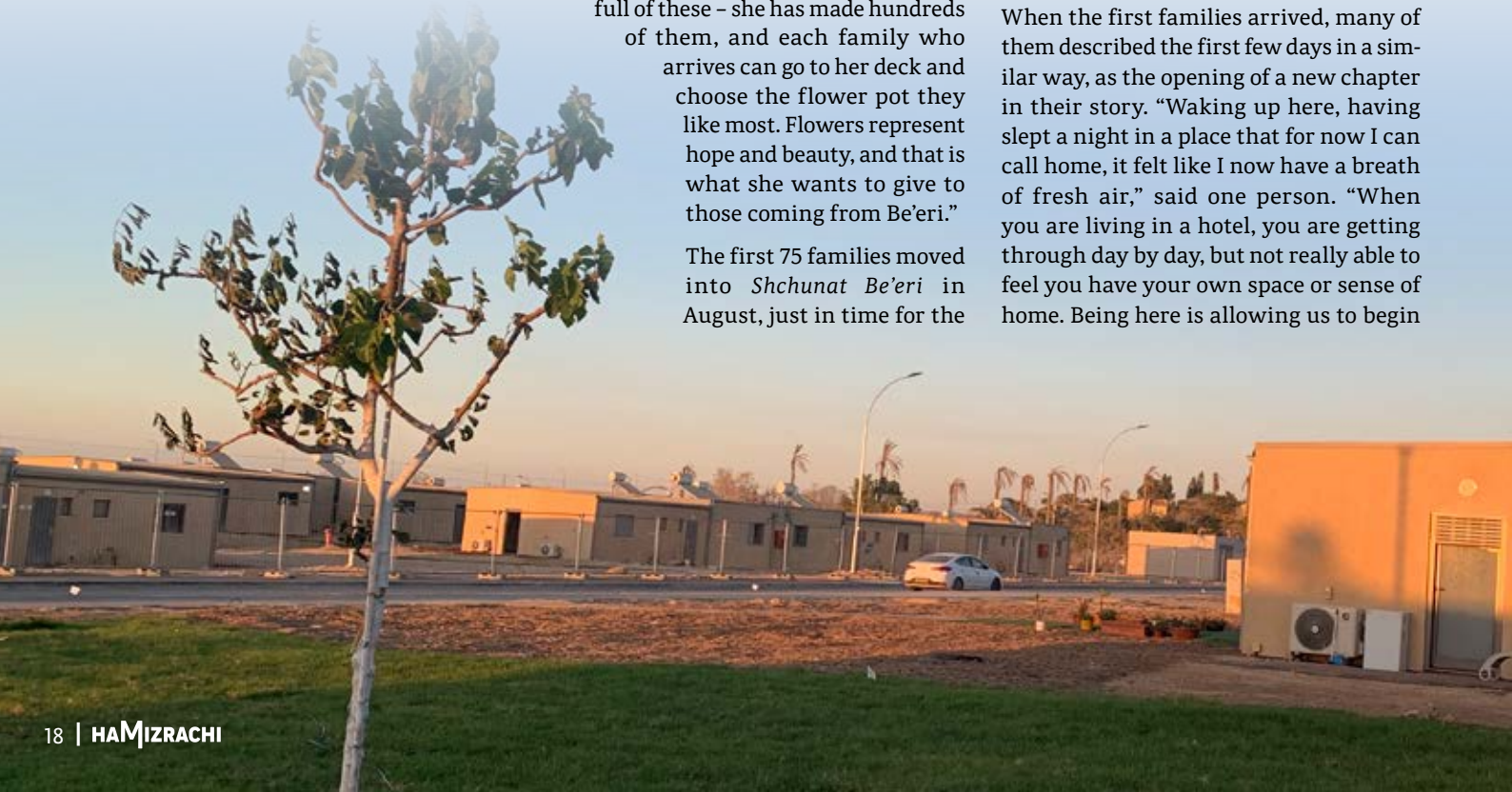
One of the ways the community has come together is through the creation of 25 different volunteer committees, each working on projects to enhance and support the new neighborhood. "There was one group of three ceramic workers who wanted to make door signs for each of the 300 new homes. They created different formats and options and sent them to the hotels at the Dead Sea so people could choose their preferences. When each family arrived, their custom door sign was given to them so they could put it on their door. Another elderly pensioner on the *kibbutz* unfortunately lost her daughter to cancer this year - she decided that in her memory, she was going to make plant pots for each of the Be'eri families. Her entire deck is now full of these - she has made hundreds of them, and each family who arrives can go to her deck and choose the flower pot they like most. Flowers represent hope and beauty, and that is what she wants to give to those coming from Be'eri."

The first 75 families moved into *Shchunat Be'eri* in August, just in time for the

start of the school year. The area containing the kindergartens (*ganim*) is particularly impressive. It's hard to believe that these buildings and parks were constructed only a month before our visit, with the grass laid just ten days prior.

Typically in Israel, developing a new neighborhood - from initial planning and approval to final construction - takes 12 to 15 years. In this case, however, all these processes were compressed into just a few months. This rapid development is reminiscent of how quickly the coronavirus vaccine was created. It demonstrates that in times of crisis, the government can expedite processes and accomplish tasks at an extraordinary pace.

When the first families arrived, many of them described the first few days in a similar way, as the opening of a new chapter in their story. "Waking up here, having slept a night in a place that for now I can call home, it felt like I now have a breath of fresh air," said one person. "When you are living in a hotel, you are getting through day by day, but not really able to feel you have your own space or sense of home. Being here is allowing us to begin



processing everything we have been through,” said another resident. Another member said, “People said to us that this is our *tekuma*, our revival. Arriving here is not *tekuma* – but it is the beginning of *tekuma*.”

This project is remarkable in several ways. One striking aspect is the simultaneous need for both large-scale planning and attention to small details. At the macro level, there’s the enormous task of constructing hundreds of homes, along with essential infrastructure like security systems, water supply, and sanitation – all at a cost of hundreds of millions of shekels. Yet equally important are the micro-level concerns, such as providing welcoming touches like flower pots and personalized door signs. The project’s success depends on both of these elements working in tandem.

In Gael’s Jerusalem office, a map of Israel hangs on the wall. It shows *yishuvim* color-coded by their founding dates. This visual representation is eye-opening, revealing that despite perceptions of Israel as a fully developed country, new towns continue to emerge regularly. The events of 2024 forced Israel to rapidly create new neighborhoods to accommodate thousands whose homes were destroyed – both physically and in spirit.

Despite the circumstances, it’s deeply moving to see children at play in newly-built parks, beneath freshly planted trees, before they return to their temporary homes. For all involved in this project – the residents of Be’eri, the people of Chatzerim, IDF personnel, and even those still held captive in Gaza – true success will only come when everyone can return to their original homes. But for now at least, hundreds of Be’eri families have found a home.

Thanks to Dov Bernstein for the drone photos of Chatzerim.



Rabbi Aron White

is the Managing Editor of HaMizrachi magazine.



A PROJECT OF  MIZRACHI

A time to dance, a time to mourn

On this unique Simchat Torah, over 500 communities will be united as we dance and we cry together. The Simchat Torah Project, spearheaded by Mizrachi UK, is the global project to unite the Jewish world and honor the memory of the 1,200 souls lost on October 7th and the hundreds since.

Together, commemorating the eternity of the Jewish people and remembering those we lost, hundreds of *sifrei Torah* around the world will be covered with identical *me'ilim* (covers), each one bearing a name of one of the fallen. From South Africa to Singapore, Canada to Chile, America to Austria, the Simchat Torah Project unites the Jewish world, dancing and crying together.



30
countries

175
cities

525
communities

635
me'ilim

Israela

Bringing Group Aliyah to the English Speaking World

While thousands of Jews from around the world made Aliyah this past summer, one group stood out with a particularly unique story. “Kvutzat Daniel,” a close-knit group of families from Australia and the UK, embarked on their journey to Israel together, coordinated by the group Aliyah organization Israela. Rabbi Ilan Goldman shared with Rabbi Aron White the innovative approach behind this initiative and Israela’s exciting plans for the future.



Thank you for speaking to us. What is Israela?

Israela was originally founded by Shalom Vach 32 years ago, with the vision to help *olim* integrate into Israeli communities. Originally from Belgium, Vach began the program to help French-speaking Jews make *Aliyah*. Since its inception, Israela has helped 10,000 Jews make *Aliyah* through its unique model. The core idea is to create a group before making *Aliyah* and to have an Israeli community that will welcome them, helping them integrate into Israeli society. In the past, I always told people to make *Aliyah* to an Anglo community, but this offers a new model. You go with Anglos, but to an Israeli community that will embrace you. It allows you to maintain your Anglo life while integrating into Israeli society, and it helps make the process a lot quicker. Most of these *olim* did not initially plan to live in an Israeli community, but this new model provides *olim* with a massive advantage.

How do you go about creating a group?

We work with people who have decided to make *Aliyah* or are considering it. We reach out through the Jewish Agency and Mizrachi, who work with families oriented toward *Aliyah*. We partner with the Jewish Agency, Nefesh b’Nefesh, and Mizrachi, who are dealing with people pre-*Aliyah*. We cater to families with school-aged kids at the moment (though we are considering including empty-nesters), mainly Modern Orthodox. On the Israel side, our Community Absorption Coordinator, Mali, works on finding communities, schools, *rabbanim*, and municipalities, narrowing it down as we get to know the group. She starts with 15 places, and the group then chooses which ones to visit. We have a checklist of criteria: the community needs to be interested, etc. We appoint someone to be the on-the-ground contact for the first 18 months to escort the families. We sign them up for schools before they’ve even moved and furnish the apartments, so the idea is they “dance off the plane” and find their apartment ready. Your *Aliyah* and your wedding are the two happiest days you experience in your life, so we try

to make it like another wedding! The community comes to welcome them at the airport, and it's very powerful.

Can you tell us about “Kvutzat Daniel,” the first group of Anglos to make Aliyah through Israel?

As I said before, Israel has operated for French-speaking Jewry for decades and has now been branching out. In 2022, we brought our first group of Spanish-speaking Jews from South America to Or Akiva, and we've since brought two more. To create this English-speaking group, we reached out to potential *olim* through Mizrahi and the Jewish Agency, gathered a group of interested people, and started having Zoom meetings. The group discussed what was important to them and got to know each other. They also named themselves “Kvutzat Daniel” in memory of Daniel Perez. The group came in May because of the war – usually, the date for the pilot trip is much earlier. Some members are making *Aliyah* in July, some in August.

How was the pilot trip?

They had already met many times on Zoom and had a WhatsApp group, but this was their first time meeting in person. They started out as almost strangers, but by the end of 6-7 days, they felt like family. This is truly a mission – building your future life together. They became so close, it was as if they had spent a year together.

We want the group to be strong and to come to a strong community. We visited Petach Tikvah, Carmei Gat, and also did group-building activities like going to Chevron. Each place has its own character. Carmei Gat is newer and more affordable, while Petach Tikvah has a strong community but is more established. Each place has its advantages.

In the end, the group of 15 families split into two: 10 are going to Carmei Gat to join the Yachad Israeli community, and 4 families are going to Rav Eyal Vered's community in Petach Tikvah. Both groups are being absorbed into Israeli communities.

The first group arrived this summer. What are your plans for the coming year?

Though we're just beginning to see the wonderful impact of Israel's first English-speaking group *Aliyah*, we are already eager to see this model grow and support many more families. For next summer, we intend to have three separate groups making *Aliyah* to three separate communities in Israel, alongside two groups from Latin America and our groups from France. ■



“From the moment we landed, we have been incredibly embraced and supported by Israel and the Yachad community. From hugs, iced coffee, and treats for the kids at the airport to dancing neighbors, a table full of freshly baked goods, meals, and purchased household items upon arriving at our new home. Our adoptive family is always there to answer questions and make sure we have places to eat for Shabbat. On our first day here, they entertained our kids for three hours so we could sneak in a nap!”

– Perachya Sorcher



Put Your Aliyah in Safe Hands



AFTER 30 YEARS OF BRINGING PEOPLE TO ISRAEL FROM FRANCE AND SOUTH AMERICA, ISRAELA'S FAMILY-FRIENDLY GROUP ALIYAH SYSTEM IS NOW HERE, HELPING YOU MAKE ALIYAH SMOOTHLY AND SUCCESSFULLY.

SECOND GROUP: SUMMER 2025

Aliyah Pilot Trip | March 2025



Aliyah as a Group

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Israela will accompany you and your family for the first 18 months of your Aliyah – helping you adjust, addressing challenges, and using connections to guide you through post-Aliyah bureaucracy, help you find employment and give you peace of mind.

You're Not Alone

Apart from your peer group, Israela works closely with the Jewish Agency to ensure your family's Aliyah experience is as smooth and successful as possible.



Golan Vach
CEO of Israela



Rav Ilan Goldman
Director of Aliyah

For further details- please contact:
Aliyah@israela.org | www.israela.org



Israela is led by CEO, Col. (res.) Golan Vach, and Ilan Goldman, son of immigrants himself, with vast experience in the Aliyah space. Col. Vach also heads the famed IDF National Rescue Unit.

*Intended for families with children aged 0-18



MIZRACHI

MIZRACHI AROUND THE WORLD



Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman visited the Scandinavian branches of Mizrachi in Sweden and Norway, as well as a visit to Serbia. He participated in the Mizrachi board meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, led by Michael Grunberger, chairman of Mizrachi in Sweden. Rabbi Wasserman gave a presentation to the board about Mizrachi's global reach and impact through our dozens of branches across the world, and praised the branch for their impactful programming that they organize for the community.



Thank you to the Lamm family of Melbourne, Australia, for hosting a magnificent dinner with Mizrachi Melbourne, in support of World Mizrachi. Building on the momentum of an uplifting Shabbat with Mizrachi Melbourne, Aliza Lamm opened the evening with reflections on Mizrachi's crucial mission at this time. Participants also heard from Mizrachi Melbourne President, Benji Jotkowitz, World Mizrachi Vice-Chairman, Dr. Danny Lamm AM, and guests of honor, Rabbi Doron Perez and Rabbi Danny Mirvis.



At the personal invitation of Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis KBE, Executive Chairman Rabbi Doron Perez gave the keynote speech to the over 200 participants of the annual Chief Rabbi's Conference for Rabbis and Rebbetzins from across the UK.



World Mizrachi co-President Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman was a guest of the Mizrachi branch in Vienna, Austria. During his visit, he met with the board of Mizrachi Austria, which is headed by president Ya'akov Grunberger. At the meeting they discussed topics of mutual interest, including the preparations for the forthcoming World Zionist Congress which is planned for October next year.



Mazal Tov to Dr. Oren and Jill Lakser on their recent Aliyah. Oren is the co-President of the Religious Zionists of Chicago. Pictured here are (L-R) Rabbi Jerry Isenberg (Executive Director, Religious Zionists of Chicago), Dr. Lakser, and Rabbi Danny Mirvis (CEO, World Mizrachi), at the Simchat Torah Project launch event in Yerushalayim in September.



In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a new project was recently launched at Kolel-Rio/Bar-Ilan, where fathers and sons gather on Sunday mornings to study Torah using Mizrachi's Chavruta parsha sheets. The program begins with Shacharit, followed by breakfast, learning together, and a football game. The participants truly enjoy the experience, and are excited to continue with the program.

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ALIYAH: THE TIME IS



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WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO BUILD A STRONGER ISRAEL THROUGH ALIYAH



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A Unique Simchat Torah

Thoughts on How to Approach Hakafot This Year

This year, Simchat Torah carries a complex emotional weight as we strive to balance the essential joy of the holiday with the painful memories of October 7. To help navigate these conflicting feelings during hakafot, we present two sets of suggestions from leading rabbis in Israel on how to honor both the celebratory nature of the day and the somber remembrance it now holds.

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon, who serves as the Nasi of the World Mizrahi movement, Founder and Chairman of Sulamot and La'Ofek, Chief Rabbi of Gush Etzion, and Rosh Yeshivah of the Jerusalem College of Technology, offers his perspective on maintaining the spirit of the holiday while honoring recent losses.

Rabbi Shmuel Slotki, head of the World Organization of Orthodox Synagogues in the WZO, brings a deeply personal dimension to this discussion. Last Simchat Torah, his sons Noam and Yishai left Be'er Sheva to defend against the Hamas attack in the Gaza envelope. Tragically, both were killed near Kibbutz Alumim.

An Introduction by Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

On Simchat Torah, we stop the hakafot and I give a shiur to the children. There are hundreds of children there. I teach them, tell a story, sing with them and at the end they get candy.

In the middle of the shiur, one of our security personnel approaches me and says, "Rabbi, a war has broken out." To announce to the public that a war has broken out is a great responsibility. "How do you know that a war has broken out?" I asked him. And he answered: "Rabbi, there are 32 hostages." It was hard to believe.

Suddenly a guy from the community comes and says: "Rabbi, I'm going to fight, and I want a blessing." Then comes another and another. Dozens of people, young people and even middle-aged people. About a hundred people were recruited from the community. Six of them did not return.

A year has passed. Dead, kidnapped and wounded. I visited many of them. I was a partner in crying, a partner in pain. I also saw strength, the tremendous strength of our wonderful soldiers, the strength of citizens who risked their lives, and sometimes paid the price of their lives, to save other Jews, the strength of soldiers' wives, of parents and families. The strength of bereaved families. The strength of the residents of the north and south, who have been away from their homes for a year.

As I also wrote in relation to Rosh Hashanah: The war is not only on the battlefield. The war is also on the home front. The enemies are trying in every way to disrupt our lives, to sow fear and panic among us, to cause division in our people and to shut down all joy in our country. We will not let them win! We will continue to live in our country with high spirits. Although, at all times, we will remember the soldiers, the wounded, the martyrs who were killed and murdered, the hostages, the bereaved families and the families from the north and the south. We will remember them, think about them and pray for them. We will also pray for unity within Israel, and we will remember that our strength is in our unity.

An Introduction by Rabbi Shmuel Slotki

Dear brothers,

These days, we are standing again in the cycle of the year before the holidays of Tishrei. These holidays come at the end of one of the most difficult years experienced by the State of Israel since its establishment. Our sons and daughters were murdered and slaughtered by our enemies on our holiday, our brothers and sisters are still in captivity of the cruel enemy, our soldiers are fighting and giving their lives in defense of the homeland, and tens of thousands of our people who were displaced from their homes are still scattered all over the country.

These days, we stand before the holiday of Simchat Torah, the day many of us were murdered and killed and the day they declared war on us. Simchat Torah this year raises many questions and concerns about how to behave in synagogues.

*On the one hand, there is the desire to 'continue according to their order', to continue the tradition of the generations and thereby show victory over the enemy who wanted to destroy us and erase our Judaism. On the other hand, the impact of the great disaster, the many bereaved families that this is the first *yahrzeit* for their loved ones, the many circles of casualties among us and the war we are in the middle of, oblige us to take a different approach.*

Therefore, we decided in the World Organization of Orthodox Synagogues in Israel to propose a model adapted for this year. Each of the seven hakafot will be dedicated to a different circle that is present in our lives this year around the war - IDF soldiers, the release of the hostages, the treatment of the wounded, and more. In every hakafa, apart from the usual songs and the established customs, we will add a special prayer, songs and Tehillim connected to the theme of the hakafa.

Suggestions for Hakafot by Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon



First Hakafa

For the soldiers and security forces

Songs – *Torat Hashem Temima, Hoshia Et Amecha, Kol HaOlam Kulo, Al Tira Yisrael, VeKove Hashem Yahchalifu Koach, Yisrael Betach BaHashem, Shomrim Hafked Le'irecha*

מי שבָּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב הוּא יְבָרַךְ אֶת חֵילֵי צְבָא הַהֲגָנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְכֹחוֹת הַבְּטָחוֹן, הַעֹמְדִים עַל מִשְׁמַר אֶרְצֵנוּ וְעָרֵי אֶלְקֵינוּ. יְתֹן ה' אֶת אוֹיְבֵינוּ הַקְּמִים עֲלֵינוּ נִגְפִים לְפָנֵיהֶם. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִשְׁמְרֵם וְיַצִּילֵם מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵיהֶם. וְיִקְרָם בְּהֵם הַפְּתוּב: כִּי ה' אֶלְקֵיכֶם הֵהָלַךְ עִמָּכֶם לְהִלָּחֵם לְכֶם עִם אוֹיְבֵיכֶם לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם: וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

Second Hakafa

For the return of the hostages

Slow songs – *Acheinu, Racheim, U'fduyei Hashem Yeshuvun, Kol BeRamah, Shifchi Kamayim Libech, Emor LaTzafon Teni*

מי שבָּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף מִשֵּׁה וְאֶהְרֹן דָּוִד וְשְׁלֹמֹה, אֲמוֹתֵנוּ שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרַךְ וְיִשְׁמַר וְיִנְצֵר אֶת אֲחֵינוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשְּׁבוּיִים וְהַחֲטוּפִים, בְּעִבּוּר שְׁאֵנוּ מִתְּפִלִּים בְּעִבּוּרָם. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵיהֶם, וְיִשְׁמְרֵם מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה, יוֹצִיאֵם מִחֲשֵׁךְ וְצִלְמֹת וְיִשְׁיֵבם מִהֶרָה לְחִיק מִשְׁפּוֹחֵיהֶם, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

Third Hakafa

For the healing of the injured

Shema Hashem VeChaneni, Shema Hashem Koli Ekra, Shir Lamaalos Esa Eini

מי שבָּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב מִשֵּׁה וְאֶהְרֹן דָּוִד וְשְׁלֹמֹה, אֲמוֹתֵנוּ שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרַךְ וְיִרְפָּא אֶת כָּל הַפְּצוּעִים בְּמַעֲרַכָּה. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵיהֶם לְהַחֲלִימָם וּלְרַפְּאֵתָם וּלְהַחְזִיקָם וּלְהַחְיֹתָם, וְיִשְׁלַח לָהֶם מִהֶרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם לְכָל אִיבְרֵיהֶם וּלְכָל גִּידֵיהֶם בְּתוֹךְ שְׁאֵר חוּלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, רְפוּאָת הַנְּפֹשׁ וְרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף, הַשְׁתָּא בְּעִגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב. וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן:

Fourth Hakafa

For the families of soldiers

Ahavas Olam Tavi Lahem, Biglal Avot Toshia Banim, Ki Lo Yitosh Hashem Amo, Utzu Eitza VeTufar

יְהִי רְצוֹן, שְׁבִזְכוֹת הַשְּׁלִיחוֹת שֶׁל מִשְׁפּוֹחֹת הַחֵילִים לַעֲם יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְתֹן ה' לָהֶם כּוֹחַ וְשִׁמְחָה, בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה, זִוגִיּוֹת טוֹבָה, פְּרֻנְסָה טוֹבָה וּבְרִיאוֹת אִיתְנָה.

Fifth Hakafa

For the unity of the Jewish people

Od Avinu Chai – Am Yisrael Chai, Yehi Shalom BeCheilech, Lemaan Achai Vere'ay, Aderaba Tein beLibeinu

אֲדַרְבָּא. תָּן בְּלִבְנֵי, שְׁנִיָּאָה כָּל אֶחָד מֵעַלְת חֲבֵרֵינוּ וְלֹא חֲסֵרוֹנִים, וְשִׁנְדָּבֵר כָּל אֶחָד אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ בְּדַרְךָ הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִי וְהַרְצוּי לְפָנֶיךָ, וְאַל יַעֲלֶה שׁוֹם שְׁנֵאָה מֵאֶחָד עַל חֲבֵרוֹ חֲלִילָה. וְתִטַּע אֶחָדוֹת וְאַהֲבָה בְּתוֹכְנוּ, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

Sixth Hakafa

In memory of the neshamot of those fallen

Slow songs – *Vehi She'amda, Venikeisi Damam Lo Nikeisi, Tehe Hasha'a Hazot she'at rachamim*

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֶלְקֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּתֵּן יָד וְשֵׁם לְכָל הַקְּדוֹשִׁים שֶׁנִּהְרָגוּ וְשֶׁנִּצְחָצוּ, שֶׁנִּזְכְּרוּ לְהַמְשִׁיךְ אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הַטּוֹבִים שֶׁהָיוּ פּוֹעֲלִים בְּעוֹלָם, וְשֶׁתִּנְתְּנֵם נִקְמַת דָּם עֲבָדֶיךָ הַשְּׁפוּדִים.

Seventh Hakafa

For the victory of Am Yisrael in this war, and bringing Mashiach closer

Besha'a Shemelech HaMashiach Ba, Hinei Anochi Shole'ach, VaHav-iotim El Har Kodshi, VeHarikoti Bracha, Kadshenu BeMitzvotcha, Baruch Hu Elokeinu, Nekadesh et Shimcha baOlam, Ochila LaKel, Am Hanetzach lo Mefached, Yibaneh HaMikdash

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, שֶׁנִּצְרִיעַ אֶת הָאוֹיֵב, נִנְצַח אוֹתוֹ וְנִמְגַר אוֹתוֹ, וְשֶׁנִּזְכְּרוּ לְרֵאוֹת בְּשִׂמְחַת צִיּוֹן וְיִרוּשָׁלַיִם, בְּבִיאַת מְשִׁיחַ צְדִיקְנוּ וּבְבִנְיַן בֵּית מִקְדָּשְׁנוּ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, אָמֵן.



Suggestions for Hakafot by Rabbi Shmuel Slotki



First Hakafa

For peace in the State of Israel

Include the *Tefillah LiShalom HaMedina* and Chapter 23 of Tehillim.

Second Hakafa

For the success of IDF soldiers

Include *Mi Sheberach* for soldiers and Chapter 121 of Tehillim.

Third Hakafa

In memory of the fallen in Charavot Barzel

Include Chapter 20 of Tehillim, and the prayer below for those who fell in this war, composed by the IDF Chief Rabbinate:

א-ל מלא רחמים שוכן במרומים, המצא מנוחה נכונה על כנפי השכינה, במעלות קדושים, טהורים וגבורים כזהר הרקיע מאירים ומזהירים, לנשמות הקדושים אַזְרָחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אַנְשֵׁים וְטָף, שֶׁנִּזְרְגוּ, שֶׁנִּזְרָחוּ, שֶׁנִּשְׁרָפוּ, שֶׁנִּטְבְּחוּ בַיָּדֵי מְרַצְחֵי הַחֲמָאס בְּנֵי הָעוֹלָה, וּמְסֻרוֹ נִפְשָׁם עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם, בְּהַתְקַפָּה הָאֲכֻזְרִית עַל יְשׁוּבֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְלִנְשָׁמוֹת חַיֵּי צְבָא הַהֲגָנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שׁוֹטְרֵי מִשְׁטֶרֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַנְשֵׁי כּוֹחוֹת הַבִּטְחוֹן שֶׁמְסֻרוֹ נִפְשָׁם עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם וְנִפְלוּ מוֹת גְּבוּרִים בְּקִרְבוֹת עַל הַגְּבֵת הָעֵם וְהָאָרֶץ. בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁאֲנוּ מִתְפַּלְלִים לְעֹלְוֵי נְשָׁמוֹתֵיהֶם, בְּגוֹן עֲדוֹ תְּהֵא מְנוּחָתָם. לְכוּ בְעַל הַרְחָמִים, יִסְתַּיְרוּ בְּסִתְרוֹ כְּנָפָיו לְעוֹלָמֵים, וְיִצְרְרוּ בְּצִדּוֹ הַחַיִּים אֶת נְשָׁמוֹתֵיהֶם. ה' הוּא נְחַלְתָּם, וְיִנְוָחוּ בְשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹתָם וְיַעֲמְדוּ לְגוֹרְלָם לְקוֹץ הַיָּמִים, וְנֹאמֵר אָמוּן.

Fourth Hakafa

For the release of the hostages

Include Chapter 142 of Tehillim and the prayer for the release of the hostages:

מִי שֶׁבְּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבִרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף מֶשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן דָּוִד וְשְׁלֹמֹה, אֲמוֹתֵנוּ שָׂרָה, רֵבֵקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ וְיִשְׁמְרֵנוּ וְיִנְצֵר אֶת אַחֵינוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשְּׁבוּיִים וְהַחֲטוּפִים, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁאֲנוּ מִתְפַּלְלִים בְּעִבְרוֹם. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵיהֶם, וְיִשְׁמְרֵם מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה, יוֹצִיאֵם מִחַשְׁוֹ וְצַלְמֹת וְיִשִּׁיבֵם מִהֵרָה לְחֵיק מִשְׁפּוּחֹתֵיהֶם, וְנֹאמֵר אָמוּן.

Fifth Hakafa

For the healing of those injured

Include Chapter 41 of Tehillim and this prayer for the wounded:

מִי שֶׁבְּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבִרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְאַמְוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה, רֵבֵקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ, יִרְפָּא וְיִשְׁמֹר אֶת חַיֵּי צְבָא הַהֲגָנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִפְגְּעֵי פְעֻלוֹת הָאֵיבָה שֶׁנִּפְצְעוּ בְּגוּפָם וּבְנַפְשָׁם, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵיהֶם לְהַחֲלִימָם, לְרַפְּאוֹתָם, לְחֻזְקָם וּלְאַמְצָם, וְיִשְׁלַח לָהֶם מִהֵרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, רְפוּאָה הַנִּפְשׁ וְרְפוּאָה הַגּוּף, [בְּשִׁבְתָּ: שֶׁבֶת הִיא מְלַעֵק וְרְפוּאָה קְרוּבָה לְבָא], הַשְׁתָּא בְּעַגְלָא וּבִזְמוֹן קְרִיב, וְנֹאמֵר אָמוּן.

Sixth Hakafa

For the strength of the bereaved families

Include Chapter 84 of Tehillim and this special *tefillah*:

א-לֵקֵינוּ וְא-לֵקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, הָאֵר פָּנֶיךָ עַל הַמְשָׁפּוֹחַת הַשְּׁפוּלוֹת: הוֹרִים וְאַלְמָנוֹת, יְתוּמִים, אֲחִים וְאַחֵיות, תוּ בָהֶם כַּח לְהוֹסִיף וְלְחַיֵּת, חַיִּים שֶׁל מִשְׁמְעוֹת, חַיִּים שֶׁל עֲשִׂיָה, חַיִּים שֶׁל טוֹבָה וּבִרְכָה. הָאֵר יְמֵיהֶם בְּטוֹב וּשְׁנוֹתֵיהֶם בְּנְעִימִים. שְׁלַח לָהֶם תְּקוּנָה, נְחָמָה וְשִׂמְחָה. הַשְׁפַּע עֲלֵיהֶם מִטוֹבָךָ כַּח לְרֵאוֹת בְּטוֹב הַרְבֵּ שִׁישׁ. שְׁתַּהֲיֵה לָנוּ הַרְגִישוֹת הַנִּכְוָנָה הַתְּבוּנָה וְחֲכָמָה אִיךָ לְהִיּוֹת לָהֶם לְסַעַד וְעִזְרָה. שְׁבַדְע מִתִּי לְדַבֵּר וּמִתִּי לְחַשׁוֹת, שֶׁנִּמְצָא אֶת הַמִּילִים הַמִּתְאַיְמוֹת לְחֻזֵק וְלֹא לְהַחֲלִישׁ, לְהוֹרִים וְלֹא לְהַפִּיל, לְתַמָּךְ וְלְהִיּוֹת שֶׁם בְּשִׁבְלִים בְּכָל עֵת. וְה' יִסֵּף עֲלֵיכֶם כֶּסֶם אֶלְף פְּעֻמִּים, וְיִבְרַךְ אֶתְכֶם כְּאִשׁוֹר דָּבָר לְכֶם, וְנֹאמֵר אָמוּן.

Seventh Hakafa

To strengthen the spirit and unity of Am Yisrael, and for the speedy return of those displaced from their homes

Include Chapter 122 of Tehillim and this *tefillah* of the Chida:

הַרְיִנִי מִקְּבֵל עֲלֵי מַצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה שֶׁל וְאַהֲבַת לְרַעַף כְּמוֹךָ, וְהַרְיִנִי אוֹהֵב כֹּל אֶחָד מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּנַפְשִׁי וּמְאֹדֵי וְיֵהִי רִצּוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' א-לֵקֵינוּ וְא-לֵקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתְּתַמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵינוּ, וְתִשַׁע אֶהְבָּה וְאַחֲוָה שְׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת בֵּינֵנוּ וּבֵין כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִהְיֵה לְאֶחָדִים כְּשֶׁם שֶׁבְּהֵרָה סִינֵי הָיָה שְׁלוֹם בֵּינֵנוּ, כְּדֹכְתֵיב וְיִחוּן שֶׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגַד הָהָר, כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּאַחְדוֹת גְּמוּרָה. כֹּן בְּרַחֲמֵיךָ הַרְבִּים תִּזְכְּנוּ לְהַעֲבִיר מִמֵּנוּ שְׁנֵאָה וְקִנְיָה וְתַחְרוּת, וְנִהְיֵה אוֹהֲבִים זֶה לְזֶה, וְתִשָּׂים שְׁלוֹם בֵּינֵנוּ. וְיִקְיָם בְּנוֹ מִהֵרָה הַכְּתוּב: ה' עִז לְעַמּוֹ יִתּוֹן ה' יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְשָׁלוֹם.

Chag Sukkot: What We Learn From Displacement

Rabbi Reuven Taragin

Our people have suffered greatly this past year. Many Jews were murdered, thousands wounded, and over one hundred remain in captivity. Over 100,000 Israelis were displaced from their homes, and tens of thousands remain displaced a year later.

Throughout this year, we have worked to empathize with those in pain. Sukkot reminds us of those living in temporary conditions, as we are commanded to do the same. The *mitzvah* of *sukkah* requires more than just eating meals in the *sukkah*; it involves moving our lives and most cherished items from home to *sukkah*. The *Mishnah* teaches us that “for all seven days, we make the *sukkah* our *dirat keva* (permanent dwelling)” (*Sukkah* 28b). Though the *sukkah* serves as our *dirat keva*, it must be constructed as a *dirat arai* (temporary dwelling). A *sukkah* cannot be taller than twenty *amot* - “For seven days, we need to leave the *dirat keva* and sit in a *dirat arai*.” Sitting in the *sukkah*, we should feel like we are in a temporary structure.

Why must the *sukkah* be a *dirat arai*? If it is our *dirat keva* for the *chag*, why not erect a bonafide *dirat keva*? Moreover, considering Sukkot is *zman simchateinu* (the time of our happiness), wouldn't we be happier in a sturdy *sukkah*? How do we find joy in a temporary structure?

The Chida explains that the temporary *sukkah* models our life in this world. It reminds us that our existence in this world and its pleasures are temporary, ephemeral, and insignificant (*Simchat HaRegel*, Sukkot). We must remember that this world is merely the “corridor to the palace” (*Avot* 4:16), the gateway to the next world. This world and its pleasures are not the ultimate end goal.

Though we know that the next world is the ultimate one, we often become overly focused on this world and its pleasures. This focus can be even more intense at

the end of a successful harvest season, when our homes are full of the fruits of our labor.

The *sukkah* reminds us that life in this world is temporary, influencing how we live year-round. We should recognize that our stay here is brief, and not be concerned with building luxurious homes. This is how the Chofetz Chaim explained why his home and furnishings were so basic. He likened himself to a traveler staying in a simple hotel room – just as a traveler doesn't need extravagance, neither do we, as we are only passing through on our way to the next world.

A *dirat arai* is not only temporary but also less sturdy than a *dirat keva*. Sitting in such a *sukkah* reminds us of our vulnerability and reliance on Hashem's protection.

Agricultural success can lead farmers to attribute their achievements solely to their efforts, forgetting their need for Hashem's support (*Rashbam*, *Vayikra* 23:39). Similarly, life in a *dirat keva* can create a false sense of security, as we may believe our steel and concrete walls protect us. The children's story of the three little pigs teaches that safety relies on solid walls, but events like September 11 and October 7 remind us that even the strongest structures can fail.

We sit in the *sukkah* to commemorate the Divine protection during our time in the desert. A *dirat arai* reminds us that true safety comes not from the strength of our walls, but from Hashem, Who fortifies them and us. It is Hashem, not the materials of our homes, Who truly protects us. By leaving our sturdy homes for a *dirat arai*, we demonstrate our faith in Hashem rather than in our perceived security.

The *Sefat Emet* explains that this recognition is also the basis of our joy on Sukkot. He asserts that “there is no happiness like the happiness of the one who truly relies on Hashem” (*Sukkot* 5645). A person who

relies on wealth and stone walls knows he is unsafe. In contrast, one who trusts in Hashem is happy because he has good reason to feel secure and confident about his future.

Rav S.R. Hirsch explains that recognizing Hashem's support brings a deeper joy. We celebrate not just our security but also our relationship with Him, which is the essence of true *simcha*.

As we pray for the swift return of those displaced, let us also internalize the lessons of displacement, which is meant to remind us of life's transience and our vulnerability and reinforce our belief in the One who offers protection in our turbulent world. May our efforts lead to Hashem's swift restoration of the fallen *sukkah* of David.



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



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Remembering our Bounty and Beginnings

From Arvot Yericho to the Etrog

Rabbanit Shani Taragin

The *mitzvot* of sitting in a *sukkah* and shaking the *arba'a minim* are intertwined to simultaneously express our agricultural and historical dependence on and gratitude for Hashem's supervision. *Sukkot* remind us of our divinely protected journey in the wilderness and are also the practical means of dwelling in the fields during harvest season. The *Ba'al HaRokeach* teaches that these huts are also reminiscent of the military huts we camped in during our years of conquest in *Eretz Yisrael*, reminding us of the final stage of our journey as we fought for the Land. At the same time, Rashbam explains that the *sukkot* remind us of our nomadic years bereft of a Land. At a time of agricultural bounty, they prevent us from feeling arrogant, recalling our homeless past and helping us appreciate our homeland anew.

A similar synthesis of agricultural and historical expression through the *sukkah* is found during the time of *Shivat Zion* in *Sefer Nechemia* (8:15-17). As the nation gathered on the second day of Rosh Hashanah to hear the words of the Torah and the laws of *Sukkot*, they were told to collect branches of olive, wood, myrtle (*hadass*), palm (*lulav*), and willows (*arava*) to build their *sukkot* - ones that resemble the *sukkot* of the time of Yehoshua ben Nun! Prof. Yehuda Feliks understands the comparison as a botanical-historical phenomenon. Due to intense agriculture and population density during the time of the First Temple, there was a shortage of wood for building *sukkot*. "A drastic change overtook the countryside after the exile of the ten tribes and the destruction of the First Temple... plantations began to yield to the encroachment of forest trees and bushes... Indeed, not since the days of Joshua the son of Nun had the country enjoyed such an ample supply of building timber for the construction of the booths in fulfillment of the biblical injunction" (Yehuda Feliks, *Nature & Man in the Bible*). The *sukkot* remind

us of the eras of entering and re-entering our Land!

The *mitzvah* of taking the four species also expresses agricultural and historical processes. Each species represents a topographical area of flora in *Eretz Yisrael* (*lulav* - valleys, *etrog* - irrigated fields, *hadass* - mountains, *aravot* - river banks) and each symbolizes a different stage of tree growth (*lulav* - bark, *hadass* - branches, *aravot* - leaves, *etrog* - fruit). Rambam, however, explains that the happiness associated with bringing these species is a historical reminder of leaving the barren wilderness bereft of water resources and fruit trees for the blossoming abundance in the Land of Israel!

At the same time of year wherein we harvest the last of our fruits and bring the last of our *bikkurim* from the seven fruit species of Israel accompanied by our historical proclamation of "*Arami oved avi*," we also celebrate with the four species of *Sukkot*. A remarkable parallel can be drawn between the "*Mikra Bikkurim*" speech recounting our national past and journey to the Land and the symbolic "speech" of the four species. The *lulav* represents our first stage in the wilderness when we dwelled in palm-covered huts for shelter. *Aravot* remind us of the Jordan River crossing ("*Arvot Yericho*"), abundant with willows along the border to Israel. *Hadassim* are reminiscent of the wild flora during the time of Yehoshua ben Nun. And the *etrog*? Just like the fruits accompanying the recital of *Mikra Bikkurim*, the *etrog* is the culmination of our historical process - the expression of our G-d-granted fruit harvest (Nogah HaReuveni, *Nature in our Biblical Heritage*)!

One of the explanations for circling the *mizbei'ach/bima* each day of *Sukkot* with our species is to remember the miraculous victory after circling the walls of Yericho. Rav Yaakov Ettlinger explains that this is in fact the basis of our happiness, expressed on *Sukkot* through a complete *Hallel*. Although we are grateful on Pesach

and Shavuot as we recount the miracles of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* and *Har Sinai*, the primary praise we offer Hashem is for the miracles performed in Israel, beginning with the victory of Yericho (*Aruch LaNer, Sukkah* 45b)!

This year, we will sit in our *sukkot* with empty chairs still awaiting return of hostages, crying for all those who were with us last year but are now sitting in the celestial *sukkah* above. We will relive our beginnings as we once again fight and pray for our Land. We will circle our *bimot* with the *arba'a minim* followed by dancing around them with *sifrei Torah* commemorating those who will not dance again. But we will also revisit our miraculous conquest of Yericho and the modern miracles of salvation in Israel. We will once again dance as we break down the walls of separation, removing the barriers between religious, social, and political factions, replacing our fissiparous communities with *sukkot shel shalom*. This *Sukkot*, let us celebrate our opportunity to revisit our national-historical beginnings, with reflection, introspection and gratitude for the past and present, and *tefillah* for sweet October rains and future fruits of salvation and redemption.



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The Definition of Simcha

Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Rav Soloveitchik suggested that we can derive a *halachic* definition of *simcha* from a discussion in the Gemara,¹ which questions how a *metzora* must conduct himself on Yom Tov with regard to the restrictions imposed upon him by his *tzara'at*.

Is he forbidden to enter the Israelite encampment, cut his hair, launder his clothes, and greet other people over the course of Yom Tov? Or are the restrictions placed upon the *metzora* superseded by the *mitzvah* of *simcha* that exists on Yom Tov?

The Gemara² derives from a seemingly superfluous word, “וְהָצִיטָהּ, And the person with *tzara'at*,” that even a *Kohen Gadol* is included in the restrictions of *tzara'at*.

The Gemara then presents an analogy: “The *Kohen Gadol*'s status during the entire year corresponds to the status of all other people on Yom Tov [with regard to mourning].” Therefore, a *metzora* **must** conduct himself on Yom Tov according to the restrictions imposed upon him by his *tzara'at*, just as a *Kohen Gadol* with *tzara'at* must act in accordance with those restrictions all year round.

The Rav analyzed the Gemara's analogy in light of how the Rambam describes the *Kohen Gadol*'s essential function. The Rambam writes, “It is the glory and honor [of the *Kohen Gadol*] to remain in the *Mikdash* all day.”³

Thus, the *Kohen Gadol*'s role is to serve as a constant presence in the *Beit HaMikdash*, overseeing the *avodah*. Since, according to the Gemara, every Jew on Yom Tov is compared to the *Kohen Gadol*, we see that the definition of *simcha* on Yom Tov is the state of being in the presence of G-d.

This state, enjoyed by the *Kohen Gadol* the entire year and by all other people on Yom Tov, is described in the *pasuk*, “וַשְׂמַחְתֶּם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בְּפָנֵי ה', And you shall rejoice before Hashem, your G-d, for a seven-day period [on Sukkot].”⁴ Indeed, whenever the Torah speaks of *simcha*, it connects this emotion with one's appearing before G-d.

On the *shalosh regalim*, when one is *oleh regel*, he finds himself *lifnei Hashem*.⁵

The Rav distinguishes between the *Beit HaMikdash* and a *Beit HaKnesset* to help illustrate the difference between Shabbat and Yom Tov with regard to the *mitzvah* of *simcha*:

A *Beit HaKnesset* is **our** house, to which G-d comes to visit. In contrast, the *Beit HaMikdash* is termed *Beit Hashem*, where we come to visit with Him. In both locations, Man has a ‘rendezvous’ with G-d; the difference between the two locations is whether Man is the visitor or the one being visited.

A similar distinction separates Shabbat from Yom Tov. The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that while one may not wear weekday clothing on either Shabbat or Yom Tov, clothing of Yom Tov should be superior to Shabbat clothing.⁶ The Rav explained that this is because there is an obligation of *simcha* on Yom Tov, as we appear *lifnei Hashem* in the *Beit HaMikdash* to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *aliyah laRegel*. On Yom Tov, the Jew enters into the domain of G-d, Who welcomes him into His home. When visiting the King in **His** royal palace, a most splendid manner of dress is mandated.

The contrast between Shabbat and Yom Tov is most apparent when each of these days comes into conflict with the concept of *aveilut* (mourning). On Shabbat, unlike on Yom Tov, *aveilut* is observed privately; Shabbat is included in the seven days of *shiva*. Similarly, Shabbat does not cancel *shiva* or *shloshim* the way Yom Tov does. *Tosafot* teaches that it is the element of *simcha* on Yom Tov that cancels *aveilut*, and this *mitzvah* is absent on Shabbat.

The Gemara in Chagigah teaches, “אֵין עֲצָבוּת לִפְנֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ” There is no sadness in the presence of the Holy One, Blessed be He.”

The Gemara's source is the *pasuk*, “הוֹדוּ וְהִדְרֹהוּ בְּמִקְוֵמוֹ לִפְנֵי עַז וְהִדְרֹהוּ בְּמִקְוֵמוֹ, Glory and majesty are before Him; might and delight are in His place.”⁷ There is always happiness and rejoicing before G-d, and so there can be

no *aveilut* on Yom Tov. *Simcha* and *aveilut* are mutually exclusive, since being *lifnei Hashem*, in **His** house, is a contradiction to a state of *aveilut*.

On Shabbat, Man does not stand *lifnei Hashem*. For the duration of Shabbat, G-d dwells with Man in **his** abode; He joins him in his pain.⁸

May we merit to stand with *simcha* before G-d in the *Beit HaMikdash*, speedily and in our days.

1. *Mo'ed Kattan* 14b.

2. *Vayikra* 13:45.

3. *Hilchot Klei HaMikdash* 5:7.

4. *Vayikra* 23:40.

5. See *Nefesh HaRav*, 1994 ed., pp. 314–315.

6. *Orach Chaim* 529:1.

7. *Divrei HaYamim I* 16:27.

8. See *Nefesh HaRav*, 1994 ed., p. 157; *Shiurim LeZecher Abba Mari z"l I*, 1983 ed., pp. 64–68, and II, pp. 188–196.



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OLIM IN THEIR OWN WORDS



"My husband and I first met in 1999 on a year-long volunteering program – that experience really planted the seed for our Aliyah. We had the opportunity to live all over the country. By the end of that year, I was hooked. The connection I felt to the land and people made it clear that I wanted to live in Israel. We made Aliyah from Los Angeles in 2010 after having our first three children.

Today, we live in Modi'in, a city that we love for its balance between big-city amenities and the peacefulness of a suburb.

It's a wonderful place to raise children, and our community is welcoming and diverse. We love our shul and feel lucky to have built such strong friendships here.

Before making Aliyah, I had been working as a marketing director for non-profits, but during the early days of COVID, I realized how vulnerable the elderly were to the virus. That's when I decided to shift my focus and dedicate myself to preserving people's life stories. This led to the

creation of "Capture Your Story" (www.captureyourstory.org), which has grown into a team of five writers and a graphic designer—all fellow Olim! Together, we create Life Story books for individuals and couples around the world. It's become more than just a career for me; it feels like a calling. Every day, I get to hear people's stories and help ensure their memories live on for generations.

Life in LA was comfortable and easy, but it lacked the deeper meaning we've found here. Though this past year has been incredibly challenging, I'm still grateful that we made the decision to move our family here. Our children have been able to grow up as active participants in Jewish history, rather than spectators. Even without immediate family nearby, we've never felt alone.

Since 10.7, "Kol Yisrael Arevim Ze La Ze" has taken on new meaning for me. Watching how regular people stepped up to help during the war has been nothing short of inspiring. Israel is a messy work-in-progress, but it's ours. I'm proud to be a part of this ongoing Jewish project, and I believe that living here means experiencing life in its fullest and most vibrant form."

Ilana Sinclair

So many people have asked me, 'Why did you move to Israel?'

To me, the answer is obvious. It's like asking someone why they go home at the end of a long day. This is home, and it's where we all belong. Growing up in a very proud NYC Jewish home, I always knew this to be true, but I didn't really see myself moving here any time soon. I thought of it as something I'd do later in life when 'I'd be more ready.' Then, October 7th happened, and so much of that shifted for me. My eyes were quickly opened to the reality of the world, and I realized that waiting to be ready was simply an excuse for not being where I truly belong.

So, the obvious next step was beginning the NBN Aliyah application.

I moved to the heart of Jerusalem with my three big, beautiful dogs from a small, quiet, suburban area in NYC. This is a massive shift, and my dogs seem to have settled in quicker and easier than I have. Moving anywhere can be stressful, but moving across the globe with three big dogs to a brand-new, busy city can definitely be stressful. (If anyone is making Aliyah with dogs, it would be my pleasure to help). One of the coolest things in the world to me is waking up every day knowing I'm in Jerusalem, a city we've prayed for thousands of years to return to. Every time I walk my dogs, wander this beautiful city, and look at the gorgeous sky, I'm reminded that I am living out the dreams of my ancestors simply by existing here.

It's now one month since I stepped off the plane at Ben Gurion and reunited with my parents and some of my siblings, who had already made Aliyah. I can't help but

be total in awe and inspired by the strength and resilience of this great nation. While we are currently at war, hostages are still not home, and many lives are still completely upended, there's a deep sense of people celebrating life as much as possible. I walk around and watch strangers dance in the streets, couples hand in hand, soldiers smiling with their children, and I realize that this is the true superpower of our people.

Even in the darkest and most challenging times, we find moments of joy to celebrate. We come together to mourn, but also to pray, dance, sing, and celebrate the beautiful sanctity of life. No nation with such a deep focus on celebrating, protecting, and living life can ever be defeated.

Now, I can finally call Israel my home, and it feels so good every time I say those words. I hope and pray that we continue to see more and more family come home. This is our land, and like a native plant in its native environment, Jews thrive in their Homeland better than anywhere else in the world.

Come home, fam. ❤️

Nachum Russel



READING KOHELET IN WARTIME

DR. ERICA BROWN

This Sukkot we will read *Kohelet* differently, especially this verse: “A time for loving and a time for hating; a time for war and a time for peace” (Kohelet 3:8). The biblical book that takes us to the dark heart of existential despair also invites us into a range of emotions and occasions in its third chapter. After October 7, we will read the time poem and focus on the challenge and promise of these brief, sharp observations in wartime. When will a time for hate and a time for war turn into a time for love and a time for peace?

Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra explains verse 3:8 simply: “Both love and hate are dependent on time and season” – without telling us the time or the season when these strong and opposing emotions are justified. One *Midrash* suggests that we love in a time of peace and hate in a time of war (*Kohelet Rabbah* 3:8). Feelings arise as natural outgrowths of the conditions that surround us. We love when we are loved. We hate when we are hated.

But life is never that simple. Human agency enables us to separate ourselves from our environments and interrogate the validity of our emotions, especially when they are complex and unsettling. Nothing in the time poem accounts for how quickly our emotions can change in times of war. We wake up to a smiling photo of a dead soldier and the news of rocket fire and are then thrown into the whiplash of pride and unity when a hostage is rescued. All of this might happen within hours.

In the same *Midrash* above, Rabbi Yehoshua of Sikhnin created word pictures from other biblical verses to illustrate each time phrase with a biblical proof text. “In this wilderness they will expire, and

there they will die” (Bamidbar 14:35) is an example of a time to die. There is no shortage of verses on death throughout Tanach, but Rabbi Yehoshua turned to a book where tens of thousands die. There is not one recorded birth. The wilderness – “a parched and thirsty land that has no water” (Tehillim 63:2) – is a landscape that often swallowed its travelers.

The time phrases that raise raw, unchecked emotions inspired Rabbi Yehoshua to cite two tragic verses from Eicha. “A time to kill” refers to G-d’s destruction of Zion: “He killed all who delighted the eye” (Eicha 2:4), and a time to cry takes us to the female imagery of a desolate Zion: “She will weep at night” (Eicha 1:2). He connects a time of mourning to “The L-rd G-d of hosts declared that day for weeping and lamentation” (Yeshayahu 22:12).

There will also be joyous times. The psalmist describes moments of happiness: “Then our mouths will be filled with laughter” (Tehillim 126:2). When we read a time to dance, Rabbi Yehoshua takes us to better days in Jerusalem: “The squares of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing” (Zechariah 8:5). He takes us into a garden in the *Shir HaShirim* for a time to embrace and the book of Malachi for a time for love. A time for peace is described by the prophet Yeshayahu’s rushing current of abundance: “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river” (Yeshayahu 66:12).

In one *Midrash* we seem to travel much of Tanach, reminding ourselves, as *Kohelet* does, that just as we cycle through times of anguish and depression will the pendulum swing back to a baseline of love and affection, societal cohesion, and possibility. By placing two opposing feelings

side-by-side, *Kohelet* also admits the possibility of negative emotions living in close proximity to positive ones, like next door neighbors that come and go. Invite every emotion in, and we will become more authentic, vulnerable and whole as a result. Only this will allow us to heal.

“If I were to sum up what faith asks us to be,” Rabbi Jonathan Sacks writes in *To Heal a Fractured World*, “I would say: a healing presence.” As we listen to the recitation of *Kohelet* this Sukkot, let us pause, exhale and create our own word pictures that match the emotions of this past year and pause as we read the words “a time to heal.” We turn one final time to our wise friend Rabbi Yehoshua who invites G-d to heal us: “Behold, I am bringing it a remedy and cure” (Yirmiyahu 33:6). And may it be so.



Dr. Erica Brown

is the Vice Provost for Values and Leadership at Yeshiva University and the founding director of its Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks/Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership. She has written or co-authored 15 books on the Hebrew Bible, spirituality, and leadership and has been published in many popular newspapers and journals. Her latest book is *Kohelet and the Search for Meaning* (Maggid, 2023). She currently serves as a community scholar for Congregation Etz Chaim in Livingston, New Jersey.



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The Place to Be

Rabbi Berel Wein

Living here in Israel allows one to gain a deeper appreciation of the holidays of the Jewish calendar. In their deepest sense, they were all meant to be observed here in Israel. Perhaps that is what our rabbis intended when they cryptically said that the observance of the *mitzvot* that the Jewish people have fulfilled and continue to practice in the Diaspora is really a training exercise for their true adherence when they return to the Land of Israel.

This observation is certainly true regarding the Jewish holidays and particularly regarding Sukkot. Perhaps no other holiday so symbolizes the Jewish people's attachment to the Land of Israel. It is a combination of the weather at this time of the year and the beauty and abundance of the agricultural products used for the observance of the holiday. This bounty fills our holiday tables and the Yom Tov menu reflects a spirit of rejuvenation that the population feels after the hot summer and the days of judgment.

In Israel, leaving one's home to dwell in the outside booths that dot the landscape is seen as a sign of the redemption of the Jewish soul, reflected in our attachment to our ancient homeland and the L-rd's gifts to the Jewish people.

The Jewish people are the most cosmopolitan group of human beings the world has ever seen. There is almost no country or area of the world where the Jewish people have not been present or visited. We have been everywhere on this globe and yet despite repeated efforts to make

ourselves feel at home wherever we are, there is a gnawing feeling of restlessness that underlies the mansions and seeming security we have built for ourselves wherever we have dwelled.

From my own personal experience, I can attest that even though I was well settled in my previous places of residence in the United States – and I am eternally grateful to that great country for allowing the Jews freedom and opportunities never granted to them before in our long history of the exile – I never truly felt at home until I was able to settle here in Jerusalem and in the Land of Israel.

I do not mean this to be a rah-rah appeal for immigration to the Jewish State. But I do feel that only here in Israel can a Jew live a truly Jewish life in its every facet of meaning. And to me, Sukkot is the ultimate proof of this statement.

Many Jews arrive here to spend the holiday and I notice that the common thread of conversation and feeling regarding this holiday is the attachment it engenders within them and the feeling of being at home.

It is somewhat ironic that this feeling of being at home is inspired by a holiday that bids us to leave our homes and live a temporary existence without our usual comforts and conveniences. But that is the great message this holiday teaches us. Our comfort zone and feeling of security is not dependent upon our physical dwellings or where we live in the world.

Many a mansion and palace are filled with heartbreak, disappointment, strife and dysfunction. If one does not feel happy and secure on the inside, the outside will never provide him or her with that feeling of happiness and security. The rabbis always felt that a shack in Jerusalem was worthier and more protective than a great palace elsewhere.

It is this feeling that has driven millions of Jews to gather here from the four corners of the world to build a renewed and vital Jewish state. Not all of us came here willingly or voluntarily. Almost all of us have the right and ability to leave if we wish. Nevertheless, the level of satisfaction of life and of our existence here in Israel is one of the highest in the world, much higher than the level of happiness exhibited in other seemingly more prosperous and less dangerous places on the globe. That is the triumph of the message of Sukkot.



Rabbi Berel Wein

lives and teaches in Jerusalem, and for decades has been a world famous teacher of Jewish History.

For a full interview with Rabbi Wein, please see pages 44-47.

Save Me Please, for Your Sake

Rabbanit Sharon Rimon

To commemorate the *mitzvah* of *aravot* from the *Beit HaMikdash* era, we circle the *bima* with *lulavim* daily during Sukkot, reciting *hoshanot* prayers. On *Hoshanah Rabbah*, we circle seven times. Let's explore the meaning of these *hoshanot* prayers:

First paragraph: This paragraph contains various names for G-d and His manifestations in the world, and in it we ask that G-d save us for His sake: "Save me, please, for Your sake..."

Second paragraph: This paragraph includes different names for Jerusalem and the Temple, and the request is for G-d to save Jerusalem and the Temple: "Foundation stone, chosen house... holy of holies... please save!"

Third paragraph: Various names appear for the people of Israel, and the request is for the salvation of the people of Israel: "The nation... holy sheep, congregations of Jacob, marked with Your name – roars, 'Please save!'"

Fourth paragraph: This paragraph refers to G-d with different names, asking Him to save us: "The Master who brings salvation – without You there is no salvation, mighty One and great in saving... Bring salvation to Your blameless ones."

Fifth paragraph: A request for salvation for all creatures of the world: "Man and beast... establishing flowers, raining on vegetation..."

Sixth paragraph: A request for salvation and the prevention of disasters and troubles: "The ground from malediction, beasts from miscarriage, the threshing floor from locusts... harvest from curse, plentitude from gauntness, stalks from parchedness – please save!"

Seventh paragraph: A request for salvation in the merit of the fathers of the nation: "For the sake of the great one thrown into the heart of the fire, for the sake of the son bound upon woods and fire..."

The sentence repeated every day at the beginning of the *hoshanah* is: "Please save! For Your sake, our G-d, please save; For Your sake, our Creator, please save..."

The request for salvation for the sake of G-d's name and not for our own sake and our own good is also repeated in the prayer of *Avinu Malkeinu* – at the beginning and at the end: "Our Father, our King, do it for Your name's sake. Our Father, our King, do it for Your sake if not for ours..."

What is the meaning of asking G-d for His sake, for His name's sake, for His mercy? This idea comes from the words of the prophets. In several prophecies, it is said that G-d will save the children of Israel, not because they deserve it, and not for their sake, but for His sake or for His name's sake: "And I will defend this city to save it for My sake and for the sake of David My servant" (Melachim II

19:34). "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins" (Yeshayahu 43:25). Sometimes *Am Yisrael* also asks G-d to forgive them and save them "for His name's sake" even though they are unworthy, such as: "For Your name's sake, O L-rd, pardon my iniquity, for it is great" (Tehillim 25:11).

These paragraphs express the gap between us and G-d. G-d is good and full of grace, which sometimes we don't deserve. And yet we ask: "Our Father, our King, have mercy and answer us, for we have no worthy deeds; treat us with charity and kindness and save us." The understanding that we are not worthy, and that G-d is good to us in spite of this, directs us to correct ourselves before G-d: not to believe that we "deserve" but to understand that G-d is very gracious because this is His essence, even when "we have no worthy deeds." This is humility before G-d's greatness, an attitude that doesn't take the good for granted, but recognizes the grace of G-d, the need to be thankful, and to try to be worthy of His blessing.

When human depravity is great and causes G-d's grace to be withheld, we ask G-d to act for His name's sake. Yechezkel describes how harming the people of Israel causes blasphemy, and therefore G-d sometimes saves Israel "for His name's sake" – to prevent blasphemy in the eyes of the gentiles, even though they are not worthy of salvation.

These have another significant dimension – that all our prayers should be for the sake of Heaven, not for our own. Just as Chana prayed to have a child not for herself but to dedicate him to G-d's service, so should we direct our prayers to Heaven: so that we can do good, worship G-d and increase G-d's glory in the world.

G-d, the source of all goodness, seeks to benefit His creation. By praying "*aseh l'ma'ancha*" or "*hoshe'a na l'ma'ancha*", we invite a partnership with G-d. This collaboration aims to bring more Divine goodness into the world, connecting humanity with G-d's blessings and fulfilling His desire to benefit all creation.



Rabbanit Sharon Rimon
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Prisoners of Hope: Zechariah's Prophecy of October 7

Rabbi Elie Mischel

When seeking signs of current events in Tanach, it's important to do so with care and humility. In particular, commentators have struggled to understand the many cryptic visions of the Book of Zechariah. "The prophecy of Zechariah is extremely enigmatic, because it contains visions resembling a dream that requires an interpretation. We cannot ascertain the truth of its interpretation until the teacher of righteousness comes" (Rashi, Zechariah 1:1).

Nevertheless, Tanach is not a book of history, but an eternal book that speaks to every generation. Despite the dangers, we must seek to understand our tumultuous times through the lens of the Torah. Zechariah's prophecies were meant for our generation, and specifically for this painful time. The prophecies that baffled our forefathers are today's front-page news. A close study of the 9th chapter of Zechariah strongly suggests that this war was prophesied by Zechariah. His words are chilling – but also contain a profound message of hope.

Chapter 9 of Zechariah begins with a murky reference to the land of "Chadrach" (Zechariah 9:1). But where is this mysterious land? The sages explain that "Chadrach" is not a country, but rather hints to the time period addressed in this chapter – the era of redemption. "Chadrach" can be broken into two separate words: "Chad, sharp," and "rach, soft." "This refers to the *Mashiach*, who is sharp against the nations and soft to Israel" (Rashi, Zechariah 9:1). When the *Mashiach* arrives, he will inaugurate an era that will be very "sharp" and painful for Israel's enemies, but "soft" and joyous for Israel. This is the era of turmoil and redemption that will unfold in the generations preceding the *Mashiach's* arrival – the era we are living through today.

Zechariah then speaks of an enemy in the north: "And Tyre built a fortification for herself, and she gathered silver like dust and gold, like the mire of the streets. Behold, G-d shall impoverish her, and He shall smite her wealth in the sea, and she shall be consumed by fire" (Zechariah 9:3–4). Ancient Tyre was located on the southern coast of Lebanon, 83 kilometers south of Beirut – precisely where the terror group Hezbollah is currently fortified. Receiving billions of dollars in funding from Iran, Hezbollah has "gathered silver like dust and gold like the mire of the streets," money it used to stockpile 150,000 deadly rockets it is currently using against Israel. But despite their great power, Hezbollah is destined to be destroyed.

"Ashkelon shall see and fear, and Gaza – and she shall quake violently... And a king was lost from Gaza... and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines" (Zechariah 9:5–6). The "Palestinians" of today do not descend from, and bear no relation to, the ancient Philistines who dwelled along Israel's coast in Biblical times. Nevertheless, it is no accident that today's Gazan Arabs have taken on the name "Palestinian," for they share something in common with the Philistines of old. Beginning with the era of Shimshon, the Philistines were consistently the most dangerous foe of the people of Israel, causing us great suffering and denying our sovereignty in our own land. When Zechariah tells us that G-d will "cut off the pride of the Philistines," he can only be referring to the "Palestinians" of our time, the spiritual descendants of the ancient Philistines, for the ancient Philistines no longer exist.

"With the blood of your covenant I have freed your prisoners from a pit in which there was no water" (Zechariah 9:11). When I read this verse after October 7, my heart stopped. As I write, Hamas is still holding over 100 hostages in pit-like tunnels. "I have freed your prisoners from

a pit..." Please, G-d, may these words come true today; bring our hostages home!

G-d has promised that we will defeat our enemies, both in the north and south. But how will we, a small and diplomatically isolated nation surrounded by enemies, succeed against all odds? The answer is found in this chapter's most powerful verse: "Return to the stronghold, you *prisoners of hope*" (Zechariah 9:12).

We are not a normal nation. Other nations facing enemies like ours would have disappeared long ago. But we are the nation of renewal, a people who rise up from every defeat stronger than we were before. We are a people constitutionally unable to throw in the towel. From our birth as a nation amidst the hell of Egypt, we were destined to forever be "prisoners of hope" – for we *always* find a path to salvation.

"Be exceedingly happy, O daughter of Zion; Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold! Your king shall come to you... and the bow of war shall be cut off. And he shall speak peace to the nations, and his rule shall be from the sea to the west and from the river to the ends of the earth" (Zechariah 9:9–10). Take strength; better days are coming.



Rabbi Elie Mischel

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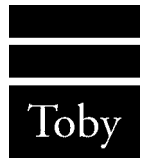
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Why isn't Simchat Torah celebrated on Shavuot?

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Why don't we celebrate Simchat Torah on Shavuot, on the day of giving the Torah and the Ten Commandments? A simple answer is that we wait for Simchat Torah for that is when we finish reading the Torah. However, this answer is difficult, as the Jewish people could have arranged the portions differently to finish the Torah on Shavuot.

On Shavuot, we received the Torah, but immediately afterward came the sin of the golden calf. The second tablets were given on Yom Kippur, but it's not appropriate to celebrate Simchat Torah on that day. Then comes Sukkot, which ends with a free day without specific commandments, making it suitable for Simchat Torah. Moreover, the end of Sukkot marks the end of the Days of Judgment, making it an appropriate time for rejoicing.

But if so, it seems that nothing remains for Shavuot, when the receiving of the Torah wasn't fully realized. However, it's difficult to say this, as Shavuot's special character is as the holiday of giving the Torah - we read the Ten Commandments, and we call it "the time of the giving of our Torah" in prayer. Also, the Sages speak about how on Shavuot, everyone agrees that we need to fulfill the principle of "lachem, for you," through physical enjoyment of the day because it's the day the Torah was given. Clearly, receiving the Torah on this day has significance.

The Mishnah says: "On the day of his wedding' - this refers to the giving of the Torah; 'on the day of his heart's gladness' - this refers to the building of the Temple" (Ta'anit 4:8). Rashi surprises us by explaining that "the giving of the Torah" refers to Yom Kippur. We would normally think this refers to Shavuot, but that's not how Rashi interpreted it.

Another interesting point is that the Mishnah compares receiving the Torah to a wedding. It seems that Shavuot is the betrothal (*kiddushin*), and Simchat Torah is

the marriage (*nissuin*). In the past, people would wait a year between the betrothal, accomplished by giving the ring, and the marriage, fulfilled through the *chuppah* and bringing the bride home. Today, these things are done in sequence, with a short break of a few minutes between the betrothal and the marriage.

Apparently, our religious experience is the opposite of a wedding. At a wedding, there's joy and dancing, and afterward, they build the home, which requires serious and meaningful building. It would seem that on Shavuot we should dance and rejoice, as it corresponds to the wedding, while on Simchat Torah, we should sit and study. However, it's the opposite. On Shavuot, we study all night, while on Simchat Torah - we dance and rejoice and hardly study!

At the giving of the Torah, the Jewish people reached an incredible peak, a revelation, an immense spiritual experience. How is it possible that immediately afterward they fell into the sin of the golden calf? It seems that the incredible experience didn't lead to practical realization. Moshe immediately went up the mountain, and the Jewish people didn't study Torah, nor were they busy fulfilling commandments. An experience is important, and certainly a divine revelation. However, if there's no practical realization, if there's no study, if there's no fulfillment of commandments, even the most incredible experience won't endure. Even the most incredible experience will end up in a calf!

On Shavuot, we try to correct what happened to our ancestors. We stay awake all night because the Jewish people didn't wake up in time for the giving of the Torah. We study all night to internalize the experience. The experience of giving the Torah returns every year. Every year there is a kind of revelation, a kind of receiving of the Torah that was at Sinai. However, we understand that despite such experiences being important and

meaningful (and in our generation, there's a great tendency towards experiences), they have no endurance without serious study, without accepting the yoke of commandments.

Shavuot challenges us to go beyond mere study and make concrete decisions about our spiritual growth. We must reflect on our learning methods and seek ways to infuse our study with greater meaning. How can we carve out dedicated time for Torah study in our daily lives? It's crucial that we honestly assess our current spiritual state.

By addressing these questions, we lay the groundwork for a more profound Simchat Torah experience. Our preparation should encompass deep study, sincere observance of *mitzvot*, and genuine spiritual introspection. This approach transforms Simchat Torah from a simple celebration into a pinnacle of joyous, experiential worship.

The dancing and festivities of Simchat Torah become truly significant when they spring from a wellspring of knowledge and devotion cultivated throughout the year. When our jubilation is rooted in sincere study and consistent practice, the experience transcends mere emotion, becoming a powerful, meaningful expression of our connection to the Torah and its teachings.



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THE NEW ANTISEMITISM

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS 5"צד

On January 27, 2000, heads of state or senior representatives of 44 governments met in Stockholm to commit themselves to a continuing program of Holocaust remembrance and the fight against antisemitism. Barely two years later, synagogues and Jewish schools in France and Belgium were being firebombed, and Jews were being attacked in the streets. The distinguished Chief Rabbi of France, Rabbi Joseph Sitruk, advised Jews not to wear yarmulkas in the street. Shmuel Trigano, professor of sociology at the University of Paris, openly questioned whether there was a future for Jews in France. Never again had become ever again.

The return of antisemitism, after sixty years of Holocaust education, interfaith dialogue and antiracist legislation is a major event in the history of the world. Already in the 1990s, Harvard literary scholar Ruth Wisse argued that antisemitism was the most successful ideology of the twentieth century. German fascism, she said, came and went. Soviet communism came and went. Antisemitism came and stayed.

Today's antisemitism is a new phenomenon, continuous with, yet significantly different from the past. In the past, Jews were hated because they were rich and because they were poor; because they were capitalists (Marx) and because they were communists (Hitler); because they kept to themselves and because they infiltrated everywhere; because they held tenaciously

to a superstitious faith (Voltaire) and because they were rootless cosmopolitans who believed nothing (Stalin).

Antisemitism is not an ideology, a coherent set of beliefs. It is, in fact, an endless stream of contradictions. The best way of understanding it is to see it as a virus. Viruses attack the human body, but the body itself has an immensely sophisticated defense, the human immune system. How then do viruses survive and flourish? By mutating. Antisemitism mutates, and in so doing, defeats the immune systems set up by cultures to protect themselves against hatred. There have been three such mutations in the past two thousand years, and we are living through the fourth.

The first took place with the birth of Christianity. Before then there had been many Hellenistic writers who were hostile to Jews. But they were also dismissive of other non-Hellenistic peoples. The Greeks called them barbarians. There was nothing personal in their attacks on Jews. This was not antisemitism. It was xenophobia.

This changed with Christianity. As was later to happen with Islam, the founders of the new faith, largely based on Judaism itself, believed that Jews would join the new dispensation and were scandalized when they did not. Jews were held guilty of not recognizing – worst still, of being complicit in the death of – the messiah. A strand of Judeophobia entered Christianity in some of its earliest texts, and became a fully-fledged genre in the days of the Church Fathers. From here on, Jews

– not non-Christians in general – became the target of what Jules Isaac called the 'teaching of contempt'.

The second mutation began in 1096 when the Crusaders, on their way to conquer Jerusalem, stopped to massacre Jewish communities in Worms, Speyer and Mainz, the first major European pogrom. In 1144 in Norwich there was the first Blood Libel, a myth that still exists today in parts of the Middle East. Religious Judeophobia became demonic. Jews were no longer just the people who rejected Christianity. They began to be seen as a malevolent force, killing children, desecrating the host, poisoning wells and spreading the plague. There were forced conversions, inquisitions, burnings at the stake, staged public disputations, book burnings and expulsions. Europe had become a 'persecuting society'.

We can date the third mutation to 1879 when the German journalist Wilhelm Marr coined a new word: antisemitism. The fact that he needed to do so tells us that this was a new phenomenon. It emerged in an age of Enlightenment, the secular nation state, liberalism and emancipation. Religious prejudice was deemed to be a thing of the past. The new hatred had therefore to justify itself on quite different grounds, namely race. This was a fateful development, because you can change your religion. You cannot change your race. Christians could work for the conversion of the Jews. Racists could only work for the extermination of the Jews. So

the Holocaust was born. Sixty years after the word came the deed.

Today we are living through the fourth mutation. Unlike its predecessors, the new antisemitism focuses not on Judaism as a religion, nor on Jews as a race, but on Jews as a nation. It consists of three propositions. First, alone of the 192 nations making up the United Nations, Jews are not entitled to a state of their own. As Amos Oz noted: in the 1930s, antisemites declared, 'Jews to Palestine'. Today they shout, 'Jews out of Palestine'. He said: they don't want us to be there; they don't want us to be here; they don't want us to be.

The second is that Jews or the State of Israel (the terms are often used interchangeably) are responsible for the evils of the world, from AIDS to global warming. All the old antisemitic myths have been recycled, from the Blood Libel to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, still a best-seller in many parts of the world. The third is that all Jews are Zionists and therefore legitimate objects of attack. The bomb attacks on synagogues in Istanbul and Djerba, the arson attacks on Jewish schools in Europe, and the almost fatal stabbing of a young yeshiva student on a bus in North London in October 2000, were on Jewish targets, not Israeli ones. The new antisemitism is an attack on Jews as a nation seeking to exist as a nation like every other on the face of the earth, with rights of self-governance and self-defense.

How did it penetrate the most sophisticated immune system ever constructed – the entire panoply of international measures designed to ensure that nothing like the Holocaust would ever happen again? The answer lies in the mode of self-justification. Most people at most times feel a residual guilt at hating the innocent. Therefore antisemitism has always had to find legitimation in the most prestigious source of authority at any given time.

In the first centuries of the Common Era, and again in the Middle Ages, this was religion. That is why Judeophobia took the form of religious doctrine. In the nineteenth century, religion had lost prestige, and the supreme authority was now science. Racial antisemitism was duly based on two pseudo-sciences, social Darwinism and the so-called scientific study of race. By the late twentieth century, science had lost its prestige, having given us the

power to destroy life on earth. Today the supreme source of legitimacy is human rights. That is why Jews (or the Jewish state) are accused of the five primal sins against human rights: racism, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, attempted genocide and crimes against humanity.

How then shall we respond? There are three key messages, the first to Jews, the second to antisemites, and the third to our fellow human beings. As Jews we must understand that we cannot fight antisemitism alone. The victim cannot cure the crime. The hated cannot cure the hate. Jews cannot defeat antisemitism. Only the cultures that give rise to it can do so.

European Jews in the nineteenth and early twentieth century made one of the most tragic mistakes in history. They said: Jews cause antisemitism, therefore they can cure it. They did everything possible. They said, 'People hate us because we are different. So we will stop being different.' They integrated, they assimilated, they married out, they hid their identity. This failed to diminish antisemitism by one iota. All it did was to debilitate and demoralize Jews.

The most important thing Jews can do to fight antisemitism is never, ever to internalize it. That is what is wrong in making the history of persecution the basis of Jewish identity. For three thousand years Jews defined themselves as a people loved by G-d. Only in the nineteenth century did they begin to define themselves as the people hated by gentiles. There is no sane future along that road. The best psychological defense against antisemitism is the saying of Rav Nachman of Bratslav: "The whole world is a very narrow bridge; the main thing is never to be afraid."

To antisemites we must be candid. Hate destroys the hated, but it also destroys the hater. It is no accident that antisemitism is the weapon of choice of tyrants and totalitarian regimes. It deflects internal criticism away by projecting it onto an external scapegoat. It is deployed in country after country to direct attention away from real internal problems of poverty, unemployment and underachievement. Antisemitism is used to sustain regimes without human rights, the rule of law, an independent judiciary, a free press, liberty of association or accountable government. One truth resounds through the pages of history: To be free you have to let go of

hate. Those driven by hate are enemies of freedom. There is no exception.

Finally, to all of us together, we must say: Jews have been hated throughout history because they were different. To be sure, everyone is different; but Jews more than most fought for the right to be different. Under a succession of empires, and centuries of dispersion, Jews were the only people who for more than two thousand years refused to convert to the dominant religion or assimilate into the dominant culture. That is why antisemitism is a threat not just to Jews but to humanity.

For we are all different. After Babel there is no single culture. Instead there is a multiplicity of languages and identities, each one of which is precious. Judaism is the world's most sustained protest against empires, because imperialism is the attempt to impose a single truth, culture or faith on a plural world. G-d, said the Rabbis, makes everyone in His image, yet He makes everyone different to teach us to respect difference. And since difference is constitutive of humanity, a world that has no space for difference has no space for humanity. That is why a resurgence of antisemitism has always been an early warning of an assault on freedom itself. It is so today.

We must find allies in the fight against hate. For though it begins with Jews, ultimately it threatens us all.

● This excerpt from *Future Tense* was published in *The Jewish Chronicle* on November 1, 2007.



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The Proper Time for Sukkot

Rabbi Shalom Rosner

The *Meshech Chochmah* asks why isn't Sukkot referenced by name in *Parashat Mishpatim*? Instead, it's exclusively referred to as *chag ha'asif*, when we gather in the produce. Why must we wait until Emor to discover the name *Chag HaSukkot*? In addition, many commentaries are puzzled by the date on which we celebrate Sukkot. It would have been more logical to celebrate Sukkot following Pesach and prior to Shavuot, symbolizing the *sukkot* in which we dwelled during the intermittent journey in the desert that transpired between the historical events of *yetziat Mitzrayim* (Pesach) and *matan Torah* (Shavuot).

The *Tur* (625) suggests that the reason we celebrate Sukkot in Tishrei instead of Nissan is so that it is clearly recognizable that we are sitting in the *sukkah* because we were commanded to do so and not for pleasure. If we celebrated the holiday of Sukkot in the spring, people might postulate that we sit outside because the weather is pleasant and not to fulfill a particular *mitzvah*. The assumption of this approach seems to point to a *pirsumei nissa* type of idea for the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* as well. It must be clear to others what we are doing. It is a *mitzvah* that has a goal of publicizing Hashem's kindness to us.

The *Gra*, though, offers a different, fascinating explanation. In his commentary on *Shir HaShirim*, the *Gra* posits that if one does the math, Moshe remained on *Har Sinai* for a hundred and twenty days – three sets of forty days. The first time he

ascended was on the seventh day of Sivan, and he descended on the seventeenth of Tammuz, at which point he broke the first set of *luchot*. At this point, *Chazal* tell us that the special protective *ananei hakavod* (clouds of glory) surrounding the nation disappeared.

Moshe then ascended on the eighteenth of Tammuz to ask for forgiveness on behalf of the nation and returned on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul to inform *Bnei Yisrael* that they had been forgiven for their transgression of *cheit ha'eigel* (golden calf).

Moshe's final ascent on *Har Sinai* was on Rosh Chodesh Elul, and he returned on Yom Kippur with the second set of *luchot*. At that point, on the following day, Moshe announced the building of the *Mishkan* and requested that people donate the requisite items. On the twelfth and thirteenth of the month of Tishrei, contributions and donations were collected for the *Mishkan*. On the fourteenth day of Tishrei, they began to build the *Mishkan*, and on the fifteenth day, the *ananei hakavod* returned. The clouds that had disappeared at the time of *cheit ha'eigel* returned with the commencement of the building of the *Mishkan*.

It is no coincidence, then, that we celebrate Sukkot on the fifteenth day of Tishrei, exactly on the date upon which the *ananei hakavod* returned and encircled the nation. According to the *Gra*, Sukkot was not moved from the Spring to the Fall, it is at the particular time that the "*sukkot*" (*ananei hakavod*) reappeared in the desert! After all, we hold like Rabbi Eliezer (*Sukkah*

11b) that the *sukkah* is meant to remind us of those special clouds of glory (see also – *Bach* O.C. 625).

The *Meshech Chochmah* then adds a fascinating suggestion. Perhaps the Yom Tov of Sukkot didn't even exist prior to *cheit ha'eigel*. There was a *chag ha'asif*, but there may not have been a *mitzvah* of *sukkah*, and that is why the Torah only refers to the time as *chag ha'asif*, when referencing the *chag* prior to *cheit ha'eigel*. When we sit in our *sukkot*, we should contemplate not only the *sukkot* in which we temporarily dwelled during our journey in the desert, but recognize that our *sukkah* symbolizes the *ananei hakavod* that reappeared, which should remind us of Hashem's continued *hashgacha* over all aspects of our lives.



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We asked three accomplished Jews from around the world: What was the most meaningful moment on your mission to Israel this year?



Isaac Barchichat

Throughout this year, Mizrahi France has brought multiple missions to Israel, to witness first-hand both the destruction, as well as the incredible unity and spirit of Israel. Spending time in Israel also gives one perspective, thinking about the situation of the Jews back in France:

October 7th – as we mark this sensitive anniversary, we keep on asking ourselves what did we do to deserve such a difficult moment – is it because we were divided (although I'm not sure that we are more united now)? Is it because we didn't focus much on the spirituality and holiness of *Eretz Yisrael*? Or simply the fact that we are getting closer to the arrival of *Mashiach* and need to suffer to deserve the ultimate delivery?

Around the world, October 7th has now become a date to remember, a date for those who hate us. In France, we have been living with those Jew-haters for far too long; the conflict was even the center of all debates during the June parliament elections. Yet, France and its large Jewish community has stood up strong to continue celebrating Jewish life. For us, October 7th was horrible, but October 8th was even more difficult – it made us realize that we are alone and none of the friendly countries will come rescue us and fight for our righteous battle.

It's now time to wake up and to understand we need to be united and that only through Hashem's help will we be protected; *Am Yisrael chai!*

Isaac Barchichat is a Yeshiva University graduate, Deputy Mayor in the Paris region, an activity community leader, director of a youth movement, married to Batya and a father of four. Isaac is the President of Mizrahi France.



Rebbetzin Elise Peter-Apelbaum

It is very hard to pick out one moment from the 4-day mission we organized this past May. Every encounter was meaningful, every person we spoke with had a personal, poignant story related to October 7th, making us realize how this war impacts every single person in Israel, younger or older, religious or not.

Seeing the place of the Nova Festival and the Re'im car cemetery was overwhelming, but personally, I also found our meeting with the wounded soldiers in the Tel Hashomer hospital very meaningful. We took time to speak with them, we brought them gifts from Czechia, and showed them our support. They were so happy to see us.

Among our gifts, we gave each of them a small *golem*. The legend says that the *golem* protected the Jewish community of Prague in the late 16th century so we pray that it will protect the soldiers and all of *Am Yisrael* today as well.

May this period bring us the *rachamim*, the mercy, of הקב"ה and may we see all the hostages, soldiers and families come back to their homes safely and quickly.

Rebbetzin Elise Peter-Apelbaum is the Head of Mizrahi Prague in Czechia where she lives with her husband, Chief Rabbi David Peter, and their five children. She recently graduated as a yoetzet halacha and plans to help women in Czechia and France.



Rabbi Hillel Van-Leeuwen

A memorable moment from a mission was with one of Mizrahi's groups. We were in the Shura IDF Rabbinate base, when a funeral procession began and the fallen soldier was wheeled out in a coffin with an Israeli flag and flowers on it. Everyone was stunned, and we were the *הגוש* there, the guard of honor, in essence. One of the *rabbanim* from the group said *kaddish*.

What touched me most is that, contrary to most things that the missions do – which is witnessing passively, listening to stories, visiting sites, or at most actively participating in mass events, such as *shiva* calls, a funeral, a BBQ for soldiers, or visiting wounded soldiers at the hospital – here, we weren't part of something big, it was all about us; we were the only ones present. If it wasn't for our group there, it would just be a few soldiers taking the fallen soldier into the (army *rabbanut*) hearse and driving out to the cemetery.

I felt in a nutshell we were *zoche* to represent all of world Jewry. There were people from various countries on the mission, and in a way it was *בְּמִקוֹם שָׂאִין אֲנָשִׁים הַשְּׂתַדֵּל לְהִיוֹת אִישׁ*, it was all about the timing, us being there, and G-d sent us there to represent all of *Am Yisrael*. Plus, if I'm not mistaken, it was also a soldier who came from an Anglo family, so that made it even more meaningful.

Rabbi Hillel Van-Leeuwen was born in Chicago and raised in Israel, and heads World Mizrahi's leadership programs, as well as The Religious Zionist Shlichut Center.

A portrait of Rabbi Berel Wein, an elderly man with a grey beard and hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a bookshelf filled with many books, likely in a library or study.

From Chicago to Yerushalayim

An Interview with Rabbi Berel Wein

A distinguished scholar, lecturer, and author of many popular works of Jewish history, Rabbi Berel Wein helped shape the Orthodox Jewish community of America as we know it today. After an illustrious career in the American rabbinate, Rabbi Wein moved to Israel in 1997 and has since served as the Rav of Bet Knesset Hanasi in Rechavia, Jerusalem. In this interview, Rabbi Aron White engages Rabbi Wein in a thought-provoking discussion on the current state of Israel and America, and the future of the Jewish people.

I wanted to start from the very beginning, in terms of your upbringing in Chicago. One thing I only learned recently, that might be particularly interesting to our readers, is that your father received *semicha* from Rav Kook, here in Yerushalayim. Could you tell me about that, and about those people who had an impact on you while growing up in Chicago.

Yes, my father received *semicha* from Rav Kook and I have a copy of it! Our relationship with Rav Kook goes back to Volozhin. My grandfather, Chaim Tzvi HaLevi Rubenshtein, was a colleague of his in Volozhin. When Rav Kook came to *Eretz Yisrael*, my grandfather also came to *Eretz Yisrael*, and he came to Yafo, where Rav Kook was the rabbi. My grandfather was the *rosh yeshiva* of the *yeshiva* 'Sha'arei Torah' in Yafo. The building is a landmark, you can still see it today. Then my grandfather came to Yerushalayim, and Rav Kook came to Yerushalayim as well. Later, my grandfather was sent to America to raise money, the usual advice on how to survive, and in 1911 he came to Chicago. The people in Chicago insisted that he stay – they said, “You have to stay, we don’t have a rabbi.” And that’s how we came to Chicago. That’s from my grandfather’s side, on my mother’s side.

My father was a student of Rav Shimon Shkop, in the Grodno Yeshiva. My father had an outstanding memory – he knew everything by heart. In fact, later Rav Kook would say that my father was his bookcase.

In 1923, the Alter from Slabodka moved part of the Slabodka Yeshiva to *Eretz Yisrael*, first to Yerushalayim, and later to Chevron, where it became the Chevron Yeshiva, and today it is the Chevron Yeshiva in Yerushalayim. My father had brothers already in *Eretz Yisrael*. One was in the Chevron Yeshiva. He also had an older brother who was a socialist, an original *kibbutz*nik, who helped pave the streets of Tel Aviv by hand. So, my father came, and in 1925, Rav Kook founded the *yeshiva* Merkaz HaRav, which at its origin was only for geniuses, for outstanding students. My father was there from 1925 to 1929. He was very good friends with Rav She’ar Yashuv Cohen and with the Nazir. My father had a photographic memory – he knew everything. He knew the name of every *sefer* there ever was, and the name of every rabbi. But my father was a very reticent person; you never heard him reveal himself. Except, I was his only son, so I knew

him very well, and he really was my main teacher in life, from the time I was three years old. When I was nine years old, he was already studying *Ketzos HaChoshen* with me.

In 1929, Rav Shimon Shkop came to New York to deliver *shiurim* in Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan, invited by Dr. Revel. Rav Shimon sent a letter to all his former *talmidim*. Rav Shimon was a “*chacham adif minavi*, a wise man is more than a prophet.” So in 1929, he told my father, “Europe is *ale geshfilt gays*, Europe is all played out,” meaning, we have no future there. The future is in the United States and Israel. He said, “I’m going to try to build a cadre of students in the United States who will spread Torah in America. Come join me.” So my father came in 1929, at the same time as Dr. Belkin, who was a great scholar from the Radin Yeshiva, the Chofetz Chaim’s *yeshiva*. My father knew him very well.

There was a Jew in New York by the name of Israel Rokeach, who had a business selling kosher soap – every Jewish house had it. Half the soap was red, and half the soap was blue, so you broke it in half for *milchigs* and *fleishigs*. Rokeach came from Kovno, and his original soap had a *hechsher* from Rav Yitzchak Elchanan. Every year, Rokeach gave a prize of \$500 to the outstanding student in the *beit midrash* of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan, and my father won the prize in 1930.

Dr. Revel knew every rabbi in America, and my father was still not married, so he told my father that there was a rabbi in Chicago by the name of Rubinshtein, and he had three daughters. He said, “Go to Chicago, you’ll like one of them!” And that’s exactly what happened. My father went to Chicago with his few hundred dollars that he won – a few hundred dollars then was a lot of money! – and he married my mother, who was the middle daughter, Esther. He became a Rav in Chicago, and he was a Rav for over 60 years. He was my main teacher in everything. I would come home from school every day at three o’clock, and my mother would give me a glass of milk and cookies, and then at 3:30pm my father sat down to learn. We didn’t know any better, so it worked.

I know that after received semicha from Hebrew Theological College (HTC), you studied law and became a lawyer. When and why did you decide to become a rabbi?

I always wanted to be a rabbi. My father had told me that we were seven generations of *rabbonim*. But when I received my *semicha* at 21 years old, the Orthodox rabbinate in Chicago collapsed. The neighborhood changed. Out of 42 Orthodox synagogues, only six survived. Many of them became Conservative. In fact, my father’s synagogue collapsed, and he was offered a very lucrative position in a synagogue without a *mehitza*, where men and women would sit together. They said to him, “This rabbi is doing it, and that rabbi is doing it,” but he said, “I saw Rav Shimon Shkop; I can’t do it.” Eventually, he found a position in East Rogers Park in Chicago, and he was there until he was 90.

When I finished *yeshiva*, I got married young at 21. My father-in-law was a great rabbi in Detroit, Rabbi Levin, and my brothers-in-law were later *roshei yeshiva* of Telz in America. But I had to make a living; it was a time when fathers and fathers-in-law could not support you – you had to make your own way. My father had a *landsmann*, someone from the same town, who was a lawyer in Chicago. My father arranged with him that if I went to law school and passed the bar, he would take me on as a law clerk in his office. I got a three-year scholarship to law school in Chicago, passed the bar on the first try, and went to work as a lawyer. After a year or two, I went out on my own. But all the time I was a lawyer, I wanted to be a rabbi. In fact, I had a



Rabbi Wein with family and participants at the dinner marking his 90th birthday this summer. (PHOTOS: CHAIM SNOW)

non-paying position as a rabbi for a small group of people for a Shabbat *minyana*.

I was in law for eight or nine years. I had, *Baruch Hashem*, a family – four children – and a home in Chicago. We thought that was it; that was the trajectory. Then a very dear friend, Rabbi Aryeh Ratner, who was a rabbi in Miami Beach, came to visit me, with the backing of my *rosh yeshiva*, Rabbi Chaim Kreiswirth, who always told me, “We have enough Jewish lawyers; we need a good rabbi.” Rabbi Ratner told me he was leaving Miami Beach and wanted me to be his successor, and that Rabbi Kreiswirth insisted on it. By that time, I already owned a business, a small manufacturing business. It’s complicated to move, especially with little children in school. But they put a lot of pressure on me, so I finally agreed to be a candidate. My wife said, “If the *Ribono Shel Olam* wants it, you’ll get it, and if it’s not for us, it won’t be for us.” Anyway, I was elected by the overwhelming vote of 21 to 19. Within a month, I had sold everything I owned in Chicago. I didn’t feel that a rabbi should have the baggage of business with him. The first year I was a rabbi, my salary was less than the income tax I had paid the last year before I became a rabbi!

So we moved to Miami Beach. That was the greatest move; it was *min hashamayim*. It was a wonderful congregation. When I came, there were 39 members in the *shul*, and when I left, there were over 250. We built a magnificent building, we built a *mikvah*, and I gave a *shiur* in the Miami Mesivta. I got to meet all of the great Jews of the world who all came to Miami Beach in the winter. I was a driver, a chauffeur for the Ponevezh Rav and for many other great *rabbanim*. The L-rd put me in Miami Beach, and there I met all these great people. If I had been in a different community, I would never have had any contact with these people. I had Rav Soloveitchik, I had Rav Ya'akov Kamenetsky, I had the Satmar Rav, I had *Chassidic* rabbis, the Tetcher Rebbe from Toronto.

I was young then, 32 or 33. They looked at me like I was their child, so they took care of me; they taught me. When you learn things from great people, a lot of it goes easy. Rav Soloveitchik didn't teach me directly, but he was the example of how to give a lecture. Nobody would fall asleep in the middle! The Ponevezh Rav taught me how to collect money, and Rav Ya'akov Kamenetsky taught me how to read a *pasuk* in the Chumash. The Satmar Rav taught me how to care for the Jewish people. That's immeasurable – there's no way to measure what that's worth, but that's what made me. We were in Miami Beach for nine years. My children grew up; it was a different world then. We never locked the front door, we never locked our car. There were 300 days a year that the sun shone, our kids were outside every day. We never worried about anything. It was healthy, beyond belief. Then I worked in New York; it was a different universe.

You've held various rabbinic roles, but your teaching of Jewish history brought you international recognition. When did that come on your horizon?

Well, what happened was, I was the head of Kashrut for the OU (Orthodox Union) for five years, which was very challenging, and in many respects very rewarding. But it was not something I wanted to do permanently. We were living in a relatively new neighborhood in Monsey, New York. On Shabbat, I would give *shiurim* in the *minyán* we *davened* in, and eventually that *minyán* turned into a *shul*. The *shul* was wonderful, with wonderful people. I've had a very easy ride with the *rabbanus* (rabbinite). When I was in Miami Beach, I developed a lecture series in Jewish history for women. When I came to Monsey, it was also for women. After a period of time, the husbands came to me and said, "It's embarrassing, my wife knows all these things, and I don't know anything. So you have to give a class for us." So I said yes, but for the men's class, everyone should pay a \$50 registration fee, and the money would go to the local *yeshiva*. About 30 people signed up, among them a number of physicians. We had a wonderful *shul* – we had 25 doctors in *shul*; every disease known to man was in our *shul*. After a few weeks, some of the doctors came and said, "We paid the \$50, but we're on call, we have to be in the hospital. Why don't you record the lecture and give us the recording?" And they came back two or three weeks later and said, "In the hospital, everybody comes to hear your recording! You should do something with it." And that's how it started.

I remember I had a rebbe in yeshiva who said to me, "You can learn anything in university, but don't learn Judaism, because if you start reading professors, it can challenge you." Did you ever find it challenging when you read Jewish history academically?

First of all, every historian has a bias. And if you're not an observant Jew, then your bias is obviously against observance

by nature. The people who wrote the history books were not personally observant and did not believe that Torah was the main folklore in Jewish life. However, all of them had bibliographies in their books, and most of the bibliographies were from great *rabbanim*. You want to know Jewish history? Look at the rabbinic responsa of the time – they're telling you what happened there. They phrase it *halachically*; they're not there to tell you stories, but the story is there if you figure it out. That was my main source of history: the rabbinic responsa. Everyone studies the Rambam's *Yad HaChazakah*, but the *Teshuvot HaRambam* is even more revealing – you can see the person from it. And then I had the idea that we should make films. So we made three large biographical films: Rashi, the Rambam, and the Abarbanel. Tens of thousands have seen them, and they're in many schools throughout the world. When the internet came, I created a foundation. We have a platform called 'Jewish Destiny.' I always said, "Our job is to tell the story of the Jewish people to the Jewish people."

Why? If you are talking to people who do see Torah as the folklore of Jewish history, who are observant, what is the need to learn Jewish history?

Because if you don't know how we got here, you'll have no idea what to do now. You'll have no perspective. History is perspective. Many times there are problems that are insoluble, and they've been insoluble for 2,000 years. So you have to know that's the kind of problem you're dealing with, and you're not going to solve it. You have to learn to live with it. And then there are problems that we have solved, but they reappear. So what do we do now? And history tells us that all of the non-traditional, non-orthodox streams eventually disappear: the Sadducees, the Essenes, the Christians, the Frankists – all of them. They're around for a while, but they don't last. In 1960, it was all about Reform and Conservative being the future of the Jewish people. Nobody says that today – they don't even say it!

In that context, I'd like to ask about American Jewry. As a non-American, I remember my first visit to America – it felt distinct from other Jewish communities in the Diaspora.

I grew up in a time when there was antisemitism, but it was on the wane. You could be an Orthodox Jew without penalty. An Orthodox Jew could be nominated and run for Vice President of the United States. And the guy who was running for president was a *Shabbos goy*. That time is gone – that was a false spring. I grew up in a time when support for the State of Israel in the Jewish community was almost complete, and there was very strong support from the non-Jewish community too. That also has changed. The very success of the State of Israel has contributed to this. And the influence of the survivors of the Holocaust was immense. They were driven people. We don't have that anymore.

In those days, the entire Orthodox spectrum, from Mizrachi to Satmar, the common denominator was that they were going to rebuild the Jewish people. They didn't have that much time to fight amongst themselves. But now that the Jewish people have been 'rebuilt,' now we have time for all of this. We exist inside political parties in the State of Israel. It's a deterrent to the coming of the Messiah. If I had to do it all over again, I never would have had a religious party.

That immediately allows the majority of the Jewish people to say, "Well, that's not for me. I don't have to put on *tefillin*, because I don't vote for this group." And that's a killer. On the other hand, my colleagues have told me many times that if there had never been religious parties, there never would have been any

religious Jews left in the State of Israel. They have a point on that too. But overall, I think there's more negative than positive. But who am I?

Historically, internal divisions were common during the time of the ancient Jewish state. Now that we once again have a Jewish state, do you think we are reliving those same divisions today?

It's funny. Both Temples were destroyed from within, not from without. And they were great people – we're not talking about idiots! But human beings are born with egos. In fact, I think the main purpose of the Torah is to try and control your ego. That was *Chassidus*, that was the *mussar* movement. Now, none of those movements are really around and vital anymore. So ego is rampant. Great people have great egos.

How have you seen Religious Zionism change in your lifetime, and how do you see its role today?

I still think it's looking for its way. I still think it took a detour when it put its entire emphasis on the settlements. In fact, Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook said at the end that we made a mistake – we concentrated on the land and not on the people. So I think that was a detour, and in some way, we can't get out of it because how can you abandon those *yishuvim* now? History teaches us that change is necessary, and it takes a long time. I think it takes 40 nautical miles to turn around an aircraft carrier at sea. Religious Zionism has become much more religious and much more Torah-centered, with a great network of *yeshivot*. These are sea changes, but we don't know where it's going to end up. So, is *Chardal* (Charedi-nationalist) the future? Maybe.

I want to ask about the non-Zionist Orthodox community, both in Israel and outside of Israel. Beyond ideological debates, practically, we've now had the State of Israel for 76 years. How long can you continue to have a non-Zionist community while living within the reality of a Zionist nation?

I don't understand those people. What do you think is going to happen without the State of Israel? The boss in my old law firm used to have a sign on his desk that said, "Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up." That's it. Their minds are made up. They don't know anything – they don't know how the state was founded, they don't know the story 100 years before the state, they don't know anything. They just know that they don't want to identify with it, even though the state is the greatest supporter of Torah. Financially and socially, the country has become much more traditional. I've been here for 30 years, and I can tell you the difference – you can't recognize it.

In the country at large, where do you see it?

I see it in the political leaders, who are now giving some respect to Shabbat. I see it in the growth of *yeshivot* – it's an explosion. I see it in women's education, which never existed before. I think that if the politicians left it alone and stayed away from it, I think you would easily have thousands of *Charedim* that would volunteer to serve in the army. But if you pass a law, they're not going. "You're not going to tell me!"

Interesting, because of that tension with the wider society.

That's right. And I think there has to be a recognition in Jewish society that there always were two alternate governments. There's the government, and then there's an alternate government, which are the rabbis, *talmidei chachamim*, the *Sanhedrin*, tradition. That's an alternate government.



Rabbi Wein and Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg, graduate of Mizrahi's Leadership programs and current rabbi of Beit Knesset Hanassi.

As a modern democratic state, how could we do that?

That's the job – to make it work. But that is exactly how we've always been. During the *Bayit Sheni* (Second Temple) era, the Hasmoneans were the kings, but people listened to the *Perushim* (Pharisees). It even brought a civil war.

To think of it that way, it's remarkable that's a pattern – we've done exactly the same thing in the past.

We're better off. That's part of the problem – you don't realize you're better off. I'll tell you the story the Ponevezh Rav told me. He flies the Israeli flag from the roof of the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak on Yom HaAtzma'ut. He said the morals squad came to visit him. And they said, "In Bnei Brak, how can you fly the Israeli flag?" He said he told them, "In Lithuania, on Lithuanian Independence Day, I flew the Lithuanian flag on the roof of the *yeshiva*." He said, "It's not worse here." That was his attitude, "It's not worse here." That puts it into perspective. So we'll see what'll happen. The aircraft carrier is slowly, slowly trying to turn around.

I wanted to ask about your own personal Aliyah. Community leaders often feel more pressure to stay with their community. What do you counsel when rabbis ask you about that? Also, for people looking for Diaspora-style communities here, how do you see those developing?

First of all, I don't counsel people on their own personal decisions, "שְׂאִינְךָ אֶתְּהָ יוֹדֵעַ בְּצַעֲרֶךָם שֶׁל תְּלַמְּדֵי חֻכְמִים" – you don't know the situation, you don't know what's involved. So everybody has to make their own decisions because we're all independent people. Nobody can tell you, "Go. Don't go. Do this. Do that." Secondly, I think there are windows in life when people can do things, and there are times when those windows are not open. It's enormously difficult to make *Aliyah* when you have children between the ages of 11 and 17, as opposed to when you have children who are 1 and 4. And many times in life, you are not an independent contractor. What does your wife say? What does your family say? The older I have become, the less judgmental I have become about people and events.

The L-rd has helped me land on my feet, so I find myself in a wonderful congregation in Rechavia. They still allow me to play-act as one of the rabbis. I think it's very important that there be Anglo-style synagogues and Anglo-style rabbis. But eventually, I think being an Anglo in Israel is a recessive gene – it's not going to last long-term. You know, either you become Israeli, or it's a one-generation, two-generation thing, and then they become Israeli. That's the way it's supposed to be.

Rabbi Wein, thank you! ■

Sweetness Amidst Bitterness: A Tishrei Reflection

Rabbi Eli Taragin

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, our hearts are heavy with the weight of recent events. The outbreak of war on Simchat Torah and its ongoing impact have left an indelible mark on our collective consciousness, to the point where for many, the mere mention of “Simchat Torah” now evokes feelings of pain and sadness in their hearts. In times like these, we might be tempted to echo the ancient liturgical phrase, “May the year and its curses come to an end,” yearning to forget the pain and turmoil we’ve endured.

Indeed, the past year has been one of unprecedented challenges. The horrors of the Simchat Torah massacre, the subsequent societal rifts, and the continued state of conflict have tested our resilience as a people. It would be understandable to wish for this year to fade quickly from memory, to turn the page and start anew.

However, as we at Sulamot and La’Ofek have witnessed, this challenging year has also given rise to truly uplifting and incredible phenomena that we dare not forget. Amidst the darkness, we’ve seen the indomitable spirit of *Am Yisrael* shine brighter than ever before.

We’ve witnessed an outpouring of unity and support across all sectors of society that defies imagination. Soldiers rushing from every corner of the country – and even from abroad – to aid those in need; civilians initiating countless projects to support our troops and displaced communities; and an unprecedented strengthening of bonds between Israeli Jews and our brethren in the Diaspora. These expressions of solidarity and selflessness have been nothing short of miraculous.

The civilian response has been particularly inspiring. We’ve been inundated with calls and messages from people eager to contribute in any way possible – from providing military equipment to preparing food for soldiers, from writing encouraging notes to offering shelter to the displaced. The sheer volume and diversity of initiatives have been overwhelming and deeply moving.

Moreover, the connection between Israeli Jews and our global Jewish family has reached new heights. As an organization, we’ve always maintained ties with communities worldwide, but the current crisis has sparked an unprecedented level of collaboration. Rabbis, community leaders, and individuals have offered support in various ways – by making *Aliyah*, volunteering, providing financial assistance, and organizing prayer gatherings and solidarity events in their communities.

As we enter the new year, *Am Yisrael’s* mission is clear. While we may wish to leave behind the pain and suffering, we must not lose sight of the incredible unity and strength we’ve discovered within ourselves. These are the silver linings that illuminate our path forward.



Featured: Rabbi Eli Taragin and Rabbi Daniel Fridman (JCOT) planting seedlings in Kibbutz Kerem Shalom through Sulamot’s Atufim project, which supports 9 Gaza border communities on their journey to rehabilitate and rebuild.



Sulamot's Ratzim LaMishna program: Inspiring 200,000 children globally to study Mishna in their free time through engaging videos and events. Featured: Siyum Masechet Ta'anit, uniting bereaved and international learners.

Our challenge now is to harness this positive energy – the dedication, the sense of mission, the connection to *Eretz Yisrael*, and the unity of our people – and channel it into our daily lives and keep it close to our hearts like a talisman that guides our way as we pray for peaceful times ahead.

This year, our prayers take on added significance. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, as the Almighty determines the course of the coming year, we must intensify our prayers. We pray for the safety of our soldiers, for the return of the hostages, for the displaced to return home whole in body and spirit. We pray that the Almighty will guide our nation to its rightful and honorable place.

Let us conclude with the timeless words of our liturgy, which resonate more powerfully than ever:

"And so, too, O L-rd, grant honor to Your people... gladness to Your land, joy to Your city, flourishing of pride to David, Your servant, and a clear, shining light to the son of Yishai, Your anointed, speedily in our days."

Rabbi Eli Taragin is the CEO of Sulamot and La'Ofek, organizations dedicated to Jewish education and community empowerment through education and employment. Working closely with founder Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon, he drives innovative projects within these institutions. Rabbi Taragin also serves as the rabbi of Kehilat Maayan Rivka in Petach Tikvah, Israel.



La'Ofek's Taasuchayil program: Empowering underprivileged IDF soldiers with jobs and mentorship.



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A Lion

Remembered

The Legacy of Rabbi Aryeh Bina

This year, the 21st of Marcheshvan marks the 30th yahrzeit of Rabbi Aryeh Bina, a visionary educator and architect of the Religious Zionist community in Israel. Today, his memory lives on through Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh, named in his honor. Rabbi Bina was an extraordinary figure who played a pivotal role in shaping Religious Zionism during Israel's formative years – from establishing religious moshavim in the 1930s to founding Religious Zionist high schools in the 1950s, and later spearheading the creation of Yeshivot Hesder in the 1960s. Beyond these significant contributions, Rabbi Bina's personal journey included four years as a Prisoner of War under Nazi rule. On this milestone anniversary, Rabbi Aron White reflects on his enduring legacy.

This profile draws significantly from "Ari Bein HaOlamot" by Prof. Aviad Hacohen (2018). Photos in this article were taken from the book with permission from the author.

In the annals of history, certain individuals emerge whose personal journeys not only tell their own story but represent an entire era or movement. Rabbi Aryeh Bina is one such figure – a *talmid chacham* and Torah educator whose life parallels the development of Israel's religious community from his arrival in the 1930s until his passing in the 1990s.

Born Leibele Benosovski in 1913 in Slonim, Belarus, Rabbi Bina received a traditional Lithuanian Jewish education. In 1926, he entered the renowned Mir Yeshiva, studying under Rabbi Leizer Yuda Finkel, the *Rosh Yeshiva*, and Rav Yerucham Leibowitz, the *Mashgiach*. These formative experiences forged connections he would maintain throughout his life.

In 1933, driven by Zionist ideals, he decided to make *Aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*.

While awaiting his immigration certificate from Polish Zionist organizations, he trained at an agricultural *Hachshara* in Kosnice. During this period, he became engaged to his cousin Rachel from Slonim. To avoid the Polish draft, he departed for Palestine ahead of her, with Rachel joining him a few months later.

Upon arriving in Jaffa, Rabbi Bina found work as a construction laborer in Tel Aviv, helping build the bustling thoroughfare of Allenby Street. He frequented the Hapoel HaMizrachi synagogue on Achad Ha'am Street, which also served as a hub for the nascent Bnei Akiva movement, founded just a few years earlier in 1929. It was here that he learned of plans to establish a new religious settlement near Hadera in northern Israel.

This pioneering community was Kfar HaRoeh, a religious *moshav* named after Rav Kook. As one of the early religious agricultural settlements, it embodied the principle of *Torah V'avoda* – the integration of Torah study and physical labor. Rabbi Bina and Rabbanit Rachel relocated there in the early 1930s, where he lived out his ideals by simultaneously serving as a Torah teacher and working the land. While engaged in agricultural pursuits, he continued his Torah studies, corresponding on *halachic* matters with Rabbi Ben Tzion Uziel, the Sephardic Chief Rabbi, and Rabbi Reuven Katz, the *rav* of Petach Tikva. In 1936, the Binas welcomed their first son, Ya'akov.

In 1937, despite Rabbi Bina's renowned Torah scholarship, Kfar HaRoeh selected Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, a graduate of Rav Kook's Merkaz HaRav *yeshiva*, as the

town's official rabbi. Undeterred, Rabbi Bina maintained a close relationship with Rabbi Yisraeli and remained an integral part of the Kfar HaRoeh community.

The winter of 1939 saw the establishment of the first Bnei Akiva *yeshiva* high school in Kfar HaRoeh, filling a void for Religious Zionist teenagers seeking an educational framework aligned with their worldview. Despite the outbreak of World War II and subsequent fundraising challenges, the school persevered. Initially hired as a substitute teacher, Rabbi Bina soon became a permanent fixture. Founded by Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Neriah under the auspices of Bnei Akiva, the institution offered a curriculum that balanced Torah study with agricultural training. Even as he embraced his role as an educator, Rabbi Bina continued his work as a farmer. His students from this era, including Rabbi Ya'akov Ariel, the former Chief Rabbi of Ramat Gan, recall their astonishment at seeing their teacher transition seamlessly from farmer's attire to rabbinic garb.

A legendary anecdote captures the essence of Rabbi Bina's dual roles: Parents visiting the *yeshiva* for a meeting with their son's teacher encountered a farmer who directed them to the school. Minutes later, they were surprised to find the same man, now dressed in rabbinic attire, conducting their meeting. This story became emblematic of Yeshivat Kfar HaRoeh's unique character as a pre-state institution.

A prisoner of the Nazis

With the outbreak of World War II, many Jews from Mandatory Palestine, including Rabbi Bina and several other Kfar HaRoeh residents, enlisted in the Jewish Brigade of the British Army. Assigned to the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, a unit responsible for digging trenches, Rabbi Bina left his wife and son to serve in Egypt and Greece as part of the Allied effort against the Nazi invasion. In April 1941, on the beaches of Kalamata, Greece, Rabbi Bina was among 10,000 British soldiers captured by Nazi forces and taken as prisoners of war.

Transferred to Germany, these POWs worked as forced laborers. Their status as prisoners of war afforded them slightly better treatment than most Jews under Nazi rule, including occasional Red Cross visits. During his captivity, Rabbi Bina forged a connection with a fellow prisoner who had outside contacts. In exchange for cigarettes and chocolates, this individual procured a Talmud tractate – *Masechet Yevamot* – which Rabbi Bina studied throughout his imprisonment.



Rabbi Bina reading the “Megillat HaYesod” at Yeshivat Hakotel. (PHOTO: YESHIVAT HAKOTEL)

Facing moments of uncertainty about his survival, Rabbi Bina penned an ethical will to his family:

“If I am cut down before reaching thirty, killed in captivity, I don't even know if you will know where I am buried... If you survive and return to our land, which I am sure you will merit, please do not forget me. Publish the Torah insights I wrote, and tell all of the Jewish people that our struggle for *Eretz Yisrael* was not in vain.”

After four years of captivity, Rabbi Bina was liberated by American forces and brought to Newcastle, England. From there, he returned to Israel, reuniting with his wife and son after their long separation. He resumed his dual roles of farming and teaching at Yeshivat Kfar Haroeh until 1952, when a new chapter of his life began in Jerusalem.

Religious schools in the Jewish state

Following Israel's independence, the pre-state educational system was integrated into a national framework. Rabbi Dr. Zerach Warhaftig of the Mizrahi party played a crucial role in this process. He approached Rav Neriah in Kfar HaRoeh, proposing the establishment of a branch of his high school in Jerusalem. Rabbi Aryeh Bina was chosen to lead this new venture, which he named “Netiv Meir” in honor of Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan.

The school's initial location in Abu Tor exposed it to constant threats from Jordanian snipers in then-occupied East Jerusalem. During the school's inauguration, Jordanian forces opened fire on

the assembled crowd, forcing them to take cover. Drawing on his military experience, Rabbi Bina personally stood guard at night to ensure his students' safety.

In addition to his role as head of the new *yeshiva*, Rabbi Bina utilized his earlier experience as a construction worker in Tel Aviv to assist with the physical development of the new building. The *yeshiva*'s curriculum was innovative for Jerusalem, combining intensive morning Torah study with afternoon secular studies for matriculation exams (*bagruyot*). This model represented a significant departure from the Old *Yishuv*'s staunch opposition to modern religious education. Ironically, it was Rabbi Bina, with his background in the Lithuanian *yeshiva* world rather than Bnei Akiva, who established the first Bnei Akiva high school in Jerusalem. His response to potential critics was simply, “When doing the right thing, I am not worried about what others will say.”

After several years, the school relocated to its current home in Bayit veGan, where it continues to play a formative role in Israel's religious community. The roster of Netiv Meir graduates reads like a who's who of Religious Zionist leadership, including luminaries such as Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, Rabbi Moshe Lichtenstein, Rabbi Chaim Sabato, Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon, Rabbi Yuval Cherlow, and Rabbi Dov Zinger.

Yeshivot Hesder

Building on his success with Bnei Akiva high schools, Rabbi Bina went on to make a profound impact through the creation of



(PHOTO: ARI BEIN HAOLAMOT)

multiple Yeshivot Hesder, institutions that combine Torah study with IDF service. The pioneering Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh, established by Mizrachi in the 1950s, set the stage, and Rabbi Bina became a catalyst for the expansion of this innovative model.

In the wake of the Six-Day War, Yeshivot Bnei Akiva founded Yeshivat Hakotel in the newly liberated Old City of Jerusalem, with Rabbi Bina at the helm as *Rosh Yeshiva*. He recruited graduates from Netiv Meir to form the core of this new post-high school *yeshiva*. During his tenure at Yeshivat Hakotel, Rabbi Bina was instrumental in establishing additional *yeshivot*, including Yeshivat HaGolan, Yeshivat Hesder Ma'alot, and Yeshivat Birkat Moshe in Ma'ale Adumim. Today, the *Hesder Yeshiva* movement encompasses over 70 institutions, with thousands of students engaged in Torah study and IDF service annually.

Interestingly, throughout his career, Rabbi Bina faced some skepticism from certain quarters of the Religious Zionist establishment, who perceived him as leaning towards a more Charedi approach. In retrospect, this perception seems ironic, given that his dual roles as Torah teacher and farmer embodied the *Torah V'avoda* ethos more literally than perhaps any other Religious Zionist rabbi. With the passage of time, the magnitude of his contributions has become increasingly apparent. From his arrival in Israel, and despite his four-year Nazi captivity, Rabbi Bina played a pivotal role in developing the institutional framework that the Religious Zionist community now considers indispensable – religious settlements, *yeshiva* high schools, and *Yeshivot Hesder*.

Rabbi Bina's legacy can also be viewed through the lens of generational shifts in Religious Zionist leadership. Many early state-era Religious Zionist leaders, both in rabbinic and political spheres, are often overlooked as their approaches no longer align with contemporary norms. In the rabbinic realm, the first generation of *roshei yeshiva* and teachers in *Hesder Yeshivot* primarily hailed from the Lithuanian *yeshiva* world. As graduates of *Hesder Yeshivot* assumed teaching roles, the older generation was sometimes perceived as out of touch. In the political arena, towering Religious Zionist figures like Moshe Chaim Shapiro might now be considered dovish compared to many current Religious Zionist politicians. While these stylistic and ideological differences are significant, they should not overshadow the immense contributions of these pioneering leaders.

As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of his passing, Rabbi Bina deserves to be remembered as one of the founding fathers of Religious Zionism, whose life's work continues to impact thousands to this day. His legacy serves as a testament to the power of vision, perseverance, and unwavering commitment to both Torah and the Land of Israel. ■

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SUKKOT

"SUKOKU"

RULES:
Each row, column and rectangle (6 spaces each) needs to be filled out with the 6 words, without repeating any words within the row, column or rectangle.

CHAGIM					DANCING
SIMCHAT TORAH			ETROG		CHAGIM
LULAV		SIMCHAT TORAH	DANCING		
	DANCING		CHAGIM		SIMCHAT TORAH
DANCING	SIMCHAT TORAH	LULAV			
SUKKOT			SIMCHAT TORAH	DANCING	

WORDS IN THE PUZZLE:
LULAV
ETROG
CHAGIM
SUKKOT
DANCING
SIMCHAT TORAH

COMMEMORATE

As we commemorate a year since the tragedy of Simchat Torah 5784, we would like to remember our fallen, acknowledge the courage and strength of our people and army, and pray for the quick return of the rest of our hostages.

If you would like to write to soldiers to give your thanks, send your letter to lettersforisrael@mizrachi.org



MEET DEBORAH E. LIPSTADT



March 18, 1947 (26 Adar 5707)

Born in the United States to her parents Erwin and Miriam, Deborah grew up in a Modern Orthodox home in Long Island. She grew up to become a Jewish historian and at the age of 40 two of Israel's most important historians asked her to study Holocaust denial. At first, Deborah thought it was a joke as she couldn't believe that Holocaust deniers would ever be taken seriously. However, she soon realized how wrong she was, and quickly became the number one expert on antisemitism and Holocaust denial. Her book, *Denying the Holocaust*, made her famous, but she ended up in court for libel by a British historian whom she had rebuked in her book for his Holocaust denial. After much research into all of the British historian's "evidence," Deborah and her colleagues brought a very large (almost 2.5 meters tall) pile of information to argue against the libel charge. In the end, the British court ruled in favor of Deborah's claims. Later, Deborah wrote a book about the court case, which was turned into a movie shortly after. Deborah has served as the United States Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Antisemitism since May 3, 2022.



Adapted from *Iconic Jewish Women* by Dr. Aliza Lavie. Scan the QR code to purchase on Amazon.



DID YOU KNOW?

- The Waldorf Astoria in Jerusalem has one of the largest *sukkot* in the world!
- The world's largest Torah collection is guarded on a closed IDF base, with almost 400 Torahs, some dating back more than 700 years ago!
- About 76% more apples are consumed during the weeks of *chagim* than on an average week throughout the year.

Test Your Knowledge



Which *sefer* do we read on Sukkot?

How many walls (at least) does a *sukkah* need to have?

Many of the *tefillot* we say on Sukkot revolve around asking for what?

Look for the answers in the Parshat Bereishit Youth Edition – see below for more details!

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MASHIV HARUACH U'MORID HAGESHEM SUKKAH DECORATION

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- ⇒ Two sheets of white paper
- ⇒ Several sheets of colored paper
- ⇒ String or ribbon
- ⇒ Scissors
- ⇒ Glue stick
- ⇒ Hole puncher
- ⇒ Black marker, pink marker

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Trace a cloud-like shape on top of one of the pieces of paper, then stack the second paper underneath the first one and carefully cut both of the pieces of paper along the lines.
2. Repeat this process with the colored papers (two at a time), except drawing smaller raindrops instead of the cloud.
3. Take the ribbon or string and cut one longer string and 5 shorter strings, in varying lengths.
4. Place the five strings along the bottom of the cloud. Using the glue, glue down all the strings very well, and then cover the rest of the paper with a good amount of glue. Quickly place the second cloud on top of the first one so that they stick together with the strings in the middle.
5. Take two of the same colored raindrops and place glue on both of them, sticking them together with one of the 5 bottom strings in the middle. Place them as you like along the 5 bottom strings.
6. Draw a face on either side of your raincloud and then punch a hole at the top of the cloud and take your longest string and tie it through the hole.
7. Hang your new decoration in your *sukkah* and enjoy!



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